Preschool–Grade 6

Paul Is Shipwrecked

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: We can trust God in the storm. God keeps His word. Paul believed God, and every one of the 276 people on the ship got safe to land.
Bible passage: Acts 27:9–44 and Acts 28:1–9. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." *Acts 27:25 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, 5 index cards, a marker, masking tape, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 5 cards (see part 4). Put a strip of masking tape on the floor across one end of the room: that is the shore. Put a bookmark in your Bible at Acts 27.

1. Opening game: Storm, Anchor, Shore (5 minutes)

Kids stand at the end of the room away from the tape. Call out: "Storm!" (kids wobble and sway in place, like a ship in the wind), "Anchor!" (everyone freezes), "Sit down!" and "Stand up!" Mix them up. Last, call "Shore!" and everyone walks to the tape line. Play two or three rounds. Then ask: *Have you ever been in a big storm? How did you feel?* Say: "Today we will hear a true story about a big storm at sea, and a man who believed God."

2. Bible story: I Believe God (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Acts 27, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Paul loved Jesus and told people about Him everywhere he went. But now Paul was a **prisoner**. He was being sent to Italy, to stand before Caesar, the ruler in Rome (Acts 27:1, 27:24). An army officer named Julius was in charge of him, and they sailed on a big ship (27:1, 27:6).

Sailing was getting dangerous. Paul told the men on the ship that this trip would bring hurt and loss (27:9–10). But they did not listen to Paul, and they sailed on (27:11–13).

Soon a strong, stormy wind came (27:14). The ship could not sail into the wind, so they let the wind push it along (27:15). The storm went on day after day. The Bible says "neither sun nor stars in many days appeared" (27:20). That means no one saw the sun in the day or the stars at night for many days. The men stopped hoping they would be saved (27:20).

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The story continues: Then Paul stood up in the middle of them all. He said, "Be of good cheer," which means cheer up, don't be afraid. Not one person would be lost. Only the ship would be lost (27:21–22).

How did Paul know? He said, "There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve" (27:23). Paul belonged to God, and Paul served God. The angel said, "Fear not, Paul." Paul had to go before Caesar, and God had given Paul all the people sailing with him (27:24). Paul said, "I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (27:25). Ask the kids: *What did Paul say?* (I believe God!)

Early one morning, after fourteen days, Paul asked everyone to eat some food. He took bread, and **gave thanks to God** in front of them all, and began to eat. Then they all cheered up and ate too (27:33–36). There were **276 people** on that ship (27:37)!

When it was day, they saw land with a beach (27:39). They sailed toward it, but the ship ran aground, which means it got stuck on the bottom near the shore. The front of the ship stuck fast, and the back of the ship was broken by the big waves (27:41). Some people swam to land. The rest held on to boards and broken pieces of the ship. "And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land" (27:43–44). Every one! Just like God said.

The island was called **Melita** (28:1). Today it is called Malta. The people of the island were very kind. They made a fire to warm everyone in the rain and the cold (28:2). Paul gathered sticks for the fire, and a **viper**, a snake, came out of the heat and held on to his hand. Paul shook it off into the fire, and he was not hurt at all (28:3–5). Later Paul prayed for the father of Publius, the island's chief man, who was sick, and God healed him (28:7–8).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. Where was Paul going? *(To Italy, to stand before Caesar, Acts 27:1, 27:24)*
2. What could the men not see for many days? *(The sun or the stars, 27:20)*
3. Who stood by Paul in the night? *(The angel of God, 27:23)*
4. What did Paul say? *("I believe God," 27:25)*
5. How many people got safe to land? *(All 276 of them, every one, 27:37, 27:44)*

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4. Memory verse: Cheer Up Cards (5 minutes)

Write the verse on 5 cards: *Wherefore, sirs, / be of good cheer: / for I believe God, / that it shall be even / as it was told me. Acts 27:25.* Explain the old words: **wherefore** means so, **sirs** means men, **be of good cheer** means cheer up and don't be afraid, and **even as it was told me** means just the way God said. Read the verse together. On "I believe God," everyone points up. Then take one card away and say it again. Keep taking cards away until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Paul said he belonged to God: 'whose I am, and whom I serve' (Acts 27:23). God loves you very much, and He wants you to belong to Him too. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: when something scary or hard happens, say Paul's words: "I believe God." Then pray, and trust Him to keep His word.

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6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Paul shipwreck word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/paul-shipwrecked-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/paul-shipwrecked-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/paul-shipwrecked-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/paul-shipwrecked-worksheet), the coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/paul-shipwrecked), or **Safe to Land:** all the kids stand together at the far end of the room, on the "ship." Ask a question from part 3. When someone answers, the whole class takes two big steps toward the tape shore. Keep asking until everyone reaches the shore together. Then say together: "They escaped all safe to land!" Nobody is ever out.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You keep Your word. When we are afraid, help us say, 'I believe God.' Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child is afraid of storms: say that it's okay to feel afraid. Paul's friends were afraid too. God was with Paul in the storm, and God is with us. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee" (Psalm 56:3, KJV). We can pray anytime.

About the viper: tell it simply. God kept Paul from harm (Acts 28:5). This is not a lesson about snakes: never play snake games, and tell kids never to touch a snake.

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