



**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Series:** God in the Storms of Life  
Spring Year 4, Lesson 53

# Paul Escapes Death

**Take Home Point:** \*Big problem? We have a bigger God. \*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

**Bible Event:** Acts 23:1-35

**Key Verse:** John 16:33, "I've told you this so that my peace will be with you. In the world you'll have trouble. But cheer up! I have overcome the world."

**We will help kids know:**

- The Bible Event of the promise of God's deliverance and Paul's rescue from death.
- No matter how big our problems are we have a bigger God.
- When facing our problems, we can pray and find help in him.




**We will help kids feel:**

- Confidence as they share their struggles and find support from one another and in remembering God's promises.
- Encouraged by the Bible Event as they face their own problems.

**We will help kids do:**

- Identify the size of their problems using different size cups.
- Explore the Bible to see how God delivered Paul.
- Make a craft that reminds them of how God deals with their problems.

# THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
<b>Small Group Warm-Up</b> 	3	Kids use different size cups to illustrate the size of their problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>three different sized Styrofoam cups: small, medium, and large</li> </ul>
<b>Large Group</b> 	4  7  9  10	<b>Overview</b>  <b>Puppet Presentation:</b> “Gordy Loses Herman”—Gordy had a small problem that became a very large problem.  <b>Video:</b> <i>Visual Bible: Acts</i> —Acts 23:1-35. Paul had a big problem, but God was bigger.  <b>Puppet Conclusion:</b> “God is bigger”—Gordy realizes that even if he made a mistake, God can make something bigger come out of it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>large broken Styrofoam cup taped or pinned to Gordy’s head or arm</li> <li>video, <i>Visual Bible: Acts</i>, produced by Visual Bible International, 1997—order from <a href="http://www.gocccc.com/vi/biacdvd1of.html">http://www.gocccc.com/vi/biacdvd1of.html</a></li> <li>raincoat, umbrella, boots, goggles (optional for the presenter)</li> <li>squirt gun or spray bottle</li> </ul>
<b>Small Group Application</b> 	4	Kids smash their problem (cup) as a reminder that God is bigger than any problem they may face.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>small Styrofoam cups, one for each child</li> <li>wiggly eyes</li> <li>chenille stems</li> <li>yarn</li> <li>glue</li> <li>scissors</li> </ul>

# Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



**Purpose:** *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

*Supplies: three different Styrofoam cups: small, medium, and large*

Place the cups in the center of the table and say:

**Today we will talk about some of the problems that we face. Some of our problems are small, some are medium and some are very large.**

Refer to the cups in the middle of the table.

**Think about some of the problems you have had this past week. Would you call it a small, medium or BIG problem? I would like each of you to share with the group one of those problems. As you share, choose which cup is like your problem: small, medium or large.**

**Let me give an example. This week I had a \_\_\_\_\_ problem.**

Shepherd shares a problem that he/she faced while holding the appropriate cup. Allow all the kids to share if they want to. Then ask:

**How did this problem make you feel? Did you feel sad, embarrassed, or angry?**

**Our question today is: What do you do with your problems especially if you feel you have a BIG one?**

**We will learn that if you have a great BIG problem, you have a BIGGER God that can take care of that problem.**

**This is what will happen to those problems.**

*Stand up. Place the large cup face down on the table and smash the cup. (This will surprise the kids. They will have a chance in small group application to smash cups and make a craft out of it. )*

**This problem doesn't look so BIG now! Remember, do you have a *\*big problem? We have a bigger God. He can take care of it.***

## Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



**Purpose:** *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible Event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

**Puppet Presentation:** “Gordy Loses Herman”—Gordy had a small problem that became a very large problem.

**Video:** *Visual Bible: Acts*—Acts 23:1-35. Paul had a big problem, but God was bigger.

**Puppet Conclusion:** “God is bigger”—Gordy realizes that even if he made a mistake, God can make something bigger come out of it.

## Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



**Purpose:** *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible Event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

*Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.*

### Observation Questions: What happened?

Have kids refer to Acts 23 (beginning at Acts 22:30) in their Bibles for the following questions.

**Why did the officer have Paul brought before the Jewish council?**  
*(Acts 22:30. He wanted to find out exactly what accusation the Jews had against Paul.)*

**The council was made up of what two groups?** *(Acts 23:6. Pharisees and Sadducees.)*

**Why did Paul say he was on trial?** *(Acts 23:6. Because he believed that the dead would come back to life.)*

**Which group did not believe this?** *(Acts 23:8. The Sadducees.)*

**What happened because the Sadducees and Pharisees disagreed?** *(Acts 23:7-10. They broke out in loud quarreling that became so violent the officer was afraid that they would tear Paul to pieces.)*

**The next night the Lord came and stood next to Paul. What did he say to Paul?** *(Acts 23:11. "Don't lose your courage! You've told the truth about me in Jerusalem. Now you must tell the truth about me in Rome.")*

**How did the Lord protect Paul from being killed by the Jews?** *(Acts 23:12-32. Paul's nephew overheard the Jews planning a conspiracy to kill Paul when he was again brought before the council. Word got back to the Roman officer of the conspiracy who then ordered infantrymen and soldiers to protect Paul and escort him to another city.)*

### **Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?**

**Do you think Paul had a small, medium or large problem?**

**How did God show he was BIGGER than Paul's BIG problem? God helped Paul in a BIG way by sending 200 Roman soldiers, 200 spearmen and 70 horsemen to protect him.**

**For what purpose do you think God kept Paul safe? Hint: Remember what the Lord said to Paul when he came to him at night?** *(God told Paul that his life would be spared so he could tell about Jesus in Rome and God kept his word.)*

### **Application Questions: What does this mean to me?**

**What does this Bible event teach us about God?** *(That God keeps his word.... That with God all things are possible, even miracles.... That God is bigger than our biggest problems... We can trust him even if it looks like things will turn out bad for us.)*

#### Application Activity:

*Supplies: small Styrofoam cup for each kid, wiggly eyes, chenille stems, yarn, other supplies to decorate cups, glue, scissors*

Give each kid a small Styrofoam cup and say:

**On the count of three, I would like you all to smash your cups just like I did in our Warm-Up time. Ready? One, two, three, smash!**

**What are some of the problems that you would like to see smashed in your life?**

**The key verse from John 16:33 says, “I’ve told you this so that my peace will be with you. In the world you’ll have trouble. But cheer up! I have overcome the world.”**

**How did Jesus overcome the world?** *(He died on the cross for us and defeated Satan. Nothing and no one in this world is more powerful than Jesus.)*

**How does that make you feel, especially when you think about your problems either big or small?**

*Shepherds, take notice of some of the problems discussed and in a few weeks ask them how those problems are going. If there are any serious problems, you may need to connect with the child’s parents or with a ministry staff person to help better minister to that child.*

In the time remaining, let kids decorate their cups into something funny. They can use any of the material available. Have kids take their cups home and set it someplace where it can be a reminder that if there are....

***\*Big problems? We have a BIGGER God.***

Closing Prayer:

Have kids pray for their problems, stating after each petition, ***“Thank you, God, that you are bigger than my problem.”*** Close by thanking Jesus for giving his life to overcome Satan and our problems.

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# Large Group Presentation: 20-30 minutes

## Gordy Loses Herman Puppet Presentation

*Supplies: a large smashed Styrofoam cup taped to Gordy's arm or head, video—The Visual Bible: Acts (cued to Acts 23), rain gear to wear, squirt gun or spray bottle*

*The presenter in this series has the option to be dressed with rain gear. This could be a rain coat, hat, umbrella, boots, goggles. He/she will need a squirt gun or spray bottle to be ready for the storms of life.*

**Presenter: Kids, should we call Gordy?**

*Kids call Gordy. Gordy... Gordy... Gordy.*

Gordy enters.

**Presenter: I can tell what size problem you have.**

Gordy: I'll say. It's a SUPER SIZE problem.

**Presenter: Sorry to hear that, Gordy. What is your problem?**

Gordy: I lost my bug collection.

**Presenter: So that's the big problem. How many bugs did you have in your collection?**

Gordy: One.

**Presenter: One? That doesn't seem like such a big problem.**

Gordy: He was my favorite green grasshopper, Herman.

**Presenter: Oh, I see. Where did you lose him?**

Gordy: I lost him at school.

**Presenter: Did you take him for Show and Tell?**

Gordy: Yeah, but I lost him before I had a chance to show him.

**Presenter: Oh. When was the last time you saw Herman?**

Gordy: Going down the back of Ashley's shirt.

**Presenter: What?! How did he get there?**

Gordy: I thought Herman needed some exercise and Ashley needed some, too.

**Presenter: Now I understand, Gordy. You really do have a problem!**

Gordy: Ashley had a problem, too. Boy, can that girl dance.

**Presenter: Gordy, what you did was wrong. You should have had some consequence for that.**

Gordy: I did. I was sent to the principal's office.

**Presenter: You definitely have a big problem, Gordy.**

Gordy: It doesn't stop there. The principal called my mom to explain what happened.

**Presenter: Uh-oh.**

Gordy: You think that was bad, he made me tell her what happened.

**Presenter: That sounds reasonable. What did you tell your mom?**

Gordy: I told her Ashley and Herman were dancing. I don't think they thought that was very funny.

**Presenter: Gordy, that probably wasn't very funny for Ashley.**

Gordy: Sometimes I just can't help it. I just do silly things, but I don't mean to hurt anyone. Now Ashley won't talk to me.

**Presenter: You really do have a BIG problem, Gordy.**

Gordy: What am I supposed to do? I don't like being in trouble and I don't like hurting Ashley's feelings.

**Presenter: Today we will see that when we have problems, we can give them to God. He can help us find an answer. No matter how BIG our problems are we will find that God is BIGGER.**

**We will discover this when we listen to what happened to Paul.**

Gordy: What happened to Paul?



**Presenter:** Paul, on his third missionary journey, was going through the storms of life.

Gordy: A real storm?

**Presenter:** No, just troubled times.

Gordy: Did he do wrong stuff?

**Presenter:** No, he didn't.

Gordy: Then why did he get into trouble?

**Presenter:** Even when we don't do wrong stuff, we can still have problems. But God showed Paul that he was bigger than the problem. You see, Paul was arrested and brought before the religious leaders.

Gordy: That was bad.

**Presenter:** You think that was bad, it got even worse. They almost beat him up.

Gordy: Now, that was really bad.

**Presenter:** You think that was bad, it even got worse. People took an oath to not eat or drink anything until Paul was killed.

Gordy: That was really, really bad.

**Presenter:** You think that was bad, forty of these people hid, ready to kill Paul as he walked by.

Gordy: Paul had a very BIG problem.

**Presenter:** Yes, he did. But, Paul had a BIGGER God! God told Paul to take courage. The next part of the problem is amazing. Do you know what God did to protect Paul? He sent 200 Roman soldiers, 200 spearmen and 70 horsemen. Our BIG God helped Paul in a BIG way.

Gordy: Wow!

**Presenter:** Gordy, let's watch this event now.

Gordy exits.

## Video

Show the video: *The Visual Bible: Acts*. Watch Acts 23:1-35. (The video clip is five minutes and forty seconds.)

## Video Review

**Once again, I need three helpers who paid close attention to the video.**

Choose three kids and bring them forward.

**Last week when you answered my questions correctly, you got to squirt me. And, if you answered wrong, I got to squirt you! We are going to do the same today. Let's find out what it means to have a big problem, but a bigger God.**

Ask each volunteer one of the following questions. After they answer the question and have used the squirt gun, have the volunteer sit down.

**Question #1: A quarrel broke out among the Pharisees and Sadducees and the officer was afraid that they would tear Paul to pieces. So the officer ordered his soldiers to take Paul back to the barracks. What did the Lord say to Paul the next night? *(Don't lose courage. God told Paul, "You told the truth in Jerusalem and now you must tell the truth about me in Rome.")***

Use the squirt gun *(or spray bottle)* if the question was not answered correctly.

**Question #2: How many infantrymen and soldiers with spears were sent out to protect Paul? *(200.)***

Use the squirt gun according to the answer.

**Question #3: This is a really tough one. I hope you listened very closely to all the details in the video. Are you ready? Do you know which pirate wore metal underwear? *(Long John Silver.)***

Squirt the volunteer.

## **God Is Bigger** Puppet Conclusion

Gordy enters laughing.

Gordy: Long John Silver. That was a great riddle.

**Presenter: Thank you, Gordy. Now back to a more serious note. Do you see how Paul had courage to face his problems?**

Gordy: I think so. He knew that God was always going to be with him.

**Presenter:** That's right. God had told him that he would face many problems in life, but God would use Paul to tell rulers and kings about Jesus. God turned those big problems into big opportunities to serve him.

Gordy: What happened?

**Presenter:** This began Paul's missionary journey that took him all the way to Rome. Although he faced many storms and many problems along the way, Paul knew God would always be bigger than those storms and problems. Paul knew God would use him so many other people could hear about Jesus.

Gordy: That means that God is even bigger than my problems.

**Presenter:** He sure is.

Gordy: How can he help me?

**Presenter:** Gordy, maybe you need to pray to him and ask for forgiveness if something you have done has been mean. Then ask God to show you how your problem can be used to show others about Jesus.

Gordy: How can my problem ever show anyone about Jesus?

**Presenter:** Maybe you could talk to Ashley and say you are sorry.

Gordy: But, she's a girl.

**Presenter:** Gordy. Maybe you could show her kindness. Maybe somehow you can be a friend to her. Maybe she would find out about Jesus by what you say and do. Maybe you could even invite her to church.

Gordy: Wow, I never thought of that. You know, maybe I could invite her on the Sunday we talk about the plague with all the grasshoppers overtaking Egypt. I bet she would really like that!

**Presenter:** Gordy. It's time to pray. Will you pray?

Gordy: Dear God, thank you for caring about our problems even when we make them ourselves. Thank you that you are bigger than our problems. Thank you that when we goof up, we have your Son Jesus who paid the price for all the wrong things we do. Please forgive me for putting a grasshopper down the back of Ashley's shirt and help me show her and others how much you care. In Jesus' name, Amen.