

The Case of the Prayed-for Prisoner*Philippians*

of BQB

Story-telling Tips

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Choose story action cues and prepare storyboard figures/Story Scenes, if using. (In Visual Aids book)
3. Practice telling story with the storyboard figures/Story Scenes, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary.

During your presentation:

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story.
2. Put up storyboard figures/add story action cues/hold up Story Scenes as you tell the story. Allow the children to help you put them on the board, if desired.
3. Include the children in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
4. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached. Shorten, if necessary.

INTRODUCTION/ LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS

“Our story is called: The Case of the Prayed-for Prisoner. Here is your listening assignment.” Read from Detective Dan’s Listening Assignment signs, but questions are summarized below:

Detective Dan’s Lesson #1 Listening Assignment:

I need to find out:

- 1. Who was the prisoner? Why was he in jail?**
- 2. Who prayed for him?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is 2 Corinthians 1:3-4,10-11**

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God...On Him we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.”

I need to find out:

- 1. Who did God use to comfort Paul?**
- 2. What did they do that was comforting?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:

I found six clues, but only 4 of them are in the story.

They are: a letter, a mouse, some money, Epaphroditus, a soldier, and some medicine.

Hold each of them up for the children to see as you identify them.

I need to figure out:

- 1. Which four belong in the story and which two don’t?**
- 2. Who did Paul thank God for using to comfort him?**

Read the assignment questions, THEN SAY,

“Ok, Deep Down Detectives! Put on your best listening ears and see if you can hear the answers to Detective Dan’s questions. When I finish telling the story, we will see if we can answer all the questions.”

*Read the Bible Truth story, answer questions, present the gospel and lead in prayer.**Answers to questions; the gospel; and, ACTS prayer are included with the story text.*

The Case of the Prayed-for Prisoner *Philippians*

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics) Numbers correspond to storyboard pictures and placement upon the storyboard. Always feel free to use less pictures, if it's best for your kids. Simply black out the numbers next to pictures you do not plan to use. All pictures are found in the Visual Aids book. Put BG (background) pictures on storyboard ahead of time. SB pictures (listed below in story text) are added to board as you tell the story. These numbers are also found on the back of each picture. Tip: Stack pictures in numerical before telling story for easy use. Use sticky-back velcro to attach pictures to storyboard felt. Use sticky-tac putty to stick a picture on top of another picture. OR, if using the Story Scenes to tell the story, disregard the storyboard picture references listed below.

“(SB1) Oh no! Paul is in prison again for telling people about Jesus!” the believers in Philippi exclaimed. Prisoners weren’t very well taken care of. They depended on friends on the outside. Paul might be cold or hungry. He could be sick or lonely. He could be discouraged and scared. Who was there to help him?

“WE must help Paul!” the believers in Philippi decided. God uses His people to help each other keep on living for Him and believing in Him. He uses them to comfort them and take care of their needs, too. These Philippians wanted to be part of God helping Paul.

But what COULD they do for Paul? How could they help him? They were in Philippi and he was far, far away in Rome, hundreds and hundreds miles away! How could God use THEM, to help PAUL, from so far away?

Can you guess what they could do?

The Philippians knew what they could do. (SB2) They could pray for Paul! Perhaps they were far away from Paul, but God wasn’t! He was with Paul all the time and He could do ANYTHING! They could ask God to work in the Roman leader’s heart and free Paul. They could ask God to keep Paul from getting sick. They could ask the Holy Spirit to comfort Paul with God’s Word and help him stay strong in his faith. Yes, there was so much the Philippians could do for Paul simply by praying for him, right there in Philippi!

But there was something ELSE the Philippians could do for Paul. What could that be?

Can you think of what else they could do to care for Paul?

(SB3) They could send a gift of money to him. The believers in Philippi weren’t rich, but they loved Paul! He was the one who first came to their city shared the gospel with them. (SB4) Down by the river, Paul had told all who would hear the good news of Jesus. Many like Lydia, heard and believed. (SB5) But others were so angry that they had soldiers grab Paul, hurt him and threw him into jail in chains!

Paul had suffered all of that, so THEY might trust in Jesus and be saved! He risked his life that God might save theirs! Now it was their turn to do something for Paul, even if it was very hard!

Everyone gave what they could. Many chose to go without things they needed. “(SB6) No, thank you, just one loaf of bread! No, thank you, only three figs, today,” was heard around the marketplace, as some may have chosen to have a little less food on their tables, so they could give more money to take care of Paul. “(SB7) Sheep for sale, goats for sale,” others yelled out at the marketplace. These chose to sell some of their own things to get money to give Paul.

(SB8) At last enough money was collected. But now there was another problem. Who would take it to Paul? (SB9) “I’ll take it, a godly man named Epaphroditus offered. “I’ll take the money, and I’ll stay and help Paul,” he said. The Philippians prayed for Epaphroditus and sent him on his way with their gift.

(SB10) Walk! Walk! Walk! Epaphroditus made the long trip from Philippi to Rome. There were no cars, trains or planes It would have taken weeks for Epaphroditus to get there, but he was happy to do it. He was glad to do something for the man who had done so much for them. He was eager to get to Paul and help him.

At last, Epaphroditus made it to the big city of Rome. (SB11, SB12) Past the temples of the fake, Roman gods and the fine houses. (SB13) Through the busy market where people came from around the world to buy and sell their goods. (SB14) Down the winding streets went Epaphroditus, until at last he found (SB15, SB16) the house where Paul was being held prisoner. “Knock, knock, knock,” Epaphroditus knocked on the door of the little prison house. “Creak,” the door opened. Epaphroditus looked in and what did he see?

What do you think he saw?

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)

There was Paul chained to a soldier. He was an old man now. His body was sick and hurting. But even so, Paul was joyful. (SB17) He was still living for God and telling people about Jesus. He had even shared the gospel with the soldiers who guarded him! Some were becoming Christians! What good news this was!

Epaphroditus stayed and cared for Paul a long time. (SB18) He used the Philippian's money gift to buy Paul food and other things he needed. He shared with Paul about the Philippians and how they still cared for him and were praying for God to help him. (SB19) He listened to Paul and prayed for him. Oh, how wonderful to have a friend to comfort and care for him! To hear how the believers in Philippi were doing! To talk about the Lord and to pray! What comfort God brought Paul through this one man! Paul was so happy!

At last it was time for Epaphroditus to go. Paul gave Epaphroditus something to take back to the believers in Philippi to thank them and encourage them. But what could a poor, old man in jail give them that would do that?

Can you guess?

A letter! (SB20) That's what! So Paul got out a piece of paper and started writing. When he finished, he rolled it up and gave it to Epaphroditus. How sad Paul must have been to see him go. Yet, how happy he would be for the Philippians to read his letter!

Off went Epaphroditus, back home. Walk, walk, walk. Week after week after week. At last, he made it home. (SB21, SB22) The believers gathered together to hear Paul's letter to them. This is what Paul wrote:

Dear Philippians,

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for you, I pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. I want you to know that it has been good for the gospel for me to be in prison. I've been able to tell many people about Jesus, including all the soldiers who stand guard over me. It makes me happy that so many people are hearing about Jesus.

Even though life in prison is hard, I am full of joy. I know that God is helping me through your prayers and by His Holy Spirit. He will help me to keep on telling people about Jesus. He will help me keep on living for Him. And one day, He will take me home to be with Him in heaven forever. That will be best of all.

Until then, I will be praying for you. I will pray that God strengthen you by His Holy Spirit, just as He is strengthening me. I will pray that He would give you joy; and, that you will keep on living for Him and telling others the good news of Jesus!

One day I hope to be freed from prison and come visit you again!

May Jesus give you strength,
Paul

What happened to Paul after Epaphroditus left? (SB23) The Lord had promised that one day Paul would stand before Caesar Nero, the great, Roman king, himself. And so he did! Nero heard his case and no doubt Paul would have even tried to share the good news of Jesus with him, too. And while Nero did NOT become a Christian, he did decide to free Paul from prison. The LORD had answered the Philippian's prayers!

(SB24) Paul was free to spread the good news of Jesus once more, though probably, his travels never took him back to see his dear friends in Philippi again. But Paul would never forget them! Their comfort gave him strength when he needed it most. (SB25) And oh, how sweet would be the meeting of these dear friends in heaven one day! They had loved each other so well on earth and now they would get to go on loving each other forever and ever!

Cracking the Case: (story wrap-up for Listening Assignments)

It's time to see how we did with our Listening Assignment.

Detective Dan's Lesson 1 Listening Assignment:

1. Who was the prisoner? Why was he in jail? Paul. He was in jail for telling others about Jesus.

2. Who prayed for him? The believers in the city of Philippi.

For You and Me:

Can you imagine going to jail for something you believe in? Paul did, because he knew the good news of Jesus was true and that people needed to hear it if they were to be saved from their sins. Paul rejoiced to tell about Jesus and watch them become God's people. We can become God's people, too, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

Detective Dan's Lesson 2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is 2 Corinthians 1:3-4,10-11**

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God...On Him we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many."

1. Who did God use to comfort Paul? The believers in Philippi.

2. What did they do that was comforting? They prayed for him, sent him money and Epaphroditus to help him.

For You and Me:

Paul was comforted by the help and prayers of the believers in Philippi. He was comforted by their love and by knowing that God was loving him, too, through them. We, too, can know the comfort of God and of God's people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. That's how we become God's people.

Detective Dan's Lesson 3 Listening Assignment:

Our six clues were: a letter, a mouse, some money, Epaphroditus, a soldier, and some medicine.

1. Which four belong in our story? The letter, the money, Epaphroditus and the soldier belong. The mouse and the medicine do not.

2. Who did Paul thank God for using to comfort him? The believers in Philippi.

For You and Me:

Paul was comforted by the help and prayers of the believers in Philippi. He was comforted by their love and by knowing that God was loving him, too, through them. We, too, can know the comfort of God and of God's people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. That's how we become God's people.

The Gospel (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)**Our Bible Truth is:****Why Do God's People Keep Believing in Him?****It Is God's Sustaining Grace...****God Uses His People to Strengthen and Comfort Each Other!**

Why Do God's People Keep Believing in Him? It Is God's Sustaining Grace... God Uses His People to Strengthen and Comfort Each Other. What a wonderful day it was when Jesus rose from the dead! That was the proof that Jesus had really paid for all of God's people's sins! You see, all people have chosen to disobey God and His good ways. No one lives the perfect life that pleases God. That is why we all deserve His punishment for our sins. God would have been perfectly fair to give us all His punishment for sins. But, He is so full of mercy and love that He chose to save His people through Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to take all the punishment for the sins of God's people. Jesus died and was buried that sad day; but, He didn't stay that way! On Day Three, God raised Jesus up from the dead. Jesus had really done it! He had beaten sin and death for God's people.

And Jesus was just the first! Now all of God's people --all who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior -- get to share in Jesus' gifts of salvation. They get to know God in their hearts all the days of their lives. When they die, their spirits will go to live with God forever. And at the very end of time, God will give them another gift-- perfect, brand-new bodies, like Jesus' to enjoy forever. We, too, can be God's people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

Close in prayer.

Closing ACTS Prayer

- A** God, we praise You for being the Comforter and Strength of Your People. You help them comfort and strengthen each other.
- C** We confess that many times we forget to pray for others who are struggling with hard or sad times. Many times, we don't take time to comfort and strengthen others who are struggling. We need a Savior!
- T** Thank You, God, for the comfort God's people receive from You through how they help and pray for each other.
- S** Work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to comfort others with Your Word and by praying for them. Use us to help others through their times of need. Help others to see Your love and kindness as we comfort and pray for each other.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Go to Lesson Plan, p.9 for the script to the rest of the lesson.