

Lesson #3-33

Saved by Faith

Galatians 1:13-17; 2:11-21

3rd-6th

Key Verse:

Yet we know that a person is justified not by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.
Galatians 2:16

The Point:

God loves us no matter what.

Making Connections:

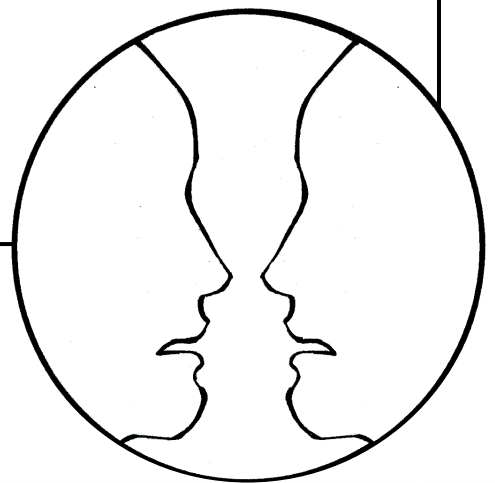
Birth of the Church

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

Letters

Spiritual Practice:

Fellowship



Activities a la Carte

Activities

Supplies

Into the Story

Mixed Messages

Life can be confusing.

10 min.

† Blindfolds

Bible Nuts & Bolts

Letters

Keeping in touch with early Christians.

10 min.

† Bibles

† Sample letters (a letter from the church pastor to the congregation would be ideal)

Learning the Story

Who and Why?

Understand what this letter is for.

10 min.

† Bibles

† Mural paper

† Markers or crayons

Living the Story

Our Church's Mission

Making sense of our purpose.

5 min.

† Mission or vision statement of your congregation

Additional Activities

The Damascus Road

Act out the whole story.

10 min.

† Bibles

† Optional: paper, pens or pencils

Activities a la Carte

Additional Activities

FaithorLaws

Play a game about law and faith.

10 min.

† None

Your Own Epistle

Write your own epistle.

10 min.

† Paper

† Pens or pencils

Bible Book

Optional ongoing activity.

5 min.

† Bible Book page (found at end of lesson)

† Cardstock or plain paper

† Pens or pencils

† Markers or crayons

† Optional: three-ring binders, hole punch

Sending the Story

5 min.

† None

Background for Teachers

Making Connections

As the early church grew, apostles went from place to place spreading the good news. Each place had its own challenges: different cultures to respond to, different governments, and different leaders trying to tell people the good news about Jesus. In today's Scripture, Paul is writing back to a congregation that he had started in Galatia. The people who have taken over in his absence have a different approach about how to include Gentiles in the church, and he is writing to clarify to them how he believes God's love should be shown.

Story Summary:

Saved by Faith

As today's passage begins, Paul is reminding the Galatians of how he came to believe in Jesus. Originally, as a devout Jew, he persecuted the early Christians. Then, God revealed Jesus to him, and his purpose became sharing this gospel (good news) with the Gentiles.

Paul writes about how he became angry with Cephas (also called Peter). At the beginning, Peter ate with the Gentiles, not separately as was Jewish custom. But when other Jewish Christians came, he stopped eating with them and remained separate. Others started following Peter's example.

Paul reminds Peter and the Galatians that a right relationship with God does not come through works, but through faith in Christ. Therefore, it does not matter if one follows or does not follow the Law. What matters is God's love for us, and the trust in that love that God grows within us.

The Point

God loves us not matter what. God loves us because God is love. Much of our lives are spent worrying about whether or not we are making the right choice. We can each take comfort in the fact that God's love for us is constant and powerful, and does not rely on our actions.

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

Letters

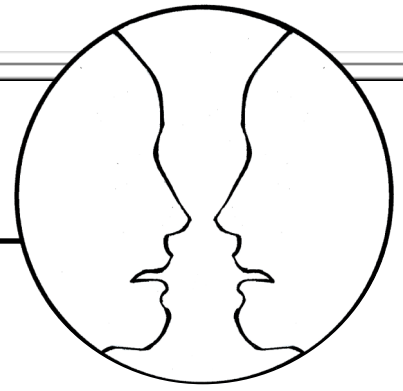
Today's Scripture is from Galatians, one of the many letters that make up the New Testament. The letters are often written to particular congregations (in the cities of Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, etc.), while some are written to a broader audience (1 John, 2 John, etc.). While exploring these letters, it is important to take into account the author, and what it is that prompts the writing of the particular letter. They are written in response to a specific situation, revealing much about how the theology and history of the early church were applied.

Spiritual Practice: Fellowship

In any community that is going to grow and last, there must be much careful attention paid to building strong relationships. The act of building these relationships is known as fellowship. What do we do in our communities to form connections with each other? One way to form relationship is to see how a common purpose might unite us. Just as early church congregations worked to identify their common purpose, so today we must look at how our mission helps connect our congregations.



Lesson Plan



Into the Story (10 minutes)

Mixed Messages

Life can be confusing.

You will need:

† Blindfolds

During class:

1. Divide the students into groups of three. One person will be blindfolded, and the other two will serve as guides. The guides may use verbal instructions, but cannot use touch.
2. Call the guides together and inform them: **You do not need to agree on your directions. In fact, you should try to lead your blindfolded person to the chosen destination by different paths.**
3. Have the guides blindfold their person, and then begin directing them towards the chosen destination.
4. After this activity is finished, say: **The people in the Galatian church were trying to be in a relationship with God and help others, too. But they were getting different messages from different people. How does having two people guide you in different ways feel? How do you choose whom to listen to? Is there any good that can come from these differences?**



Bible Nuts & Bolts (10 minutes)

Letters

Keeping in touch with early Christians.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Sample letters (a letter from the church pastor to the congregation would be ideal)

Before class:

1. Contact your church office and see if you can get copies of any letters sent to your congregation over the last year.
2. If there are no letters to the congregation, find other sample letters.

During class:

1. Pass around the sample letters. Have students identify the greeting, the body, and the conclusion of the letters.
2. **From its very beginning, the church has used letters to communicate with each other. Leaders may use letters to share information, to ask for money, or to convince people what to believe.**
3. Pass around the Bibles. **In the Bible, we have a number of early church letters. In fact, much of the New Testament is filled with letters written from church leaders to followers. Let's find the book of Galatians.** Help the students as necessary. Once they are to the New Testament, point out the four Gospels (the stories of Jesus' life and ministry), followed by Acts (the story of the church's beginnings), and then 21 letters. Galatians is the fourth letter.
4. **Let's look through Galatians. Try and find the greeting (Galatians 1:1-2), the opening prayer (Galatians 1:3-5), the body (Galatians 1:6-6:10), and the conclusion (Galatians 6:11-18). Many of the other letters of the New Testament are set up in the same way, and allowed the leaders of the early church to share their ideas about faith, church structures, and other issues with the growing church.**



Learning the Story (10 minutes)

Who and Why?

Understand what this letter is for.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Mural paper
- † Markers or crayons

Before class:

1. Post two large sheets of mural paper.
2. On the top of one sheet, write “Paul,” and on the top of the other, write “Peter”.

During class:

1. Students will be pulling out key points of the Scripture and putting them on mural paper. The Scripture is divided into three parts. Ask for three volunteers to read each section.
2. **We are going to start by reading Galatians 1:13-17 together. While it is read, listen for what Paul has to say about himself.** After a volunteer reads this section, have the students say what they heard about Paul. Write down the key facts on the mural paper that says “Paul”.
3. **Now we are going to read Galatians 2:11-14. While it is read, listen for what Paul has to say about Peter.** After a volunteer reads this section, have the students say what they heard about Peter. Write down key facts on the mural paper that says “Peter.”
4. **Our last section is from Galatians 2:15-21. While it is read, listen for what Paul believes.** After a volunteer reads this section, have the students say what they learned about Paul’s beliefs. Add these facts to the poster about Paul.
5. **Why do you think Paul wrote this Letter to the Galatians?** Use the posters to generate conversation, and then hang them up in your classroom. *[Answers will vary, but may include: to prove to the Galatians that he should be trusted and listened to; to be sure the Galatians knew Peter was being hypocritical; and to explain the importance of faith (over works) in right relationship with God.]*



Living the Story (5 minutes)

Our Church's Mission

Making sense of our purpose.

You will need:

- † Mission or vision statement of your congregation

Before class:

1. Get a copy of your congregation's mission or vision statement. If your congregation does not have one, then use one from your conference or denomination.
2. Make one copy for each student.

During class:

1. Have the students read the mission or vision statement of your congregation aloud.

Discuss the following questions.

- **What does this statement mean? How can you say it in your own words?**
- **What does this statement tell us about our congregation?**
- **Do you agree with the statement?**
- **Do you think it is important for congregations to have mission or vision statements? Why or why not?**

Additional Activities

The Damascus Road (10 minutes)

Act out the whole story.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Optional: paper, pens or pencils

Before class:

1. This activity can be done two different ways. You can read the story of Paul on the road to Damascus, and the students can act it out as you do. Or, students can read the story and come up with their own mini-skit to share.

During class:

1. **In the first part of our reading for today, Paul told the Galatians about what happened when he first began to follow Jesus. That story is in another part of the Bible, too, in the Book of Acts. We are going to find that story and act it out.**
2. **You will notice that in the story in Acts, Paul is called Saul. It is the same person, but Saul is his Hebrew name and Paul is his Greek name. Lots of people in the Bible had more than one name!**
3. If you are using the first option, turn to Acts 9:1-19 and read the story to the class. Ask them to stand up and act out the story as you read it a second time. You may assign different roles (Saul, Saul's companions, Jesus (the Lord), and Ananias) or have students act out each part as they hear it.
4. If you are using the second option, divide the class into groups of four to six students (or use one large group if you have a small class) and hand out Bibles and pens or pencils to each group. Ask the groups to read the story in Acts 9:1-19 themselves and make notes on how they can act it out. Let each group perform for the rest of the class.

Faith or Laws (10 minutes)

Play a game about law and faith.

You will need:

† Nothing

During class:

1. This is a variation on “Red Light, Green Light”. “Red Light” or stop will be “Bound by Law” and “Green Light” or go will be “Freed by Faith.”
2. Choose one person to be the leader. Have them stand at one side of the room, and then have the rest of the class line up on the other side of the room. The goal is to get across the room, without the leader seeing you.
3. When the leader faces away from the group and shouts “Freed by Faith”, students can move forward. When the leader yells “Bound by Law,” the students must freeze, and the leader can turn around to ensure that they have. If the leader catches students moving, they must go back to the starting line. Then, the leader turns back around and yells “Freed by Faith.” This continues until someone makes it across the room and tags the leader. The person who tags the leader becomes the new caller, and the game begins again (and again, for as long as you have time).
4. When it is time to draw to a close, gather the students together. **Laws are not bad, but when people think that they have to follow lots of rules so that God would love them, that is bad. We do not have to do anything to deserve God’s love. God loves us no matter what!**

Your Own Epistle (10 minutes)

Write your own epistle.

You will need:

- † Paper
- † Pens or pencils

During class:

1. **Many of the letters, or epistles, in the New Testament are written to encourage the new members of the church in the faith.**
2. **You are going to write a letter to someone who you think might need encouragement in their life.**
3. Once students have written the letters, make a plan for them to be delivered. If they are within the congregation, make arrangements to mail them through the church office. If they are from outside the congregation, students could take them home to be mailed or deliver them in person.

Bible Book (5 minutes)

Optional ongoing activity.

You will need:

- † Bible Book page (found at end of lesson)
- † Cardstock or plain paper
- † Pens or pencils
- † Markers or crayons
- † Optional: three-ring binders, hole punch

Before class:

1. Make copies of this week's Bible Book page on cardstock or copy paper for each student.

During class:

1. Hand out Bible Book pages.
2. **What are some of the important things we have learned from today's story?**
[Answers will vary.]
3. **On the bottom of your page, please write one or two important things that you have learned from the story today. In the middle of the page, draw a picture from the story or illustrate one of the important things you've learned. Don't forget to put your name on the back of the page, please!**
4. Optional: Collect and three-hole punch the pages, and put them in individual binders for each student to be kept at church until the end of the year. If you wish, you can investigate other options for binding the Bible books through a local print shop at the end of the year instead of using a three-ring binder.



Sending the Story (5 minutes)

Prayer

Before ending class, make a point to come together to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

Teach students their response, and then lead them in prayer.

Leader: **Sometimes we are uncertain what we should do.**

Students: Guess what? God loves us.

Leader: **Sometimes we argue amongst ourselves.**

Students: Guess what? God loves us.

Leader: **Sometimes we feel overwhelmed by rules.**

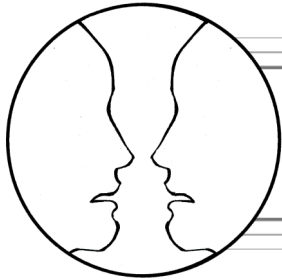
Students: Guess what? God loves us.

Leader: **Guess what? God's love never ends!**

Saved by Faith

Galatians 1:13-17; 2:11-21

I Learned:



The Story @ Home

3rd-6th

Living the Word: Teaching Kids God's Story
Narrative Lectionary, Year 3 (2020-2021)

Lesson #3-33
Galatians 1:13-17; 2:11-21

Last Week

A major disagreement arises in the early church, so the apostles gather together to discuss it and come to an agreement. This is the first church council (Acts 15:1-18).

This Week

In a letter, Paul writes about how he became a follower of Jesus. He proclaims that a relationship with God comes from trusting Jesus, not what we do (Galatians 1:13-17; 2:11-21).

The Point

God loves us no matter what.

Story Summary

Saved by Faith

In this passage, Paul reminds the Galatians of how he started following Jesus. Originally, he persecuted the early Christians. Then, God revealed Jesus to him, and was called to share the good news about Jesus with the Gentiles (non-Jews). Paul became angry with Peter. At the beginning, Peter ate with the Gentiles. But when other Jewish Christians came, he stopped. Paul declared that a right relationship with God does not come through what we do, but through faith in Jesus. Therefore, it does not matter if one follows or does not follow Jewish laws. What matters is God's love for us, and the trust in that love that God grows within us.

Bible Nuts & Bolts

Letters

The Letter to the Galatians is one of the many letters that make up the New Testament. The letters are often written to particular congregations (like the church in Galatia), though some are written to a broader audience (like the letter of 1 John). When reading these letters, it is important to understand what specific situations they are written for.

Practice: Fellowship

Sometimes a life of faith can feel like an obstacle course. However, Jesus came to remove obstacles that keep us from knowing God and knowing each other. Talk as a family about what makes it hard for you to know God and each other, and consider what you might do to remove these obstacles.

Next Week

Paul continues writing to the Galatians that they become right with God based on faith, not what they do. He declares that everyone is united in Jesus Christ with no divisions (Galatians 3:1-9 23-29).

Family Discussions

Use the questions below or other questions you think of to discuss today's Scripture reading (listed above) with your family.

- ✚ How do you think Peter felt about Paul reprimanding him?
- ✚ Why do you think Paul wanted to remind the Galatians about how he became a Christian?
- ✚ How do you think Paul's message to the Galatians made them feel?

Family Devotions

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. What is God's message to us? How should we respond?

Sunday—Read Galatians 1:13-17; 2:11-21

Paul and Peter approach Gentiles differently, and Paul reminds all that we are justified not by works but by faith and grace. Talk about a part of your life that feels overwhelming, and brainstorm ways you can support each other.

Monday—Read Galatians 1:1-12

Paul is writing to the Galatians because he is worried they are not following the teachings of Christ. Plant seeds together, and commit to nurturing them just as you nurture your faith.

Tuesday—Read Galatians 1:18-24

Paul describes his travels, and how his conversion led others to glorify God. Think about people in your life who help you see God, and be certain they know how they have helped you!

Wednesday—Read Acts 11:1-18

Peter reports about his vision of animals formerly called unclean, and how God declared them clean. The Gentiles, then, must not be considered unclean. Draw a picture of a dream that you have had. Describe to each other how the dream made you feel.

Thursday—Read Romans 3:21-31

Through Jesus Christ, we know that righteousness and faith are for all. Pray for people in the world who struggle with faith.

Friday—Read 2 Peter 3:14-16

The conclusion of this letter reminds followers to be at peace, and to be wary of people who misinterpret the Scriptures. Practice sitting together in peace for a few moments. Try not to talk or move, but to focus on taking deep breaths together.

Saturday—Read Acts 28:23-28

Paul attempts to tell people in Rome about Jesus and is frustrated by people's inability to understand and accept this good news. Commit to holding each other accountable in doing an extra act of kindness this week, so that others may understand God's love through you!