

PAUL'S PRISON PROTECTION

The Plot
to Kill Paul
Acts 23:12–24
AD 55

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God protects us from our enemies.

BIBLE VERSE

Deliver me from my enemies, O my God. Psalm 59:1

LEARNER GOAL

I understand God protects us from our enemies.

LAW & GOSPEL

The world hates Jesus and those like me who follow Him.

Christ has overcome the world and is with me to the end of the age.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

When Paul's nephew overhears a plot by the Jews to assassinate Paul, he tells Paul, who tells his prison guards. They take the young man to the Roman tribune, who takes action to protect Paul from the plot. Now guarded by at least 470 soldiers, spearmen, and horsemen, Paul is safely moved to Caesarea to await a hearing before Governor Felix.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Acts 23:12–24 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*.

MORE TIME Read Acts 21–22 in *TLSB* with study notes for more context.

IN DEPTH Read the Fifth Commandment and its meaning in Luther's Small Catechism.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- "Protection" items as described in Leader Note
- Blank index cards, 1 or 2 per student

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Device with downloaded music
- Pens or pencils
- Student copies of *Explore Bible Guidebook*
- Bible
- Copies of downloadable activity page
- Supplies for bonus activities
- cph.org/digitalcontent



LEADER NOTE

Bring in items (or pictures of items) that denote various kinds of protection. Choose items that work for the age and interests of your students. Some suggestions include a police officer's or firefighter's hat, a raincoat or umbrella, a shield, bug spray, and a batting helmet. Include a Bible.



GUIDEBOOKS

Hand out student copies of the *Explore Bible Guidebook* and turn to Lesson 11.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Check the back page for the "Protection Thank-You's" activity to extend the learning.

LAUNCH

PRAY Dear heavenly Father, You are the giver of all good things, and that includes protection. Thank You for bringing us safely together today to study Your Word and learn how much You love us. In Your name we pray. Amen.

SING "Jesus, You Are Always Near"
"I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus"
Music can be found in the digital resource center.

SAY **What do all these things have in common?** (Show your "protection" items or pictures as described in the Leader Note. Listen to student responses and ideas.) **Protection. These are all items that protect us in some way. Why did I include this Bible? How does it protect us? Yes, it might be able to stop a flying bullet, but it also contains God's Word. God's Word protects us from our worst enemy, Satan. Throughout the Bible, we've seen God protect His people over and over again. In the Book of Acts, we have seen how God protected both Peter and Paul, and He's not done yet.**

LEARN

READ "PAUL'S PRISON PROTECTION"

Use the *Explore Bible Guidebook* to read the Bible narrative aloud to your students.

DO SOMETHING

FOR YOUNGER LEARNERS Give each student an index card. Have students sketch out their favorite parts of the narrative, or assign parts to different students; then have the group put the pictures in the correct order. If you have a smaller group, have each student draw two events (on separate index cards).

FOR OLDER LEARNERS As Paul sits in prison, all around him things are happening. To review and act out the narra-

tive, play a game of telephone. Choose a student to be Paul, and have him or her sit in a chair in the middle while words are whispered all around. Select one person to have the special message that gets to Paul, that gets to the tribune, that doesn't get to the Jews. Or as an alternative to acting out the story, simply use today's Bible Verse as the special message in your game.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- Paul's status as a Roman citizen was very important. It kept him safe in some very dangerous situations. The Lord knew Paul would need this, and He had it all lined up for him from the very beginning.
- The Word of God that Paul was preaching was unpopular with all sorts of people. This is true for us today. Like Paul, we continue to preach the truth of Christ and Him crucified for our sins, and like Paul, we cling to the hope of eternal life.
- When you read this account in Acts and the chapters before and after it, you'll find a number of names of Roman officials. This is a reminder for us that these events took place in a specific time and place in history. Remind students that this narrative is a true account of something that happened in history, not merely historical fiction.

LIVE

EXPLORE THE CONTEXT

Before you start the discussion questions, use the *Explore Bible Guidebook* for further details about Roman soldiers, found on the second page of Lesson 11.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose from the following questions. For a few helps, encourage students to look in the *Explore Bible Guidebook*.

- ▶ **God promises to protect us from our enemies, but who exactly are our enemies? What's the difference between an opponent and an enemy?** (Kids may think of those who disagree with them or who oppose them on a team as their enemies. Help them see that our biggest enemies are Satan, our sinful world, and our own sin inside us. Those who oppose God's Word are also our enemies. Some children may have real enemies trying to harm them, and even though those are rare, acknowledging them is important.)
- ▶ **It's no accident that God chose Paul, who had been a Pharisee, who was also a Roman citizen and had a unique ability to reach a wide variety of people. It was no accident that it was Paul's nephew who heard the plot to kill Paul. God put all these people in just the right place at just the right time. God does exactly the same with your life. What are some of the unique gifts that God has given you to tell of the Good News of Jesus right where you are?** (Help students to think about how they can proclaim the Word of God in their families, in their classroom, on their sports teams, in their dance classes, or in other social groups. Remind them that these different roles in life are called "vocations.")

SAY THE BIBLE VERSE TOGETHER

Deliver me from my enemies, O my God. Psalm 59:1

KEY DISCUSSION POINT

- Jesus' work on the cross has already delivered us from our worst enemy, Satan. The Holy Spirit continues to protect us from the world and our own sinful selves.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

As you wrap up this lesson, have your students write or tell you three things they learned in this lesson, two interesting things (new or old information), and one question they still have. You can do this with the entire group by writing "3, 2, 1" on the board in your class or on a piece of poster paper.

LEAVE

SAY God protected Paul from the plot to kill him. In an even bigger way, God protects us from the eternal consequences of the lasting effects of sin and the deceptions of the devil.

SING The Doxology, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"
"The Lord's Prayer"
Music can be found in the digital resource center.

PRAY Dear Jesus, You cover us with Your loving arms of protection. What a joy and comfort this is to us. Help us to share this precious love with others. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.



LEADER NOTE

If time allows, make a chart to compare and contrast enemies and opponents, talking about how they are alike and how they are different.



DOWNLOADABLE PAGE

Extend learning by printing the downloadable activity page found in the digital resource center. See the back page of this guide for details.



CHRIST CONNECTION

By dying on the cross for us, Jesus protects us from our ancient enemies of sin, death, and the devil.

DOWNLOADABLE PAGE HELPS

Make copies of the downloadable activity page found in the digital resource center. Use the helps below as a guide.

Talk about this page together before students begin drawing. Help them to see how God uses so many different people to protect us in so many different ways.

Students might draw parents, grandparents, an older sibling, police officers, teachers, or others. Point out that God also works through pastors, who preach the Word of God so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can face the devil's attacks.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God uses authorities to protect and keep me safe from harm and danger.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can support and encourage those who work to keep me safe.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

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

ADULT

I can consider different ways in the text and in my life that God protects His people from enemies.

YOUTH

I can relate God's protection of Paul in the text to His protection of His people today.

ELEMENTARY

I understand God protects us from our enemies.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God protects me and helps me do His work.

PAUL'S PRISON PROTECTION—THE PLOT TO KILL PAUL
Unit 9, Lesson 11

God Protects Us from Our Enemies
God worked through Paul's nephew, the centurion guard, the soldiers of the tribune, and through Paul himself to protect him from the Jews who wanted to kill him. Whom does God use in your life to protect you from those who could harm you?

Directions: In the space below, draw pictures of three different people in your life whom God uses in this way.

BONUS ACTIVITIES

UNCOVER THE PLOT

Times may vary

Give each child a piece of construction paper; have them draw a line to divide the paper in half. Glue the top edge of a half sheet of paper along line to make a flap over bottom half. On top half, draw Paul in prison with his nephew talking to him. Under flap, draw the people plotting to kill Paul. On the top of the flap, write today's Bible Verse.

PROTECTION THANK-YOUs

Times may vary

Talk more about the people in your community whom God uses to keep us all safe. Write thank-you notes and draw pictures to your local police, firefighters, and emergency responders. Include a favorite Bible verse and a line about how your class is thanking God for them and praying for their protection. Mail or hand-deliver the cards.

COMPARISON CHART

5–10 minutes

The plot to kill Paul is similar to the plot to kill Jesus, but there are also distinct differences. Use a Venn diagram (search for examples online) with Paul on one side, Jesus on the other, and the circles overlapping for the similarities. **Why was it necessary for the plots to kill Paul to fail? Why was it necessary for the plot to kill Jesus to succeed?**