

LESSON 1

PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Works Through the Holy Spirit

SCRIPTURE: Acts 16

GOD'S BIG STORY: After Jesus goes to heaven, God sends the Holy Spirit to be our helper. God works through the Holy Spirit to lead Paul on missionary journeys to spread the good news.

WORD OF WONDER: Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. —Romans 8:14

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Pre-service Interactive Game: Pack Your Bags! 8–10 min
- Welcome Question: If you were moving somewhere on the other side of the world and could only bring one suitcase, what would you bring? 2 min
- Declaring God's Wonder 25 min
- Prayer of Invitation 1–2 min
- Worship: Your Love for Me, Love Come Down 1–2 min
- God's Big Story 8–10 min
- Connecting the Wonder Truth 5–6 min
- Responding in Worship: Holy Forever 1–2 min
- Blessing Your Kids 3–4 min
- SMALL GROUP: Responding in Worship Activity 1–2 min
- 5–10 min



Schedule:

Pre-service Activities: 10 min before service

Small Group: 20-25 minutes

Large Group: 30-35 minutes

Small Group Response Activity: 5-10 min



[Holy Spirit Our Helper Spotify playlist](#)

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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We love to go hiking as a family. My kids are young and have logged more hiking miles than many adults! One thing that's important while hiking is following the signs. Signs saying go this way or that way. Signs saying how far you must go before reaching your destination. Signs saying you're here—you made it! It gives us comfort to have guidance when we're walking through the wilderness. Take a moment to read Acts 16:6–15 and remember that Paul and his companions are taking the gospel into unfamiliar territory. It'd be nice to have some guidance along the way.

What did you notice? Paul and his buddies had something better than hiking trail signs—they had the Holy Spirit. The Spirit guided them from place to place, saying, “Take the gospel here, not there,” or “You made it. This is the place.” We all want clear signs from the Holy Spirit to guide us, but those signs aren't always easy to recognize.

Like hiking, we must stay on the path to see the signs. What's important is that we continue to follow the path God has laid before us, trusting He is working through the Spirit to guide us when we need it. Sometimes that means we need a very clear sign from the Spirit, and other times it means we just stay on the path in obedience and trust that God knows what we need.

—Kramer Mize

Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

LESSON 1 **FOR LEADERS**
PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Paul, also called Saul, was a Jewish man from Tarsus. He was a Pharisee who persecuted the early church but became a follower of Jesus after encountering Christ on the road to Damascus. Paul proclaimed Jesus to the Gentiles (non-Jews) and endured much persecution himself.

WHAT?

While traveling with his companions, Paul was prevented by the Holy Spirit from entering Asia Minor or Bithynia (by-thin-EE-uh). The Spirit instead led him to Macedonia, where Paul preached to a woman named Lydia. The Lord opened her heart to accept the good news of Jesus.

WHERE?

Paul and his companions set out from Troas, a coastal city in present-day Turkey. They crossed the Aegean Sea and landed in Neapolis before heading to Philippi. These cities were part of Macedonia, which was located north of Achaia (uh-KAY-uh) in present-day Greece.

WHEN?

Acts tells the story of the growth of the early church after Jesus ascended into heaven. This story recounts part of what is known as Paul's Second Missionary Journey, taking place around AD 50. This was several years after Paul's conversion and well into his ministry.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

God promised Abraham that all peoples would be blessed through Abraham's family. Jesus, a descendant of Abraham, makes the way for all people to be part of God's kingdom. In Acts, the Holy Spirit empowers Jesus' followers to spread this news to the nations.

Large Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Welcome kids by name and greet them with enthusiasm. Be extra intentional about hearing and responding

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service start)

Interactive Game: Pack Your Bags!

8-10 MINUTES PRE-SERVICE

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only), bags (2 small suitcases, duffel bags, or backpacks), 2 sets of items (adult-sized clothing (several) and one article of purple clothing), cardstock (optional)

RESOURCES: [Relay Game Flame Sheet \(1/LG\)](#)

For this activity, kids will race to pack a bag with items relevant to the Bible story, including an article of purple clothing and a paper flame (representing the Holy Spirit).

Ahead of time, print the Relay Game Flame Sheet (on cardstock, if possible) and cut out the two flames. Set out the bags on one side of the room, and each pile of clothing on the other side of the room. Both piles should have the same number of clothing items and one paper flame.

Divide the group into two teams. **We're going to pack some bags to take with us on a missionary trip! Each of you will put on an item of clothing from the pile and wear it as you walk to your team's bag. Then you'll take it off and put it in the bag. If you choose the flame, you can hold it over your head or in front of you. Then the next person in line can go.** Demonstrate this for the kids by slipping on an article of clothing, walking to a bag, and placing the item into the bag. Return the article of clothing to the pile before kids begin.



Ready, set, go!" Cheer for the kids as they participate and lend a hand to those who need a little help. You can congratulate the first team to pack all the items into their bag or simply affirm everyone for doing a great job without declaring a specific winner.

Leader Tip: You can modify this game in several ways based on the number of kids in your group. *If you only have a few kids:* Have only one team, but time the relay. If time allows, do it twice so kids can try beating their first time. *If you have lots of kids:* Choose several kids to be on the two teams, then encourage the rest of the kids to cheer. *If you have more kids than items but want everyone to have a turn:* Play the game twice or have half the kids take the clothing out of the bag and wear it back to the starting position.

Make It Inclusive! If you have kids who aren't able to dress themselves or have sensory challenges that make them sensitive to certain fabrics or extra clothing, allow them to simply carry their items to the other side. Or make extra copies of the flame cutouts so multiple kids can carry flames rather than put on articles of clothing.

Gather kids back together. **The relay had two clues about what we're going to learn in God's big story today.** Hold up one of the articles of purple clothing. **First, you might spy some purple clothing in our story.** Hold up one of the paper flames.

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH And second, the most important clue is the flame. It reminds us of our life-changing Wonder Truth: **GOD WORKS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT.**"



Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR , whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At service start time, draw kids' attention to the Welcome Question.

Invite kids to write answers on the poster board or whiteboard.

If you were moving somewhere on the other side of the world and could only bring one suitcase, what would you bring?

"In God's big story, Jesus' friends had to learn how to travel all over the world and share His story ... without Jesus standing right next to them (because He was in heaven). Who could help them share the story? Today we're going to discover the incredible helper God sent them. But first, it's time for small group."

Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

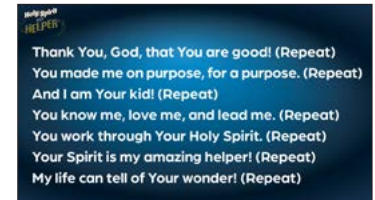
And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You work through Your Holy Spirit. (Kids repeat.)

Your Spirit is my amazing helper! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words. Here is an example: **God, thank You for sending Jesus to save us and Your Spirit to help us. Thank You for working through Your Spirit to help us follow You and spread the good news about Jesus. Help us to learn how Your Spirit works in us as we follow You. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Consider sharing some about the songs you are going to sing. What they mean, why we sing them, why they are meaningful and important to you!

"We're going to stand and sing together! One way that we show love to God is to worship through song! So stand up, sing loud, and join in the motions with us. God loves to hear us sing praises to Him! Let's stand together and sing!"

WORSHIP VIDEOS: Your Love for Me, Love Come Down

God's Big Story

SLIDE: TITLE

"Today in God's Big Story we are learning about Paul. Paul used to be someone who didn't believe in Jesus, but after meeting Jesus, his whole life changed! Now he traveled to different places to tell everyone the good news about Jesus. Paul didn't always know where to go next, but he trusted that God would guide him. In this story, we'll see how God worked through the Holy Spirit to lead Paul exactly where he needed to be."



VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY

LESSON 1 PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: cardstock, scissors (prep only), masking tape, white gift bag, tissue paper (orange, red, and yellow), blue bed sheet, purple cloth, paper clip

RESOURCES: Full-size Holy Spirit Flame Sheet (2 copies), Quarter-size Holy Spirit Flame Sheet (5 copies), Paul's Vision Sheet(1 copy)

Ahead of time, print two copies of the Full-size Holy Spirit Flame Sheet on cardstock. Print five copies of the Quarter-size Holy Spirit Flame Sheet on cardstock with two-sided printing, which will provide more than enough flame cards for all the kid volunteers participating in the storytelling.

Ahead of time, make the Holy Spirit Flame Bag. With glue or tape, attach two copies of the Full-size Holy Spirit Flame Sheet to the outside of a white gift bag (one on each side). The gift bag should be about as large or a little larger than an 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper. Fill the gift bag with flame-colored tissue paper—red, orange, and yellow. Cut the Quarter-size Holy Spirit Flame Sheets along the dotted lines and stack the cards, securing them with a paper clip. Place the cards inside the Holy Spirit Flame Bag. Print Paul's Vision Sheet and place it in the bag.

Leader Tip: Keep the Holy Spirit Flame Bag to use again during the Lessons 3 and 4 Experience It! Scripts.

Ahead of time, place near your staging area the Holy Spirit Flame Bag, a blue bed sheet, and purple cloth. Set masking tape nearby for when Paul and Lydia receive the Spirit. To help the story move quickly, select your volunteers ahead of time and tell them what their roles will be.

Can you remember when you first heard the good news that Jesus is God's Son and He loves you? You might have heard it from your parents or from someone at church, or maybe a friend told you! Or maybe you first heard the good news in a song or read about it in a book, like the Bible. Briefly share how you first heard about Jesus—even if you share that you can't remember, because kids can relate to that. **Right after Jesus was on earth and had gone back to heaven, the only way to hear the good news about Jesus was to hear it from someone. And back then, not many people knew Jesus had lived and died and rose again!**

But there was a group of people who knew Jesus really well. They had followed Him, learned from Him, and witnessed His death and resurrection. Who were they? Wait for a response. **His disciples!** Invite a small group of kids to your stage area to play the roles of Jesus' disciples. Ask them to face the other kids and wait for your instruction.

After Jesus died on the cross, He rose from the grave, defeating death and making the way for all people to be part of God's forever kingdom. For 40 days, Jesus appeared to His disciples, proving He was alive and teaching them about God's kingdom. Then He went to heaven to be with God the Father.

But first (hold the Flame Bag in your hands) **Jesus prepared His disciples for what was coming next**



in God's big story. God was about to send an amazing gift (point to the flame on the bag)—the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit is God—God's powerful, wise, and loving presence. (The Holy Spirit isn't an actual flame, but sometimes a flame is used to represent the Holy Spirit.)

Leader Tip: Acts 2:3 describes when the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost: "They saw something that looked like fire in the shape of tongues." You may want to explain that while we can't see the Holy Spirit, we will use the Bible's image of a flame to represent the Spirit—the gift of God's presence to all who declare Jesus is Lord.

When the Spirit came to Jesus' followers, He came as their helper. From the Flame Bag, give a Flame Card to each of Jesus' disciples on stage. Have them hold the cards in front of them so the other kids can see them. **The Holy Spirit gave the disciples power to spread the good news about Jesus.** Ask Jesus' disciples to read out loud together the message on the back: "Jesus is God's Son, and He loves you!" (If any of the disciples are pre-readers, whisper the message to them and invite them to repeat it out loud.) Then ask them to share that message—the good news—with the group one more time but with boldness and enthusiasm. Remind them it is the Holy Spirit's power that makes them brave and gives them the words to say. Thank the disciples for spreading the good news and ask them to return to their seats. **God was at work, and His kingdom was growing.**

Eventually, a man named Paul became a follower of Jesus. Invite another kid up to play the role of Paul. **At one time, Paul was against Jesus and His followers, but then Jesus appeared to Paul and God changed his heart.** From the Flame Bag, pull out a Flame Card. Place a tape roll on the back of the card and have Paul stick it to his shirt, over his heart. **Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit guided Paul and gave him power to tell people about Jesus.** Direct Paul to proclaim to the whole group, boldly and with enthusiasm: "Jesus is God's Son, and He loves you!" **Paul traveled around spreading the good news.** Invite Paul to move through the audience telling each person the same message—the good news. While he does that, say: **The good news spread not only to Jewish people who had been waiting for the Messiah—the everlasting King—but also to non-Jewish people called Gentiles. The news about Jesus was for everyone! Salvation was coming to the ends of the earth!** Have Paul rejoin you, even if he didn't get to everyone.

Then Paul had a vision (from the Flame Bag, pull out Paul's Vision Sheet and hold it above Paul's head), **a special picture from the Holy Spirit. He saw a man from Macedonia** (ma-si-DŌ-nyuh) **standing and begging him. " 'Come over to Macedonia!' the man said. 'Help us!' "** (Acts 16:9). **Macedonia was on the other side of the sea.** Invite two volunteers to play the role of the water. Give them each opposite long ends of a blue bed sheet. Direct them to move the sheet like gentle waves. Stand behind the sheet and walk while holding Paul's Vision Sheet over the water like a boat moving across the sea, showing Paul the way to go. **The Spirit was showing Paul where to go next.**

They arrived at the coastal town of Neapolis (nee-AP-o-lihs), **then went to an important city called Philippi** (fih-LIHP-ai). **On the Sabbath—a day to rest and remember God's goodness—they walked outside the city gate and down to the river. They found a group of women and started talking to them.**

One of the women was named Lydia. Invite another kid up to play the role of Lydia. **In Philippi, she had a business selling expensive purple cloth.** Place the purple cloth over Lydia's shoulders. **She was a worshiper of God who needed to hear the good news about Jesus. As Paul and his friends spoke** (direct Paul to tell Lydia the good news: "Jesus is God's Son, and He loves you!"), **the Lord opened Lydia's heart to accept Paul's message** (Acts 16:14). From the Flame Bag, give Lydia a Flame Card with a tape roll on it and have her stick it to her shirt, over her heart. **She and her family were baptized with water as a symbol that God was washing them clean of their sin, the wrong they had done.** Direct Lydia to stand behind the water, and ask the kids holding the bed sheet to pass it once over her, like a slow-moving jump rope. Invite Lydia to proclaim to the audience, boldly and with enthusiasm: "Jesus is God's Son, and He loves you!" **Then Lydia invited Paul and his friends to come and stay at her house.** Thank all the volunteers and invite them to sit down.

The Holy Spirit was at work! He had led Paul to Macedonia, and now Lydia and her family were followers of Jesus! Soon other people would hear the message too. The kingdom of God was growing and is still growing today as more and more people come to know that Jesus, God's Son, is Lord! Invite all kids to tell someone sitting near them: "Jesus is God's Son, and He loves you!" Encourage them to proclaim it boldly and with enthusiasm. Make sure everyone has heard it from someone; then thank the kids for spreading the good news. **Like Paul, we can trust in the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, our amazing helper, because God works through the Holy Spirit."**

Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

"Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD WORKS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.



God promised Abraham that people of all nations would be blessed through his family. Many years later, Jesus, who is a relative of Abraham, made the way for all people to be part of God's kingdom. The Holy Spirit gave Jesus' followers the power to spread the good news of Jesus to all nations. The news continued to spread until it eventually got to us! And it keeps going!"

Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



WORSHIP VIDEO: HOLY FOREVER

Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. Use your own words. Here is an example:

Blessing: May God work through the Holy Spirit in your life, helping you live as chosen and beloved children of God.