

Use Week of:

Unit 30 • Session 4

Guarding the Truth

BIBLE PASSAGE:

2 Corinthians 11

STORY POINT:

God gives us power to stand up for the gospel.

KEY PASSAGE:

Colossians 1:18

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why does the church exist? The church exists to glorify God by worshiping Him, showing His love, and telling others about Jesus.

INTRODUCE THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 206



TEACH THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 208



APPLY THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 214



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LEADER Bible Study

In New Testament times, Corinth was an important city in ancient Greece. About eighteen years after Jesus' death on the cross, Paul preached the gospel to the Corinthians and established the church there. (See Acts 18.) He stayed in Corinth for at least 18 months.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote to help believers solve some problems within the church. In his second letter, written just a few weeks later, Paul wrote to encourage the church and to assure them that God loved them—even when they had troubles. Of all Paul's letters in the New Testament, none reveals his heart as much as 2 Corinthians. In it, Paul showed his passion for Christ as he fiercely defended his ministry against false teachings.

Paul wrote of the dangers he faced as a disciple of Christ—stonings, beatings, imprisonment, hunger, and hardship. But he also wrote of the comfort and the strength to endure that Jesus gives to those who trust in Him. Nothing could keep Paul from sharing the good news of Jesus—a lesson for the believers at Corinth and for all believers everywhere.

As you teach from 2 Corinthians 11, emphasize that God gives us power to stand up for the gospel. Paul cared about the believers in Corinth, and he wanted them to be faithful to Jesus and remember the gospel. Paul may not have been an eloquent speaker like those who preached lies, but he refused to back down. Paul suffered and nearly died to share the gospel.

Second Corinthians teaches us that sharing Jesus with the world is not always easy. There will always be some who try to stop the good news from spreading. But our job as believers is to follow and obey Jesus no matter what. Like Paul, we guard the truth because God, the Father of the Lord Jesus, deserves to be praised.

The BIBLE Story

Guarding the Truth

2 Corinthians 11

Paul had shared the good news about Jesus in Corinth. Many people believed the gospel, and they began meeting together as a church. After Paul left, he heard that the believers in Corinth were turning away from the gospel. Other people had come and taught them things that weren't true.

These teachers led the Corinthians away from the one true gospel, and Paul was worried. **So Paul wrote a letter to the church.**

"Listen," Paul wrote, "I care about you. I want you to be faithful to Jesus and remember the gospel." Paul knew that the people had been tricked by the false teachers, like the serpent in the garden of Eden had tricked Eve. Eve had everything she needed, but she believed the serpent's lie and disobeyed God. The Corinthian believers had everything they needed—the good news of the gospel—yet they were turning away to listen to wrong teaching.

"I'm not a great speaker," Paul admitted, "but I know what I'm talking about." **Paul relied on God's power to share the gospel. He spent his life sharing the good news, even though it meant facing suffering. Paul didn't share the gospel to get something**



from those who listened; he told them about Jesus because he loved them!

Paul wrote, “I won’t back down. False teachers are trying to spread different messages so that the good news about Jesus won’t go out. These teachers are against God, and they’re only trying to take advantage of you.”

Paul spoke up because he knew the truth. “If anyone deserves to be listened to, it’s me. I’ve worked hard, been thrown in jail and beaten, and nearly died to share the gospel.” God had chosen Paul and had changed his life. Paul knew his suffering was worth it, and he wasn’t going to give up. “I do all of this because God, the Father of the Lord Jesus, deserves to be praised.”

Christ Connection: Sharing Jesus with the world is not always easy. There will always be some who try to stop the good news from spreading. God calls believers to follow and obey Jesus no matter what.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Display a map:** Use the New Testament Mediterranean Map or a larger world map to point out Corinth (in modern day Greece west of Athens).
- **Vary your voice:** Shift the sound of your voice to distinguish between quotes and explanations.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Guarding the Truth

BIBLE PASSAGE: 2 Corinthians 11

STORY POINT: God gives us power to stand up for the gospel.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:18

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why does the church exist? The church exists to glorify God by worshiping Him, showing His love, and telling others about Jesus.

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 talk about a time they faced bullying or stood up to a bully. If any kid discloses abuse or neglect, report such claims to the proper authorities according to the law where you live and your ministry's policies.

SAY • It's never fun to feel bullied. We are called to love all people, and when you see someone being bullied, it's important to stand up to help victims. Today we will learn about a group of people who were lying to believers, trying to get them to believe things that were not true. Paul wrote to defend the truth!

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the "The Real Deal" activity page. Instruct kids to study the different pictures of Paul to find the one that is different from the rest.

SAY • When false teachers spread lies in the church, Paul had to defend the truth and his own reputation as an apostle chosen by God. Paul was the real deal!

- "The Real Deal" activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Never have I ever

Guide the kids to sit in a circle. Each kid will hold up three fingers. Select a kid to go first. She will say “never have I ever ...” and complete the sentence with an activity she has never done—such as eaten a grapefruit, ridden a roller coaster, or pet a snake. Each kid who has done that activity must put one finger down. Then the next kid will have a chance to make a “never have I ever” statement. Play in this way until only one kid has any fingers up. That kid wins.

SAY • You all have done a lot of different and interesting things. Today we will learn about a time Paul listed some of the many sufferings he faced as a result of telling people about Jesus. Why do you think Paul would talk about all the things he did to spread the truth about Jesus?

OPTION 2: Guarding the goals

Use traffic cones to mark two goals on either side of the room. Form two teams of kids and place a beach ball in the center of the room. Instruct teams to walk on their knees. When you say go, teams must work together to earn points by rolling the ball into the opposing team’s goal. After a few minutes, declare the team with the most points the winner.

• traffic cones, 4
• beach ball

SAY • One good strategy in that game was to make sure someone stayed near the goal to guard it, like a goalie or keeper in soccer. Today we will learn about a time Paul wrote a letter to “guard” Christians from believing lies told by false teachers. What kind of lies do you think Paul may have guarded against?

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why does the church exist? The church exists to glorify God by worshiping Him, showing His love, and telling others about Jesus.

Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

[Leader enters wearing khaki shorts and a polo shirt, with a whistle hanging from a lanyard around her neck.]

LEADER • Hey everyone. I'm glad you could make it today.

This is the last week of the team tryouts. At this point I've got most of my roster filled up. All I need now is one very special position filled: the goalie.

Depending on who you ask, the goalie might be the single most important position on a soccer team. A good goalie will often mean the difference between winning a game and losing it. No matter how good the rest of your team may be, if you don't have a goalie, your opponents will be able to score much more easily than you. Defending the net is vital.

You know, that actually reminds me of a Bible story. Jesus is the most important person to the church, but in our story today, Paul had to take on the very important job of defending the truth of the

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

gospel against false teachers who were trying to tear him down and lead people away from the truth.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Before we get too far into the story, we need to review the big picture question and answer. Does anyone remember the question? [*Allow responses.*] That's right! ***Why does the church exist?*** How about the answer? [*Allow responses.*] Right again! ***The church exists to glorify God by worshiping Him, showing His love, and telling others about Jesus.*** That means that our purpose as believers is not to keep the good news to ourselves, but to spread it to everyone we meet. We show God's love to others and worship Him in how we live our lives.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. - Giant Timeline

LEADER • When we first started this unit, we learned that **the Holy Spirit led Philip to tell the Ethiopian man about Jesus.** Next, we learned **Jesus saved Paul and chose him to spread the gospel.** Paul planted many churches, and wrote many letters, often to the churches he planted! To the church in Colossae, Paul explained that **Jesus gives new life to people who trust in Him.** This week we will learn about what Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. The church in Corinth actually had a lot of struggles, and Paul wrote more than one letter to them. Our story today is from one of those letters to them. The story is called "Guarding the Truth."

- Bibles
- “Guarding the Truth” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 2 Corinthians 11. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Guarding the Truth.”

LEADER • Can you imagine sacrificing everything Paul had sacrificed, only to have a liar come along and try to undo the work you started? Paul was pretty upset about the false teachers. That’s why he wrote the things he wrote: he didn’t want anyone to lead people away from the message of salvation through faith in Jesus.

Paul wasn’t writing just to defend his own reputation or to make himself look good. Paul was worried that people wouldn’t live the wonderful life Jesus had for them. Paul was concerned for the church, not himself. Even when Paul used words that may have sounded like boasting, he was really just pointing people to Jesus’ power. No matter what Paul suffered, he knew the gospel was worth it.

We are called to defend the truth just as Paul did.

God gives us power to stand up for the gospel.

That’s why studying God’s Word and gathering with the church is so important. When we do those things, along with praying, we are better equipped to defend the truth against false teachers who lead people away from Jesus.

Nowadays, false teachers may teach all kinds of things; They may say that God wants more than anything to give you lots of money and make you happy. They may say that God doesn’t care about you, that God isn’t the only God, or that God doesn’t even exist. All of those messages are false. Only the

gospel of Jesus is true. We are all sinners, and Jesus died on the cross for our sins, rising again on the third day to conquer death. Only faith in Him can save us.

Christ connection

LEADER • Sharing Jesus with the world is not always easy. There will always be some who try to stop the good news from spreading. God calls believers to follow and obey Jesus no matter what.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 30, Session 4” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about those who do not believe the Bible. Guide them to discuss how we can know the truth.

Missions moment (3 minutes)

Play the “Christian Worship Around the World” video. Discuss how different people can worship God in different ways.

LEADER • God gives people the power to stand up for the gospel, even in different countries that might not be open to the gospel. Christians around the world are worshiping Jesus in their own styles and in their own languages. Sometimes worship is not allowed by the governments, but believers are bold to gather together.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Colossians 1:18. Then sing the key passage song.

LEADER • Jesus Christ is our greatest treasure. He deserves

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

• “Unit 30, Session 3” Questions from Kids video

• “Christian Worship Around the World” missions video

• Key Passage Poster
• “First Place in Everything (Colossians 1:18)” song

all the glory in our lives. That's what this verse teaches. We put Jesus first.

Sing (4 minutes)

• "One Foundation"
song

LEADER • The church is one body. Paul also compares the church to buildings. A building may have a foundation of rock or stone. We have one foundation, Jesus!

Sing together "One Foundation."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father, we know that we would be lost without You. Help us to be bold as we defend the truth from anyone who tries to lead people from Jesus. Amen.

Dismiss to apply 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: Why does the church exist? The church exists to glorify God by worshiping Him, showing His love, and telling others about Jesus.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- permanent marker
- beach ball

Invite volunteers to say the key passage from memory. Thank each kid for his efforts and encourage all the kids to keep working to memorize the passage. Write phrases of the key passage on the sections of a beach ball. Toss the beach ball around the group for a few seconds. Every so often, say “stop.” Whoever catches the ball will look at the section her right thumb is touching. She must say the verse starting from that section. Play multiple rounds.

SAY • Paul wrote many letters to believers who lived all over the Roman empire. Paul wanted to make sure they knew the truth about Jesus, the gospel, and our purpose as the church. Jesus is the head of the church; He is our leader and greatest treasure. *Why does the church exist? The church exists to glorify God by worshiping Him, showing His love, and telling others about Jesus.*

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

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help them find 2 Corinthians 11. Use the New Testament Mediterranean Map to point out where Corinth was located. (D4)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Paul was concerned the Corinthians would be deceived just like who? (*Eve, 2 Cor. 11:3*)
2. Did Paul charge the Corinthians to share the gospel with them? (*no, 2 Cor. 11:7*)
3. What did Paul face because of his desire to share the gospel? (*all kinds of sufferings, 2 Cor. 11:23-27*)
4. Where can we find the truth about God and ourselves? *Guide kids to see that the Bible is the only source of truth about God and our relationship to Him. Lead them to discuss why we need the Bible, and how we can learn truth from it.*
5. What sufferings might we face if we stand up for the gospel? *Discuss the ways kids may feel left out or unpopular for their faith. Point out that some places in the world still face very severe persecution, such as imprisonment or even death. Remind the kids that even those severe forms of persecution cannot stop God's plan to grow the church, and that the gospel is worth facing any kind of mistreatment.*
6. Where can we get strength to face persecution and stand up for the gospel? *Remind kids that God is our source of strength. Help them see that being afraid of persecution is natural and normal. Discuss ways the Holy Spirit can help them face fears and do things that seem impossible or scary.*

SAY • God gives us power to stand up for the gospel. In some places, persecution may be very mild; you may only be mocked or disliked because you believe the Bible. In other places, the people may actually punish you for believing the truth. No matter what kind of persecution you face, the Holy Spirit will help you.

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

· paper
· pens or pencils

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Kids worship

Ask kids to describe their favorite part of worship. What are some of their favorite songs or things that they've seen in a worship service?

Encourage them to plan a worship service together, incorporating some of their favorite elements of worship. Remind them that all worship should be pleasing to God and should share the gospel with others. Invite them to think about Scripture reading, testimonies, music, prayer, and even an offering time.

Find a time in the near future for a special worship time for kids, allowing them to lead using their own ideas. Encourage them to invite friends. If you do not have worship for kids as a regular part of your church events, ask the staff if there is a time when one could be scheduled.

SAY • One day, some of you might work in churches or might be missionaries around the world. You will help others to worship God. How you choose to worship God and how you lead others to worship is an important part of missions. Worship is one way that we stand up for the gospel.

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

LOW PREP

OPTION 2: Stand together

Invite the class to stand side-by-side with about two feet between each kid. Challenge them to stand on one foot. You may time them to see how long they can stay standing on one foot. After the last kid loses balance, play again, allowing the kids to place hands on shoulders to hold one another steady.

SAY • **God gives us power to stand up for the gospel.**

One of the ways God gives us this power is through

the Holy Spirit, but God also gives us one another. Other believers can help you stand up for the gospel just as you can help one another stand on one foot longer.

We help one another by studying God's Word together, confessing sin to one another, encouraging one another, and meeting one another's needs.

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.