

Lesson #3-34

A Church Divided

Galatians 3:1-9; 23-29

3rd-6th

Key Verse:

For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.
Galatians 3:26

The Point:

God's grace is a gift for all.

Making Connections:

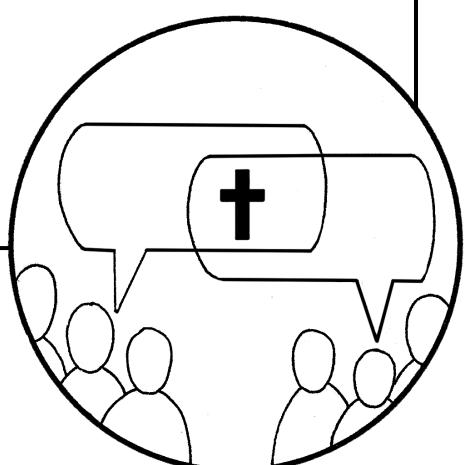
Birth of the Church

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

Paul's Travels/Bible Maps

Spiritual Practice:

Fellowship



Activities a la Carte

Activities

Into the Story

Promise to Abraham

God's promise begins with Abraham.

5 min.

Supplies

† Activity Sheet #3-34.A

Bible Nuts & Bolts

Paul's Travels

How far did Paul travel?

10 min.

† Activity Sheet #3-34.B
 † Bible maps or maps of the eastern Roman Empire
 † Current map of your region
 † Pens or pencils
 † Ruler, card stock, or paper
 † Optional: Internet-connected device, projector

Learning the Story

Are You Foolish or Free?

Paul questions the Galatians.

10 min.

† Bibles
 † Mural paper
 † Markers or crayons

Living the Story

Clothing Ourselves with Christ

Remember our call to love.

10 min.

† Assorted beads
 † Embroidery floss
 † Scissors
 † Masking tape

Activities a la Carte

Additional Activities

There Is No Longer...

Picture human diversity.

10 min.

- † Mural paper
- † Magazines
- † Scissors
- † Glue sticks or glue

Justified by Faith

What does it mean to be justified by faith?

5 min.

- † Index cards
- † Markers

Blob Tag

A quick-moving, team-growing game.

5 min.

- † None

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

The last two lessons looked at the question of law and faith in the building of the church. While Jewish followers of Christ continued to keep the Law of Moses, the Gentiles did not, and the apostles struggled with how to bring these two groups together in community. They concluded again and again that being a Christian was about trusting in Jesus and not about performing certain actions. In today's story, Paul continues to remind the Galatians of the power of the Spirit, and clarifies that those things that make others different do not make them any farther from a relationship with God.

Story Summary:

A Church Divided

As today's story opens, Paul is chastising the Galatians. What is his concern? The Galatians have been turning their focus back to the Jewish laws and have been measuring people by how well they follow them. Paul writes to remind them of the power of the Spirit, and how they began their faith by embracing this Spirit.

The letter highlights that the promise to Abraham in Scripture also included the Gentiles. The blessing Abraham received and passed down through ancient traditions has always been intended for all people.

Before Jesus, the law helped people to navigate their relationships with others and with God. Paul celebrates that in Jesus Christ we have freedom and that all are children of God. There are no barriers to keep us from God; instead we are all part of the blessing of Abraham.

The Point

God's grace is a gift for all. It is easy to draw lines between others and ourselves. It can be comforting to be on the inside, confident in our relationships and place in our community. There will always be differences between communities. There will be people who make a line between who is on the inside and who is on the outside. Paul reminds us that in spite of distinctions that exist, none of them keeps us from a relationship with God! God's grace is for each and every one of us.

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

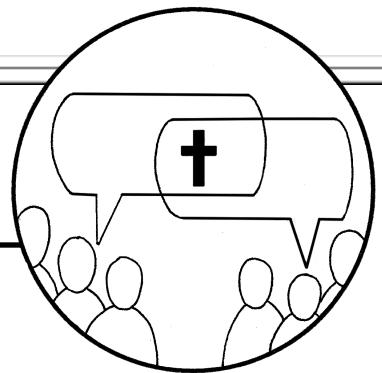
Paul's Travels/Bible Maps

To understand Paul's use of letters and his relationship with the people of Galatia, as well as with many other churches throughout the New Testament, it is helpful to understand the geography affecting these relationships. In the Bible Nuts & Bolts, students will look at a map and see where these different churches were beginning, and how Paul traveled amongst them.

Spiritual Practice: Fellowship

We are reminded in this Scripture about the importance of understanding and bringing others into our community. The church must be a community where all are allowed and encouraged to participate. As we fellowship with each other, we give opportunities for people to encounter God.

Lesson Plan



Into the Story (5 minutes)

Promise to Abraham

God's promise begins with Abraham.

You will need:

† Activity Sheet #3-34.A

Before class:

1. Cut Activity Sheet #3-34.A into the indicated pieces, making additional copies if you have a large class. Each student should have one piece.
2. Hide the slips of paper around the room.

During class:

1. After checking in with students, inform the students that you have hidden slips of paper around the room.
2. **There is one piece of paper for each of you. When I say “go,” look for a piece of paper. Once you have found one, return to the circle.**
3. Once all the students have returned to the circle, ask for one volunteer to read the slip of paper.
4. **Who gets to keep this blessing? [It is for each and every one of us!]**

Bible Nuts & Bolts (10 minutes)

Paul's Travels

How far did Paul travel?

You will need:

- † Activity Sheet #3-34.B
- † Bible maps or maps of the eastern Roman Empire
- † Current map of your region
- † Pens or pencils
- † Ruler, card stock, or paper
- † Optional: Internet-connected device, projector

Before class:

1. Find a map that would show Paul's first missionary journey or a map of the ancient Mediterranean. Some Bibles include such maps.
2. Find a map of your region that would be at least 400 miles (scaled) square. The more detailed it can be the better.
3. For both of the above, if you anticipate working in small groups due to the size of your class, plan to have multiple copies or devices.
4. Make copies of Activity Sheet #3-34.B, one for each student or for each group.
5. If you are using physical maps of your region, use a ruler and the map scale to create your own ruler marked with the distances listed on the Activity Sheet (15 to 170 miles). Make multiple if you will be splitting into small groups.
6. If you would prefer to use online resources, search for a relevant map of Paul's first missionary journey; a modern map of your region or a map website such as Google Maps; and a website that would allow you to create a map radius (search: map radius tool). Become familiar with each.
7. Note: the distances listed on Activity Sheet #3-34.B are approximates only and show only the outbound trip.

During class:

1. Depending on the size of your class, you may divide into small groups or pairs.
2. **Paul is writing to the people of Galatia because he has been with them and now has left to spread the good news to others. Over his time in ministry, Paul traveled almost 7,000 miles without modern transportation to start new churches. He did his best to keep connected with them as he moved from place to place, which is why we have the series of letters in the New Testament.**
3. **Today, we are going to look at where he traveled in his first missionary journey, which is found in Acts 13:1–14:28. We will look at how far he traveled between places, and then think about what a similar trip would look like for us.**
4. Break the students into their groups, and give each a copy of Activity Sheet #3-34.B and maps. Have them trace Paul's first journey and find the locations listed on the Activity Sheet.
5. After students are familiar with Paul's journey, direct them to the map of your region. Using the ruler marked with the map scale, have them find locations that are similar distances. For example, find a city, park, or other location that is 15 miles (the distance from Antioch to Seleucia) from your church.
6. Ask students to complete the table on Activity Sheet #3-34.B.
7. For an added challenge, work with students to plot out a continuous journey from your church using the distances of Paul's journey.

Learning the Story (10 minutes)

Are You Foolish or Free?

Paul questions the Galatians.

You will need:

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

During class:

1. Invite students to gather with their Bibles around the large sheet of mural paper.
2. **Paul starts today's Scripture reading by asking a lot of questions. We are going to write them all down as we read.**
3. Ask for a volunteer to read Galatians 3:1-5. Each time they get to a question, they should stop and take turns writing down the questions. Here are the questions they should have:
 - Who has bewitched you?
 - Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard?
 - Are you so foolish?
 - Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?
 - Did you experience so much for nothing?
 - Well, then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?
4. When you hear all these questions, how do you think Paul was feeling about the Galatians at this writing? *[Frustrated, annoyed, angry.]* Paul feels like the Galatians are being pretty foolish. So what would the foolish answers to these questions be? *[We received the Spirit because of all the good we do; God loves us because we have earned it; we did something right, that is why we are loved.]* Talk through the questions.
5. Paul cares about the Galatians, and he wants them to improve their relationship with God. So throughout the rest of today's Scripture, he tries to redirect them.
6. Ask for a volunteer to read Galatians 3:6-9. According to this, who is blessed? *[Those who believe.]*
7. Ask for a volunteer to read Galatians 3:23-29. How does Jesus bring us together? *[All are one through Christ Jesus, all heirs to the promise.]*

Living the Story (10 minutes)

Clothing Ourselves with Christ

Remember our call to love.

You will need:

- † Assorted beads
- † Embroidery floss
- † Scissors
- † Masking tape

Before class:

1. Gather supplies into one pile for each student. Each student should receive multiple 12-inch lengths of embroidery floss, 6-12 beads, and a piece of tape.

During class:

1. Direct each student to a pile of supplies.
2. **In Galatians, Paul tells us that we can clothe ourselves in Christ and that we should remember in visible ways each and every day about our call to share God's love with the world.**
3. **Today we are going to make bracelets to help us remember this call.**
4. Students might have experience making bracelets, so feel free to let them get started. If they need guidance, follow these steps:
 - Tie multiple lengths of embroidery floss in a knot at one end, and then tape it to the table.
 - Students can braid or knot the bracelets, incorporating beads onto singular strands that will then be anchored by further braiding or knotting.
 - They should continue this process until the bracelet is long enough to go around their wrist, with room for an easy knot.
 - Tie off the end before tying the two ends together.

Additional Activities

There Is No Longer (10 minutes)

Picture human diversity.

You will need:

- † Mural paper
- † Magazines
- † Scissors
- † Glue sticks or glue

Before class:

1. Gather discarded magazines. There might be some in your congregation's supplies, or you might need to put out a call to parents.

During class:

1. **We are told in today's Scripture that whatever barriers we might see, God's love is for everyone. We are called to remember this promise!**
2. In the middle of the mural paper have one student write the key verse: "For in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God through faith." Galatians 3:26
3. Have students find and cut out pictures representing human diversity (age, gender, ethnicity, style, religious, economic status, etc.) and glue them around the verse.
4. When the students have completed the collage, have them each take a moment to study it. **What is one thing you think is interesting about this collage? Are the images what you expected to see? Why?**
5. **Our key verse teaches us that even though people can seem very different from each other, those differences do not matter to God. God loves each person equally and calls us to do the same.**
6. Display this collage in the classroom.

Justified by Faith (5 minutes)

What does it mean to be justified by faith?

You will need:

- † Index cards
- † Markers

During class:

1. Hand out three cards to each student.
2. **Paul tells us in Galatians that we are justified by faith. That means that our lives are right and good, and our relationship with God is whole through our faith.**
3. **On one of your cards, write down one thing that makes it hard for you to have a relationship with God.**
4. **On another one of your cards, write down one thing that makes it hard for you to have a relationship with others.**
5. **On your third card, write down something bad that you have done.**
6. Once all of the cards have been written on, have students lay them in a line on the floor.
7. **All of these things represent what could be barriers between us and God, and between us and love. They are things that make it hard to connect. But Jesus came into the world to say that God loves us, no matter what. What happens to these barriers when we believe that?**
8. Ask a student to pile up the cards while you finish talking. **These things do not just disappear. They are things we should still work on. But we can work on them together, and we can do it knowing that God's love is always with us.**

Blob Tag (5 minutes)

A quick-moving, team-growing game.

You will need:

- † Nothing

During class:

1. Two people start out as the “blob.” They need to link arms and stand in the middle of the area.
2. The rest of the class gathers on one side of the room. Their goal is to make it to the other side of the room without getting tagged.
3. The “blob” must stay linked together as they attempt to tag the others.
4. Once tagged, the tagged person links arms with the “blob” and becomes a part of that tagging team.
5. Students run (or walk) back and forth across the room until the “blob” has gathered everyone.
6. Play the game a number of times to give different students a chance starting out as the “blob.” Gather the students back together. **When you think about the early followers, you can imagine that they were like a blob, linked together by their love for God and Jesus. They could have just stood still, but instead they moved all over, growing this community and trying again and again to connect people to the love of God.**

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)

We are all children of God, and are reminded of this in today's closing prayer.

Prayer

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

Repeat after me:

I am a child of God. (echo)

I need God's love and the help of my neighbor. (echo)

Turn to one neighbor and say:

You are a child of God.

You are loved by God and by me!

Turn to your other neighbor and say:

You are a child of God.

You are loved by God and by me!

Return to center.

Each of us are loved and each of us can love.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Promise to Abraham

God's promise begins with Abraham.

“...I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

“...I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

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Paul's Travels

How far did Paul travel?

The places listed are for Paul's first missionary trip. He took two more additional trips—covering almost 5,000 miles in those trips. What is 5,000 miles from us right now? Can you imagine traveling there without cars, planes, or trains?

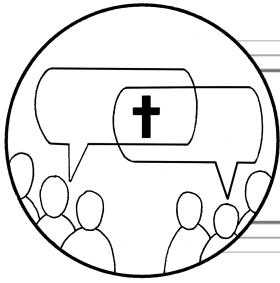
Destination	Distance from Previous	Equivalent Location (same distance from church)
Antioch (in modern Syria)	Starting Point	
Seleucia	15 miles	
Salamis (on Cyrus)	130 miles	
Paphos	85 miles	
Perga	170 miles	
Antioch in Pisidia	120 miles	
Iconium	95 miles	
Lystra	20 miles	
Derbe	25 miles	

Total Miles Covered (one way):

A Church Divided

Galatians 3:1-9; 23-29

I Learned:



The Story@Home

3rd -6th

Living the Word: Teaching Kids God's Story

Narrative Lectionary, Year 3 (2020-2021)

Lesson #3-34

Galatians 3:1-9; 23-29

Last 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).

This 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).

The Point

God's grace is a gift for all.

Bible Nuts & Bolts

Paul's Travels/Bible Maps

To understand Paul's use of letters and his relationship with the people of Galatia, as well as with many other churches, it is helpful to understand the geography affecting these relationships. Look up a map in a Bible or online of Paul's travels and see where these different churches were beginning, and how Paul traveled amongst them.

Story Summary

A Church Divided

Paul is frustrated with the Galatians. They have been turning their focus back on the laws, and have been measuring people by how well they follow them. Paul writes to remind them of the power of the Spirit, and how they began their faith by embracing this Spirit. God's promise to bless Abraham was for everyone, including the Gentiles. Before Jesus, the law helped people to navigate their relationships with others and with God. Paul celebrates that in Jesus Christ we have freedom and that all are children of God. There are no barriers to keep us from God; instead we are all part of the blessing of Abraham.

Practice: Fellowship

The church must be a community where all are encouraged to participate and there are no outsiders. As we build relationships with each other, we give opportunities for people to encounter God's love. As a family, what can you do to connect with someone new, to break down barriers between people?

Next Week

The Holy Spirit comes in power to the apostles on Pentecost. Paul writes to the Galatians that we are made children of God through this same Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; Galatians 4:1-7 [5:16-26]).

Family Discussions

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

- † Who is someone that feels hard for you to love? What do you think Paul would have had to say to you about this?
- † What does it mean to be a part of God's blessing?
- † What are some ways we can remind each other that we are clothed in Christ (Galatians 3:27)?

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 3:1-9; 23-29

Paul tries to refocus the Galatians on to the power of Spirit, and the inclusion of all people in the promise of Abraham. Do a neighborhood walk, asking for blessing on each house as you walk by.

Monday—Read Genesis 15:1-6

God promises Abram that his descendants will be as many as the stars in the sky. Go stargazing with your family or find pictures of the night sky. Can you count the stars?

Tuesday—Read Galatians 3:15-18

The promise to Abraham is older than the commandments given to Moses, and the commandments do not stop the promise. Talk about what rules or expectations you have in your home. Are some more important than others?

Wednesday—Read Galatians 3:19-22

Paul explains that the law is not intended to replace the promise between God and Abraham but to help people navigate their relationships with each other and God. Decide on one new family or household rule that will help each member show God's love.

Thursday—Read Galatians 4:8-20

Paul lets the Galatians know he is disappointed in their behavior, and concerned they are trying to take the easy way out instead of following Christ. Write a letter to someone to remind them that God loves them and so do you!

Friday—Read Galatians 4:21-31

Paul tells the story of Hagar and Sarah. Look through family pictures, talk about who your ancestors are.

Saturday—Read Galatians 5:1-15

Paul reminds the Galatians that their freedom should be focused on learning to fully love each other. Say a prayer together at mealtime, asking for help in always loving your neighbors.