

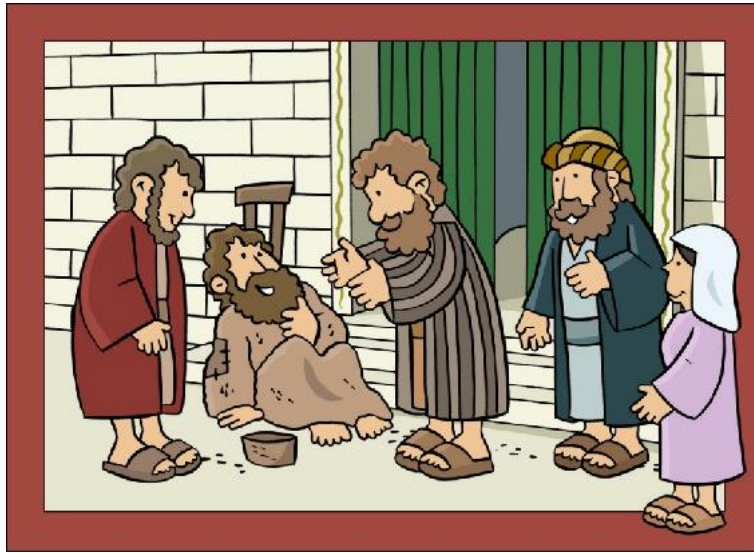
# Stories from the Book of Acts for Children



## The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Before Jesus returned to heaven to be with His Father, He told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for a special gift from God, the gift of the Holy Spirit. So, the disciples, along with many other believers, waited in a large room in Jerusalem for the promise to be fulfilled. On the day of Pentecost, while they were all gathered together in prayer, there was a great noise from Heaven, like a strong wind blowing that filled the whole room and they saw what appeared like small flames of fire resting on each person there. All of the believers who were present were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Many people from diverse parts of the world had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost. After hearing Peter explain about Jesus, about three thousand people accepted Jesus as their Savior.



## Healing the Lame Man

Peter and John went together to the Temple to pray. By the Temple gate sat a man who was paralyzed in his legs since birth. He begged daily at the gate. As Peter and John passed by, he asked them for some money, but Peter answered: "I have no silver or gold, but what I have, that I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up on your feet." Immediately, the lame man was healed! He jumped up and went into the Temple with Peter and John, praising God for the miracle.

A huge crowd gathered, and Peter preached Jesus to them. As a result, over 5,000 people received Jesus that day.



## The Apostles Meet Opposition

The high priest and his officials were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in jail. But an angel of the Lord came at night, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then he told them, “Go to the Temple and give the people this message of life!” At daybreak the apostles entered the Temple, as they were told, and immediately began teaching.

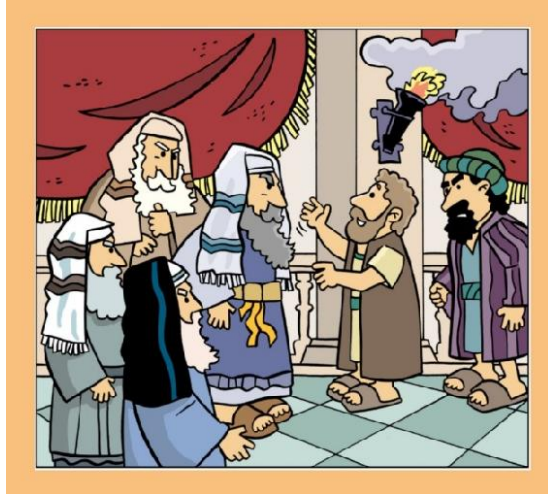
The high priest and his officials convened the high council. Then they sent for the apostles to be brought from the jail for trial. But when the Temple guards went to the jail, the men were gone. They returned to the council and reported, “The jail was securely locked, with the guards standing outside, but when we opened the gates, no one was there!” Then someone arrived with startling news: “The men you put in jail are standing in the Temple, teaching the people!”



## Stephen Preaches to the People

One of the leaders among the first followers of Jesus was a man named Stephen. Everyone respected him. The Holy Spirit gave him much power and wisdom. Stephen did many miracles. Many people believed him when he taught them to trust in Jesus.

One day when Stephen was teaching about Jesus, some Jews who did not believe in Jesus came and began to argue with him. They became very angry, so they went to the religious leaders and told lies about him.



## Stephen is Arrested

The religious leaders arrested Stephen and brought him to the high priest and the other leaders of the Jews. More false witnesses came and lied to them about Stephen.

The high priest asked Stephen, “Are these men telling the truth about you?” Stephen began to say many things in order to answer the high priest. He said that God had done many wonderful things for the people of Israel from the time when Abraham lived to the time of Jesus. But the people had always disobeyed God. Stephen said, “You people are stubborn and rebellious against God. You always reject the Holy Spirit, just as our ancestors always rejected God and always killed his prophets. But you did something worse than they did! You killed the Messiah!”

When the religious leaders heard this, they were so angry that they dragged Stephen out of the city and threw stones at him in order to kill him. As Stephen was dying, he cried out, “Jesus, receive my spirit.” He fell to his knees and cried out again, “Master, do not hold this sin against them.” Then he died.



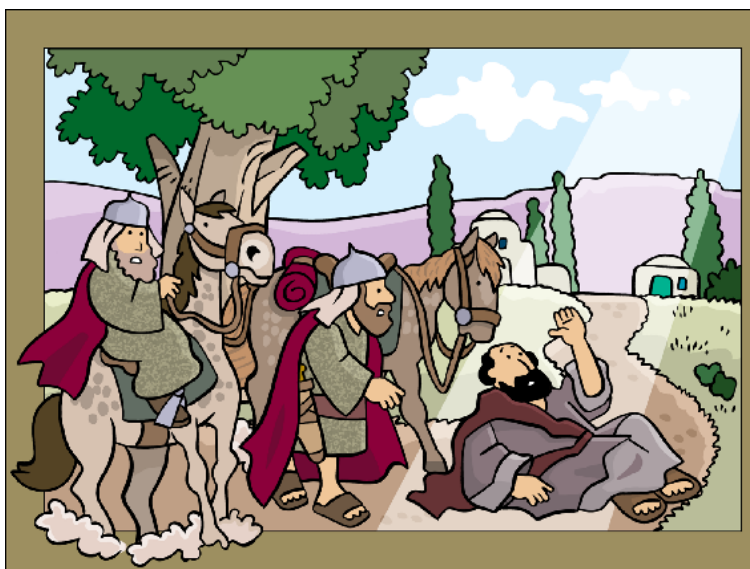
## Philip, the Evangelist

Philip was one of the seven deacons chosen by the apostles to help with the care of the people of the early church. One time, while Philip was in Samaria telling the people about Jesus, he was visited by an angel who told him to go to the road between Jerusalem and Gaza.

On the road, Philip saw a man sitting and reading in a chariot. The man was the treasurer of Candace, the queen of Ethiopia, and was returning home after worshipping in Jerusalem. As Philip approached the chariot, he realized the man was reading Isaiah 53, a prophetic chapter about Jesus. Phillip asked the man, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

“No, I don’t,” the man answered. “Can you explain the text to me?”

Philip told him about Jesus and the great gift God had given to all. Then the Ethiopian man asked to be baptized. After performing the baptism, Philip was suddenly taken away by the Spirit of the Lord, and the man from Ethiopia “went on his way rejoicing.”



## The Road to Damascus

Peter, John and the other apostles continued to preach the Good News about Jesus to all in Jerusalem. Many people believed and were added to the young Church. However, jealous enemies began to persecute the Christians in Jerusalem. One man was set on arresting as many believers as possible, and even asked for letters of recommendation to go to Damascus to arrest and bring back believers to Jerusalem. His name was Saul of Tarsus.

Saul was interrupted on his journey to Damascus, when suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. It was so bright it caused him to fall to the ground. Saul heard a voice saying "Saul, Saul! I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." When Saul got up, he could not see. His friends had to lead him into Damascus.





## Saul Escapes in a Basket

Saul miraculously recovered his sight and a great transformation took place in his heart. He was baptized and became a follower of Jesus.

But many were quite shocked by this change in Saul. The Christian community in Damascus had difficulty believing that Saul, their enemy, had become a follower of Jesus. At the same time, many of Saul's former friends turned against him and plotted to kill him.

It becomes so dangerous for Saul that he had to secretly escape from the city. This wasn't easy to do, because his enemies were watching the city gates day and night. So Saul's friends helped him escape by lowering him down from the wall of the city in a basket.



## Peter raises Dorcas from the Dead

There was a believer in Joppa named Dorcas. She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor. Then she became ill and died. The believers had heard that Peter was nearby at Lydda, so they sent two men to beg him, "Please come as soon as possible!"

Peter returned with them; and as soon as he arrived, they took him to the upstairs room. Peter asked them all to leave the room; then he knelt and prayed. Turning to the body he said, "Get up, Dorcas."

Dorcas opened her eyes! When she saw Peter, she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called in the widows and all the believers, and he presented her to them alive.



## To Eat or not to Eat?

In Caesarea lived a Roman officer by the name of Cornelius. Cornelius and his family believed in God, and generously helped the poor. One day an angel appeared to him saying, "God has heard your prayers and has seen all that you have done to help the poor. Send some men to Joppa and ask for Simon Peter to come see you."

Cornelius obeyed the angel's command and sent men to Joppa. Later, when the men were on their way to the house where Peter was staying, Peter had gone to the top of the house for prayer. After praying for a while, he had become hungry. While waiting for the food to be ready in the house, Peter saw a vision from heaven.

A large sheet was being lowered by its four corners containing many different kinds of wild animals, and a voice told him, "Get up, kill and eat." Peter refused saying that as a Jew he could not eat unclean food. But the voice explained to him that what God had sanctified was now clean.



Up until this time the disciples had been sharing the Gospel with the Jewish people only. Through this vision, God was showing Peter that the good news of the Gospel was for everybody. God used this vision to prepare Peter for sharing the Gospel with Cornelius and his family.

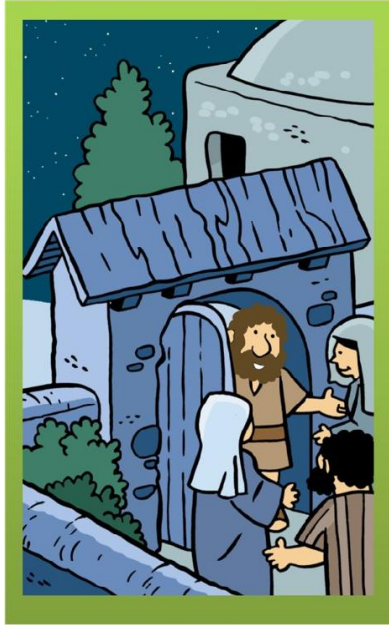


## A Miraculous Escape

While the Good News of the Gospel was being preached, persecution was growing against the young Church in Jerusalem. King Herod arrested James, the brother of John, and had him killed. Then he had Peter arrested and threw him into prison, intending to kill him. However, because it was at the time of the Passover Feast, Peter was kept overnight in prison.

The Christians prayed earnestly and continually for Peter, asking God to deliver him, and God mightily answered their prayers. While Peter was sleeping, chained between two soldiers, an angel came, freed him, and led him out of the prison, without the guards even noticing.

Peter went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered for prayer. He knocked at the door in the gate, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to open it. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that, instead of opening the door, she ran back inside and told everyone, "Peter is standing at the door!"



“You’re out of your mind!” they said.

Meanwhile, Peter continued knocking. When they finally opened the door and saw him, they were amazed. He motioned for them to quiet down and told them how the Lord had led him out of prison. “Tell James and the other brothers what happened,” he said. And then he went to another place.



## A Man Made Blind

While the Good News of Jesus was being preached in Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas started on their missionary adventures. After leaving Antioch, they journeyed to the island of Cyprus and travelled toward the city of Paphos, preaching the Word of God.

In Paphos, the Roman governor Sergius Paulus summoned them to come see him. But while talking to the Governor, a man, a sorcerer called Elymas started to mock Paul and oppose his teaching.

Empowered by the Spirit of God, Paul rebuked Elymas and the Lord immediately temporarily blinded the sorcerer. Astonished by the power of God, Sergius Paulus became a believer.



## A Call from Macedonia

Next Paul and Silas traveled through the area of Phrygia and Galatia. Then They went on through Mysia to the seaport of Troas.

That night Paul had a vision: A man from Macedonia in northern Greece was standing there, pleading with him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us!”

Paul and Silas decided to leave for Macedonia at once. God had called them to preach the good news there.





### Opening of Prison Doors and a Jailer's Heart

When Paul freed a fortune-teller from the demon that possessed her, the woman's irate masters stirred up a mob against Paul and Silas, dragged them before the local authorities, and brought false charges against them. The officials had Paul and Silas stripped, beaten, clamped in irons, and tossed into prison, disregarding their rights as Roman citizens.

That night there was a massive earthquake that shook the prison so violently that the walls crumbled and the doors flew open. But after Paul and Silas saved the jailer's life by not fleeing the scene, the jailer took them to his own house, set a meal before them, tended to their wounds, and listened to what they had to say. That very night, he and his entire household came to believe in Jesus. The next morning Paul and Silas were released from custody, with the apologies of the court.

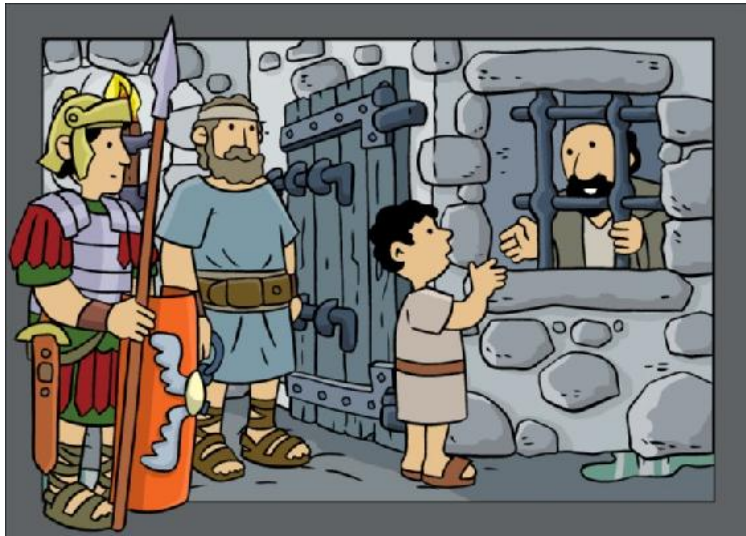


## Sleeping in Church

After leaving Greece to travel to Jerusalem, Paul stayed several days in Troas. Paul preached the night before he left and his talk went well past midnight.

Many came to listen, amongst them a young man name Eutychus, who sat by the window sill. The poor young man, tired from the long day, fell asleep and fell out of the window. Everyone rushed out and found that Eutychus had died from the fall.

Paul threw his arms around Eutychus and prayed for him. Young Eutychus rose, shaken but alive. Then Paul returned to finish his teaching until daylight.



### The Apostle Paul's Nephew

While Paul was in Jerusalem, a mob seized him and would have done him great harm if a Roman patrol had not come to his rescue. The Roman patrol kept him prisoner and took him to the Roman authority to answer the mob's (false) accusations.

The religious leaders were so angry that they wanted Paul killed. They devised a plan to trick the Roman commander to bring Paul from prison to the Jewish council, so they could kill him on the way.

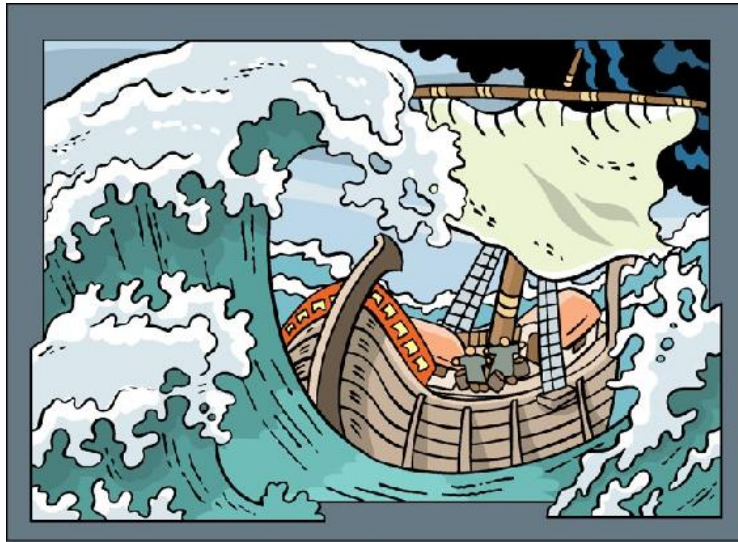
But a lad, Paul's nephew, overheard a conversation about these plans. He right away went to see Paul to tell him of the plot. Paul then sent his nephew to tell the Roman commander, who believed the lad. The commander called for a strong escort of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to transport Paul to another city in the middle of the night.



### Paul Stands Before King Agrippa

After Paul was taken to Caesarea, he stood trial before Governor Festus. Festus wanted to do the Jews a favor and send Paul back to Jerusalem for the trial. Paul, however, appealed to stand trial in Rome, as was his right as a Roman citizen.

Later, King Agrippa visited Caesarea and expressed an interest in listening to Paul. Paul shared his story with the king, who later commented that was almost convinced to become a Christian. King Agrippa and Governor Festus then agreed that Paul had done nothing wrong but the governor still sent him to Rome to stand trial before Caesar.



## Peace in the Midst of the Storm

Shortly after his meeting with King Agrippa, under the care of a Roman centurion named Julius, Paul embarked on a journey to Rome along with several other prisoners.

It was a long and dangerous journey. At one point during the journey, a violent wind blew so strong that for several days they didn't see the sun or the stars. All the men were losing hope of surviving this storm, but Paul stood amongst them and said, "Be of good courage! An angel of the Lord appeared to me and said that no life will be lost. Let's eat and get our strength back."

And sure enough, though the boat suffered extensive damage, all crew and passengers were able to safely reach the island of Malta and not one life was lost!



## The Viper's Bite

The local people were very friendly and made a fire to warm those who had just come ashore. Paul had gathered some wood and was putting in on the fire when a viper, a poisonous snake, crawled out and bit him on the hand.

When the local people saw the snake hanging from Paul's hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer! He didn't drown in the sea, but the goddess of justice will kill him anyway." However, Paul shook the snake off into the fire and wasn't harmed.

Later, Paul was able to visit the governor of the island and pray for his sick father, who was immediately healed. After this happened, everyone on the island brought their sick friends and relatives to Paul, and they were all healed.



### “I Have Kept the Faith”

After a long and dangerous journey, Paul finally arrived in Rome. Paul then stayed in Rome for at least two years, still a prisoner but allowed to live in his own rented house under the supervision of a guard. Paul was also allowed to receive visitors and to continue teaching about Jesus.

During this time, Paul wrote letters to the Christians he had witnessed to on his travels. Many of these letters became books of the Bible.



## Timothy

While Paul was being held in a Roman prison, he wrote a letter to Timothy, a young man whom he had sent to Ephesus to strengthen the church.

Timothy's mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, had taught him as a boy to read and understand the Scriptures. Paul wrote to Timothy acknowledging their loving influence on him:

“Continue in the things which you have learned and have faith in remembering who you learned from. From the time of your childhood, you have known the Holy Scriptures, which have given you the wisdom of salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Even though the task ahead for Timothy was not easy, Paul commended him and encouraged him: “Let no man despise your youth; but be an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”



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Images and text (adapted) by Didier Martin.