

S-TAT

The Church on Mission

Acts 17-28

Priscilla and Aquila

Acts 18:1-11; 18-28

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

Paul did not spend much time in Athens before he moved on.

Acts 18:1-3

So Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a descendant of Abraham* named Aquila,...who had recently arrived from the capital of the kingdom, Rome, with his wife, Priscilla. They had left...when the king deported all of Abraham's descendants from Rome. Paul lived and worked with them, because they were tentmakers just like him.

Acts 18:4-8

...Paul went to Abraham's descendants' place of prayer*, trying to convince them...that Jesus was the Promised Savior*. But when they opposed and insulted him, Paul shook the dust from his clothes to show them that God was angry with them, and said, "Your blood is upon your own heads—I am innocent. From now on I will go speak to those who are not descendants of Abraham."...As Paul shared about Jesus, many people in Corinth...became believers,* and were baptized*.

Acts 18:9-11

One night Jesus spoke to Paul in a vision* and told him, "Don't be afraid! Speak out! Don't be silent! For I am with you, and no one will attack and harm you, for many people in this city belong to me." So Paul stayed there for the next year and a half, teaching the message from God.

Acts 18:12-17

But later, some of Abraham's descendants came together against Paul and brought him before the governor for judgment. They accused Paul of "persuading people to worship God in ways that are contrary to our law."

But just as Paul started to make his defense, the governor turned to Paul's accusers and said, "Listen, Abraham's descendants, if this were a case involving some wrongdoing or a serious crime, I would have a reason to accept your case. But since it is merely a question of words and names and your religious law, take care of it yourselves. I refuse to judge such matters." And he threw them out of the courtroom.

The crowd then grabbed...the leader of the place of prayer, and beat him right there in the courtroom. But the governor paid no attention. Paul stayed in Corinth for some time after that, then said good-bye to the brothers and sisters and went to a nearby town...

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for information on the following terms:

Baptism*

Abraham's descendants*

Followers/Believers*

Place of prayer* may replace Synagogue

Vision*

Promised Savior*

Story Crafting

Several names have been omitted from the first few verses, and Rome is used in place of Italy in order to simplify the story. We've also added the information that Rome was the capital of the kingdom, because Rome appears several times in this story set.

Telling/teaching the message from God, speaking

The word 'preach' used in the original text means that he strongly urged or warned them. You may choose to use a word that also includes the connotation of warning or urging. Throughout this story set, we have changed the word 'preach' to a word with less religious connotation. Most of the time, we have replaced 'preach' with 'speak' or 'tell' (which often is actually a more literal translation); but where we have used a different word, we have noted why. In this case, 'teaching' is the word used in the NLT.

Message from God

'Word of God' is a figure of speech that may not be understood if translated literally into another language, so we have simplified the phrase, made it more specific for those who may not understand what the message was about, and retained its meaning by saying 'message from God (about Jesus).'

Lord

In this story, all references to 'Lord' refer to Jesus, so we have used Jesus' name, as 'Lord' may be an unfamiliar term to someone with little biblical background. We have chosen not to use "master" as a substitute for "Lord" because here it seems to be used more as a name for Jesus.

Intra-Story Cohesion

This story is meant to be the first in an "Acts, Part 2" story set in which the first story set (Church Formation Set) ends with Paul in Athens and the Return stories. If you use this set immediately after the Church Formation Set, you may choose to omit the Return story from the first set and use it at the end of this set. We have kept terms and phrases consistent throughout both story sets, and although you may choose different terms, be sure to keep your terms consistent throughout the two sets.

If you are considering a story or stories from the Epistle to the Corinthian Church, then you will want to include this story for the necessary background narrative to the Epistle.

Worldview

Shook the dust from his clothes is an idiomatic phrase that means that Paul was trying to show them that God was angry with them. You may add the phrase that we included in italics, or you may simply delete this phrase if it causes more confusion.

Your blood is upon your own heads is an idiomatic expression that means that the people themselves are responsible for the punishment they will receive from God. If this phrase is not understood in your culture, you may need to say 'You are responsible for'

Brothers and sisters is a phrase that refers to fellow believers. If your audience's culture or background does not allow for the use of kinship terminology here, you may need to refer to fellow believers simply as 'fellow believers,' or by another appropriate title.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Abundant evangelism, Home meetings, Gospel for all peoples

Apollos

Acts 18:18-27, Romans 16:3, 1 Corinthians

3:1-4:21; 16:19, 2 Timothy 4:19

Based on NLT (2004)

Acts 18:18-23

Later, Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila traveled to Ephesus, and Paul spoke the message from God. Priscilla and Aquila stayed in Ephesus while Paul continued traveling to visit and strengthen the believers.*

Acts 18:24-26

Meanwhile, a descendant of Abraham* named Apollos, an eloquent speaker who knew the Scriptures* well, had arrived in Ephesus...He had been taught the way of Jesus, and he taught others about Jesus with an enthusiastic spirit and with accuracy. However, he knew only about John's baptism*. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him preaching boldly in Abraham's descendants' place of prayer,* they took him aside and explained the way of God even more accurately.

Acts 18:27

Apollos had been thinking about going to Corinth, and the brothers and sisters in Ephesus encouraged him to go. They wrote to the believers at Corinth, asking them to welcome him. When he arrived there, he proved to be of great benefit to those who, by God's grace*, had believed.

Romans 16:3, 1 Corinthians 3:1-4:21; 16:19, 2 Timothy 4:19

Paul and Apollos continued to work in various parts of the region. Later, Paul wrote a letter to the church in Corinth. He warned them that they were not to be prideful about whom they followed. He told them "Apollos and I are only servants of God who helped you believe. I planted the seed and Apollos watered it. But God is the One who made it grow." Paul also kept contact with his friends, Priscilla and Aquila and greeted them whenever he wrote letters to their area.*

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for a full explanation of these words.

Believers*

Grace*

Church*

(John's) Baptism*

John's baptism was different than the baptism that believers underwent to show that they now followed Jesus. John's baptism showed that the people had repented of their sins and were brought into a new spiritual condition. (Matt. 3:6, Mark 1:4-5, Luke 3:3, Acts 1:22, 10:37, 13:24, 18:25, 19:3-4). After Pentecost, baptism became the symbol not only of a person's confession and repentance of sins, but of his/her new spiritual relationship with Jesus. If you do not want to introduce the term "John's baptism," you could simply say "he did not fully understand the way to God through Jesus," or you could add 'John's baptism of *repentance*.'

Story Crafting

Lord

In this story, all references to 'Lord' refer to Jesus, so we have used Jesus' name, as 'Lord' may be an unfamiliar term to someone with little biblical background.

Way of God/Way of Jesus

If this phrase translated literally is not easily understood, you might include additional implicit information such as "the way that God has shown (that people should take)."

This is an example of how to include Epistle material into stories from the book of Acts. As you include more stories from the Epistles, the audience can refer back to these stories as narrative 'hooks' upon which they can hang the Epistles.

Intra-Story Cohesion

This story, as crafted above, is best understood by an audience who has heard the story of Jesus' baptism by John.

WORLDVIEW

Brothers and sisters is a phrase that refers to fellow believers. If your audience's culture or background does not allow for the use of kinship terminology here, you may need to refer to fellow believers simply as 'fellow believers,' or by another appropriate title.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

The church as the family of God, Correcting false teaching, Follow up with new churches

Baptism in Jesus' Name

Acts 19:1-10

Based on NLT (2004)

Acts 19:1-7

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions until he reached Ephesus *again*, where he found several believers*. “Did you receive *God’s Spirit** when you *became believers?*” he asked them.

“No,” they replied, “we haven’t even heard *about God’s Spirit.*”

“Then what baptism* did you experience?” he asked.

And they replied, “The baptism of John.”

Paul said, “John’s baptism *was only to show that you had turned from your sins* and turned towards God.* But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus.” As soon as *these believers whom Paul had found in Ephesus* heard this, they were baptized in *Jesus’ name.* Then when Paul laid his hands on them, *God’s Spirit filled* them, and they spoke in *other languages* and *proclaimed God’s message.* There were about twelve men in all.

Acts 19:8-10

Then Paul went to *Abraham’s descendants* place of prayer** and preached boldly for the next three months...But some became stubborn, rejecting his message and publicly speaking against the *Way of Jesus.* So Paul left the *place of prayer* and took the believers with him. Then he held daily discussions at *a large lecture hall.* This went on for the next two years, so that people throughout the province of Asia—both *Abraham’s descendants* and *others*—heard the *message about Jesus.*

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for more information on the following terms:

God's Spirit*

Followers/Believers*

Baptism* (For John's Baptism*, please see *Apollos*) Remember that baptism in Acts includes the act of God's Spirit coming to dwell in the believer. Paul makes that clear to the believers by contrasting this new baptism with John's and then by the act of baptizing them with this 'new' baptism which includes the indwelling of God's Spirit.

Abraham's descendants*

Place of Prayer*

Sin*

Story Crafting

Turned from their sins and turned towards God is the phrase used to describe the repentance that is shown when someone is baptized. Be sure that your audience understands the figure of speech of turning from something and then turning to something.

God's Spirit filled them is used in place of "God's Spirit came on them" to better describe what actually happens.

They spoke in other languages

Translator's Handbook states that speaking in other tongues does not necessarily constitute speaking foreign languages, but "speaking in a strange manner by using unknown or unrecognized sounds."

Proclaimed God's message

Many texts translate this phrase as 'prophesied.' However, 'prophesied' in the Bible has more than just the connotation of foretelling. Literally it means to proclaim God's message, so we have used that phrase here.

The way of Jesus

In most texts it is simply stated as 'the Way.' TEV has expanded this to read 'the way of the Lord.'

a large hall is the simplified phrase for the place where they met.

Intra-Story Cohesion

John's baptism **was only to show that you had turned from your sins and turned towards God** is the same expression for repentance that stories in previous story sets have used. Be sure that you are using similar expressions each time you describe such concepts and ceremonies to help your audience remember and understand the concepts, and connect them with previous stories.

Worldview

Laid hands on them...

In this case, laying on of hands was symbolic of spiritual blessing flowing from one person to another. You may need to make this explicit in the story if your audience does not understand this concept.

Some may think that a re-baptism takes place here, but these people had never been properly baptized as followers of Jesus.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Leadership/mentoring, Baptism, Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Gospel for all peoples

□ On the Name of Jesus

Acts 19:11-22

Based on NLT (2004)

Acts 19:11-12

During this time, God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles*. When *pieces of cloth* that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits* were expelled.

Acts 19:13-16

A group of *Abraham's descendants** was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits.* They tried to use the name of...Jesus in their incantation, saying, "I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul *proclaims*, to come out!"... But one time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, "I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?" Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked and battered.

Acts 19:17-20

The story of what happened spread quickly all through Ephesus, to *Abraham's descendants* and *others* alike. A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of...Jesus was greatly honored. Many who became believers confessed their sinful* practices. A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars. So the message about *Jesus* spread widely and had a powerful effect.

Acts 19:21-22

Afterward Paul felt compelled by the Spirit* to go over to Macedonia and *Corinth* before going to Jerusalem. "And after that," he said, "I must go on to Rome, *the capital of the kingdom!*" He sent his two assistants, *one of them* Timothy....., ahead to Macedonia while he stayed a while longer in *Ephesus*.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for information on the following terms:

Miracles*

Spirit* (referring to God's Spirit/Holy Spirit)

Believers*

Religious leader*

Sin*

Evil Spirits*

Story Crafting

Incantation refers to a magical formula.

Proclaims is used in place of "preach" in this story.

Sorcery refers to magic. If it seems difficult to find one word to adequately translate 'magic,' you may use a descriptive phrase such as 'hurt (or heal) people by using dark words' or "cause harm by using secret object." (Translator's Handbook)

The name of Jesus

This phrase, translated literally, may not carry the full, intended meaning. You may choose to say something along the lines of

- 1) 'by the name/authority of Jesus'
- 2) 'by the authority that Jesus has given me'
- 3) 'by the power which is in the name of Jesus'

Achaia/Greece/Corinth

Achaia is the area we now know as Greece. Corinth is the church in that location. Use place names that are already familiar from other stories if possible.

Rome, *the capital of the kingdom*

We have used the location name of Rome because it returns in later stories; however, we have described it as "the capital of the kingdom" to make it easier to remember. If it is easier for your audience, you may just delete "Rome" and simply use the description.

Timothy

Only Timothy's name is included because he returns in other stories.

Lord

In this story, all references to 'Lord' refer to Jesus, so we have used Jesus' name, as 'Lord' may be an unfamiliar term to someone with little biblical background.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Ephesus, Macedonia, Corinth, Jerusalem

These locations have been mentioned in previous stories. Use the same name or description of each location in each story. You may need to be sure your audience realizes that Paul is still in Ephesus when this story occurs.

Worldview

It would be a good idea to have an understanding of your audience's view on evil spirits. What practices in your culture are considered sorcery? Is this considered a bad or good thing in the culture?

Several million dollars should be changed to an equivalent amount in local currency.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

The work of the Holy Spirit, Respect for God and the Holy Spirit, Integrity in ministry, Following the leading of the Holy Spirit

Trouble in Ephesus

Acts 19:23-41

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition (Acts 19:21-22)

Timothy had gone on to Macedonia, but before Paul left Ephesus, some trouble started that detained him.

Acts 19:23-27

About that time, serious trouble developed in Ephesus concerning the Way of Jesus. It began with...a silversmith who had a large business manufacturing silver shrines of...*the city's goddess of fertility*. He kept many craftsmen busy. He called them together, along with others employed in similar trades, and addressed them as follows:

"Gentlemen, you know that our wealth comes from this business. But as you have seen and heard, this man Paul has persuaded many people that handmade gods aren't really gods at all. And he's done this not only here in Ephesus but throughout the entire province! Of course, I'm not just talking about the loss of public respect for our business. I'm also concerned that the temple of the great goddess...will lose its influence and that...this magnificent goddess worshiped throughout the province of Asia and all around the world—will be robbed of her great prestige!"

Acts 19:28-31

At this their anger boiled, and they began shouting, "Great is *our goddess!*" Soon the whole city was filled with confusion. Everyone rushed to the *place where the people in the city gathered*, dragging along...Paul's traveling companions. Paul wanted to go in, too, but the believers* wouldn't let him. Some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, also sent a message to him, begging him not to risk his life by entering the *gathering place*.

Acts 19:32

Inside, the people were all shouting, some one thing and some another. Everything was in confusion. In fact, most of them didn't even know why they were there...

Acts 19:35-41

At last the mayor was able to quiet them down enough to speak. "Citizens of Ephesus," he said. "Everyone knows that Ephesus is the official guardian of the temple of *our great goddess*, whose image fell down to us from *the sky*. Since this is an undeniable fact, you should stay calm and not do anything rash. You have brought these men here, but they have stolen nothing from the temple and have not spoken against our goddess. "If...the craftsmen have a case against them, the courts are in session and the officials can hear the case at once. Let them make formal charges. And if there are complaints about other matters, they can be settled in a legal assembly. I am afraid we are in danger of being charged with rioting by the Roman government, since there is no cause for all this commotion. And if Rome demands an explanation, we won't know what to say. Then he dismissed them, and they dispersed.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Believers*

Story Crafting

The Way of Jesus

In most texts it is simply stated as ‘the Way.’ We have expanded the phrase to include the implicit information that it refers to “the Way of Jesus” or “the Way shown by Jesus.”

The sky

This is the way we’ve translated “heaven,” which in this context means “the sky” or “from the gods.” We have not used “heaven” because we don’t want people to think that this goddess came from the heaven where the Creator God lives.

The temple in this story refers to the place where Artemis, the goddess of fertility, was worshipped. Use an appropriate word in your culture for the worship place.

Gods/goddesses

Some languages have a word for a god which is not the “creator/almighty God”. For example, English differentiates the all-powerful, sovereign God from a “lesser” god by the use of a capital letter. The word for the “lesser” god should be used when talking about the special god of Ephesus. When talking about the Creator God (Yahweh), use a term that is recognized as a title for the all-powerful, creator, sovereign God so that there are no misunderstandings about which god is being referred to.

Roman government

If you have used the name of the kingdom of Rome in previous stories, you can probably use “Roman government.” If you have not, you may want to say something like “central/main government.”

She was the goddess of fertility is the way that we referred to “Artemis,” the special goddess of the Ephesians. We have left out her name for ease of retelling, and included the fact that she was the goddess of fertility. You may include that information if you think your audience would benefit from knowing this.

their anger boiled

This is an idiomatic expression that may not translate exactly. Look for a phrase that means ‘got very angry.’

Several names in this story have been left out for ease of retelling.

the place where the people in the city gathered/gathering place

The amphitheatre or theatre, in the days of this story, were places used for public events or town meetings.

Paul wanted to go in

The NEB says “Paul wanted to appear before the assembly.” This helps explain a bit more why it might be dangerous for him inside with the angry group.

Tried to explain the situation

This Jewish leader was likely speaking in defense of the Jews, not necessarily in defense of Paul.

Mayor

Some translations say city clerk. Use an appropriate title for an important city official who gives decrees in a public assembly.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Refer to the Roman government in the same way that you have in previous stories. Your audience will best understand these stories if they have an idea of the political situation of the day.

Worldview

Most audiences will understand the mob mentality of the citizens of Ephesus, and that the government could get angry with them for rioting. If they do not, you may need to explain in the story that rioting was illegal and punishable by the Roman government.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Persecution and issues surrounding it, especially the economics and emotions associated with idolatry

Eutychus

Acts 20:1-12

Based on NLT (2004)

Acts 20:1-6

When the uproar was over, Paul sent for the believers* and encouraged them. Then he said good-bye and left for Macedonia. While there, he encouraged the believers in all the towns he passed through. Then he traveled down to *Corinth*, where he stayed for three months. He was preparing to sail back *to another area...* when he discovered a plot by some of *Abraham's descendants** against his life, so he decided to return *by a different route*.

Several men, *from the cities where he had visited, including Timothy*, were traveling with Paul.... They went on ahead and waited for *Paul and his companion*. Sometime later, *Paul and his companion* boarded a ship...and five days later joined *the others in a city where they* stayed a week.

Acts 20:7-12

On the first day of the week, *they* gathered with the local believers to share in *a meal together, remembering how Jesus had sacrificed his life for them**. Paul was *speaking* to them, and since he was leaving the next day, he kept talking until midnight. The upstairs room where *they* met was lighted with many flickering lamps. As Paul spoke on and on, a young man,...sitting on the windowsill, became very drowsy. Finally, he fell sound asleep and dropped three stories to his death below. Paul went down, bent over him, and took him into his arms. "Don't worry," he said, "he's alive!" Then they all went back upstairs *and* shared in the *special meal Jesus told them to have to remember how Jesus sacrificed his life for the sins of all men*, and ate together. Paul continued talking to them until dawn, and then he left. Meanwhile, the young man was taken home unhurt, and everyone was greatly relieved.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Believers*

We have referred to Jesus' followers as "followers" until Pentecost, at which time we have changed to "believers" to emphasize the importance of faith when someone chooses to follow Jesus."

Abraham's descendants*

Remembering how Jesus had sacrificed his life for them Lord's Supper* Different translations say different things, but most commentators agree that the Lord's Supper occurred here.

Story Crafting

We've used location names that we've used in previous stories, and several location, religious festival, and personal names have been left out for ease of retelling.

We've chosen to include Paul waiting in Ephesus until after the religious festival to show that Paul respected the tradition from which he came.

For story purposes, you may change the "we" to "Paul," "Paul and his companion," or "Paul and Luke." We have chosen to omit Luke's name because he does not appear again in this story set; however, you may include his name if you wish.

Speaking is the way we have chosen to translate 'preaching,' (See note in *Priscilla and Aquila*)

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same location names and glossary words that you used in previous stories.

CHURCH PLANTING ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Fellowship with other believers, Lord's Supper, Teaching for believers, Signs and wonders

Goodbye in Ephesus

Acts 20:13-38

Based on NLT (2004)

Acts 20:2, 13-15

Paul and his companions continued to travel throughout Asia. Sometimes Paul traveled alone, but would meet up with the others as they went from place to place encouraging the groups of believers.*

Acts 20:16-17

Paul had decided to sail on past Ephesus, for he... was hurrying to get to Jerusalem, if possible, in time for *a religious festival of the descendants of Abraham**. But when *he came near Ephesus*,...he sent a message to the *leaders of the church** at Ephesus, asking them to come and meet him.

Acts 20:18-21

When they arrived he declared, “You know that from the day I set foot in the province of Asia until now I have done *Jesus’* work humbly and with many tears. I have endured the trials that came to me...*publicly and in your homes, I gave one message for all people: the necessity of turning from sin** and turning to God, and of *believing** in...Jesus.

Acts 20:22-24

“And now I am *drawn by...God’s Spirit** to go to Jerusalem...*and the Spirit* tells me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead. But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by...Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about *how God has shown his love for us by accepting us as his people through Jesus and forgiving our sin.* (the wonderful grace* of God.)

Acts 20:25-32

“And now I know that...you...will *never* see me again...So guard yourselves and God’s people,... His church...*God’s Spirit has given you this task as leaders of the church. You must teach and lead the believers, because...I know that false teachers,...will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the group.* Even some men from your own group will *tell lies...in order to persuade people to follow them.* Watch out! Remember the three years I was with you...And now I entrust you to God *knowing that the message about God’s goodness to you in his plan of salvation through Jesus will take care of you and cause you to become strong.*”

Acts 20:33-35

“*In the three years I was with you...I have never coveted anyone’s silver or gold or fine clothes. You know that I have worked to supply my own needs and even the needs of those who were with me... You should remember the words of...Jesus: ‘If a person gives to someone else, he is happier than if he just receives from someone.’*”

Acts 20:36-38

When he had finished speaking, he...prayed with them. They all cried as they embraced and kissed him good-bye. They were sad most of all because he had said that they would never see him again. Then they escorted him down to the ship.

Words and Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for information on the following terms:

Believers*

Descendants of Abraham*

Church*

Sin*

Believe*

God's Spirit*

Grace* in this context refers to God's love for us in his plan of salvation through Jesus, so we have unpacked this meaning in the story.

Story Crafting

Paul's message has been condensed for re-tellability. There are points in his message that pertain to church formations: faithfulness in sharing the gospel, meeting publicly and in homes, clarity in the truth that he had taught (turning from sin and turning to God – God's grace), God's Spirit in directing the leadership of the church, being on guard against false teaching, and self support and giving.

Festival of the descendants of Abraham (Festival of Pentecost)

It is not necessary to name the festival unless you plan to connect the festivals throughout your stories. This festival came in celebration of the harvest. It is during this festival that the disciples were gathered awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit after Jesus' ascension.

Leaders

Be sure to remain consistent in what you call the church leaders. You may choose to call them older leaders or church leaders. The term actually comes from Judaism. At this time in the early church, the name was not used in a technical sense to describe church organization. You may choose to use a word that is used in your culture for "religious leader," but be sure that this word is general enough that it can refer to more than just that religion's leadership.

Good News in this story is explained, but if the meaning or 'kind' of Good News is not explained in the story, you may want to include an explanation such as "the Good News about Jesus."

....In order **to persuade people to follow them** is used in place of the hard to understand idiom "draw a following."

Group is used in place of 'flock,' since your audience may not understand the allusion to sheep and shepherds.

We have translated "build you up" as **cause you to become strong** because 'building up' is an idiom that may not translate literally in all languages.

If a person gives to someone else, he is happier than if he just receives from someone. This is the way we have rendered "It is more blessed to give than to receive," because this sentence may be difficult for people to understand.

The term "Lord" has been omitted from this story because it often has a connotation that is not accurate in reference to the Bible. Where it refers to "Jesus" we have simply said "Jesus."

turn from...turn to...

Idioms often do not translate well into another language. For example, you may need to work with your story crafter to determine wording that communicates better to your hearers the meaning of the idioms 'turn from' and 'turn to.'

Intra-Story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same location names and same key words as in previous stories.

Worldview

They all cried as they embraced and kissed him good-bye may be a culturally inappropriate thing to do among men in your culture. If this is the case, you may consider omitting this section, or simply state that they were sad to see him go.

CHURCH PLANTING ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Lay leadership, Sound teaching, giving, MAWL (model, assist, watch, and leave)

Paul goes to Jerusalem

Acts 21:1-15

Based on NLT (2004)

Acts 21:1-3

After saying farewell to the...*church* leaders in Ephesus, Paul and his companions sailed away... finally stopping in the city where the ship was to unload its cargo.*

Acts 21:4-6

They went ashore, found the local believers, and stayed with them a week. These believers were guided by God's Spirit* to tell Paul that he should not go on to Jerusalem. When they returned to the ship at the end of the week, the entire church group, including women and children, left the city and came down to the shore with them. There they knelt, prayed, and said their farewells. Then they went aboard, and the local believers returned home.*

Acts 21:7-8

...Paul and his companions sailed on and then made another stop at...the home of Philip, a speaker of the good news about Jesus and one of the seven men who had been chosen to distribute food...

Acts 21:10-12

Several days later, while Paul was at Philip's house, a man named Agabus gave Paul a special message from God...*He came over, took Paul's belt, and bound his own feet and hands with it. Then he said, "God's Spirit declares, 'So shall the owner of this belt be bound by the religious leaders* in Jerusalem and turned over to the government leaders.'" When they heard this, they and the local believers all begged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.*

Acts 21:13-15

But he said, "Why all this weeping? You are breaking my heart! I am ready not only to be jailed at Jerusalem but even to die for the sake of...Jesus." When it was clear that they couldn't persuade him, they gave up and said, "God's will be done." After this Paul and his companions packed their things and left for Jerusalem.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for information on the following terms:

Church*

God's Spirit*

Believers*

Religious Leaders*

Story Crafting

guided by God's Spirit to tell

Some translations use "prophesied" here. Others say "prompted by the Holy Spirit" or "through the Spirit."

speaker of the good news

Some translations call Philip an evangelist. In New Testament usage, an 'evangelist' was one who preached the Good News. We are using the term 'speak' for 'preach' because of the religious connotations that 'preach' carries.

Luke, the writer of Acts and Paul's companion, makes himself known in this passage through the use of the pronoun "we." Throughout this passage, the plural forms have been changed to third person (they / them / their) to aid in storytelling.

v. 1-3 *finally stopping in the city where...*

In storytelling, it may not be necessary to name every port. If you want to cover Paul's journeys by using maps, remember that reading maps is a learned skill, just as reading is a learned skill.

Religious leaders/government leaders (Jews/Gentiles)

We've simplified this to religious leaders and government leaders. It's best to keep it simple unless your group has a good understanding of the political situation of the day.

You are breaking my heart

This is an idiom that may not translate literally into another language. A more usual expression would be "you are causing me to suffer so much."

God's will be done

We have replaced "the Lord's" with God's because in this context, "Lord" refers to God, and the word "Lord" may not be easily understood by the audience.

Intra-story Cohesion

Include the same location names as you have in previous stories.

Philip is mentioned first in the story "Seven Men Chosen to Serve."

If your audience has heard all the Acts stories, they will probably understand the political situation of the day, and thus understand that religious leaders and government leaders were different.

CHURCH PLANTING ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Extraordinary prayer, Bold response to persecution, Spiritual gifts

Trouble in Jerusalem

Acts 21:17-40

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

Even though he was warned of problems in Jerusalem, Paul felt God's Spirit leading him to go on to Jerusalem, so he set off with a group of believers*.*

Acts 21:17-19

When *they* arrived, the brothers and sisters in Jerusalem welcomed *them* warmly. *Then* Paul went...to meet with James, and all the *leaders* of the Jerusalem church* were present. After greeting them, Paul gave a detailed account of the things God had accomplished among *those who are not Abraham's descendants** through his ministry.

Acts 21:20-21

After hearing this, they praised God. And then they said, "You know, dear brother, how many thousands of *Abraham's descendants* have also believed, and they all follow the *religious laws* very seriously. But *Abraham's descendants who are* believers here in Jerusalem have been told that you are teaching all of *Abraham's descendants* who live *outside of our nation* to turn their backs on...*our* customs..."

Acts 21:23-26

In order to help avoid rumors, the leaders asked Paul to go with some of Abraham's descendants to their place of worship to complete some ritual purification ceremonies as was their custom. Paul agreed.* But those believers who were not Abraham's descendants were not held to these same rituals.

So Paul went to the place of worship the next day with the other men to complete the seven day ritual.

Acts 21:26-32

Just before the seven days ended, some of Abraham's descendants...saw Paul in the place of worship and roused a mob against him. They grabbed him, yelling,...*"This is the man who preaches against our people everywhere and tells everybody to disobey our religious laws. He speaks against the place of worship—and even defiles this holy place by bringing in those who are not Abraham's descendants."* (Earlier in the city they had seen Paul with someone not from Abraham's descendants, and the people assumed that Paul had brought him into the place of worship, although he had not.)...The whole city was rocked by these accusations, and a great riot followed. Paul was grabbed and dragged out of the *place of worship*, and immediately the gates were closed behind him. As they were trying to kill him, word reached the commander of the Roman regiment that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. He immediately called out his soldiers... and ran down among the crowd. When the mob saw the commander and the troops coming, they stopped beating Paul.

Acts 21:33-36

Then the commander arrested him and ordered him bound with...chains. He asked the crowd who he was and what he had done. Some shouted one thing and some another. Since he couldn't find out the truth in all the uproar and confusion, he ordered that Paul be taken to the fortress. As Paul reached the stairs, the mob grew so violent the soldiers had to lift him to their shoulders to protect him. And the crowd followed behind, shouting, "Kill him, kill him!"

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for information on the following terms:

God's Spirit*

Believers*

Church*

Abraham's descendants*

Place of worship*

Story Crafting

In this story, Luke is writing in the 1st person plural. For storytelling purposes, this has been changed to a third person narrative.

Leaders is the way that we have translated "elders," since it is an easier term to understand.

The **fortress** was the headquarters of the Roman army in Jerusalem. The Roman soldiers stayed there. Use a term in your language that would have an equivalent meaning.

We have omitted 'law of Moses' and the specific rituals in order not to confuse an audience that may not have a deep biblical background. We have used a more general term **religious laws**.

Purification ceremonies

This phrase will be readily understood in many areas, but, the biblical passage also contains phrases about keeping vows, so depending on your listeners, you could describe the religious ceremonies with other descriptions from the same passage.

We have omitted the specific things that those who were not Abraham's descendants were asked to abstain from to avoid distracting from the main theme that we want the listeners to understand from the story.

Commander

This word originally referred to a person in charge of 1000 men. When translating, you can look for the language's equivalent.

Intra-story cohesion

Use the same names or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for key words, location, and people's names. If you have chosen to introduce the Romans as the governing power of that time, you may include "Roman regiment." If not, you may refer to this group as "government."

Your audience will best understand this story if they understand that Abraham's descendants were bound by religious laws and customs.

Worldview

Brothers and sisters is the way that the early church referred to fellow believers. If your audience would not understand calling non-blood relatives by the title "brother and sister" you can simply say "believers."

Most cultures understand the idea of defiling a holy place by bringing in something not "pure" according to their religious tradition. However, if your audience does not understand this concept or have a similar concept in their culture, you may need to explain in the story that it was unacceptable in this culture to bring someone not from their people group into the place of worship.

CHURCH PLANTING ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Persecution, healthy churches, Giving testimony to the church of what God is doing in missions

Paul's Testimony in Jerusalem

Acts 21:37 - 22:29

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition from Acts 21:36-40

Paul was arrested; but, before he was locked up, he was allowed to address the crowd. Although they had been in a violent uproar, they quieted as Paul began to speak.

Acts 22:1-5

“Brothers and esteemed fathers,” Paul said, “listen to me as I offer my defense.” When they heard him speaking in their own language, the silence was even greater. Then Paul said, “I am a descendant of Abraham*,...and I was brought up and educated here in Jerusalem...I was carefully trained in our *religious* laws and customs. I became very zealous to honor God in everything I did, just like all of you today. And I persecuted the followers of the Way/Jesus, hounding some to death, arresting both men and women and throwing them in prison...*I even went to another city in order to bring the believers* from there to Jerusalem to put them in jail.*

Acts 22:6-10

As I was on the road, approaching *the city* about noon, a very bright light from *the sky* suddenly shone down around me, I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Paul, Paul, why are you persecuting me?’

‘Who are you...?’ I asked.

And the voice replied, ‘I am Jesus...the one you are persecuting.’...

I asked, ‘What should I do...?’

And Jesus told me, ‘Get up and go into *the city*, and there you will be told everything you are to do.’

Acts 22:11-16

“I was blinded by the intense light and had to be led by the hand...*In the city, a man named Ananias* came and stood beside me and said, ‘Brother,...regain your sight.’ And that very moment I could see him! “Then he told me, ‘...God...has chosen you...and...you are to be his witness, telling everyone what you have seen and heard. What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized.* Have your sins* washed away by calling on the name of the *Master,* Jesus.*”

Acts 22:17-18, 21

*In Jerusalem, while praying...*I saw a vision* of Jesus saying to me, ‘Hurry! Leave Jerusalem, for the people here won’t accept your testimony about me...Go, for I will send you far away to *those who are not Abraham’s descendants!*”

Acts 22:22 -29

The crowd listened until Paul said that word. Then they all began to shout, “Away with such a fellow! He isn’t fit to live!”...The commander brought Paul inside and ordered him lashed with whips to make him confess his crime. When they tied Paul down to lash him, Paul said to the officer standing there, “Is it legal for you to whip a Roman citizen?...The soldiers who were about to interrogate Paul quickly withdrew when they heard he was a Roman citizen, and the commander was frightened because he had ordered him bound and whipped.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for information on the following terms:

Abraham's descendants*

Believers*

Baptized*

Sin*

Vision*

Story Crafting

The Biblical portions chosen here were selected to give emphasis to how Paul gave testimony of his conversion. We have placed less emphasis on the politics involved with his Roman citizenry.

We have left out the name of "Damascus," as we did in the original CFT set.

The sky... is often translated "heaven" in English translations, but is the same Greek word as "sky." In this context, this word probably simply refers to the sky, rather than the place where God lives.

Lord

In this story, all references to 'Lord' refer to Jesus, so we have used Jesus' name in most instances. You also may choose to substitute 'Master' for some of the references to 'Lord,' as we did.

Persecute means 'to cause harm to,' 'to cause to suffer' or 'to be cruel to.'

Why are you persecuting me?

This is a rhetorical question that has the following implied meaning: 'It is as though you are persecuting me by persecuting my followers.' If your language needs the clarification, you may need to give the implied meaning.

Who are you...?

This was said with the Greek word usually translated 'Lord.' Paul realized that he was addressing deity, so be sure that this question is stated in a polite way in your target language.

The God of our ancestors was shortened simply to "God," to avoid confusion or any idea that this God was a different one than the one we have been talking about. However, if using "God of our ancestors" is helpful to show that Paul worshipped the same God as they did, you may include it.

INTRASTORY COHESION

The story of Paul's conversion is also told in "Paul Meets Jesus" and "Ananias Obeys God." Use the same key words and phrases that you used in those stories.

In *Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned*, we introduced Paul. We have chosen not to begin using the name Saul and later change it to Paul, as this could be confusing for oral communicators. Whatever you choose to do, you will need to be consistent throughout the story set.

The Way

We've used the phrase "way of Jesus" in earlier stories. Here, this term was an actual title that Christians of that day were given. If this phrase translated literally is not easily understood, you might include additional implicit information as you did in previous stories such as "the way that God has shown" (that people should take).

Worldview

Brothers and Esteemed Fathers

This is a formal address referring to addressing those in the group who are of Paul's age and older. When storying across languages and cultures, look for an appropriate form of address.

During this time, it was illegal to punish a Roman citizen without first having a trial, and that is why the soldiers stopped what they were doing when they heard that Paul was a Roman citizen. You may need to make this implicit information explicit in your story.

CHURCH PLANTING ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Giving testimony of conversion, Reactions to persecution

Paul Before the High Council

Acts 22:29-23:11

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition:

After learning that Paul, as a Roman citizen, should not have received the treatment he did, the soldiers withdrew and the commander was frightened.

Acts 22:30

The next day the commander ordered the leading *religious leaders** into session with Abraham's *descendants* high court*. He wanted to find out what the trouble was all about, so he released Paul to have him stand before them.

Acts 23:1-5

Gazing intently at the high *court*, Paul began:

"Brothers, I have always lived before God with a clear conscience!"

Instantly...the *chief religious leader* commanded those close to Paul to slap him on the mouth. But Paul said to him, "God will slap you, you corrupt hypocrite! What kind of judge are you to break the law yourself by ordering me struck like that?"

Those standing near Paul said to him, "Do you dare to insult God's *chief religious leader*?"

"I'm sorry, brothers. I didn't realize he was the *chief religious leader*," Paul replied, "for the Scriptures* say, 'You must not speak evil of any of your rulers.'"

Acts 23:6-10

Paul realized that some members of the high court were from one group, and some were from the opposing group, so he shouted, "...I am on trial because my hope is in the resurrection of the dead!"

This divided the *court*—the *two groups against each other*—for one group says there is no resurrection or angels* or spirits, but the *other group believes* in all of these. So there was a great uproar. Some of the teachers of religious law who were *with Paul's group* jumped up and began to argue forcefully. "We see nothing wrong with him," they shouted. "Perhaps a spirit or an angel spoke to him." As the conflict grew more violent, the *Roman* commander was afraid they would tear Paul apart. So he ordered his soldiers to go and rescue him by force and take him back to the fortress.

Acts 23:11

That night *Jesus* appeared to Paul and said, "Be encouraged, Paul. Just as you have been a witness to me here in Jerusalem, you must preach the Good News in Rome as well."

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for information on the following terms:

Religious leaders*

Abraham's descendants*

Scripture*

Angel*

Fortress

Conscience

This term refers to a person's basic beliefs about their behavior and values. Some languages have a special idiom for this, and in some languages it is simply equivalent to "heart."

Hypocrite/whitewashed wall

This is an idiomatic expression that may stand for hypocrite, or someone who looks different on the outside (or pretends to be a certain way) than what he really is on the inside. Look for a word or idiom understandable to your listeners.

Story Crafting

This story is not really a "stand-alone" story. It is rather one of several stories that show the different situations in which Paul is persecuted in the final parts of his journeys. As you craft, you may still choose to omit some proper names; however, you may have to give a description of the words like Pharisees and Sadducees to help people understand the situation in which Paul finds himself.

Lord

In this story, the reference to 'Lord' refers to Jesus, so we have used Jesus' name, as 'Lord' may be an unfamiliar term to someone with little biblical background.

High Court is the way that we have rendered "High Council/Sanhedrin." This was the highest legal, legislative, and judicial body among the Jews.

Some members of the high court were from one group, and some were from the opposing group is the way that we have described the Pharisees and Sadducees, because remembering the titles of these two groups may be too complicated for your audience. You may use their titles if you find it is more helpful in distinguishing the two groups. Your audience should understand from the story that Paul's outburst that he believes in the resurrection of the dead is the very thing that divided these two groups, and Paul successfully created a diversion in using that statement in the meeting that ultimately led to him being rescued from it.

Pharisees

The dominant religious party, usually from the common people. They believed that people who have died would rise again some day. In previous stories, they are often simply referred to as "religious leaders," but in this story, you must distinguish between the two parties of religious leaders in some way.

Sadducees

Usually from the upper class. They did not believe that people who died would rise again. They also did not believe that Satan or angels existed.

Angels or spirits

The word 'spirits' here refers to the spirits unlike angels (who are also spirits). Therefore, you can use the same word you have been using for 'evil spirits,' or you can use a generic phrase like 'other spirits' to differentiate them from the angels.

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for key words.

World View

Some cultural issues to explore with this story would be the political and religious systems of your country and how they work together. Ask: Do the religious and civil governments function separately? Who makes decisions related to religious matters? What is considered a religious matter? A civil matter? You could also explore the culture's views on resurrection of the dead. Do your listeners believe this is possible? Have they heard of it before? Is it possible in their religion? Finding the answers to questions such as these will help you know how your listeners will understand this story in their own context.

Brothers, in this context, is a term of respect and an attempt by Paul to focus on his similarities with the group. Use an appropriate title in your language and culture.

CHURCH PLANTING ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Boldness in persecution, Understanding the culture you are a part of, Guidance from the Lord for direction

The Plan to Kill Paul/Escape to Caesarea

Acts 23:12-32

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

After the uproar with the religious leaders*, Paul was confined to the fortress and Jesus assured Paul that He was going to continue to be a witness in new cities.

Acts 23:12-15

The next morning a group of Abraham's descendants* got together and made a vow not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. There were more than forty of them in the conspiracy. They went to the leading religious leaders and told them, "We have made a vow to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. So you and the high court should ask the commander to bring Paul back to the court again. Pretend you want to examine his case more fully. We will kill him on the way."

Acts 23:16-22

But Paul's nephew—his sister's son—heard of their plan and went to the fortress and told Paul. Paul called for one of the Roman officers and said, "Take this young man to the commander. He has something important to tell him." So the officer did, explaining, "Paul, the prisoner, called me over and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you." The commander...asked, "What is it you want to

tell me?"

Paul's nephew told him, "Some of Abraham's descendants are going to ask you to bring Paul before the high court tomorrow, pretending they want to get some more information. But don't do it! There are more than forty men hiding along the way ready to ambush him. They have vowed not to eat or drink anything until they have killed him. They are ready now, just waiting for your consent."

"Don't let anyone know you told me this," the commander warned the young man.

Acts 23:23-35

Then the commander called two of his officers and ordered, "Get 200 soldiers ready to leave.... at nine o'clock tonight. Also take 200 spearmen and 70 mounted troops. Provide horses for Paul to ride, and get him safely to Governor Felix." Then he wrote a letter to the governor (Felix) describing all that had happened with Paul. The commander assured the governor that he did not think that the charges merited death or imprisonment, but that it was a religious matter of Abraham's descendants. He sent him to keep him from being killed.

So that night, as ordered, the soldiers took Paul on the long journey to where the governor was. The governor had him locked in prison in that town until his accusers could arrive.

Words/Phrases to Consider

See the glossary for a full explanation of the following words

Religious leaders*

Abraham's descendants*

High Court

This is the way we have rendered the "High Council/Sanhedrin" (see previous story)

Story Crafting

Made a vow is a simpler way of saying that the men 'bound themselves with an oath.' These vows were probably similar to a vow that said something like "So may God do to us, and more also, if we eat or drink anything until we have killed Paul."

Paul's nephew, his sister's son

In some languages, words describing familial relationships can be quite complicated. Find a term that most closely matches "sister's son."

200 soldiers, 200 spearmen, 70 mounted troops

You may choose to omit the exact number of troops, or say "470 troops." You simply want to show that the commander was willing to go to great lengths to protect Paul.

Letter to the governor

You may choose to give the contents of the letter, or you may simplify it for re-telling purposes.

City names (Caesarea, Antipatris)

These names were omitted for re-telling purposes, but you may want to indicate that it was a long journey in that time period. The trip to Antipatris during the night was 40 miles. Caesarea was 64 miles from Jerusalem.

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for important words.

Worldview

Like the previous story, this story provides an opportunity to explore the political culture of the day, and compare and contrast it to the political culture of your audience.

CHURCH PLANTING ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Persecution, Importance of family relationships during persecution

Paul Appears Before Felix

Acts-24:1-27

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

Paul was held in prison by Felix, the governor, until his accusers arrived.

Acts 24:1

Five days later...the *chief religious leader** arrived with some of *Abraham's descendants** leaders and a lawyer...to present their case against Paul to the governor. When Paul was called in, *the charges were presented.*

Acts 24:2-9

The lawyer stepped forward to present the charges. He politely addressed the governor, apologizing for the trouble. He then accused Paul of being a troublemaker, starting riots, and trying to desecrate Abraham's descendants' place of worship. The other descendants of Abraham who were there declared that everything the lawyer said was true.*

Acts 24:10-13

The governor then motioned for Paul to speak. Paul said, "I know, sir, that you have been a judge of *our people's* affairs for many years, so I gladly present my defense before you. You can quickly discover that I arrived in Jerusalem....to worship at the *place of worship*. My accusers never found me arguing with anyone *there*, nor stirring up a riot ...These men cannot prove the things they accuse me of doing.

Acts 24:14-16

"But I admit that I follow the *Way of Jesus*...I worship...God..., and I firmly believe *our Scriptures.** *I wait expectantly for God in the same way as they*...Because of this, I always try to maintain a clear conscience before God and all people.

Acts 24:17-20

"After several years away, I returned to Jerusalem to help...my people and to *worship* God. My accusers saw me in the *place of worship* as I was completing a purification ceremony. There was no crowd around me and no rioting...Ask these men here what crime *Abraham's descendants'* high court found me guilty of..."

Acts 24:22-23

At that point Felix, who was quite familiar with the *Way of Jesus*...*delayed the case*...He ordered an officer to keep Paul in custody but to give him some freedom and allow his friends to visit him and take care of his needs.

Acts 24:24-26

A few days later Felix came back with his wife.... Sending for Paul, they listened as he told them about *belief** in the *promised savior** Jesus. As he reasoned with them about *how to have a right relationship* with God*, self-control and the coming *day when God would judge everyone*, Felix became frightened. "Go away for now," he replied. "When it is more convenient, I'll call for you again." He also hoped that Paul would bribe him, so he sent for him quite often and talked with him.

Acts 24:27

After two years went by in this way, Felix was succeeded by...Festus. And because Felix wanted to gain favor with *Abraham's descendants*, he left Paul in prison.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Conscience is a word that represents someone's most basic concerns about behavior and values. (Translator's Handbook) A 'clear conscience' means that he has no doubts before God about his life and decisions. You may need to unpack this meaning for your audience.

The Way may need to be specified as 'the Way that leads to Jesus,' or 'the Way of God/Jesus.'

Self-control is the ability to say no to one's desires. If your audience does not understand the term "self-control," you may unpack the meaning for them by saying "saying no to one's desires."

Please see the glossary for a full explanation of these words

Religious leader*

Abraham's descendants*

Place of Worship*

Scripture*

Belief*

Promised savior* is the word used here to replace the term "Christ," which may be an unfamiliar term to your audience.

Right relationship*

Story Crafting

Scriptures is used to replace "law and prophets," which is a specific phrase used for Jewish Scriptures, but which may not be understood by your audience.

Paul's defense

Paul's defense was shortened somewhat since monologues are hard to repeat.

Sir is a respectful address in Paul's culture. Use a title that is equivalent in your culture.

The God of our ancestors was shortened to "God" to avoid confusion of people thinking that Paul was worshipping a different God than the others. However, if using "God of our ancestors" is helpful to show that Paul was one of them, you should include it.

To help...my people and worship God

Paul had arrived in Jerusalem with money to aid his people and to offer sacrifices, but the line was simplified for easier understanding.

Coming day when God would judge everyone is the way we rendered "coming day of judgment." Your audience may not be familiar with this biblical concept, so we have unpacked the phrase to show what will happen on that day.

Intra-story cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for the key words.

Worldview

There are many worldview issues that could be explored in conjunction with this story. Ask questions such as, "Do you believe in a final judgment? What do you expect it to be like? Is there such a thing as house arrest in your country? Who would be placed under house arrest? What would they be allowed to do? Is it legal to bribe in your country? Who gets bribes? Who gives bribes?" These are not questions you would ask after sharing the story in a house fellowship setting, but rather questions to explore with a cultural informant before using this story in a house fellowship setting or sharing this story with others.

CHURCH PLANTING ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Boldness in persecution, Patience in sharing, Taking every opportunity to share

Paul Before Festus & Agrippa

Acts 24:27-26:32

Based on the NLT (2004)

Acts 24:27; 25:6-12

...Two years went by *with Paul imprisoned under Felix*. Then, Felix was succeeded by...Festus... Soon after Festus assumed his position, he took his seat in court and ordered that Paul be brought in. When Paul arrived, *the leaders of Abraham's descendants** from Jerusalem gathered around and made many serious accusations they couldn't prove. Paul denied the charges...*and told Festus...* "If I have done something worthy of death, I don't refuse to die. But if I am innocent, no one has a right to turn me over to these men to kill me. I appeal to *the emperor!*"

Festus conferred with his advisers and then replied, "Very well! You have appealed to *the emperor*, and to *the emperor* you will go!"

Acts 25:13-22

A few days later *Abraham's descendants' king* arrived...*to greet Festus*. During *his* stay, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king...*Festus told him*, "...the accusations made against him weren't any of the crimes I expected. Instead, it was something about their religion and a dead man named Jesus, who Paul insists is alive. I was at a loss to know how to investigate these things..."

"I'd like to hear the man myself," *the king* said...

Acts 26:1, 6, 9-23

Paul was given an opportunity to defend himself before the King... "I am on trial because of my hope in the fulfillment of God's promise made

to our ancestors...I used to...do everything I could to oppose the very name of Jesus...*I had many followers of Jesus beaten and imprisoned*. "One day, however, *Jesus spoke to me and my life changed*. *Jesus told me*, 'I am sending you to *those who are not Abraham's descendants...* so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan* to God. Then they will receive forgiveness* for their sins* and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by *belief** in me.' And so, King..., I obeyed that vision* from heaven*...I teach nothing except what *God's spokesmen** and Moses said would happen—that the *promised savior** would suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, and in this way announce God's light to *Abraham's descendants and others alike*."

Acts 26:24-29

Suddenly, Festus shouted, "Paul, you are insane. Too much study has made you crazy!"

But Paul replied, "I am not insane, Most Excellent Festus. What I am saying is the sober truth...King..., do you believe *God's spokesmen?* I know you do—"

The King interrupted him. "Do you think you can persuade me to become a *believer** in Jesus so quickly?"

Acts 26:30-32

Then *they* left...As they went out, they talked it over and agreed, "This man hasn't done anything to deserve death or imprisonment." And *the king* said to Festus, "He could have been set free if he hadn't appealed to *the emperor*."

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for more information on the following terms:

Abraham's descendants*

Satan*

Forgiveness*

Sins*

Belief*

Vision*

Heaven*

Spokesmen*

Promised Savior*

Believer*

Story Crafting

Emperor is the way that we have rendered "Caesar." This story's political climate may be complicated for your audience. The Emperor ruled the entire Roman empire, but Abraham's descendants were allowed to have their own king (hence the "king" in this story) who ruled with a limited authority. Governors were Romans who occupied the level in between emperor and king. You may use whatever terms are necessary to differentiate the three levels of government found in this story. If needed, you may use a general term such as 'highest official in the land' for 'Caesar.'

This story has been condensed from 2 chapters. Many place names have been omitted. Paul's full testimony was not included since it was told in chapter 23. This story's goal is to show that Paul wanted everyone to know of his hope in Jesus, even the leaders who were judging him.

Most excellent Festus is a title of respect for a man in authority. Use an appropriate cultural title here.

Because the King was one of Abraham's descendants, like Paul, he would have known about God's spokesmen (the prophets). That is why Paul appealed to his knowledge of this.

Intra-story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for the key words.

Your audience will best understand this story if they have a biblical background that includes knowledge of Moses. If they do not, you may want to omit this name.

CHURCH PLANTING ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Persecution, Giving testimony consistently, Obedience

Storm at Sea- Shipwreck

Acts 27:1-44

Based on NLT (2004)

Acts 27:1-2, 4-12

When the time came...*Paul, several other prisoners, and some of Paul's friends*, set sail for Rome, where the emperor was. Some time into the journey, the travel became rough...the wind was against them and they...struggled along the coast...The weather became dangerous for sea travel...,and Paul spoke to the ship's officers about it. "Men," he said, "I believe there is trouble ahead if we go on—shipwreck, loss of cargo, and danger to our lives as well." But the captain and most of the ship's crew wanted to go on instead of stopping as Paul suggested.

Acts 27:13-14, 17-26

...*The crew* thought they could make it...but the weather changed abruptly, and a wind of typhoon strength burst across the island and blew them out to sea...The terrible storm raged for many days, blotting out the sun and the stars, until at last all hope was gone. No one had eaten for a long time. Finally, Paul called the crew together and said, "Men, you should have listened to me in the first place... But take courage! None of you will lose your lives, even though the ship will go down. For last night an angel* of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me, and he said, 'Don't be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before the emperor! What's more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.' So take courage! For I believe God. It will be just as he said. But we will be shipwrecked on an island."

Acts 27:27, 29-31, 33-38

On the fourteenth night of the storm,...they were afraid they would soon be driven against the rocks along the shore...The sailors tried to abandon the ship...But Paul said to the commanding officer and the soldiers, "You will all die unless the sailors stay aboard..."

Just as day was dawning, Paul urged everyone to eat. "You have been so worried that you haven't touched food for two weeks," he said. "Please eat something now for your own good. For not a hair of your heads will perish." Then he took some bread, gave thanks to God before them all, and broke off a piece and ate it. Then everyone was encouraged and began to eat...

Acts 27:39-44

When morning dawned, they...*decided to let the ship run aground. When that happened, the ship began to break apart.* The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners to make sure they didn't swim ashore and escape. But the commanding officer wanted to spare Paul, so he didn't let them carry out their plan. Then he ordered all who could swim to jump overboard first and make for land. The others held onto planks or debris from the broken ship. So everyone escaped safely to shore.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for more information on the following term:

Angel*

Story Crafting

This story was written in the first person, plural, but for a told story, it has been changed to a third person narrative.

Many of the sailing details were omitted. Remember your audience when deciding which details to omit and which to include. If your audience is a sea-faring people, you may choose to include more sailing details.

Rome has been substituted for "Italy," because the audience should be familiar with this location name by now.

For not a hair of your heads will perish is an idiom which may not mean the same thing in another language when translated literally. Use an appropriate phrase for your audience when telling this story.

Worldview

If your audience has never lived near the sea, you may have to explain some of the sea terminology within the story.

CHURCH PLANTING ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Boldness in persecution, Keeping the faith in hard circumstances, Trusting God in what he promises

Paul on the Island of Malta

Acts 28:1-10

Based on NLT(2004)

Acts 28:1-2

Once *Paul and the others* were safe on shore, *they* learned that *they* were on *an island*. The people of the island were very kind to *them*. It was cold and rainy, so they built a fire on the shore to welcome *the shipwrecked sailors and prisoners*.

Acts 28:3-6

As Paul gathered an armful of sticks and was laying them on the fire, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, bit him on the hand. The people of the island saw it hanging from his hand and said to each other, "A murderer, no doubt! Though he escaped the sea, justice will not permit him to live." But Paul shook off the snake into the fire and was unharmed. The people waited for him to swell up or suddenly drop dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw that he wasn't harmed, they changed their minds and decided he was a god.

Acts 28:6-7-10

Near the shore where *they* landed was an estate belonging to...the chief official of the island. He welcomed *them* and treated *them* kindly for three days. As it happened, *the chief official's* father was ill with fever and dysentery. Paul went in and prayed for him, and laying his hands on him, he healed him. Then all the other sick people on the island came and were healed. As a result *they* were showered with honors, and when the time came to sail, people supplied *Paul and the others* with everything *they* would need for the trip.

Words and Phrases to Consider

god

Some languages have a word for a god which is not the “creator/almighty God”. For example, English differentiates the all-powerful, sovereign God from a “lesser” god by the use of a capital letter. The word or phrase for the “lesser” god should be used when talking about what the people considered Paul in this story.

Story Crafting

This story is written in first person, but is changed to third person for story-telling purposes.

Names of the location and chief official have been omitted for easier re-telling.

The word **healed** may be translated “caused him to be well,” “caused the disease to disappear,” or “caused the fever and dysentery to leave him.”¹

Worldview

In the worldview of the people in this story, just to be bitten by a snake was considered to be an indication of divine punishment, so to be protected from the bite of the snake was considered to be an indication of divine protection. You may want to make this explicit for the audience.

Laying his hands on him

This act was often done to impart healing on someone. You may specify that Paul laid his hands on the man’s head, if necessary in your language. (Be aware that some in some cultures, laying hands on the head would be offensive, so in those cultures it would be more appropriate to not specify the part of the body on which Paul laid his hands.

CHURCH PLANTING ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Man of peace, Prayer for healing, Signs and wonders

Paul in Rome

Acts 28:11-31

Based on NLT (2004)

Acts 28:11-16

It was three months after the shipwreck that *Paul and the others* set sail on another ship that had *been on* the island...*They made several stops along the way, even stopping for a week to visit some believers**. *They finally arrived in Rome*. The brothers and sisters in Rome had heard *they* were coming, and *went* to meet *them*...When Paul saw them, he was encouraged and thanked God. When *Paul* arrived in Rome, *he* was permitted to have his own private lodging, though he was guarded by a soldier.

Acts 28:17-22

Three days after Paul's arrival, he called together the local leaders of *Abraham's descendants**. He said to them, "Brothers, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Roman government, even though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors. The Romans tried me and wanted to release me, because they found no cause for the death sentence. But when *the leaders of Abraham's descendants* protested the decision, I felt it necessary to appeal to *the emperor*, even though I had no desire to press charges against my own people. I asked you to come here today so we could get acquainted and so I could explain to you that I am bound with this chain because I believe that the hope of *Abraham's descendants*—the *Promised Savior**—has already come." They replied, "We have had no letters from *your area* or reports against you from anyone who has come here. But we want to hear what you believe, for the only thing we know about this movement, [*the Way of Jesus*], is that it is denounced everywhere."

Acts 28:23-27

So a time was set, and on that day a large number of people came to Paul's lodging. He explained and testified about the Kingdom of God/*how to have a relationship with God** and tried to persuade them about Jesus from the Scriptures.* Using the law of Moses and the books of *God's spokesmen**, he spoke to them from morning until evening. Some were persuaded by the things he said, but others did not believe. And after they had argued back and forth among themselves, they left with this final word from Paul: "*God's Spirit** was right when he said to your ancestors through *God's spokesman* Isaiah..., 'Go and say to this people: When you hear what I say, you will not understand... For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes..., and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.'"

Acts 28:28-31

So I want you to know that this salvation* from God has also been offered to *those not a part of Abraham's descendants*, and they will accept it." For the next two years, Paul lived in Rome at his own expense. He welcomed all who visited him, boldly proclaiming the Kingdom of God/*how to have a relationship with God* and teaching about the *Master** Jesus, *the Promised savior*. And no one tried to stop him.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the glossary for more information on the following terms:

Believers*

Abraham's descendants*

Promised Savior*

Relationship*

Scriptures*

Spokesman*

God's Spirit*

Salvation*

Master*

Story Crafting

This story is written in first person, but has been changed to third person for story-telling.

Brothers and sisters refers to fellow believers. Use an appropriate title for your audience.

Kingdom of God/relationship with God/allowing God to rule

The "kingdom of God" refers to the activity of God's ruling, but it especially refers to the relationship between God and his people. Use the phrase that will be best understood by your audience.

Isaiah 6:9-10 is the passage being quoted by Paul. This was shortened for easier retelling.

Hearts of these people are hardened is an idiomatic expression that describes people who choose not to listen. Use an appropriate idiomatic expression for your audience.

Intra-story Cohesion

Continue to use the same words and phrases you have been using throughout the story set for key words.

The hope of Abraham's descendants' nation refers to the fact that Abraham's descendants were waiting for the Messiah/promised savior to come. Your audience will best understand this part of the story if they have knowledge of that part of Israel's history. If they do not have such knowledge, you may say 'the promise from God of a savior.'

Your audience will best understand this story if they have an understanding of the Old Testament spokesmen (prophets) and of Moses. If they do not know Moses, you may choose to omit that name from this story.

CHURCH PLANTING ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Ministering in difficult circumstances, Boldness, Use of Scripture