

Lesson 9

God Protects My Body

Bible Lesson: Acts 12:1-12

Memory Verse: For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways.
Psalm 91:11

Enrichment Memory Verse: The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. *Psalm 18:2*

Catechism Memory Work: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. *What does this mean?* I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, my eyes and ears, and all my members, my reason and all the powers of my soul together with food and clothing, home and family, and all my property; that He daily provides abundantly for all the needs of my life, protects me from all danger...

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prepare to Teach

- † Students that God is with them and protects them.
- † Students that angels are real beings created by God
- † Students that angels are sent by God to minister to and protect His children

Prepare Materials

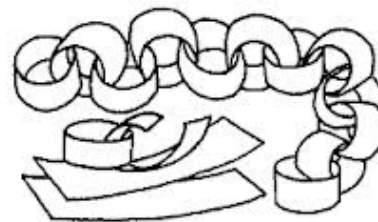
Along with the regular materials needed for class, you will need the following items for this lesson:

1. To be used with Activity 2—God Protects
18 strips of paper 8 1/2" long by 2" wide

A. On 9 strips, write the following Scripture references:

I Samuel 14:45
Genesis 7:23
Daniel 6:21-22
Exodus 14:30
I Kings 17:1-4
Psalm 3:3
Acts 14:19-20
Matthew 2:19-20
II Thessalonians 3:3

to



Loop the strips together make a paper chain.

B. On the remaining 9 strips, write the following names:

Jonathan
Noah and his family
Daniel
People of Israel
Elijah
David
Paul
Jesus
Christians—you

Don't shape these into circles until students identify which name corresponds to which reference.

2. Secret Stash bag containing the supplies for the paper chains. The paper chains are a reminder of Peter's miraculous release for the chains that bound his hands while he was in prison.

Prayer Preparation

1. Thank God for His protection over you and your students. Ask for His continuing protection as the year progresses.

2. Thank God for each of your students. Pray for specific needs that you have become aware of in your work with them.
3. Pray that God will prepare you to teach and prepare your students for the Word that He has to give them this week. Pray that God may work in their hearts through the Word as they memorize it this week.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

A. Bible Study

Acts 12:1-12

Herod, who was the grandson, was king over the whole region of Palestine/Israel. His capital was Jerusalem. He was intent on winning the favor of the Jews, especially the religious leaders of the day. One way to do that was to actively persecute Christians since Christians were hated by the Jewish leaders. Herod succeeded in having James, the brother of John, killed. When he saw that this strong action won the praise of the Jews, he also had Peter arrested.

The Threat Against Peter

After his arrest, Peter was put into prison. Since it is likely that Herod had heard how the disciples had earlier escaped from prison (Acts 5:19), extra precautions were taken this time to ensure the security of his prison. Four squads, or sixteen soldiers, were given the job of keeping Peter in prison. Two guards were chained to him, one of each arm. The other soldiers took up positions at various places throughout the prison to make sure that no unauthorized person either came or went. A large iron gate with a large lock stood at the jail's entrance as a final impressive barrier to anyone who attempted escape. It would be impossible for anyone to get out of this prison without having a strong outside force working for his release. Peter's friends were not a well-armed military force. There was no way they could fight their way in to rescue Peter. His imprisonment seemed guaranteed.

The Attitude of Peter

Peter trusted God. He did not know what was going to happen to him but he was confident that God was in control of the situation. For all Peter knew, he would be tried and put to death the next day. But that thought did not make him anxious. When it came time to sleep, Peter slept. He slept while the guards around him were watching and alert. The guards knew the importance of their prisoner and the consequences they would suffer if there was any slip-up on their part. Since soldiers were put to death for allowing the escape of a high-profile prisoner like Peter, it is likely that the men assigned to guard Peter had no thoughts of sleep on their minds. Their fate rested on the will of King Herod (See Acts 12:9). Peter's fate rested in God. Peter was secure.

The Rescue of Peter

Peter was awakened by a blow to his ribs. Step by step, the angel who had awakened him gave Peter commands. Step by step, Peter methodically followed the instructions he was given without questioning what was happening or what was going to happen next.

The chains slipped off his wrists but remained on the arms of the two soldiers to whom he had been chained. The two guards noticed nothing. Peter put on his clothes and sandals right there in the presence of the soldiers but none of them interrupted his actions. As Peter was led through the prison past one group of guards after another, no one stopped him. None of the guards was conscious of what was happening. It was as though the eyes of all the guards were made blind to what was happening. God, Who could make blind eyes see was also able to make seeing eyes blind.

When Peter reached the last obstacle to his freedom, the large iron gate) which usually took several men to open), swung open by itself and after he had gone through, closed silently behind him. Peter was free.

Peter's life had been in danger. The tremendous force of Roman power was being exercised against him. There was no earthly power that would be able to rescue him from the plot of this Roman authority. But God could. And God did.

Peter lived to see another day. His escape was totally unexpected on the part of his friends. When he showed up, they recognized that his release had been accomplished through an act of God. Peter later suffered the death of a martyr. But for now, no one, no matter how strong or impressive his power, could harm God's servant.

B. Creed Study

The Scripture makes clear that the Lord never slumbers or sleeps (Psalm 121:3-4). We are then to understand that He is not only alert but also concerned about us and our continued well-being. So Psalm 91:11 tells us that God has sent angels, messengers to watch over His people. It is also true that God has provided people, such as our parents, to help protect us from the dangers of this world. What great comfort these truths give us in a world so full of dangers.

In the Scriptures we are shown that the Lord is fully capable of delivering us from evil and all dangers. The men Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were aware of this as they were about to be thrown into the fiery furnace. In Daniel 3:16-17 it says, **“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”** They made a confession that God is able to protect them from all danger. The three men knew that being protected by God might mean a protection in which God protects them through the fire of the furnace and carries them into eternity; an eternity in which no dangers will ever harm them.

In the Acts 12 passage it begins with the record of James being killed at the hands of Herod. We might ask, “How does this fit?” in the Creed which says God protects us “from all evil.” We should be reminded that in the Creed and in the Lord's Prayer when we pray, “deliver us from evil,” that the greatest and most final answer is for the Lord to remove His children from this place where sorrow and difficulty are always near.

Later in the passage, we also see that He sometimes cares for us by protecting us from the very real dangers that come to us in this world. Peter was protected from the danger that James had to endure. Was God unfair? Of course not, He cared for and protected these individuals in different ways. In the Creed, we confess that God protects now in this world and that protection flows from now into eternity. When the troubles and dangers of the world assail us we cling to the promises of God. We cling to the One who is our rock and fortress; who is our deliverer. We look up to our caring Heavenly Father and see that our help “comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:2). We learn in the Creed that He protects us from all danger. How could this be? Because He keeps our “going out and [our] coming in from this time forth and forevermore” (Psalm 121:8).

BEGINNING OUR CLASS HOUR

Welcome

As students enter the classroom, warmly welcome them to class. Then **ASK** them to think about a time they thought they were in danger. **EXPLAIN** that you will ask them to share their experience later in class.

Open with Prayer

1. Ask students for prayer suggestions. Encourage students to participate in prayer by using short sentences to pray for the needs they suggested.
2. Close by asking the Holy Spirit to be their Teacher today. Ask that He would help the students to learn and remember the lesson He has for them.

Recite Memory Work

Listen to students recite their memory work:

From the Bible: Matthew 6:26

And

From the Catechism: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean? I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, my eyes and ears, and all my members, my reason and all the powers of my soul together with food and clothing, home and family, and all my property; that He provides abundantly for all the needs of my life...

Review

USE last week's Wall Words to review the lesson. Provide the students with a word's meaning, then ask them what word fits that meaning.

MEANING WORD

1. Someone who received a message from God and proclaims that message to the people **Prophet**
2. A large, black, scavenger bird that will eat fresh or decaying meat, insects, or vegetation **Raven**
3. To gather in a crops when it ripe; to bring in the harvest **Reap**
4. A place that protects you **Shelter**
5. To scatter or plant seeds **Sow**

6. A widow is a woman whose husband has died **Widow**
7. A book of questions and answers which explain Christian teachings **Catechism**

Introduce Wall Words

Charge (this word is found in the memory verse)—to be responsible for or take care of something

Escape—to get out of jail without getting caught

Fervently—with deep, strong, or intense feeling

Protects—to guard or keep safe from danger. God protects His children. He keeps His children safe.

Required—something that must be done

Rescued—to be delivered from danger or evil

Seriously—someone who is seriously hurt is badly injured and would need a lot of special care and possibly surgery in order to recover from the injury

Situation—all the events happening around you; circumstances

Unexpectedly—an event that is not planned; a surprising or sudden event

Introduce the Lesson

INSTRUCT students to turn to page 35 in their book. **READ** the title of Lesson 9—"God Protects My Body." **ASK** the students what they think this lesson is going to be about.

READ the first sentence in paragraph 1. Then **ASK** the students to share about a time when they felt like they were in danger.

Teach the Lesson

FINISH READING paragraph 1.

SAY We are going to read about a boy named Dan and a dangerous event that happened to him.

READ paragraphs 2 through 5.

ASK

1. What unexpected event happened to Dan? (*A truck turned in front of him, hit him, and threw him off of his bike.*)
2. What did Dan's parents pray for? (*They asked God to heal Dan.*)
3. Who else prayed for Dan? (*His family, friends, and people from his church*)

4. What did Dan and the others thank the Lord for? (*Dan was thankful that he was able to leave the hospital. Others thanked the Lord for protecting Dan from more serious injuries and for healing him.*)
5. What is one way God protects us from danger? (*He sends his angels.*)

SAY Let's read how God sent his angels to protect the Apostle Peter. The whole story is found in our Bibles in Acts 12, but let's read it from our student book.

READ paragraphs 6 through 9.

REVIEW paragraphs 6 through 9 by listing the miracles that Peter experienced:

1. An angel woke Peter.
2. Peter's chains fell off.
3. Peter put on his sandals and cloak without the guards seeing him.
4. Peter walked passed the guards without being seen.
5. The main gate of the prison opened by itself.

DIRECT students to open their Bibles to Acts 12:11. **READ** the verse.

ASK Who rescued Peter from the hand of Herod? (*God. If students say the angel rescued Peter, remind them the angel was sent by God.*)

FINISH the lesson by reading the last paragraph.

SAY Yes, God protects us. But sometimes we do get hurt. Sometimes Christians are hurt very badly, and some even die. Why does that happen if God is protecting us? (*What we think is danger might not be the greatest danger.*) God knows what real danger is. The greatest dangers are things that take us away from trusting Jesus. God not only cares about safety for our bodies, He also cares most that we should be His children and live as His children with our sins forgiven. Sometimes when we are hurt or sick we learn how to trust Jesus and to love God most. If Christians die, God takes them to heaven to be with Him forever. God is good and He always does what is best for us

REVIEW

Use Activity 1 to review the lesson. See answers below.

APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

Memory Work

BIBLE VERSE—Psalm 91:11

For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways.

(If time permits, have students write the words to the memory verse and reference on strips of paper 8 1/2" long by 2" wide. Then assemble them into a paper chain by looping the words together in the order they appear in the verse. End with the strip of paper that has the Scripture reference written on it.)

CATECHISM—Have each student add the next segment of the Meaning to the First Article of The Apostles' Creed:

Add: that He daily provides abundantly for all the needs of my life,

Then the student may draw whatever kind of line he wishes to make an edge for the first puzzle piece. Then cut it off along that line.

Allow students time to place all their puzzle pieces together.

At this point, the students should have pieces for the following portions of the Apostles' Creed and its Meaning:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

***What does this mean?* I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, my eyes and ears, and all my members, my reason and all the powers of my soul, together with food and clothing, home and family, and all my property; that He daily provides abundantly for all the needs of my life, protects me from all danger,**

Have each student place the puzzle pieces in the envelope.

Encourage students to memorize the First Article of the Apostles' Creed and its Meaning by putting the puzzle together at home. One method that may help the students memorize is to challenge

them to remove pieces of the puzzle and recite the missing portion from memory. The ultimate goal is to recite the entire First Article and its meaning without the help of the puzzle pieces.

See sample puzzle at the front of this Teacher Manual.

Activity Pages

Activity 1—Escape from the Maze

ANSWERS

1. Herod
2. James
3. Prayer
4. sleeping
5. angel
6. chains
7. guards
8. gate
9. dreaming
10. rescued
11. watching
12. protecting

Activity 2— God Protects

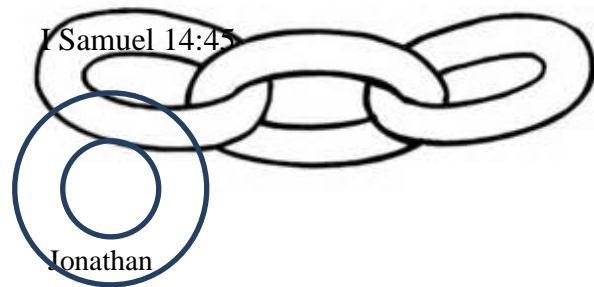
Write the Scripture references and Answers/Names from Activity 2 on strips of paper 8 ½” long by 2” wide paper. (See details under “Prepare Materials” section.)

Assign each student a Scripture reference from the list below. Have the reference read out loud. Then

have the student choose from the name strips the person he or she was protected by. Loop the name strip through the link with its corresponding reference so the name strip dangles from the reference loop.

ANSWERS

I Samuel 14:45	Jonathan
Genesis 7:23	Noah and his family
Daniel 6:21-22	Daniel
Exodus 14:30	People of Israel
I Kings 17:1-4	Elijah
Psalms 3:3	David
Acts 14:19-20	Paul
Matthew 2:19-20	Jesus
II Thessalonians 3:3	Christians--you



CLOSING THE LESSON

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You because You provide everything we need. Help us to trust You every day to give us what we need. Help us to be thankful and satisfied with what You give us. Forgive us for taking so many things for granted. In Your Name we pray. Amen

Assignment

1. Encourage students to take their Activity pages home and use them to tell someone what they learned today in class. If there wasn't sufficient time to complete the Activity pages, students should finish them at home and bring them back to class next week.
2. Remind students to memorize Psalm 91:11.

3. Challenge the advanced students to also memorize Psalm 18:2.
4. Students should also continue memorizing The First Article of the Apostles' Creed and its meaning.