

# Paul on Trial

Scripture Reference: [Acts 24-26](#)



**Suggested Emphasis:** Tell others about Jesus.



Background Study



Story Introduction



Telling the Story



Review Questions



Songs



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## Story Overview:

Paul had been falsely accused of starting riots and defiling the temple. Although innocent of these accusations Paul was kept in prison in Caesarea where he appeared before a succession of governors and leaders including Felix, Festus and even the Roman-appointed Jewish King, Agrippa. At each court appearance Paul spoke freely about his Christian faith. His accusers could never prove him guilty and Paul eventually used his right as a Roman citizen to ask to be sent to Rome to appear before Caesar's court.

## Background Study:

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

Previously, in Jerusalem (see [Paul's Nephew Uncover a Plot](#)), Paul had been attacked and falsely accused of causing riots and defiling the temple. Wishing to avoid civil unrest a Roman commander had secretly transferred Paul, under protective guard, to the governor's court in the city of Caesarea Maritima.

The city of Caesarea Maritima, on the Mediterranean coast of Israel, was built up by Herod the Great and the remaining ruins can be visited today. Herod constructed a large port and a grand palace. Caesarea became the centre of Roman government for the Judea region and was also home to the Roman legion. Earlier, in Acts, it was home to the first Gentile Christian, Cornelius. (see [Cornelius Becomes a Christian](#)).

The current lesson opens with Paul under guard in Herod's Palace awaiting the arrival of his accusers from Jerusalem. Prisoners would have been kept in the palace because it served as a place to conduct Roman government business as well as a residence. You can read more about Caesarea and view photographs and maps at websites such as [biblehistory.com](http://biblehistory.com), [biblewalks.com](http://biblewalks.com), [bibleplaces.com](http://bibleplaces.com) or [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caesarea\\_Maritima](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caesarea_Maritima).

Because he was a Roman citizen Paul's rights were protected and his original accusers from Jerusalem had to make their case against him before a Roman official. Eventually, Paul would stay on in Caesarea Maritima for more than two years and appear before a number of government officials and important people. In every case he took advantage of the opportunity to speak about Jesus.

1. Appearing Before Governor Felix: (Acts 24:1-26) This first court appearance took place five days after Paul arrived in Caesarea. The High Priest, Ananias, and a lawyer, Tertullus, came from Jerusalem to make their accusations before Felix. But after hearing from both sides Felix was not convinced of the accusations. He dismissed Ananias and the other accusers and said he would decide the case when the original commander from Jerusalem came to the court in Caesarea. This seems to be a move by Felix to stall the proceedings. Although he allowed Paul some freedom and let his friends tend to him Felix kept Paul in prison for two years hoping in vain that Paul would give him a bribe to secure his freedom. Paul was able to talk about Jesus often. Although Felix and his wife, Drusilla, often called Paul out of the prison just to hear him talk about faith in Jesus they never made a commitment and become followers of Jesus themselves.
2. Appearing Before Governor Porcius Festus: (Acts 24:27-25:12) After the two years had passed a new governor, Porcius Festus, replaced Felix. As the new ruler of Judaea Festus wanted to keep the Jews on his side. Just three days after being installed Festus travelled up to Jerusalem where the Jewish leaders unsuccessfully tried to persuade him to transfer Paul there. Festus did not comply to their wishes so, once again, the Jewish leaders had to travel down to Caesarea and appear before Festus' official court. Even so, they were still unable to make a case. Paul defended himself. Still trying to appease the Jews Festus asked Paul if he was willing to travel to Jerusalem to stand trial. Paul not only refused but also used his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar. Festus was now obligated to send Paul to Rome to the highest courts.
3. Appearing Before King Agrippa, High Officials and Men of the City: (Acts 25:13-26:32) While Festus was still contemplating this turn of events, the Roman-appointed king of the Jews, King Agrippa, and his wife, Bernice, came to Caesarea Maritima to pay their respects to the new governor. King Agrippa was the Jewish leader approved by Rome so, again, Festus needed to impress him. Festus told them all about the prisoner (Paul) and how the former governor, Felix, had left him with this dilemma. Agrippa found this very interesting and wanted to meet Paul. Felix planned a large and ostentatious gathering with Agrippa, high-ranking officials and the important men of the city. During the gathering Paul was brought before the group. Paul did not waste this opportunity to share his testimony with all of these important people. He told about his formal education, strict adherence to Jewish law and his fanatical campaign against Christians before he eventually encountered Jesus. He described, in detail, what Jesus had told him to do (see [Paul Becomes a Christian](#)). Agrippa and the others were impressed with what Paul had to say.

*"Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?'*

*Paul replied, 'Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.' Acts 26:28-29, NIV*

Agrippa told Festus that Paul could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar. He agreed that Festus now had no choice but to send Paul to Rome.





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## Way to Introduce the Story:

“Let’s play a game. Let’s pretend that everyone who has the letters “A,E,I, O, or U” in their name has a disease called NOSE DISEASE. This pretend disease will make you grow an extra nose tonight when you are sleeping. That would be terrible!!! No one want’s to grow an extra nose, do they?”

Now, let’s pretend that I know some special words that will make Nose Disease go away. Would you want me to tell you the special words? Of course you would! You would feel very sad if I knew the special words but refused to tell you. Who wants to hear the pretend words?” (You could whisper something like “nose, nose, blow away” in each child’s ear).

Did you know that Paul had something very special to tell people? Something that would save them from something even worse than Nose Disease? Paul wanted to tell everyone about Jesus because Jesus could save everyone from their sins. Today we are going to learn how Paul told people about Jesus even when he was in a court room.

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## The Story:

Paul was a man who loved God. He was a missionary who travelled to many places telling people about Jesus. He was also an educated man and a Roman citizen.

Being a Roman citizen meant that Paul had special rights. Roman citizens could not be put in prison unless someone could prove they were guilty. A Roman citizen had a right to a trial in a court of law.

The High Priest and other Jewish leaders from Jerusalem had accused Paul of being a troublemaker. They told lies and said he had disrespected God’s temple and tried to cause riots. They even wanted him put to death.

But, since Paul was a Roman citizen, he had the right to appear before a Roman official in a court of law. A Roman official could listen to all of the evidence and decide whether or not the accusations were fair and true.

So Paul was taken to the Roman city of Caesarea for a trial before the Roman governor, Felix. The Jewish leaders who had accused Paul brought a lawyer, Tertullus, with them to the trial. The lawyer tried to convince the governor that Paul deserved to be punished.

When Paul was given the chance to speak to Felix, the governor, he told Felix that he was not a troublemaker. Paul said that he had been to the temple but he showed respect when he was there. He said that he worshipped God but he followed the way of Jesus.

Paul said that other people were making false accusations against him and that Felix could check this out by investigating the facts.

Felix, the governor, listened to both sides very carefully but he could not make a decision about who was telling the truth. Felix did not want to make a decision yet. Maybe everyone should wait until the Roman commander

came from Jerusalem to say what he thought the truth was.

So Felix decided that Paul should stay in prison in Caesarea until the Roman commander from Jerusalem came to Caesarea and told his side of the story.

So Paul stayed in the prison in the place known as Herod's Palace. Felix allowed him some freedom and let Paul's friends take care of him. Felix and his wife, Drusilla, also liked to invite Paul to come to them and talk about faith in Jesus Christ.

But Felix did not want to follow Jesus. In fact, part of the reason he kept listening to Paul was because he hoped Paul would pay him a bribe to get out of prison. But Paul did not pay a bribe and ended up staying in prison for two years waiting for a fair trial.

After two years a new governor replaced Felix. The new governor's name was Festus. Once again, the Jews from Jerusalem made accusations against Paul. They told Governor Festus that he should send Paul back to Jerusalem. They said it was so he could have another trial in Jerusalem but really it was just a trick. Going back to Jerusalem would be very dangerous for Paul. If he went back to Jerusalem they would kill him.

Governor Festus called everyone together for a new trial. He asked Paul to tell his side of the story. After hearing this Festus knew the Jews did not have enough proof against Paul. It would not be fair to say Paul was guilty.

But the Jewish leaders were very powerful and Governor Festus did not want to make a decision that would make them angry. He asked Paul if he would be willing to go back to Jerusalem and let the Jewish leaders make the decision. Paul knew that the Jews would probably kill him if he went back to Jerusalem so he did not want to go.

Then Paul said something that no one expected. What he said next was a law that no one, not even Governor Festus could break.

Paul said, "I am a Roman citizen and I have the right to appeal to the highest court in the Roman Empire. If this Roman court cannot make a decision," Paul said, "then, as a Roman citizen, I will appeal to the highest court. I want to travel to the capital city, Rome, and appear in a court before Emperor Caesar."

Governor Festus knew that Paul must have been so surprised to hear Paul say this. But Paul was right. The governor could not say "no" if a Roman citizen wanted to go to Rome and appear in the highest court of the empire. So Governor Festus told Paul and everyone in the court that, yes, Paul would now be going to Rome as soon as it could be arranged.

Governor Festus and all of the Jews were surprised that Paul said he wanted to make the long and dangerous journey to Rome. But Paul was not worried. He knew something that none of the others knew about.

Two years earlier, when Paul was first in prison in Jerusalem, he had had a special visitor come to him in the night. This was the most special visitor anyone could ever have. When Paul was the most frightened and upset, Jesus himself came and appeared to Paul in the prison. Jesus stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome." (Acts 23:11)

For this reason Paul had confidence that he would be safe. He knew that God wanted him to tell people in Rome about Jesus. God would take care of him and get him safely to Rome.

During the time the prisoner, Paul, was waiting for a ship to Rome, Governor Festus had a visit from King Agrippa and his wife, Bernice. King Agrippa did not have much power but he was respected as the king of the Jews.

When King Agrippa heard about the Jews from Jerusalem being angry with Paul he asked to hear what Paul had to say. So Governor Festus gathered all of the city leaders and King Agrippa together in one big and important meeting. The meeting had many ceremonies and probably lots of speeches. Paul was called to speak in front of all

of these important people.

What do you think Paul talked about? Do you think he begged them to let him out of prison? No, Paul used this opportunity to tell these important people all about Jesus!

Paul told King Agrippa how his whole life changed years ago when he had met Jesus. Paul explained that for many years he had been like the other Jewish leaders. He used to think followers of Jesus were troublemakers, too. But now he knew the truth. Jesus had come to him in a vision. Now he followed Jesus and always tried to tell people about Jesus.

Paul said that God wanted everyone to hear about King Jesus. This is the reason the Jews wanted to kill him. When he said that, Governor Festus interrupted him and said, "Paul, you have been studying so much that you are going crazy!"

But Paul was not crazy. He just wanted everyone to know about Jesus and how Jesus can forgive their sins.

Paul was not afraid to tell everyone, even governors and kings, about Jesus. In front of all of these important people Paul told King Agrippa that he should follow Jesus too. But sadly King Agrippa did not want to follow Jesus.

After leaving Paul, King Agrippa told Governor Festus that Paul had not done anything to deserve death. He should have been set free.

But everyone knew the law that could not be broken. Paul had appealed to Caesar's official court in Rome. No one had a choice now. Paul would be going to Rome.

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## 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, student interaction and/or emotion. [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 the way YOU are telling 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 following video.

## Review Questions:

1. What was the name of the city where Paul spent three years appearing before governors (Felix, Festus and King Agrippa) and waiting for a trial? Caesarea
2. Did the governors that Paul spoke to become Christian? No
3. Who should tell people about Jesus? Me!

# Song Suggestions:

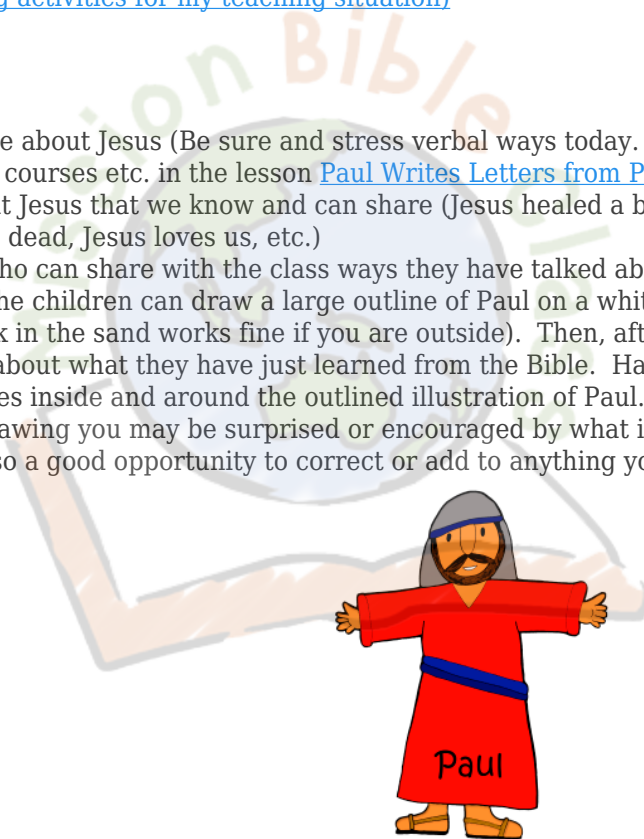
- [Hello Hello Song](#)
- [I Can Be a Missionary](#)
- [J-E-S-U-S Cheer Song](#)
- [Love is Something If You Give It Away Song](#)
- [L-O-V-E Song](#)
- [Oh, How I Love Jesus Song](#)
- [This Little Light of Mine](#)
- [Roll the Gospel Chariot Along](#)
- Choose songs from a church hymnal with a theme of telling people about Jesus.
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

# Learning Activities and Crafts:

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

*Activities:*

- Discuss ways to tell people about Jesus (Be sure and stress verbal ways today. We will discuss written methods–correspondence courses etc. in the lesson [Paul Writes Letters from Prison](#)).
- Make a list of things about Jesus that we know and can share (Jesus healed a blind man, Jesus died on a cross, Jesus rose from the dead, Jesus loves us, etc.)
- Invite someone to class who can share with the class ways they have talked about Jesus with others.
- To review, either 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 and/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 then you might draw an outline of him 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.](#)

*Crafts:*

- Guide children in drawing a picture of themselves in front of a group of people. To be specific they could name the group (friends at school, sports team, etc.) The children could then add speech bubbles or

thought clouds of godly things they might say or think to interact with this group.

- Make a relief map of Paul's Journeys featuring the place in today's story. If you are studying about 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. Refer to [Overview of the Book of Acts](#). Instructions on how to make a relief map at <http://www.squidoo.com/salt-dough-maps>

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for "Paul's Trial" printables to print \(A4 paper\)](#)

[Click here for "Paul's Trial" to print \(Letter size-USA\)](#)

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## Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets- Paul sent before Felix \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets- appearance before Agrippa \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [A good selection of puzzles and games \(gardenofpraise.com\)](#)
- [Craft: Doorknob hanger \(sundayschoolcrafts.net\)](#)
- [Review: Create a "passport" that covers the life of Paul. Good visual ideas and activities. Could be split up to go with several lessons or taught all together as a review of previous lessons concerning Paul \(kidsbibledebjackson.blogspot.co.nz\)](#)

<https://www.pinterest.com/marynnz/paul-3rd-journey-to-rome/>

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