

God Works through Us

Paul's Nephew

Acts 23:11–24

Bible Point: God uses us to complete His plan.

Experience: What is something you do well? How can you help others with what you do well?

Study: Acts 23:11

Examine: What was God's plan that the angel shared with Paul? How was Paul's nephew used in God's plan to get Paul to Rome?

Apply: Write ingredients and instructions for a cookie recipe on slips of paper, and then distribute among family members. Everyone gathers ingredients and completes tasks when needed. As the cookies bake, compare how everyone was used to complete the recipe to how God uses us to complete His plans. As you eat the cookies, discuss the sweet rewards of being a part of God's plans.

Life Application: I will work for God.

Pray: We don't always realize God is using us as part of His plan. Paul's nephew was in the right place at the right time to hear what the bad guys wanted to do to Paul—it was all part of God's plan. Ask God to help you be a person He can use in His plans, at the right place and at the right time.

God Gives Us Each a Testimony

Paul Gives His Testimony

Acts 24–26

Bible Point: God wants us to share our testimonies.

Experience: Have you ever had to do something in front of a big crowd? How did you feel?

Study: Acts 26:22

Examine: Discuss Paul’s testimony and what people thought about it. How did the three different leaders respond to Paul’s testimony?

Apply: Gather for a family meal. Pass serving bowls around one at a time. As members take a serving, they share something positive about their day. Compare how the plates became full of food with how our lives become full of God’s blessings. Discuss ways we can share our testimonies of God’s love with others so they can enjoy the fullness of His blessings too.

Life Application: I will share my testimony.

Pray: Not everyone will understand your testimony. Some may not believe you. Others may want to hear more. Pray that God will give you courage to always share your testimony, even with those who don’t understand it or believe it. Ask God to help those people to understand that they can have their own testimony.

God Speaks to Us

Paul's Shipwreck

Acts 27:1-44

Bible Point: God speaks to us in our storms.

Experience: Discuss the worst storm you have ever experienced. What helped you get through it?

Study: Acts 27:24-25

Examine: Let the children share what happened during the storm Paul experienced while he was a prisoner on the ship. What helped Paul and the others get through the terrors of that storm?

Apply: Have a family meeting about what to do in emergencies, such as a fire, blackout, missed school bus, and so on. Discuss why emergency plans are needed. What about spiritual emergency plans? Discuss how to contact God and hear from Him in spiritual storms. Create a family plan for spiritual preparedness that includes prayer, Bible reading, devotions, and church attendance.

Life Application: In my storms, I will listen for God.

Pray: Sometimes God speaks to only one person and lets that person share what he or she heard. That's what happened with Paul when God promised that Paul and the others would survive the storm if they did what God said. Pray that you will always hear what God says, and that you will share it with others according to God's directions.

God Loves Us and Forgives Us

Onesimus Forgives Philemon

Bible Point: God wants us to model His love and forgiveness.

Experience: Share a time when someone hurt your feelings. How did you react? Were you able to forgive the person?

Study: Philemon 6

Examine: After the children tell what Philemon did, discuss what Paul did to help Philemon and Onesimus get back together.

Apply: Cover a cookie sheet with a layer of sugar. For round one, each person draws a simple picture. For round two, members write their names, but first clear the board by gently shaking the cookie sheet. Compare this to forgiveness. If you don't forgive, you're the one who can't move on. For round three, write, "Thank You, Jesus," and identify ways to model His love and forgiveness.

Life Application: I will love and forgive others.

Pray: Sometimes it is hard to forgive others after they have hurt you. Think of a time when you hurt someone. Did you want the person to forgive you? God wants us to love and forgive others, just as we want others to love and forgive us. Ask God to help you love others, to be kind, to ask forgiveness when you do wrong, and to help you forgive others when they do wrong. God loves us!

Jesus Brings Us Together

Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1–10; Ephesians 2:1–22

Bible Point: God brings us together as His body.

Experience: Name types of people who work together (e.g., doctors and nurses).

Study: Ephesians 2:6

Examine: Let children retell the story of the sinner, Zacchaeus. Why did Jesus want Zacchaeus to join His group of believers?

Apply: Distribute three slips of paper to each family member and tell them to write something special or unique about themselves on each one. Fold the papers and put them in a bowl. Members select a paper (not their own), read it, and guess who it describes. Discuss how interesting your family is because of everyone's differences. Compare this to how God brings different people together as His body.

Life Application: I will help God bring people together.

Pray: Sometimes God brings together people we would never put together. God sees things in us that would work well with one person, while people in another family might work better with someone else. Pray that God would show you who He wants you to work with, but more importantly, let God know that you are ready to work with anyone in His body—the church.

Jesus Wants Us to Work Together

The Early Church Works Together

Acts 6:1–7; Ephesians 4:1–16

Bible Point: Jesus expects His body to work in unity.

Experience: Name jobs that you have to do with someone else. Do you ever have problems working with other people?

Study: Ephesians 4:11–13

Examine: Discuss why the church leaders needed to assign jobs to people. How did the new plan work?

Apply: Send family members to their rooms to retrieve an article of clothing and return. Do the collected pieces complete an outfit when put together: at least a top, a bottom, and shoes? If not, try again, but this time tell everyone the goal. Did they coordinate their efforts? Were they successful? Discuss how working together toward a common goal helps everyone complete the task. Compare this to the body of Christ working in unity.

Life Application: I will work together with other members of God's church.

Pray: Imagine if everyone wanted to be the preacher and stand behind the pulpit and tell people what to do. There would be lots of problems. God does not want problems in the church. He wants everyone to work together. Ask God to show you what you can do in His church, and how you can work together with others. Pray that God will help your church people to work together.

Jesus Is the Head of the Church

The Great Commission

Matthew 28:1–10, 16–20; Colossians 1:15–20

Bible Point: Jesus Christ is the head of the body.

Experience: Name some leaders you know and what they do. How do people treat these leaders?

Study: Colossians 1:18

Examine: Discuss what showed that Jesus was a good leader. What did Jesus tell His disciples to do that would make them good leaders?

Apply: Give each family member a plate with mini marshmallows, toothpicks, and one large marshmallow. Allow a few minutes for members to create a marshmallow person. The only rule is that the large marshmallow must be the head. Vote on which is the most realistic, scary, crazy, and so on. Discuss how Jesus is the head of the church body and why we must always keep Him at the top of all we do.

Life Application: I will show others that Jesus is the head of the church and my life.

Pray: God gives us leaders to help us be good members of His church. As the head of the church, Jesus told us what to do: tell others about Him, teach them to repent, and baptize them in His name. Ask God to help you do what He said. When you tell others about Jesus and they repent and are baptized, they become part of God's church and can follow the leader, Jesus.

Jesus Gave His Life for Us

Easter

Matthew 27:27–37, 45–60; 28:1–8; Philippians 2

Bible Point: Jesus gave His life for the body.

Experience: Name something you had to give away. Was it hard to do?

Study: Philippians 2:8

Examine: Discuss the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Why did Jesus give His life like that?

Apply: Make s'mores. Explain how Jesus' plan all along was to live inside of us, which could only happen after He died and rose again. When a marshmallow comes through the fire—like Jesus came through the cross and grave—and is placed inside the graham crackers, something new is created: s'mores. Like the transformed graham crackers, we become new creatures when we receive God's Spirit. Thank Jesus for giving His life for us.

Life Application: I will surrender my life to Jesus.

Pray: We are sad when we read what Jesus had to go through, but He did it because He loves us. He gave His life so we can be saved. He wanted to take away our sins and give us new life inside. Jesus died, but He had power to rise again. That is what gives us new life. Have you received His new life? Ask Jesus to fill you with His Spirit so you can have the new life He died and rose again to give you.

God's Spirit

The Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:37-47; Ephesians 5:15-21

Bible Point: God's Spirit helps us make right choices.

Experience: What did you have to choose today? Did you choose your outfit?
Did you choose to be in a good mood or a bad mood?

Study: Ephesians 5:17

Examine: Ask the children to describe what happened on the Day of Pentecost. How did the people respond to the message Peter preached? How were their lives changed?

Apply: Hide a piece of candy in one hand. Everyone takes turns guessing which hand holds the candy. After a few rounds, stop and ask if there is a way they could be correct every time. Position someone behind you to help the guessers know which hand to choose. Discuss how God can help us make right choices if we are willing to listen to Him and follow His directions.

Life Application: I will allow God's Spirit to help me make right choices.

Pray: When the Holy Ghost lives inside us, it helps us make right choices, such as helping others, being kind, and obeying God's Word. Ask God to help you make right choices. If you need His Spirit inside you, ask Him for it. If you have problems knowing what the right choice is, ask God to show you. His Spirit will help you.

God's Armor

The Armor of God

Ephesians 6:10–18

Bible Point: God provides what we need to stand against the devil.

Experience: What do you wear to protect you when the weather is bad? How is that like the armor a soldier wears?

Study: Ephesians 6:11

Examine: What are some ways the devil fights against us? After reading Ephesians 6:11, discuss each piece of armor and how it works against the devil.

Apply: Have the smallest family member step on a balloon until it pops. Place a cookie sheet atop four balloons. Help the largest family member step onto the cookie sheet. The balloons don't pop. The cookie sheet keeps the balloons safe. God is like the cookie sheet. He helps us stand against the devil. Without God, the smallest attack can pop our spiritual balloons, but with God, we can withstand the biggest attack.

Life Application: I will use God's armor to stand against the devil.

Pray: Think about ways the devil fights against us. How can the armor of God help you fight the devil? As you pray, pretend to put on each piece of armor and ask God to help you use that piece against the devil.

God's Love

Ruth and Naomi

Ruth 1–2; Colossians 3:10–17

Bible Point: God's love should be at the center of our actions.

Experience: How do you show love to someone? How do you know when someone loves you?

Study: Colossians 3:14

Examine: Review the story of Ruth and Naomi. Because Ruth loved Naomi, she learned to love Naomi's God. God's love became important to Ruth, and God blessed Naomi and Ruth because of their love for Him.

Apply: Make cupcakes or cookies. Allow everyone to put something special in the middle of the cupcakes or cookies before baking (e.g., coconut, pecans, raisins, chocolate). As the treats bake, discuss what it means to have God's love at the center of our actions. Identify ways we can put something special—like God's love—in everything we do.

Life Application: I will let God's love direct my life.

Pray: God wants us to love Him more than we love anything or anyone else. He wants to be at the center of everything we do. Is God at the center of your life when you wake up, when you go to school or work, when you play or study? Talk to God and tell Him how much you love Him. Invite Him to be at the center of everything you do.

God's Peace

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

John 20:19–29; Philippians 4:4–13

Bible Point: God wants us to allow Him to work in our lives.

Experience: Name a time when you were worried or scared. What did you do?

Study: Philippians 4:9

Examine: Discuss why the disciples were worried. Why did they feel peace when Jesus came into the room?

Apply: Set up a water sprinkler. Play in it for a few minutes before crimping the hose to cut off the water. Explain that the water is still on, but it's not coming through this line. Compare that to God's desire to work through us and our ability to choose to let Him flow through us or not. Release the hose. Thank God for choosing to work in our lives, and then resume playing.

Life Application: I will seek God's peace.

Pray: When we let God work in our lives, He will take care of the worries and fears we have. He gives us peace that lets us know He is taking care of us. As you pray, think about things that are scaring you or you are worried about. Ask God to take care of those things. Let Him work in your life and give you peace.