



Session

1



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 reveals that it is through God's power that we are saved.

BIBLE SKILLS SPOTLIGHT: Know some of the books of the Bible in order, and pronounce names of some Bible books.

BIBLE STUDY

(35 MINUTES)

- ☐ **Jump In:** *Item 15: "Objects: The Roman Forum" (Printables), "Romans" (Books of the Bible Posters), Bible Timeline for Kids*
- ☐ **Examine the Text:** *Item 4: "Text Truth 1" (Poster Pack)*
- ☐ **Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- ☐ **Memory Verse:** *Item 1: "Ephesians 2:4-5" (Poster Pack), construction paper, marker*
- ☐ **Prayer:** *Family Cards*

APPLY THE TRUTH

(20 MINUTES)

- ☐ **Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- ☐ **Review:** *copy paper, crayons, envelopes*

ACTIVITIES

(20 MINUTES)

- ☐ **Bible Skills:** *"Bible Books" (Books the Bible Posters), 26 index cards, Item 11: "Christ in Context: Romans" (Printables)*
- ☐ **Move:** *Item 22: "Mailbox" (Printables), 2 pieces of paper, string, tape, 2 shoe boxes, scissors*
- ☐ **Make:** *Item 4: "Allergy Alert" (Printables), white paper plates, 2 ounce paper cups, napkins, candy-coated chocolate pieces, water*
- ☐ **Explore:** *Item 16: "Myanmar Map" (Printables), painter's tape*

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PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

Romans 1:1-17

Paul was a follower of Jesus and a missionary. Paul wrote letters to believers and churches to help them understand how God wanted them to live. 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 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 and that God called him to share the gospel. Then Paul reminded the church that Jesus kept 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 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 to be His people. 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. 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 share the gospel with 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." The gospel reveals that it is through God's power that we are saved. Paul also reminded the church that the followers of Jesus 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 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), "Romans" (Books of the Bible Posters), *Bible Timeline for Kids*
- Examine the Text: Item 4: "Text Truth 1" (Poster Pack)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: Item 1: "Ephesians 2:4-5" (Poster Pack), construction paper, marker
- 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

- Greet kids by name and tell them that you are looking forward to sharing the Bible story with them today.
- Display "The Roman Forum."
- Ask: "What do you think our object is?" (*Allow time for children to answer.*)
- Ask: "How many of you have gone shopping at a mall or a shopping center?" After the kids have responded, explain that the picture is a place where ancient Romans would go shopping, worship, and hold court sessions.
- Say: "The Forum is not in the best of shape today, and it lies in ruins."
- Display the "Romans" poster.
- Say: "Romans is the longest of Paul's letters in the New Testament, and it is part of the letters genre."
- Ask: "Who has made plans to visit a friend and then something happened that kept you from going?" (*Allow children to share their experiences.*)
- Say: "Paul wanted to visit his friends in Rome but something kept happening, and he could not go. He longed to see them so that he could encourage them."
- Explain that just like we write letters or notes to our friends, Paul wrote this letter to his friends in Rome.
- Encourage the kids to find the book of Romans on the timeline.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Direct the children to open their Bibles to the book of Romans. Encourage them to use the table of contents to locate the book. Choose a willing child to read Romans 1:16 aloud.
- Ask: "Who did Paul say that salvation is for?" (*everyone who believes, from Jews to Gentiles*) Clarify that during this time, there was dislike between the two groups of people. Explain that God does not have favorites and that He loves us all the same.
- Display the Text Truth. Invite a volunteer to read it aloud: **the gospel reveals that it is through God's power that we are saved.**
- Ask: "What does the word *gospel* mean?" (*good news, the story of Jesus coming to earth to be the Savior of the world*)
- Encourage children to listen closely to find out who God called Paul to share the gospel with.
- Share the Bible story in your own words, using the Bible story page as a guide.
- Ask: "Who did Paul say he was supposed to share the news of Jesus with?" (*Give kids time to respond.*)

- Explain that just like Paul, we are supposed to share the news of Jesus with everyone. Continue: “Have you ever been embarrassed to share the gospel because of what someone might think of you?” (*Allow answers.*)
- Say: “This week, let’s try and be like Paul was in verse 16 when he said he was not ashamed!”
- Conclude: “It is through God’s power that all can be saved, and it is up to us to tell everyone we meet.”

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.*
- ☐ *Write the Memory Verse in three sections on three pieces of construction paper.*
 - Present the “Ephesians 2:4-5” poster.
 - Instruct children to follow along as you read the verse.
 - Form groups of three and position the kids in three different areas of the room.
 - Provide each group with a piece of the Memory Verse that you prepared earlier and explain that each group will recite their section in order. Suggest that the children work together, and express that you will be listening for the most excited group.
 - After each group has recited their section of the verse, urge them to say it again a little louder.
 - Congratulate them and then swap the pages so each group has a new section. Continue until every group has had all three sections of the Memory Verse.
 - Complete the activity with all groups reading all three sections and applaud their efforts.
 - As children return to their seats, collect the pages, and remind them that you are so glad God forgives our sins and that He loves us so much.

PRAYER

- Distribute Family Cards to each child.
- Ask: “Who remembers what events happened in the Roman Forum?” (*shopping, worship, meetings*)
- Encourage kids to share the questions with their families at home.
- Prompt children to share any prayer needs they may have. Close by praying that we would be bold like Paul and want to share the good news of Jesus to everyone.

APPLY THE TRUTH (20 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens
- Review: copy paper, crayons, envelopes

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Distribute Explorer Guides and help kids locate today's pages.
- Review today's object, "The Roman Forum."
- Select a volunteer to read aloud "A \$2,000 Letter."
- 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 fill in the blank in each sentence of the activity "Sharing the Gospel."

REVIEW

- Remind the children that Paul wanted to tell everyone about the gospel and how we can be saved through God's power. He wrote a letter to encourage the Christians in Rome. He wrote to tell them he was praying for them.
- Distribute a piece of paper, crayons, and an envelope to each child.
- Ask: "How many of you have ever written a note to encourage someone?" (*Allow the kids to respond.*)
- Encourage the children to think of someone they would like to encourage. Lead them with ideas that it could be a mom, dad, or other family member. Offer the idea of encouraging a pastor or someone on staff at church.
- Announce that you have given them supplies to write a note, just like Paul did to his friends. Suggest the idea of drawing a picture. Assist children as needed and guide them to fold the papers and place them in the envelopes with the names of their recipients. Urge them to give the note to the one they wrote it for as soon as they can. Elaborate by explaining that they will encourage the one who gets their letter.

ACTIVITIES (20 MINUTES)

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

PAUL'S LETTERS



Tools: "Bible Books" (Books of the Bible Posters), 26 index cards, Item 11: "Christ in Context: Romans" (Printables)

- ☐ On each index card, write one of the 13 books of the Bible from Romans to Philemon (Paul's Letters).
- ☐ Make two sets for two teams. Scramble the cards.
- Form two groups of children and give each team a set of "Paul's Letters."
- Using the "Bible Books" poster as a guide, instruct children to put the titles in the correct order.
- Cheer for each team as they complete the activity. Ask the children how long they think it took Paul to write all of these letters. *(Allow for responses.)* Explain that it took Paul years to write these letters and that you are excited to be learning about the book of Romans with them.
- Display the "Christ in Context" statement. Select a volunteer to read it aloud.
- If time allows, prompt the kids to mix up the cards and place them back in order without looking at the poster for a guide.

MAIL RELAY



Tools: Item 22: "Mailbox" (Printables), 2 pieces of paper, string, scissors, 2 shoe boxes, tape

- ☐ Attach the "Mailbox" printable to each of the boxes. Print today's Text Truth on the two pieces of paper, roll up the paper, and tie each one with a string like a scroll. Position a box for each team several feet apart from the first child in line.
- Before the game begins, explain that during Paul's time, they did not have cell phones, emails, or video chat! Remind the children that Paul wrote a letter to the Romans since he was not able to visit. Emphasize that it must have taken a long time for the letter to arrive and that there were no postal trucks!
- Create two teams of children and form two lines. Give the first child in each team a scroll.
- Explain that in this relay, each kid will act as a mail delivery person and deliver the letter as quickly as possible. The game will begin when you shout, "Go to Rome!"
- The first child in each line will run and drop the scroll in the box and run back to the next child in line. He will then tell that child to "go to Rome!" The next child in line will run to the mailbox, grab the scroll and deliver it to the next child on their team and shout, "Go to Rome!" The relay continues until every child has had a chance to be the mail delivery person.
- Conclude by inviting kids to open the letters and read aloud the message: **The gospel reveals that it is through God's power that we are saved.**
- Say: "God has given us powerful tools *(letters, email, text messaging, video)* to use today to spread the gospel, but remember it is only through His power that one can be saved."



SPREAD THE NEWS

Tools: Item 4: “Allergy Alert” (Printables), white paper plates, candy-coated chocolate pieces, 2 ounce paper cups, water, napkins

☐ Fill cups with candy-coated chocolate pieces. Add water to a second cup.

☐ Distribute the paper plates, cups of candy, cups of water, and napkins to each child. Remind the children to wait for instructions to begin.

- Ask the kids to arrange their candy in a circle on the paper plate around the edges. Let them know it is OK if they want to eat one or two pieces but not the entire cup or they won't be able to experience the amazing thing that is about to happen! Allow kids time to position the circles and assist anyone who may need guidance.
- After each child has completed the circle, instruct them to carefully pour a small amount of water in the center of the plate and stop when it touches the candy.
- Encourage the kids to wait for the colors to spread. Ask them if this would have happened without the water. *(Give time for responses.)*
- Remind children of the verse they read aloud earlier in Romans 1:16. Explain that just like the candy could not spread without the water, Paul could not spread the good news without the power of God.
- Say: “Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, and he wanted to tell everyone the news. **The gospel reveals that it is through God's power that we are saved.** It was only through God's power that Paul was saved, and he was determined to tell as many people as possible.”
- Conclude by encouraging the children to also spread the good news just like Paul.



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.