

## **Paul Returned to Jerusalem**

The Gospel Project: Unit 35 Session 1

Acts 21-22

Midweek Bible Class

Week of April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Christ Connection:** Paul followed God's plan and returned to Jerusalem even though he faced danger in the city. Paul believed that God, who was faithful to raise Jesus from the dead, would help him in his troubles. We can follow God's plan to tell others about Jesus and trust God to take care of us.

**Big Picture Question:** Why should we praise Jesus? We should praise Jesus for all He has done for us.

**Memory Verse:** PS: Lord, I will praise Your name. Isaiah 25:1; Elem: Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago.

**Spiritual Discipline:** Bible Study

**Leader Bible Study:** We begin a focus on a different spiritual practice this week: Bible study. Over the next five weeks, we will be diving into six benefits of reading and studying the Bible. When you think of Bible study, you might associate it with a group of people coming together to read the Bible. Or you may think of it as something you do individually. Neither approach is wrong. Bible study can, and should, happen in both environments. But if we only focus on one aspect, then we're missing out on the richness of the other.

Our hope is to show kids that Bible study is something we can do in all environments and in all occasions: in groups and by

ourselves, when we don't feel like it, and when we can't wait to dig in. The Bible applies to all parts of life.

Each week in our leader Bible study, we will walk through excuses. Take a few minutes to write out a list of as many benefits as you can think of for reading the Bible. How many did you think up? We want to encourage kids to look at studying the Bible as not just a discipline or a chore, but as something exciting, beneficial, and interesting.

Now next to your list of Bible study benefits, write out a list of excuses you might have come up with in the past about why you shouldn't study the Bible. It could be as simple as feeling like you need a few extra minutes of sleep in the morning! Hold onto this list as we walk through the next six weeks.

This week, we will be walking through a basic explanation of what Bible study is and how the Bible is the foundation for all that we know about God and what He has done for us. Pray that the Lord would guide you as you teach the kids about Bible study, but also that He would reveal Himself to you during this time. Pray over the excuses you use to not study God's Word and ask for strength to be able to overcome them.

## Welcome

### **Sing Songs**

### **The Floor is Lava**

Materials: random objects

Lay out objects on the ground such as hula hoops, floor dots, and pieces of construction paper. Let the kids wander around until you say "The floor is lava." Then count down from five, at which point the kids must be standing on an object by the time you finish counting. Kids can share the same object by trying to all stand in one hula hoop or everyone trying to put one foot on the piece of paper.

Anyone who doesn't make it in time has to sit out for one turn. You can make the game harder by giving a specific color for them to stand on and saying "The floor is lava...purple!"

### [Learn about Bible Study](#)

#### **Review Spiritual Disciplines**

Materials: none

Ask, ***"What spiritual discipline did we just finish learning about?"***

Say, ***"That's right, for the past few weeks we have been learning about the spiritual discipline of generosity."***

Ask, ***"Would someone like to share the definition of a spiritual discipline?"***

Say, ***"A spiritual discipline is a practice, or repeated action, that helps us grow in love for God and godliness. Today we are going to start to focus on a different discipline that will help us grow closer to God."***

#### **Group Demonstration: Solid Ground**

Materials: beanbags, blocks, Bible

Bring kids around a table or in a large circle. Lay out an uneven pile of beanbags. Explain that your goal is to build a house. Prompt kids to encourage (or discourage) your endeavor to build a house on the beanbags. Use blocks to attempt to create a house on the rocks. Build the biggest house you can, allowing kids to give you blocks or advice. Ultimately, it should end up being difficult to build a proper structure. Ask the kids why it isn't working out. The kids should suggest that the beanbags make it too unsteady and that you will need a flat surface.

Bring out a large Bible and tell the kids you are going to try again but with a steady surface this time. Now you should be able to build a solid structure without it crumbling or falling over.

Say, ***“Wow, building the house on a solid and firm foundation worked so much better than trying to build it on beanbags! When we try to build our lives on a foundation of anything other than God’s Word, our foundation will be rocky, which affects every part of our life. There are so many thoughts, opinions, and suggestions from the world, but God’s Word- the Bible- is true, constant, and strong. When we study God’s Word, we are building our life on the best foundation.”***

### **Introduce the Discipline of Bible Study**

Materials: none

Ask, ***“Based on that demonstration, anyone have a guess about which spiritual practice we’re learning about today?”***

Say, ***“Those are great guesses! We’re going to focus on the spiritual discipline of Bible study for the next several weeks. Studying the Bible may sound overwhelming because it’s a really long book! But if we break it down into pieces, it’s a little easier. In fact, God actually broke it down into smaller pieces for us already. The Bible is made up of 66 books between the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament, which is the first part of the Bible, teaches us about humanity’s sin, God’s power, and His plans for a Savior, Jesus. The New Testament shows Jesus’ life, our Savior come to earth, and the early growth of the church. Each book of the Bible has its own special stories, information, and lessons, but they are all tied together by a common thread:***

***Jesus. We study these books to learn more about God and how to be a disciple of Christ.”***

### **Follow Up on Weekly Challenge**

Materials: none

Say, ***“Our challenge last week was to notice someone who cheerfully gave to us. We don’t know the state of someone’s heart, only God knows that. But we can notice actions like being quick to offer help, giving with a smile, or being generous in a way that no one else would see, as signs that we are giving cheerfully.”***

Ask, ***“How did it go? What were some ways that you noticed that they were cheerful when they were practicing generosity.”***

### **Read the Bible**

Materials: Bibles

Say, ***“We study the Bible because it is the foundation to our beliefs, our relationship with God, and to living a godly life. The Bible guides us, gives us wisdom, helps us relate to others, and shows us how to have a relationship with God.”***

Read Psalm 119:15-16.

Say, ***“This verse reminds us that the Bible is filled with truth designed to help us. Being a follower of God means that we will dedicate our lives to continually growing and knowing God more. This verse reminds us that Bible study is more than simply reading the words on the page. Bible study is thinking about and meditating on God’s words. You may have heard the word meditating in other situations, but when we apply it to the Bible,***

***it simply means thinking deeply about Bible verses, word by word.”***

***Ask, “This verse mentions “forgetting” God’s Word. How do you think that might happen?”***

***Say, “Those are great thoughts. It could be literally forgetting God’s Word, like we forget to brush our teeth. But it also might mean turning away from the Bible and ignoring its importance. God has given us His words so that we can read them over and over again and continue learning. This is a gift and we can treat it like that!”***

### **Group Activity: Books of the Bible**

Materials: write each book of the Bible on a note card

Before the session, hide the cards around the room. Challenge the kids to find the cards and then work together to put them in order. Encourage them to use their Bibles to get the order correct.

***Say, “Wow, great job! That was a lot of books to put in order. Why might it be important for us to learn about the different books of the Bible? (Allow responses.) The Bible is more than just random stories about random people. Each book has a purpose, written by someone who God specifically chose to write His words down. For example, let’s look at Genesis through Deuteronomy. These books were all written by Moses and are called the ‘Books of Law.’ God gave Moses these laws so that Moses could guide the people. Paul wrote many of the books in the New Testament. Almost all of the books he wrote are actually letters of encouragement, wisdom, and stories of his life that Paul sent to various churches and people he loved. It is a gift that we get to read these special books! And even though each book has a***

***unique form and purpose, they all point to God's plan to provide Jesus as our Savior and Messiah."***

### **Christ Connection**

Materials: none

Say, ***"We study the Bible for many reasons. And while each book of the Bible has a special purpose and unique perspective for us to learn from, they are also all tied together by a common thread."***

Ask, ***"Any guesses as to what, or who, that thread may be?"***

Say, ***"The thread is Jesus! Even though we don't see His name in every single book of the Bible, the entire Bible points to His coming as our Savior. At the very beginning of the Bible, the world was broken by sin. But all along, God has had a plan to restore our relationship with Him. He sent His own Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life without sin, die on the cross as our sacrifice, and then be raised to life again. It is through that sacrifice that we are able to be close to God again."***

### **[Love God by Practicing Bible Study](#)**

#### **Scripture Scavenger Hunt**

Materials: dry erase board/paper

Write the following, adding additional stories as desired: Noah's Ark (Genesis), a lions' den (Daniel), fruit of the Spirit (Galatians), Ten Commandments (Exodus and Deuteronomy), Lord's Prayer (Matthew), birth of Jesus (Matthew and Luke), a talking donkey (Numbers), a colorful coat (Genesis), the tower of Babel (Genesis), and a giant fish (Jonah).

Create several teams, each with their own piece of paper and a few Bibles. Challenge the teams to race to find the chapter and verse references that go with the items on the list. You may also consider providing small sticky notes or bookmarks for the kids to tag each story in their Bible and go home to read them during the week. If kids are unfamiliar with the Bible, you may choose to provide the chapter and verse and show them how to look each reference up to find the different items from the list.

### **Bible Study Poster**

Materials: craft paper, crayons

Cover a table with a large sheet of craft paper. In the middle of the paper write out the words from: Psalm 119: 15-16. Read the verse aloud to the kids. Then encourage them to decorate the poster with images from the verses, such as walking in God's ways or treasuring His Word in our hearts. Give kids a chance to share what they drew with the group.

### **Weekly Challenge**

Materials: none

Challenge kids to ask a family member to help them memorize either the Old Testament or the New Testament books in order.

### **Close in Prayer**

Materials: none

Use the scripted prayer below or pray in your own words.

Say, ***“God, thank You for the Bible! Thank You for giving us Your words so we do not have to wonder what You said, what Your character was, or who You are. We ask that over the next several***



***weeks, we would learn more about You through studying the Bible. Thank You for giving us the Bible as our foundation. Amen.”***