Paul spent time teaching the Romans about the church. Since the church as a whole was new in its existence, Paul had plenty to share about this institution that God ordained as an instrument to spread His word around the world. Paul helped the church know that without a pastor, or leader, the people would not know about God’s plans for them. Paul praised the preachers called by God to be messengers of His word.

Paul highlighted the ways the members of the church should act and respond as representatives of the one true God. Further, the Holy Spirit had given members of the church various gifts reserved to bring honor and glory to God. Paul instructed the church that not all members had the same gifts, and the gifts were given in order to further the work of Christ around the world. Each church member should use his gifts, along with other members of the church, as part of a whole or complete body of Christ. Paul encouraged the members to seek their gifts and employ them for the glory of God and not for self-promotion.

The church is a unique institution and one of the only places where people, who may disagree about a wide variety of things, can come together in unity and worship to glorify God. Paul shared with the Romans that God’s desire for the church was a desire of united teaching of the truths of the gospel. Paul characterized worship as a true expression of devotion to God and worship should fill people with joy, peace, and hope.

Paul closed his letter to the Romans with a word of warning about false prophets and instructed the Romans to remain vigilant, always checking the validity of a preacher’s message with the truth of Scripture itself. Paul ended with a reminder that God is always with His people and will not leave them. People should look to God to bring peace, joy, and hope in all things. Love, peace, and unity should be our focus as we worship God with other believers.
SESSION FOCUS

TEXT TRUTH
Love and help one another.

BIBLE STORY
Romans 12:1–15:13

BIBLE VERSE
Romans 14:19

CHRIST IN CONTEXT
The Book of Romans affirms that we became sinners through one man, Adam, and we will be saved through one man, Jesus. Through Jesus, sinful man is reconciled to holy God.

BIBLE SKILLS
• Help open the Bible. Say the word Bible.
• Hear that the Bible helps people know what to do.

OFF TO A GREAT START!

▸ First impressions are important. Help each child and family feel special and welcomed at church.

▸ Greet each child individually and personally.

▸ Briefly mention to families and their preschooler an activity you have ready for children to enjoy at church.

EXPLORATIONS FOR BABIES
• Roll to the Bible
• Move Paint in a Bag
• Tap a Box

EXPLORATIONS FOR TODDLERS
• Move & Flip Pictures
• Match & Clip Heart Shapes
• Sweep & Clean
• Make a Handprint

TEXT CONNECTION
• Paul taught the Romans about the nature of the church and helped believers know what a united church looked like. Believers are called to work together as a body to bring others into the church and help them put their faith in Jesus.

• While believers still sin, believers can live in ways that honor God. Paul listed for the church qualities that would bring them in line with God’s command. The church should be united in one voice. Believers should worship God in truth and use the gifts God has given to be examples of Christ so others will want to know more about God.

• Jesus served as an example of what lives lived for God in unity look like. In Mark 3, we read that Jesus told a parable which was not understood. Jesus was even approached by His siblings who failed to understand His true mission. Both Jesus and Paul urged believers to be united in telling others about God and sharing the good news of Jesus.

FAMILY AT HOME
Print this week’s devotional page (Enhanced CD) to give to families.
Babies are sensory learners, and they are relational. They learn best when teachers engage them through conversation and play. Prepare two or three activities for babies to enjoy as they explore the Bible.

**BIBLE STORY NUGGETS**

- Paul told people about Jesus.
- Paul helped church friends.
- Paul said to show love to one another.

**ROLL TO THE BIBLE**

*Tools: Bible, exercise mat, Diaper Bag Card*

- Place a baby on the exercise mat. Put the Bible and Diaper Bag Card a few feet away from the baby.
- Gently roll the baby over toward the Bible. Take the baby’s hand and touch the Bible. Say: “Elizabeth is touching the Bible. The Bible is a special book. The Bible helps us know what to do."
- Slowly roll the baby back toward the Diaper Bag Card. Touch the card with her hand. Point to the people in the picture.
- Say: “See the people. The Bible tells people to show love and kindness to one another.”

**MOVE PAINT IN A BAG**

*Tools: Bible, large ziplock bags, 3 colors of non-toxic water-based paint, tape, Diaper Bag Card*

- Squeeze a small amount of each color paint into a large bag. Zip the bag and tape it to the floor or wall (at babies’ eye level).
- Place the Diaper Bag Card in a different bag and zip it.
• Open the Bible and lay it near the paint bag. Say to a baby: “You are my friend. Friends at church help one another. I will help you paint at church.”

• Guide the baby’s finger to push paint across the bag. Talk about the color of the paint.

• Show the baby the picture on the Diaper Bag Card. Point to people who appear to be working together and showing kindness.

**TAP A BOX**

Tools: Bible, Story Picture: Reminders for Church Friends (Pack), tape, large shoe box, 2 toy hammers

• Tape the Story Picture to the top of the shoe box. Put the toy hammer next to the box. Open the Bible to the Book of Romans.

• Encourage a baby to get the hammer and tap on the box. After a few taps, show the baby the hammer on the Story Picture. Remark that the people look to be working together.

• Touch the open Bible. Say: “Paul wrote to church friends. Paul told the friends to love and help one another. The people in the picture are working.”

• Thank God for your church friends who work together and show love.

**NEXT HOUR (MORE EXPLORATIONS FOR BABIES)**

• Continue and repeat activities from the first hour. Babies learn through repetition and practice.

• As you cuddle, rock, soothe, and tend to babies’ needs, talk about the Bible. Say Bible words and phrases.

• Use the Bible with babies. Let them see, touch, and turn Bible pages.

**LEADER TIP!**

As often as possible, provide duplicates of toys. This minimizes struggles and encourages babies to learn to play side by side.

**DON’T FORGET!**

Give every child this week’s Diaper Bag Card and Preschool Family Card.
EXPLORE STATIONS

REMINDERS FOR CHURCH FRIENDS

Romans 12:1–15:13

Paul made many trips to cities and towns to teach people about Jesus. Paul never stopped telling about Jesus.

Paul wanted to go to the city of Rome to see the church friends there. Paul looked forward to talking with his friends about the things that were happening in their church.

Paul wrote a letter to the church friends. Paul said: “Learn what is good and pleasing to God. Work together and help one another. God gave everyone skills and talents to use to do His work.”

Paul told the church friends to respect and love one another.

“Serve God. Be patient and kind. Pray for one another. Do what is good. Be peaceful and encourage one another,” said Paul.

EXPLORATION STATIONS

Toddlers are on the go and ready to learn. They learn best through playful exploration and discovery. Offer three or more multisensory activities to lead young preschoolers to discover and learn Bible truths.

MOVE & FLIP PICTURES

Tools: Bible, Bible and Me Pictures (Pack), long shoelace or piece of yarn, Friends Picture (Pack)

• See the Leader Pack for instructions to prepare the Bible and Me Pictures. After hanging the pictures on the shoelace, tie it between two chairs. Prop the Friends Picture near the pictures.

• Guide a toddler to move the Bible and Me Pictures back and forth across the shoelace, or flip the cards over to see the reverse side. Read the words on the cards to children.

• Say: “The Bible helps us know the right things to do. Paul wrote a letter to church friends and reminded them to show love and kindness. How are the children in the picture showing kindness?”
**SWEEP & CLEAN**

Tools: Bible, toy cleaning supplies, toy broom and dustpan, Diaper Bag Card, My Picture Book (Pack), 1 or 2 other preschool books about working and helping, small dish drainer

- Put the books in the dish drainer and put it on the table. Prop the broom and other cleaning tools near the table.
- Invite children to clean the room. Talk to children about ways to show love and kindness through helping. Thank boys and girls for working together. Affirm children for taking turns with favored items.
- Picture-read books to children. Thank God for people who help us.
- Hold the Diaper Bag Card as you tell the Bible story. Point to the person sweeping. Tell the story.

**MATCH & CLIP HEART SHAPES**

Tools: Bible, Proverbs Cards (Pack), small box, peg-type clothespins, Story Picture: Reminders for Church Friends (Pack)

- Put two Proverbs Cards in the Bible to mark Romans 12 and 14. Put the other cards next to the box.
- Show some of the cards to a child and read the words. Lead the toddler to match cards that have the same color hearts.
- A friend may enjoy clipping cards to the shoebox, using peg-type clothespins.
- While the children do these activities, comment that the Bible story for today helps us know some of the things Paul reminded the church people in Rome. Turn to Romans and find the Bible verse (Romans 14:19).
- Show the Story Picture to the children as you summarize the Bible story.

**MAKE A HANDPRINT**

Tools: Bible, washable ink stamp pads, baby wipes or wet paper towels, sheets of paper with today’s Bible verse written on them, Bible Markers (Pack)

- Mark the Bible story with today’s Bible verse marker.
- Invite a child to press her hand on a stamp pad then onto paper to make a handprint. Help clean her hands when she is finished.
- Say: “You can use your hands for many things. You can use your hands to help other people.”
- Lead the toddler to name helpful actions she can do with her hands. Thank the preschooler for doing what God wants her to do.
- Open the Bible to Romans 14. Comment: “Paul wrote to his friends in Rome. Paul reminded the friends to love and help one another.”
- Help the toddler say the Bible verse on her paper.
CIRCLE TIME (2-5 MINUTES)

Your toddlers may be ready for a simple circle time. You decide when and how long to have a group experience.

GATHER

- When toddlers arrive in the Circle Time area, give a cell phone to one of the children. Use the other phone to pretend to call the child.
- Say: “Hello. Is this my friend (child’s name)? I’m glad to see you at church today. Choose a friend to use the phone.”
- Direct the child to give the phone to a friend in the circle. Call this friend and chat.
- Repeat until every toddler receives a phone call.

HEAR THE BIBLE STORY

- Lay the hoop on the floor between you and the children. Place the Story Picture (Pack) in the hoop.
- Open the Bible to Romans 12 or 13 and tell the Bible story in your own words.
- Ask a child to get the picture from the hoop and pass it around the circle for everyone to see.

PRACTICE BIBLE SKILLS

- Slip today’s Bible Marker (Pack) in the Bible at Romans 14:19. Put the Bible on the floor inside the hoop.
- Call on toddlers one at a time to step into the hoop and pick up the Bible.
- Say: “One, two, three. I see my friend (child’s name) at church today. Please come and say a Bible verse with me.”
- Lead the preschooler to say the Bible verse with you.

PRAY

- Tell toddlers that people can talk to God anytime.
- Ask children and teachers for their prayer requests.
- Pray briefly, thanking God for the Bible and the important truths we learn from it.
- Play the Enhanced CD (Track 11: Wave Your Hands) and lead toddlers to do the motions.

PACK ITEM

- 3 Story Picture: Reminders for Church Friends
- 19 Bible Markers

LEADER TIP!

Use the Bible. Open the Bible to the Scripture passage while you tell the story. That way toddlers will know the story comes from the Bible.

CIRCLE TIME TOOLS

- Bible
- Enhanced CD
- 2 toy telephones or 2 old cell phones (no batteries)
- large plastic hoop
NEXT HOUR (MORE EXPLORATIONS FOR TODDLERS)

OPTION 1 Continue activities from first hour. (Kids learn through repetition!)

OPTION 2 Try something different. Choose two or three new activities.

Bounce A Ball
Tools: Bible, masking tape, large bouncing ball, Story Picture: Reminders for Church Friends (Pack Item 3)

- Make 4 or 5 large tape Xs in a circle on the floor. Guide toddlers to stand or sit on the Xs and bounce the ball to friends.
- Each time a toddler bounces the ball, say the Bible verse aloud. Help the children say the words with you.
- After children have had at least one turn to bounce and receive the ball, put the ball aside.
- Show preschoolers the Story Picture and ask them to tell you what they see in the picture. Summarize the Bible story.

Find Letters for Bible Words
Tools: Bible; large magnetic letters; magnet board or metal pan; cards with words printed on them (God, love, help)

- Write the suggested words in large manuscript letters on the cards.
- When a child shows interest, read a word on a card. Say: “That word is in the Bible.” Open the Bible to Romans 14 and find the word. Point to the word.
- Say: “We learn from the Bible that God loves us. He wants us to love and help.”
- Identify the letters in the word written on a card. Help the child find letters to spell the word. Say: “Paul reminded his friends to love and help one another.”

Read Books in a Box
Tools: Bible, shallow cardboard box (large enough for 2 toddlers), Diaper Bag Card, Book: The Bible Tells Me (Pack Item 18), 2 or 3 other books about loving and helping

- Use the Diaper Bag Card to mark Romans 12 in the Bible. Put the books and Bible next to the box.
- Invite a child to sit in the box to read. Or offer to read a book to the child.
- Relate the book contents to today’s emphasis on loving and helping others. Remark: “Paul wrote to his church friends in Rome and reminded them to show love and kindness. God wants us to love and help others, too.”
- Look at the Diaper Bag Card together as you tell the Bible story.

Look for printable Next Hour helps on the Preschool Enhanced CD.

Don’t Forget!
- Make a final diaper check.
- Put a Diaper Bag Card and Preschool Family Card in each child’s bag.
- Release children to authorized adults.