

A Good Shepherd Early Church Story

Shipwrecked

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SHIPWRECKED ... MATERIALS

-medium wicker basket to hold

-wooden Paul figure

-wooden Captain Julius figure

-two wooden onlooker figures



—
Captain Julius



Paul



PAUL IS SHIPWRECKED ... ACTS 27

ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the story from its shelf. Return to the circle and sit down, placing the basket next to you.

Gently stroke one or more of the wooden figures to center yourself and the children.

Place Paul in the center of the storytelling area.

Shake your head as you touch Paul.

Move your hand to the right to indicate Rome in the distance.

Place Captain Julius next to Paul.

Move the figures to one area and stop. Then move them again.

Move the Paul figure away from the others.

Move Paul near Captain Julius and move them together just slightly in one direction.

Move Paul and Captain Julius as though moving from one ship to another.

Again, move the two men, just slightly.

Touch Paul as you speak.

WORDS

Children of God, watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make it your work today or another day.

Children of God, all of the words to this story are inside of me. If you will make silence with me, I will find all the words to this story.

The people in Jerusalem were still angry with Paul. They wanted him to be punished because he said God's word was for everyone ... not just them.

But Paul knew that he had done nothing wrong.

Paul asked that he be sent to Rome to be tried by the Roman Emperor.

When it was time to sail to Rome, a soldier named Captain Julius was put in charge of Paul and the other prisoners.

The first ship Paul was on stopped at several places.

At Sidon, Captain Julius let Paul visit with his friends who lived there.

When they left Sidon the winds were strong against them. They stayed close to the islands so the wind wouldn't blow their ship apart.

They stopped again at Myra, in a country called Lycia. There Captain Julius had them change ships. They got on a ship going to Italy.

But again the winds blew very hard. The ship couldn't go very far.

Paul knew that if they sailed late in the year, it would be unsafe because bad storms would start.

Place two sailors near Paul.

Paul talked to the crew of the ship. He said, "If we sail now our ship and the things we have with us are going to be hurt. And some of the people will die."

Touch Captain Julius and shake your head.

Captain Julius heard Paul, but he didn't listen to him.

Touch one of the sailors as you speak.

Instead he listened to the captain of the ship.

Pantomime pulling the sail into place.

Soon a gentle wind started blowing and the sailors put up the sails. They were certain it was a good wind to move their ship closer to Italy.

Lean forward and emphasize the word "very".

But the gentle wind changed to a very strong wind.

Move your hands in different directions to indicate the boat moving haphazardly.

The sailors couldn't really sail the ship, so they just let it go where the wind pushed it.

Move both hands as though wrapping a rope around something.

They had to tie ropes around the ship to keep it together.

Touch the sailors and pantomime throwing something overboard.

The storm became so strong that they had to throw some of the cargo into the ocean.

Rest your hand gently on Paul as you speak.

Paul told the people, "You should have listened to me when I told you not to sail. But my God sent an angel to me last night. The angel told me not to be afraid. I will live to stand trial by the Emperor in Rome. That means that all of you will live too. God will do just what God promised. We will lose the ship, and we will be shipwrecked on some island. But we will live."

Cover your eyes to indicate darkness.

Sometimes it was so dark the men couldn't see whether the sun or the moon was shining.

Emphasize the word "fourteen."

The storm lasted for fourteen days.

Hold your hand parallel to the floor at about one foot.

Then about midnight the sailors found that the water wasn't as deep as before. They were getting closer to land.

Touch one of the sailors.

Some of the sailors were afraid and tried to escape in the lifeboat.

Move Paul to face Captain Julius as you speak.

Touch first the sailors and the Paul.

Pantomime break bread. Touch each of the men as you speak of them eating.

Again pantomime throwing something overboard.

Point away from your body to indicate land.

With your palm flat, "run into the sand bank" along the floor.

Touch the sailors and speak softly.

Touch Captain Julius as you speak.

Lay two of the figures face down as though swimming.

Lay the other two on their backs.

As you speak, move all the figures to "land" and stand them upright.

But Paul told Captain Julius, "If the sailors don't stay with the ship we will die."

So the sailors with Captain Julius cut the ropes that held the lifeboats.

Some of the men hadn't eaten for fourteen days. Paul told them to eat so they would live.

Paul then took some bread and thanked God for it. The men all watched while Paul broke the bread and ate it. Then they ate some bread too.

After they ate they threw the wheat into the ocean to make their ship lighter.

When morning came, the men saw land. They didn't know what country it was, but they decided to try to get to it anyway.

They tried to steer the boat into the beach. But it got stuck on a sandbank, quite far from the beach.

Meanwhile the back of the ship was smashed by huge waves.

The sailors decided they should kill the prisoners so they couldn't escape.

But Captain Julius wanted to save Paul's life, so he didn't let them do that.

Instead he told everyone who could swim to dive into the water and head to shore.

He told the ones who couldn't swim to hold on to a piece of wood or other parts of the ship that had broken off.

Finally everyone came safely to shore.

The men had been shipwrecked on the island called Malta. They stayed there for three months before going on to Rome.

WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder why the sailors didn't listen to Paul when he said they should not sail any further?

I wonder how God felt when the sailors were in the storm?

I wonder if any of the sailors believed in Jesus after they heard Paul and escaped the storm?

Carefully place the wooden figures back in the basket, one at a time.

Without speaking, stand and return the basket to the shelf. Return to the circle and sit down.

Be sure everyone has had the opportunity to choose their work before dismissing the entire group.

Children of God, watch carefully as I put these materials away. Then you will know how to handle them if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

Watch carefully where I return this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

I wonder what you will do for your work today? Let's go around the circle and decide what each of us will do.

PAUL IS SHIPWRECKED ... TEACHER HELPS

The story of Paul's voyage to Rome is one filled with detail and adventure. There was no direct route from Caesarea to Italy so we are given, port by port, the route of the voyage Paul took. While this has little meaning to us today, it would have been a very common part of the language of Paul's day. Some of this detail would have lent validity to Paul's story, while the color of the story would have entertained those who listened.

The centurion, Julius, who is sent to accompany Paul is one of the Augustan Cohorts, like the centurion in the story of Peter and the vision of unclean animals. (*The Interpreter's One Volume Commentary on the Bible*, p. 764.) This leads us to wonder if perhaps Julius, like the centurion of the other story, was not a God-fearing man. It would certainly give some understanding to the deference Julius afforded Paul on this trip.

We are not far into the story before we understand that the voyage is being undertaken at a questionable time of the year. Travel on the Mediterranean was always closed from November 11 to March 10. Any trip after September 14 was considered a risk. The fast that is referenced in this story is probably the Jewish day of Atonement that was observed in late September or early October. (*The Interpreter's One Volume Commentary on the Bible*, p. 764.) No doubt Paul would have cast the best possible light on this by indicating that this setting made it more possible for God's greatness to manifest itself.

Paul was allowed to visit friends at Sidon. Those friends were probably fellow Christians. We don't have a record of Paul making a previous trip to Sidon, although it cannot be ruled out. We do have an understanding of how strong the ties were in the early church from this story. Though they had only heard of Paul, the early followers gave him everything he needed for his trip.

The picture painted by the words of the author is especially vivid during the storm and shipwreck portions of the story. It's almost as if we are there, being thrown around by the wind. The men were unable to eat for two weeks, most likely because of the seasickness caused by the severe storm. Paul was given opportunity to say, "I told you so" when the storm did just as he had indicated. And while Paul is the focus of our story and therefore important to us, it's understandable that a prisoner's word carried very little weight in matters decided on board the ship.

The darkness experienced by the sailors was most frightening, because they had only the stars and sun by which to steer their crafts. Without those guiding lights, the sailors had no idea where they were or where they were going.

Finally the ship sights land, only to run aground and be torn apart by strong winds. The soldiers' suggestion to kill the prisoners seems harsh. But we must remember that they were responsible for the men. If they failed to deliver their prisoners, it would be their own lives that were at stake. But Julius intervenes, mainly to save Paul. And all of the men from the ship, prisoners and crew alike, eventually make it to shore, either by swimming or by holding onto pieces of the ship and letting the tide take them in. There is a possibility that the words "pieces from the ship" may

really indicate members of the crew. **In** that case we would have an ancient example of lifesaving. (*The Interpreter's One Volume Commentary on the Bible*, p. 765.)

Our first wondering question asks why the sailors didn't listen to Paul when he told them not to go any further. I imagine the response will most often be because the sailors thought they knew more than Paul. Some children may say that the sailors didn't like Paul, or they thought they shouldn't listen to a prisoner. Children relate easily to this situation, because they are usually the ones who "don't know as much" so they function at the directions of others.

Our second question wonders how God felt when the sailors were in the storm. These are always fun because the children give us such open responses about God. They are usually not burdened with thoughts about omnipotence and omniscience. Some children may say that God was afraid or worried. But often children respond that God is the one who can take care of such situations. They may say that God wasn't worried. Or perhaps they will say that God knew it would all be OK. You may even have a child who will respond that God was angry that the others didn't listen to Paul.

The final wondering question asks if any of the sailors might have believed in Jesus after they heard from Paul and after the storm was over. The responses will probably be mixed. Most young children will believe that the escape from the storm would be enough to make the men believe. Older children may be more analytical. They may say that the men had probably survived other storms. Or maybe they will say that the men may have prayed to other gods.

Remember the wondering questions are intended to bring the child further into the story to help them explore all the possibilities. There are no right or wrong answers. Participation in the time of wondering is always good.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Paul seemed determined to go to Rome. Have you ever had something in your life that you **REALLY** wanted to do? What did you do to achieve your goal? If you didn't achieve it, what kept you from doing so? Do you think it was a good thing to get to do what you wanted or not?

Paul told the sailors that they shouldn't go any further. They didn't listen to him and ended up in a terrible storm. Have you ever warned someone not to do something, only to have them do it anyway? What was the result?

Captain Julius didn't want Paul to be killed, Why do you think it was important to Captain Julius that Paul remained alive? Were they friends? Did he want to hear more of Paul's stories of Jesus? Was he afraid he would be punished if Paul didn't make it to Rome alive? If you were in a dangerous situation who would you want to be with you?