

WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE

WHAT'S
NEXT?

BIG IDEA

We can share
the good news.

BIBLE

Paul in Macedonia:

Acts 16:6–15; Matthew 28:18–20

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Once you have finished a great puzzle, the next step is to share it with others so they can have a similar experience. This week, we'll hear about how Paul shared the good news and how Lydia decided to follow Jesus. Paul's life was completely different because of what God was doing, and he helps us see that **we can share the good news.**

LARGE GROUP TIME

It's our final puzzle-solving, maze-running quest together! Last time, we learned through the story of Peter and Cornelius how God wants us to love like Jesus does. *What's next?* Today, we'll go back to the story of Saul—also known as Paul—and see what his life looked like after he met Jesus.

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Good News Relay

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *In this variation of the telephone game with a bit of charades, invite four or five volunteers to the front. Have participants line up facing a wall, away from you. Tap the first contestant on the shoulder for them to turn round. Act out a piece of "good news" for them, like "I hit a home run," "I got an A," "I have a new baby brother," "I have a new dog," or "No school tomorrow." Have that person tap the next person to turn around, then imitate your motions. Keep going down the line and have the last person guess the original good news. Repeat with new clues and new volunteers.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Play a maze game like [this](#) instead. Explain how the air coming out of the balloon is like spreading good news.*
 - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *Choose simple good news phrases, like "God loves you," "you are awesome," "God is good," "Jesus saves." Have kids line up single file. Tell the first person the message, and they'll tell the person behind them, repeating until it reaches the last person. You can also teach the sign language for the phrases and have them sign to the next person.*
- **What puzzling challenge do you think awaits us today?** Riddle me this:
 - When you know something good and true,
 - What is the first thing you want to do?
 - Obviously, tell a person or two.
 - Don't keep it just for you!

- When we receive a piece of good news, our first instinct is to share it with someone. This reminds me of how God sends Paul and his friends to share the very best good news in today's Bible story.

ACTIVITY | Decode Together

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need one printed copy per team of the [message decoder printable](#). Cut each decoder into pieces and hand one or more pieces to each team member. Have each team work together to solve the coded message and touch their noses when they're done. Wait for all teams to finish, then have everyone yell out the answer together.
 - ✳ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** Convert this activity to be led from the front by a leader. This can be done by showing the printable on a screen, or writing it out on a board. Have the leader guide kids to find the matching codes and letters.
- **What secret messages did you decode together?**
 - What's next?
 - Did you know that Jesus loves you?
 - The quick brown fox jumps over a lazy dog. (This means nothing, but every single letter of the alphabet can be found in this sentence.)
- Because each of you only had part of the decoder, you had to work together and share what you knew to decode the full message.
- In today's Bible story, we'll learn that Paul, who was now a follower of Jesus, wasn't meant to keep what he knew about God to himself. That's why God directed him to a new place to share the good news.

POLL | Maze-able Journeys

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, have kids indicate their answers to each question by moving to opposite sides of the room, then discuss with each other why they chose as they did.
 - **Would you rather have someone tell you how to get through a maze or figure it out yourself? Why?**
 - **Would you rather do a maze with another person or a large group of people? Why?**
 - **Once you find your way out of a maze, would you go and tell people about it or keep it to yourself? Why?**
- We might find some things more difficult to share, like our favorite candy or the ending of a movie that we don't want to spoil for people. But when it comes to the good news of Jesus, God invites us to share it as much as possible with as many people as possible. Let's find out more in today's Bible story.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Acts 16:6–15 (Paul in Macedonia)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Like in Week 1, prepare a mystery box with a large question mark drawn or posted on it. Keep a Bible inside the box until it is time to read from it.
- **Answer this riddle in the form of a question, like they do on Jeopardy: a word that means "immediately following." What is "next"?**
- Great question! **What's next?** Next up is one final, puzzling, true story that comes right from the Bible.
- **Let's read Acts 16:6–10.**
 - If you remember, Saul was someone who once chased down people who followed Jesus, but after hearing from Jesus on the road to Damascus, Saul completely changed course and started following Jesus, too. He even traveled to lots of different places to tell people about Jesus. This Bible story is about one of those times.

- Paul and the people who were with him were ready to go wherever God led them. When they found that God was purposely leading them away from the places they were originally going to, they listened and went to Macedonia instead. It's a good thing, too, because it turns out that was exactly where they needed to be.
- **What's next? Let's find out in Acts 16:11–15.**
 - Paul and his friends traveled for a number of days and looked for somewhere to worship when the Sabbath day arrived. They bumped into a group of women and knew right away that they should share the good news of Jesus with them. Lydia was one of the women there who received Paul's message. But she didn't keep it to herself. She went and told everyone who lived in her house that they all believed in Jesus, too.
 - Being a dealer in purple cloth meant that Lydia probably lived pretty well. She chose to share what she had with Paul and his team, and from then on, she became an important part of Paul's missions. Lydia is even recognized today as the first person to become a Christian in Europe.
- Isn't that a-maze-ing? God really shows us the way in the Bible. **After we choose to follow Jesus, connect with God through prayer, and learn to love like Jesus does, what's next?** We can tell others all about it! That's the thing about good news—it's a shame to keep it to yourself. We need to share it.

BIG IDEA | We can share the good news.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need a foam board cut into six pieces using a craft knife—you can shape the edges like jigsaw puzzle pieces or make straight edges. Write one word of the Big Idea on each piece and hide them around the room. Invite kids to find the pieces and put them together in the center of the room.*
- **Now that we learned from the Bible story, what's next?** It's time for the Big Idea! Let's piece it together.
- **We can share the good news.**

STORY | A Time To Share

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a story about a time when you shared the good news about Jesus with someone else or when someone shared it with you. How did it go? What did you learn about sharing the gospel through this experience?*
- Sharing the good news about Jesus looks different for all of us. Sometimes, we plan a whole presentation beforehand. Other times, it happens unexpectedly, in the middle of a completely different conversation. But no matter how it happens, we don't need to be shy about sharing what we know. God will do the rest!
- Paul and his team went to Macedonia, not knowing that they would meet Lydia and share about Jesus with her. They went where God led them, and God gave them the chance to meet Lydia and help her begin a new life with Jesus.
- **We can share the good news.**

ACTIVITY | Good News Tag

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need painter's tape to create a giant [Pac-Man-style maze](#) on the ground. Have one person start in the middle of the maze and have four people enter from the corners. Everyone must stay inside the maze and follow the path on the ground. The person in the middle tries to tag one of the other players. Once they do, that player gets activated to tag the remaining players. Continue until the last person is tagged. Repeat with a new set of players.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Have preteens play an elevated moving maze tag game like [this](#).*
- The good news about Jesus is so powerful that once someone receives it, they can't help but want to pass it on to someone else. So when we share the good news with even just one person, that good news could reach so many more people.

- And why wouldn't we want to share with as many people as we can about who Jesus is, how much he loves us, and how we can be a part of his family? It really is good news.
- Tag—you're it! **We can share the good news.**

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 28:18–20

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the passage together.*
- After Jesus came back to life, before he went up to heaven, he gave his friends a super-important mission—the one we just read. We call this “The Great Commission.”
- I wouldn't be surprised if people were a little puzzled by this mission at first. It would be easy to tell people about Jesus if they could easily show people where to find and meet him. But how were they going to be able to tell people about Jesus after he had gone?
- Jesus didn't just tell them to go and make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey what Jesus commands. He also gave them a promise: “*And surely I am with you always to the very end of age.*”
- This means that we're not talking about someone who came and went. Jesus is with us forever. This also means that we aren't alone as we go and tell others the good news about Jesus. Jesus promises to be with us always, around every bend of the maze.
- **We can share the good news.**

VIDEO | *What's Next?*, Episode 4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).*

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

REFLECTION | Puzzle Station

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need a bin filled with small [brain teaser toys](#), maze workbooks, or easy jigsaw puzzles for kids to complete as they think about the prompts below.*
 - ✳ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *Give kids with disabilities simple tools they can keep in their pocket to share the good news. Brainstorm some good news phrases and print or write them on small cards for kids to literally keep in their pockets to share with others! You can also have paper invitations that invite the receiver to come visit your ministry to learn more.*
- **We can share the good news**, but sometimes, our minds are the biggest puzzle standing in the way of doing the thing Jesus wants us to do. When we take moments like this to think deeply about what God is saying to us, God helps us understand and see more clearly.
 - **Imagine you are Paul sharing the good news with Lydia and the other women gathered by the river. What are some things you might have said in your message?**
 - **What is the “good news” in your own words?**
 - **Why do you think God wants us to share the good news?**

RESPONSE | Sharing Posts

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need the [printable](#) on cardstock, cut into postcard-sized half-sheets. Give each kid a postcard and have them write a message on the back. They can then decorate the front of the postcard, cut the postcard into puzzle pieces, and place the pieces in an envelope or plastic zip bag.*
 - ✳ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Share encouraging tidbits with preteens as they puzzle about who they can share the good news with. Sometimes, a good place to start is just thinking, “I wonder if this person knows Jesus,” whenever they cross paths with someone.*
- Sharing the good news can be as simple as letting someone know how much Jesus loves them.

- On the lines provided, write the name of someone you want to share the good news with.
- On the left-hand side, write or draw a message to them.
- On the front, decorate your postcard and cut it into a few puzzle pieces. What a fun way to share the good news!
- We shouldn't be shy about the truth of Jesus. When we deliver these postcards, we share the best news ever. Deliver them proudly!
- We can share the good news.

MEMORY VERSE | Proverbs 16:9 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Learn the memory verse together using any combination of the resources provided: [memory verse coloring page](#), [sign language motions](#), or choose from [this list](#) of our favorite memorization techniques!
- **"In their hearts, humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps."**

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for always showing us what's next in our journey of following you. In addition to praying for others and loving them the way you do, help us to share the good news with them boldly. Give us the words to say and the opportunities to say them. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS**
 - **What prompted Paul to go to Macedonia?** *God told him to go in a dream.*
 - **What was Lydia's profession?** *She was a dealer of purple cloth.*
 - **What did Lydia do after she received the good news Paul and friends shared with her?** *She persuaded them to stay at her home because she was so thankful she had received the good news about Jesus.*
 - **Read Matthew 28:20. What promise does Jesus give at the end of this passage? Why is this good news to you?** *That he will be with us always.*
- **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**
 - **What is the good news?**
 - **Who are some people you can tell this good news to?**
 - **Can you share the good news without using words? How?**

ACTIVITY | Infinity Puzzle Cube

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need the [printable](#) on cardstock paper and duct tape. Give each kid eight cube templates and have them cut each one out and fold it into a box. Once they have made eight boxes, arrange them into two rows of four and loosely secure them with a rubber band. You can also use [foam counting cubes](#) to save time. Follow [this tutorial](#) for directions on how to make and add small pieces of duct tape. Afterward, provide [one-inch square stickers](#) for them to decorate the cubes and even add in the Big Ideas on each side before they can play with their new infinity cube fidget! See a worked example [here](#).
- From the moment we decided to follow Jesus, we have been discovering what's next. We talked about praying for others, loving like Jesus does, and sharing the good news. What's next? We keep doing it forever. We will never run out of opportunities to do all of these things, especially when it comes to talking to others about Jesus. **We can share the good news forever.**