

Unit 29 • Session 3

The Good News

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Romans 5–6

STORY POINT:

God sent Jesus into the world to rescue sinners.

KEY PASSAGE:

Romans 12:5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

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LEADER Bible Study

After Jesus returned to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles, the gospel began to spread. Those who heard the good news at Pentecost included visitors from Rome, and they were likely among the three thousand who believed. (See Acts 2:10,41.) When Paul wrote his letter to the Romans in AD 57, he had never been to Rome. But by that time, Roman believers were meeting in house churches.

Paul wrote his letter in part to explain the essentials of the Christian faith and what it means to live for Jesus. Paul's words are helpful to Christians today. As you guide kids through Romans 5–6, help them grasp the good news of the gospel. This is the message for which Jesus' followers gave their lives. This good news changes everything.

First, help kids understand the benefits of believing in Jesus. To appreciate the good news, kids need to understand the bad news: Apart from Jesus, we are dead in our sin—separated from God. We need to be rescued. God sent Jesus into the world to rescue sinners. When we trust in His death and resurrection, we are made right with God and are saved from sin and death.

Next, compare and contrast the first Adam with Jesus—"the second Adam." Adam represented all people, but he sinned. Sin brought death into the world, and death spread to all people because all people sinned. Jesus came to bring us life. He obeyed God perfectly. All who trust in Him are forgiven and have eternal life.

Finally, introduce how believers deal with sin in view of God's grace. Since our sin is forgiven, should we keep on sinning? Paul was emphatic that the answer is no. When we are in Christ, we are no longer slaves to sin. Sin will still be a struggle in our fallen world, but we have power through the Holy Spirit to resist sin and live a life that honors God.

The BIBLE Story

The Good News

Romans 5–6

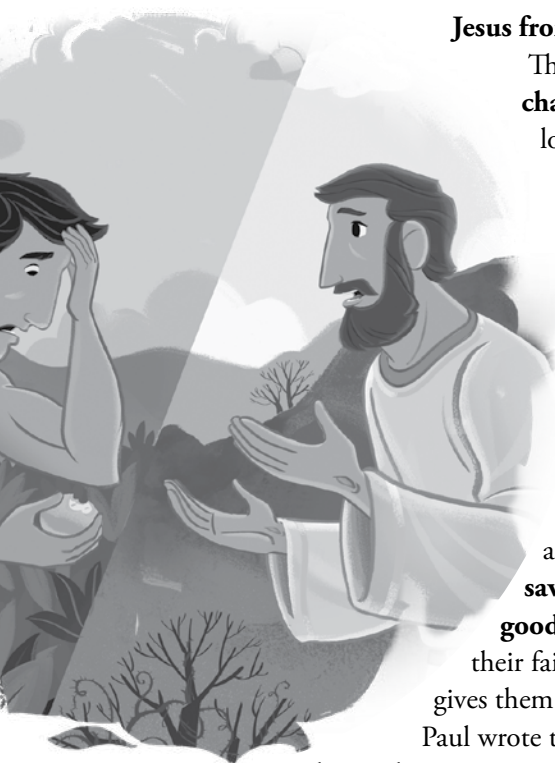
Jesus' followers in the **early church** wanted **everyone** to hear the **good news about Jesus**. God had kept His promise to send a Savior. He sent His own Son, Jesus, to earth to rescue sinners. Jesus lived the perfect life we cannot live and died the death we deserve to die. On the third day, God raised Jesus from the dead!

This good news—the **gospel**—changes everything. People who love Jesus tell others about Him. That's what Paul did. Paul wrote a letter to believers in Rome to tell them that Jesus was the Savior they had been waiting for.

Paul wrote, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.” Everyone sins and needs to be rescued. God saves people who believe the good news about Jesus. Because of their faith, God forgives their sins and gives them eternal life.

Paul wrote that God showed His love for us by sending His Son to die for us. “We were sinners—enemies of God—but Jesus died and rose again to make us right with God. Jesus is God's good gift to us. Let's rejoice!”

Paul reminded the people about the first man, Adam. When



Adam sinned, death came into the world. Everyone sinned, so death spread to all people. God sent Jesus into the world to bring us a gift that is greater than Adam's sin. **Adam brought death, but Jesus brings life. Adam disobeyed God, but Jesus obeyed Him perfectly.**

Does that mean we can keep on sinning because we are forgiven? **Paul said no! Jesus sets us free from sin** so we can live in a new way that honors Him.

Christ Connection: Because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. The good news of the gospel is that God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Everyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use music:** Incorporate atmospheric background music that fits with the story. Play triumphant music while speaking about Jesus' resurrection. Play sad music when talking about Adam and sin in the world.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: The Good News

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KEY PASSAGE: Romans 12:5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to tell about a time they got to share good news with someone else.

SAY • It feels good to tell someone happy news. Whether it's the announcement of a new baby's birth or telling your parents about the good grade you got, good news feels good to share. Today we will learn about a letter Paul wrote to explain the best news of all—the gospel—to believers in Rome.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Telephone game

Instruct the kids to sit in a line. Whisper a secret message, such as the story point, into the first kid's ear. He will whisper it in the ear of the kid behind him, and so on down the line. Allow the last kid to say aloud what she heard. Play as time allows or until each kid has a chance to be the end of the line.

SAY • If you whisper a message and only say it once, it's easy to have the message become distorted. Today we will learn about a time Paul wrote down the good news of the gospel in a letter for the believers in Rome, so they would know for sure what the gospel is.

OPTION 2: Roads to Rome

Form two teams of kids. Give each team two sheets of paper. You may choose to use something more durable, like carpet squares, if you have them available. The teams will form two lines, and the first kid in each line will use the two sheets of paper as stepping stones to cross the room and return to the line. There they will pass their two sheets to the next kid in line who will repeat the process. The first team to have each member cross the room and return wins.

SAY • In the time of the New Testament, Rome controlled a large empire that covered most of the known world. Because the Roman empire was so big and so powerful, they built many roads to help people travel around. That led to the saying "all roads lead to Rome." Today we will hear about a letter Paul wrote to believers living in Rome.

- sheets of paper, 4
- carpet squares, 4 (optional)

Feel free to use the hallway for a bigger challenge for this fun game

Transition to teach the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- Allergy Alert
- balloon

Inflate a balloon and tie it off. Challenge the kids to work together to keep the balloon in the air by bopping it one at a time. No kid may bop the balloon more than three times total, no kid may bop it more than once consecutively, and each kid must say a word of the key passage to bop the balloon. Each time the balloon hits the floor, stop the game and start it over.

SAY • Paul wrote these words as part of his letter to believers in Rome. That's the letter our story came from today! In addition to making sure they understood the gospel, Paul wanted them to know that believers form one body, united together by Jesus. That's still true for believers today!

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find Romans 5–6. Explain that Romans is the first of Paul's Letters, a division in the New Testament containing letters Paul wrote to believers in cities all over the Roman Empire. In total, Paul wrote 13 of the 21 books of the New Testament! Point out Rome on the New Testament Mediterranean Map. (*B1*)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. How is a person justified—given a right relationship with God? (*by faith in Jesus' sacrifice, Romans 5:1, 9*)
2. Through whom did sin enter the world? (*Adam, Romans 5:12*)
3. Through whom does righteousness and justification come? (*Jesus, Romans 5:18-19*)
4. Does it feel fair or unfair that Adam's sin led to sin for all of us? *Guide kids to see that all of us have sin. We aren't guilty simply because of Adam's sin, but also because of our own sins. Help them see this truth through the lens of Christ's sacrifice making righteousness available to all despite our sin.*
5. Does it feel fair or unfair that Jesus' righteousness leads to righteousness for all who have faith? *Help kids see that this, too, is a picture of God's perfect justice. He showed us mercy when Christ became our perfect substitute. Help the kids wrestle with the difference between human ideas about justice and fairness in contrast to God's perfect justice and mercy.*
6. If God forgives all our sin when we have faith in Jesus, why is it necessary to live like Jesus? *Guide kids to remember that God's plan for our lives is better for us than our own plans. Obeying God is good for us, because He knows what we need before we need it. Help them see obedience as a blessing, not a chore. Explain how sin may feel fun, but it leads to destruction, pain, and death.*

SAY • God sent Jesus into the world to rescue sinners.

The Bible is clear that we all are sinners and we all deserve death and separation from God. His choice to send Jesus proves His justice and mercy.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

- US map
- world map
- string
- scissors
- stickers.

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Carry the message home

Display a map of the US and a map of Africa. Ask volunteers to find some of the countries mentioned in the video such as Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Cameroon.

Allow the kids to place star stickers in the Twin Cities and each of the countries listed above. Then use string to connect the stickers.

SAY • Churches give money to support the work of the Hope of Nations Gospel Church in Minnesota. But churches are really supporting missions around the world! Many of the immigrants who hear the good news eventually travel back to Africa, and they take the good news with them! How can we carry the good news with us?

OPTION 2: Read all about it

Provide kids with large sheets of paper, pencils, markers, and rulers. Invite the kids to design a newspaper front page based on the information in today's story. Encourage them to write a paragraph or two summarizing what they learned, or draw a large picture that represents what they learned.

SAY • Paul wrote to the believers in Rome to explain the gospel to them. Paul wanted to be sure they knew the truth and were following Jesus. He wanted them to know that **God sent Jesus into the world to rescue sinners**. Paul wanted them to experience the transformation that is only possible by the Holy Spirit's power and to be united together as a church body.

LOW PREP

- large sheets of paper
- pencils
- markers
- rulers

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's Big Picture Cards for Families to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.