
Purpose

To encourage class members to follow Paul’s example and be faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ even in the midst of trials and tribulation.

Preparation

1. Read, ponder, and pray about the following scriptures:
 - a. Acts 21:1–22:21. Despite the objections of his companions, who fear for his life, Paul travels to Jerusalem. He reports on his missionary journeys to the brethren there. He goes to the temple and is taken by an angry mob. The chief captain arrests him but allows him to speak to the people. Paul tells the people about his conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Acts 22:22–23:35. The mob rejects Paul and seeks his life. The chief captain removes Paul from the mob and holds him in a castle. The next day the chief captain takes Paul before the Sanhedrin. Another great dissension arises, and again the chief captain removes Paul and has him taken to the castle. That night the Lord appears to Paul and tells him that he is called to bear witness in Rome as well as in Jerusalem. More than 40 Jews plot to kill Paul, and he is taken to Felix, the governor, for safety.
 - c. Acts 26. After several years of persecution and imprisonment, Paul is brought to testify before King Agrippa. Agrippa rejects Paul’s testimony and sends him to Rome to see Caesar.
 - d. Acts 27–28. Paul is shipwrecked on his way to Rome after the captain of the ship ignores his counsel. When he finally reaches Rome, he is imprisoned, but he preaches to all who will listen.
 2. If the following materials are available, use them during the lesson:
 - a. “Paul—A Chosen Vessel,” an eleven-minute segment of *New Testament Video Presentations* (53914). Preview this segment, if possible, so you will know when to stop the video for discussion.
 - b. A map of Paul’s journey to Rome (map 22 in the LDS edition of the King James Bible).
 3. Suggestion for teaching: “It is essential that those you teach be fed, that they be taught something. Each time they come there should be at least one thought, one idea, one inspiration that is theirs for having been in the class. It can be a little thought, an ordinary one—in fact, the more fundamental it is, the more you have accomplished” (Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* [1975], 154).
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Suggested Lesson Development

As appropriate, use the following activity or one of your own to begin the lesson.

- Is there a person in the scriptures with whom you feel you can identify, because of similar thoughts, experiences, or situations? Why do you feel a particular closeness to this person?

Allow several class members to comment. Then point out that in looking back at his experiences after the First Vision, the Prophet Joseph Smith felt that his experiences were similar to the Apostle Paul's. Have class members read Joseph Smith—History 1:23–25 to discover why.

Explain that the Apostle Paul's appearance before King Agrippa is one of the events that will be discussed in this lesson. In this situation and throughout his missionary journeys, despite rejection and persecution, Paul stood firm in the faith and courageously bore testimony of Jesus Christ.

Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how we can develop courage and faith as strong as Paul's. Encourage class members to tell about times when they have courageously borne testimony through their words or actions.

1. Paul reports on his journeys and faces an angry mob in Jerusalem.

If you are using the video presentation "Paul—A Chosen Vessel," show the first part now. Stop the video after the narrator says, "He fulfilled the Lord's words that he would bear His name before kings and rulers" (during these words, Paul is being escorted down a hallway by several soldiers).

Discuss Acts 21:1–22:21. Invite class members to read selected verses. Explain that after three successful missionary journeys that took him throughout the Roman empire, Paul returned to Jerusalem, though he knew it was dangerous to do so.

- Why did Paul's friends try to stop him from returning to Jerusalem? (See Acts 21:10–12.) How did Paul respond to his friends' concerns? (See Acts 21:13.) How did this demonstrate Paul's commitment to Christ?
- What did Paul do the day after he reached Jerusalem? (See Acts 21:17–19.) How is this similar to what missionaries today do after returning from their missions? (They report their mission experiences to the stake president and high council and often to ward or branch members in sacrament meeting.) How have you benefited from hearing about others' missionary experiences?
- Many Jewish Christians resented Paul for teaching that salvation came through Jesus Christ, not the law of Moses (Acts 15:1–35). To please these people, the brethren in Jerusalem asked Paul to go to the temple and undergo ritual cleansing as a sign that he still observed the law (Acts 21:20–25). What happened while Paul was in the temple? (See Acts 21:26–30. He was seized by a mob of people who accused him of teaching against the law of Moses and polluting the temple by bringing a non-Jew into it.) How was Paul rescued from this mob? (See Acts 21:31–36.) What did Paul do when the chief captain allowed him to speak to the people? (See Acts 21:37–22:21. Why did this require courage?

You may want to begin a list on the chalkboard of all the times in Acts 21–28 that Paul showed great courage in being a witness of Jesus Christ. Add to the list as appropriate during the lesson.

- When have you borne your testimony in a situation that required courage? How did you gain the courage to do this? How can learning about Paul's actions help us have more courage to share our testimonies with others?

2. Paul is taken before the Sanhedrin.

Read and discuss selected verses from Acts 22:22–23:35.

- How did the crowd outside the temple respond to Paul’s account of his conversion? (See Acts 22:22.) What was the chief captain’s purpose in removing Paul from the mob? (See Acts 22:24.) How was Paul able to avoid being scourged? (See Acts 22:25–26. He pointed out that he was a Roman citizen. This gave him special rights and privileges in the Roman empire, of which Jerusalem was a part.)
- What was the first thing Paul said when he was brought before the Sanhedrin (the Jewish council)? (See Acts 23:1; see also Acts 24:16. See D&C 135:4 for a similar statement made by the Prophet Joseph Smith.) How do you think Paul’s “good conscience before God” helped him at this time? Invite class members to consider what changes they need to make in their own lives to have a “good conscience before God.”
- What did the Lord say when he appeared to Paul following Paul’s examination by the Sanhedrin? (See Acts 23:11.) How has the Lord helped you “be of good cheer” during difficult times?
- The day after the Lord appeared to Paul, more than 40 Jews plotted to kill Paul, vowing not to eat or drink until they succeeded (Acts 23:12–15). How was Paul protected from their plan? (See Acts 23:16–35. You may want to point out that this was the third time in just a few days that Paul was protected from death.)

3. Paul testifies to Agrippa, but his testimony is rejected.

Read and discuss selected verses from Acts 26. You may want to summarize the following information from Acts 24–25: Paul was sent to Felix, the governor, and testified boldly before him. Paul remained a prisoner for two years while Felix hoped to receive money to free him. When Felix was succeeded as governor by Festus, the Jews asked Festus to send Paul to Jerusalem for trial. Paul refused to go, knowing he would not get a fair trial there. Instead, Paul appealed to Caesar, as was his right as a Roman citizen. Festus agreed to send Paul to Rome, but Paul first had to appear before Herod Agrippa, the Roman-appointed ruler of Judea.

If you are using the video presentation, show the second part now. Stop the video after Paul’s statement, “I would to God that not only thou, but also all who hear me this day, were such as I am, except these bonds” (just before Paul is escorted from the court of King Agrippa).

- What impresses you about Paul’s words to King Agrippa? (See Acts 26:2–27.) How did Agrippa respond to Paul’s words? (See Acts 26:28.) What might have kept Agrippa from becoming a Christian? What attitudes or other problems keep people today from accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- How were Festus’s and Agrippa’s reactions to Paul different? How were they similar? (See Acts 26:24, 28. Point out that nothing less than complete devotion is acceptable to the Lord. Although Agrippa found Paul’s message almost believable while Festus rejected it outright, both failed the test of faith Paul offered them.)

4. Paul is shipwrecked on his way to Rome.

Read and discuss selected verses from Acts 27–28. Explain that Agrippa had been willing to release Paul (Acts 26:32), but Paul had appealed to Caesar and so was

sent to Rome. As you discuss Paul's journey to Rome, display the map and point out relevant sites, such as Fair Havens, where Paul counseled the men to remain for the winter, and Malta (Melita), where the shipwrecked passengers swam ashore.

- What happened when the master of the ship rejected Paul's warning that it was too dangerous to sail from Fair Havens? (See Acts 27:7–20.) What motivated the centurion to disregard Paul's counsel? (See Acts 27:11–12.) Why do some of us occasionally disregard our Church leaders' counsel? How have you learned the importance of following Church leaders' counsel?
- How did Paul know that all of the passengers would arrive on land safely, though the ship would be destroyed in the storm? (See Acts 27:21–26.) How was this prophecy fulfilled? (See Acts 27:27–44.)
- How did Paul use his priesthood power while on the island of Melita? (See Acts 28:7–9.) What does this incident suggest about the purpose of priesthood power? How does honoring the priesthood help us serve as witnesses of Christ?
- After several months, Paul finally reached Rome, where he was again imprisoned. How did he turn this seeming setback to his advantage? (See Acts 28:16–31. He was given relative freedom, so he spent his time teaching the gospel and testifying of Christ.) What can we learn from Paul about being a faithful witness of Jesus Christ? (If you made a list on the chalkboard of the times that Paul showed courage in being a faithful witness, refer to it.)

If you are using the video presentation, show the remainder now.

Conclusion

Explain that historians assume that Paul died a martyr's death in Rome about A.D. 65. Throughout his life, he fulfilled his responsibility as an Apostle to "go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19). He also fulfilled the Lord's prophecy that he would preach the gospel "before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). He was a faithful witness of Christ despite verbal and physical attacks, unjust imprisonment, and natural disasters.

Testify that when we follow Paul's example by being faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ in all situations, He will give us the strength to endure our trials.

Additional Teaching Idea

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use this idea as part of the lesson.

Review of Paul's life

To help class members appreciate how Paul fulfilled his life's mission to testify of Christ, have them turn to the entry under "Paul" in the Bible Dictionary (pages 742–43). Have each class member select one event in Paul's life when he testified of Christ. (Events not listed in the Bible Dictionary may also be used.) Invite each class member to share his or her selection with the class, and list all the events on the chalkboard. Then ask class members to turn to the maps of Paul's journeys (maps 19–22 in the LDS edition of the King James Bible) and identify where each event took place. Help class members review the appropriate scriptures if necessary to determine the location of the event.