

Shipwreck At Malta

Acts 27:13-28:16

MEMORY VERSE

PSALM 91:14-15

Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Short pieces of rope, chairs, crackers in a Ziploc bag, a spray bottle with water, four large cut-out paper anchors each attached to a long string, a folded paper boat, various boxes for cargo, a tape of lots of wind and storm noises (this is easily made by blowing into a tape recorder, shaking a cookie sheet for thunder, a squeaky door for creaking timbers on the boat, and crackling a piece of wadded paper for the sound of rain).

Club soda or sprite, modeling clay (a very tiny amount), and a clear drinking glass.

Colored construction paper, scissors, and markers.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Shipwreck at Sunday School

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Place the chairs close together, side by side, facing each other with one at each end facing in. The seats may touch if the kids are young enough to enjoy scrunching up in the boat, otherwise leave room for their legs. Tell them they are passengers on a ship on the Adriatic Sea.

Tell the Bible story while playing the sound effects tape. Make it as real as possible by spraying the water bottle occasionally and throwing the ropes and cargo boxes overboard. Count the fourteen days without food, drop the anchors, cut off the skiff and eat the bread (crackers).

LESSON TIME!

Most of us have seen movies or read books about people being shipwrecked and then washed up on some beautiful, enchanted island. They seem so adventurous and sometimes even fun, don't they? But if you were actually caught in a violent storm, had to go without food for a long period of time, and then washed up on some strange island, would you think it was adventurous and fun? Would you be afraid?

We are going to learn about some men who actually came face to face with these circumstances and they too, felt afraid. But God told them not to lose heart, but to have courage. **We should have courage and never lose heart because God is faithful.**

ACTS 27:13-17

When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete.

But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon.

So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let her drive.

And running under the shelter of an island called Clauda, we secured the skiff with difficulty.

When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis Sands, they struck sail and so were driven.

Paul was on a ship with other prisoners and passengers making his way to Rome to stand trial before Caesar. They were sailing along the coast of Crete to reach the Phoenix Harbor when they were caught by a storm (or a hurricane like wind) and were driven helplessly to the open sea.

This sounds pretty scary doesn't it? Do you suppose that Paul was scared? God had already promised him that he would preach the gospel in Rome (Acts 23:11). So Paul knew that he was going to make it, but he did not know what he might have to go through in order to get there. He could have been very fearful, but instead he took courage in the Lord and His promises. That is what we need to do when difficult times happen to us.

ACTS 27:18-26

And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next day they lightened the ship.

On the third day we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands.

Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.

But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss.

“And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.

“For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve,

“saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.'

“Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. However, we must run aground on a certain island.”

The storm raged on, so the next day they threw all their cargo overboard and the day after that all the ship's tackle. The storm was so intense that after many days they gave up all hope of getting out of the situation alive. The passengers and probably most of the crew had gone without food for many days. The storm probably destroyed most of their supplies. Also, much of the supplies had to be thrown over board to lighten the ship.

Paul encouraged them with a message from God. God through an angel promised Paul a safe journey and that no one would die; only the ship would be lost. Twice Paul urged his shipmates to keep up their courage and not lose heart. Many of us can feel lost like in a storm. We may feel hopeless and discouraged, but God's message is the same for us, too. **We should have courage and never lose heart because God is faithful.**

ACTS 27:27-32

But when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land.

And they took soundings and found it to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found it to be fifteen fathoms.

Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come.

And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow,

Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved."

Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.

After two weeks in the storm, the sailors finally sensed they were coming to some land. When they came into shallow enough water, they dropped anchors. Some of the sailors on the ship were making an attempt to escape, when Paul reminded the Centurion (the one who was in charge) and the soldiers that the only way "they" could be saved was if the men trying to escape stayed on the ship.

So they cut the lifeboat loose so that no one had anyway of leaving the ship and they had to totally depend on the Lord for deliverance. This was a big deal, because most of the 276 people on the ship were not Christians. The men trying to escape probably thought they had a better plan, but Paul reminded them that God's plan for deliverance was and still is the only sure way to be saved. **We should have courage and never lose heart because God is faithful.**

ACTS 27:33-38

And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored them all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing.

Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you."

And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it he began to eat.

Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.

And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship.

So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.

Paul had total confidence in the Lord to keep them all safe, so he encouraged them to eat for their nourishment and their survival. He openly gave thanks to God in the presence of all of them. So they ate and were encouraged and when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship by throwing the remaining wheat into the sea.

Paul's example of confidence in the Lord is a great example to us. We too, can have total confidence in the Lord and be encouraged no matter what the circumstance. **We should have courage and never lose heart because God is faithful**

ACTS 27:39-41

Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible.

And they let go the anchors and left them in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore.

But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.

When they saw a sandy beach, they decided to try running the ship aground. So they cut the anchors and rudders and hoisted the foresail and headed for the beach. The ship struck a sandbar that the sailors had not seen and because of the beating of the waves during the storm, the ship began to break into pieces.

ACTS 27:42-44

Now the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape.

But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from their purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land,

and the rest, some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.

The soldiers were accountable, with their own lives, if any of the prisoners escaped. So they made a plan to kill the prisoners so none of them could swim away and escape. But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life because he saw the value and worthiness of his life and stopped the soldiers' plans, but it was actually God who spared Paul's life. The passengers (soldiers and prisoners) and the ship's crew who could not swim were urged to float ashore on any pieces of debris left from the destroyed ship. As Paul predicted, the ship was lost, but no one perished. **We should have courage and never lose heart because God is faithful.**

Help

You will need club soda or sprite, modeling clay (a very tiny amount), and a clear drinking glass.

Before class make about five tiny balls of clay, each about the size of a grain of rice. Have the kids watch what happens when you pour a glass full of soda then drop tiny bits of clay into it. The bubbles stick to the clay and raise it to the top of the liquid. The clay then falls back to the bottom and the bubbles bring it up again.

Explain how God sticks to us always, and when we have trouble, He always pulls us up to the top, even though He doesn't always take us out of the trouble.

ACTS 28:1-6

Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta.

And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold.

But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live."

But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.

However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead; but after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

They were shipwrecked on a small island called Malta. The islanders at Malta showed hospitality and kindness; they made a fire for them and welcomed them. While Paul was laying sticks on the fire a snake came out and bit Paul's hand. The natives had some superstition that because the snake bit his hand he was a murderer, but Paul shook the snake off and he suffered no harm. The islanders were watching Paul to see if he would swell up or suddenly die. When he did not, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

ACTS 28:7-10

Now in that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days.

And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.

So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed.

They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary.

A man by the name of Publius took Paul and others to his house for three days. While Paul was on the island God used him to heal Publius' father and many others on the island who were sick. The islanders honored the shipwrecked men in many ways and gave them supplies before they set sail three months later.

Many of the missionaries we support face similar circumstances as they share Jesus with others. They travel to places where they do not know what kind of reception they will receive from strangers, or if they will even be welcomed. What a great encouragement it must have been for Paul and the others to receive such kindness and honor. God used this circumstance to reveal Himself to the whole island of Malta. **We should have courage and never lose heart because God is faithful.**

ACTS 28:11-16

After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island.

And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days.

From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli,

where we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days.

And so we went toward Rome.

And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.

They sailed on toward Rome, stopped in Syracuse and stayed three days. They sailed on further and when they came to a place called Puteoli, Paul found some brethren (or other believers in Christ) and he stayed with them seven days. Seeing the believers in the towns where they stopped encouraged Paul and he thanked God. When they finally arrived in Rome the centurion gave the prisoners to the Captain of the Guard, but because Paul was so trusted, he was permitted to stay by himself with only one soldier who guarded him.

Paul's example is a great example to us today. He was a prisoner on his way to stand trial, was in a violent storm, hungry, shipwrecked and even thought of as being a murderer by strangers. However, through all of these trials, God was faithful and encouraged Paul. He used Paul to be an encouragement to others. God protected him and kept him safe. He used him to heal others. He surrounded him with other Christians and He granted him favor with the Centurion. In the midst of the storm, God sent an angel to Paul to tell him to have courage and not lose heart, that He would be faithful. **We should have courage and never lose heart because God is faithful.**

Heart

You will need colored construction paper, scissors, and markers.

Show your students how to fold a piece of paper to cut out a heart. Let them cut one out and write the memory verse on it. Have them decorate the hearts while you discuss what it means to "not lose heart."

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for the faithfulness of God. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.