



Date: _____
Series: Seeing God Through Suffering
Summer Year 2, Lesson 13

Paul... Suffering Because We Follow Christ

Take Home Point: *Be prepared to suffer for Jesus' sake. *Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Acts 9:1-28; 2 Corinthians 11:23-27; 1 Peter 3:13-18

Key Verses: 1 Peter 3:14, "But even if you suffer for doing what God approves, you are blessed. Don't be afraid of those who want to harm you. Don't get upset."

We will help kids know:

- God promises to be with us through hardships, not spare us from hardships.
- We will, at some time, have suffering or challenge if we follow Christ.
- We need to be prepared to experience suffering, or persecution, as a time of testing, so that we can show the hope that we have because Jesus is with us.




We will help kids feel:

- Encouraged that they would be able to pass the test of suffering for their faith when it happens.
- Support by their Christian friends and church that will help them stay encouraged when they encounter times of difficulty for their faith.

We will help kids do:

- Share examples of when they endured some type of suffering or negative consequences because of their choice to do right or follow God.
- Have fun with marshmallow launchers as they see how "similar attacks" of the enemy can bounce right off of them.
- Write a letter to themselves in the future that will help them to be prepared for those times when they face any trials for their faith.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Students will make paper guns to launch miniature marshmallows at each other. This will provide a visual demonstration of how to let mean comments or actions bounce right off of us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one piece of 8 ½" x 11" cardstock paper for each student • clear tape • miniature marshmallows • plastic trash bag for used marshmallows labeled "Do Not Eat"
Large Group 	4 7 8	Overview Brief Drama Sketch: Two teenagers are talking at school following a morning prayer at the See You at the Pole event. Object Lesson: Acts 9:1-28 tells about Paul's conversion. Students will pelt the large group presenter with marshmallows to observe how we should let persecution bounce off of us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio tape/CD of the song <i>I'm Not Cool</i> by Scott Krippayne. Spring Hill Music Group, distributed by Word, 5/8/01. ISBN: 555006782X <i>Teaching Props:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toy sword • two poles or broom handles • large flashlight • chair to stand on • large question mark • sunglasses • real or fake doughnut • fake fish • bottle sprayer with clean water inside • megaphone • calendar • paper crown • toy binoculars • "Souped up" marshmallow gun for reader (p. 13)
Small Group Application 	4	Students will review the story of Paul's conversion and write letters to themselves to pull out and read for encouragement during times of teasing or persecution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "When I Am Persecuted" template (p. 14) OR • writing paper • business sized envelopes • pens/pencils



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.

As kids gather: Listen to memory verses from last week and give coupons for memory verses, remembering to bring your Bible, and bringing a guest.

Supplies: 8 ½" x 11" cardstock piece of paper for each child, clear tape, (Option: For information on how to make marshmallow launchers in advance from 1" PVC pipes, see Appendix A.) miniature marshmallows, plastic trash bag for used marshmallows labeled, "Do Not Eat."

Pass out the paper and demonstrate how to roll the paper tightly along the 11" side so that it becomes a long tube.

We are making marshmallow launchers today. The closer you can make the diameter of your tube to the actual size of a miniature marshmallow, the better it will work. Try to roll paper close to three-fourths of an inch.

When kids have made their tubes, hand out some mini marshmallows and let them snack. Do not permit kids to eat the blown marshmallows.

Today, we will talk about ways that people have taken shots at us. These shots can be times others have teased us, made fun of us, or done something mean because we did what was right or what God wanted us to do.

Can you think of a time when someone made fun of you because you chose the right thing to do instead of the wrong thing?

After a student has shared his/her story, instruct the rest of the kids to shoot a marshmallow at the student with their launchers. Continue in the same manner as others share stories. Then ask:

Can you think of a time when you were made fun of because you were a Christian? Not just because you did the right thing, but because you were a follower of Jesus?

Can you think of a story about when anyone else has suffered because they were a follower of Jesus?

Collect the marshmallows that have hit the floor in a trash bag labeled "Do Not Eat." Then say:

Did you know that the Bible says if you are truly a follower of Jesus, someday you will suffer for his sake? That means people might make fun of you, or you could suffer from something much more. You could lose a job, not be hired for a job, or someone might even hurt you. Who knows, someday, someone here might even be put to death because they are a follower of Jesus.

How many of you would be willing to go through that because you are followers of Christ? Today we will learn to **be prepared to suffer for Jesus' sake.*

Send students into Large Group with the paper marshmallow guns and one or two mini-marshmallows. Tell them to keep their guns "loaded" with the ammunition and in their laps until the end of large group time where they just might have the chance to use them again. Remind them to listen carefully for the right time!

Large Group: 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.*

Overview

Brief Drama Sketch: Two teenagers are talking at school following a morning prayer at the See You at the Pole event.

Object Lesson: Acts 9:1-28 tells about Paul's conversion. Students will pelt the large group presenter with marshmallows to observe how we should let persecution bounce off of us.

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 9:1-28 for the following.

How did Saul meet Jesus? (Acts 9:3-5. *He was near Damascus when a light from heaven flashed around him and Jesus asked why Saul was persecuting him.*)

Why were people so amazed that Saul became a follower of Jesus? *(Acts 9:21. Saul was well known for arresting and persecuting Christians.)*

Read Acts 9:15-16.

What did God tell Saul through Ananias? *(That he would suffer for the sake of Jesus' name.)*

Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-27.

What are ways Paul suffered for Jesus' name? *(He was beaten several times and nearly died, imprisoned several times, almost stoned to death, shipwrecked three times and drifted on the sea, faced dangers from raging rivers, from robbers, from other people and from believers who turned out to be false friends. He often went without sleep, food and water, and warm clothes.)*

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Why do you think Paul was bold in sharing his faith in Jesus even though he knew he would suffer? *(He had seen Jesus and knew the truth.)*

Why do you think God chose Saul, the Christian persecutor, to become the disciple and missionary, Paul? *(Discuss.)*

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Read 1 Peter 3:13-18.

Why should we not be afraid of suffering for Jesus' name? *(1 Peter 3:13. We will be blessed.)*

How should we defend our confidence in God? *(1 Peter 3:15. With gentleness and respect.)*

How can verse 18 be a comfort to us when we suffer for Christ? *(Jesus also suffered. He suffered death so that he could bring us to God. He was brought back to life and, because of him, so will we.)*

What reward can we expect for suffering when we stand up for our faith? *(Eternal life in heaven with Jesus, free of any more suffering.)*

Application Activity:

Supplies: template "When I Am Persecuted...", writing paper, business size envelopes, and pen

Give each student an envelope and a piece of paper. You may have the first line on the paper already written out or printed from the template. Then say:

You will write a letter to yourself and seal it in an envelope to find and open when you need it. I suggest keeping it in your Bible and using it as a bookmark.

The first line of your letter shall read, "When I am persecuted..." Then, I want you to finish that statement with thoughts about what you learned from the lesson today. Be sure to remind yourself about the image of marshmallows bouncing off of someone who is suffering. But the rest of the letter is completely yours to write as much as you want so that it is helpful to you, and only you, in the future when you feel teased or persecuted.

Provide quiet time for reflection and writing. Tell students to seal their letters in the envelopes when they are finished but to remain quiet until everyone is done. Have them also write the take home point on the outside of the envelope.

Review the key verse and take home point.

1 Peter 3:14 says, "*But even if you suffer for doing what God approves, you are blessed. Don't be afraid of those who want to harm you. Don't get upset.*"

Because we know the victory Jesus won for us and the outcome of our lives when we believe in him, we can have comfort when we suffer. We can **be prepared to suffer for Jesus' sake.*

Closing Prayer:

Allow kids to pray for the times in the past when they endured persecution or teasing. Pray that anyone currently experiencing persecution be strong and resilient to the shots. Finally, ask God for help during times when we might find ourselves in the position of teasing others and that we are not hurtful but positive examples of treating others in a way that is pleasing to God.

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Large Group Presentation: 20-30 minutes

Why Would God Let Me Suffer For Doing Right?

Brief Drama Sketch

Purpose: To demonstrate the need to learn how we should be prepared to endure suffering for Jesus' sake.

Characters: Two teenagers are talking at school in the hall after a See You at the Pole event.

Plot Summary

This story has a simple plot line that can be remembered and acted out without memorizing lines.

It is the morning of See You at the Pole. This is an annual event, inviting Christians to get together before school around the flagpole to pray for their school. Tyrone has just done that and now enters the school building. Several of his friends are teasing him for participating and being "one of them." Adam is challenging him. Tyrone is faced with the challenge of what to stand up for. Does he stand up for his faith and take a "ribbing" or try to hide his faith?

Story Board

The large group presenter introduces Tyrone who just entered school and is teased by his friends for praying with other kids at See You at the Pole. Adam seems to be quite agitated with Tyrone and wants to pick a fight.

"What were you doing?"

Adam challenges Tyrone with,

"Why are you looking so religious? Do you think you're better than we are? I saw you outside by that flagpole with all those religious people and I always thought you were cooler than that. So what were you doing out there?"

"I enjoy spending time with God."

Tyrone explains that he was praying with other Christians for the school and his friends.

Adam: "I don't need to be prayed for."

Tyrone responds by saying that,

"It's not my choice. I've got to pray for you because the Bible says to pray for those who persecute you, so now I've really got to pray for you."

"Don't pray for me to be a good person."

Adam thinks he is fine just the way his is. Tyrone says,

"I'm not interested in you being a good person, I'm interested in you meeting God. That is what I pray for."

Cue Scott Krippayne's nerd anthem, *I'm Not Cool*, which proclaims in the chorus, "I'm not cool, that's okay, my God loves me, anyway." Teenagers exit the sketch.

Teaching Using Object Lesson

Props needed: toy sword, two poles or broom handles, large flashlight, chair to stand on, large cardboard question mark, sunglasses, real or fake doughnut, fake fish, bottle sprayer with clean water inside, megaphone, calendar, paper crown, toy binoculars "Souped up" marshmallow gun for reader (see appendix), audio tape/CD of the song I'm Not Cool by Scott Krippayne. Spring Hill Music Group, distributed by Word, 5/8/01. ISBN: 555006782X

Think to yourself about a time when you had trouble getting someone to believe you. The topic could be about anything you were trying to tell them. It is not always easy to convince people what you are saying is true unless it is something they can see for themselves.

Think again about the relief you felt when you were finally able to show them what you mean. If people can see or experience what you are talking about, it is much easier to convince them that what you are saying is true.

The same thing sometimes happens when Christians share their faith with others. It can be very difficult to tell what it is like to see God's good work in your life.

As we observed in the brief drama between the two teenagers, Tyrone felt what it was like to be teased, or persecuted, for his beliefs. His friend Adam is like a person from the Bible.

Saul was a bad guy who turned into a good guy, even receiving a new name, Paul, when Jesus helped him to see and experience the love of God.

Have a volunteer, who is a good reader, read the following verses from Acts 9.

The presenter should have props ready to playfully show the audience, or heckle the reader, while he/she is reading. Warn him/her in advance to try and not be distracted because telling the Bible story is very important. Have a marshmallow gun hidden where the reader can easily take it out when finished reading the story and blast the presenter to get back at him/her.

Acts 9:1-28

Saul kept threatening...

Show a sword or other toy weapon and act out on reader from the side or back.

...to murder the Lord's disciples. He went to the chief priest and asked him to write letters of authorization to the synagogue leaders in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted to arrest...

Point fingers like a gun at the reader.

...any man or woman who followed the way of Christ and imprison them...

Hold up two poles and look through them like they are prison bars.

As Saul was coming near the city of Damascus, a light from heaven suddenly flashed around him.

Stand on a chair and shine a flashlight down.

He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him,

Hand reader a megaphone for this line or cup hands around mouth...

"Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?" Saul asked,

Raise a cut-out cardboard question mark over the reader's head.

"Who are you, sir?"

The person replied, "I'm Jesus, the one you're persecuting. Get up! Go into the city, and you'll be told what you should do."

Meanwhile, the men traveling with him were speechless.

Pretend to zip your lip and throw away the key.

They heard the voice but didn't see anyone.

Put hand to ear, and then put on sunglasses, eye patches or headband over eyes.

Saul was helped up from the ground. When he opened his eyes, he was blind.

Put sunglasses on reader.

So his companions led him into Damascus. For three days he couldn't see and didn't eat or drink.

Hold a doughnut on a plate as if to tempt the reader but then throw it away.

A disciple named Ananias lived in the city of Damascus. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

Ananias answered, "Yes, Lord." The Lord told him, "Get up! Go to Judas' house on Straight Street, and ask for a man named Saul from the city of Tarsus. He's praying.

Fold hands, kneel and bow head.

In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias place his hands on him to restore his sight."

Ananias replied, "Lord, I've heard a lot of people tell about the many evil things this man has done to your people in Jerusalem. Saul has come here to Damascus with authority from the chief priests to put anyone who calls on your name in prison."

Hold up two poles on sides of face for prison bars.

The Lord told Ananias, "Go!"

Point finger and arm toward the door.

"I've chosen this man to bring my name to nations, to kings, and to the people of Israel. I'll show him how much he has to suffer for the sake of my name."

Ananias left and entered Judas' house. After he placed his hands on Saul,

Place hands on reader's head.

Ananias said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way to Damascus, sent me to you. He wants you to see again and to be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Immediately, something like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again.

Drop a fake or paper fish in front of reader from over his head and take off his sunglasses.

Then Saul stood up and was baptized.

Spray reader with a few squirts of water.

After he had something to eat, his strength came back to him.

Eat a doughnut and flex arm muscles.

Saul was with the disciples in the city of Damascus for several days.

Hold up a calendar and make check marks on a few days.

He immediately began to spread the word in the synagogues that Jesus was the Son of God. Everyone who heard him was amazed.

Make an amazed looking face.

They asked, "Isn't this the man who destroyed those who worshiped the one named Jesus in Jerusalem? Didn't he come here to take these worshipers as prisoners to the chief priests in Jerusalem?"

Flex muscles again.

Saul grew more powerful, and he confused the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

Put crown on head.

Later the Jews planned to murder Saul, but Saul was told about their plot.

Whisper into reader's ear.

They were watching the city gates day and night in order to murder him.

Look through toy binoculars or two marshmallow shooters.

However, Saul's disciples lowered him in a large basket through an opening in the wall one night. After Saul

arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples. But everyone was afraid of him.

Look scared and shake.

They wouldn't believe that he was a disciple. Then Barnabas took an interest in Saul and brought him to the apostles.

Put arm around reader.

Barnabas told the apostles how Saul had seen the Lord on the road and that the Lord had spoken to him. Barnabas also told them how boldly Saul had spoken about the one named Jesus in the city of Damascus. Then Saul went throughout Jerusalem with the disciples. He spoke boldly with the power and authority of the Lord.

Reader tells the audience to blast the presenter with marshmallows for heckling him/her. After everyone else has shot their marshmallows, the reader pulls out a marshmallow gun and a bowl of ammunition and shoots.

After kids settle down the presenter continues with:

In the Bible event, we heard today, that people had difficulty believing that the same person who wanted to persecute Christians had converted into one himself. God wanted Saul to experience a miracle and change his heart to use his gift of leadership for good and to spread the Good News that Jesus Christ is, in fact, the Son of God.

How do the marshmallows represent persecution? (*We may be shot at.*)

How did the reader handle my heckling? (*He let it bounce off.*)

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for your presence with us today and every day. Everyone at some time, is teased by others and it can be so hurtful. Help us to be strong when it happens and let those shots bounce right off of us, just like the marshmallows. Also, please stand up with us for others enduring the shots when we see it happen. Whether or not doing the right thing is "cool," help us to do what is pleasing to you. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

As students return to small groups, play again, the chorus verse from "*I'm not cool*" CD.

Appendix A – Optional Marshmallow Gun

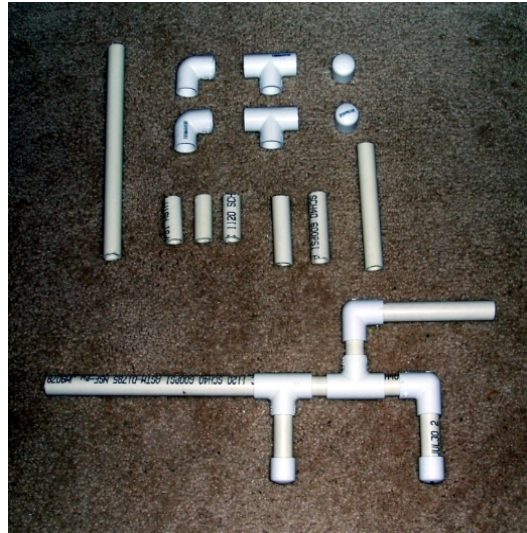
Parts Needed:

- 36 inches of ½" PVC pipe cut as follows:

1	6"	½" PVC Tube
1	10"	½" PVC Tube (barrel)
3	3"	½" PVC Tubes
2	5"	½" PVC Tubes
2		½" PVC end Caps
2		½" PVC L-Shaped Connectors
2		½" PVC T-Shaped Connectors

Tools Needed:

- Hacksaw or PVC cutter
- Ruler
- Marker or Pencil



Smooth all rough edges from cut PVC. Wash all of the parts with hot, soapy water. Dry and lay out your pieces in the manner shown below. Firmly insert each piece into the next one. You may glue or seal the tubes together, **BUT this will greatly limit your ability to clean or unclog the Marshmallow Gun.**

The Marshmallow gun can be decorated, use you imagination.

Insert miniature marshmallows into open handle end of tube, on top of the gun. Take a deep breath BEFORE you place your mouth on the gun.

Caution: Never take a breath after you have placed a miniature marshmallow in the loading tube and put your mouth on the gun. You could suck the marshmallow down your throat and choke.

Aim and blow VERY hard toward your target or victim. Do not aim at anyone's face.

When I Am Persecuted.....