



LESSON 4 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: The Holy Spirit Gives Us Courage

SCRIPTURE: Acts 27–28

WORD OF WONDER: From Romans 12:2

Have you been weathering any storms lately? The storms in life can be rough. They can shake your confidence, wreak havoc on your relationships, and cause you to question everything. Scripture warns us that storms will come. When they do, meditate on God’s promises. He won’t leave you during your storm; He’ll be right there beside you.

Paul saw his share of storms (both literally and spiritually). Throughout his ministry, Paul was beaten, mocked, and imprisoned almost more times than we can count. But there was one constant throughout: he never gave up. He never stopped doing the work God called him to do; he never called it quits in the midst of a storm. Look at Paul’s encouraging words to the others on the ship with him during a physical storm in [Acts 27:25](#): “So keep up your courage” (NIV). Paul got it. He knew, that on his own, he didn’t stand a chance against the storm; but Paul wasn’t alone.

Whatever storm you are going through, know your survival isn’t dependent on you and your giftedness. As Paul reminds us again in [Ephesians 6](#), it’s not our battle. We merely need to stand firm and to take courage. Give your storms and battles to the Lord. He will never leave you. He will lead you, guide you, and see you through ... so take courage.

—Amber Pike

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DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Luke, author of both the Gospel of [Luke](#) and [Acts](#), writes in the first-person voice only in the final chapters of Acts (the “we” passages). Many Bible commentators take this to mean that Luke was a travel companion of Paul and present during these events.

WHAT?

Paul's elevated status meant that a centurion guarded him. This centurion saved his life, for whereas the other soldiers were planning to kill the prisoners, Paul's guard persuades them to trust the prisoners to swim—requiring that their chains be removed ([Acts 27:43](#)).

WHERE?

When the ship came to rest on the island of Malta ([Acts 28:1](#)), it had traveled at least 600 miles from Crete. These are some of the most treacherous waters in the Mediterranean Sea.

WHEN?

A voyage after the feast of the Day of Atonement ([Acts 27:9](#)) means the ship was traveling to Rome as late as October, when the dangerous conditions of winter were already threatening. Travel by ship would become outright impossible in only a few short weeks.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

From [Luke 8:22–25](#), we know Jesus has the authority to command the winds and the waves. Like Jesus, who was able to sleep during a storm, Paul calmly urges his companions to eat and await God's deliverance ([Acts 27:33–34](#)).



Curiosity

LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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

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Curiosity Activity: Will It Float?

SUPPLIES: bucket of water, aluminum foil, coins (at least 1 per kid)

Leader Tip: Use the bucket of water from the Beach Exploration play station to do this Curiosity activity.

Gather kids around the bucket of water. Use a sheet of aluminum foil to create a small boat by folding it multiple times, then place it in the water. Instruct kids to observe how the pretend boat floats on the water. Give each child a coin and take turns putting them into your boat. See how many coins the boat will hold before it sinks! Depending on the weight of the coins and thickness of the foil boat, you will likely get around ten coins on the boat before it sinks.



Who could tell when the boat was about to sink? Allow a show of hands. **We all know that if a boat gets too heavy, it will sink. Can you imagine, though, being on that boat and knowing it would sink? How would you feel?** Allow answers. **Right!** We might feel scared or nervous.

In God's big story today, we will see that Paul, a follower of Jesus, knew the boat he was on would sink. However, instead of being scared, Paul had courage! Do you know why? Because he knew that God, through the Holy Spirit, was with him. God had told Paul that even though his boat would sink, he and all the other passengers would be safe. Paul could have courage because he knew that God was with him. We can be brave in scary situations, too, because the Holy Spirit gives us courage!



Belief

LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Guide kids into knowing God, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

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Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God’s big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for giving us Your Holy Spirit. Thank You that, when we are scared, knowing You are with us through Your Spirit gives us courage. Build our trust that You are with us and that You love us. Help us have courage through the Holy Spirit. In Jesus’ name, Amen.**

God’s Big Story

Pull out the Bible.

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible important? *Because it is God’s word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Acts 27:13 - 28:10

Paul clung to a chunk of wood as he drifted ashore. The battered ship he had been sailing on crashed against the rocks near the Island of Malta. Thankful to be alive, Paul crawled onto the beach.

By God’s mercy all 276 men survived the ship wreck. It was just as the angel had told Paul: “Do not be afraid, Paul...God has shown his grace by sparing the lives of all those sailing with you.”

It was cold and raining, so the men built a campfire. As Paul added more sticks to the campfire, a snake darted out and bit Paul’s hand!

10:45 Service

He flicked the deadly snake off his arm, but the native people watched and worried. How long until Paul started to swell up and suffer from the poison?

Miraculously Paul was fine. Nothing happened to him. The people were amazed.

During the three months that Paul stayed with the people of Malta, he healed them of their sicknesses and diseases. And he told them about Jesus and what it means to be a Christian.

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

His plan is good and pleasing and perfect.

—from Romans 12:2b NiRV

Repeat the verse with the kids.



Faith

LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

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Craft: Saltwater Painting

SUPPLIES: paper (1 sheet per kid); watercolors; paintbrushes (1 per kid); cups of water; salt; large piece of butcher paper, craft paper, or a disposable tablecloth (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: "It Is Well with My Soul" from the [Transformed Early Childhood music flashdrive](#) (optional)

Paul and everyone on the ship experienced a scary storm. Have you ever experienced a storm that felt scary to you? What happened? Interact with responses. We all go through times that make us feel afraid. But we can remember that the Holy Spirit gives us courage.

Today, we're going to listen to a few verses to remind us about God helping us. As I read the verses, I invite you to close your eyes and be as quiet as you can. Give kids a moment to settle down and close their eyes.

Listen to these special words from God. Read [Psalm 46:1-3](#): "God is our place of safety. He gives us strength. He is always there to help us in times of trouble. The earth may fall apart. The mountains may fall into the middle of the sea. But we will not be afraid. The waters of the sea may roar and foam. The mountains may shake when the waters rise. But we will not be afraid" (NIRV).

After reading the verse, set out the watercolors, paper, and salt for the kids. Do you know what kind of water is in the sea? It's saltwater. Let's paint pictures and sprinkle them with salt as we remember that the Holy Spirit gives us courage.

Allow kids to paint on their papers, then show them how to sprinkle salt over the watercolors. (It will cause a chemical reaction that lightens the paint colors where the salt lands, while the surrounding areas will be a darker shade.) Because of God, we can go from being afraid to being courageous. As you paint and watch the colors change, think about how God changes us by giving us courage through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps us be courageous! Consider playing "It Is Well with My Soul" from the [Transformed Early Childhood music flashdrive](#) as the kids paint.



Identity

LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

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Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for giving us courage through His Holy Spirit.

God, thank You for being our place of safety. We know You are always with us, through Your Holy Spirit. Because You are with us, we can have courage even when life gets hard. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May God bless you with His presence. May His Holy Spirit give you courage during every scary situation in your life.

10:45 Service

Closing Activity: Sailing on the Sea!

SUPPLIES: blanket or bed sheet

Lay a blanket (or sheet) on the floor to act as the “ship” in this game. Invite the kids to “board the ship” and sit down on the blanket.

When Paul’s ship experienced bad weather, Paul helped the sailors and the commander know what to do. In this game, I will give you some commands to follow related to sailing on the sea. See if all of you can work together as a team and do them at the same time. If I yell, “Shipwreck,” you should make a swimming motion.

Row the boat: Make a rowing motion.

Hoist the sails: Makes fists and have their fists move in a downward motion, one over the other, like pretending to pull a rope.

Feel seasick: Grab stomach and moan.

Fish for food: Place both hands above one shoulder and make a forward-throwing motion.

10:45 Service

Sharks: Make a surprised or scared face.

Call out different actions for the kids to follow. Don't forget to call out "Shipwreck" from time to time. If you have time, allow kids to take turns calling out the commands.

Make It Inclusive!

If you have a kid unable to sit in the ship or participate in the actions, invite her to help you call out the actions.