

THE CONTINUING ACTS OF THE CHRIST



Week Twenty-Six - To Be Continued...

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

- **Big Idea:** We (the church and God's people) are invited to continue this story. As actors and participants in God's story, we get to live in such a way that the people and world around us encounter Jesus.

Starter

Evidence of Grace

- Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

Discussion:

- Have you ever watched a show or movie and at the end of the movie, it doesn't quite end but you just see, "To Be Continued..."
- How do you feel when a story, show, or movie doesn't end but leaves you wondering what happens next?

Sing Together

Story - from Acts 19: 21-41

We pick up in chapter 28 where we left off in chapter 27. Paul and everyone on the boat that was sailing to Rome had been shipwrecked but made it safely to shore on the island of Malta. The people that lived there were extremely kind to Paul and the other shipwrecked survivors. Everyone was gathered on the shore the people of Malta lit a fire and brought them food because it was cold and rainy.

Paul was helping gather some firewood for the fire and when he put some wood on the fire a snake came out and bit Paul on the hand and wouldn't let go. When the people saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said, "This guy must be a murderer. He must have done something bad enough to deserve death because even though he survived the shipwreck, justice is being served by this snake because the venom will kill him." The people watched and waited for Paul's hand to swell up and for the venom to kick in and they were prepared to watch Paul die. Instead what they saw was Paul brushing it off and nothing happening to Paul. He was fine. So now the people thought that Paul was some type of god.

Then Paul actually goes to the house of one of the leaders of the island, named Publius. Publius' father was sick in bed and so Paul goes and prays for him and he gets healed. Then all of the sick people on the island heard about this and started coming to see Paul. The Bible says that the rest of the sick people on the island were healed when Paul prayed for them.

After the sick were healed, the people of Malta were so thrilled that they let Paul and the others take a boat that they had in order to continue their journey to Rome. So Paul and everyone else that was on the original boat that crashed set sail again on a new boat bound for Rome.

After a few weeks and a few different stops, they all finally make it to Rome. When Paul gets to Rome he is greeted by people who have heard that he is coming and have been eagerly waiting to meet him and to hear his teaching. Some of them traveled many miles to greet him in Rome and Paul thanked God for these people and was encouraged to see them.

The first thing that Paul does when he gets to Rome is to meet with the Jewish leaders. Paul pleads his case before them and says that he hasn't done anything wrong, but the Jewish leaders in other towns wanted to kill him because of the good news that he was teaching. These Jewish leaders send that they hadn't heard anything bad about him, but they did want to know what he was teaching because they had heard that many people were following his teachings. So Paul met with a big group of leaders and all day and night he told them about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus.

Paul then tells the leaders that the Holy Spirit did in fact tell their ancestors about this kingdom of God and Jesus the Messiah, but said that they wouldn't listen. Paul ends by saying, "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"

The book of Acts ends with a cliffhanger. It ends with Paul finally making it to Rome and it just says that Paul stayed in Rome for two years in his rented house and he proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness. That's it. It's done. The end. It kind of leaves us hanging. We are left asking questions like, What happened to Paul? Did anyone believe Paul? Did Paul travel anywhere else? Did Paul get put to death like the Jews

wanted or did he just stay in his house in Rome forever? What about the churches? What happened with the different churches that he helped plant?

Have you ever watched a show and it doesn't really end and then that's it; there isn't another episode to watch that would help wrap everything up? Have you ever wondered what it might be like to be a character in that show and then be told to carry on the story that you just watched? This is kind of what Acts does with us. It invites you to participate in the rest of the story. Acts is a book where we learn what the early followers of Jesus were like. What they believed, who they were, how they lived, and the Jesus they followed. We are invited into this story to figure out how to live in God's good kingdom, following Jesus' life, words, and deeds, in a community of other believers. You now get to be a part of this story because of Jesus.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- ▶ Why do you think the book of Acts ends without wrapping things up but leaves it open-ended?
- ▶ What story did Paul teach to the Jewish leaders and to everyone who would listen? *The kingdom of God has come in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, the promised messiah they were looking for.*
- ▶ What do you think our role in the story is now here in Phoenix or where you live?
- ▶ Do we already know the end of the story? (*Yes, so we can trust God with our lives because we know the end is a restored creation*)
- ▶ How is Jesus good news in this story?

Breakout Time

Pray:

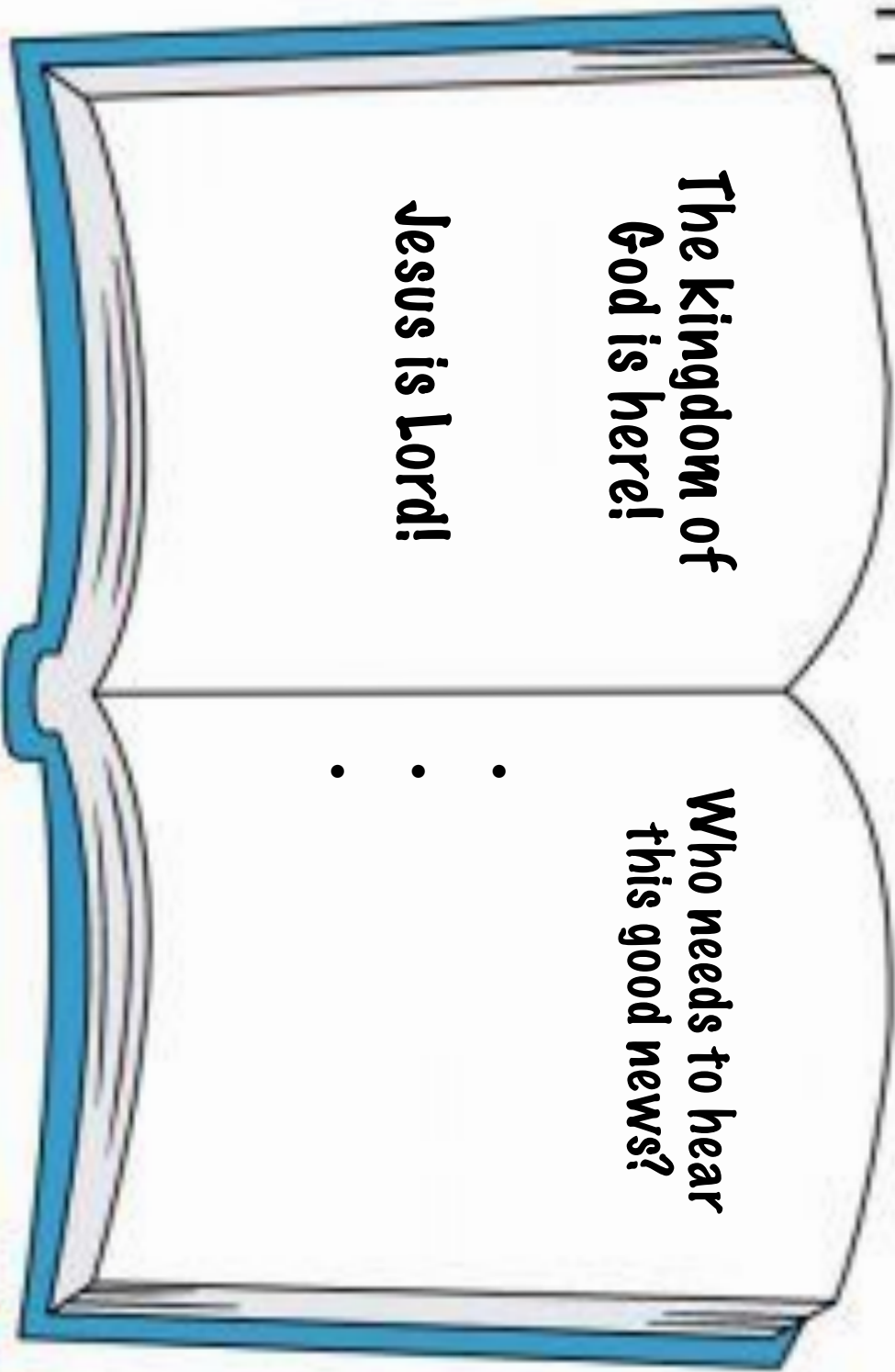
God, I know that you are the one true living God who created all things. You created the earth and everything on the earth. You created me. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus so that I can be forgiven of worshiping other things. Forgive me for sometimes worshiping other things than you. I repent. Holy Spirit please work in my heart to love God and love others.

Craft:

- The kids can color the following page

BLESS Activity

This week, ask your family how you can practice the Speak rhythm. Maybe as you go to school, go to the store with your parent, go to your sports game or after-school activity, or even in your own home and think about who you might be able to speak the good news that the kingdom of God has come to earth in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.



**The kingdom of
God is here!**

Jesus is Lord!

**Who needs to hear
this good news?**

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