

Aim of lesson

To learn, from the account of Paul's shipwreck, lessons about the ways in which our lives can be wrecked or saved.

Bible background

Acts 27.

Outline of lesson

Storm at sea

Ask the class about the final verdict of the trials of Paul which were considered last week. You may like to refresh their memories by reading together Acts 26:30-32 and to remind them, using the map, that the trials had taken place at the port of Caesarea, 25:13.

You may like to have the class work individually or in twos using the worksheet, and searching for themselves through Acts 27 to complete the narrative of the shipwreck. Alternatively you could read the chapter with the class, stopping at verses 12, 26, 32 and 44 for the class to complete the appropriate sections of the worksheet and discuss what they have written.

Good and bad

The last four boxes on the worksheet are to help the class consider the characters of some of the people involved in these events. Ask the class to discuss in turn the good or bad points of the character of Julius, Paul, the soldiers and the sailors. Bring out the change in Julius' character. In verse 11 he ignores Paul's advice, though he had already shown him kindness (v3) but later he wants to save Paul's life (v43). Perhaps he had learned during the storm to respect Paul's faith and the truth of what he said.

Get the class to consider Paul's faith during this terrifying experience. The Lord had told him he would witness in Rome, and so he had no doubt that he would arrive safely.

It appears from verse 24 that he had prayed for the safety of all on board.

There is not a lot of information about the soldiers or the sailors; but the sailors do not have Paul's faith in the angel's words; they prefer to try their own method of escape (v30), and the soldiers are more interested in their own job than in people being saved or the angel's words (v42).

Encourage the class to see how we can have similar attitudes.

Digging deeper

Paul in danger

During the journey to Rome all had to trust in God rather than in tangible things.

Relevance to our lives

Have the class discuss Paul's words to Timothy which are written at the end of the worksheet. Ask them what they have learned about holding on to faith and a good conscience or rejecting them. Ask also how they intend to hold on to faith and a good conscience during the coming week, and steer clear of shipwreck.

Prayer

The class could divide into groups to write the prayers which might have been said by Julius, Paul and the soldiers or the sailors when once safe on Malta.

Other suggestions for activities

- The class could write a letter that Julius might have written after these events, telling a friend about the unusual prisoner he had escorted to Rome.
- The class could bring up to date their map of the journeys of Paul.