How it works

On the first page is a core lesson plan for Sea Sunday. This covers four key elements for the session that can be covered whatever the age group.

On the subsequent pages are activities for each key element, differentiated into two age groups: 4 – 7 year olds and 7 – 11 year olds. Think of the activities as a pick and mix, so you can pick appropriate activities for the age and individual needs of your group. They are deliberately not time bound as session times will differ so pick as few or as many as you like. The activities marked with * can be used for both age groups and are great if you have a group with a wide range of ages.

All of the prayer activities can be used by any age group.

Even though each section is not time bound, do try and cover all the sections, keep the introduction brief and make sure you leave time to pray.

Be sensitive to children who may have family and friends at sea and make sure they have time to talk about and pray for those people.

These activities have been used in settings before but have not been risk assessed for individual settings, so each church will need to do their own risk assessment.

Resources
Sailors’ Society Who are we? video - youtu.be/aHEApdQ1TLM
Sailors’ Society website – www.sailors-society.org

These resources were kindly created by Lisa Edwards - Teacher and member of Guildford Baptist Church - @Lis_Edwards
CORE LESSON — SEA SUNDAY

OBJECTIVES
• To understand the work of Sailors’ Society.
• To understand that seafarers face many dangers at sea.
• To understand that God kept Paul safe during his challenging journey by sea and his shipwreck, and that God can keep us safe through all the ‘storms’ that we have to face.
• To link the story of Paul’s disastrous journey by sea to the protection that Psalm 107 offers us.
• To be able to apply the story to our own lives and to understand its relevance today.

INTRODUCTION:
• Briefly introduce Sailors’ Society and what it does, using the “Who are we?” video.
• Explain that the purpose of Sea Sunday is to provide a chance to think about seafarers and the sacrifices they make for us.
• Introduce the theme of the morning: Paul’s journey to Rome by sea and the disasters that befell him, but that we will see how God protected him and how God protects us.

BIBLE READING:
• Acts 27
• Psalm 107

COLLECTION BOXES:
Cut out collection boxes, provided with this pack, that children can colour in and then use to save their pennies for seafarers.

EXPLORE AND RESPONSE:
• Activities and games designed to explore the theme, looking specifically at the storms that we face in our own lives.
• Activities that help the children to think of ‘wondering’ questions such as:
  - What was it like for Paul and the other sailors on the boat?
  - What did the centurion think about it all?
  - What does Psalm 107 tell us?
  - What dangers do seafarers face at sea? What are some of the dangers that are the same as Paul faced? What are some that are different? Do you think that families back home are worried about the seafarers in their family?

PRAYER:
• Respond in prayer in a variety of different ways; particularly try to encourage a personal response.
• Pray for those who work on the sea and the dangers that they face.
• Try to ensure that children who know seafarers personally have time to pray for individuals.

To download more of these resources including video clips, cut out boats and collection boxes visit www.seasundayhero.org
INTRODUCTION: (KEEP THIS FAIRLY BRIEF)

- Watch the short *Who are we?* video clip of the work of Sailors’ Society.
- Introduce the work of Sailors’ Society by showing pictures from the website.
- Talk about dangers at sea, using pictures, e.g. storm, a ship becalmed, a tired and hungry crew, a damaged ship, with the older ones you could show pictures of modern day pirates, but think about if this appropriate with younger ones.

BIBLE READING:

If time allows it is always good to tell the story in two different ways with this age group as it helps them to really get into it e.g. you might read the story and then act it out or read the story and then get the children to retell it to each other. There are also some good YouTube clips suitable for this age group, for example:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U16uNUKNvVM

To enable the children to get a proper understanding of the chronology of the story, it is probably best to read the story from the Bible or rewrite in your own words beforehand, picking out the important parts. (The whole of Acts 27 may be a bit too long to read, unless your group is used to that). Make sure that you get across what a catalogue of disasters this trip turned into. Do use props to tell the story, it works best if you can remember it and act it out. Try and get the children to sit in a boat shape or on a brown cloth laid on top of a blue one to show the boat on top of the sea. Act out as much as possible, for example:

- Make it clear who Julius the centurion was and that Paul was handed over to him (v1). Pick out a child to play the centurion (they will need to do something else later on).
- The wind against them (v6). Children can make sounds like the wind, or have some children outside of the boat waving tea towels at the boat to make a wind effect.
- Not being able to stop in the harbour and continuing on to Crete (v12).
- Getting caught in a hurricane that lasted for several days and throwing the cargo overboard (v14 - 20).
- Feeling very hungry (v21).
- Paul seeing an angel telling him that God will keep him safe, but that they will run aground on an island somewhere (v24-25).
- Act out measuring the soundings and then dropping down anchors (v28-29).
- Letting the lifeboat drift away and their feelings once the lifeboat has gone (v30-31).
- Have a loaf of bread (don’t forget - gluten free!), pass it round as you tell the story of Paul urging them to eat (v33).
- Try to get some idea of the panic and fear of the shipwreck as they run aground (v39).
- The centurion wanting to spare Paul’s life.

Finish the story with a time of quiet, perhaps the children could lay down or find a quiet space and read them this verse:

Psalm 107 v 29 New International Version (NIV)

“He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed.”

Ask them to think about the storms in their life at the moment and ask God to still them to a whisper.

EXPLORE AND RESPOND:

Choose as many of these activities as you have time for. Ideally you should choose at least one craft, one game and one reflective activity, but it’s up to you! You could either do each activity as a whole group depending on the size of the group or you could set up different stations for the children to move around and do the activities in their own time (although this is dependent on room size and the amount of helpers that you have).

GAMES:

- **Port and starboard**: This is a classic game with which you are probably already familiar and you can play indoors or outdoors. It is based on the theme of a ship captain and their crew. One person is the captain, the rest are crew members. The captain (leader) gives out one of the set orders listed below. The crew (children) then do the matching actions. Great as a warm up game, or an energy burner, and good for small or large groups!

  1. **Port**: Everyone runs to the left of the playing area or room.
  2. **Starboard**: Everyone runs to the right of the playing area or room.
  3. **Bow**: Everyone runs to the front of the playing area or room.
  4. **Stern**: Everyone runs to the back of the playing area or room.
  5. **Man overboard**: Children lie on their back and waggle arms and legs in the air.
  6. **Captain’s coming**: Children salute and shout “Aye aye captain”.
  7. **Climb the ladder (or climb the rigging)**: Children pretend to climb a ladder.
  8. **Crow’s nest**: Put hands above eyebrows and look out to sea.
9. **Sweep the decks**: Children pretend to clean the floor.
10. **To the lifeboats**: If you have a group of players) Get into groups of three, hold hands and sit down.
11. **Boat sinking**: All children sit down as fast as they can.
12. Make up some actions of your own!

- **Musical shipwreck**: Like musical chairs but with big bits of paper on the floor that represent part of the shipwreck. When the music stops children need to be standing on a piece of paper, take away one sheet every time. The winner is the one who makes it to a sheet of paper every time.
- **Parachute games**: If you have a parachute, have the children sitting round the edge with their legs under it. Have two or three children under the parachute being the angry sea in a storm trying to pull children under by the legs. Have several children acting as the ‘lifeguards’ or ‘rescuers’ who when they notice the children being pulled under by the sea, have to try and pull them back to stop them from ‘drowning’. This can get quite physical so think about whether this is appropriate for your group first, and risk assess accordingly. Look online for other appropriate parachute games.

**CRAFT:**

- **Boats**: Make a paper boat (a template is provided in the resource pack) and write Psalm 107 v 29 on it. If your children are very young, have the verse pre-printed so all they have to do is stick it on.
- **Egg box boats**: Collect egg boxes in advance and using straws and coloured paper, turn them into boats. Use Playmobil/Lego/Sylvanian Families characters to be the crew (one in each ‘egg’ gap), talk about how the crew would have felt on the boat and risk assess accordingly. Look online for other appropriate parachute games.
- **Life belt doughnuts**: Place a plain ring doughnut on a paper plate with Psalm 107 v 29 written or stuck on the plate. Decorate the ring doughnut using white and red writing icing to look like a life belt. Children can either leave behind or take with them.
- **Fishing net prayers**: Have a station set up with Polo mints, brown string and blue paper. Ask the children to write prayers about something that they feel like they need God’s help with. When they have written the prayers, roll up the blue paper into a scroll shape and secure with brown string and a polo attached to look like a life belt. Children can either leave behind or take with them.
- **Polo prayers**: Have a station set up with Polo mints, brown string and blue paper. Ask the children to write prayers about something that they feel like they need God’s help with. When they have written the prayers, roll up the blue paper into a scroll shape and secure with brown string and a polo attached to look like a life belt. Children can either leave behind or take with them.
- **Message in a bottle**: Collect bottles with lids (preferably plastic) in advance and get the children to write their prayer to God. They can then place in a paddling pool or large tub of water. If you have a good budget you can buy tiny bottles with lids from eBay, which can be quite fun. In the past when I have done this activity, I have asked leaders to read the prayers after the children have gone, pray for them and think about responding over the next week or so with a Bible verse or word from God. They then wrote on the paper and during the following weeks, we set it up again and got the children to retrieve their bottles to see if the situation had changed or whether the Bible verse or word was helpful to them.
- **Sweep the decks**: Children pretend to clean the floor.
- **To the lifeboats**: If you have a group of players) Get into groups of three, hold hands and sit down.
- **Boat sinking**: All children sit down as fast as they can.
- Make up some actions of your own!

**REFLECTIVE ACTIVITIES:**

- **Singing**: Sing the old favourite ‘With Christ in the vessel, you can smile at the storm’. After they have got the hang of it, ask them what are some of the things that are worrying them and sing a verse with every suggestion changing the words e.g. ‘With Christ with us at school, we can smile at the storm’ or ‘When I am frightened, I can smile at the storm’. You might need a bit of poetic license here, but the idea is that the children make a connection between God being with Paul during the long sea journey and that he is with us in our everyday trials.
- **Colouring sheet**: Have a quiet area of the room with colouring sheets or plain pieces of paper, pens and pencils, perhaps some quiet music playing where children can go and think about the story or draw or write their own response.
- **Water play**: Have a water tray with ice cream tubs and plastic toy people (anything that doesn’t matter if it gets wet) and just let the children use their imagination to retell the story using the tubs as boats and the toy people as the crew. Don’t feel that you have to jump in or correct them if they get the story wrong or go off on a tangent, just let them play.
- **Anchors**: Have anchor-shaped cut outs that the children can write or stick on Psalm 107 v 29 and then decorate or colour in.

**PRAYER:**

- **Pray as a group**: Either leader-led or child-led, depending on the group – pass something round so children can pass it on if they don’t want to pray.

Please note: none of these activities have been risk assessed; you will need to do that in your setting.
Feel free to pick as many activities from each section that are appropriate for your time limitations and the needs of your group.

Activities marked with * can be used if you have older children in your group as well.

Please note: none of these activities have been risk assessed; you will need to do that in your setting.

INTRODUCTION: (KEEP THIS FAIRLY BRIEF)

- Watch the short Who are we? video clip of the work of Sailors’ Society. *
- Introduce the work of Sailors’ Society by showing pictures from the website.*
- Talk about dangers at sea using pictures, e.g. storm, a ship becalmed, a tired and hungry crew, a damaged ship, and modern day pirates.
- Have a true or false quiz about the likelihood of certain dangers happening at sea.
- Have a list of dangers at sea and put in order of most likely to happen at sea to least likely to happen at sea.

BIBLE READING:

- If time allows it is always good to tell the story in two different ways, e.g. you might read the story and then act it out or read the story and then get the children to retell it to each other. To enable the children to get a proper understanding of the chronology of the story, it is probably best to read the story from the Bible or rewrite in your own words beforehand, picking out the important parts. The whole of Acts 27 may be a bit too long to read, unless your group is used to that. Make sure that you get across what a catalogue of disasters this trip became. Do use props to tell the story, it works best if you can remember it and act it out. Try and get the children to sit in a boat shape or on a brown cloth laid on top of a blue one to show the boat on top of the sea. Act out as much as possible, for example:
  - Make it clear who Julius the centurion was and that Paul was handed over to him (v1) Pick out a child to play the centurion (they will need to do something else later on).
  - The wind against them (v6). Children can make sounds like the wind, or have some children outside of the boat waving tea towels at the boat to make a wind effect.
  - Not being able to stop in the harbour and continuing on to Crete (v12).
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Finish the story with a time of quiet, perhaps the children could lay down or find a quiet space and read them this verse:

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Ask them to think about the storms in their life at the moment and ask God to still them to a whisper.

EXPLORE AND RESPONSE:

Choose as many of these activities as you have time for, ideally you should choose at least one craft, one game and one reflective activity, but it’s up to you! You could either do each activity as a whole group depending on the size of the group or you could set up different stations for the children to move around and do the activities in their own time (although this is dependant on room size and the amount of helpers that you have). Or you could have one whole group activity and then split into groups for the rest of the activities...

GAMES:

- Save the crew: This is a team building game that can be played inside or out. Split your group into teams of approximately four children and give them five sheets of paper (pieces of ship wreckage). The idea is that the whole team gets from one side of the room or outdoor space to the other, only using the pieces of paper, with everybody, at all times, on a piece of paper. If anybody is not on a piece of paper at any time, then they are in the sea and they have to start again. They have to work together to make this happen by passing along pieces of paper to enable the first person to move along and so on. You can make this harder or easier by giving them less or more paper.

- Port and starboard: This is a classic game that you are probably already familiar with and you can play indoors or outdoors. It is based on the theme of a ship captain and their crew. So one person is the captain, the rest crew members. The captain (leader) gives out one of the set orders listed below. The crew (children) then do the matching actions. Great as a warm up game, or an energy burner, and good for small or large groups!*

Activities for 7 – 11 year olds
1. **Port:** Everyone runs to the left of the playing area or room.

2. **Starboard:** Everyone runs to the right of the playing area or room.

3. **Bow:** Everyone runs to the front of the playing area or room.

4. **Stern:** Everyone runs to the back of the playing area or room.

5. **Man overboard:** Children lie on their back and waggle arms and legs in the air.

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7. **Climb the ladder (or climb the rigging):** Children pretend to climb a ladder.

8. **Crow’s nest:** Put hands above eyebrows and look out to sea.

9. **Sweep the decks:** Children pretend to clean the floor.

10. **To the lifeboats:** (If you have a group of players) Get into groups of three, hold hands and sit down.

11. **Boat sinking:** All children sit down as fast as they can.

12. **Make up some actions of your own!**

**CRAFT:**

There are literally hundreds of craft ideas on Pinterest: https://uk.pinterest.com

Check this website out if you haven’t already! Particularly look at the Messy Church boards. They have crosswords and colouring sheets appropriate for this age group, as well as many different crafts. With this age group you can take simple ideas and make them more elaborate. Here are just a few ideas:

- **Collage:** Use any kind of materials that you can find. Make a collage of the ship’s wreck or the storm with the verse Psalm 107 v 29 written above it. Lolly sticks, cardboard and sandpaper all make good wreckage.*

- **Interactive Map:** Draw a map that follows the coastline of Paul’s journey; there are some ideas on Pinterest that may help. Make a small boat and attach to a lolly stick, make a slit in the map and poke the boat on a lolly stick through. Use the boat to follow the coastline and retell the story or talk about the area that Paul travelled.

- **Comic strip:** Tell the story in a form of a comic strip, this can be done individually or in groups with each group taking a section of the story to be put together at the end. This would make a great display if you have wall space.

- **Life belt doughnuts:** Place a plain ring doughnut on a paper plate with Psalm 107 v 29 written or stuck on the plate. Decorate the ring doughnut using white and red writing icing to look like a life belt. Have a conversation with the children about the things that Jesus saves them from while the children are completing the activities.*

**REFLECTIVE ACTIVITIES:**

- Ask the children to write or draw an extract from the ship’s log, choosing a part of the story that has most interested them or made them think. They could choose to write from Paul’s point of view, the centurion or one of the crew.

- If space allows, have a blow up dinghy in the room in which children can go and sit and think about the story and have some quiet time. There could also be other sea artefacts or props like an anchor, life belt, life jacket, rope, etc. Have pieces of paper and pencils in case the children want to sketch or write things down. You could also have a camera available allowing the children to take pictures of the artefacts. The photos could be printed off and given back to the child who took it at a later date, asking them why they took a photo of that particular object. This would serve as a good reminder of the lesson.

- **Anchors:** Have anchor shaped cut outs that the children can write or stick on Psalm 107 v 29 and then decorate or colour in.*

**PRAYER:**

- **Message in a bottle:** Collect bottles with lids (preferably plastic) in advance and get the children to write their prayer to God. They can then place the bottles in a paddling pool or large tub of water. If you have a good budget you can buy tiny bottles with lids from eBay which can be quite fun. In the past when I have done this activity, I have asked leaders to read the prayers after the children have gone, pray for them and think about responding over the next week or so with a Bible verse or word from God. They then wrote on the paper and during the following weeks, we set it up again and got the children to retrieve their bottles to see if the situation had changed or whether the Bible verse or word was helpful to them.*

- **Polo prayers:** Have a station set up with Polo mints, brown string and blue paper. Ask the children to write prayers about something that they feel like they need God’s help with. When they have written the prayers, roll up the blue paper into a scroll shape and secure with brown string and a Polo attached to look like a life belt. Children can either leave behind or take with them.*

- **Fishing net prayers:** If you can get hold of a large piece of netting, attach it to the wall and ask the children to write prayers on a piece of paper and put in the net. This is particularly good if they have people that they are worried about. They can write the name of the person they are worried about and ask God to keep them safe in his net. A similar thing could be done with a life belt or rubber ring, with the children putting their prayers in the middle of the ring.*

- **Seafarers’ prayers:** Fill a small paddling pool with water, make a small paper boat using the template provided in the resource pack, write a prayer on the bottom of the boat and put it in the water. If a child wants to pray for a specific seafarer then they could ‘name’ their boat for that individual and put it on the water.*

- **Pray as a group:** Either leader-led or child-led, depending on the group – pass something round so children can pass it on if they don’t want to pray.*