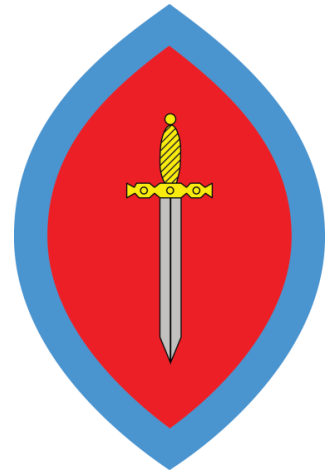


SWORD



Memory verse: “Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”
Ephesians 6:17

Study Plan: To earn this badge, you will learn about St. Paul. God transformed the heart of St. Paul and changed him from being a persecutor of Christians to being a missionary of Christ’s message.

Step 1: The Story of Paul Leader’s Initials: _____



Background information on St. Paul - St. Paul has a remarkable life story; when God transformed his heart, he change from a man who tried to destroy Christians to being a missionary for Jesus to the non-Jewish world. He wrote 13 of the letters in the New Testament.

Paul, who was also called by his Hebrew name was Saul, was born in Tarsus, which is in what is now known as south-central Turkey. His father was probably both a Roman citizen and a Jew. Roman citizens had special rights that other people did not have. Paul was brought up in a Jewish home, studied in the synagogue in Tarsus, and later studied under the famous law teacher, Gamaliel. Paul was a Pharisee. A Pharisee studied the Torah and strictly carried out the rules contained in the Jewish law. Paul was strongly against Christianity and worked to get rid of it. In fact, Paul was on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians when his life was changed by a vision of Jesus and converted to be a follower of Jesus. He began to preach about Jesus and travelled to many countries in the Middle East to tell them about Jesus.

It is thought that St. Paul was martyred in Rome in the year 64 under the Emperor Nero. Because he was a Roman citizen, he had the right to be beheaded by the sword instead of suffering crucifixion. This is why the symbol for St. Paul on the GFS badge is a sword.

Much of what we know about the life of St. Paul is found in The Acts of the Apostles. At first, he is called Saul. When God’s love transformed him to be a follower of Jesus, he is referred to as Paul.

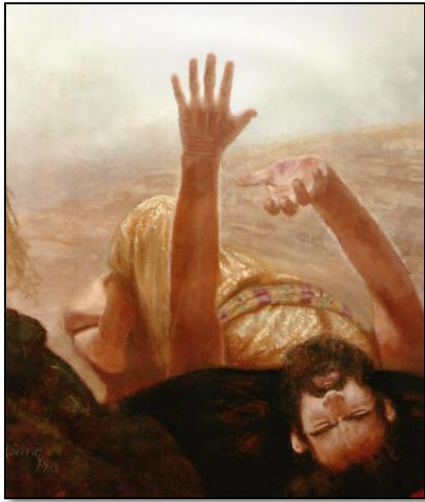
These readings from the Acts of the Apostle tell a bit about Paul’s life.

The Conversion of Saul to Christianity

Acts 9:1-19

In the meantime Saul kept up his violent threats of murder against the followers of the Lord. He went to the High Priest and asked for letters of introduction to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he should find there any followers of the Way of the Lord, he would be able to arrest them, both men and women, and bring them back to Jerusalem.





As Saul was coming near the city of Damascus, suddenly a light from the sky flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me?”

“Who are you, Lord?” he asked.

“I am Jesus, whom you persecute,” the voice said. “But get up and go into the city, where you will be told what you must do.”

The men who were traveling with Saul had stopped, not saying a word; they heard the voice but could not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground and opened his eyes, but could not see a thing. So they took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. For three days he was not able to see, and during that time he did not eat or drink anything.

The Lord Sends Ananias to restore Saul’s Sight

There was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. He had a vision, in which the Lord said to him, “Ananias!” “Here I am, Lord,” he answered.

The Lord said to him, “Get ready and go to Straight Street, and at the house of Judas ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying, and in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come in and place his hands on him so that he might see him.”

Ananias answered, “Lord, many people have told me about this man and about all the terrible things he has done to your people in Jerusalem. And he has come to Damascus with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who worship you.”

The Lord said to him, “Go, because I have chosen him to serve me, to make my name known to Gentiles and kings and to the people of Israel. And I myself will show him all that he must suffer for my sake.”



So Ananias went, entered the house where Saul was, and placed his hands on him. “Brother Saul,” he said, “the Lord has sent me—Jesus himself, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here. He sent me so that you might see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” At once something like fish scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he was able to see again. He stood up and was baptized; and after he had eaten, his strength came back.



Discuss:

- Why was Saul (Paul) going to Damascus? What happened along the way?
- Saul’s conversion reminds us that God finds us even when we are not looking for him. Has God ever found you when you were not looking for God?
- What do you think Saul thought about during those 3 days of blindness?
- How do you think Ananias felt when God told him to go to Saul? Have you ever been afraid to do something your parents or teachers asked you to do? How did you overcome your fear?

Paul begins his ministry

Acts 9:19-25

Discern

Saul stayed on for a few days with the believers in Damascus. He went straight to the synagogues and began to preach that Jesus was the Son of God.

All who heard him were amazed and asked, "Isn't he the one who in Jerusalem was killing those who worship that man Jesus? And didn't he come here for the very purpose of arresting those people and taking them back to the chief priests?"

But Saul's preaching became even more powerful, and his proofs that Jesus was the Messiah were so convincing that the Jews who lived in Damascus could not answer him.

After many days had gone by, the Jews met together and made plans to kill Saul, but he was told of their plan. Day and night they watched the city gates in order to kill him. But one night Saul's followers took him and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.



Paul Preaches in Many Places

Note: Paul made four journeys throughout Asia Minor (now Turkey) and Greece over approximately 15 years. The details of his travels are carefully noted in the Acts of the Apostles.

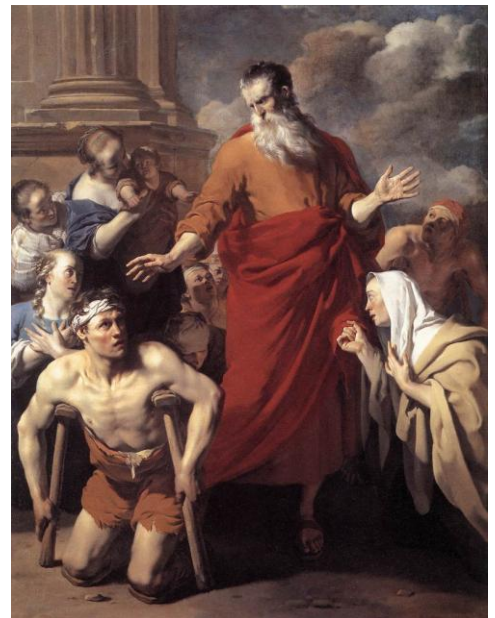
His 1st journey, to Galatia, (Acts 13-14) covered about 1,500 miles. He departed from Antioch, travelled to Selucia, Cyprus, Salamis, Paphos, Attalia, Perga, Antioch of Pisidian, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, and then returned to Antioch (of Syria).

His 2nd journey, to Greece, (Acts 15:36-18:22) covered about 3,000 miles. He departed from Antioch, travelled through Cyria and Cilicia, Lystra, Phrygia and Galatia, Traos, Philippi (city in Macedonia), Thessalonica (leading city in Macedonia), Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Caesarea, and then returned to Antioch (of Syria).

His 3rd journey, to Asia Minor and Greece, (Acts 18:23-21:15) covered about 3,300 miles. He departed from Antioch, went through regions of Galatia and Phrygia, returned to Ephesus, travelled from Macedonia to Greece, Traos, Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Miletus, Tyre, Ptolema, Caesarea and Jerusalem (the final destination of his missionary trip).

His final journey was to Rome where he was tried in court. He traveled from Caesarea (where he was imprisoned) Sidon, Myra (Lycia); Cnidus, Fair Haven (on the Island of Crete), Malta, and on to Rome.

Acts 14: 1-7 The same thing happened in Iconium: Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of Jews and Gentiles became believers. But the Jews who would not believe stirred up the Gentiles and turned them against the believers. The apostles stayed there for a long time, speaking boldly about the Lord, who proved that their message about his grace was true by giving them the power to perform miracles and wonders. The people of the city were divided: some were for the Jews, others were



Karel Dujardin's *St Paul healing the cripple at Lystra* (1663)

for the apostles.

Then some Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, decided to mistreat the apostles and stone them. When the apostles learned about it, they fled to the cities of Lystra and Derbe in Lycaonia and to the surrounding territory. There they preached the Good News.

Discuss

- What were some of the difficulties Saul (Paul) faced?
- How did he get out of Damascus?
- What happened when Paul and Barnabas spoke in Iconium?
- How did God help their mission in Iconium succeed?
- What does it mean that the people “were divided”? Have you ever had a heated argument about your faith? How did you resolve it?
- What happened to the apostles as a result of their teaching?

Discern

The Conversion of Lydia and her Household

(during Paul’s Second Journey)

Acts 16:8-15, Good News Translation

So they [Paul and Timothy] traveled right on through Mysia and went to Troas. That night Paul had a vision in which he saw a Macedonian standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us!” As soon as Paul had this vision, we got ready to leave for Macedonia, because we decided that God had called us to preach to Good News to the people there.

...we went inland to Philippi, a city of the first district of Macedonia; it is also a Roman colony. We spent several days there. On the Sabbath we went out of the city to the riverside, where we thought there would be a place where Jews gathered for prayer. We sat down and talked to the women who gathered there. One of those who heard us was Lydia from Thyatira, who was a dealer in purple cloth. She was a woman who worshiped God, and the Lord opened her mind to pay attention to what Paul was saying. After she and the people of her house had been baptized, she invited us, “Come and stay in my house if you have decided that I am a true believer in the Lord.” And she persuaded us to go.



Definitions: **Disciple** - one who accepts and assists in spreading the word of Christ. Every one of us can be a disciple of Christ.

Apostle – one called directly by Jesus to spread the word of God. These are generally known to be the original 12 Disciples plus Matthias (who replaced Judas), Paul and Barnabas.

Missionary - a person sent to a particular area to spread the word of Christ.

Paul is known for being a missionary to the Gentiles (non-Jews). Other disciples of his time preached mainly to Jews to tell them the Good News of Jesus Christ. Paul's work with the Gentiles especially angered Jewish leaders.



Chapel in Phillipi near the riverbank, including the Baptistry of the Lydians.



- How did Paul know where to go next on his journeys?
- Who sent Paul to be a missionary?
- Who heard Paul in Philippi?
- The reading says “*and the Lord opened her mind to pay attention to what Paul was saying.*” What did Lydia do after hearing God's word?
- How did God open your heart to the Gospel? Which people helped you to know God?

Do at least one of the following activities:



1. Trace the four missionary journey's of St. Paul. Refer to the timeline of Paul's life which lists the cities he visited. The map and the timeline are in the Leader's List.
2. Interactive maps of Paul's journeys are available at www.About-Jesus.org. Click on each city to read the Bible text about Paul's experience at each stop of his journey.
3. Review the lessons in the Lydia badge in the blue level to refresh your

Christ. My task is to bring out in the open and make plain what God, who created all this in the first place, has been doing in secret and behind the scenes all along. Through followers of Jesus like yourselves gathered in churches, this extraordinary plan of God is becoming known and talked about even among the angels!

All this is proceeding along lines planned all along by God and then executed in Christ Jesus. When we trust in him, we're free to say whatever needs to be said, bold to go wherever we need to go.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (MSG)

If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

Love never gives up.
Love cares more for others than for self.
Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.
Love doesn't strut,
Doesn't have a swelled head,
Doesn't force itself on others,
Isn't always "me first,"
Doesn't fly off the handle,
Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,
Doesn't revel when others grovel,
Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,
Puts up with anything,
Trusts God always,
Always looks for the best,
Never looks back,
But keeps going to the end.

Faith
Hope
Love
1 Cor 13:13

Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled.



- What does the excerpt from Paul's letter to the Ephesians tell us about the power of God?
- The selection from Corinthians is usually read at marriage ceremonies, however, the suggestions hold true for all relationships. Discuss how you can apply this description of love to improve your friendships.

At the time of Paul, there were no cell phones, email or texting; there was no U.S. Post Office to deliver the mail. There were no planes or cars or buses.

- How do you suppose the letters got from Paul to the people in the churches?

Do at least one of the following:



1. Using your Bible, find the letters of Paul. List them here: _____



Do at least one of the following:

1. Read about a missionary from the past such as Eric Liddell, missionary to China, Adoniram Judson, missionary to Burma, Herman of Alaska, Missionary to the Aleut, or Lillian Trasher, Missionary in Egypt, in Holy Women, Holy Men or Lesser Feasts and Fasts. Share what you have read with your group. Your priest will be able to lend you a copy of this book.
2. Does your parish support a missionary, or does your priest know of a missionary? Find out if there are things you can do to help with their work.
3. Look at our national church website (episcopalchurch.org) and see where our missionaries are in the world. Look under Ministries/Mission Personnel.
4. Does your diocese have a World Mission Group? Find out what programs they undertake and see if you can be of help.
5. Many churches, during Lent, have a Children's Sunday School Offering, which is to go to missionary work. Find out if your church does this; where is the money sent?

Step 4: Faith and Salvation

Leader's Initials _____



Paul wrote in Galatians:

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have

come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. *Galatians 2:15-16*

Faith is our belief or trust in someone. Faith in God is our belief in God or our trust in Him. Our faith is a gift from God, a gift which is "grace-filled".



This gift of faith from God will grow as we use it and practice it. Any gift, talent, or interest we have, must be studied and practiced if we are to use the gift to its fullest. For example, we may be born with some natural athletic ability or a lovely singing voice. However, for us to excel in athletics or sing professionally, we must practice daily, work on tedious drills, and discipline ourselves physically and mentally. Our faith, then, must be practiced also.

How do we strengthen our Faith?

By **learning** more about our faith

By **practicing** our faith

By **teaching** it to others



As you go into the world, you will find that your faith is questioned by others and even yourself. As a group, share why you believe Jesus Christ is your savior and how you think you can maintain your faith in the face of doubters. If your co-worker or college roommate questions your faith, how can you handle an explanation? Do you just tell them it is a "personal choice" or can you give them a reasonable answer? What do you do if someone mocks your faith?

Do at least one of the following:

1. Open your Book of Common Prayer (BCP) to page 845. This section is called the Outline of Faith (Chatechism). It answers many questions and explains many Christian concepts. Browse through it and write down the topics covered:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____
- g. _____
- h. _____
- i. _____
- j. _____
- k. _____
- l. _____
- m. _____
- n. _____
- o. _____
- p. _____
- q. _____
- r. _____

2. List ideas for the following:

Three ways to learn more about God:

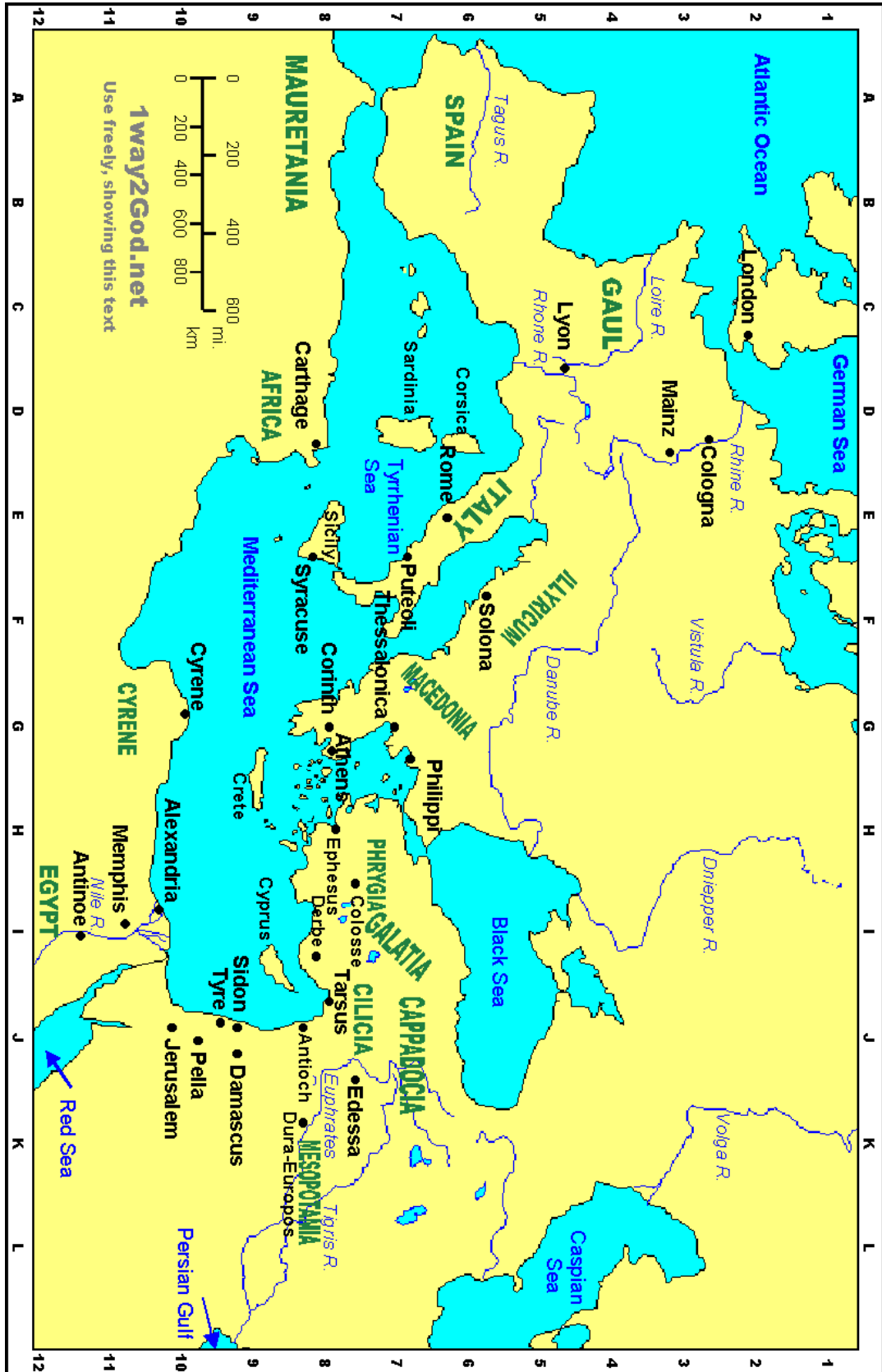
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Three ways to practice your faith:

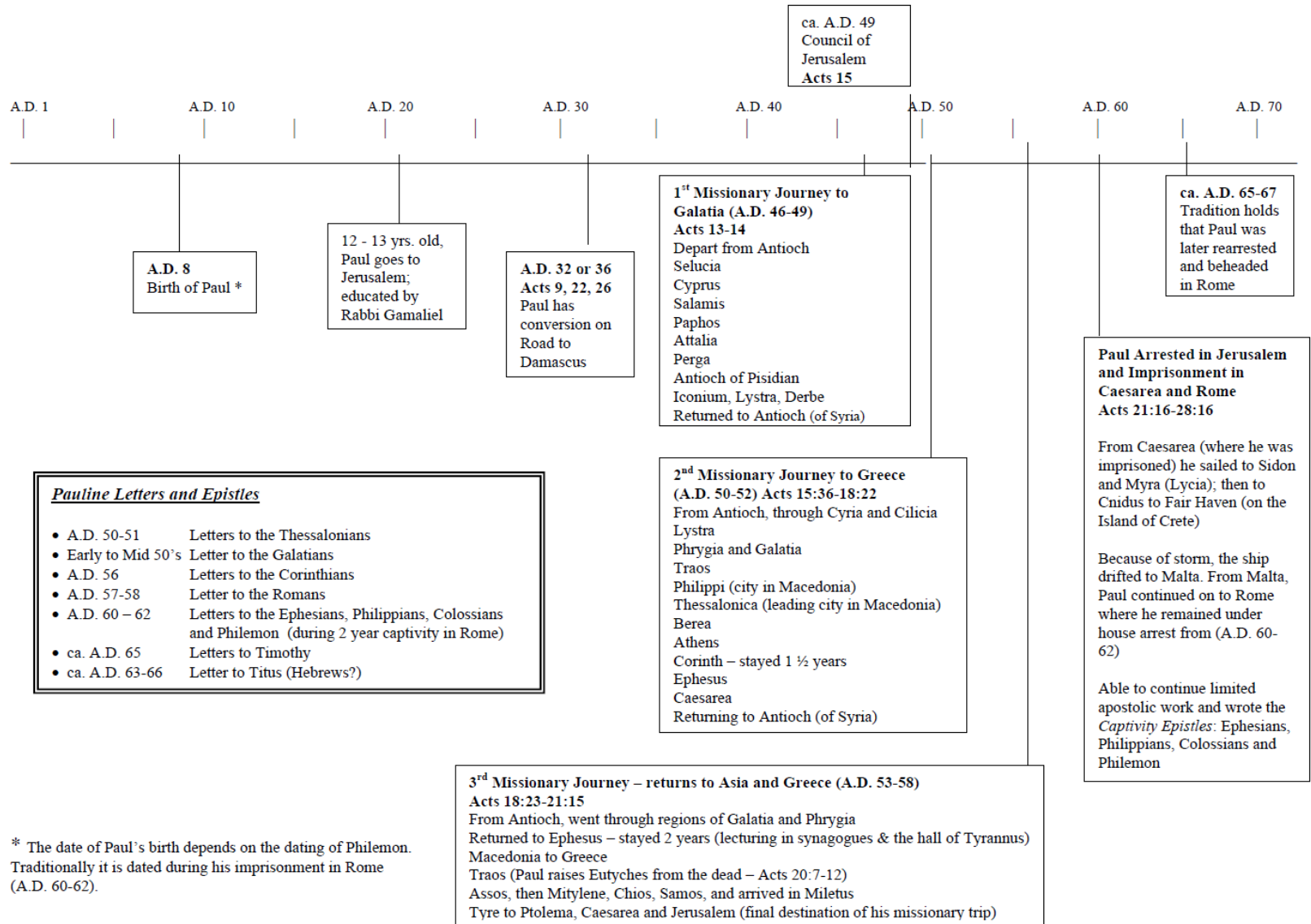
Three ways to teach your faith to others:

3. Assist in Sunday School for three months or commit to attend church services for three months.

Map of Paul's World



Timeline of St. Paul's Life and Missionary Journeys



* The date of Paul's birth depends on the dating of Philemon. Traditionally it is dated during his imprisonment in Rome (A.D. 60-62).