

BIBLE TRUTH 6, LESSON 3: PLANNER/OVERVIEW

GETTING STARTED: Welcome and Opening Songs (*introduce unit and get kids moving with these songs*)

Welcome to Praise Factory: PFI: Praise Factory Investigators Theme Song *PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 1*

Rules to Help Us Worship God and Love One Another: WoGoLOA Classroom Rules Song
PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 2

Big Question Under Investigation: Big Question 8 Songs *PFI NIV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4*

Big Question Bible Verse: 1 Chronicles 16:34 Song *PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 5*

DIGGING DEEP DOWN: Key Concept and Story (*introduce the Bible Truth and tell the related story*)

Bible Truth 6: God Will Never Stop Loving His People

Bible Truth Hymn: The King of Love, v.6 *PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 19*

Bible Verse: Romans 8:31-32,35,37-39

Bible Verse Song: Who Shall Separate Us? *PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 20*
Extra Bible Verse Song: I Will Betroth You to Me Hosea 2:19 PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 21

Lesson 3 New Testament: The Case of the Forward-Lookers *Acts 17,18; 1 and 2 Thessalonians*

TAKING ACTION: Response Activities (*choose from among these activities*)

Snack and Discussion Planner: Rods and Raised Bodies

ACTS Prayer: Prayer Sheet

Bible Truth Review: Discussion Questions and Game: Circle and Cross

Bible Truth Hymn: The King of Love, v.6 *PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 19*
Song, Sign Language and Song Game: Pass the Secret Sign **PFI NIV Songs 8 BOOK or ONLINE**

Bible Verse Review: Romans 8:31-32,35,37-39 Discussion Sheet and Game: Frisbee Toss

Bible Verse Song: Who Shall Separate Us? Romans 8:35,38-39 *PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 20*
Song, Sign Language and Song Game: Mimic Me! **PFI NIV Songs 8 BOOK or ONLINE**

Story Review: Discussion Questions and Game: Balloon Volleyball

Case Replay, Jr: Drama Activity for Youngest Children (children do same story actions together)

Case Replay, Sr: Drama Activity for Most Children (children re-tell story with individual parts)

Craft: Bad Guys

VIPP (Very Important Prayer Person) Prayer Time: Coloring Sheets (back of book) & Game: Crabbin' Around

TAKING IT HOME: Take Home Sheet for Review and Family Devotions

PFI Pronto: Bible Truth 6, Lesson 3 **PFI NIV Prontos 8 BOOK or ONLINE**

The Case of the Forward-Lookers *Acts 17,18; 1 and 2 Thessalonians*

by Connie Dever

Our story is: The Case of the Forward-Lookers. As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who were the Forward-Lookers? What were they going through that was hard?
2. What were they looking forward to? How did this help them with what they endured?

This story takes place in New Testament times, about 15 years after Jesus rose from the dead and went to heaven.

How hard the last, few years had been! Full of traveling and troubles for Paul, Silas and Timothy! They had been traveling through Galatia sharing the good news of Jesus and visiting the little churches of Lystra, Derbe, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch. They made plans to go next to Bithinia.

But one night in Troas, God changed Paul's plans. In a vision, Paul saw a man not from Asia but Macedonia standing before him. The man spoke to him "Come over to Macedonia and help us," he begged.

Paul felt sure this from the Lord. The next morning, Paul told his friends: "Luke, Timothy, and Silas, we're not going west to Bithinia anymore. The Lord wants us to go east to Macedonia instead."

So off they went. They sailed from Troas across the Aegean Sea to Neapolis, a seaport in Macedonia. From there they set out walking the Via Egnatia, the Roman highway connecting the cities of Macedonia.

Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke stopped first at Philippi, then Thessaloniki, then Berea. At each city, Paul preached the good news of Jesus to gatherings of Jews and God-fearing Greek and Romans at the Jewish Sabbath worship services. Paul and his friends rejoiced as many in Macedonia repented of their sins and trusted Jesus as their own Savior.

But not everyone was happy about these new Christians--and this is where the troubles came in! Most of the Jews, Greeks and Romans rejected the gospel of Jesus...and would do most anything to stop Paul and his friends from sharing it with others. So in Philippi, Paul and Silas beaten with sticks on their bare backs, then put locked up in chains and thrown in prison.

In Thessaloniki, an angry mob of Greeks and Jews beat upon the door of Jason's house, demanding Paul

and Silas be handed over to them for punishment. The crowd wanted to silence their teaching that Jesus was the Son of God who reigned in heaven as king and one day would return to set up His everlasting kingdom. The Jews thought it dishonored God to call Jesus His Son. The Greeks and Romans thought it dishonored Caesar to call Jesus King. Not able to find Paul, the crowd grabbed Jason and some of the other believers to punish in their place. Paul and his friends hid out until dark then slipped out of Thessaloniki.

Things were no easier for them in Berea. Jews who stirred up trouble in Thessaloniki came there to stir up the Bereans against Paul, too. Paul was only able to get out of Berea alive with a special escort of men who sneaked him out of town and took him all the way down the coast to leave the country.

Was this what it meant to "help" the Macedonians, as the Lord had told Paul in his vision? Did Paul begin to doubt whether it was such a good idea to go to Macedonia? Yes, many Macedonians had been saved from their sins, but now they also were being hurt by enemies. Was it really worth it?

Paul knew that it was. It was true that the lives of Christians were often filled with trials and persecutions. If this life was all there was, then Christians should be pitied for spending it suffered for Jesus like this. Yet Paul knew this life wasn't all there was! No! There was so much more to life than just this earthly life! There was a whole FOREVER with Jesus waiting for believers after they died. The Jews might not like to hear it, but Jesus really was the Messiah, the Son of God. He really did die on the cross for their sins. He did rise from the dead and now reigns in heaven. The Romans and Greeks might not like to hear it, but one day Jesus really would come

Story-telling Tips

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Create story cue cards on index cards (or highlight text).
3. Practice telling story dramatically, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary to fit your allotted time.
4. Decorate area with story props that help bring your story alive.

During your presentation:

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story. Point to/use props at important points in the story. Include the kids in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
2. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached.

back and right all wrongs. He would put an end to all evil. Then, in the new heavens and earth, Jesus would set up His kingdom where His people would praise Him and know His love forever. Yes, there might be suffering in this life for Paul and these new believers, but it would not be forever. God was faithful and He would do all He had promised. A Forever of love awaited them. This is what Paul thought about as he and the other Christians faced these trials. He would press on, looking forward to that day. He would pray that the little churches of believers back in Berea, Philippi and Thessaloniki would, too.

Paul and his friends left Macedonia and traveled on to Greece where there were thousands more who needed to hear about Jesus. Even so, Paul and his friends could not forget the Macedonians. "How were they doing? Were they suffering for believing in Jesus? Were they holding on to their faith in Him?"

At last, Paul could stand it no longer. He just had to hear something. "Silas, I want you to go back to check up on the Philippians and the Bereans. Timothy, will you go back to Thessaloniki? Check up on the believers and bring word back to me down there," Paul urged them. Timothy and Silas were happy to go. They left and headed back over to Macedonia.

Weeks passed. Paul kept telling the good news of Jesus in Greece, but he eagerly awaited Timothy's and Silas' return. At last Silas returned from Philippi. The believers were doing well and were growing in godliness and love for each other. Their sufferings had not caused them to turn away from their faith in Jesus. Paul was so happy!

Then Timothy brought news from Thessaloniki. The Thessalonian believers had suffered a lot. Some had even died. They had many fears. Some were afraid that believers who did die before Jesus came back would miss out on the good things He promised. Others were afraid that Jesus had already come back and they had missed Him completely. But despite all their suffering and their fears, the LORD had kept them strong in their faith in Jesus.

The three friends praised God together. How faithful God had been to His people in those little churches of Macedonia! They needed help and encouragement,

by God's grace they stood firm in the faith. In first one letter and then another, Paul, Silas and Timothy wrote words of encouragement to the Thessalonian believers:

"From Paul, Silas and Timothy:

To the church of the Thessalonians:

"Ever since we left you, we've been wondering how you were doing. We were afraid that you might have stop believing in Jesus and encouraged that you are standing strong in your faith.

"Don't be discouraged about your sufferings. These are expected in this life. Don't worry that Jesus has already come or that those of you who have already died will miss out on anything the LORD has prepared for His people. On the day He comes, you won't be able to miss Him! Jesus will come down from heaven with a loud command with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God. The dead in Christ will rise from the dead first; then we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet Him in the air."

"You might be suffering now, but it won't be for forever. For on that day, Jesus will right all wrongs and put an end to all evil once and for all. Then, in the new heavens and earth, He will set up His kingdom where His people will praise Him and enjoy His love forever."

"May God Himself completely prepare you for that day of Jesus' coming! The One who calls you to live and even suffer for Him is faithful. He will do it!"

"Read this letter to all the believers so that may be encouraged. We hope to visit you soon.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy"

What happened next to the Thessalonians believers? There's really only two things we know: for many years to come, the Thessalonian believers were known among the churches for enduring their sufferings with a deep love for God and a strong faith in Jesus. And best of all, we know that after each and every one of them died, they went to be with Jesus where they are praising Him and enjoying His love forever even now!

Cracking the Case:

It's time to answer our Case Questions.

1. Who were the Forward-Lookers? What were they going through that was hard? The Christians in Thessaloníki and Paul. They were suffering for being Christians.

2. What were they looking forward to? How did this help them with what they endured? The day when they would go to be with God in heaven. There would be no suffering then. They would enjoy His presence and His love in a far deeper way forever. Knowing that God had a purpose in their suffering now and gave them promises of this wonderful life forever with Him, they kept on loving God and enduring whatever He, in His wisdom and love, allowed.

Something For You and Me

Our Bible Truth is: God Will Always Love His People

Our Bible Verse is: Romans 8:31-32,35,37-39

"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any power, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

What about you and me? We don't know what we may face in this life. if we are God's people—those who have turned from our sins and trusted in Jesus as our Savior. there may be days when we may face suffering for believing in Jesus.

But if we are God's people, we know that God loves us and cares for us. We know there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ. He will bring us through everything we might have to go through in this life, and then bring us into His kingdom where we will praise Him and enjoy His love forever and ever. Our God is faithful. He will do it.

Let's praise God for faithfully loving His people forever and ever. Let's ask Him to help us to trust Him with our lives and rejoice even if there is suffering and hard times ahead for us. Let's ask Him to help us to

look forward to the day when His people will enjoy His love forever. That can be us, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior!

Close in prayer.

Closing ACTS Prayer

A God, we praise You for being the Worker of Your people's good and Your glory, even in the hardest things that happen to them.

C God, we confess that we are tempted to lie instead of trusting You, God, when we are afraid of punishment, like Joseph's brothers did. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for always being true to Your promises and always working out Your good purposes.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Help us to faithfully tell others about You and endure even hard things so that others might hear the good news of Jesus. Help Your people all over the world who even today are enduring hard things because they believe in You. Give them courage! Help them to look forward to the day when their suffering will end and they will be with You forever!

ACTS PRAYER ACTIVITY

Use this sheet to write down your ACTS Prayer

Instructions:

Use this sheet to help the children apply the Bible Truth into a prayer. You can use the ACTS provided or even better, have the kids think of their own applications. Also have the children add their personal requests to the prayer, too. Lead the children in the prayer or let them pray sections, with your help. Never force a child to pray! Non-readers can participate by you whispering a section of the prayer into their ear and allowing them to pray it aloud for the group.

ADORATION:

God, we praise You for loving Your people forever with Your "hesed" steadfast love.

God, we praise You for being.....

Add your own Adorations:

CONFESSION:

God, we confess that we are rebellious sinners who don't deserve Your forever love, but really Your forever punishment. We need Jesus to be our Savior.

God, we have sinned against You....

Add your own Confessions:

THANKSGIVING:

Thank You, God for offering Your forever love to us through Jesus, when we confess our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior

God, we thank You for...

Add your own Thanksgivings:

SUPPLICATION:

God, work in our hearts, that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Be our Heavenly Father! Make us Your adopted children who You will love forever and ever.

God, we need Your help...

Add your own Supplication:

SNEAKY SNACK

Can you figure out how this snack ties in with our case?

Snack: Rods and Raised Bodies

Pretzel stick “rods” like what Paul and Silas were beaten with in Philippi and/or Teddy grahams covered up with a sprinkling of graham cracker crumbs to remind them of the dead Thessalonian believers whose bodies would be raised up to meet Jesus when He comes back.

This is only a suggestion. Feel free to modify. Be mindful of allergy issues among your children!

Case Tie-in: Many believers suffered for their faith. Paul and Silas were once beaten with rods. Others suffered by losing their jobs and even their lives. Paul encouraged these believers, telling them to keep looking forward to the day Jesus would come back. On that day, He will bring all their suffering to an end. All those who have died, He will raise their bodies to life. They will live forever happy with them. It will make their suffering worth it all!

SOUL FOOD

Food for thought during snack time

1. What does the snack have to do with the story?

Choose a few questions from the other activity discussion sheets to talk about during this snack time.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Directions: Read and discuss Bible Truth, using a FEW of the questions. Play game. Feel free to modify the game to fit your children.

God Will Never Stop Loving His People

Our love for others often changes. Sometimes it is strong; sometimes it is weak. Sometimes it fades away completely. God's love for His people never changes. The Bible calls God's love "hesed:" steady love and kindness, flowing out to sinful people who don't deserve it.

God loved His people before they were created. He kept on loving them when they rebelled against Him. And He chose to send His dear Son, Jesus to save them from their sins. God will go on loving them forever and ever.

Why does God's love for His people never change? It's not because His people are so good and lovable. It's because God loves His people through Jesus, the perfect Son of God, who died for their sins. With His blood, shed on the cross, Jesus made a covenant—a forever promise—with God, His Father. His blood would be the perfect payment for the sins of God's people. He took God's punishment for their sins so they didn't have to bear it themselves.

Because of Jesus, God would forgive them and love them forever. Praise God for sending Jesus! He is why God will never stop loving His people.

Understanding the Bible Truth

1. What is our love for others like? *It often changes. Sometimes it's strong. Sometimes it is weak. Sometimes it fades away completely.*
2. What is God's love for His people like? *It never changes.*
3. What special word does the Bible use for God's love? *"Hesed."*
4. What does it mean? *"Hesed" means steady love and kindness flowing out to sinners who don't deserve it.*
5. Did God love His people before they were created? *Yes.*
6. Did God love His people even when they rebelled against Him? *Yes.*
7. Who did God send to save His people from their sins? *Jesus.*
8. How long will God go on loving His people? *Forever.*
9. Does God's love never change for His people because they are so good and lovable? *No.*
10. What do God's people deserve instead of God's love? *His punishment for their sins.*
11. Why does God's love for His people never change? *It is because God loves His people through Jesus.*
12. What did Jesus do so that God would love His people forever? *He shed His blood on the cross to forgive their sins and make a forever promise with God to always love them.*

Bible Verse Connection Question

1. What does our Bible Truth have to do with our **Bible Verse: Romans 8:31-32,35,37-39**: "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any power, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."?

God's people may have to go through some very hard things in this life. They may face some very powerful enemies, such as sin in their hearts, people who want to stop believing in Jesus, and even temptations and troubles from Satan, the enemy of God. But they know that none of these things will separate them from God. He has always loved them and will always love them. He will be with them as they go through the hard things and one day, He will bring them into heaven to live perfectly happy in His presence forever.

Bible Truth Story Connection Questions

1. How did Paul, Timothy and Silas deal with the sufferings they went through as they shared the good news of Jesus? *By remembering that their sufferings were nothing compared with being with God and enjoying His love forever.*
2. How did Paul, Timothy and Silas encourage the Thessalonian believers about those believers who had died already? *God's love for them didn't stop or change just because they had died. He had the same good plans for them. They would not miss out on any blessings when Jesus came back. They would be the first to rise to meet Jesus when He returned. They would go on to live with Him forever, just like the believers who were still alive. They would enjoy God's love forever.*

Life Application Questions

1. How has God shown us His hesed love? *He has let us hear the good news of Jesus that we might turn from our sins and trust in Him. And, if we have, He has promised to keep on loving us as His people and lavish us with a wonderful inheritance when we die and go to be with Him forever.*
2. How can God's people know that God will always love them, even though they are still sinful? *Because God's love isn't based on how good they are, but on what Jesus has done for them.*

ACTS Questions

1. What is something we can praise God for because of this Bible Truth?
God, we praise You for loving Your people forever with Your "hesed" steadfast love.
2. What are sins we can confess to God because of this Bible Truth?
God, we confess that we are rebellious sinners who don't deserve Your forever love, but really Your forever punishment. We need Jesus to be our Savior.
3. What is something we can thank God for because of this Bible Truth?
Thank You, God for offering Your forever love to us through Jesus, when we confess our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior
4. What is something we can ask God for because of this Bible Truth?
God, work in our hearts, that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Be our Heavenly Father! Make us Your adopted children who You will love forever and ever.

The Gospel

1. How can we become one of God's people, forever loved by God? What is the gospel?
God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who have rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son Jesus to earth to save sinners. Yes, Jesus, the perfect Son of God, left His home in heaven and became a man. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who has ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Game: Circle and Cross

Materials

Beanbags, 1 per child
Masking Tape
Bible Truth Questions

Preparing the Game

1. Choose 20+ questions for your game from the Bible Truth Discussion Questions, or make up your own.
2. Write the Bible Truth questions on small thin strips of paper (or make a photocopy of the Bible Truth Discussion Questions and simply cut them into strips) and put them in the bag/bowl.
3. Tape a circle about 2' in diameter on the floor. Tape a large X in the middle of it.
4. Mark one team's set of beanbags with a small piece of masking tape or other distinguishing mark.

Playing the Game

Divide the children into two teams, giving the members of each team a beanbag of the same color or marking. Have all the children stand outside of the circle, about 6' back. At your signal, have the children toss their beanbags into the circle, trying to make them land on the taped X. Count up the beanbags for each team that landed on it. That's how many points their quiz question is worth. Choose a question for each team from the bag/bowl. If a team gets it wrong, the question goes to the other team for 1 point, if they can get the correct answer. Gather up the beanbags and continue play.

Game continues as number of questions, time, and attention span allow.

Non-competitive Option

Set a target number of points for the whole group. Challenge the children to see how many turns it takes score the target number of points. Once the target has been reached, start the game over and see how many turns it takes to reach the target the second time.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Quiz Questions

Have the children choose a few of the questions from the game to ask the parents/other children during TAKING IT TO OTHERS time. Help pre-readers by whispering the question in their ear and letting them ask it aloud to the parents/other children. Make sure you read the Bible verse aloud before you ask your questions.

Directions:

1. Write words to song in large print before class.
2. Play the song for the children, helping them follow along on the song sheet.
3. Discuss the song, using a few questions from the discussion sheet. *Don't use them all!*
4. Introduce sign language for key words of your choice from sign language sheet for your song. Use as few or as many as you think the children can learn.
5. Sing and sign the song. Sign language as well as large format lyrics and sheet music are found in the PFI Unit Songbook or online.
6. If desired, play the Song Game.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Presenting and Singing the Song

1. Sing and sign the song, encouraging the watching children/parents to join in.
2. Ask the class some of the questions listed below. The Bible Truth Connection Question is particularly good to help them understand how the song ties in with the Bible Truth.

The King of Love

Verse 6

And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never.
Good shepherd may I sing Thy praise
Within Thy house forever.

Listen to it on PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 19

Understanding the Song

1. What does "all the length of days" mean? *All the days of our life.*
2. What never fails through all the length of days? *God's goodness towards His people.*
3. Who is the "good shepherd"? *God is.*
4. To whom is God like a good shepherd? *His people.*
5. Who are God's people? *All who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.*
6. Can we become God's people? *Yes, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.*
7. How does God act like a good shepherd towards His people? *Sheep need constant watching or else they will get lost or hurt or even eaten by hungry wild animals. A good shepherd is always with His sheep, looking out for their good. He never leaves them. He always protects them. He is even willing to give up his life to keep them safe. God constantly is near His people. He always takes care of them. Jesus even was willing to give up his life to save them.*
8. What is the good shepherd's house? *Most of all, this a picture of heaven, where God's people will be gathered to live with Him forever.*
9. What will be so wonderful about being in the good shepherd's house? *Being in close fellowship with God in His presence in heaven. There is nothing better than this!*
10. What do God's people want to do in the good shepherd's house forever? Why? *Sing God's praise because of how good He is to them and how wonderful is His love.*

Bible Truth Connection Question

1. How does this song relate to our **Bible Truth: God Will Never Stop Loving His People**? *God's people praise God for being the King of love. They delight in having Him as their king because all that He does comes from His heart of love for them that will never end or fail. God takes care of His people like a good shepherd cares for his sheep. Sheep are very stupid and need someone to take care all of their needs or else they will die. God promises to always be with His people, taking care of them throughout their whole length of days--their whole lives. And He will go on caring for them even after they die. He will take them to live with Him in heaven forever. How wonderful that will be! No wonder God's people want to sing His praise forever! We can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.*

Story Connection Question

1. How does this song relate to today's story? *Even though the believers in Thessaloniki had faced hard times and would face even more, Paul, Silas and Timothy urged them to remember that the goodness of the Lord, their good shepherd would never fail. He would always take care of them. He would always help them. They urged these new believers to remember that Jesus would come back and bring them and all of His people home to heaven to be with Him forever.*

Bible Connection Question

1. What does this hymn have to do with our Bible Verse: **Romans 8:35,37-39**: "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any power, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."?

God's people know that the LORD is their loving King who will always be with them all the days of their lives and throughout eternity. Nothing will ever separate them from His love for them in Christ. Just like a good shepherd, He takes care of all their needs. He took care of their greatest need by sending Jesus to die on the cross to save them from their sins. God's people look forward to the day when they will dwell with God forever in heaven. There, they will sing praises to Him for being their loving King who always cared for them perfectly...and always will. His goodness to them has never failed and it never will!

ACTS Questions

1. What is something we can praise God for from this hymn?

Praise God for being the King of Love who loves and cares for His people perfectly.

2. What are sins we can confess to God from this hymn?

That we have rebellious hearts who many times do not want to follow the LORD, even though He is the good and loving King of the world. We need a Savior!

3. What is something we can thank God for from this hymn? *We can thank God sending Jesus to save His people from their sins. We can thank Him for ways we have seen Him care for our needs, even this past week.*

4. What is something we can ask God for from this hymn?

That God would work in our hearts that we might turn from our sins and trust Jesus as our Savior. We can ask Him to be our shepherd and help us to follow Him all the days of our lives.

Life Application Questions

1. How can our lives be affected by the message of this song? *We can praise God for being the Good Shepherd of His people. We can ask Him to make us His people, giving us faith to turn from our sins and trust in Him. We can ask Him to help us to trust Him as the Good Shepherd that He is.*

Gospel Question

1. How can we know God's unfailing goodness all the days of our life? How can we go to live with Him in heaven? What is the gospel?

God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who've rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son, Jesus to earth as a man to save sinners. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who's ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Song Game: Pass the Secret Sign

Materials

Sign Language signs used in song, particularly choose words with important meanings you want the children to learn, such as "grace", "redeem", etc.

Bag or bowl

Blindfold

Preparing the Game

1. Cut out signs and put in bowl.

Playing the Game

1. Practice the song and signs until the children know them well.
2. Have all the children stand in a tight circle, except one, "It," who will stand in the middle of the circle, blindfolded.
3. Have the children in the circle to put their hands behind their backs. Choose a sign from the bag and hand to a child in the circle, still keeping hands behind their backs, not looking at the sign.
4. When "It" says "Pass the Secret Sign", the children will begin to pass the sign around behind their backs.
5. When "It" says "Stop the Passing!" the child who has the sign freezes with the sign behind his back.
6. The child with the sign brings it around and looks at it. You can help the child practice the sign.
7. Then take the blindfold off of "It", watch the child with the card do the sign, then have "It" guess the name of the sign. (If desired, "It" can ask another child in the circle for help with their guess.)
8. The holder of the sign then becomes "It." Sing the song with all the signs, then repeat.

choose a FEW questions for discussion, then choose the game and/or music activity

Meditation Version: Romans 8: 31-32,35,37-39

"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any power, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Alternate Memory/Games Version: Romans 8:38-39

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life...neither present nor the future...nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Understanding the Bible Verse

1. Who or what can be strong enough to defeat God's people? Why? *No one or nothing! This is because God is for them.*
2. What does it mean for God to be "for" His people? Does this mean they will never face anything hard or suffer? *No. It does not mean they will not suffer or face anything hard. It means that God is stronger than anyone or anything they will face. He will always help them when they suffer. And, He will only let them suffer, as is for their good and His glory. And, He is always working in all things for their good.*
3. Who did God not spare in order to save His people? Why does this tell us that God will graciously give His people everything else they need? *Jesus is God's dear, beloved Son. No one means more to Him than Jesus. But, God loved His people so much that He was even willing to send this dear Son to suffer and die in their place. If He was willing to do this greatest act of love, there is no question that He loves them enough to give them everything else they need.*
4. Who is Christ? *Christ is the Greek word for Messiah, the special one sent from God to save His people. Jesus is the Christ.*
5. What does it mean to be separated from the love of Christ? *To be some place or faced with some situation where God's loving plan for His people through Jesus will fail.*
6. Who is the "us" and "we" in which nothing can separate them from the love of Christ? *God's people, all who turn from their sins and trust Jesus as their Savior.*
7. What kinds of things cannot separate God's people from the love of Christ? *Trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, the sword, death, life, angels, demons, the present, the future, any power, height, depth, anything else in all creation. NOTHING!!!*
8. What does "height" and "depth" mean? *It's not really talking about how high something is or how deep it is. Back in the days when Paul wrote this letter, these words were special words used about stars. "Height" (hupsoma) meant the highest point in the night sky a star reached and "depth" (bathos) meant the lowest point in the night sky a star reached. What Paul is saying is there is nothing from the highest point in space to the lowest point in space that can separate God's people from the love of Christ.*
9. Why is it so comforting to God's people to know that none of these very difficult things can separate them from the love of Christ? *They can know that God's loving plan for them in Christ will never fail, no matter what they face, no matter when it happens. God's love will be victorious for them forever.*

Bible Truth Connection Question

1. What does this verse have to do with the **Bible Truth: God Will Never Stop Loving His People?** *God's people may have to go through some very hard things in this life, but they know that none of these things will ever separate them from God. He has always loved them and will always love them. He will be with them, helping them through them all, to the very end. And one day, God will bring them into heaven where they will enjoy His love and the delight of His presence forever.*

Story Connection Questions

1. How does this verse relate to our story? *The new believers in Thessaloniki faced many hard times. Some even died for their faith. Some of them were afraid that those who died would miss out on some of the blessings Jesus would give His people when He returned. Some of them were worried that Jesus had already come back and not taken them. Paul, Silas and Timothy encouraged them that they had not. Nothing could separate them from the love of God in Christ—not even death. They did not need to worry that Jesus had come back and not taken them. He loved them and nothing could separate them from that love. He would surely come for them.*

Life Application Questions

1. What can God's people remember as they go through hard things? *That nothing can separate them from the love of Christ. No matter how hard or sad is what they have to go through, they can know they aren't going through it because God's love or plans have failed, but as part of it. And, they can know He is with them, helping them and giving them strength.*
2. How can we become God's people? *By turning from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our own Savior.*

ACTS Questions

1. What is something we can praise God for from this Bible Verse?
Praise God for loving His people so much that nothing can ever separate them from His love.
2. What are sins we can confess to God from this Bible Verse?
That we sometimes get angry at God when we see His people go through hard things. We act like He has stopped loving them.
3. What is something we can thank God for from this Bible Verse?
We can thank God that He will never let anything separate His people from His love. We can thank Him that His love is always stronger than even the hardest thing they go through.
4. What is something we can ask God for from this Bible Verse?
We can ask God to work in our hearts that we would want to turn away from disobeying Him and trust in this wonderful Jesus as our own Savior. We can ask Him to help us know more and more of His love, even when we go through very hard things.

The Gospel

1. How can we become God's people, those who are never separated from God's love? What is the gospel?
God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who have rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son Jesus to earth to save sinners. Yes, Jesus, the perfect Son of God, left His home in heaven and became a man. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who has ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Game: Frisbee Toss

Materials

Bible verse written up in large print so that all can see
 1 or more Frisbees (or bean bag)
 Masking tape
 marker and paper
 small container

Preparing the Game

1. Divide the verse into 5 to 10 sections and place a word/verse section in each section. Write point values on the word/verse section, higher points for a word near the beginning of the verse; lower points for a word closer to the end. Tape these down.

Learning the Verse

Some or all of your children may be non- or early readers. Teach the verse in sections, having them say it after you. Repeat a few times. Add clapping or other movement as they say it.

Directions

1. If desired, lead the children in a discussion of a **FEW** of the most important questions before beginning game.
 2. Explain the game to them as follows:

Divide the children into two teams and sit down in line. Explain that everyone will say the verse together. Then a child from one team will come up and toss the Frisbee into a word section. The leader/group will say the verse up to that word. The child can then win total point values by completing the verse on his own, or have point values by asking a team member to help him. If they are unsuccessful, the other team will have a chance to complete it for the half point amount. Have whole group say verse together again, then choose a child from the other team to toss the Frisbee.

Game continues until all children get a turn, or as time and attention span allow.

Non-competitive Option

Don't split the children into teams. Have the children take turns throwing the Frisbee, letting the child or a child with a partner, say the rest of the verse on their own.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Quiz Questions

Have the children choose a few of the questions from the game to ask the parents/other children during TAKING IT TO OTHERS time. Help pre-readers by whispering the question in their ear and letting them ask it aloud to the parents/other children. Make sure you read the Bible verse aloud before you ask your questions.

Directions:

1. Write words to song in large print before class.
2. Play the song for the children, helping them follow along on the song sheet.
3. Discuss the song, using a few questions from the discussion sheet. *Don't use them all!*
4. Introduce sign language for key words of your choice from sign language sheet for your song. Use as few or as many as you think the children can learn.
5. Sing and sign the song. Sign language as well as large format lyrics and sheet music are found in the PFI Unit Songbook or online.
6. If desired, play the Song Game.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Presenting and Singing the Song

1. Sing and sign the song, encouraging the watching children/parents to join in.
2. Ask the class some of the questions listed below. The Bible Truth Connection Question is particularly good to help them understand how the song ties in with the Bible Truth.

Who Shall Separate Us?

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?
 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?
 Shall trouble? No! Shall Hardship? No!
 Persecution, famine, nakedness? No!
 Danger or sword? No!
 In all these things we are conquerors through Him who loved us.
 For I am convinced that neither death nor life,
 Nor anything else in all creation,
 Will be able to separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 Romans Eight, thirty-five, eight and nine.

Listen to it on PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 20

Song Game: Mimic Me!

Materials

Sign Language
 Song

Preparing the Game

None.

Playing the Game

1. Practice the song and signs until the children know them well. Choose a person to be the leader and let them decide upon an action for everyone to do as they sing the song, such as jump on one foot, etc.
2. Sing the song while doing the chosen action.
3. Select another child to be the leader.
4. If desired, you can choose a different action for different important words in the song, such as jump on one foot when you sing the word "grace", but clap your hands when you sing the word "Jesus". Ask the children the meaning of each of the words before adding in their action.

Game continues as number of questions, time, and attention span allow.

STORY REVIEW

Directions: Read and discuss Bible Truth, using a FEW of the questions. Play game. Feel free to modify the game to fit your children.

General Story Questions

1. Why had Paul, Silas and Timothy been traveling in Galatia? *To visit the little churches of believers there.*
2. Why did Paul, Silas and Timothy decide to go to Macedonia instead of Bithinia, as they had planned? *The Lord gave Paul a vision of a man from Macedonia asking them to come over and help them. Paul knew that was what they were supposed to do.*
3. Paul, Silas and Timothy knew they were supposed to go to Macedonia, but was their time easy there? Why or why not? *It was not. In every city, they suffered for telling the good news of Jesus.*
4. What happened to them when they were in Philippi? *They were arrested, beaten on their bare backs with rods, cuffed with iron chains and thrown in prison.*
5. What happened to them in Thessaloníki? *An angry mob beat upon the door of Jason's house, demanding Paul and Silas be handed over to them for punishment. They had to sneak out of the city after dark.*
6. What in Paul's message made the Jews, Greeks and Romans in Thessaloníki so mad? *The crowd of Jews and Greeks hated that they taught Jesus was the Son of God who reigned in heaven as king and one day would return to set up His ever-lasting kingdom.*
7. What happened to them in Berea? *Jews from Thessaloníki followed them there and stirred up the people against them. Paul had to have a secret escort out of the city, down the coast and out of the country.*
8. Why did Paul send Silas and Timothy back to Macedonia when they were in Greece? *They were concerned about how the new believers were doing. Were they holding firm to their belief in Jesus? Were they suffering?*
9. What word did Silas bring about the Philippian Christians? *They were doing well.*
10. What word did Timothy bring back about the Thessalonian Christians? *They were standing firm, but they had suffered a lot. Some had even died for their faith. They were getting mixed up about Jesus coming back.*
11. How did Paul, Silas and Timothy comfort the Thessalonian Christians about their sufferings for Jesus? *One day Jesus would come back and right all wrongs. He would bring His people into His heavenly kingdom and they would enjoy His love forever.*
12. What did Paul, Silas and Timothy say would happen to believers that died before Jesus came back? *That they would be the first to rise and meet Jesus in the air.*
13. How did Paul, Silas and Timothy say that the Thessalonians believers would know when Jesus came back? *Jesus will come down from heaven with a loud command with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God.*

Bible Truth Connection Questions

1. What does this story have to do with our Bible Truth? *Paul, Silas and Timothy endured much suffering, knowing that one day it would be over and they would live with Jesus and enjoy His love forever.*

Bible Verse Connection Question

1. What does the story have to do with our **Bible Verse: Romans 8:31-32,35,38-39**: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any power, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.?" *The new believers in Thessaloníki faced many hard times. Some even died for their faith. Some of them were afraid that those who died would miss out on some of the blessings Jesus would give His people when He returned. Some of them were worried that Jesus had already come back and not taken them. Paul, Silas and Timothy encouraged them that they had not. Nothing could separate them from the love of God in Christ—not even death. They did not need to worry that Jesus had come back and not taken them. He loved them and nothing could separate them from that love. He would surely come for them.*

Life Application Questions

1. How can thinking about God's forever love help God's people when they go through hard times or suffer for Jesus? *They can know that Jesus will come back and right all wrongs done to His people. They can think about how one day all their hard times and suffering for Jesus will be over and there will be nothing but enjoying God's love forever. That helps make are hard times and suffering seem not so long and worth it all*
2. How can we become God's people? *By turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior.*

ACTS Questions

1. What is something we can praise God for being that we learned in our story?
Praise God for being the Sustainer of His People, even through the hardest of times.
2. What is something we can confess as sin that we learned in our story?
Confess that many times we choose not to tell others the good news of Jesus, especially if we think they will make fun of us or harm us in some way.
3. What is something we can thank God for that we learned in our story?
We can thank God for promising to one day bring an end to sin and all the hard things His people go through in this life. We can thank Him for the promise of His people getting to live forever happy with Him in the new heavens and earth.
4. What is something we can ask God for that we learned in our story?
We can ask God to work in our hearts, helping us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. We can ask Him to help us to faithfully tell others about Him and endure even hard things so that others might hear the good news of Jesus. We can pray for people we know who are living in other parts of the world and enduring hard things there in order that people in those places might hear the good news of Jesus.

The Gospel

1. What was the good news of Jesus that Paul, Timothy and Silas told everywhere they went? What is the gospel?
God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who have rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son Jesus to earth to save sinners. Yes, Jesus, the perfect Son of God, left His home in heaven and became a man. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who has ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Game: Balloon Volleyball

Materials

20+ balloons
small strips of paper
pen
Masking Tape
20+ Story Review Questions and other story review questions

Preparing the Game

1. Choose 20+ questions for your game from the Story Review Discussion Questions, or make up your own.
2. Write out each Story Review question on a small strip of paper. (Or photocopy the review questions and cut them apart). Roll it up and place it inside of the balloon. Inflate the balloon. Continue this process for each Story Review question. Make a line with masking tape across the middle of the playing area.

Playing the Game

Divide the children into two teams and have them spread out on each side of the masking tape line. Take one of the balloons and bat it out into the field of play. The children will bat it back and forth without letting it hit the floor. When it hits the floor, play stops and the team on the opposite side scores a point. The balloon is popped, the question is unrolled and read. The team who scored the point gets first try at answering the question. If they get it correctly, they get another point. If not, then the other team can try for a point. Play resumes by the leader batting another balloon out into the court.

Play continues as balloons last, or as time and attention span allow. The team with the most points at the end wins.

Non-competitive Option

Don't keep track of points. Encourage the children to see how many times they bat the balloon back and forth, counting out loud with each hit. When the balloon hits the floor, the leader pops the balloon and reads question for all to answer.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Quiz Questions

Have the children choose a few of the questions from the game to ask the parents/other children during TAKING IT TO OTHERS time. Help pre-readers by whispering the question in their ear and letting them ask it aloud to the parents/other children.

CASE REPLAY ACTIVITIES

Use this guide to review the Case Story and act it out for others to enjoy!

CASE REPLAY, JR: YOUNGEST CHILDREN

Description: The children will act out the story together, everyone doing the same action/sound effect at the same time. This activity is most suitable for kindergarteners.

Materials

The Case RePlay, Jr. script for younger children

Preparation

1. Read through the script and write in the blanks along the side possible actions/sound effects the children could do to act it out.

Instructions

1. Tell the children that they will be re-enacting the story together as you tell it.
2. As you read the script, lead the children in actions/sound effects to do with you.
3. If desired, you can read the script and stop at certain sentences and ask them what a good action/sound effect would be to act out what you just read.
4. Repeat the re-enactment one or two times more.

CASE REPLAY, SR: OLDER CHILDREN

Description: The children act out the story as a three-scene play. You will narrate it using the Case RePlay, Sr. script and they will act it out (no spoken words, for the most part), with each child assuming a different character's role. This activity is most suitable for first grade and up. You will review the story, then practice it a few times before performing it for others.

Materials

The Case RePlay, Sr. script

White board or other large format paper

Costumes and props

Preparation

1. Prepare for the play by choosing costumes and props for each character in the story. Decorate the area with any scenery props.
2. Write the words "Beginning," "Middle," "End" on a large piece of paper/whiteboard with plenty of space under each heading. You will use this paper to help the children think about the story as a three-scene play, as it is presented in the script.

Instructions

1. Tell the children that they will get to act out the story as a three-scene play, with a beginning, middle and end section. Tell them that before they can act it out, they need to think it out. as you narrate it with your script.
2. Take the children's answers as they recount the story, helping them put key incidents in the right order.
3. If desired, when they have filled in their Beginning, Middle, End, read through your whole (real) script, so they hear exactly what you will have them act out.
4. Then tell the children that it's time to practice acting out the story.
5. Assign parts to each child. If you are using costumes, do NOT give them out at this point. They will be a distraction.
6. Have all the children sit on the floor or in chairs on one side of the "stage," then call the characters up in place as their part in the story comes.
7. As you read the script, guide the children in where you want them to move or do to act it out.
8. After going through the whole script once, give out any costumes and props and act out the script once or twice more.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Re-enacting the Story

Read the script as the children act out together (younger) or assuming different roles (older) as the other children or the parents watch.

CASE REPLAY, JR--YOUNGER KIDS (KINDERGARTEN) P.2

Welcome to our play! The name of our story is: The Case of the Forward-Lookers.

Our story takes place in New Testament times, about 15 years after Jesus rose from the dead and went to heaven.

And now we present: "The Case of the Forward-Lookers."

Scene 1:

Paul, Silas and Timothy had been visiting the little churches in Galatia and were preparing to go to Bithinia next. But when one night in Troas, the Lord gave Paul a vision of a man from Macedonia to come to help them, they knew they were to go there instead. They caught a ship to Neapolis, then began walking the Via Egnatia that went by the biggest towns in Macedonia. Everywhere they went, many believed in the good news of Jesus, but many more rejected it and made Paul, Silas and Timothy suffer for it. In Philippi, Paul and Silas were beaten, chained and put in jail. In Thessaloníki, an angry mob came to Jason's house, demanding Paul and Silas be handed over to them for punishment. Paul and Silas sneaked away at night for Berea. Jews from Thessaloníki had followed them there and stirred up the crowds against them. Once more Paul had to be sneaked out of the city.

Actions:

Scene 2:

Paul, Silas and Timothy headed to Greece to tell more people about Jesus,, but they didn't forget the Macedonian believers. Were they suffering? Were they still believing in Jesus? Paul sent Silas to go back and check up on the believers in Berea and Philippi He sent Timothy back to Thessaloníki to check up on the Thessalonian believers. Paul stayed in Greece to keep on telling people about Jesus. He eagerly waited for news from Silas and Timothy about how everyone was doing.

Scene 3

At last Silas and Timothy returned with news. Silas reported that the Philippians were doing well! Timothy said that the Thessalonians were standing firm, too, but they were suffering. Some were afraid that Jesus had come back already. Others were afraid that if they died before Jesus came back, would they miss out on some of the rich blessings God promised. Paul, Silas and Timothy wrote back a letter of encouragement to them. No. Jesus hadn't come back yet. They wouldn't miss it when He did. He would come back with His angels in glory. No. The believers who had died already wouldn't miss out on any blessings. They would be the first to rise to be with Jesus when He comes back. Paul told them how happy he was that they still believed, even though they suffered. They would be the first to rise to be with Jesus when He comes back. He told them how happy he was that they still believed, even though they suffered. They were a great example for other believers. He told them that there might be suffering now, but it won't be forever. On that day, He will right all wrongs and put an end to all evil once and for all. Then, in the new heaven and earth, He will set up His Kingdom where His people will praise Him and enjoy His love forever. The Thessalonian believers were known among the churches for enduring the sufferings of this life with a deep love for God and strong faith in Jesus. And best of all, we know that after each and every one of them died, they went to be with Jesus where they are praising Him and enjoying His love forever.

Bible Truth Tie-In: The Bible Truth we are learning is: **God Will Never Stop Loving His People.** Paul, Silas and Timothy endured much suffering, knowing that one day it would be over and they would live with Jesus and enjoy His love forever.

CASE REPLAY, SR--OLDER KIDS (1ST GRADE AND UP) P.3

Welcome to our play! The name of our story is: The Case of the Forward-Lookers.

Our story takes place in New Testament times, about 15 years after Jesus rose from the dead and went to heaven.

The characters in our story are: Egyptian officials; Canaanite people; Jacob's sons and families; Pharaoh during Joseph's time; Pharaoh during Moses' time; Moses; Aaron; Israelites; peoples from surrounding countries; and, Sarcophagi of Joseph and Jacob.

And now we present: "The Case of the Forward-Lookers."

Scene 1: (Beginning)

Paul, Silas and Timothy had been visiting the little churches in Galatia and were preparing to go to Bithinia next. But when one night in Troas, the Lord gave Paul a vision of a man from Macedonia to come to help them, they knew they were to go there instead. They caught a ship to Neapolis, then began walking the Via Egnatia that went by the biggest towns in Macedonia. Everywhere they went, many believed in the good news of Jesus, but many more rejected it and made Paul, Silas and Timothy suffer for it. In Philippi, Paul and Silas were beaten, chained and put in jail. In Thessaloníki, an angry mob came to Jason's house, demanding Paul and Silas be handed over to them for punishment. Paul and Silas sneaked away at night for Berea. Jews from Thessaloníki had followed them there and stirred up the crowds against them. Once more Paul had to be sneaked out of the city.

Scene 2: (Middle)

Paul, Silas and Timothy headed to Greece to tell more people about Jesus,, but they didn't forget the Macedonian believers. Were they suffering? Were they still believing in Jesus? Paul sent Silas to go back and check up on the believers in Berea and Philippi He sent Timothy back to Thessaloníki to check up on the Thessalonian believers. Paul stayed in Greece to keep on telling people about Jesus. He eagerly waited for news from Silas and Timothy about how everyone was doing.

Scene 3: (End)

At last Silas and Timothy returned with news. Silas reported that the Philippians were doing well! Timothy said that the Thessalonians were standing firm, too, but they were suffering. Some were afraid that Jesus had come back already. Others were afraid that if they died before Jesus came back, would they miss out on some of the rich blessings God promised. Paul, Silas and Timothy wrote back a letter of encouragement to them. No. Jesus hadn't come back yet. They wouldn't miss it when He did. He would come back with His angels in glory. No. The believers who had died already wouldn't miss out on any blessings. They would be the first to rise to be with Jesus when He comes back. Paul told them how happy he was that they still believed, even though they suffered. They would be the first to rise to be with Jesus when He comes back. He told them how happy he was that they still believed, even though they suffered. They were a great example for other believers. He told them that there might be suffering now, but it won't be forever. On that day, He will right all wrongs and put an end to all evil once and for all. Then, in the new heaven and earth, He will set up His Kingdom where His people will praise Him and enjoy His love forever. The Thessalonian believers were known among the churches for enduring the sufferings of this life with a deep love for God and strong faith in Jesus. And best of all, we know that after each and every one of them died, they went to be with Jesus where they are praising Him and enjoying His love forever.

Bible Truth Tie-In: The Bible Truth we are learning is: **God Will Never Stop Loving His People.** Paul, Silas and Timothy endured much suffering, knowing that one day it would be over and they would live with Jesus and enjoy His love forever.

Bad Guys

Description

Children will make paper bag tunics and paper beards.

Materials

1 plain grocery bag per child
Paper scraps, tempera paint, fabric scraps or markers
Optional: sticky back Velcro about ½" per child
Yarn
Glue
2 paper reinforcers per child
Thin elastic, about 1' per child

Preparing the Craft

1. Cut out neck, arm and front opening of tunic as shown in Figure #1.
2. Turn bag inside out to plain side, if outside has a lot of printing on it.
3. Make 1 copy per child of Pattern #1. Cut out.
4. Cut 2" strands of yarn (or small paper scrap squares) for beard.

Making the Craft

1. Show the children a copy of the craft.
2. Have the children decorate their tunic with medium of your choice: markers, fabric scraps and glue; tempera paint, etc.
3. Have children decorate their beards with markers or yarn and glue.
4. Attach a paper reinforcer at each side of mustache as shown by the black dot on Template #1.
5. Insert one end of elastic in one hole. Tie firmly. Find good length for child's head, then tie other end in other hole on mustache.
6. If desired, attach the sticky back Velcro at top of tunic to make a fastener.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Craft Presentation

If you are presenting the craft to other children or parents the children can hold up their crafts (or your model craft) and read their Bible Truth Connection answers to explain the importance of the craft.

CASE CRAFT**Discussion Guide****Instructions:**

As the children are settled into making their craft, ask them these questions to help them understand the craft's significance. Use the answers provided to guide the children's answers.

Discussion Questions

1. From what town did Paul, Silas and Timothy have to secretly leave? *Thessaloníki.*
2. What did bad men do what made it necessary for them to leave secretly? *They started a riot and people wanted to hurt or even kill them.*
3. Why did the men start the riot? What were they upset about? *They were upset that Paul, Silas and Timothy were preaching the good news of Jesus.*
4. What is Bible Truth that we are learning?
God Will Never Stop Loving His People.
5. What does our craft have to do with our Bible Truth: God Will Never Stop Loving His People.
Paul, Silas and Timothy joyfully suffered at the hands of bad men, knowing that one day they would enjoy life in God's presence and delight in His love forever.
6. What can our craft help us remember?
God's people will suffer in this life for Jesus, but they remember that one day they would enjoy life in God's presence and delight in His love forever.

TAKING IT TO OTHERS**Craft Presentation****Instructions:**

Have children hold up your model craft/their crafts. Choose five children (or you say) the five sections below to explain the craft's importance.

Presentation:

1. Our craft is: Bad Guys.
2. In Thessaloníki, Paul, Silas and Timothy had to leave town secretly because of a riot started by a group of bad men who were angry because the good news of Jesus was being preached.
3. Our Bible Truth is: God Will Never Stop Loving His People.
4. Paul, Silas and Timothy joyfully suffered at the hands of bad men, knowing that one day they would enjoy life in God's presence and delight in His love forever.
5. Our craft can help us remember that God's people will suffer in this life for Jesus, but they remember that one day they would enjoy life in God's presence and delight in His love forever.

Note: Even non-readers can participate in presenting the craft, if you will whisper what they are to say in their ear and let them say it aloud for the others to hear.

Pattern #1 Beard

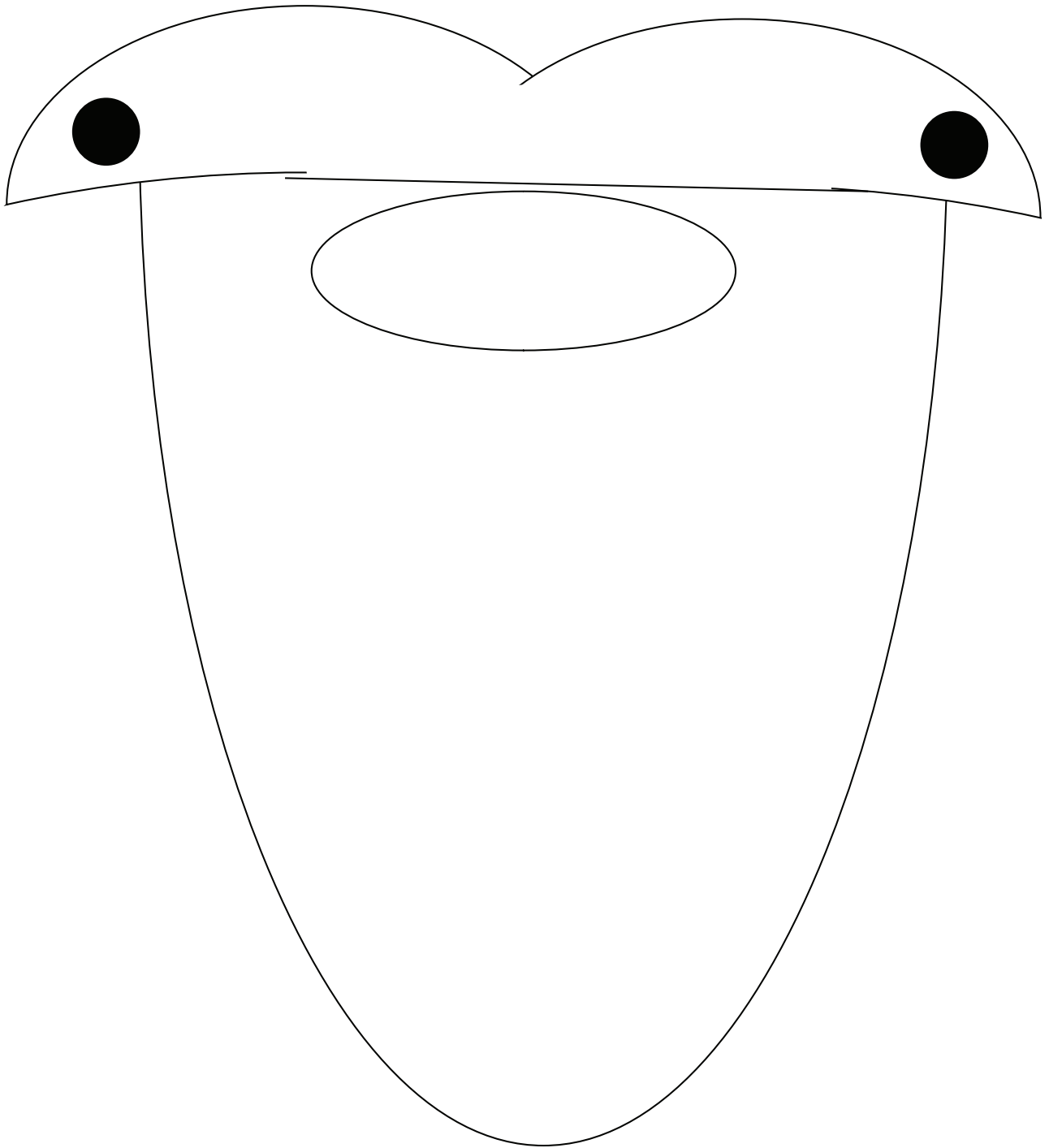
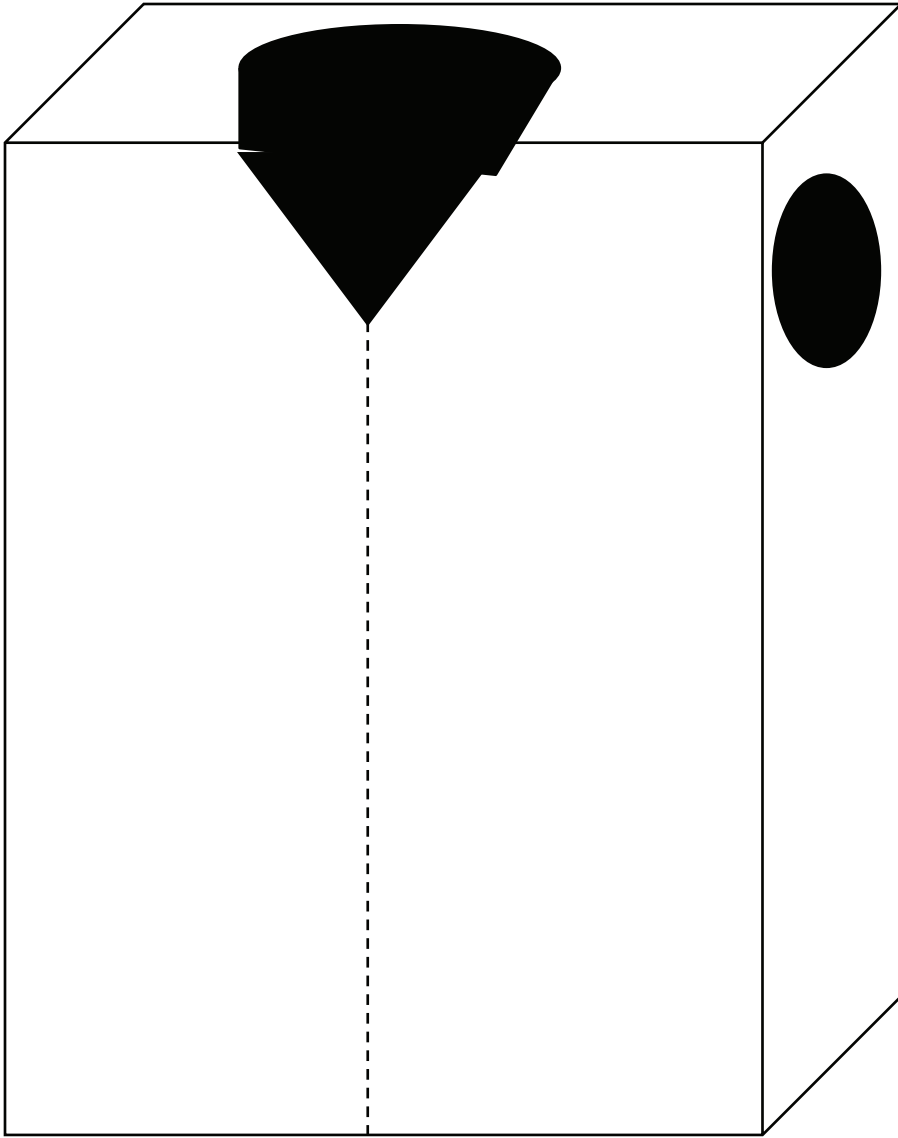


Figure #1 Picture of Bag Tunic



BEFORE CLASS:**1. PICK YOUR PERSON**

VIPPs can be anyone in your church! Typically, they fall into 6 categories: Church staff, Elders, Deacons/deaconesses, Special Volunteers (people who aren't paid, but spend a lot of time helping out in particular ways), Supported Workers (aka missionaries), and Church Members.

2. GATHER YOUR FACTS

Use the VIPP Information Sheet to write down the facts about your VIPP. The information on this worksheet is used in the VIPP activities, listed in the "Choose an Activity" section below.

DURING THE ACTIVITY:**1. INTRODUCE YOUR VIPP**

Introduce your VIPP to the children, using the VIPP Information Sheet. Fill in a set of VIPP Clue Cards with the information for your VIPP. If desired, you can even have the actual person come into class for the children to meet.

Need help describing what someone does for the church in a kid-friendly way? Check out the list of common VIPPs on the Praise Factory website in the PFI resources. There are lots of kid-friendly descriptions for common VIPP's, such as pastors, elders, deacons and a lot more.

2. PRAY!

Lead the children in praying for the VIPP. Ask the children if they would like to pray for one of the VIPPs prayer requests. Even non-readers can pray for the VIPP if you whisper the prayer request in their ear, then let them say it aloud. Never force a child to pray!

3. CHOOSE AN ACTIVITY

There are two activities you can use to help the children learn about the VIPP:

VIPP Clue Cards: These are nine coloring sheets in which children fill in the nine things they learn about the VIPP from the VIPP Information Sheet. Photocopy a set of each child. Use as few or as many of these Clue Cards as you desire.

VIPP Game: This is a game that uses a set of Clue Cards for one or two VIPPs.

Choose a VIPP and fill in his/her information on the VIPP Information Sheet. Fill in a set of VIPP Clue Cards with the information for your VIPP. Tell the children about the VIPP, having them fill in the VIPP Clue Cards with the key facts as they learn them. Write any words the children need to write on a white-board or other piece of paper so they can see how to spell them. Help younger children write these words on their clue cards. Ideas for how to tell the children about many common VIPPs are listed at praisefactory.org with the resources for this Bible Truth.

Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Introduce and Pray for the VIPP

If you are presenting the VIPP to other children or parents you can assign children to hold up the 10 clue cards and say what each card tells about the VIPP. (Or, you can have the children hold them up as you tell what each one means.) Then lead the children in praying for the VIPP.

Game: Crabbin' Around

Materials

Information Sheet for two VIPPs

2 Sets of Clue Cards

Tape

A Bag

Preparing the Game

1. Fill in one set of clue sheets for the VIPP you are using.
2. Put all the Clue Cards in a bag, except for the ones with the names and pictures of the VIPPs.
3. Tape the picture and name of each VIPP to the wall, about 3 feet from the ground.

Playing the Game

Reveal: Tell the children about the VIPPs, showing them your filled-in clue cards as you tell about them.

Review: Put the Clue Cards for both VIPPS put in one bag. Mix up. Have children sit down, with their legs in front of them and their hands propped behind them. Show them how to get in crab position and try moving around. (Moving on hands and feet, with front side facing up). Tell them that you will pull out a clue, tell them what it is and they are to crab-crawl their way to the picture of the person who it belongs to. Give them the answer after everyone has run to their guessed person. Continue until all clues have been used up.

VIPP INFORMATION SHEET

VIPP NAME:

WHAT VIPP LOOKS LIKE

Man or Woman? _____

Hair color? _____

Eye color? _____

FAVORITE ANIMAL

FAVORITE FOOD

FAVORITE FREE TIME ACTIVITY

WHAT VIPP DOES DURING WEEK

VIPP GROUP OF SERVICE:

Church Member

Deacon

Elder

Church Staff

Special Volunteer

Supported Worker
(Missionary)

3 WAYS VIPP SERVES CHURCH

3 WAYS TO PRAY FOR THE VIPP
