Priscilla and Aquila



Scripture Reference: Acts 18:1-28

Suggested Theme: In whatever career or job we choose, we can play our part in helping others know about God.

Memory Verse: “In all the work you are doing, work the best you can. Work as if you were working for the Lord, not for men.” Colossians 3:23, ICB

Story Overview:

In Corinth, Paul met a couple named Priscilla and Aquila. The three of them built tents together to earn a living. Whenever he was not making tents, Paul taught people about Jesus. After about a year and a half, Paul, Priscilla and Aquila travelled to the city of Ephesus together. Priscilla and Aquila stayed in Ephesus to make tents and tell people about Jesus while Paul continued his journey. A while later, when a great teacher named Apollos came to Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila invited him to their house and explained baptism’s real meaning. Apollos was grateful and went on to Corinth, where he continued to share the good news of Jesus.

Background Study:

Click here for an overview of the Book of Acts

Today’s story occurs in the last stages of what is often referred to as Paul’s 2nd missionary journey. This journey had started in Antioch. From there, Paul and Silas had first travelled north and then west across Asia Minor. Timothy and Luke had joined them along the way. Crossing over into Macedonia, Paul taught many people about Jesus. Escaping dangerous opposition from Jewish leaders, Paul carried on with some of his work alone. This was the case when he preached in Athens just before arriving in Corinth.

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Making Tents and Teaching People in Corinth (Acts 18:1-17):

Upon arrival at Corinth, Paul met a fellow Jewish Christian named Aquila and then Aquila's wife, Priscilla. While following Paul's journeys, we learn about Aquila and Priscilla and how they connected with Paul.

This couple were in Corinth because they had been among the Jews recently expelled from Rome by Claudius. History records the date of that expulsion as 49 A.D., which makes it easy to put a date for the church's beginnings in Corinth.

Paul had received excellent academic training but could also support himself in the tentmaking trade. He joined Aquila and Priscilla, and they worked together in Corinth. This allowed Paul to support himself while preaching and teaching people about Jesus.

After this initial meeting, Priscilla and Aquila are always mentioned together, and her name is before his name. Possibly, this denoted her higher social standing or perhaps she took the lead in teaching. Whatever the name order, they are a married couple working as vocational missionaries. They worked together as a team in their profession (tent-making) and in sharing their faith with others. Paul mentions them in a number of his other writings. Romans 16:3-4, 1 Corinthians 16:19, 2 Timothy 4:19

As he had so often done before, Paul first taught in the synagogue. Even when the synagogue leaders opposed him, Paul continued teaching the Gentiles in the community. The Jews from the synagogue tried to accuse Paul before the Roman-appointed proconsul, Gallio, but the case was thrown out of court.

Travelling to Ephesus Together (Acts 18:18-21):

Eventually, Paul, Priscilla and Aquila left Corinth for Ephesus. Priscilla and Aquila remained in Ephesus and seem to have continued making tents and sharing the Gospel. Paul continued on his journey.

Paul And His Journeys (Acts 18:22-23):

In these two verses, a lot of changes occur. Paul travels from Ephesus to Jerusalem to report to the church there. Following this, he completed his 2nd missionary journey in the same place it began, at the Antioch church.

Once again, beginning in Antioch, we learn that Paul then set off on his 3rd Missionary Journey. This journey would eventually lead him back to Ephesus, where he will confront the dark powers in this city.

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Priscilla and Aquila Teach Apollos in Ephesus (ACTS 18:24-28):

Apollos arrived in Ephesus from Alexandria, Egypt. Alexandria was well known as the intellectual centre of Egypt and held a world-renowned library. It was the 2nd most important city in the Roman Empire.

Although Apollos was a dynamic speaker who knew much about Jesus, he only knew about the baptism of John. There was a significant difference between John's baptism and the later Christian baptism we read about throughout the Book of Acts. This was a significant point of difference that these early teachers addressed a number of times.

The baptism that John the Baptist taught had been a baptism of repentance that prepared people for the coming of the Messiah (Matthew 3:1-12). Even as he preached and baptised people, John knew that Jesus would usher in a different kind of baptism involving the Holy Spirit. John's baptism became obsolete once Jesus was revealed as Messiah through his death, burial, and resurrection. Now baptism was "in the name of Jesus" and incorporated people into the new people of God. Peter first preached this distinction in the Sermon at Pentecost:

> "'So, all the people of Israel should know this truly: God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ. He is the man you nailed to the cross!'
>
> When the people heard this, they were sick at heart. They asked Peter and the other apostles, 'What shall we do?'
>
> Peter said to them, 'Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" Acts 2:36-38, ICB

Priscilla and Aquila did not publicly confront Apollos while he was preaching but invited him to their home to explain this difference. Their respectful manner must have impressed Apollos.

Apollos went on to Achaia (Corinth) to continue the work there. His Alexandrian education seemed to have helped him do well in the public debates with the Jews. Later, when Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthian church, he explained the role both he and Apollos played in establishing the church in Corinth:

> "I planted the seed of the teaching in you, and Apollos watered it. But God is the One who made the seed grow." 1 Corinthians 3:6, ICB

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Way to Introduce the Story:

Use blankets and sheets to form a tent in your teaching space. Tell today's story as you all sit inside the tent. "Today, we will learn about some people in the book of Acts who had a job making tents. Why do you think people needed tents in the first century?" (Staying overnight when they travelled, room for extra guests, etc.) "How do you think tents were made since there were no sewing machines? Who wants to guess who one of the tentmakers was in the Book of Acts? Let's listen to the story and find out!

The Story:

Paul was a missionary sent by the church in Antioch to tell people about Jesus. This missionary journey had taken him very far, and more and more people were beginning to follow Jesus.

In Corinth:

When Paul came to the city of Corinth, he met a man named Aquila and his wife, Priscilla. Paul must have been happy to find out that they followed Jesus. Priscilla and Aquila were tentmakers. Many people used tents. Some lived in tents, and others used tents when they were travelling.

Paul also knew how to make tents, so he joined them in their work. Paul worked hard and did a good job making tents with Priscilla and Aquila. But every week on the Sabbath, Paul went to the synagogue where all Jews gathered. He told them about Jesus.

Soon, Paul's fellow missionaries (Silas and Timothy) came to Corinth too. Paul was so happy because now they could all teach people.

But not everyone was happy to hear about Jesus. Some of the Jewish leaders were so angry at Paul that they made him leave the synagogue. As he left the synagogue, Paul told them that the Jews were not the only ones who could be saved. He would go and teach the Gentiles. (Gentiles were people who were not Jews).

And guess what?! A Gentile named Titius Justus lived right next to the synagogue. Titius Justus invited Paul to come to his house and teach everyone. After they heard about Jesus, they wanted to follow him. Titius Justus and everyone in his home were baptised. Many other people in Corinth were baptised, too. Even Crispus, the synagogue's ruler, decided to follow Jesus and be baptised.

Paul stayed in Corinth for another year, working with Priscilla and Aquila and teaching people. Even though some people rejected Jesus, Paul knew he would always be safe. He knew this because Jesus came to him in a vision while he was sleeping.

In the vision, Jesus said, "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."

Eventually, some angry Jews tried to get Paul into trouble with the Roman proconsul, Gallio. They told Gallio that Paul was breaking the law by talking about Jesus. But Gallio, the lawkeeper, told the Jews that Paul was not breaking the law and set Paul free. The crowd then turned on the Jewish synagogue ruler, Sosthenes, and beat him up. Gallio did not even try to stop them.

Leaving Corinth:

After a while, Paul, Priscilla and Aquila decided to leave Corinth. They sailed for the city of Ephesus. Priscilla and Aquila wanted to stay in Ephesus so they could make tents and teach more people about Jesus.

Paul Returned Home to Antioch:

Paul decided the time had come for him to finish this missionary journey. Paul had started his journey in Antioch and travelled great distances, spreading the Good News to everyone. Now, he returned to Antioch to tell the church about all the great things God had been doing while he travelled.

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Meanwhile, Priscilla and Aquila Stay in Ephesus:

Paul left for home, but Priscilla and Aquila stayed in Ephesus. While there, they heard of a great teacher named Apollos, who had come to Ephesus from Alexandria, Egypt. They went to the synagogue to hear him preach. He was a great preacher who told the people about Jesus.

There was only one problem. Priscilla and Aquila realised that Apollos only told part of the Good News. Apollos did not know about the new meaning of being baptised. He was teaching people the old meaning, as John the Baptist used to teach. So Priscilla and Aquila invited Apollos to their house and explained the new meaning to him. Jesus had died on the cross and had been raised from the dead. He was the Messiah. Now, people could be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ.

Apollos Goes to Corinth

So now Apollos was an even better teacher! He could tell people they could be baptised in the name of King Jesus and become part of his new people, having their sins washed away. When Apollos decided to go to Corinth, everyone was so happy. They even sent a letter to him telling the Christians in Corinth to welcome him.

Apollos went to Corinth, where Priscilla and Aquila first met Paul. Because he was such a good teacher, he was a great help to the church there in Corinth.

This story reminds us that anyone can tell the good news of Jesus, whether they are a preacher, a teacher, a missionary, or a tent-maker. What kind of job do you think you will have someday? Who will you teach about Jesus?

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various 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.

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.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the 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.

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Review:

- What was Paul's job? (Tentmaker)

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- Who were the husband and wife who were tentmakers? (Priscilla and Aquila)
- In Corinth, Paul made tents during the week and preached in the synagogues when? (Each Sabbath, which was Saturday)
- When Priscilla and Aquila moved to Ephesus, they heard a man named Apollos preaching about Jesus. Why did they invite him to their house? (He was not teaching correctly about baptism, so they taught him so he would understand)
- Who came to Paul in a vision while he was in Corinth? What did he say? (Jesus; he told Paul to not be afraid and to keep preaching the good news.)
- Who was the teacher and preacher about Jesus who came from Alexandria, Egypt? (Apollos)
- Why did Priscilla and Aquila talk to Apollos about his teaching? (They wanted Apollos to know about baptism through Jesus so that he could know and teach the full truth about the good news)
- What did this story show you about God or Jesus?
- What did this story show you about people?

Reflection:

- What do you think the tents that Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila made looked or felt like?
- How do you think Paul felt having Priscilla and Aquila with him as they worked on tent-making and preaching the good news?
- When you are at school, events, or home, do you have friends who you like to be with? If you have Christian friends at these places, how could you work together to show God's love to the people you're around? (Suggestions might include looking for the lonely people in the groups, praying for others, sharing the good news, serving, etc.)
- How do you think Paul felt when he saw Jesus next to him, telling him not to be afraid? Do you think Paul listened and wasn't afraid, even when the Jews argued with him and tried to hurt him?
- Paul hadn't been working as a tent-maker on his other missionary journeys. Why do you think he made tents when he was in Corinth? Why didn't he spend all his time preaching the good news instead?
- If you were Paul, where would you have wanted to go to share the good news?
- What jobs do you know about? How could someone show God they love Him or share the good news while doing that job?
- Does God ask everyone to be a missionary like Paul, travelling to other places to tell the good news? Why is it important that there are Christians who have other kinds of jobs too?
- What question do you have for God about this story?
- What part of this story will you remember and be impacted by the most?

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 lifelong 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.

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Song Suggestions:

- ABC: Jesus Died for You and Me Song
- J-E-S-U-S Song
- I Can Be a Missionary Song
- I’m in the Lord’s Army Song
- Rejoice in the Lord Always Song
- This Little Light of Mine
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- Make a “tent” out of sheets and blankets, and let all the children get inside when you tell the story today.
- List as many careers as possible. Let children describe how they can do each job in a way that pleases God. Guide them in thinking of ways to share about Jesus while doing that job. Example: Doctor- treat patients kindly, give free service to poor people, tell other doctors about Jesus. Scientists- help show ways that God created the earth.
- Older children can write newspaper ads for jobs- listing Christian and other job qualifications.
- Research online to find out more about tent making in New Testament times.
- If the weather is right and you are ambitious, plan a camping trip with families and children.
- Invite some parents or members of the church to come and tell the children about their jobs and the opportunities they have to share the gospel with others.

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- 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.
- Click here for the 16 lessons about the Life of Paul grouped together.

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

Crafts:

- Make a collage showing different careers
- 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, 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 can be found at https://www.weirdunsocializedhomeschoolers.com/step-by-step-to-making-salt-dough-map/.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

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Other Online Resources:

- Craft, How to make a play tent (ehow.com)
- Craft, Make a Tent: Great ideas on how to make simple tents, especially when talking about Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila being tent makers. All kids love tents, and they could be made from any spare

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material (kidsbibledebjackson.blogspot.co.nz)

- Lesson plan and activities (sundayschoolsources.com)
- 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 (kidsbibledebjackson.blogspot.co.nz)

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