

A Good Shepherd
Early Church Story
Priscilla And Aquila

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PRISCILLA AND AQUILAIVfATERL<\LS

-medium wicker basket to hold

- wooden Paul figure
- wooden Priscilla figure
- wooden Aquila figure
- wooden scene of Jewish people



Aquila



Priscilla



Paul



Jewish People

PRISCILLA AND AQUILA ... Acts 18:1-21

ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the story from the shelf. Carry it back to the circle and sit down, placing the story basket next to you.

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

Place Paul to one side of the storytelling area.

Move Paul to the center of the storytelling area.

Place Priscilla and Aquila next to Paul.

Touch first Priscilla and then Aquila.

Point to both Aquila and Priscilla. Then point to Paul.

Move the three figures just slightly in one direction.

Move Paul off slightly to one side.

Place the small scene of Jewish people next to Paul.

Touch the scene and shake your head slowly.

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, if you will make silence with me I will find all of the words to this story of God's people.

Paul, whose name had once been Saul, was a missionary of God. He went many places telling people about Jesus.

Paul had been in Athens. He left there and went to Corinth.

In Corinth he met two people of the Way. They were named Priscilla and Aquila.

Priscilla and Aquila were married. They worked together,

They were tentmakers. And so was Paul.

So Paul worked together with Priscilla and her husband, Aquila.

Every Sabbath Paul would go to the Jewish meeting place and talk to both Jews and Gentiles.

But then Silas and Timothy came to Corinth, too.

After that Paul spent almost all of his time preaching to the Jews.

But some of the Jewish people wouldn't listen to Paul. They said mean things about him.

Touch the Jewish people.

So Paul told them, "Whatever happens to you will be your own fault. From now on I'm going to preach to the Gentiles."

Move Paul a short distance from the Jewish scene.

Paul moved in with some other friends, who believed in Jesus and were baptized.

Touch Paul and close your eyes briefly.

One night Paul had a dream. In his dream Jesus told him not to be afraid. He said that Paul would be safe.

Move the Jewish scene close to Paul.

So Paul stayed in Corinth for one and a half years.

Finally some of the Jews gathered together and grabbed Paul.

Move both the scene and Paul slightly to the right or left.

They dragged him into court. They wanted the Roman ruler to punish Paul because he was letting people worship God in a different way.

. Shake your head as you speak.

But the ruler, Gallio, said, "These laws are about your religion, not about my government. You take care of it."

Move Paul and the Jewish scene out of the "court" area.

Then he told them to leave the court.

Move Paul, Priscilla and Aquila a distance away, but together.

A little later Paul left Corinth to go to Syria with Priscilla and Aquila. They decided they would tell more people about Jesus.

Touch the front of each of the three figures.

Finally Paul went to one city, and Priscilla and Aquila went to another.

Place your right hand, palm flat over your heart.

But God kept their hearts close to each other.

After speaking, carefully replace each of the wooden figures in the basket.

After speaking, stand and carry the basket back to the shelves. Return to the circle and sit down.

Be certain every child has had the opportunity to choose their work before you dismiss them from the circle.

\VONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder if it is hard to make a tent? I wonder what color their tents were?

I wonder why the Jewish people didn't like Paul?

I wonder if Priscilla and Aquila were sad when Paul left?

I wonder how you like to worship God?

Children of God, watch carefully as I put this story away so you will know how to handle it if you make it your work today or another day.

Children of God, 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 make your work today? Let's go around our circle and decide what each of us will do.

PRISCILLA AND AQUILA TEACHER HELPS

Rarely do we get a chance to catch a glimpse of a daily routine in the lives of Bible characters. That's part of the reason this story is so precious to us. Here Paul met a husband and wife, Aquila and Priscilla. They had been sent out of Rome by the Emperor Claudius. That most likely means that they were sent from Rome for teaching about their belief that Jesus was the Messiah. It seems that Paul found immediate friendship with the married couple. He was a tentmaker so were they. He was a follower of Jesus ... so were they. He had been persecuted for his faithso had they. Whatever the attraction, it seemed immediate. The story says that the three worked side by side. That brings us to the second reason this story is so precious to us.

Many times we cannot find a story in the Bible that treats women as equals. But that is not true in this story. Here Priscilla and her husband worked side by side making tents and preaching and teaching about Jesus. And this is not the only reference to Priscilla and Aquila. Both Romans 16:3-4 and I Corinthians 16:19 reference them as well. And since both of those books are thought to be authentic Paul, we have to believe that he thought very highly of the couple. It would have been much more common to exclude Priscilla and speak only of Aquila. But Priscilla must have been significant for Paul to mention her twice and Luke once.

This is yet another story about the Jewish people refusing to accept the changes that Jesus and his followers brought to their faith. They were very angry, and so was Paul. He gave up on them. There is a wonderful biblical phrase used here. "He shook the dust from his clothes." This means the same as "he shook the dust from his feet." Both are common ways of saying, "If you won't listen I will reject you and give you no more of my time and energy." It was not a common thing for the people of the Way. In fact it was more of a last resort. It seems almost as though having the dust from that particular area bound Paul, and others, to that place. But when the dust was shaken off, they could go elsewhere and be more effective.

The Jewish people didn't give up. They tried to have Paul brought before the Roman authorities and punished. But Gallio, wisely, refused to pass a judgment on a religious law. He left that up to the Jews. Please note that I have left out vs. 18 in our story. I believe that adding another character to this story would complicate the message for the children. However, if you have older children you may choose to add it and find a way to talk about it.

I also left out verse 18b. Obviously Paul had made a Nazarite vow. During that time he would not cut his hair or drink alcohol. At the end he would cut his hair and offer a sacrifice to God. Many people took a short term Nazarite vow as a way to come closer to God. But probably the most famous Nazarite was Samson, the Old Testament judge whose strength was in his long hair. Again, I felt it would complicate the story line.

Finally Aquila and Priscilla said goodbye to Paul. Perhaps the couple stayed and ran the church in Ephesus, while Paul went on. It must have been a sad farewell.

We wonder first about the tents. Are tents hard to make? What color are they? Don't be surprised to have the last question answered first. Many children have been in tents and they can describe them to the letter. Depending on the age of the children you will get a variety of answers about the difficulty of making a tent. Usually older children recognize the difficulty of something more than younger children.

In the second wondering question we wonder about the Jews. Why did they dislike Paul so much? While our story tells us that it was because he didn't follow their laws, we really struggle to understand the depth of their dislike. And the children may not know either. But it is an important question with which we struggle, and now is a good time to begin. Most likely the children will say the Jewish people were mean or that Paul was really different.

In the third wondering question we wonder if Priscilla and Aquila were sad when they had to say goodbye to Paul. That piece of emotion is left out of the story. But the children will most likely say "yes". They have friends whom they have had to leave. They understand the pain of separation.

The final wondering question asks the children how they like to worship. For very young children you may want to re-phrase that to ask, "I wonder what you like best when you sit in church (worship)?" Then sit back and enjoy!

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

Paul knew a lot of people, but he seemed to have very few close friends. Priscilla and Aquila were two that were close to him. It must have been hard for them to go different ways. Think of a time when a good friend of yours has moved, or when you have had to leave a good friend. How did you feel? What did you do to keep the relationship strong?

Paul, Priscilla and Aquila all had the same profession. They enjoyed doing the same things. What about your friends ... do they enjoy the same things you enjoy? What do you like to do together? What are some things you do that are very different from your friends? How does that affect your relationship?

We find a lack of tolerance about the ways people worshiped God in this story. What is your favorite thing that happens in worship? What don't you like? Describe an ideal worship service, in your opinion.