

ADULT STUDY GUIDE

This is the adult component of the Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum. This piece follows the **same scope and sequence** as the other levels: **Early Childhood, Elementary, and Youth**. This alignment presents some amazing opportunities.

- First of all, it helps all ages speak a **common theological language**.
- Second, it helps God’s people build an understanding of the **lifelong nature of learning God’s Word**—that we don’t just learn the narratives once or twice before moving on to other matters.
- Third, and critical to this curriculum, it helps **equip households** to teach the faith at home.

If parents and other adults spend time meditating and discussing the narratives of the Bible while the younger generations in the congregation study the same narratives, then there will be greater opportunity throughout the week to **reflect together** upon what the narrative says and what it means. In other words, studying the narratives of the Bible as adults is a blessing in and of itself, but it also helps **equip parents and faith leaders** to be more confident and feel empowered to extend those conversations into the household.

FEATURES OF THIS STUDY

This study guide is meant to provide some guidelines and springboards for discussion in your Bible study groups.

- The **first page** of each lesson provides the central focus statements, not only for the Adult level, but also for the other levels. Use this as a way to orient yourself to the **main themes and goals** of the lessons across all levels. You’ll also find helpful **tips for preparation**.
- The **middle two pages** begin with an introductory “**Launch**” section, which provides prompts for beginning the study and an open-ended reflection question to kick off group discussion. The following “**Learn & Live**” section breaks down the text into three to five narrative sections. Each one of these sections has some additional commentary, a reflection question, and some helps to better understand possible answers to the reflection question. The “**Leave**” section provides prompts for a final reflection question and some other considerations to close the lesson. The **sidebars** include leader tips and bonus activities to help you think through options for extending the lesson.
- The **final page** of each lesson is the student piece. Copy one lesson handout per learner, and distribute this at the beginning of class.

TIPS FOR USE

This study guide is designed primarily to help give you, the leader, some thoughts and prompts to help guide and assist facilitation of the class. Below are some tips for how to use it.

- This is meant to be a Bible study, so each learner will need access to a Bible. Encourage your learners to bring their own to class.
- Don’t neglect the lesson handout. The primary reason for this page is to create some space for each learner to reflect and engage the questions on his or her own. Often, any given group will have one or two vocal learners and others who may not speak up. Consider using techniques to help engage all learners in the process, such as having each learner write down his or her reflection privately before sharing, having each learner share with a partner before opening up discussion, or changing the seating arrangements to create small groups.
- Use the opening reflection question as a time to build community. Adult learners, generally speaking, desire to share their experience with one another, and this lesson starter provides an opportunity for this.
- For each narrative section, ask volunteers to read the text aloud while the rest follow along. Don’t force anyone; adults, like children and youth, may be self-conscious about their reading or public speaking ability.
- Download the Enduring Faith Page from the online digital resource center and hand out copies to your learners. Near the end of the lesson, talk through the prompts, which help the learners extend the lessons in their households throughout the week. Encourage learners to take this page home along with the lesson handout to be used throughout the week.

ALL OVERBOARD

Paul's Shipwreck
Acts 27:9–44
AD 57

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus guides and protects us.

LEARNER GOAL

I can identify, using examples in the text, how Jesus guides and protects His people.

BIBLE VERSE

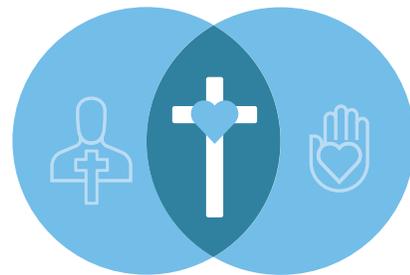
When I am afraid, I put my trust in You. Psalm 56:3

LAW & GOSPEL

When faced with troubles, I doubt God and do not trust His redeeming love. **Christ gives me certain hope and promises to bring me safely to eternal life.**

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

After appealing his right as a Roman citizen, Paul sets sail for Rome under guard of Julius, a centurion. They try to sail along the coast of Crete, but a fierce storm batters the ship for two weeks, pushing them out to sea. An angel tells Paul the ship will be lost but all aboard will survive. Paul encourages everyone to take heart and have some food. Then the crew cuts loose the anchors, and the ship heads toward a beach, where it strikes a reef. All 276 who were aboard arrive safely ashore.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God keeps me safe from harm and danger in this life and the next.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can trust God to keep me safe and guide me to my heavenly home.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

ADULT

I can identify, using examples in the text, how Jesus guides and protects His people.

YOUTH

I can describe how Jesus guided and protected Paul, and how He guides and protects me.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that Jesus guides and protects me.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know Jesus is with me and has power to help me.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read the narrative and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*.

MORE TIME Read **Acts 27:1–8** and **28:1–10** in *TLSB* with study notes for additional context.

IN DEPTH Read the articles on pages 1892 and 1895 in *TLSB* for historical and geographical background.



LEADER NOTE

Encourage your learners to each write down their own list, then compare it with a partner or a small group. There are no right and wrong answers, just an opportunity for people to share their experiences. People feel helpless for a variety of reasons (change, children, finances, moving), but it is an experience that is common to us all. Share your findings in your group, then point them to the text, where a group of people feel helpless and hopeless in the face of great danger, but God guides and protects them, using Paul as His messenger for His purposes.



BONUS ACTIVITY

This whole episode involves a lot of nautical terms and geography. Before really digging into the lesson, consider looking up images of Roman sailing/ cargo ships during the first century, as well as maps of Paul's voyage to Rome, and sharing them with your learners, giving greater context to the events of this narrative.

LAUNCH

WELCOME

Welcome the group, and open in prayer. It may be a good time to take prayer requests and pray, either now or at the conclusion.

REVIEW

Review the Bible Truth, Bible Verse, and Learner Goal. Then, begin with the opening question.

OPENING REFLECTION

Brainstorm a list of the top five instances in which you think people feel the most helpless in life, and why you think that is.

LEARN & LIVE

ACTS 27:9–20

BIBLE COMMENTARY

Paul is now on his way to Rome to bear witness to Christ before the emperor himself. Along the way, he is accompanied by Luke, who is recording the voyage, and Aristarchus, a fellow disciple and friend of Paul. Why these men are allowed to accompany Paul is not certain, but it appears that the centurion in charge of Paul, Julius, is favorable and generous toward Paul. Here they are on Crete, about to set sail from Fair Havens to winter at a more suitable port named Phoenix, not too far down the coast of the island. Paul, whether by prophecy or by personal experience, warns them not to sail, yet they do so anyway. The Roman ship is caught in a dangerous storm and is carried far from the planned destination. Along the way, the sailors do everything they can, avoiding sandbars (the Syrtis), jettisoning cargo, undergirding the ship, and bringing their lifeboat aboard. Though their future seems unsure, God will use this circumstance to ultimately bring Him glory and proclaim Christ to many.

REFLECTION QUESTION

After looking over this section of text, try to put yourself in the shoes of a passenger on that ship. What do you suppose would have been your emotional journey during this time?

REFLECTION HELPS

This question is very subjective and answers will, of course, vary due to learners' experiences. The passengers would have started out feeling wary and ended hopeless of their own safety.

ACTS 27:21–26

BIBLE COMMENTARY

In the midst of the raging storm and hopelessness of the crew, Paul addresses the passengers. He begins by reminding them that he had warned against sailing in the first place, which gives credence to his words. He then gives great comfort, saying that an angel of God had come to him at night and assured him that he would stand before Caesar and that all on board the ship would be spared. Though they will run aground and endure hardship, God will save their lives. Here not only does God show His faithfulness to His promise to Paul, but He also demonstrates His saving power to the unbelieving world. Many on board will witness miracles and the authority of God's Word.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Summarizing Paul in your own words, how is God going to use this experience for His ends? What comfort can you find from this in the Church today?

REFLECTION HELPS

Paul, using his previous warning as validation to his words, assured them that God was going to fulfill His promise to bring Him to Caesar, and that all would be spared. Despite hardships the Church today faces, God is faithful to His promises in Christ and will ultimately bring His people to heaven and restore all creation.

ACTS 27:27–38

BIBLE COMMENTARY

We now fast-forward to two weeks into the storm. During this time, the crew has drifted nearly five hundred miles west from Cyprus, and they quickly near land. It is likely that they are nearly starved, physically exhausted, and at their wits' end. One group of sailors, likely involving some of the leadership, conspire to abandon the rest of the crew in the middle of the night via the lifeboat, thinking this may be their best chance at survival. Paul sees this and informs the centurion that this course of action would lead to death. Amazingly, the group does not follow through on their original plan, instead cutting the lifeboat altogether! This likely signals how Paul had arisen as a true spiritual leader of the crew during these two weeks. After all, he had prophesied that none would perish and none had so far. In one last move, the morning before the wreck, Paul urges them to eat the last of their food for strength to face the challenge ahead. Here Paul offers a prayer of thanks before all. Even in this most difficult and suspenseful time, Paul bears witness to his faith in Christ in front of the 276 aboard. They then throw the remainder of their cargo overboard in anticipation of their final approach toward the island.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Looking at the text, how does Paul assume leadership upon the ship? What kind of leadership is it, and what can we learn from his example in the Church today?

REFLECTION HELPS

Because of the prophecy given through Paul, and God's preserving work over the two weeks at sea, the people listen to him. Today the Church can learn from Paul's calm presence in the face of trouble as we, too, trust in God's Word and promises.

ACTS 27:39–44

BIBLE COMMENTARY

The crew sees an opportunity in a bay to run aground, and does everything in its power to get as light as it can before beaching the ship and scrambling to shore. Typically, in a situation like this, the centurion would kill all prisoners aboard before making the final break, as any who survived and escaped custody would result in the centurion losing his life. Here, however, he stays his hand from killing any. He could have killed all except for Paul, but spares the entire group, indicating a likelihood that he trusted in Paul's prophecy and words, in essence believing in God's promise. Not only does God's Word likely bear faith in the centurion, it also bears fruit as all survive the shipwreck.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What are some potential possibilities as to why the centurion acted the way he did toward Paul and the other prisoners here? What does this show about how God works?

REFLECTION HELPS

Though it's possible he spared Paul's life out of desiring to accomplish his mission of bringing him to Rome, it's more likely that he had come to believe Paul's prophecy. God works through His Word, and His Word has the power to move people to both faith and action.

LEAVE

FINAL REFLECTION

Using examples in the text, identify how Jesus guides and protects His people as they go through the trials of life.

TAKE HOME

Equip your learners with ideas for taking the lesson into their households by giving them access to the Enduring Faith Pages.

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

If you haven't yet, take prayer requests, or encourage a volunteer from the class to pray as you prepare to leave.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Lead a discussion on the hows/whys/whens of daily prayer, pointing your learners to the sections on Daily Prayers and the Second Commandment in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017). When is daily prayer most challenging? When is it easiest? What can we do in our daily lives to help lead our households more intentionally in daily prayer? What can we learn from Paul's example here about the witness that prayer can have? Use questions like these to spark discussion.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ leads and guides us through the trials of this life to our eternal home.



LEADER NOTE

Jesus leads and guides us through His Word, usually using others who preach that Word to us in our trials. We do so trusting His promises even when we cannot see.

