

Three Friends



Shawnta, Dana, and Tish are best friends. They've known each other since preschool. They celebrate each other's birthdays every year and exchange gifts on Christmas. They make sure they text or talk on the phone every day. Their bond is special and strong. Shawnta and Tish live in the same neighborhood and attend the same church. Dana and her family moved from the neighborhood a year ago and attend another church. Today, the three girls were going to the mall to purchase new outfits and eat lunch together.

Dana wanted to go into another store before they left. "My mom didn't give me enough money for this," she said while holding up a silver necklace. "But this would go perfect with my outfit." Dana whispered to Shawnta and Tish, "Watch me. I'm going to put this in my bag before anyone notices. I need you guys to help me."

Shawnta and Tish weren't too surprised with Dana's behavior. They'd noticed she had developed some bad habits since she moved. They had discussed that when the opportunity came, they would talk to her.

"Dana, you know we don't steal!" exclaimed Shawnta. "We don't waste our time on things like that."

"That necklace is not worth us going to jail," said Tish. "Now put it back on the counter and let's get out of here."

Once they got outside, Tish asked Dana if she could pray for her. Dana was a little hesitant at first, but she agreed.

"I know stealing is not good," said Dana. "I don't know what comes over me at times. Yes, please pray for me."

In My Heart

"The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god"

(Acts 28:6, NIV).

WORD!

Acts 28:1–10, NIV—Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. **2** The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. **3** Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. **4** When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live." **5** But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. **6** The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. **7** There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. **8** His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. **9** When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. **10** They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

SIDEBAR

Paul Ministers in Malta

After Paul's amazing conversion to Christianity (he once persecuted many Christians), he immediately wanted to share the wonderful news of Jesus Christ with everyone he knew, near and far. The same man that once watched as Christians were murdered was now an enthusiastic believer. Paul was determined to spread the loving message of Jesus; therefore, he traveled from place to place, ready to minister. This apostle went on many extended missionary journeys that would sometimes last for a few years. Remember, there were no cell phones, Internet, or texting. Early Christians traveled by horseback, in caravans, on boats, or just on foot to get to their destination. Paul was on a mission and because of his determination, many were converted to Christ.

How to Demonstrate Your Faith

1. Take a risk that requires you to trust God.
2. Be ready at all times to share your faith.
3. Treat everyone with love and respect, no matter what. Your life is a witness.

GOT IT!

A. Paul Demonstrates His Faith

Use Word! to help you search the Scriptures and write three faith actions Paul demonstrated.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

B. Faith Acts

- Re-read verses 1–6.
- Separate into two teams.
- Team 1 will act out verses 1–3 and Team 2 will act out verses 4–6.
- Discuss what you observed from the performances and learned from the verses.

JAM SESSION

Helping One Another

Often we can tell something about the character a person by observing how he or she responds in difficult situations. When a man was healed because of Paul's faith in Christ, the people of Malta recognized something extraordinary about him. Best friends like Shawnta, Dana, and Tish care for one another in all circumstances. You may see your friends in all types of situations—some good and some bad. Dana saw a necklace she didn't have money for and she was tempted to shoplift. Her friends gave her good advice and prayed for her. Dana walked away without committing a crime and involving her friends. Are you ready to be a help to one of your friends during a difficult time? God shines in difficult times!

JAM ON IT!

Hands that Help

Do you know of someone who's in need of a helping hand of support? Someone needs to see the light of Christ in you. Decide whom you can minister to and who can benefit from your hand of support. Maybe you can pray, give words of wisdom, or just display a small act of kindness.

LAST JAM

Let your light shine!

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS

Use this space to write down questions you have about this lesson.



Good afternoon, radio audience. We have a special guest with us today and his name is Terrell Miller. Terrell is a 13-year-old who's doing exciting things in the community for the needy," announced Marissa Jets, host of "Teens Moving." "Teens Moving" is a radio program that highlights local and national teens doing special things in their communities.

"Well Terrell, tell the radio audience what your youth outreach program is spearheading for Thanksgiving," said Marissa. "From what I hear, over 200 people will receive turkeys and other food items."

Terrell was a bold and courageous youth leader who organized an outreach program to rally young people to improve their communities. Terrell also used the outreach efforts to witness to young people and others about Jesus. Terrell wasn't always this bold and courageous teenager. He had been shy and didn't think he could speak very well. It wasn't until a youth pastor at his local church mentored him and encouraged him to organize a program for youth that he became bold enough to act.

"Good afternoon, Marissa. We are excited about feeding 200 people for Thanksgiving and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ," explained Terrell. "The name of our program is 'Youth Standing Up.' We believe in making and being a difference in the world."

"That's great to hear about a young man such as yourself making a difference," expressed Marissa. "Are there any last words you want to share with teenagers who might think they can't make a difference because of their age?"

Terrell explained, "My words are: just do it and be confident that you can do it. Some will believe and others won't, but keep moving forward."

In My Heart

"Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"
(Acts 28:28, NIV).

WORD!

Acts 28:23–31, NIV—They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. **24** Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. **25** They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet: **26** 'Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." **27** For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' **28** Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!" **30** For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. **31** He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

SIDEBAR

Paul Evangelizes in Rome

When we evangelize, we are proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ to another person or group who may not know Him. God wants us to evangelize to the world. It's stated in the Scriptures. Matthew 28:19-20 says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Take a moment and think about how many people know about Jesus. They know about Him because of the tool of evangelism that continues today. It started with the disciples who went into the world and made disciples for the kingdom. Individuals were evangelized, and they shared the Gospel until their whole nation knew about Jesus.

How to Evangelize

1. Prepare yourself by reading and studying the Bible. Search for Scriptures on love and forgiveness.
2. Practice witnessing to other believers. Observe what to say and what not to say.
3. Pray before evangelizing. Pray for guidance and confidence.

GOT IT!

A. Spreading Hope

Use Word! to help you with this activity. Answer the following questions.

1. What did Paul do from morning till evening? _____
2. Did everyone believe his words? _____
3. How long did Paul evangelize that city? _____
4. He proclaimed the _____ and taught about the Lord _____ — with all _____ and without _____!

B. Spreading the Good News

- Get a partner.
- Practice witnessing with each other. One partner will be the one witnessing and the other partner will be the one being witnessed to.
- Switch roles.
- Share your experience with the class.

JAM SESSION

Spread the Good News

It is a paradox of human nature that even when we have good news to share, some will ignore or reject it. Paul persevered in faith, preaching the Gospel and bringing salvation to those who would listen, even though there were many who refused to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Terrell is a courageous teenager making a difference in his community. In today's Reality Check, Terrell is being interviewed for his efforts. He heads a youth organization that feeds the hungry and, at the same time, shares the Good News of Jesus. He tells the young people that some will believe and some won't, but the key is to do it. What's stopping you from just doing what you desire to do for Christ and His church?

JAM ON IT!

Tellin' It No Matter What

Telling others about Jesus can be challenging, but the more you do it, the more comfortable you will become. As you learned, not everyone will be willing to listen; some people will be resistant. This week, speak with your pastor or a spiritual leader in your church or community about what to do when you encounter resistance.

LAST JAM

I will spread the Good News of Jesus daily!

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS

Use this space to write down questions you have about this lesson.
