

Aim of lesson

To see how a young church is built up in all aspects of its life on the central teaching of Christ crucified.

Bible background

Acts 18; part of 1 Corinthians.

Outline of lesson

Tell the class to look for the different people involved with the church at Corinth as you read through Acts 18:1-17. You could stop as someone identifies one of the sketches at the top right of the worksheet.

I give thanks to my God always for you

Think together about Paul's prayer for this church. Would he thank God for Aquila and Priscilla and the blessing of their home? Would he pray for the brave Crispus who, as ruler of the synagogue, may well have lost his job since he and his family had become Christians? Would he pray for this church growing up surrounded by violence, and for Sosthenes who had been beaten? Was Sosthenes a Christian – perhaps the one mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:1?

The problem at Corinth, Paul, is that ...

Tell the class that after Paul had left Corinth, the church there had some problems. Have them find out what the first one was by looking at 1 Corinthians 1:11-12. The class can then fill in what the problem was in their own words in the centre of the worksheet. You may like to show them who Apollos was from Acts 18:24–19:1.

A letter from Corinth

The church at Corinth wrote to Paul to ask for his advice on some things. Point out to the class the references in the workbook. They can look up the references to find out what problems the church wrote about. The subjects are:

- marriage – 1 Corinthians 7:1;
- food sacrificed to idols – 8:1;
- the Lord's Supper – 11:17-21;
- spiritual gifts – 12:1;
- the resurrection of the dead – 15:12;
- collections – 16:1.

Paul's reply

Over the next two weeks the lessons will consider some of the replies Paul made to the questions the Corinthians had raised.

As an introduction to the letter, the class should note who it was from, whom it was written to, where it was written from, who took the letter and how far his journey was. The class can use the following references to put into their own words one important point of teaching from Paul's letter. 1 Corinthians 1:10, 13, 21, 22, 31; 2:2; 3:5-7, 21-23. The teaching is that which Paul gives to answer the problem Chloe's household had brought to his notice, that of different groups within the church all thinking they were the best. He reminds them of the central point of the gospel that he preached: Christ crucified. Christ who had died for them and into whom they were baptised. This is the starting point of the answer to all their questions.

Have the class note that this letter is written to us too; it is addressed not only to the church in Corinth but also to all who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ: that can be each one of us. For us, too, the most important event of all time is that Christ died and rose again for us.

Digging deeper

Finding out about Athens and Corinth

This section compares the Athenians and the Corinthians, and draws some lessons for us. It might be helpful to have some books or website information about the two places in the first century.

Relevance to our lives

It is equally important that we do not follow other people or other ideas. The cross of Christ must be central to our lives too. You could discuss with your class how we might make the mistake of starting to follow other people or other ideas both inside or outside the church and so form groups of 'the young' or 'the old', 'the active' or 'the studious'.

Prayer

Ask the class to write a prayer about not forming exclusive groups but remembering that we belong to the one who died for us.

Other suggestions for activities

- If the class is producing a large map, they could bring it up to date – or they could use the maps in the workbook. Acts 18:18-22 should be included to bring Paul's second journey to its end back in Antioch.
- The class could dramatize the situation of Paul and Silas giving a report about their second journey to the church at Antioch.