



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MARCH 26 2022

the inspiring minority

Scripture Story: Acts 19; 20:1.

Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles (or Unlikely Leaders)*, chapters 27, 28.

Key Text: Acts 19:11, 12.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Paul had to face great opposition when preaching the gospel. God not only used Paul to work miracles to guide the pagan population back to the true God, but He also gave him the courage he needed to face immense confrontation. Paul had to stand for what he knew was right, even if he had mobs chasing him down!

This lesson examines the courage of those who were willing to stand up for what was right in the face of an offended, angry majority. The majority was prejudiced against the Christian movement. Some hated Paul because he was affecting their profit in the sale of idols. Some hated Paul because he was adding to the Jewish belief system, a threat to the established power structure. Others had no personal reason to dislike Paul at all, but simply joined in on the public fervor, unwilling to be outside the safety of the majority's approval.

God never said that standing for the right would make us popular or part of the majority's clique. God did tell us, though, that He would be with us, that He would provide us with courage, and that we would be rewarded for our faith.

Facing opposition is never easy. It's never comfortable. God never asks us to face opposition for no reason, either. There are people without the strength to stand up who need a champion. There are people loaded down with questions who need to see an answer in your relationship with God.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand how a relationship with God gives us courage to face opposition. (*Know*)
- Sense a responsibility to stand for what the Holy Spirit tells us we must stand for. (*Feel*)
- Choose to live life courageously, living life to the fullest with God as our support. (*Respond*)

III. EXPLORE

The Great Controversy, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 8

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God's adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the global flood, as presented in the historical account of Genesis 1-11. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation (Gen. 3; 6-8; Job 1:6-12; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-18; Rom. 1:19-32; 3:4; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 3:6; Rev. 12:4-9).

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Give the students a list of causes and ask them to prioritize them. The first should be the one they would be willing to die for, and the last should be the one they simply don't care about. Examples of causes could be: world peace, a cure for cancer, environmental issues, freedom of religion, rehabilitating criminals, educating people on the dangers of smoking, and so on.

After the students have put the causes into the order that best represents their personal feelings, ask them why they ordered them the way they did. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. This is meant to get them thinking about their own priorities and values.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks paid her fare and boarded the Cleveland Avenue bus home from work one night. She worked at a department store as a seamstress, and she was thankful to sink into a seat.

According to municipal law, Blacks and Whites were segregated in virtually every aspect of everyday life. On buses there were "colored sections" where non-White people were permitted to sit. When the "White section" filled up, the people sitting in the "colored section" were expected to give up their seats.

On this particular night, some Caucasian people boarded the bus and the bus driver, James Blake, ordered the four people seated in the "colored section" to vacate their seats. Three of them stood up, but Rosa Parks did not. Instead she scooted in to the window seat. When the bus driver asked her why she would not stand, she said, "I don't think I should have to."

"Are you going to stand up?" he asked.

"No," she said.

"If you don't, I'll call the police and have you arrested," he said.

"You may do that," she replied. The police were called, and she was arrested.

Many years later, Mrs. Parks commented on that

night: "People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day. I was not old, although some people have an image of me as being old then. I was 42. No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in."

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Rosa Parks has gone down in history as a woman who was willing to "sit down" for what was right. Because of Mrs. Parks, and other courageous people like her, great advances were made in human rights. Generations after her have grown up in a much different America because of her decision not to give in.

God needs courageous people who are willing to stand up for what is right in the seemingly unimportant situations like a bus ride. He needs people who are not willing to compromise their beliefs or the peace of their conscience.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- What was the reason for Demetrius's behavior toward Paul?
- Do you think that Paul was aware of why the city had been thrown into an uproar?
- Do you think that the city clerk was courageous in facing the mob? Why or why not?
- What do you think had a calming effect on the crowd?
- In the mob, it says that "most of the people did not even know why they were there." What made them follow the group in this show of rage?

Extra Questions for Teachers

- Who began the riot, and why?
- Why do you think the majority of the people went along with the mob?
- Who acted in a courageous way? Defend your choice.

Use the following as other teachable passages that relate to today's story: Isaiah 44:6-23; Exodus 20:1-4.



Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

The Continuum

This is useful for discussing ideas that may be controversial.

Make two signs: one that reads “Agree” and one that reads “Disagree.” Put them on opposite sides of the room. Ask a series of questions and ask the students to stand at a point along the continuum between the two signs. (See the Closing Activity for sample questions.) Ask several students why they chose the position they did. Discuss why someone else might have chosen a different position. Do not judge opinions, or the students will not want to participate in the discussion.

RABBI 101

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

Ephesus was the home of the temple of Artemis — one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was built in 559 B.C., and there is evidence of earlier temples being built on the same site as early as the Bronze Age. Ephesus was an economically vibrant area, and merchants from all over Asia Minor were drawn to the temple of Artemis. The temple was constructed over a period of 220 years and was made of pure marble. Inside the temple was an idol of Artemis.

Festivities were celebrated each May, and Ephesus was the destination of many pilgrimages.

Demetrius was a silversmith who made shrines of Artemis. He would have made a good amount of money from the many tourists, devotees, and pilgrims who came through Ephesus to see the magnificent temple and worship there.

Paul was preaching that idols could not aid their worshippers and that there was one God who would hear the prayers of His people, and of this God, it was a blasphemy to create an image. Many pagans were being converted, so many, in fact, that it was having an effect on the profits of the silversmiths who made shrines of the goddess!

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

As mentioned above, put up two signs that read “Agree” and “Disagree.” Ask the students to stand in a position between the two signs in response to some statements:

For example:

- “I would be willing to die for something I believed in.”
- “I think people are more important than ideas.”
- “I believe that God wants us to stand up for the truth.”

Ask the students why they chose the position they

Teaching From the Lesson

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

• Key Text

Invite students to share the Key Text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

• Flashlight

Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book *The Acts of the Apostles*. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from *Out of the Story*.

• Punch Lines

Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.

• Further Insight

Ask them how the quote in Further Insight conveys the point of the story in this lesson.

did. Is there anything that they are willing to stand for, no matter what the cost?

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Having the courage to stand for your beliefs in the face of opposition is not easy. Paul faced an entire city filled with devoted pagans with a financial interest in their goddess's temple. And we all know how seriously people take their money! God was with Paul, though,

and protected him through it. In fact, God used a pagan official to calm down the crowd that wanted to kill him.

We can trust God to be with us and protect us when we stand up for what is right, even if we have to be the unpopular minority when we do so. God rewards us when we are loyal to Him, and He gives us the courage and wisdom to stand for what He thinks is important!



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Acts of the Apostles (or Unlikely Leaders)*, chapters 27, 28.