



Session 11
Summer 2020
Multiage

Aquila and Priscilla

ACTS 18:1-3, 18-28

prepare

PRAYER

God, empower me to do your work, whether it is creating something new or sharing my story. Let my work and my worship come together in beautiful ways. Amen.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

To understand that Jesus' followers learned from each other

STORY SUMMARY

In Corinth, Paul was welcomed by Priscilla and Aquila. They had many interests in common. When Paul went to Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila joined him there. Later, when Paul went on to other cities, they stayed in Ephesus, where they met a bold preacher named Apollos. Apollos had not known some things about Jesus. Having learned many things from Paul, Priscilla and Aquila mentored and encouraged Apollos, helping him understand more about Jesus.



teaching tips for multiage

Today's Bible story reveals the way the early church grew and developed. Paul mentored Aquila and Priscilla, who then shared what they knew with Apollos, who then went to new places to share what he had learned. This tradition continues today, and is an important part of the faith formation of children. They learn and grow as they interact with people who have traveled longer on the faith journey.

Decide which Explore activities you will do, and check Supplies and To do throughout the session to see what needs to be prepared.

Priscilla and Aquila

Among married couples involved in the expanding messianic missionary movement, Priscilla and Aquila stand out. Their story is narrated in Acts 18. They extend greetings (1 Corinthians 16:19) and receive greetings (Romans 16:3–4; 2 Timothy 4:19). In every case, except for Acts 18:2 and 1 Corinthians 16:19, Priscilla is mentioned before her husband. In the patriarchal culture of the first century, this signals that she is recognized as the one who takes the lead in their ministry partnership.

Their roots

Paul first encounters Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth (Acts 18:2). Aquila is identified as a Jew from Pontus. Priscilla likely had origins in Rome, which had been their home before they settled in Corinth. Her ethnicity is not stated, although her name suggests roots within a Roman family. Nothing is said about what led to the marriage of this Jew from Pontus and this (Gentile?) woman from Rome.

Luke states the occasion for their move to Corinth from Rome: “Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome” (18:2). Suetonius, a Roman historian, mentions that Claudius Caesar expelled Jews from Rome because of “constant riots at the instigation of Chrestus.”¹ This expulsion occurred in AD 49. *Chrestus* is likely a careless misspelling of *Christos* (the Greek equivalent to the Jewish term *Messiah*). Within the Jewish community in Rome, there appears to have been considerable debate about whether Jesus was the Christ. When the furor among Jews attracted official attention, the emperor banned Jewish leaders from the city and forbade assembly in the synagogues. The emperor was likely less concerned about any theological claims about Jesus than about the perceived risk of political instability. Awareness of increasingly strident zealot uprisings against Roman occupation in Judea led to imperial sensitivity to any signs of Jewish restlessness throughout the vast Roman empire, including Rome itself.²

Life and ministry in Corinth

In Corinth, Priscilla and Aquila aligned themselves with Paul. By trade they were tentmakers, working with

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ACTS 18:1–3, 18–28



leather and goat’s hair to make curtains, sails, tents, and other products. Paul also made his home with them (18:3). And, during their protracted sojourn in Corinth (18:18a), Priscilla and Aquila had strategic roles in planting a congregation there. We note that in Paul’s letter to the Corinthian church they extended warm greetings to that congregation (1 Corinthians 16:19).

To Ephesus

After a period of time in Corinth, Priscilla, Aquila, and Paul made their way to Ephesus (18:18). Paul soon departed on a journey to Jerusalem and then to Antioch and elsewhere. In the meantime, Priscilla and Aquila carried on the ministry in Ephesus.

They soon made contact with Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria, a city in Egypt that was known as a center of culture and learning. Apollos is described as eloquent, as a fiery orator with a contagious communication style. Furthermore, he is thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures, undoubtedly the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, which had Alexandrian origins (18:24). In addition, Apollos has been instructed in the Way of the Lord. Apollos apparently has not become aware of the Spirit’s role in baptism, so he needs to hear about the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. Priscilla and Aquila are instrumental in upgrading the credentials of this promising young man.

Back in Rome

At the end of his letter to the churches in Rome, Paul includes a greeting to Priscilla (here shortened to the intimate name Prisca) and Aquila (Romans 16:3–4). By AD 56 when this letter was written, Claudius’ edict of expulsion had been lifted, and this pastoral team is back in Rome. Paul has warm praise for them: greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

1. *Life of Claudius* 25.4, cited from Wolfgang Wiefel, “The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity” in *The Romans Debate*, ed. Karl P. Donfried (Hendrickson Press, 1991), 92–96.

gather

supplies

- *Shine Songbook and CD* (or digital versions)
- *Annual Shine Songbooks*
- CD player
- Thick stick for “talking stick”
- Lighted candle; bowl of olive oil (optional)

resource pack

- Bible memory poster (Ephesians 3)

media connections

- Books: *Thanks for the Feedback, I Think and Teamwork Isn't My Thing, and I Don't Like to Share!*, both by Julia Cook
- “Whatever You've Got” song by Bryan Moyer Suderman (*Can't Keep Quiet!* CD)
- Internet image search for “Aquila Priscilla tent making”
- Internet image search for “Bible tent ideas” (for ideas for making tents in Move)

BUILD COMMUNITY

Greet the children warmly and invite them to sit in a circle. Pass around the “talking stick” and let each one tell something new they learned recently. Only the one who holds the stick talks; the others listen.

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Sing “Come Fill Us Up” from the *Shine Songbook and CD* (track 10, page 14). Gather in a circle to sing. On the first line of each verse, move in toward one another; on the second line move back again. On the refrain, move in a circle. Remain in a circle and invite children to do the following movements as you read the simple prayer:

God, we know you are here (*bow heads*)

and that you love us. (*Lift heads.*)

We come together to learn about you (*hold hands around the circle*)

and praise your name. (*Lift up hands together.*)

Amen. (*Lower hands.*)

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Today's story is about feeling God's presence and being led by God. Practice a prayer that helps to focus on God's presence. Ask the group to sit comfortably with eyes closed and bodies relaxed. Have each child choose a word for God, such as *God, Jesus, Spirit, or love*. Then guide them to repeat the word over and over in their thoughts. If their minds begin to wander, they can return to that word. Try it first for ten seconds, then again for twenty seconds.

Bible memory

Divide the group into pairs and assign one phrase of the passage (divided below) to each pair. Give the partners a few minutes to memorize their lines together. Then have the children turn their backs to the Bible memory poster and say the verses, with each pair saying their line.

**Now to him who by the power at work within us is able /
to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, /
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus /
to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.**

—Ephesians 3:20–21

experience

SHARE THE STORY

Build background for today's story. Have children find out more about Corinth on page 2 of the Multiage leaflet.

Point out Rome on the map from the resource pack and explain that Priscilla and Aquila, who are the main focus of today's story, had been living in Rome. When the emperor Claudius forced Jews to leave Rome, Aquila and Priscilla moved to Corinth. Trace the journey from Rome to Corinth. Also point out Ephesus, since it comes up in today's story.

Open the Bible to Acts 18. Tell the story from page 304 in *Shine On* using the story props from pages 3 and 4 of the Multiage leaflet. When telling about the tent making, set out brown cloth and a needle. Use fabric squares or colored paper squares to indicate the locations of Corinth and Ephesus.

WONDER AND REFLECT

Think about the following questions and statements. Children may choose to share their thoughts aloud or ponder silently.

- I wonder what Paul and Aquila and Priscilla talked about while they made tents.
- I wonder why Aquila and Priscilla decided to sail with Paul.
- I wonder what new things Priscilla and Aquila told Apollos about Jesus.
- I wonder what I can learn from others.
- I wonder which people in your life have taught you important things. I wonder who you have helped learn something.

PEACE NOTES

There are various aspects of peace, including peace with God, peace with others, peace with self, and peace with creation. The pictures from page 93 in this guide will remind children of ways to work peacefully with other people, just as Priscilla, Aquila, Paul, and Apollos did.

Work together to color the Peace mobile circles from page 93 in this guide. Hole punch them and attach them with yarn to a hanger to make a mobile.



Aquila and Priscilla

Acts 18:1–3, 18–28
***Shine On*, p. 304**

supplies

- Bible
- *Shine On: A Story Bible*
- Multiage leaflets
- Peace mobile circles (from Additional resources)
- Hole punch
- Crayons
- Metal hanger
- Yarn

storytelling props

- Fabric or colored paper squares for Corinth and Ephesus
- Story props (prepared from Multiage leaflet pages 3–4)
- Piece of brown cloth and needle

resource pack

- Map

to do

- Use a teacher copy of the Multiage leaflet. Follow the directions on page 3 for making the story props.

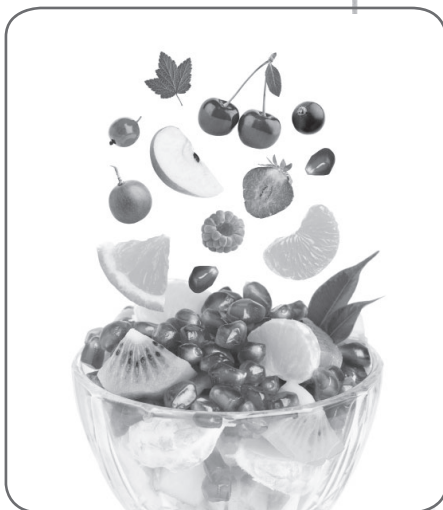
explore

CREATE

Bring a variety of fruits. Children can work together to wash, cut, and chop the fruits to make a fruit mixture. Mixing the fruits together combines a variety of colors and flavors. Talk about how individually, the ingredients can only do so much. Combining the fruits creates a delicious treat. When God's people work together, more can be accomplished than one person can do alone.

supplies

- Variety of fruits
- Water to wash the fruits
- Cutting boards and plastic knives
- Bowl and wooden spoon
- Serving cups, spoons



MOVE

Divide into groups of two or three to make tents. Give each group two chairs, a single sheet, pillows, and a few decorative items. Set a time limit and use a timer the children can hear. When time is up, admire the tents. *Option:* Have children sit in their tents to do the Leaflet activity.

For smaller groups: Have the whole group make a tent together. If you are working alongside the group, let the children make the decisions.

supplies

- Chairs, two for each pair of children
- Single sheets, one for each pair
- Pillow
- Decorative items
- Timer

RETELL

Children will cut out the props from pages 3 and 4 of the Multiage leaflet and use them to retell the story. Older children can look up the story in the Bible (Act 18:1–3, 18–28) to add more details. Younger children can also retell the story with motions from page 1 of the Multiage leaflet.

supplies

- Multiage leaflets
- Scissors
- Small paper bags for taking home story props

LEAFLET

Read the items under “Offering my gifts” on page 2 of the Multiage leaflet. Each person can check the sentences that describe his or her own gifts. Talk together about using their gifts for others and in church.

supplies

- Multiage leaflets
- Pencils

other ideas

- Purchase polar fleece fabric. Work together to make a baby blanket gift. Search “tied fleece blanket” online for instructions.
- Create tent snacks from thin pretzel sticks and fruit leather.
- Play parachute games or other cooperative games outside to highlight working together. Games are available online.

bless

PRAY

Gather together in a circle. Ask a child to mark with stickers the categories on the “Faithful followers” poster from the resource pack that fit Aquila and Priscilla (*New Testament, public speaker, changed mind, had a supporter*) and Apollos (*New Testament, traveler, welcomed others, had a supporter*).

Then stand and pray together the People’s prayer from the “Ways to pray” poster from the resource pack.

God, we come together to worship and learn about you.

(Link elbows).

We praise you in our joys.

(Stand on tiptoe.)

We support each other in our sorrows. *(Bend knees.)*

In your love we meet *(step in),*
and in your love we part.

(Step out.)

Be with us as we go.

(Unlink elbows.)

Shine through us as we live.

(Raise arms.)

Amen. *(Lower arms.)*

SEND

Send the children with this blessing from Paul’s second letter to the church in Corinth (2 Corinthians 13:11b):

Live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Make sure to send the leaflets home with the children.

supplies

- Multiage leaflets
- Small stickers

resource pack

- “Faithful followers” poster
- “Ways to pray” poster

I routinely tweak the session to fit the personality of my children, which is a different group each year.

—Rose Miller

West Unity, Ohio



leader’s closing prayer

Listening to others’ opinions is not always pleasant—even, and sometimes especially, in the church. But working together and learning from each other is God’s way, and usually brings the strongest result.

God, help me to honor you as I work with others for your kingdom. Amen.