

# Acts-Revelation

## 1st Thessalonians

1st Thessalonians 1-5  
Acts 17:1-10

### Younger Verse

Be joyful always. 1st Thessalonians 5:16

### Older Verse

Be joyful always, pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances. This is what God wants from you. 1st Thessalonians 5:16-18

### Welcome Time

Have you ever received a letter from a friend who wrote to encourage you and let you know that someone was coming to see you? Were you excited about the future visit? Today we will talk about a letter just like that!

### Bible Story

*The following is a summary of the Bible story to help you with your preparation. Please do **NOT** read to the children. Instead, study your Bible, using this summary as a guide, and make a note page to help you remember your plans for the lesson or questions you want to ask.*

How many of you remember what Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians have in common? (They are all letters written by Paul.) Believe it or not, those aren't all of Paul's letters. He also wrote two letters to the church in a city called Thessalonica. Thessalonica was the capital of a region of Greece (Macedonia). The city is still there today and the Greeks call it Thessaloniki (thes-uh-la-knee-key) which means "victory." The letters to the Thessalonians were probably the first letters Paul wrote, even though they come after other letters in the New Testament. Paul visited Thessalonica after he visited the city of Philippi (where the Philippians lived) and wrote this letter from the city of Corinth (where the Corinthians live).

### Note to Teachers:

Make it a matter of prayer to be able to say, as Paul did, "Be imitators of me." What a responsibility we have to be the men and women of God that he desires us to be and thus be able to encourage others to act the way we act! (See 1 Cor 4:6; 11:1 and 1 Thess 1:6)

Paul wrote this letter with Silas and Timothy. They wrote to those "who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul and Silas and Timothy talked about how much they missed the believers in Thessalonica because they accepted Jesus as God's son and learned about following Him. They knew that when Paul spoke, the message wasn't his, it was God's. They imitated what they saw in their leader Paul who began the church there and then they became examples to everyone around them. It made Paul and his friends happy that they were obedient so quickly.

Paul then gave them instructions on how to live. He told them they were doing a good job but he also asked them to do even more. You know how sometimes we can do good things and be obedient and follow the rules, but could still do better? Well, God wants us to do even more, to spend more time with Him, to obey our parents - every time - with a good attitude, to be a good example to our classmates and teachers and principal, to mind our own business and work hard, and to always do good to other people. We should do this because that's how other people will want to know who God is.

### Lesson Goals

To understand the need to be blameless (pleasing to God) always - because we do not know when He will return.

And when we know who God is, when we have a friendship with Him, one day Jesus will come back for us from heaven. He won't come as a little baby in a manger this time. In Acts 1:11, right after Jesus was crucified and resurrected and went back to heaven, two angels said that one day Jesus would come back just the way He went, in the clouds, as an adult! It will be a surprise! No one will know when He is coming, but He will come with a shout, and Michael the archangel (Jude 9) will say something and God's trumpet will blow! Then what happens next is amazing; everyone who has ever believed in Jesus will meet in him the air. That means believers from a long time ago and those who are still alive when He comes. Paul explained this to the Thessalonians to encourage them not to be sad like some people about death. For everyone who has a friendship with Jesus - one day, we will be with Him in heaven - we don't just stay in the ground. Death is not the end! And we should encourage each other this way.

How many of you remember how it feels to wait for someone who is coming to visit you, maybe your grandparents, aunts and uncles or a special friend? Jesus hasn't come back yet, but we know that if He promised to come back, He will. He is still in heaven getting a place ready for those who believe in Him (John 14:2-3).

Paul ends his letter with instructions on how we should act. He tells us to respect the people who teach us about God. He shares that we should not pay back a wrong with another wrong, but we should be joyful always, pray at ALL times, and be thankful in all circumstances (5:14-18). Paul also says we should test things, like what people say to us. How can we test them? By knowing what the Bible says. And after the test we should keep what is good and avoid EVERY kind of evil. The first step to doing that is to trust God, believing that He loves you so much that He sent His one and only son to make a way for you to live with Him forever. And if you have done that, be obedient to God!

**Memory Verse  
Activities**

Write out this week's memory verse on poster board. Cut the verse into phrases or cut the poster board into puzzle pieces. Let your students take turns reassembling the verse. If you have access to the internet or other published material, use coloring pages and word puzzles that reinforce this week's memory verse.

**Prayer Time**

Pray with your students that they, and you, will be examples to everyone they have time with this week.

**Clean Up/Snack time**

During this time, be ready with an encouragement for each of your students. Be aware of who is helping a sibling or friend, who is cleaning up without being asked to, and who is saying helpful things. Remind them that Paul was doing the same thing in His letter to the Thessalonians.

Planning for September 26th  
2nd Thessalonians

## Preschool Lesson for 1st Thessalonians

Today we are going to talk about another letter written by Paul - the same man who wrote Colossians and Philippians and many other letters that are books of the Bible. Paul started a church in a place called Thessalonica on his second missionary trip. Thessalonica is a city in Greece, where the Olympics began. (Teachers you might want to show your students the flag of Greece and a map of the area as you tell the story.) The people in Thessalonica are called Thessalonians.

When Paul first visited Thessalonica, he taught the people about God and they believed! When Paul had to leave to visit another city they continued to be obedient and Paul missed them so much he wrote them this letter.

In the letter he told them that pleasing God is important. How can we please God? Well, Paul told us that, too! He said that we should encourage and help each other. Does that mean saying bad things about other people? NO! It means being nice and saying things that help and don't hurt. Paul also said that we should be joyful always. Joy is a little different than being happy. It's hard to be happy when bad things happen to us, but if we believe that God cares for us, all the time, we can be joyful even during the hard times.

Paul also teaches us to pray all the time. Praying is talking to God and it's something we can do at home or in our cars, at school or at the store and we can do it in the morning or afternoon or at night! How many of you have friends? Do you talk to them? Sure, you do. It would be hard to have a friend if you never talked, and that's how it is with God. Once we belong to Him because we believe He died for us, He will never ever leave us. But He wants us to talk to Him.

Paul also told us that we should say "Thank you" to God for everything that happens. Does *everything* just mean good stuff? No, it means good things and bad things. That's hard to do, but God wants us to learn from Him when things are easy and when they are hard. Paul says that to be joyful always, pray at all times and be thankful in all circumstances is what God wants us to do. What else does God want us to do? He wants us to believe that He loved us so much that He sent His one and only son to die on the cross for all the times we have ever messed up and done bad things and for all the times when we haven't been obedient. And when we do that we can be like the Thessalonians who were good examples to everyone around them!

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## Activities for 1st Thessalonians

Pertaining to Thessalonica, Greece:

- Provide the flag of Greece to show or copies of the flag for coloring.
- A Taste of Greece - try olives, bread (the substantial Italian kind) dipped in olive oil, figs or a Greek Salad.
- Make a Weaving: Greek women wove fabric to make things. Use paper plates to teach children about weaving. Cut 1" parallel strips across a paper plate (leaving a border intact.) Using 1" wide strips of construction paper weave colored paper over and under paper plate strips, alternating with every strip. Continue until you have filled the paper plate.
- Make an instrument like the Greeks would have used when Paul was alive. On a long strip (roughly 3" x 14") of poster board glue drinking straws. Line the straws up across the top with about 2" protruding. Fold the poster board over across the drinking straws and glue. Cut the long end of the drinking straws off at an angle to allow for different sounds through the straws. Blow through the short end of the straws to create music.

Pertaining directly to 1st Thessalonians:

- Have your students write a letter of encouragement to someone they know who is doing the right thing. Guide them according to Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians.
  - Encourage your students to say "Thank you" to the people who teach them - at church and at school. You might even want to have cards ready for them to sign and then deliver to those workers.
  - Using a long, rectangular piece of paper or poster board, have your students decorate the strip of paper lengthwise with their verse or a picture that represents today's lesson. When they have finished, attach long, thin strips of tissue paper along the bottom. Roll the paper up until the short edges overlap 1/2". Fasten this end together and attach yarn to the top for a wind sock that will remind your students of today's lesson.
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