

# Tour of the Holy Lands - Pamphylia



Welcome back to the Kids' Tour of the Bible Lands! Are you ready for another great summer? I see some familiar faces and some new ones, too. It's been a while since our last trip -- I bet you're as eager as I am to get going! We're going to join the Apostle Paul as he and Barnabas finish the first journey to spread the Gospel through Asia Minor, which is called Turkey today. Did you remember to bring everything? You'll need summer clothes, a hat, a notepad and pen, a camera, binoculars and a backpack that you can carry all by yourself. Most importantly, be sure to keep your passport in a safe place and your map handy because we'll refer to it often.

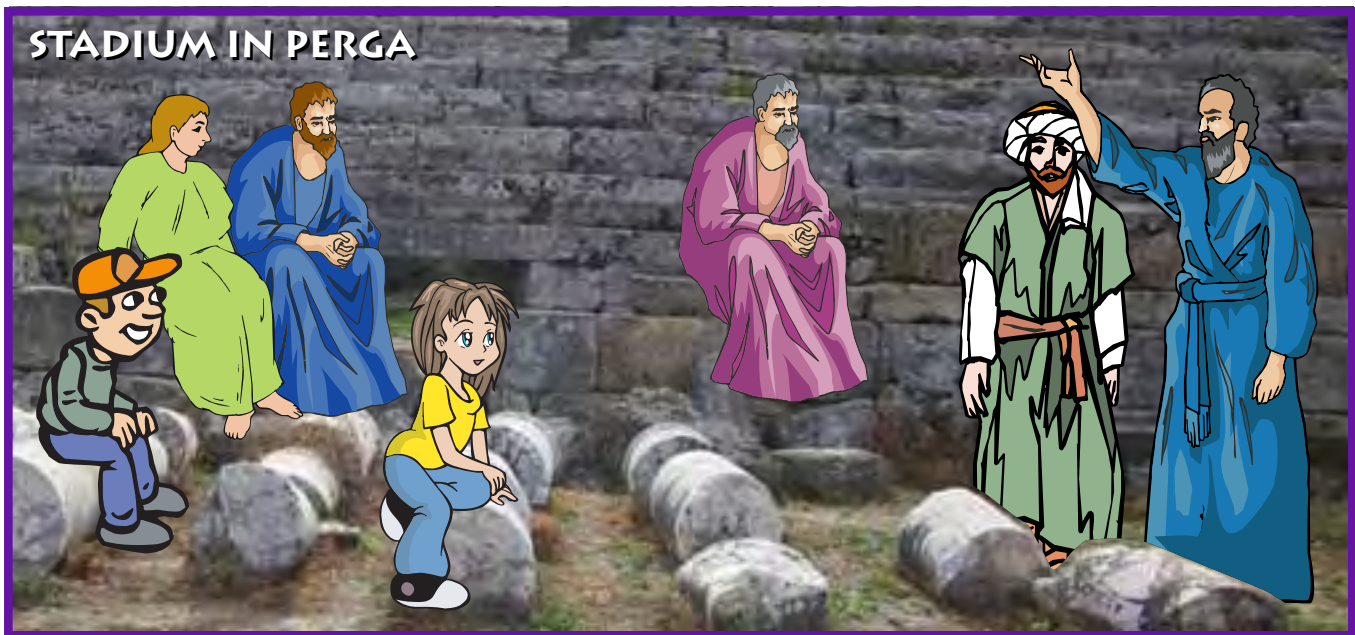


Your airplane has flown you from your home city into the large new airport of Antalya (An-tal' ya in Turkish and At-tal'ia in English), a popular tourist city on the beach of the Mediterranean Sea in Turkey. People around the world love to spend their vacations along this seaside. Over 2000 years ago, the ancient Romans had the same idea. So, let's begin our summer tour by visiting some of these nearby Roman cities.

Are you ready to board our bus? As soon as you find a seat, please put your backpacks onto the racks above your heads. Then, let's see if we can find these places on the map – Perga (Per' guh), Aspendos (As-pen'dos), Side (See' day) and Antalya. They are all located in an area called Pamphylia (Pam-fil'ya). I'm sure our bus driver knows the way, and now we can follow along on our maps.



We've been to Perge once before. Do you remember? We sailed from Cyprus to Attalia with our missionaries – Paul, Barnabas and Mark. The first time we were here, the men were in a hurry to get to Antioch Pisidia, so they didn't stay in Perge. This time is different. In front of us stand the gates of the city. They are falling apart now, but they used to be tall circular red brick towers, which the missionaries would have passed through. As we pass through them now, we can see that there used to be statues of important citizens standing in the "courtyard of honor." Go ahead – climb into those holes in the wall where statues once stood, and we'll take your picture.



The second time Paul and Barnabas came to Parga, they stayed longer, maybe two months, and preached. They must have received a warm welcome. Some of their Jewish listeners had already become Christians. How did they hear about Jesus? They had gone to Jerusalem at Pentecost, where they heard Peter

preach the Gospel of Jesus. What a surprise to hear it in their own language! They believed the word, were baptized, and joined the church. We can imagine that when they returned to Parga, they were probably eager to start a church of their own.



**PETER PREACHING  
AT JERUSALEM**

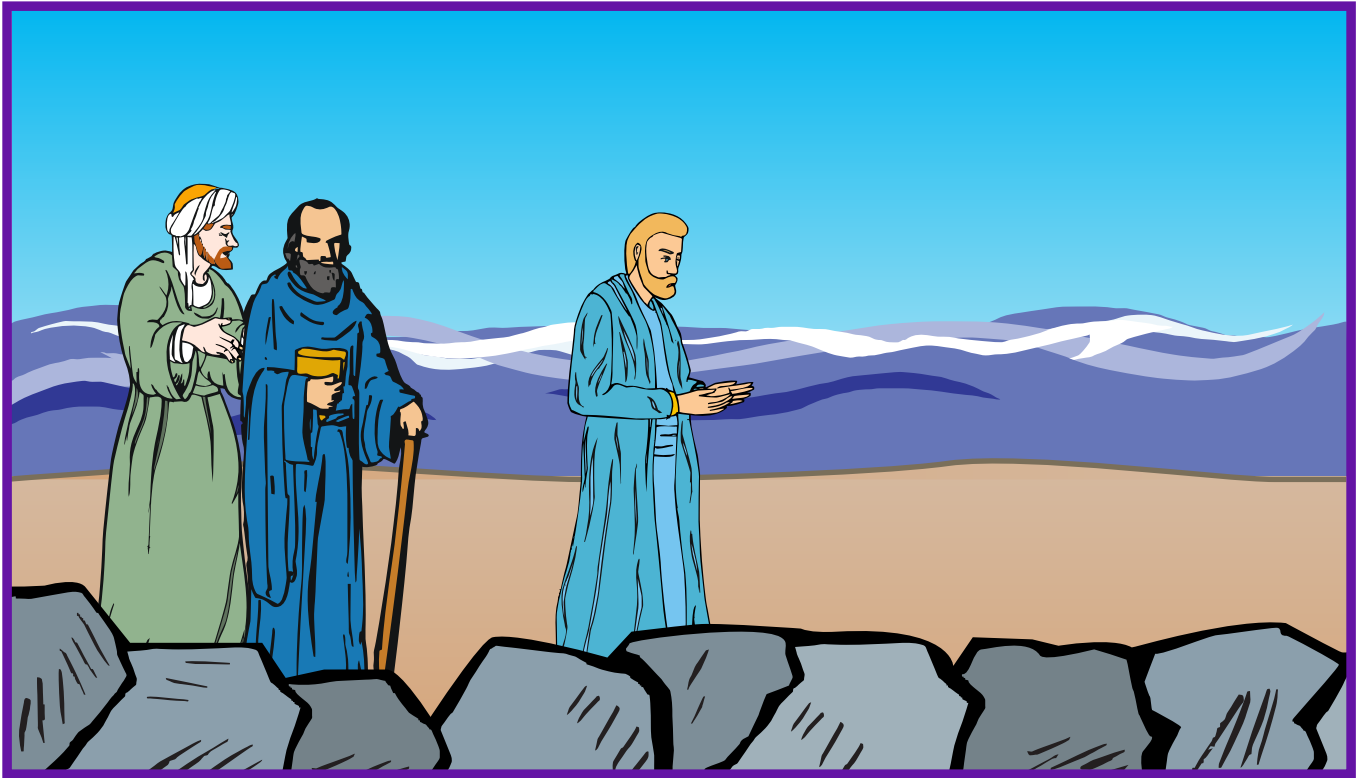
Look here. Do you know where we're standing? It's a huge Roman stadium that once held sports activities. See how well preserved it is! Can you imagine the seats filled with Christians, new and old, waiting for Paul to speak? Let's sit with them and pretend we're actually listening to Paul.



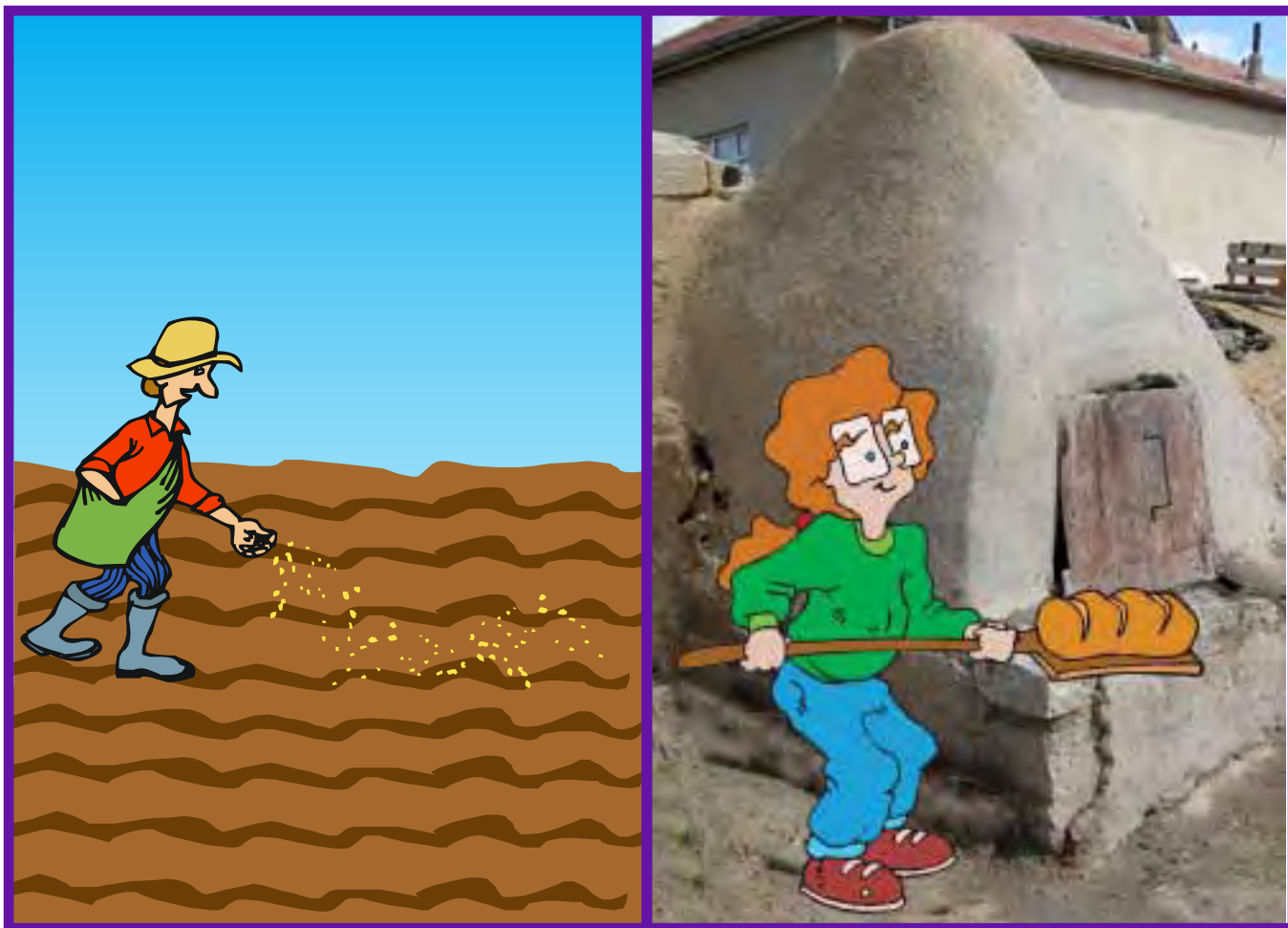


Each time Paul preached in a new place, his goal was to gain enough members to start a church. Then he would move to the next city. He didn't have time to stay and help the new church. He depended on strong individuals to take on the leadership roles. Later, when he was far away and heard the latest church news, he would write the members a letter full of advice and encouragement. Paul's letters were called "epistles." A trusted friend would deliver the epistles to the churches, some of which were hundreds of miles away. Several of these epistles have been saved – you can find them in our New Testament today.



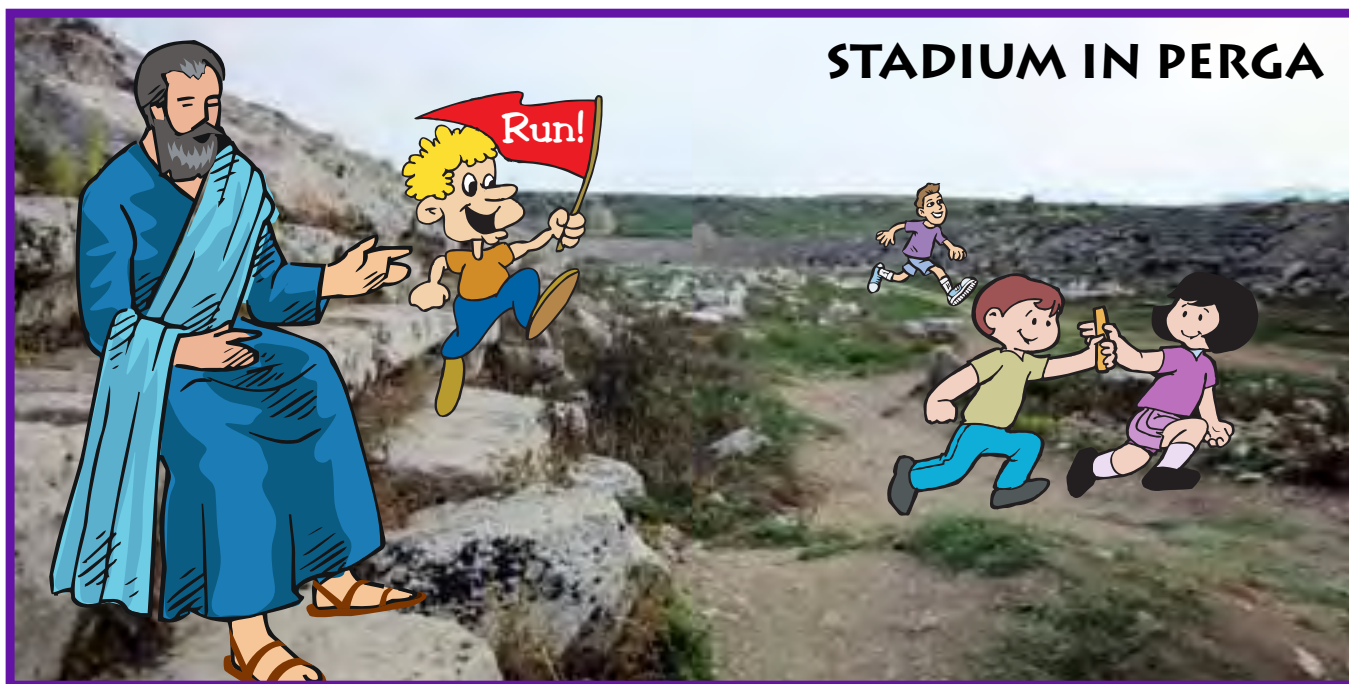


Remember the young man, Mark, who went on the first missionary journey? It was here at Perga that Mark left the team and went home. (Acts 15:37-39) No one knows why he did that. Even though Paul was angry about Mark's departure for a while, he had kind words for Mark later. "He'll be my right hand man," Paul said. (II Timothy 4:11)



Paul's letters were sometimes like Jesus' parables. They would teach lessons using everyday subjects that were easy to understand. Jesus spoke of farmers planting seeds or of women baking bread.





Paul knew that his listeners liked sports, especially running races in stadiums such as this one, so he wrote a letter saying that being a Christian is like running a race. Here is one of his lessons: Paul heard that some of the churches in Galatia were allowing older leaders to bring back old rules, instead of being guided by the Spirit. So Paul wrote them a letter. He said, "You were running your race well, but someone has put a road block in your path to try to trip you up. You haven't been following the true path, the path Jesus taught." (Galatians 5:7) It's pretty cool that Paul could explain his point in a way that made perfect sense to the people of that time – and still makes sense to us! Now, how would you kids like to run in this stadium?

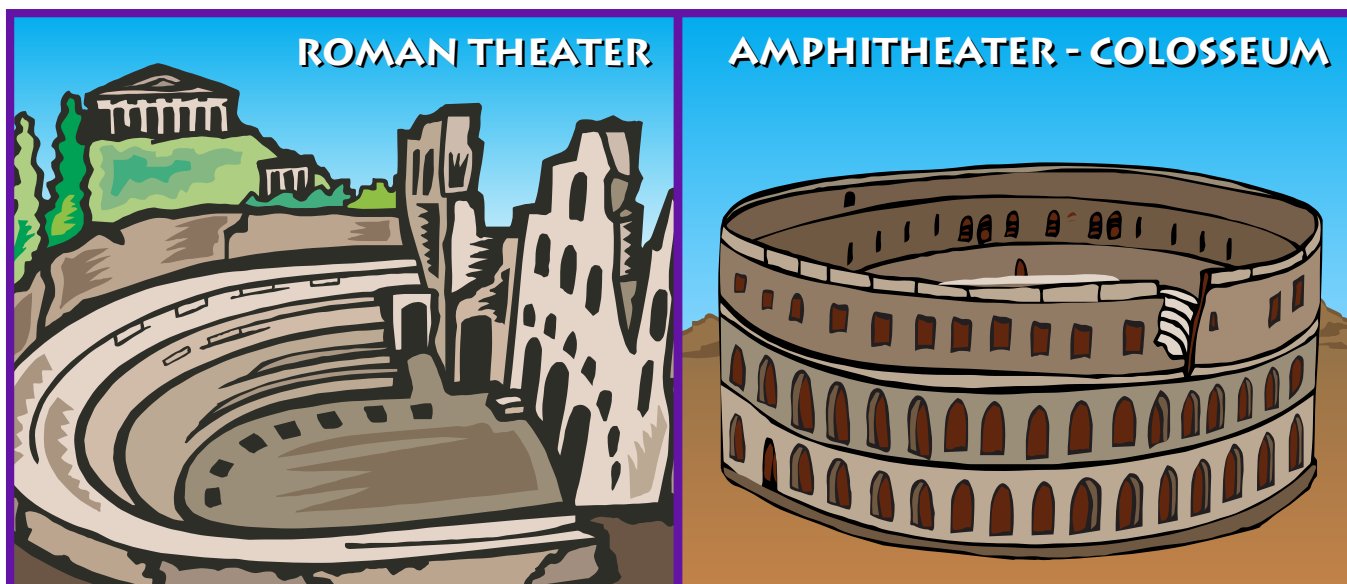


## ROMAN THEATER



There's a Roman building that's worth seeing in one of these cities. We don't read that Paul and Barnabas ever went there, but let's climb on the bus and visit it anyway. As we get close to the city of Aspendos, keep your eyes open for a building that's several stories tall. What do you think it is? There certainly weren't any tall office buildings in ancient times! Run inside and see what you find! Look around -- we're inside one of the largest Roman theaters in the Roman Empire. What we thought was a tall building is really part of the theater. In fact, it's the back of the stage. How ingenious!

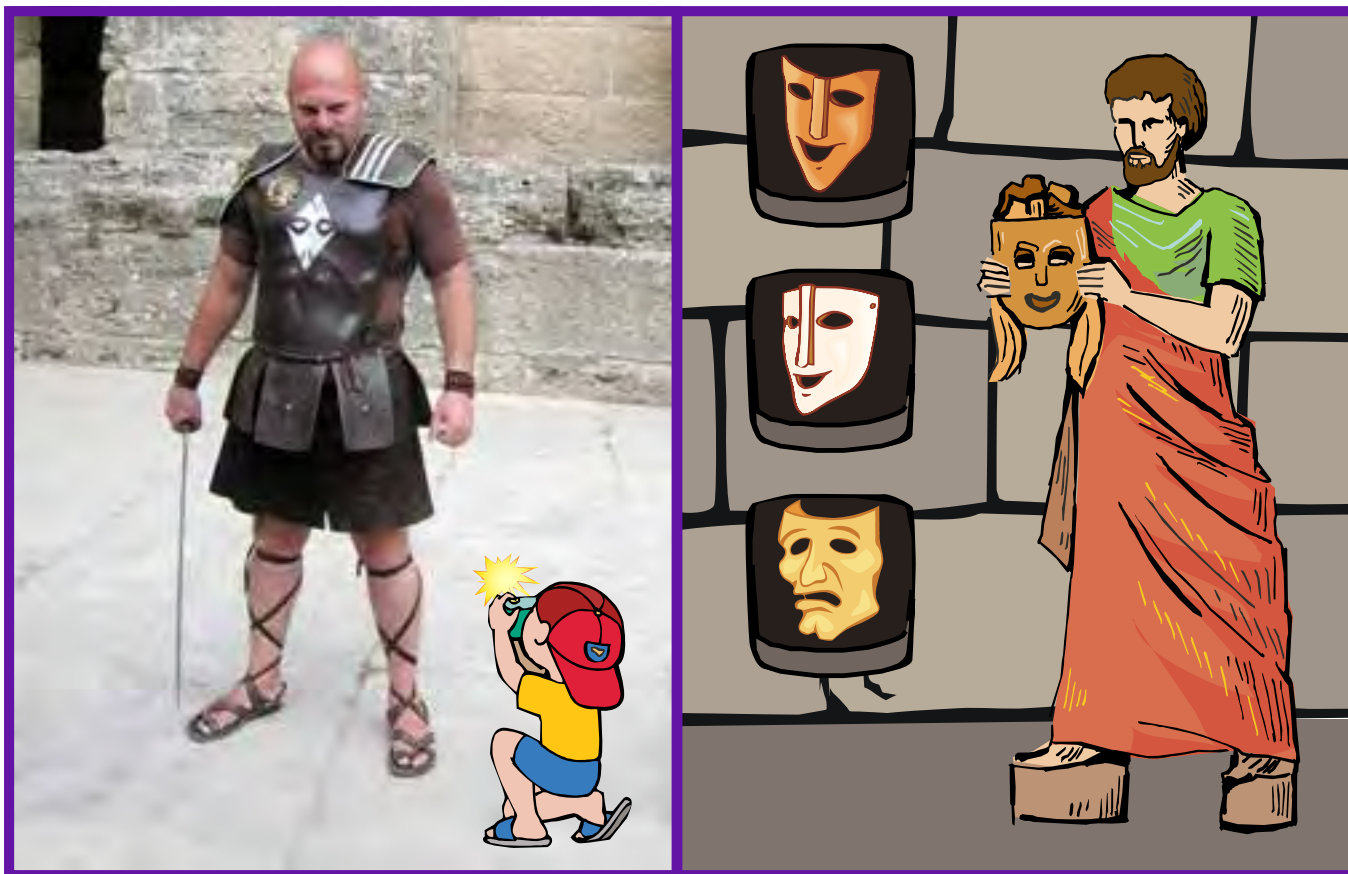




There's an interesting fact to know about ancient theaters. If you study these two pictures, what do you notice? The building on the left is almost a circle, but cut in half -- it's just a half-circle connected to what we now know is a tall backstage. The building on the right is more like a circle -- which is really two half-circles, right? This type of ancient building is called an amphitheater because "amphi" means "two" -- two theaters put together. People mistakenly call all outdoor theaters "amphitheaters," but you now know better!

It is thought that many theaters in those days were closed in to keep out weather and noise. A tarp or tent could be pulled over the top for shade. Some say that since Paul was a tent-maker, he might have made those kinds of tarps.

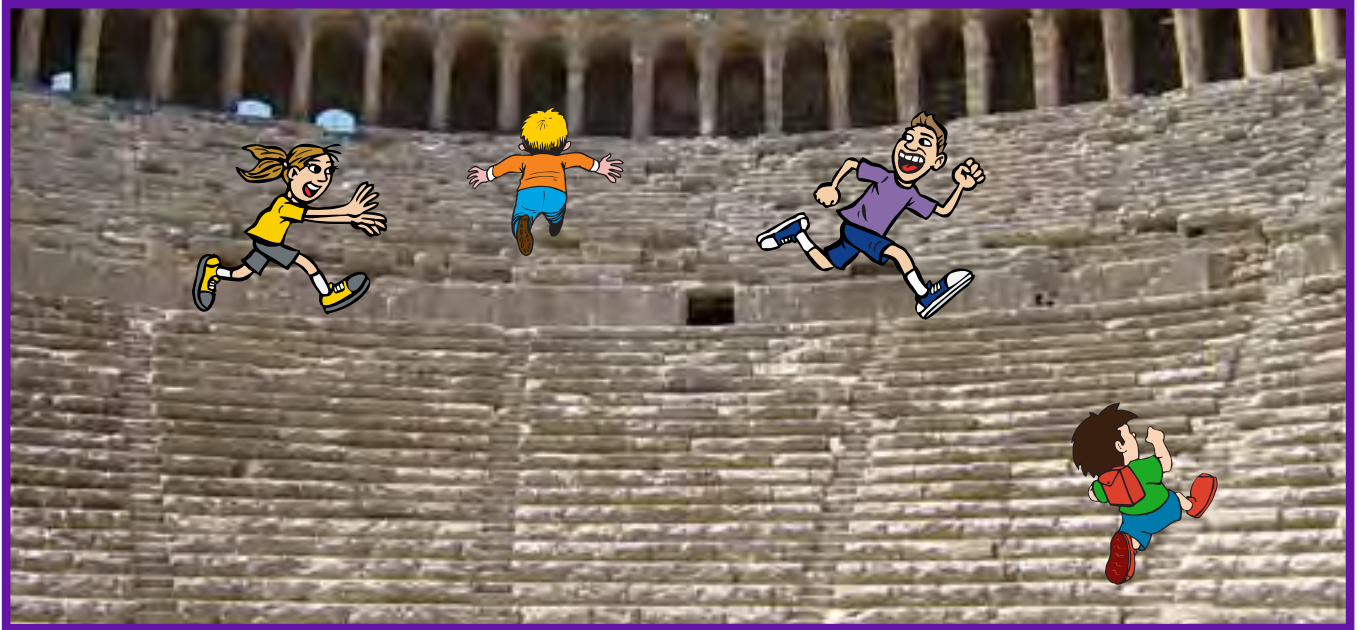
The picture on the right is a free-standing amphitheater -- and it's modeled after the famous Colosseum in Rome. You might want to jot that down in your notebooks to research when you get home. Remarkable events took place in the Roman Colosseum!



Actors in those days were men, not women. Women on stage were really men wearing women's masks and women's clothes. Look! Over there is a man dressed as a Roman soldier.

Audiences in those days were so noisy that they couldn't hear the actors. So their costumes and masks were essential to show what kinds of characters the actors were. Brown masks represented male characters, and white masks represented female characters. Happy characters wore smiling masks; sad characters wore frowning masks. As for costumes, rich characters wore purple, poor ones wore red, boys wore stripes, soldiers and slaves wore short tunics. Some actors spoke the lines, and others made gestures to fit those lines, while the musicians played music that supported the characters' roles. All of these elements helped the audience understand the story.





Jesus uses the word, "hypocrite," 20 times in the Bible. It means a "play actor" in Greek, just like actors with masks and costumes. A hypocrite is one acting a part, pretending to be someone else. Look up "hypocrite" in the Bible and read what Jesus says. Then try reading the same passages by substituting "play actor" for "hypocrite." See if it doesn't help you understand his story.



Here's something interesting. See these little clay masks? They were actually tickets to a performance. Numbers painted on the back of the tickets matched numbers on the seats.

I can tell you're eager to run up to the top of this theater. Go ahead! We'll meet you at the bus.

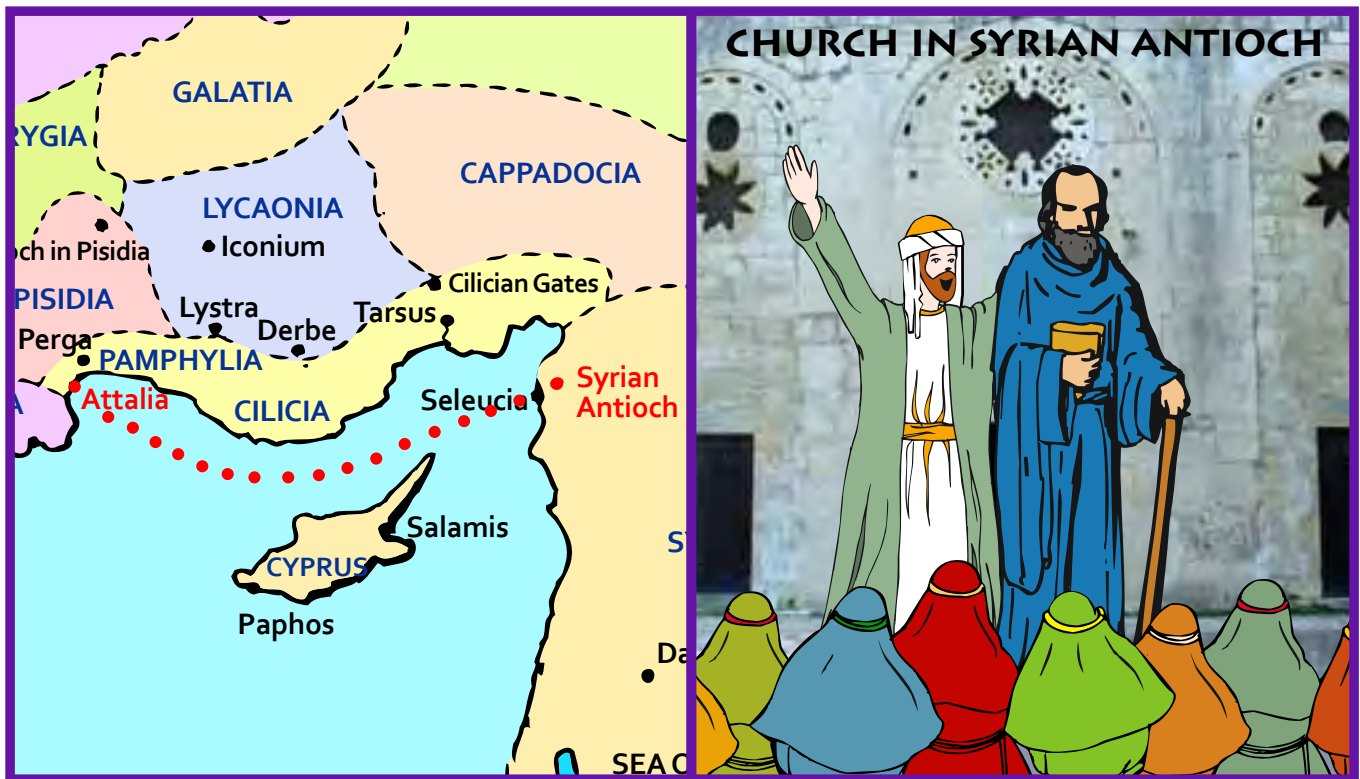




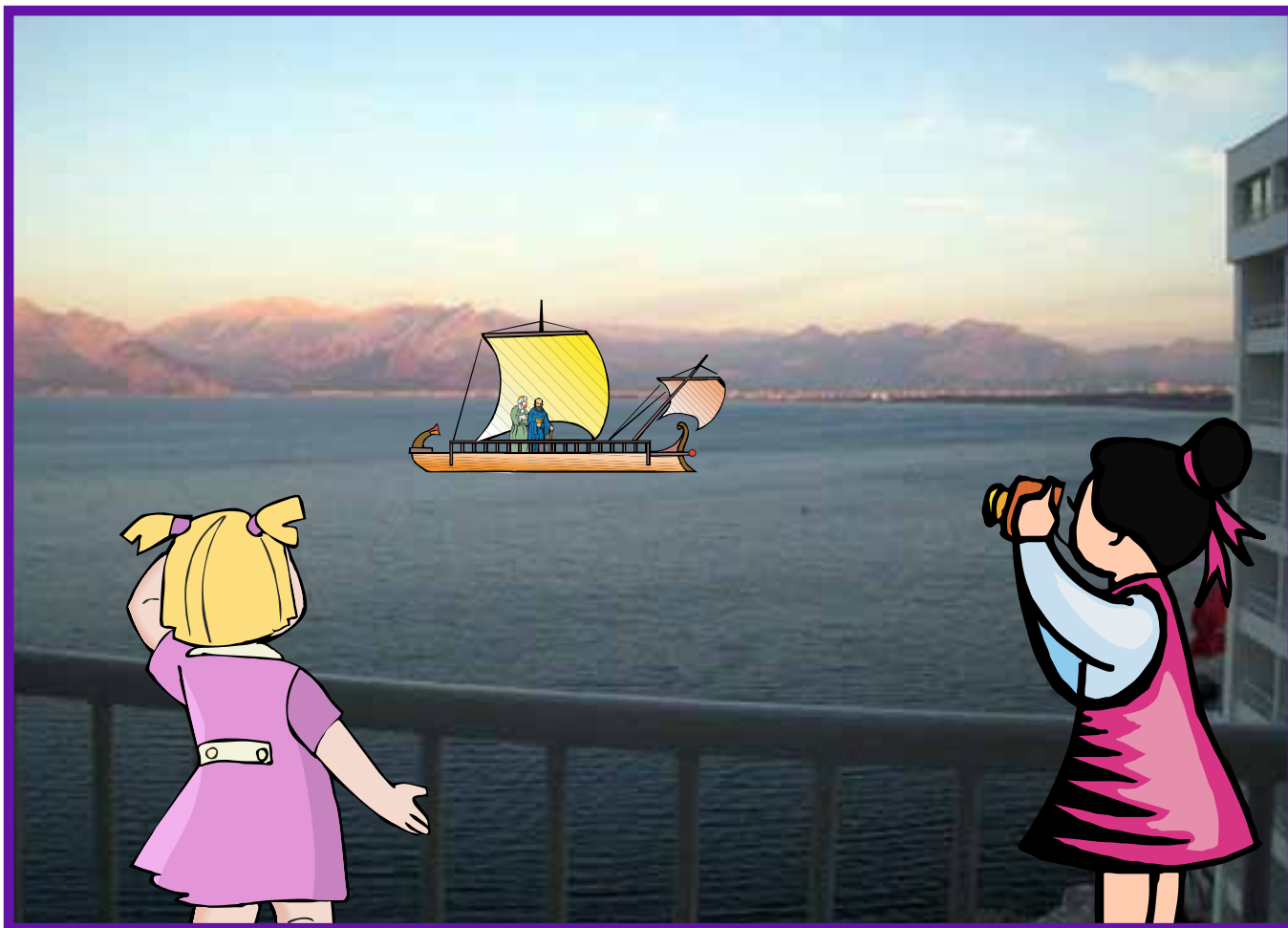
Not too far away is a seaside where Paul and Barnabas went after preaching in Perga, and that's where we're headed now. We'll park the bus and walk over to those huge columns left standing from the Temple of Apollo in this ancient Greek town called Side (See' day), meaning "pomegranate" or fruitful. What an inspiring view of the Mediterranean! That's probably why worship services were held here. Let's go into this Christian worship area here. Just think - they were holding services here before anyone had even thought of the world being round!



Does anyone hear the sea calling us? Let's go to our hotel in Attalia, change into our suits and go swimming. Afterwards, we'll have dinner and get a good night's rest before continuing our journey.



Here in Attalia is the port where Paul and Barnabas boarded a ship and headed home to Syrian Antioch. Another ship towed their boat out to sea, where they found a favorable breeze, and sailed toward the church that had sent them on their first missionary journey. The church members wanted to hear their stories. They gathered together and listened to the report Paul and Barnabas gave of all that God had done with them and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. (The word “Gentiles” may be new to some of you. They were people who were not Jews.) The missionaries told of the healings that occurred along their journey – do you remember the two most important ones? The church members rejoiced over Paul and Barnabas’ successes.



When you wake up tomorrow, look out your hotel window and try to imagine Paul's ship sailing away!