



Session

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# PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

## Romans 1:1-17

Paul, as one of the first missionaries to the Gentiles, wrote this letter to the churches in Rome. It had been Paul's desire to travel to Rome and visit with the churches and the people he had never met. Several times in the book of Acts, Paul shared this desire.

Having ministered completely to the cities on the eastern side of the Roman territory, Paul sought to move westward to Spain, passing through Rome. After spending time in Ephesus, Paul moved on to Corinth where he likely wrote this letter. The purpose of Paul's writing was to share the truth of the gospel with those in Rome. Since Rome was the seat of government, the city would have had people of many nationalities and faiths.

Paul opened his letter by identifying his credentials. Some in Rome may not have known who Paul was, and Paul wanted to be sure those reading this letter would know that the words he was sharing were not from him but were from God. As an apostle, Paul had been called by God to share this truth—the truth of the gospel.

The gospel is what Paul takes the next 16 chapters of text to unfold. Knowing the Christians living in Rome were from a heavily Gentile background, Paul took great care to open the gospel to them in ways they would understand. The gospel in a nutshell is what Paul shared in Romans 1:1-5. The gospel is about Jesus Christ, descended from David, crucified and raised from the dead, through whom we have received God's grace. The good news of the gospel was not just for the Jews. It was for all people, and Paul fulfilled his calling to share that gospel with as many as he could.

Paul commended the church for the ways they were growing in their faith. Paul had heard good reports from many believers and wanted to continue strengthening the church's resolve. Paul assured the church of his continued prayer and encouraged them by sharing his own unashamed commitment to the gospel—the light by which the righteousness of God is revealed.

## SESSION FOCUS

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Romans 1:1-17

**MEMORY VERSE:** Ephesians 2:4-5

**BIBLE VERSE:** Romans 1:16

**TEXT TRUTH:** The gospel is the power of God and reveals His righteousness to everyone who believes.

**BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT:** Know the Bible is God's revelation about Himself and how He rescues and transforms us. Name all the books of the Old Testament and all the books of the New Testament.

### BIBLE STUDY

(35 MINUTES)

- ☐ **Jump In:** *Item 15: "Objects: The Roman Forum" (Printables)*
- ☐ **Examine the Text:** *Bibles; Item 4: "Text Truth 1," Item 11: "Bible Genres," and Item 13: "Romans Definitions" (Poster Pack)*
- ☐ **Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- ☐ **Memory Verse:** *Bibles, Item 1: "Ephesians 2:4-5" (Poster Pack), Item 34: "Memory Verse Puzzle" (Printables)*
- ☐ **Prayer:** *Family Cards*

### APPLY THE TRUTH

(20 MINUTES)

- ☐ **Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- ☐ **Review:** *"Romans" (Books of the Bible Posters)*

### ACTIVITIES

(20 MINUTES)

- ☐ **Bible Skills:** *66 large craft sticks, permanent marker, 2 buckets or cans, painter's tape*
- ☐ **Move:** *Item 12: "Ancient Rome" (Poster Pack), blindfolds, washable ink pad, painter's tape, baby wipes, Item 4: "Allergy Alert" (Printables)*
- ☐ **Make:** *Item 5: "The Gospel" and Item 35: "Sample Letter" (Printables), parchment paper, stamp or wax seal, pens*
- ☐ **Explore:** *Item 16: "Myanmar Map" (Printables), painter's tape*

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## PAUL'S LETTERS TO THE ROMANS

### Romans 1:1-17

*Paul was a follower of Jesus and a missionary. He traveled many places to tell people about Jesus. Paul also wrote letters to believers and churches to help them grow in their faith. While Paul was in the city of Corinth and on the way to the city of Jerusalem, Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in the city of Rome.*

*In Bible times, letters—also called epistles—often began with the writer sharing his name and who he was. Paul began his letter by telling the people that he was an apostle called by God and that his calling was to share the gospel. Then Paul reminded the church that the good news of Jesus was the fulfillment of the many promises the prophets had made in Scripture. The prophets promised in Scripture that Jesus would come. Jesus would come from the family of David. Jesus came as fully human, but He also was fully God because He is the powerful Son of God. Because of Jesus, we can receive grace and tell others about Jesus.*

*Then Paul explained that this letter was for those in Rome who were loved by God and called as saints. Paul was thankful that he had heard about the faith of the Roman Christians. Paul shared that he was praying for the church constantly. He even prayed that he would be able to visit them one day if that was God's will. Paul wanted to see the believers so he could help them grow in their faith and they could encourage him. God had called Paul to share the gospel with all types of people—Jews, Gentiles, those who had been to school, those who had not been to school, the wise, and the foolish. Paul really wanted to visit and preach the gospel to the people in Rome.*

*Paul understood that people who do not believe in Jesus might think the gospel is strange. Some people might even think that the gospel was silly, but Paul was not worried about what these people thought. Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel." Paul shared that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes and through the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. Paul also reminded the believers that the righteous live by faith.*

*Paul wrote many, many things in his letter to the Romans because Paul wanted to help the Romans fully understand the gospel and how to live their lives in a way that brought glory to God.*

### CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The book of Romans illuminates the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sin entered the world through one man—Adam—and spread to all people. The good news is that salvation also entered the world through one man—Jesus. This is how God showed His great love to us: God sent Jesus—while we were still sinners—to die for our sin. Through faith in Jesus, we can receive His righteousness and be reconciled to God.

## BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Jump In: Item 15: "Objects: The Roman Forum" (Printables)
- Examine the Text: Bibles; Item 4: "Text Truth 1," Item 11: "Bible Genres," and Item 13: "Romans Definitions" (Poster Pack)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: Bibles, Item 1: "Ephesians 2:4-5" (Poster Pack), Item 34: "Memory Verse Puzzle" (Printables)
- Prayer: Family Cards

Need an Opening Activity? Choose one of the activities in the *Activities* section and adapt it to introduce the session.

### JUMP IN

- Welcome children as they arrive.
- Ask: "How many of you have ever been to a busy city like New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles?" (*Allow responses.*)
- Ask: "What do you notice about these busy cities?" (*Allow responses.*)
- Display "The Roman Forum."
- Say: "Our object today is the Roman Forum. This was a very busy place in Ancient Rome, and Rome would have been considered a very busy city. The Forum was the center of government and religion in Rome. At that time, Rome was considered to be the 'center of the world.'"
- Say: "Paul wrote a letter to the church in Rome because he wanted to be with them. He longed to be in Rome, and he had important things he needed the Romans to know. He wanted Jews and Gentiles to understand how to be rescued from their sin. Paul knew that the only way to be saved was through Christ."
- Say: "Today we will learn about Paul's letter to the Romans and how he wanted to make sure that everyone knew about Jesus so they would fully understand the gospel."

### EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Display the "Bible Genres" poster and select a volunteer to find which genre Romans is a part of. (*letters*)
- Direct kids to open their Bibles to Romans 1.
- Ask: "Is Romans in the Old Testament or the New Testament?" (*New*)
- In your own words, tell the first part of the Bible story. Stop when you get to the fourth paragraph.
- Ask a volunteer to read Romans 1:16-17.
- Ask: "What does it mean to NOT be ashamed of the gospel?" (*It means we are not embarrassed by the gospel.*)
- Ask: "Do you get nervous telling other people about Jesus?" (*Give kids time to respond, and assure them adults get nervous too.*)
- Say: "In verse 17, it talks about how the righteous shall live by faith. What do you think *righteousness* means?" (*Give kids time to respond.*)
- Display the "Romans Definitions" poster. Share with kids the concept of righteousness.
- Say: "Righteousness is doing what is right. A righteous person is someone who does what is right. God declared people who repented of their sins righteous because Jesus paid the price for their sin by dying on the cross."

- Say: “This means that if we have repented of our sin and trusted in Jesus Christ, we should live by faith and know that Christ died on the cross for each of us. He didn’t just die for rich people or famous people; He died for everyone that believes in Him.”
- Display the Text Truth: **the gospel is the power of God and reveals His righteousness to everyone who believes.**
- Say: “Paul wrote his letter so that the people in Rome could know how to be saved. A letter written two thousand years ago still is important today because it points us to Jesus.”
- Continue: “Paul wrote this letter from what the Holy Spirit told him to say, so the book of Romans is also God’s Word. Christ loves you, and He wants you to know that if you repent of your sin and trust in Him as your Savior and Lord, you will be saved!”

### PLAY THE VIDEO

- Play the Session 1 video.
- Ask: “What did Dr. Justin help Joel understand about power? Which type of power was your favorite? Whose power saves us?”

### MEMORY VERSE

- ☐ *Bible Verse Option: The Memory Verse activity each week is focused on the monthly Memory Verse, Ephesians 2:4-5. If your kids quickly memorize the Memory Verse, you may opt to challenge them to learn an additional weekly Bible Verse. This week’s Bible Verse is Romans 1:16.*
- ☐ *Make two copies of the “Memory Verse Puzzle” in your translation choice and cut it up like a puzzle. Put the pieces in a bag and give one to each group.*
- Display the “Ephesians 2:4-5” poster.
- Instruct a volunteer to read the verse and then allow the children to say the verse together.
- Form two groups and let the kids race to put the verse puzzle pieces together.
- The team that finishes first gets to say the verse out loud together.

### PRAYER

- Distribute Family Cards.
- Say: **“The gospel is the power of God and reveals His righteousness to everyone who believes.”**
- Pray and thank God for sending us Paul’s letters so that we can understand the saving work of Jesus and that God loves everyone and wants to spend eternity with them.

## APPLY THE TRUTH (20 MINUTES)

### TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens
- Review: “Romans” (Books of the Bible Posters)

### EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help kids locate today’s pages.
- Review today’s object, “The Roman Forum.”
- Help kids decode the “Coded Message from Romans.” (*Answer: I am not ashamed of the gospel.*)
- Guide kids to examine the “Spotlight on Rome.”
- Lead boys and girls to select a question to answer in the activity “What Would I Say?”
- Select a volunteer to read about “Mapping the Spread of Christianity.”

### REVIEW

- Ask: “What genre (*type of writing*) is the book of Romans a part of?” (*letters*)
- Display the “Romans” poster.
- Ask a volunteer to read over the poster to the group.
- Say: “It’s important for us to understand what was happening in Paul’s life during the time he was writing Romans. When was Romans written?” (*during Paul’s 3rd missionary journey*)
- Say: “Paul wrote Romans to help the believers have a solid Christian faith. What are some things that we learned from Paul today?” (*Give kids time to respond.*)

# ACTIVITIES (20 MINUTES)

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

## OLD TESTAMENT OR NEW TESTAMENT



Tools: 66 large craft sticks, permanent marker, 2 buckets or cans, painter's tape

- ☐ Write Old Testament on one bucket and New Testament on the other.
- ☐ Write each book of the Bible on the craft sticks, mix them up, and divide them between two teams.
- Create a start line for each team using the painter's tape. Give each team half of the books of the Bible written on the large craft sticks.
- Say: "Today we are going to practice putting the books of the Bible in the right bucket. If it is an Old Testament book, put it in the *Old Testament* bucket. If it's a New Testament book, put it in the *New Testament* bucket. The Old Testament bucket will have more books, but we are racing to see which team can get all of their books in the correct buckets the fastest."
- Say: "If you get stuck, ask your team to help you, but only one person at a time can run with a craft stick."
- Let kids play the game.
- When it's over say: "It's really important to know the books of the Bible and where they are located in the Bible. Our Bible story today was in Romans, which is in the New Testament. We learned a lot from Paul today in the book of Romans, and it's important that we remember the Text Truth: **The gospel is the power of God and reveals His righteousness to everyone who believes.**"

## WHERE IS THE ROMAN FORUM?



Tools: Item 12: "Ancient Rome" (Poster Pack), blindfolds, washable ink pad, painter's tape, baby wipes, Item 4: "Allergy Alert" (Printables)

- Display the poster on a wall.
- Say: "We learned that the Roman Forum was the center of Rome's government. Let's play a game where we see if we can find the Roman Forum on the map."
- Guide a child to press her thumb into the ink pad. Blindfold the child (*or invite her to close her eyes*) and gently spin her around. Guide her to try to put her thumbprint on the point closest to the Roman Forum. Write her initials next to her thumbprint. Play until everyone has had a turn.
- Say: "Let's look and see how everyone did. Who was the closest to the Roman Forum?"
- Let the kids find their thumbprints and see how everyone did.
- Say: "The Roman Forum was an important place in Rome, and Paul wanted to reach all of the people of Rome with the gospel of Christ. Our Text Truth reminds us that **the gospel is the power of God and reveals His righteousness to everyone who believes.**"
- Say: "Name some places we want to reach with the gospel." Encourage kids to think locally and globally.



## WRITE A LETTER

Tools: Item 5: “The Gospel” and Item 35: “Sample Letter” (Printables), parchment paper, stamp or wax seal, pens

- Say: “In Roman times, people didn’t text or send emails; they wrote letters. Paul wrote a letter to the Romans, and that is how we got the book of Romans. Today you are going to write a letter about what you learned in our Bible study time. Your letter will have a greeting, a body, and a closing.”
- Show the sample letter to the group and explain each part of the letter.
- Say: “I want you to think about what you can write in this letter and how you can share the gospel of Jesus with someone just like Paul did.”
- Provide paper and pens and give the children time to write their letters.
- Display “The Gospel” for kids to reference as they write.
- Help kids seal their letters and challenge them to give the letter to a friend or family member.
- Say: “Don’t forget the Text Truth: **the gospel is the power of God and reveals His righteousness to everyone who believes.**”



## LAND, SEA, AIR

Tools: Item 16: “Myanmar Map” (Printables), painter’s tape

- ☐ **Print a copy of the map. Place the tape strip on the floor to separate the “land” from the “sea.”**

- Show the map as you tell the kids that Adoniram Judson, his wife, Ann, and another couple named Samuel and Harriett Newell choose to relocate from one nation to another to tell people in another land about Jesus. It took four months for their ship to arrive in Calcutta, India from the state of Massachusetts in the United States.
- Say: “Being on a ship for that amount of time would have been challenging. Soon they sailed on another ship to Rangoon, Burma. The nation of Burma is now called Myanmar. The Judsons wanted to tell people in this faraway land about Jesus.”
- Show the tape line and explain to kids that you will play a game called “Land, Sea, Air.” Point out that the area in front of the tape strip is the “sea” and the area behind the strip is the “land.” Explain that if you call “Land,” kids should walk into the land area, if you call “Sea,” kids swim into the sea, and if you call “Air,” kids should jump as high into the air as they can. For added fun, surprise kids with random words such as: ship, Judson, missionaries, sail, Myanmar, and so forth as you play.
- Pray, thanking God for people willing to leave their homelands to tell other people about Jesus.