

The Macedonian Vision



Scripture Reference: [Acts 15:36-16:10](#)

Suggested Theme: Missionaries go wherever God needs them to work.

Memory Verse: “Jesus said to the followers, ‘Go everywhere in the world. Tell the Good News to everyone.’” [Mark 16:15, ICB](#)

Story Overview:

Silas accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey. As Paul revisited the churches he had previously established, he invited Timothy to join them. The Holy Spirit actively guided Paul and his companions, telling them where and where not to go. While in Troas, Paul had a vision of a man from the region of Macedonia standing and begging him to come and help. By entering Macedonia, Paul took the good news of Jesus to Europe for the first time.

Background Study:

[Click here for an overview of the Book of Acts](#)

The Antioch church was the base from which Paul set out for each of his missionary journeys. Both Jews and Gentiles were members of this church. Jesus had previously commissioned Paul to teach both groups so the Antioch church would have had a particular understanding of his work.

Before Antioch, the Christian movement had been centralised in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem church was made up of Jewish believers. There were still tensions between Jews and Gentiles. In the time between Paul’s first and second missionary journeys, time was spent trying to work through some of these issues ([Acts 15:1-35](#))

Questions about the unity of Jews and Gentiles re-surface throughout Paul’s life and work. Even in this second missionary journey, Paul had Timothy circumcised so that Timothy could teach about Jesus in strict Jewish settings. Paul’s background as a Pharisee and his commission to teach Gentiles placed him in a unique position to teach about Jesus in all settings.

A Rough Start for the 2nd Missionary Journey ([Acts 15:36-41](#)):

Barnabas had travelled with Paul on the first missionary journey but sharply disagreed on who should go on the second. Barnabas wanted to take his cousin, John Mark, again, but Paul was firmly against this. John Mark had left Paul and Barnabas on the first journey ([Acts 13:13](#)), and Paul now referred to this as what some versions of the Bible describe as a “desertion.”

Paul and Barnabas could not agree, so Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus to retrace the first part of the earlier journey. Paul and his new companion, Silas (a respected Jewish believer from Jerusalem [Acts 15:22](#)), headed out overland and went north through Syria towards Lystra and Derbe, where he strengthened the churches.

Although they could not agree with this, Paul did not lose all respect for Barnabas. In later writings, [1 Corinthians 9:1-16](#) (verse 6 in particular), Paul used Barnabas and himself as examples of workers worthy of financial support. We know that Paul and John Mark worked together later on several occasions. At the end of his life, Paul even asked for John Mark and referred to the great help he had been ([2 Timothy 4:11](#)).

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas ([Acts 16:1-5](#)):

Paul had visited Lystra on his 1st missionary journey. He now returned and met a disciple called Timothy. Paul was impressed by this young man and invited him to join him on his travels. Timothy continued to be mentored by him in the years to come. [Learn more about Timothy's life here.](#)



A Vision and an Open Door ([Acts 16:6-10](#)):

The language used in this passage reveals the Holy Spirit is actively involved in guiding Paul and his group.

“Paul and the men with him went through the areas of Phrygia and Galatia. The Holy Spirit did not let them preach the Good News in Asia. When they came near the country of Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia. But the Spirit of Jesus did not let them.” Acts 16:6-7, ICB

Still searching for a place to preach, Paul travelled west to the coast of the Aegean Sea and the busy port city of [Troas](#). After so many refusals, Paul finally received a “yes” from the Holy Spirit through a vision during the night. In the vision, a man from [Macedonia](#) stands before Paul, begging him to come to [Macedonia](#) and help. The following day, Paul concluded that God had called them to preach the Gospel in [Macedonia](#).

This is the first record of the Gospel being spread across the Aegean Sea into what is now known as Europe.



Paul was a great example of someone who submitted his life to God's will. It was, after all, God's mission and not Paul's mission.

Up to this point, Luke (the writer of the book of Acts) referred to Paul, Silas and Timothy as "them." Upon leaving [Troas](#), Luke begins to use the pronoun "we." ([Acts 16:10](#)). For this reason, we can assume Luke has now joined Paul's travel group. After this, he is writing a firsthand account.

The next chapters in the Book of Acts cover the spread of the Gospel throughout Macedonia, Greece, and Asia Minor. After his travels, Paul would head back to Jerusalem. On his way, he stopped again in Troas, where a young man, [Eutychus, fell from a window while Paul preached](#).

- [Lydia Becomes a Christian](#)
- [A Jailer Becomes a Christian](#)
- [The Noble Bereans](#)
- [Paul Preaches in Athens-Mars Hill](#)
- [Priscilla and Aquila](#)
- [Paul in Ephesus](#)
- [Eutychus Falls from a Window](#)
- [Paul Goes to Jerusalem](#)

Way to Introduce the Story:

Provide a globe, atlas or world map to display today. Say, "Let's pretend we are going to travel to a far away country today to teach people about Jesus. (Let one of the children choose a country and find it on the globe or in the atlas.) What language would we have to know if we went there? What kind of clothes would we need to bring? What would we need to do before we left? In today's story we are going to learn about another trip that Paul took to teach people about Jesus."

The Story:

There were many Christians in the Antioch church. Some were from Jewish families, and some were from Gentile families, but they all loved God. Paul and Barnabas were two missionaries who were members of the Antioch church.

Once, some men from Jerusalem came to Antioch and told the Christians that Gentiles could not become full members of God's people unless they became Jews first. But Paul and Barnabas said this was not true. They travelled to Jerusalem and talked to the church leaders there about it.

The Jerusalem leaders sent a letter back to Antioch to tell all Christians there that what Paul and Barnabas said was correct. Gentile Christians did NOT have to become Jews first to be full members of God's people. Both Jews and Gentiles are part of God's people through faith in Jesus. There may be differences on many things, but all Christians need peace and unity.

After some time had passed, Paul began to think about all of the people he and Barnabas had visited on their 1st Missionary Journey.

When Paul asked Barnabas to go on a 2nd Missionary Journey with him, Barnabas wanted to take his cousin John Mark. Paul remembered how John Mark had deserted them when they were on the 1st Journey. He did not want him to come again. Paul and Barnabas had a very big disagreement about this.

Since they could not agree about John Mark, Barnabas and Paul decided to go on two different journeys. Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus to encourage the churches there.

But Paul went a different direction. Instead of taking a ship, Paul set out walking. He travelled to many churches he had established on his last journey.

Paul also took someone along with him to be a helper. He took a good worker called Silas.

On this 2nd Missionary Journey, Paul visited some of the churches he had started on his 1st Journey. When they came to Lystra, the Christians were happy to see Paul again.

In Lystra, Paul and Silas met a young man named Timothy. Timothy's father was a Greek, and most Greeks did not follow God. But since he was a little boy, Timothy's mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois) had taught him about God. Paul was so impressed by this young man that he invited him to join him on his missionary journey. Timothy left his family and began travelling with Paul and Silas, telling people about Jesus.

After Paul, Silas and Timothy left Lystra, they travelled to teach people about Jesus. Paul always tried to think about where God would want him to go. The Holy Spirit did not want them to go in that direction when they tried to enter Asia.

Later, Paul tried to lead the group into Bithynia, but he was stopped by the Holy Spirit once again. Paul was a missionary and wanted to go where God wanted him to go, but the Spirit kept saying "no."

Paul stopped in Troas to decide what he should do next. But God had a special way of revealing his plans to Paul.

One night in Troas, Paul received an answer from God.

A man came to him in a vision. The man in the vision was from Macedonia, and he stood and begged Paul, saying, "Come to Macedonia and help us."

Now Paul knew where God wanted him to go! The next morning, Paul told his travel companions they would visit Macedonia. Everyone prepared for the trip. There would be many adventures ahead of them.

Macedonia was part of what is now known as Europe. Paul was the first missionary ever recorded as taking the Good News of Jesus to Europe. Paul was a missionary willing to go where God wanted him to go.

And how about you? Are you willing to go where God wants you to go? Are you willing to do what God wants you to do?

Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download the slideshow](#), or [click here for the printable illustrations](#).

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Or use the video below.

Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story, while reflection questions encourage them to internalize its meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. [Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.](#)

Review:

1. Why did Barnabas and Paul not go together on the second missionary journey? (They disagreed over who to take with them)
2. Who joined Paul during his journey? (Silas and Timothy)
3. Where did the Holy Spirit not want Paul and the others to go on this specific journey? (Asia and Bithynia)
4. What did Paul see in his vision? (A man from Macedonia begging Paul to come and help the people there)
5. Where did Paul and his companions go after he saw the vision? (Macedonia)
6. Where is Macedonia? (In Europe)
7. What is a missionary's role? (They share the good news of Jesus with people, often in a place that isn't there home)
8. What does this story show you about the Holy Spirit?
9. What does this story show you about people?

Reflection:

1. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit didn't allow the missionaries to go to Asia or Bithynia. What do you think this means- what might have happened or how did the missionaries know the Holy Spirit wasn't allowing them to travel there?
2. Why do you think the Holy Spirit didn't want the missionaries to go to Asia or Bithynia on this trip?
3. How do you think Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke felt when the Holy Spirit didn't allow them to travel to Asia or Bithynia?

4. Why do you think God sent Paul a vision to tell him to go to Macedonia? How else could He have told Paul this?
5. What is something you wonder about in this story?
6. What question do you have for God about this story, or something related to the story?
7. How does the Holy Spirit help Christians share the good news?
8. Do you know any missionaries? Does your church know any missionaries?
9. Did you know you can be a missionary in your own city, today? You can share the good news with people you know, because there are people in your city, school, or neighbourhood that don't know Jesus. Have you ever shared the good news of Jesus and God's love with someone?
10. Is there someone you want to share the good news of Jesus' love with?
11. Close your eyes and think about the world. Is there a country you care a lot about? Is there a place that God might want you to share the good news with one day? Ask God to share with you His plans for you and if He is calling you to share the good news with people.

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. [A variety of prayer methods are found here.](#)

Song Suggestions:

- [I Can Be a Missionary](#)
- [Jesus Loves the Little Children](#)
- [L-O-V-E Song](#)
- [Roll the Gospel Chariot Song](#)
- [This Little Light of Mine](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Begin a map of Paul's Second Missionary Journey.
- If possible, obtain a missionary report from someone your church supports. Read this to the children and then write notes to mail to the missionary.
- To review, you or the children can draw a large outline of Paul on a whiteboard or piece of paper (even drawing with a stick in the sand works fine if you are outside). Then, after you have taught the lesson, ask the children to think about what they have just learned from the Bible. Have them write descriptive words or draw pictures inside and around the outlined illustration of Paul. When you see what the children are writing or drawing, you may be surprised or encouraged by what insights they have picked up from the story. This is also a good opportunity to correct or add to anything you might not have covered as well as you could have when you were teaching.



If you prefer, you can [download and print the illustration of Paul provided here](#) and then have the children write and draw on it for the review.

- Alternatively, if you are teaching a series of lessons about Paul, you might draw an outline of his body on a large poster or paper and then add descriptive words about him each time you study a new lesson.
- [Click here for the 16 lessons about the Life of Paul grouped together as a set.](#)



Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. [Free printables for this story.](#)

Crafts:



Use a globe or [world map](#) and discuss some of the different cultures and languages of the world. Talk about how you might teach the gospel in a few different countries.

- Make a relief map of Paul’s Journeys featuring the place in today’s story. If you are studying Paul’s journeys over a few lessons, then you could add more details to the map each time you learn about another stop on the journey. Instructions on how to make a relief map at <https://www.weirdunsocializedhomeschoolers.com/step-by-step-to-making-salt-dough-map/>



- Print bookmarks, trading cards or timelines ([printable pages](#)).
- Visit the [Teaching Ideas](#) page for additional activities and crafts.

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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets- Timothy joins Paul \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets-the Call to Macedonia \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Review: Create a "passport" that covers Paul's life. Good visual ideas and activities. It could be split up to go with several lessons or taught all together as a review of previous lessons concerning Paul found \(kidsbibleobjackson.blogspot.co.nz\)](#)
- To understand how another teacher explains what a missionary is, watch the ten-minute video at https://youtu.be/ZK6pOWNwd_s. The speaker references another church and a different Bible story, so you won't want to play the entire video for the children. Use this as an example and then say it in your way.

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