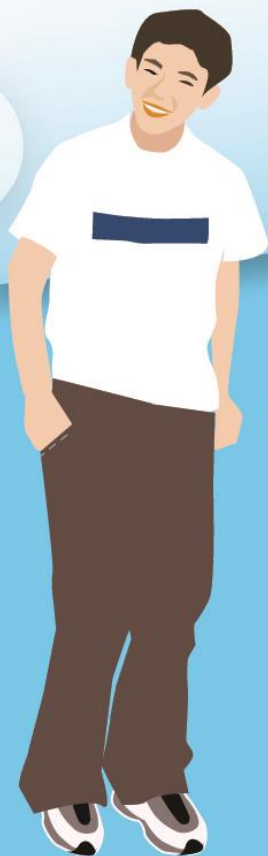


THE PRACTICE OF FAITH



6th Grade

Chicago CBF



Missional Bible Studies

The Practice of Faith: Missional Bible Studies for 6th Grade
Chicago Children's Bible Fellowship 2018
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A Note on using these materials

I would personally like to thank you for your decision to guide young children to know Christ. As you look through these materials, you will find a teacher page that breaks down the 3 main points of the lesson. You will also find copies of the lessons which are numbered and include: An Introduction, Questions, and room for the children to write a small reflection on how they put God's word to practice. There are 46 lessons in this book which covers an entire year's worth of Bible study among the Gospels and Epistles. Ultimately, it is to your superb judgment on how the lessons are paced throughout the year. Feel free to make copies or ask questions about the materials that have been prepared for you. And as always, stay blessed, be prayerful, and have fun serving God!

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ACTS ACTIVITY AND LESSON

These are some ideas to introduce Acts to your class.

Memory Verse: Acts 1:8 (NIV) “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

As a way to teach the verse draw a large circle on the board with 2 smaller circles inside the large circle. On the center smaller circle talk to the students about what Jesus meant when He told them to be His witnesses in Jerusalem. Use a map (if available) to point out the area mentioned in the verse. (Jerusalem is where the apostles lived.) Place the name of the city or town your church is located in the center circle. Explain that Judea and Samaria were surrounding areas to Jerusalem. In the second circle have a student write the name of the state they are in and some surrounding states. To the ends of the earth would be outside the surrounding states to other countries around the world. Have students write in the 3rd circles some names of countries.

These 3 circles make me think of what happens when you throw a stone in a lake or pond. There is a ripple effect that happens because the rock hit the water. It’s the same with the message of the Gospel. When you and I take that message to others there is a ripple effect that takes place. As you share with others and they believe in Jesus and they share with others, the circle keeps growing.

Teacher Preparation:

Prepare arrow road signs from construction paper. Label the signs with the words: Luke, Theophilus, The Acts of the Apostles, Works/deeds, Apostles, Witnesses, Power, Holy Spirit, Salvation and Persecution. (The words are underlined in the lesson as a cue to know when to put the sign on the board. As I prepared to teach this overview I envisioned our class taking a trip through the Book of Acts. The ‘road signs’ were a way to focus on particular aspects of the Book of Acts that we would be focusing on in this lesson to prepare them for our study through the Book of Acts.

To enable students to participate by reading verses throughout the lesson prepare slips of paper (I used construction paper) with Scripture references for the words: Power, Holy Spirit, Salvation and Persecution (you will find those references in the lesson). I used four envelopes labeled Power, Holy Spirit, Salvation and Persecution and place the corresponding verses in the envelopes. Before teaching the lesson ask children who are willing to read Scripture references to take a verse and find it in their Bible using the slip of paper as a book mark so they will be prepared to read their verse when it is time during the Bible lesson.

BIBLE LESSON: A JOURNEY THROUGH ACTS 1-9**Let's turn in our Bibles to Acts 1.**

This morning we are beginning a new journey in our class. We are going to be traveling through the Book of Acts. As we take this trip together we will witness some amazing things. As we study and learn together we will learn how we can live powerful lives like the believers we will be learning about. For the next few weeks we will be reading from chapters 1-9 of Acts and learning about believers in the early church.

Before we begin let's discover who the author of Acts is. Let's turn to Acts 1:1. Does this verse name the author? No, it names who the author was writing to. What is the person's name that the author was writing to? (Theophilus-One who loves God) In order to learn who the author is of this book let's turn to another passage in Scripture that is addressed to Theophilus. (Luke 1:1-4) Do you have a better idea now who the author of Acts is? (Luke) Luke tells us why he wrote the Book of Luke in verse 4. Acts is a sequel to the Book of Luke. How many of you have read a book by an author who wrote more than one book in his/her series. (Have an example to show them. I have read the Left Behind Series by Tim Lahaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. This is the first book in the series (Left Behind) and I also have brought the second in the series (Tribulation Force). Acts is a continuation of the Book of Luke teaching us the events that took place after Jesus returned to heaven.

Does anyone know what kind of job Luke had? (Allow students to answer.) Luke was a doctor. It's very important to back up statements we make about people from the Bible. Does anyone know where we would find that Luke is a doctor? (Colossians 4:14)

When Luke wrote the Book of Acts he didn't write the book in the English language. Does anyone want to guess what language Luke wrote? Luke wrote in Greek. The Greek title for the Book of Acts (Praxeis Apostolon) when translated into English means The Acts of the Apostles. This sequel that Luke has written will show us the works or deeds that the Apostles did as they obeyed Jesus and went into the world sharing the Good News after He returned to Heaven. The Apostles are 12 men chosen by Jesus to take the Gospel to all nations.

Each week as we read and learn from the Book of Acts, Luke will be the one who shares what he has seen and heard. A person who shares what they have seen is called a witness. That word brings us to our memory verse for this morning. This verse is also the key verse for the entire book of Acts.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” –Acts 1:8

When you are on a road trip and start getting hungry what signs do you look for? (Allow students to answer.) As we journey through the Book of Acts, words from this key verse will stand out all along the way. These words will be like road signs we see as we travel together.

Power: What does the word power mean? The Ability to do or act; capability of doing or accomplishing something; The possession of control or command over others; authority; ascendancy (Dictionary.com) Some verses that talk about power in the chapters we will be studying the next 12 weeks are: (Have students with the verses read them as you call them out. Acts 3:12, Acts 4:33, Acts 6:8 and Acts 9:22.) The power found in these verses came from God in the form of the Holy Spirit. That’s our next road sign that we will continually see throughout the Book of Acts.

Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is the 3rd person of the Trinity. The Trinity is made up of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are equally God with different jobs. After Jesus went back to Heaven the Holy Spirit came and empowered the believers to do the work that Jesus told them to do. (Acts 2:38; 4:31; 5:32; 6:5; 9:31) While God the Son, Jesus is in heaven with God the Father, God the Holy Spirit gives power to those who believe in Him. He gives them power to have courage and boldness to share with others the salvation message.

The next road sign we will see is Salvation. Salvation means be saved from your sins. In the book of acts we will see many people believe in the Lord Jesus and be saved. (Acts 2:41, 4:12 and 5:14) There will be an explosion of faith in people because the Apostles obeyed Jesus. As they were empowered by the Holy Spirit they shared the Good News with many people and as a result many were saved from their sins.

As we see many people saved in Acts, we will also see the apostles persecuted for their obedience to Christ.

The final road sign we are going to discuss this morning is Persecution. What does the word persecute mean? To persecute means to harass, or trouble someone with hurtful methods. Some examples we will see in Acts are found in Acts 5:17-18 (Arrested and imprisoned), 7:54-58 (stoned to death), and 8:1. We have an exciting journey before us! Each week as we see how the apostles served the Lord Jesus I pray that we would serve Him more in our own lives. The power that the Holy Spirit gave to the apostles is available to each one of us who has been saved. As we walk with Jesus each day may we see the Holy Spirit’s power working in our lives helping us to be more like Jesus and being obedient to the command He gave us in Acts 1:8.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

A way to review the lesson is to take the arrow signs and turn them face down on the ground. As students volunteer to choose an arrow they play a game like Jeopardy and answer with a question. (Example: A student chooses Luke. They answer and say, “Who is the author of Acts?”)

If you prefer to play another game here are some review questions you may want to use:

1. Who wrote the Book of Acts? (Luke)
2. Who did Luke write the Book of Acts to? (Theophilus)
3. What was Luke’s job? (Doctor)
4. What language did Luke write Acts in? (Greek)
5. When translated into English what is the title of Luke’s Book (Acts of the Apostles)
6. What’s another word for acts? (Works/deeds)
7. What is the key verse for the Book of Acts (Acts 1:8)
8. Name the Third Person of the Trinity. (Holy Spirit)
9. Which part of the Bible is Acts found in? (New Testament)
10. Who can you share the Good News with this week?

WITNESSES OF THE RISEN CHRIST!

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:1-11
Key Verse: 1:8

What do you get excited to tell others about? What do you like to share with others? Have you ever been chosen to share something or speak for a group?

The book of Acts was written by Luke. It continues the story of Jesus and his disciples after Jesus rose from the dead. Acts tells how the work begun by Jesus was carried on by his disciples through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. It tells how the Christian church was formed and how it spread, beginning in Jerusalem (1-7), it spread to all Judea and Samaria (8-12), and to the ends of the earth (13-28). In today's study the risen Jesus appears to his disciples and promises them the gift of the Holy Spirit. He also gives them a command to be his witnesses by the power of the Holy Spirit. Let's learn what it means to be a witness of Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verse 3. What did Jesus do after his suffering and before his ascension? Read verses 4 and 5. What was Jesus' command and promise? What is "the Holy Spirit"? Why did the disciples need the Holy Spirit?

Read verse 6. What was the disciples hope? What was wrong about this? ***Do you ever feel that your hopes and dreams get in the way of God's plan?***

Read verses 7-8. What was God's plan for them? What does it mean to be a witness? Could they do this mission on their own? How would God give them the power to do it? ***How does God give us power to do his work?***

Read verse 9. Why did Jesus leave them instead of staying to help them? (think about verse 8) Read verses 10-11. What was the angel's promise?

Application: Who can you begin witnessing to this week? Do you believe that you can?

GOD'S HEART'S DESIRE IS TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

WITNESSES OF THE RISEN CHRIST!

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

HOW I PUT GOD'S WORD INTO PRACTICE

SUMMARY: WHAT IS THIS PASSAGE ABOUT?

OBSERVATION: WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT GOD IN THIS PASSAGE?

APPLICATION:

*How does the meaning of this passage apply to my life?
What truths should I believe and keep in my heart?
What changes should I personally make in my life?*

PRAYER TOPICS:

GOD'S HEART'S DESIRE IS TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

WITNESSES OF THE RISEN CHRIST!

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Teachers Sheet

Acts 1:1-11

Key Verse: 1:8

- This passage gives us a unique glimpse into the time after Jesus' death and before his ascension that is not found anywhere else. Jesus showed himself to his disciples and many others as seen in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. He gave them instructions, he presented himself to the apostles and gave many convincing proofs, he appeared for 40 days and spoke about the kingdom of God. Then he told them not to leave Jerusalem—which was a very hard command because they were currently terrified hiding in an upper room with the door locked, for disciples of Jesus Jerusalem was the most dangerous place to stay. But they were to wait for the gift the Father promised, which Jesus spoke to them about—see John 14:16,26;16:13-15: The Holy Spirit.

 - The Holy Spirit is somewhat mysterious and may not be really defined in children's minds, so this is a good chance to discuss the work and role of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit never appears as a person, but its work is seen everywhere. In John 3 Jesus described it like the wind, which we cannot see but the effects of which can be seen all around us. So it is with the Holy Spirit. Whenever a person feels the pull to believe, to repent, to do some good thing, feels inspired in a good way, is moved to do the right thing, overcomes temptation, is prompted to pray, receives an answer from God, is prompted to read or accept a verse, feels called to a mission field, is prompted to talk to a person about Jesus or just comfort or help them, understands a passage of scripture, finds words to say when witnessing to others, finds words to say when preaching or defending their faith, finds love for an enemy, forgives miraculously, finds faith in an impossible situation and a multitude of other situations all these are the work of the Holy Spirit. He cannot be seen but he is literally everywhere in the life of faith. What is more having the Spirit is the sign that we are a true believer (Eph 1:13). The Spirit of God in us is all the power of God living inside our little body, therefore it is impossible for a true believer not to change. Hence there is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). For all these reasons and more the Holy Spirit is called the Advocate that is helper and he IS a help indeed.
 - Humanly they were a bunch of terrified nobodies, who had abandoned Jesus at his arrest. They were hiding in an upper room with the door locked, with no idea what to do or how to do it. The task Jesus was giving them was impossible for them. The work God gives to any of us seems too big for us. When God says to our kids, "go share your faith at your school" or "invite your friend to church" they think, "there's no way I can do that, I don't know how" but actually it is the Holy Spirit who does it, not them.
- All the Jews were expecting Jesus to restore the kingdom of Israel (Luke 19:11). From their history, whenever they cried out to God and God raised up a rescuer, the nation was restored. Especially fond in their hearts was king David. They also had the prophecies of the Messiah that said he would rule the nations with an everlasting kingdom, but misunderstood the meaning, and also confused prophecies of his second coming with those of his first. As such, for many Jesus wasn't the Messiah they were looking for. In their worldly dream they didn't want a Messiah like Jesus. However, Jesus' kingdom is not physical but spiritual. We sometimes want an earthly kingdom too, full of only Christians, with perfect laws and perfect morality and we can be in paradise here on earth. But such a kingdom would make us not want to leave this world and we would not want the kingdom. Kids

GOD'S HEART'S DESIRE IS TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

also can get distracted by all the fun of this world and many have said, “I think heaven would be boring...” because they think of how we tell them not to play video games, don’t watch too much TV, spend more time practicing, studying, read your Bible, write your testimony, and they think that this world is much better. They don’t want a kingdom to come, they want to make this world a better place and live here forever. We have to be careful about putting too much hope in this world, that we miss our real destination.

3. Jesus doesn’t rebuke them, but gives them his vision for them. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” They would be witnesses. Witnesses are very powerful. Hearsay is useless in a court but an eye witness is very powerful. Uniquely, the Apostles had actually heard and seen Jesus, because of this and the anointing of the Spirit that opened their mind to the scriptures (Luke 24:45), the Apostles have unique authority to tell what happened, to write the Gospels, to teach the word and interpret scripture as they did in the New Testament. We should know that their witness is absolutely accurate and trustworthy. When someone is a witness to something, they have an obligation to tell others. If we witness a car crash, we have an obligation to stay and tell the police what we saw. If we witnessed a crime we have an obligation to call the police and report it. If we see bullying in school or a kid doing something wrong or dangerous, we have an obligation to tell a teacher about it—it may seem scary to witness because we think something may happen to us, but we have a responsibility. In the same way, if we were in a sinking ship and found the last remaining lifeboat we could not selfishly get in and abandon everyone else, we have to tell everyone there is a way to be saved. As those who know the way to be saved, we have an obligation to be witnesses of what we know, what we have seen and heard. We haven’t seen Jesus in the flesh like the Apostles but we’ve seen lives changed, we’ve seen prayers answered, we seen hope restored, we’ve seen sins overcome and we have a responsibility to spread that news so others can be saved as well. As witnesses we must come forward and not let all our classmates be condemned to hell—we may be the only Christian our classmates ever meet. We don’t need to be experts just be a witness and tell what you know, what you’ve seen and heard. Know that when you witness, it is not just you speaking but the Holy Spirit will help you to have words.
 - As you grow and overcome your fear, you can begin to understand God’s heart. Actually, it is hard for us even to love the kids in our class, but what about our whole school, what about our city, our state, our country, our world. God loves all of them and he really wants to save them, he really wants other people to feel the way he does and go to the ends of the earth. As we begin to grow, we can start to love others and begin to pray to go. When we pray like this, God will reveal where he wants to send us. We must follow the leading of the Spirit in our lives and be willing to obey Jesus’ world mission command.
4. It seems that it would be more effective for Jesus to stay and evangelize the whole world by himself, while we sit back lounging. In actuality, it is God who does the work of reaching souls and saving them but he chooses to work through us. He had to go in order that he may send the Spirit and prepare a place for them see John 16:7, John 14:3. Even though Jesus has left physically however, he is actually always with those who believe in him. What is more in the same way he left, he will come again. However, he will not come as a savior again but as a judge. So we wait in expectation for his return but his return also gives us a strong sense of urgency to spread the message. Jesus will return and at that time it will be too late. How many can we save before it is too late? How many can we witness to? How many can we love and give a good influence to? Jesus’ certain coming should motivate us to tell the world the message of salvation

PRAY FOR GOD'S WISDOM

"They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers."

Acts 1:12-26

Key Verse: 1:14

Have you ever had to make a **tough decision**? Were you **nervous**? Were you **scared** to make the wrong **choice**? How did you **choose**? What happened?

Today's passage teaches us how to pray for God's direction as we serve his work. How much do you pray? Do you pray in the morning? Do you pray during the day time? Do you pray at night? Do you pray quickly? Or do you pray with sincere heart? Prayer is not a grocery list, or wish list that we must present to God for our own benefit. Prayer is our communication with our heavenly Father who loves us, and wants to do his will. Let's learn from the prayer of the first believers and experience God's power, blessing, and victory in our lives and in the life of faith.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verse 12. Why did the disciples go to Jerusalem? (see 1:4) Read verse 13-14. What did they do there? **What is the benefit of joining together in united prayer?**

Read verses 15-17. How did Peter explain what had happened to Judas? What is "Scripture"?

Read verse 20. What problem did God reveal to him in prayer? Read verse 21-22. How did he recommend they solve it? **How did Peter, a simple fisherman, suddenly become a Bible expert and leader?**

Read verse 23. Who was nominated? Read verse 24-26. How did they choose? **When we're faced with really tough decisions, directions, etc. what must we do? How will God reveal his will to us practically?**

Application: What are the difficult things that you can pray for wisdom about? How can you make a lifestyle of asking God for direction?

PRAY FOR GOD'S WISDOM

"They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers."

Teacher Sheet
Acts 1:12-26
Focus Verse: 1:14

- ❖ Jesus taught us where any two of us agree on anything, in his name, it will be done for us. Jesus showed us that united prayer is more powerful than personal prayer. To unite in prayer, we have to all agree. We have to humble ourselves and love one another. We share together and find inspiration and as we get together God gives us wisdom that we could not find on our own. God wants us to be in community in his name here, as it will be in heaven. We need to do this often.
- ❖ In prayer, God speaks in many ways. Often, he brings a verse to mind as he did with Peter (which is why it is good to have them hidden away in our heart). Sometimes he speaks directly. Many kids experience that he gives dreams. One of the most clear ways he gives us direction is opening and shutting doors. We don't need to sit around and wait for an answer, Jesus said that whatever we've asked for in prayer believe you have received it; so, we step out in faith and try one way or another and he will make it clear to us which way to go through success and failure.
- ❖ One of the great worries of the kids is that they will screw up and choose the wrong way and be doomed for not choosing God's way. If they have prayed in faith and are truly surrendered to God, God will make it impossible for them to go the wrong way. But if he leaves several doors open, then they should just go and God will bless the way they take. In the casting of the lots, really God could have blessed either man they chose, it doesn't really matter. If they choose one High school or another, either could be God's will and he will bless wherever they go—they cannot choose wrong before a sovereign God.

ACTIVITY: JOIN TOGETHER IN PRAYER

Have the entire class each share their prayer topics that they have had for a long time or that are urgent. Then pray all together in one voice for each of them.

Make a prayer box for the class. Have each write down their prayer topic for the week and their name and put them in each week. Once a month open the box and see if God has answered.

GOD SENDS THE HOLY SPIRIT TO DO HIS WORK

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

Acts 2:1-13

Key Verse: 2:4

What special **abilities or skills** do you have? How did you get these **skills**?
How long did it take? How did it feel to be able to do something **special**?

Jesus promised the Apostles that he would send the Holy Spirit to them and that they would be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. This passage tells us about the day the Holy Spirit came as Jesus had promised. Many wonders occurred that day. Let's think about that day and how God began to use his disciples as his witnesses. God sends the Holy Spirit to us to do his work. As we review this passage let's pray that the Holy Spirit work may also in us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verses 2-4. Describe what happened as the disciples were together that day. What did the Holy Spirit enable them to do?

Read verse 5. Who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Pentecost (refer to a map looking at 9-11)? How was the Holy Spirit helping them to carry out their mission?

Read verses 6-8. What did the people hear when each listened to the Apostles? Read verse 11. What were the Apostles declaring? How was this possible?

Think back to Jesus' ascension, what was their mission from Jesus (Acts 1:8)? Could they do this impossible mission on their own? Now with the Holy Spirit was it possible to do this mission?

Application: *How can you receive the Holy Spirit? Why do you need to?*

GOD SENDS THE HOLY SPIRIT TO DO HIS WORK

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

Teachers Sheet

Acts 2:1-13

Key Verse: 2:4

❖ A

JESUS IS LORD AND CHRIST

"This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him."

Acts 2:13-42
Key Verse: 2:23,24

Do you like **public speaking**? Have you ever given a **speech** before? Were you **scared**? Were you **excited**? Are you good at **convincing** others of your point?

This passage contains Peter's message to the crowds that were gathered at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. His message can be divided into two parts. First he explains that what was happening was a fulfillment of Scripture. Second he spoke about Jesus; his death and resurrection and ascension into heaven. With the help of the Holy Spirit, Peter encouraged others to believe in Jesus. Peter wanted to help them have the right view of God, and Jesus. Let's learn from Peter's message today.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verses 16-21 and 33. How did Peter explain the amazing behavior of the Apostles? How did Peter become such a Bible scholar and so brave (look at Luke 24:45 and John 14:26)? **What happens when you receive the Holy Spirit?**

Read verses 22-23. Who is responsible for the death of Jesus? Read verse 24. How did God show his power and love to Jesus? **Why did Jesus die? Why did God raise him to life?**

Read verses 32-33. Where is Jesus now? Read 36-37. How did the people respond?

Read verse 38. What must we and all sinners, who crucified Jesus by our sins, do to be saved? Read verse 41. How many were saved that day?

Application: What is your response to Peter's message? Do you want the gift of the Holy Spirit?

GOD WILL GIVE US THE HOLY SPIRIT TO DO GREAT THINGS FOR HIM

JESUS IS LORD AND CHRIST

"This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him."

Acts 2:13-42
Key Verse: 2:23,24

The focus of this passage should be helping children to accept that they are personally responsible for the death of Jesus because of their sins. At some point in the Bible study ask them this: "If you lived in the time of Jesus and somehow there was a horrible disease that killed everyone on earth except for our class, would Jesus still die on the cross just for us? Yes." Then ask: "Do you want your sins forgiven? Yes. Do you want to go to hell? No. Do you want to be able to go to heaven? Yes. What is the only way you can have your sins forgiven and go to God's kingdom? If Jesus dies on the cross for you. Then what would our class have to do to Jesus to be forgiven and go the kingdom of God? We would have to whip him, flog him, press the crown of thorns into his head, beat him half to death, make him carry his cross, nail him to it with nine inch long nails and raise him up into the air on it, give him a sponge with wine-vinegar, mock him, spit on him, and wait for him to die and then pierce his side, take him down and bury him in Joseph's tomb, seal it and leave him there." All this is necessary for our salvation because all of it is in scripture. We wouldn't want to do it, but unless we do it, we could not be saved. Consider it, it wasn't the nails that held Jesus to the cross but it was our sin and his love. The only reason all that suffering was necessary was because WE sinned and can't stop sinning. We should be cut to the heart, repent and love Jesus with all our heart. We must be clear that saying we believe and being baptized is not NECESSARILY enough, only we know in our hearts if we TRULY REPENTED.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read verses 16-21 and 33. How did Peter explain the amazing behavior of the Apostles? How did Peter become such a Bible scholar and so brave (look at Luke 24:45 and John 14:26)? **What happens when you receive the Holy Spirit?**
 - Amazingly, Peter the simple fisherman began to quote from Joel 2:28-32. In it, beginning in verse 12 God tells the people to repent and rend their hearts then, beginning in verse 18, God said he would have mercy on them and never again would they be shamed. Beginning in verse 28 he then says that after that time he would pour out his Spirit on all people. The coming of Jesus is God's mercy and great blessing. We can accept Jesus when we repent and rend our hearts. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a new thing in God's history. There were people filled with the Spirit of God in the OT, like Saul for a time, Elijah, Elisha (who asked for a double portion of the Spirit). But for it to be poured out forever on all people is something new. John the Baptist had told the people again and again that the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire but they had never really believed or understood this.
 - Before Jesus had ascended, he breathed on them, that is the giving of the Spirit and it says that he opened their minds to understand all the scriptures. Even later on, the Pharisees took note that these were uneducated blue collar men, even they could not explain this sudden change. The sudden change is the greatest proof of the resurrection of Jesus and the new life through the Spirit in Jesus.
 - You are changed. Your heart becomes sensitive to sin. God gives you direction and inspiration in prayer. You have words to speak, courage to tell others, and power to do God's work.

GOD WILL GIVE US THE HOLY SPIRIT TO DO GREAT THINGS FOR HIM

2. Read verses 22-23. Who is responsible for the death of Jesus? ***Why must we take personal responsibility?***
Read verse 24. How did God show his power and love to Jesus? ***Why did Jesus die? Why did God raise him to life?***
 - We are. Those who sin, is the entire human race. Directly the Pharisees were responsible, but all those who allowed it to happen are also responsible.
 - [See intro]
 - God raised him from the dead.
 - Jesus died to save us from our sins.
 - Jesus was raised to give us victory over death and prove that he was the Messiah.

3. Read verses 32-33. Where is Jesus now? Read verses 36-37. How did the people respond?
 - Exalted to the right hand of God
 - The people realized that they had killed the Messiah, the author of life, the son of God who is now exalted to the right hand of God. Surely, they realized that they were both judged at this moment and were terrified and also sorry and repented. It says they were cut to the heart and asked “Brothers, what shall we do?”

4. Read verse 38. What must we and all sinners, who crucified Jesus by our sins, do to be saved? Read verse 40. Why must we separate ourselves from the sinful world to be saved? Read verse 41. How many were saved that day? ***What is your response to Peter’s message?***
 - We must first of all repent. That doesn’t just mean say “I’m sorry” but actually turn your life away from those things and never do them again. In this same way we must be baptized. This is similar to John’s baptism but not the same. It is a symbol of putting the old self to death and rising with Christ. Christian baptism isn’t just repentance like John’s baptism but accepting Jesus as my Lord and Savior and deciding to live a new life in him.
 - Repentance must be sincere. Some think they are saved but their life shows no evidence of it. To be saved, we must actually separate ourselves from the sinful world.
 - 3 thousand

GREAT THINGS HAPPEN IN THE NAME OF JESUS

"Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.'"

Acts 3:1-10

Key Verse: 3:6

Is there something you really want badly? Is it fame, money, electronics, friends, something else? What things has God given you? Which would you rather have?

In this passage, Peter and John meet a beggar. The beggar wanted silver and gold, but Peter wanted to give him something better. Peter healed him in the name of Jesus. When we do things in the name of Jesus, God is with us. Let's learn today how to do everything in the name of Jesus, and be used to do great things for God!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verse 1. Where were Peter and John going? ***What kind of jobs did Peter and John have before they started following Jesus? How had their lives changed?***

Read verse 2-3. Who was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful? What did he ask for from Peter and John? ***How could silver and gold help this beggar?***

Read verses 4-5. What did the man expect from Peter and John? Read verses 6-7. What did Peter give him instead? ***Why is Jesus a far better gift?***

Read verse 8. What happened to the man? Read verses 9-10. How did the people who saw the crippled man walking respond?

Application: How can you give others the name of Jesus this week?

GREAT THINGS HAPPEN IN THE NAME OF JESUS

"Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.'"

Teachers Sheet

Acts 3:1-10

Key Verse: 3:6

Read verse 1. Where were Peter and John going? **What kind of jobs did Peter and John have before they started following Jesus? How had their lives changed?**

Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer.

Peter and John were fishermen but they were no longer working for food that spoils but for the food that endures to eternal life (Jn 6:27-29). They were no longer interested in making money but they wanted to live for God and his good purpose. Of course we need to make money, we need to go to school, we need to get into a good college and get a good career but when it is time to seek God, we need to give him priority.

Read verse 2-3. Who was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful? What did he ask for from Peter and John? **How could silver and gold help this beggar?**

A man who was lame from birth was being carried to the gate.

He asked them for money

For that day or the next maybe he could eat. It seems that to eat is the number one pressing need of all people we think that what we really need to worry about is getting money to eat and live.

Read verses 4-5. What did the man expect from Peter and John? Read verses 6-7. What did Peter give him instead? **Why is Jesus a far better gift?**

He gave them his attention expecting to get some money

Silver and gold we don't have but what we do have we give you in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth be healed.

Jesus helps us for our whole life not just for the day. Eternal life is far more important than food.

Read verse 8. What happened to the man? Read verses 9-10. How did the people who saw the crippled man walking respond? **How can you give others the name of Jesus this week?**

He was immediately healed he jumped to his feet and started jumping and praising God.

They were filled with wonder and amazement

HAVE FAITH IN JESUS' NAME

"By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see."

Acts 3:11-26
Key Verse: 3:16

What are the **names** of some famous people you like to watch or read about (athletes, singers, actors, leaders)? How do you feel when you hear that **name**? What about your own **name** what do people think when they hear it?

After Peter healed a crippled beggar by the temple gates, many people in Jerusalem were astonished and filled with wonder. These were the same people who had asked Pilate to have Jesus crucified. Peter spoke to them and explained how Jesus had given him the power to heal the man. God's plan was to save all people from the power of sin through Jesus starting with the Jews in Jerusalem. (Acts 1:8)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verse 11. What had Peter and John done for one lame beggar? Read verse 12. What did all the people think about Peter and John? Read verses 13a and 16. How had he actually been healed?

Read verses 13b-15. Who did Peter say was responsible for Jesus' death? ***How are we also responsible?*** Read 15 again. How did God rescue Jesus?

Read verse 16. What does it mean to have faith in the name of Jesus? What do you learn about the power of Jesus' name? ***What are other names that people hope will save them?***

Read verse 19. How can we accept Jesus' name? Read verses 22-23. Why must we have faith in Jesus' name?

Application: How can we practically make Jesus' name first in our heart?

HAVE FAITH IN JESUS' NAME

"By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see."

Acts 3:11-26
Key Verse: 3:16

HOW TO STAND UNDER TRIAL

"But Peter and John replied, 'Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.'"

Acts 4:1-22

Key Verse: 4:19-20

Have you ever been **afraid**? Describe a time when you were **scared**? How did you feel? Have you ever **stood up** for someone? How did it feel? How did you get the **courage**?

Have you ever been afraid in your life? In this passage, Peter and John were brought before the Sanhedrin because they healed a crippled man by the power of God. When they healed him, many people were moved to follow Jesus. However, the religious leaders did not like it. They persecuted Peter and John, and threatened them. Peter and John, filled with the Holy Spirit were not afraid. When we have the Holy Spirit, no one can and intimidate us and we can keep on doing God's work.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verses 1-3. How were Peter and John persecuted for their faith in Jesus? Read verse 4. What effect did that persecution have on the people?

Read Verses 5-7. Why did the religious leaders want to stop the Christian ministry that was growing? **Why do people want to stop Christians today?**

Read verses 8. How did Peter receive courage and wisdom to respond under such pressure? Why wasn't he scared or confused (see also Matthew 10:18-20)? **What can we do when we are challenged or persecuted?**

Read verses 10-12. What did the Holy Spirit teach about Jesus? Read verse 13 and What did the religious leaders realize? Read verses 18-22. Why couldn't they do anything?

Application: How can we turn persecution into an opportunity to reveal God and do great things?

WHEN WE HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT, WE CAN OVERCOME

HOW TO STAND UNDER TRIAL

"But Peter and John replied, 'Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.'"

Acts 4:1-22

Key Verse: 4:19-20

WHEN WE HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT, WE CAN OVERCOME

GOD GIVES US THE POWER TO SPEAK BOLDLY

"After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly."

Acts 4:23-41

Key Verse: 4:31

Have you ever tried to convince others of your point? Was it at school or with your friends or maybe your parents? Was it easy to convince others? How did it feel? Did you convince them?

Peter and John overcame the persecution of the religious leaders by the power of the Holy Spirit. Next they went and reported all that had happened to them to God's people. The people began to pray together and asked God to continue to help them. They accepted God's sovereignty and believed that God was with them. Do you believe that God is Sovereign?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verse 23. When they were released, what did Peter and John do? ***Why is it so important to pray in difficult times?***

Read verses 25-26. What did they learn from Psalm 2:1-2? Read verses 27-28. How was Psalm 2:1,2 fulfilled? Read verses 29-30. What was their prayer topic? Read verse 31. What happened after they had finished praying? ***How can we preach the word when people are against us? (31)***

Read verse 32-33. How was the fellowship of believers described? (32a) How did they view their possessions? (32b) What did they do daily? (33) How did they survive and eat? (34-37)

Can we preach the word boldly today? Can we overcome the enemies of the Gospel?

Application: How can you boldly preach the word to your friends without shame or fear?

GOD WORKED IN THEM BECAUSE THEY ACCEPTED HIS SOVEREIGNTY

GOD GIVES US THE POWER TO SPEAK BOLDLY

"After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly."

Teachers Sheet

Acts 4:23-41

Key Verse: 4:31

GOD WORKED IN THEM BECAUSE THEY ACCEPTED HIS SOVEREIGNTY

LIVE FOR GOD NOT PEOPLE

"Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number."

Acts 5:1-16
Key Verse: 5:14

Have you ever given to a charity? Or a special cause? Why did you do it? How did it make you feel? Did you get any recognition for it?

The church was growing and there was a spirit of love and sharing amongst the new believers. At the same time there were two people, Ananias and Sapphira who didn't share the same spirit of sacrifice and who were not honest. They were part of the church, but they were not sincere. God punished them. In spite of this sad story the church grew and God continued to bless many through the apostles.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read 4:32-37. How and why did the first Christians give? Read verses 1-2. What did Ananias and Sapphira do with a piece of property they sold?

Read verses 3-4. What did Peter say to Ananias? How did he know that Ananias had lied about keeping some of the money for himself? Read verses 5-6. What happened to Ananias? Read verses 7-8. When Sapphira came in what did Peter ask her? Read verses 9-10. What happened to her?

Were the Christians required to sell their land? Why did Ananias and Sapphira sell their land and lie? Read verse 11-16. What effect did this event have on the people? Why did God judge this one couple so severely compared to others?

What do we learn about being fake Christians? or doing service to God for selfish reasons?

Application: What can you do to encourage the church and live out your faith this week?

LIVE FOR GOD NOT PEOPLE

*"Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed
in the Lord and were added to their number."*

Acts 5:1-16
Key Verse: 5:14

OVERCOME OUR FEARS AND GIVE THE MESSAGE OF LIFE

WHY WE MUST BE THANKFUL

"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

What is the biggest thing you ever did to say thanks to someone? Why were you so thankful? What was their response? How did it make you feel?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verse 16. How can we always be "joyful?" What kinds of joy are there in the world? What kind of joy was Paul talking about here?

Read verse 17. What does it mean to "pray continually?" What kind of prayer is this? What happens when we do so?

Read verse 18. Why should we give thanks in ALL circumstances (All the time no matter what)? What happens when we do not thank God?

What if something bad happens to us, can we be thankful? How were the Pilgrims thankful? What were they thankful for?

Why is it important to thank God? What are you thankful for this thanksgiving?

Application: List your thanksgiving topics as many as you can think of. Especially find as many complaining topics as you can and find a way to give thanks for them from God's perspective by faith.

WHY WE MUST BE THANKFUL.

*“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances,
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

Teachers Sheet
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

- ❖ Why should we be “joyful” always? (What is Joy [as opposed to happy feelings] and what do we always have to be Joyful about?)
- ❖ Why should we always “pray?” (Pray for what? And why non-stop?)
- ❖ How can we “give thanks” always? (Good times and Bad regardless of our circumstances)

STAND AND TELL THE MESSAGE OF NEW LIFE!

"Go, stand in the temple courts,' he said, 'and tell the people all about this new life.'"

Acts 5:17-42

Key Verse: 5:20

What is the hardest thing you ever had to do? Why was it hard? How did you feel when you had to do it?

In this passage, the apostles were again harassed by the religious leaders. They were put in jail, but God sent an angel to free them. The angel told them to keep on preaching. The religious leaders were very angry with them, but the apostles had no fear, even though they were flogged! From their example, we can learn the secret to overcoming our fears and about how to give the message of new life to others. Are you afraid of telling others about Jesus? Let's listen to God's word, and give the message of new life to those around us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verses 19-20. Why were the Apostles arrested? How did they get out of jail? What did God tell them to do? **Why might this be difficult for some people to do? Why was it not difficult for the Apostles?**

Read verses 27-29. When the religious leaders rebuked them, how did the Apostles answer? **What are some things people are fearful about? What do the Apostles teach us about how to get over fear?**

Read verses 33-39. What did Gamaliel teach them about struggling against people? Read verse 40. How were the apostles punished and what were they commanded?

Read verse 41. Why were the apostles rejoicing for being arrested and flogged? Read verse 42. Why didn't they obey what they were commanded?

Application: What can you do when you are persecuted and how should you react to persecution?

STAND AND TELL THE MESSAGE OF NEW LIFE!

"Go, stand in the temple courts,' he said, 'and tell the people all about this new life."

Teachers Sheet

Acts 5:17-42

Key Verse: 5:20

OVERCOME OUR FEARS AND GIVE THE MESSAGE OF LIFE

WE MUST OBEY GOD NOT MAN - CHRISTIAN SCENARIOS

1. You are starting biology in science and the teacher tells the class you will be studying the “fact of evolution.” She says that evolution is supported by so much evidence and factual observation that it is accepted by the scientific community as indisputable fact. She then begins a well prepared speech with many facts that support evolution and everyone in the class is really convinced by her. She then says that you will hear Christians telling you that evolution is just a guess and not a fact, that God created everything, but there is no proof, no facts and no scientist would believe this. These people are trying to confuse and mislead you, evolution is a fact. She then goes on to say that even if you believe something different you cannot talk about it because this is a science class and anyone trying to argue it will get a detention and anyone who doesn't learn the material will fail. What will you do?
2. You are playing with your best friend who you've known for years. You've always done everything together and you really enjoy being with them. Your friend has helped you out many times when you were in trouble or had problems and you totally trust them. While you are sitting there, your friend asks if they can tell you a really big secret without you judging them. You, of course, agree and then your friend tells you they are gay. What will you do?
3. You're doing really bad in one of your classes but one kid (of the opposite gender) is the top student in the class and offers to tutor you. They invite you over to their house and when you get there, no one is home, they invite you in ready to study. What will you do?
4. You're with friends when they start teasing an unpopular kid, taking his things and calling him names. If you stick up for him, the group could turn on you. You start to slip away, but someone throws you the boy's backpack. What will you do?
5. You're in the middle of an intense video game. Just a few more points and you'll beat your high score. You hear Dad say it's time to turn off the game. The game's loud, so it would be easy to pretend you didn't hear. That way, you could finish the game. What will you do?
6. Some of your friends have started using bad language because it makes them feel cool. Each day you hear words you know your parents don't like. Your friends even use the names of God and Jesus as if they were just bad words, and they call you a baby because you won't talk like them. What will you do?
7. You heard your best friend and some others lying to the principal about who started a fight. You didn't see the fight, but your friend told you another good friend of yours started it. Now an innocent person has been blamed and will be suspended from school. What will you do?
8. You're playing with two good friends. They both want to be your best friend. You think you like one friend better. That friend says, "Let's go play by ourselves." You know your other friend's feelings will be hurt if she's left out. What will you do?
9. There's a new kid at school who hardly talks and seems to look at the ground a lot. The other kids laugh at him, and they expect you to laugh with them. You know this child needs a friend, but if you become his friend, the other kids might not be your friends anymore. What will you do?
10. Your friend has invited you over for a fun afternoon doing all your favorite things. You have your parents' permission to go, but you have to get your homework done first. The assignment isn't hard, but it would take time to do well. You could just tell your parents you did the work even though you didn't. They'll never know. What will you do?

STEPHEN, A MAN FULL OF FAITH, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit"

Acts 6:1-15

Key Verse: 6:5b

What are your responsibilities at home? Chores? Babysitting? Do you get paid or is it voluntary? Do you like having responsibility?

In this passage a problem arises in the church about the distribution of food to the poor. The apostles handled this problem wisely by choosing seven men and turning this responsibility over to them. The church continued to grow, but soon it faced persecution again. Stephen who was a man of God's grace, spoke powerfully and did many miracles amongst the people. Then some Jews became jealous of him and had him arrested. They brought him before the Sanhedrin and accused him falsely. Stephen however was not afraid. He stood strong. Today let's learn from Stephen's faith

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verses 1-4. As the church got bigger what problem arose and how did the 12 propose to solve it? Why did they want men full of the Spirit and wisdom rather than talented or skilled men? ***What is really necessary to do God's work?*** Read verse 7. What happened to the church after the problem was solved?

Read verse 5 and 8. Who is Stephen? Read verse 9. Why did people oppose him? Read verse 10. How did God help Stephen? ***What can we learn about how to do God's work?***

Read verse 11. When they couldn't defeat Stephen's arguments, what did the enemies do? Read verse 12-14. How did they falsely accuse him? What did they do to him? How did they lie?

Read verse 15. Even though he was treated so unfairly, what did they notice about Stephen? What does it mean? How could he be so strong when people opposed him and falsely accuse him?

Application: How can you grow in the Spirit and wisdom to do God's work?

LEARN THE KIND OF FAITH THAT GOD IS PLEASED WITH

STEPHEN, A MAN FULL OF FAITH, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit"

Acts 6:1-15

Key Verse: 6:5b

LEARN THE KIND OF FAITH THAT GOD IS PLEASED WITH

GOD IS WITH HIS PEOPLE

“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit!”

Acts 7:1-53

Key Verse: 7:51

Are there certain things you are very picky about? Have you ever been in a situation where you refused to change your mind when you knew you were wrong?

Today’s passage is the speech Stephen gave at the Sanhedrin when he was falsely accused of blasphemy. When asked if the charges against him were true, Stephen gave his accusers the gospel message in context of God’s history. He showed them how God used great men in history and used the temple which they accused him of speaking against. He taught them that God cannot be confined to a building. He hoped they would repent. Let’s learn today about how great our God is and put him at the first place in our hearts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verse 1. What were the charges against Stephen and what would be the punishment (see 6:11, 13-14)? Why did they make such a big deal about the law and the temple?

What command and promise did God give to Abraham (2-3)? How did he show amazing faith against many challenges (4-8)? How did the Israelites reject Joseph and how did God use him (9-16)?

How did God rescue and use Moses for his good purpose (17-25)? How did the Israelites reject him (26-29)? How did God call Moses and rescue his people (30-38)? How did the Israelites continue to reject Moses and God (39-43)?

How did the Israelites receive the temple (44-47)? What was more important than the temple (48-50)?

Read verse 51-53. How did Stephen rebuke them about their attitude toward God, his word and God’s servants, especially the Messiah? **What is the purpose of church and reading the Bible?**

Application: How can we avoid the mistake of the Jews and come to know the Living God?

DO YOU HAVE GOD’S PROMISE?

GOD IS WITH HIS PEOPLE

*“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised.
You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit!”*

Acts 7:1-53
Key Verse: 7:51

DO YOU HAVE GOD'S PROMISE?

IMMANUEL, GOD IS WITH US

"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means 'God with us')."

Matthew 1:18-25

Key Verse: 1:23

Did you ever have your plans interrupted? How did it feel? What did you do? How hard is it to give up what you want?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Who was Joseph? Who was Mary? What do you think they hoped and dreamed for in their married life? What happened to change that dream? Read verse 19. When Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant, what did he decide to do? Read verse 20-24. How did the angel change Joseph's mind?

Read verses 21-23 again. What does the name "Jesus" mean? What was God's plan for Jesus, Mary, and Joseph's family? Why is following God's plan for our lives a blessing and joy? How did God turn Joseph's sadness to joy?

What does it mean that God is "with us?" Why is Jesus the best gift to us? How has he saved people from their sins? How did he save you?

Read verse 24-25. What did Joseph do after he woke up? How was Joseph different after finding out about Jesus?

Application: How can we be different after finding out Jesus in our lives?

GOD USED JOSEPH AND MARY TO DO HIS AMAZING WORK

IMMANUEL, GOD IS WITH US

"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means 'God with us')."

Matthew 1:18-25

Key Verse: 1:23

GOD USED JOSEPH AND MARY TO DO HIS AMAZING WORK

A DECISION THAT PLEASURES GOD

"But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way."

Daniel 1:8

Did you make any New Year's resolutions last year? How long did it take for you to forget it or break it? Why is it hard to keep our resolutions?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verses 1-4. Why did God allow Judah to be conquered and taken as slaves? What did the king of Babylon select some young men of Judah for?

Read verses 5-7. Why did he give them food from his table? Why did the king change their names? ***In what ways has the world tried to tempt you and change your name?***

Read verses 8-16. What did Daniel decide to do? Why would it be hard for Daniel to keep this decision? Why did Daniel's decision please God? ***Why is it important to make decisions that please God in our lives? Did you make good decisions this year, or bad ones?***

Read Verses 17-21. How did God help these four men? ***What will happen when we decide to please God with our lives?***

Application: How can you start small and make small decisions to please God this new year?

A DECISION THAT PLEASURES GOD

"But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way."

HOW I PUT GOD'S WORD INTO PRACTICE

SUMMARY: WHAT IS THIS PASSAGE ABOUT?

OBSERVATION: WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT GOD IN THIS PASSAGE?

APPLICATION:

*How does the meaning of this passage apply to my life?
What truths should I believe and keep in my heart?
What changes should I personally make in my life?*

PRAYER TOPICS:

A DECISION THAT PLEASURES GOD

"But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way."

Teachers Sheet
Daniel 1:8

What to Focus On:

- ✓ What does being faithful mean?
- ✓ What does it mean to make a decision?
- ✓ Why did Daniel's decision please God? What is your decision to God this year?

THE CHURCH IS SCATTERED AND THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED

"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went."

Acts 7:54-8:8

Key Verse: 8: 4

Has something bad ever happened in your life that turned out for good? Did you ever feel that actually the bad things that happened were God's good plan for you? How did it make you feel?

The death of Stephen was the beginning of great persecution of the church. Saul persecuted the church and the believers were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. In this lesson Philip preaches the kingdom of God to the people in a Samaritan city and they believe. God began to spread the gospel to the Gentiles through Philip's ministry. Let's learn what God's people should do in times of persecution and how God works when his word is preached.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

On the day of Stephen's death what happened to the church at Jerusalem (1b)?

Who was Saul (8:1a, 7:58)? What did Saul do and how bad was it (3)? **Why did Saul try to destroy the church after Stephen's death?**

What did those who were scattered do wherever they went (4)? **What was God's purpose in allowing the persecution?**

Who was Philip and how had he helped the church (5, Acts 6:5)? Where did Philip go and why was this so amazing (5; Jn 4:9; Ac 1:8)? How did God help Philip and what was the response (6-8)? **What can you learn here about how important world mission is to God? About how God works?**

Application: How is God challenging you to get out of your comfy life and begin to witness to others?

THE CHURCH IS SCATTERED AND THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED

"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went."

HOW I PUT GOD'S WORD INTO PRACTICE

SUMMARY: WHAT IS THIS PASSAGE ABOUT?

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APPLICATION:

*How does the meaning of this passage apply to my life?
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PRAYER TOPICS:

THE CHURCH IS SCATTERED AND THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED

"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went."

Acts 7:54-8:8

Key Verse: 8: 4

GOD USES EVERYTHING FOR HIS PURPOSE

BELIEVE IN GOD WITH A RIGHT HEART

"But when they believed Philip he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

Acts 8:9-25

Key Verse: 8:12

Have you ever met someone who tried to help but got in the way? How did you respond? Have you ever gotten in someone's way like this? How did you feel?

The gospel was exploding out into many places especially a great work began in Samaria an area that had formerly been bitter enemies of the Jews. As many came to believe there were also those who believed with wrong motives. There are always those who believe or pretend to believe for the wrong reasons, but regardless, the gospel is preached and the kingdom spreads.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Who was Simon and why did people follow him (9-11)? What did they do when they heard about the kingdom of God (12)? How did Simon respond to Philip's preaching (13)? **What do you learn here about the power of God through Philip's preaching?**

Who came to help the new believers in Samaria?(14) What did they do for them? (15-17)

What did Simon request of the apostles (18,19)? How did Peter rebuke him (20-23)? **What was wrong with Simon's faith (21,23; see also 13b)? How can we have a right heart before God?**

Despite this, where did Peter and John go after spending time helping the people in this city (25)? How was this a fulfillment of Jesus' command (Ac 1:8)? **What can we learn from the ministry in Samaria?**

Application: Do you have a right heart or are there wrong motives and sin you need to repent of?

BELIEVE IN GOD WITH A RIGHT HEART

"But when they believed Philip he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

Acts 8:9-25

Key Verse: 8:12

GOD BEGAN TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN

"Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus."

Acts 8:26-40

Key Verse: 8:35

Have you ever been able to explain something about Jesus or the Bible to others? How did it feel? How did God help you in that situation?

From Samaria God sent Philip south. On the way Philip met an Ethiopian man who was reading the Bible but he didn't understand it. He didn't know anything about Jesus. The Spirit led Philip to this man and he helped the man to understand the Bible and told him the good news about Jesus. In this passage we can learn how God uses his servants as his witnesses to all kinds of people to bring them the good news of Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verses 26-28. Where did an angel of the Lord direct Philip to go (26)? Who did Philip meet and where had he been (27-28)? What did the Spirit tell Philip to do (29)?

What was the Ethiopian reading (30a)? How did Philip make a relationship with the man (30b-31)?

What passage was the Ethiopian reading and who is it about (32-33)? What did the eunuch want to know (34)? How did Philip help him (35)? **What can you learn here from Philip who helped this man?**

What effect did the Bible study have on the Ethiopian (36)? What did Philip do (38)? What happened after the eunuch was baptized (39)? **How did this event change this man's life?**

Think about how God used Philip as a missionary for an Ethiopian man. Where did Philip go after this (40)? What can you learn in this passage about how the gospel is spread to all kinds of people(26,29)?

Application: Where is the Spirit leading you to go and who does he want you to preach to?

THE SPIRIT WANTS TO HELP US PREACH THE GOSPEL

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN

"Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus."

Acts 8:26-40

Key Verse: 8:35

THE SPIRIT WANTS TO HELP US PREACH THE GOSPEL.

GOD CHANGES SAUL INTO A MAN OF GOD

"He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'"

Acts 9:1-19a

Key Verse: 9:4

Have you ever been in a situation where you deserved one thing but were forgiven or given something much less? How did you feel? What effect did that have on you?

Today we want to learn about Saul's conversion. Jesus met him as he was on his way to Damascus to arrest believers. Jesus spoke to him and Saul was changed into a man whom God used greatly in pioneering many gentile churches. Let's think about Jesus' grace to Saul and how it changed his life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 7:58-8:1. What kind of person was Saul (Ac 22:4-5; 26:9-11; Gal 1:13-14; Php 3:5-6)? Why was Saul on his way to Damascus (1,2)? **Why did he persecute Christians so much?**

What happened to Saul as he went to Damascus (3-4)? What did Jesus ask Saul? What did Saul ask and how did Jesus respond (5)? **How do you think Saul felt (9)?**

Where did Jesus tell Saul to go and what had happened to him? (6-9) Who was Ananias? (10) How did the Lord instruct him to help Saul (11-12)? Why did he hesitate (13-14)?

What was Jesus' mission for Saul (15-16)? **What does this tell you about why Jesus saved Saul?**

How did Ananias help Saul?(17-19) ? What did Saul do (18b)? **What do you learn in this passage about God's grace to Saul?**

Application: What is the grace that God has had on you and for what purpose?

GOD ALSO CALLS YOU FOR AN IMPORTANT PURPOSE

GOD CHANGES SAUL INTO A MAN OF GOD

"He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'"

HOW I PUT GOD'S WORD INTO PRACTICE

SUMMARY: WHAT IS THIS PASSAGE ABOUT?

OBSERVATION: WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT GOD IN THIS PASSAGE?

APPLICATION:

How does the meaning of this passage apply to my life?

What truths should I believe and keep in my heart?

What changes should I personally make in my life?

PRAYER TOPICS:

GOD ALSO CALLS YOU FOR AN IMPORTANT PURPOSE

GOD CHANGES SAUL INTO A MAN OF GOD

"He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'"

Acts 9:1-19a
Key Verse: 9:4

GOD ALSO CALLS YOU FOR AN IMPORTANT PURPOSE

NO FEAR IN JESUS!

"Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ."

Acts 9:19b-31
Key Verse: 9:22

What are you afraid of? Do you have any phobias? Why are you afraid of these things? Have you ever overcome a fear? How?

Today we want to learn what Saul did after he met the Resurrected Jesus. He was a changed person. Many people were amazed by his teaching and change. However others wanted to kill him. Despite this, he was not fearful. He knew God was with him and continued to preach about Jesus. God miraculously saved him every time someone wanted to kill him. God wanted to use Saul for a great mission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles of his time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What did Saul do after 'several days' in Damascus (19b-20)? Why were those who listened to him so surprised (21)?

Read verse 22. How powerful was his teaching? How could he do this after only several days (Read Galatians 1:11-17)? What was the result of his powerful teaching (23)? How did he escape (24-25)?

Why was it hard for the Christians in Jerusalem to accept Saul (26)? Who helped him (27)? What do you know about Barnabas (see 4:36,37)?

Who did Saul stay with and what did he do while he was in Jerusalem (28-29; Read Galatians 1:18-19)? Why did they again try to kill him? How did the believers help him (30)?

How does Paul immediate conversion and powerful preaching challenge us? Where does the knowledge and authority to teach about Jesus come from?

Application: Are you on fire to tell others about Jesus? Why or Why not? How can you be?

NO FEAR IN JESUS!

"Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ."

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PRAYER TOPICS:

NO FEAR IN JESUS!

"Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ."

Teacher sheet
Acts 9:19b-31
Key Verse: 9:22

- ❖ The purpose of this Bible study is to help them see the amazing total transformation of Paul's life immediately after accepting Christ. Many people take years to overcome doubts and fears and tell even one person about Jesus—some never do. Paul preached the next day, powerfully! Not only that but he 'PROVED' that Jesus is the Son of God. That kind of knowledge and courage does not come from man or from more Bible study but as Paul reveals in Galatians, from the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ It should be noted that between verses 22 and 23 Paul spends 3 years in Arabia, presumably praying and meditating on who Jesus is and preparing himself to teach about him. This is where Paul does take time to prepare himself and learn. Just as Jesus' disciples were trained for 3 years and then sent out, so also Paul was trained by the Holy Spirit for 3 years and then we see that his preaching upon returning was so powerful that they wanted to kill him and he had to be snuck out of the city because he shook Satan's stronghold there so powerfully.
- ❖ Our kids think they cannot tell anyone about Jesus, that somehow they are lacking and it will take many years before they can really do anything for Jesus and so they hide. However, after just several days Paul was so amazed by the grace of Jesus and his calling that he couldn't wait. Then as a good Bible student he learned more, but he never stopped preaching and serving Christ. May we all learn to overcome fear (and excuses) and go out in response to the grace we received. It is God who gives us the words and the authority.

GOD GUIDES PETER AND CORNELIUS

"The voice spoke to him a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'"

Acts 9:32-10:48

Key Verse: 10:15

Were you ever challenged to make friends with someone different from you? Why is it hard to make friends with different people who are not like us or from our country? Why is it good to do so?

God wanted to spread the gospel to all kinds of people. He wanted to use Peter his faithful disciple for this work. Peter however had grown up as a law-abiding Jew. There were certain people and certain customs he could not accept. In this passage we learn how God helped Peter to overcome his prejudices so that he could be used by God. God used Cornelius a God fearing man to help Peter. Cornelius was not a Jew but he feared and trusted God, so God could bless him and use him in his salvation work? As we study this passage think about what kind of prejudices you have.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How did God work through Peter as he traveled about the country (9:32-43)? Who was Cornelius and why did God want to bless him (1-4)? What did the angel tell him to do (5-8)?

In the meantime, how did God speak to Peter and what was his reaction (9-14)? What was God's word to him (15-16)?

What was the meaning of the vision and how did God want him to apply it (17-20)? How did Peter receive the men (21-23a)? **What amazing thing does this show about Peter? What does God want you to do?**

How did Cornelius greet Peter (23b-25)? How did Peter share his inner struggle and his reason for coming without objection (26-29)?

Through Cornelius' and Peter's words what do we learn about the Gospel and who can receive God's grace (30-43)? What happened after Peter finished preaching (44-48)? **How did this event open the door to Gentile ministry?**

Application: What kind of prejudices do you need to give up to spread the gospel to all people?

GOD GUIDES PETER AND CORNELIUS

"The voice spoke to him a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'"

HOW I PUT GOD'S WORD INTO PRACTICE

SUMMARY: WHAT IS THIS PASSAGE ABOUT?

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APPLICATION:

How does the meaning of this passage apply to my life?

What truths should I believe and keep in my heart?

What changes should I personally make in my life?

PRAYER TOPICS:

GOD HELPED PETER TO OVERCOME HIS PREJUDICES

GOD GUIDES PETER AND CORNELIUS

"The voice spoke to him a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'"

Teachers Sheet
Acts 9:32-10:48
Key Verse: 10:15

GOD HELPED PETER TO OVERCOME HIS PREJUDICES

HOW THE CHURCH BEGAN TO GROW TO INCLUDE GENTILES

“When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, ‘So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.’”

Acts 11:1-30

Key Verse: 11:18

Have you ever tried to talk to or make friends with someone very different from you? Maybe a refugee or someone from a completely different background? What was it like? How did it affect your perspective?

In this passage we learn how God helped the Jews in Jerusalem to accept the new Gentile believers through Peter’s testimony. God began to work greatly among the Gentiles after this and the church grew to include people outside of Jerusalem. Today let’s think about how the gospel touches the hearts of all kinds of people and changes them into children of God. God’s love knows no boundaries.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What did the Apostles and believers in Judea hear and why was it a big deal (1)? How did some of them criticize Peter (2-3)? How did Peter respond to the criticism (4-14)? What did God teach Peter and them about the new work he was doing (15-17)? How did the Jewish believers respond (18)? **What do you learn from them about accepting God’s way of working when it is hard to understand?**

At the same time, who did God also begin working through and what happened (19-21)? **What does this tell you about the work of God?**

Who did the church of Jerusalem send to Antioch (22)? What did Barnabas see when he got to Antioch (23)? Why was Barnabas the perfect person for this mission (24)?

Where did Barnabas go and why (25-26)? How powerful was their ministry in Antioch (26b)?

What did prophets from Jerusalem predict (27-28)? How did the believers in Antioch respond to his message (29-30)? **What effect do you think this Gentile offering had on those Jews who could not accept the Gentile ministry? What can you learn from these new Christians in Antioch?**

Application: How do you see God working in our times and how can you be part of telling the good news?

HOW THE CHURCH BEGAN TO GROW TO INCLUDE GENTILES

“When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, ‘So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.’”

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OBSERVATION: WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT GOD IN THIS PASSAGE?

APPLICATION:

*How does the meaning of this passage apply to my life?
What truths should I believe and keep in my heart?
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PRAYER TOPICS:

HOW THE CHURCH BEGAN TO GROW TO INCLUDE GENTILES

“When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, ‘So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.’”

Acts 11:1-30
Key Verse: 11:18

- ❖ When Barnabas went to look for Saul in Tarsus, it seems to have been many years (estimates between 8-12 years). 11:30 Paul went a second time to Jerusalem. Paul says that this second visit to Jerusalem took place after 14 years (Gal 2:1). Paul upon his conversion spent 3 years in Arabia (Gal 1:17) and then returned to Damascus, where he escaped a plot by the Jews and went to Jerusalem to meet Peter (Gal 1:18). There he begins preaching but they try to kill him and so he has to flee to Tarsus (Acts 9:28-30; Gal 1:21). Then 14 years until his second visit to Jerusalem means he spent 3 years in Damascus, and when Barnabas called him to minister with him in Antioch for 1 year, that leaves 10 years in Tarsus.
 - The other view is that in ancient reckoning even part of a year is counted as a year so not 14 full years but 2 part years and 12 full years. This means 1 ½ years, possibly, in Damascus, “a whole year” (Acts 11:26) in Antioch, so possibly 8-9 years in Tarsus). Yet a third view is that “14 years” refers to AFTER Damascus which means his visit to Jerusalem is the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, which means he was only in Tarsus for maybe 5 years.
 - Possibly in this time in Tarsus, he did ministry in Cilicia and Syria. There are some possible clues in Gal 1:21-2:2 where he doesn’t say he returned to Tarsus after his first Jerusalem visit but says that he returned to “Syria and Cilicia” (Cilicia is where Tarsus is located and Syria is where Antioch is located). When he and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement about John Mark, Barnabas sailed for Cyprus while Paul went to the churches in Syria and Cilicia. In Syria at least we know was the Antioch church but we have no record of anyone establishing churches in Cilicia which is Paul’s home region—it makes logical sense that he would have established churches there and this is also why Barnabas sought him out for the work in Antioch since he was known in that area.
 - **Regardless of how we count the timeline, Paul definitely had a long time to study and do local ministry before God called him to a much bigger mission and that should communicate to our children.** Start locally where you are, not waiting for some grand vision of being called to a far off land to do some great ministry. Practically, if God did that, they wouldn’t be ready for it intellectually, spiritually, practically, or disciplined enough. Those who are seeking God and working where they are will be called by him to a greater work. We each may have some very clear calling from God, but in the meantime do the work right in front of you where you are, because there is such great need and the workers are few. What’s more God seems to have called him from doing work by himself to working with others and from this time on he never does ministry work alone. Coworking with Barnabas seems to leave a strong impression on Paul and he learns that God’s work must be done in fellowship.

PETER'S MIRACULOUS ESCAPE FROM PRISON

"So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him."

Acts 12:1-25
Key Verse 12:5

What is the worst situation you've ever gotten into? Were you in danger? In trouble? How did you feel? What did you think would happen?

In this passage we learn about how God helped Peter to escape from prison. Herod persecuted the church, but they prayed earnestly to God. God was with them and they experienced answer to their prayer. Do you pray for others? Do you believe that God can change an impossible situation when his people pray?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What did King Herod do to some church members (1-4)? Why? What were the believers doing while Peter was in prison (5)? ***Do you remember a situation in your life that you had to pray urgently like this?***

What was Peter doing the night before his execution (6-7)? How did God help Peter to get out of prison (8-10)?

Where did Peter go when he realized what was happening (11-12)? Even though they were praying for Peter, what did the believers think when he came to the door (13-17)?

What did Herod do to the guards who lost Peter (18-19a)? What finally happened to Herod in the end (19b-23)? In spite of persecution what happened to the church (24-25)?

Application: After experiencing the power of prayer for the persecuted, how can we pray for the Persecuted Church?

PETER'S MIRACULOUS ESCAPE FROM PRISON

"So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him."

HOW I PUT GOD'S WORD INTO PRACTICE

SUMMARY: WHAT IS THIS PASSAGE ABOUT?

OBSERVATION: WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT GOD IN THIS PASSAGE?

APPLICATION:

How does the meaning of this passage apply to my life?

What truths should I believe and keep in my heart?

What changes should I personally make in my life?

PRAYER TOPICS:

DO YOU PRAY FOR OTHERS?

PETER'S MIRACULOUS ESCAPE FROM PRISON

"So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him."

Acts 12:1-25
Key Verse 12:5

DO YOU PRAY FOR OTHERS?

THE BEGINNING OF PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

"While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"

Acts 12:25-13:12

Key Verse 13:2

Have you ever been chosen to do some special job? How did it feel to be chosen? What did you do? How did you feel about the experience?

In this passage we learn more about the Antioch church. It had been established by scattered Christians. Later the church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to help establish this church and it began to grow. Barnabas invited Saul to help him in this ministry. Now God wanted to use the Antioch church to spread the gospel. Barnabas and Saul were chosen to go out as missionaries. This was the first of Paul mission journeys.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read verse 12:25. Where did Saul and Barnabas return from and why? Read verses 1-2. Who did the Holy Spirit tell the church at Antioch to set apart? What was the mission they were set apart for (see also 9:15)? (look at how they were sent off in verse 3) **What mission can you be set apart for?**

Who was leading Barnabas and Saul (4)? Look at a map. Where did they go first? (Note that Barnabas is from Cyprus, Acts 4:36) What did they do as soon as they arrived (5)?

Read verse 6-7. Who did they meet in Paphos after traveling through the whole island (6)? Who was Serguis Paulus (7)? Why did he send for Barnabas and Saul?

What did Elymas (Bar-Jesus) do and why (8)? How did Saul deal with him (9-11)? What effect did this have (12)? **What do you learn here about dealing with those who oppose what God is doing?**

What do you learn in this passage about how God spreads the gospel?

Application: Do you want to be sent out? How can you hear God's voice and his mission?

GOD WANTED TO USE THE ANTIOCH CHURCH TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL.

THE BEGINNING OF PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

"While they were worshipping and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"

HOW I PUT GOD'S WORD INTO PRACTICE

SUMMARY: WHAT IS THIS PASSAGE ABOUT?

OBSERVATION: WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT GOD IN THIS PASSAGE?

APPLICATION:

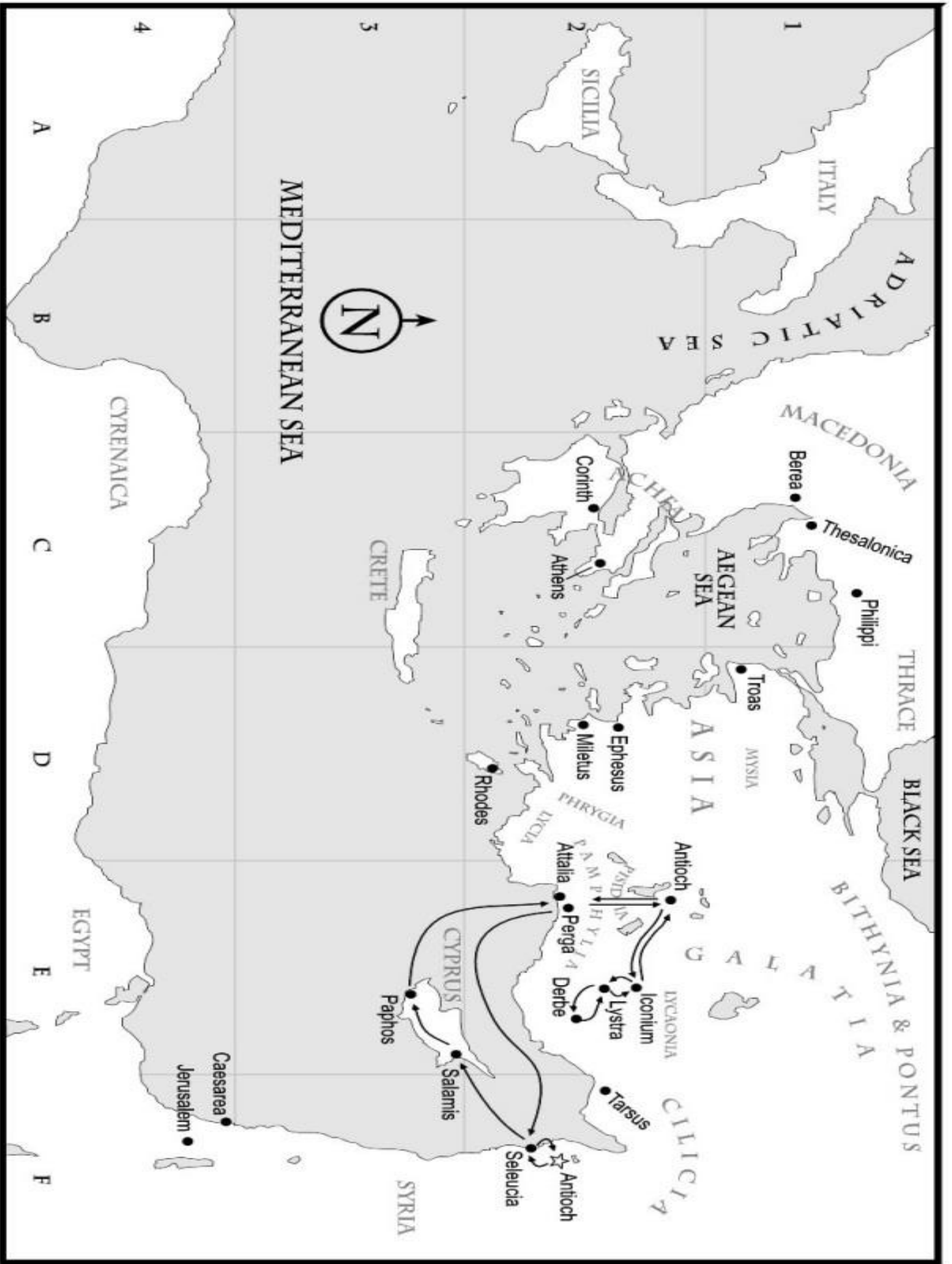
How does the meaning of this passage apply to my life?

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PRAYER TOPICS:

GOD WANTED TO USE THE ANTIOCH CHURCH TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL.



THE BEGINNING OF PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

"While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"

Teachers Sheets
Acts 12:25-13:12
Key Verse 13:2

- ❖ Often kids think that to be a shepherd or missionary, to give their life to God and tell their friends and classmates about Jesus, is way too difficult, like a heavy burden. What we need to focus this study on, is that they were "set apart". How awesome it is to be chosen, to be the number one pick, to have a purpose, to be wanted. The kids know what it is like to be chosen first and what is like to be chosen last or even passed over. To be chosen by God to do his mission is such a privilege not a burden.
- ❖ They went to Cyprus first, but not of their own idea, this was the leading of the Holy Spirit. Barnabas was from Cypress. How interesting that the first place that God led them was to familiar territory, to a place they could feel comfortable (because there was a large Jewish population in Cypress) and start their missionary journey easy moving to more difficult. God is very gracious and leads us in the way that is fitting to us. Following God is not super-difficult and painful, he knows us and he knows how to help us and lead us in the best way. It won't always be easy but it will be exactly what is best for us and where we can be most fruitful.
- ❖ When they were opposed by an evil person, Bar-Jesus/Elymas, they did not love and forgive him. They—like Jesus speaking to the Pharisees—rebuked him and opposed him. There is a time to play nice, and there is a time to tell the truth and rebuke. Rebuking should be done carefully and sparingly, but when a person is set on doing evil and opposing God we don't turn the other cheek and let him blaspheme God's name, we must have the courage to stand up to them and oppose them. Too often Christians have just rolled over and given up before atheists, anti-Christian groups, gay rights activists, school boards, Muslims, and the list goes on. They say they are trying to live quiet lives and respect the authorities but in fact they are being cowardly instead of standing up for the name of Jesus. Just as we would not let our children or spouse be made fun of or slandered, we should stand up for the name of Jesus with just as much passion. We should not allow our country to be taken over by the devil and his servants, just so we can be "nice".

GOD WANTED TO USE THE ANTIOCH CHURCH TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL.

PAUL PREACHES IN PISIDIAN ANTIOCH

"For this is what the Lord has commanded us: 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

Acts 13:14-52

Key Verse 13:47

Has anyone ever been really jealous of you or opposed you? Why? How did it feel? What did you do? What happened in the end?

Last week we learned how God set apart Paul and Barnabas for a special mission. The first place they went was to Cyprus where Paul cast out an evil spirit from Elymas the sorcerer. In this passage Paul travels on to Perga in Pamphylia and then to Pisidian Antioch. In Pisidian Antioch Paul gives his first missionary message to the Jews who lived there. When many Jews rejected his message he turned to the Gentiles. God loves all people and he was using Paul and Barnabas to spread the gospel beyond the territory of the Jews.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What cities did Paul and his companions go to from Paphos (13-14)? What did the rulers of the synagogue ask them to do (15)?

What did Paul teach about God's work up to that time (16-23)? Who came before Jesus and what did he do (24-25)?

When the people of Jerusalem heard the message of salvation what did they do to Jesus (26-29)? What did God do for Jesus (30)? Who are the witnesses of this event (31)? **Why is Jesus' resurrection the so important to the gospel (32-37)?**

What is the good news for those who believe (38-39)? **Why is this such good news?** What warning did he give them (40-41)?

What was the response of the people who heard Paul's message (42-44)? What did the Jewish leaders do and why (45)? How did the word spread and what happened (46-50)? Did this stop the work of God (51-52)?

Application: Have you had the courage to share the good news with people who might reject you?

GOD WANTED TO USE THE ANTIOCH CHURCH TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL.

PAUL PREACHES IN PISIDIAN ANTIOCH

“For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.””

HOW I PUT GOD’S WORD INTO PRACTICE

SUMMARY: WHAT IS THIS PASSAGE ABOUT?

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PRAYER TOPICS:

GOD WANTED TO USE THE ANTIOCH CHURCH TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL.

PAUL PREACHES IN PISIDIAN ANTIOCH

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Acts 13:14-52

Key Verse 13:47

GOD WANTED TO USE THE ANTIOCH CHURCH TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL.

PAUL CONTINUES ON HIS FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

*“strengthening the disciples and encouraging the to remain true to the faith.
‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,’ They said.”*

Acts 14:1-28

Key Verse: 14:22

Have you ever been persecuted? How did it feel? What effect did it have on you? Have you overcome it?

In the last passage Paul was in Psidian Antioch. Many of the Jews there rejected his message of salvation through Jesus. However many Gentiles listened and believed. Paul realized that God was using him to reach all kinds of people. In today’s passage Paul visits Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Finally he returns to Antioch which is the end of his first missionary journey. Let’s learn how Paul served others in these places.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Where did Paul and Barnabas preach and what were the two responses (1-2)? How did God work through Paul and Banabas in Iconium (3)? Why did they have to leave Iconium quickly (4-7)?

What city did they preach in next and who was listening to Paul there (6-9a)? What did Paul notice about him and how did he help him (9b-10)? What did the people of Lystra think about Paul and Barnabas after this (11-13)?

What did Paul do and say to the people who tried to worship them as gods (14-18)? What happened to Paul (19)? How did God help him and what did Paul do (20a)? Where did they preach next and what was the result (20b-21)? **How can we learn from their never giving up spirit?**

Where did Paul and Barnabas return to and what was their message (21b-22)? **What does this show about their faith?** What did they do in each city (23-25)? When they got back to Antioch what did they do (26-28)?

How did God work through their first mission journey?

Application: What past failure, persecution or fear do you need to overcome to share the good news?

GOD WAS USING HIM TO REACH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE

PAUL CONTINUES ON HIS FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

*“strengthening the disciples and encouraging the to remain true to the faith.
‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,’ They said.”*

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PRAYER TOPICS:

GOD WAS USING HIM TO REACH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE

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*“strengthening the disciples and encouraging the to remain true to the faith.
‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,’ They said.”*

Acts 14:1-28

Key Verse: 14:22

GOD WAS USING HIM TO REACH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE

THE GRACE OF GOD MAKES US ALL EQUAL.

"No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

Acts 15:1-35

Key Verse: 15:11

Have you ever felt excluded? Have people made you feel less because of your looks, likes, race or smarts? How did it feel? How did it affect the way that you act?

Paul and Barnabas had experienced God's power as they spoke about salvation in Jesus in many places. Many Jews and especially Gentiles believed in all the cities where they had preached. When they got back to Antioch they spent a long time with the disciples. In today's passage we learn how God led Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to a very important meeting about how to include the new Gentile believers in the church.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What were some men from Judea teaching the believers at Antioch (1)? Why did Paul and Barnabas argue with them (2)? ***Did the believers need to be Jewish to be Christian? (Do we?)***

Where did the church send Paul and Barnabas (3-4)? What did some of the believers say about the Gentiles (5-6)? ***Did you notice something shocking about these believers, what were some of the interesting dynamics of the first church?***

What did Peter teach about how we become Christians (7-9)? What is Christianity not (10)? What is the only thing necessary to be a Christian (11)?

What James' conclusion about the Gentiles (12-18)? What was the decision of the church? Why did they still place certain restrictions (22-29)? Read verses 30-35. ***Why was this letter and the Jewish messengers so important to bonding the early churches? How do you think it made them feel and what effect did it have?***

Application: Is there anyone that you have a hard time to believe they could be saved, how can you overcome your prejudices and pray for all people?

THE GRACE OF GOD MAKES US ALL EQUAL.

“No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

HOW I PUT GOD’S WORD INTO PRACTICE

SUMMARY: WHAT IS THIS PASSAGE ABOUT?

OBSERVATION: WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT GOD IN THIS PASSAGE?

APPLICATION:

How does the meaning of this passage apply to my life?

What truths should I believe and keep in my heart?

What changes should I personally make in my life?

PRAYER TOPICS:

THE GRACE OF GOD MAKES US ALL EQUAL.

“No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

Teachers Sheet

Acts 15:1-35

Key Verse: 15:11

- ❖ From chapter 11:2 this problem has been floating around the church. The circumcision group was a group of Christians who believed that you had to be Jewish, that is keep ALL the law of Moses (the 10 commandments plus the very long detailed laws in Leviticus), in order to be a true Christian. It was a very appropriate question, and one which was not really clear. Jesus restricted his ministry to the Jews during his life but yet he always welcomed Gentiles without discriminating (with the exception of the Syro-Phoenician woman). Yet Jesus never really told his disciples what were the clear rules concerning Old Testament Law. It took a long time before people really worked out that they had accepted a New Covenant that cancelled the old (see Hebrews). Paul and Barnabas and later Peter really looked at how the Holy Spirit had been moving and saw that God accepted people on the basis of grace and not on outward law. This doesn't mean that we should ignore the Old Testament and ignore all the rules, the rules actually reveal what God loves and hates and that is always good and appropriate to do, but outward laws like circumcision are part of becoming Jewish—the keeping of festivals, offering of sacrifices, ritual tithes and all such outward things were canceled through the fulfillment of the Old Testament because they were an outward way of being righteous that was no longer relevant because we find salvation only in Jesus.
- ❖ The believers of the group of the Pharisees seem to be the same as the circumcision group in 11:2 and perhaps Galatians 2:12. They couldn't let go of the old way and all the work they had done to be made righteous. Many Christians also hold onto legalism as

a blanket to make themselves feel better, “I kept all the rules I’m a good Christian...I’m better than that guy...” It is interesting that there were people who had become Christians that were still Pharisees. There were many kinds of people in the church with many different beliefs and ways of living and doing, there wasn’t just one way to be a Christian. In the same way becoming a Christian doesn’t mean that we give up who we are and just become like everyone else. The church is made up of many different kinds of people and that is great.

- ❖ When we fully understand grace we understand that it is crazy: we are saved only by faith in Jesus, we don’t have to keep rules. In this way it is only by grace that we are saved and each person equally. It is not only some who can be saved because they are good enough and others cannot be saved because they are “bad people”. We are not better than others because we are Christians but every person is equal because we are each saved by grace. Then we can’t be proud or exclude others but must serve and love each person equally.
- ❖ We also learn that not every issue is easy and has a simple answer, some things require us to discuss and pray and find God’s direction. We need to learn to work together and find God’s wisdom together. Especially, we must seek to find the leading of God’s Holy Spirit and once we’ve found an answer each submit our strong idea to follow God’s idea. It is very significant that James is the one who said this, because James was the most legalistic of the Jewish Christians and least likely to accept this direction but he saw that God’s leading was undeniable and so he submitted his strong idea to God’s and found God’s direction, thank God.

PAUL BEGINS HIS SECOND JOURNEY

"After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them."

Acts 16:1-10

Key Verse 6:10

What do you like to do with your friends? What is the most fun you ever had with your friends? Why do you like to spend time with them? How does it make you feel?

Paul decided to visit all the brothers and sisters in all the towns where he had preached so he set off on his second missionary journey, this time with a new co-worker Silas. In Lystra he met Timothy a young man and invited him to travel with him. Paul carefully followed the leading of the Holy Spirit. This led him to the west to Macedonia to a new mission field.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Where did Paul go first on his second journey (1, Acts 15:36)? Who was Timothy and why did Paul take him along (1-3; Php 2:19-22)? What message did Paul's company give to the Gentile churches (4)? What effect did this have on the churches (5)?

Where and why did Paul and his group continue to on their journey (6)? Where did they try to go (7)? What city did they finally stop in (8)? How far is it from Pisidian Antioch to Troas (look at map)? **Think about how Paul and his companions traveled following the Holy Spirit (7).**

Who did Paul see in a vision (9)? Where is Macedonia (look on a map)? What did Paul decide to do after having this vision (10)?

What do you learn in this passage about how God called even a young man like Timothy to be Paul's helper on his mission journey?. What do you learn about following God's leading?

Application: How can you seek the Spirit's leading in finding those you should share the good news with?

PAUL BEGINS HIS SECOND JOURNEY

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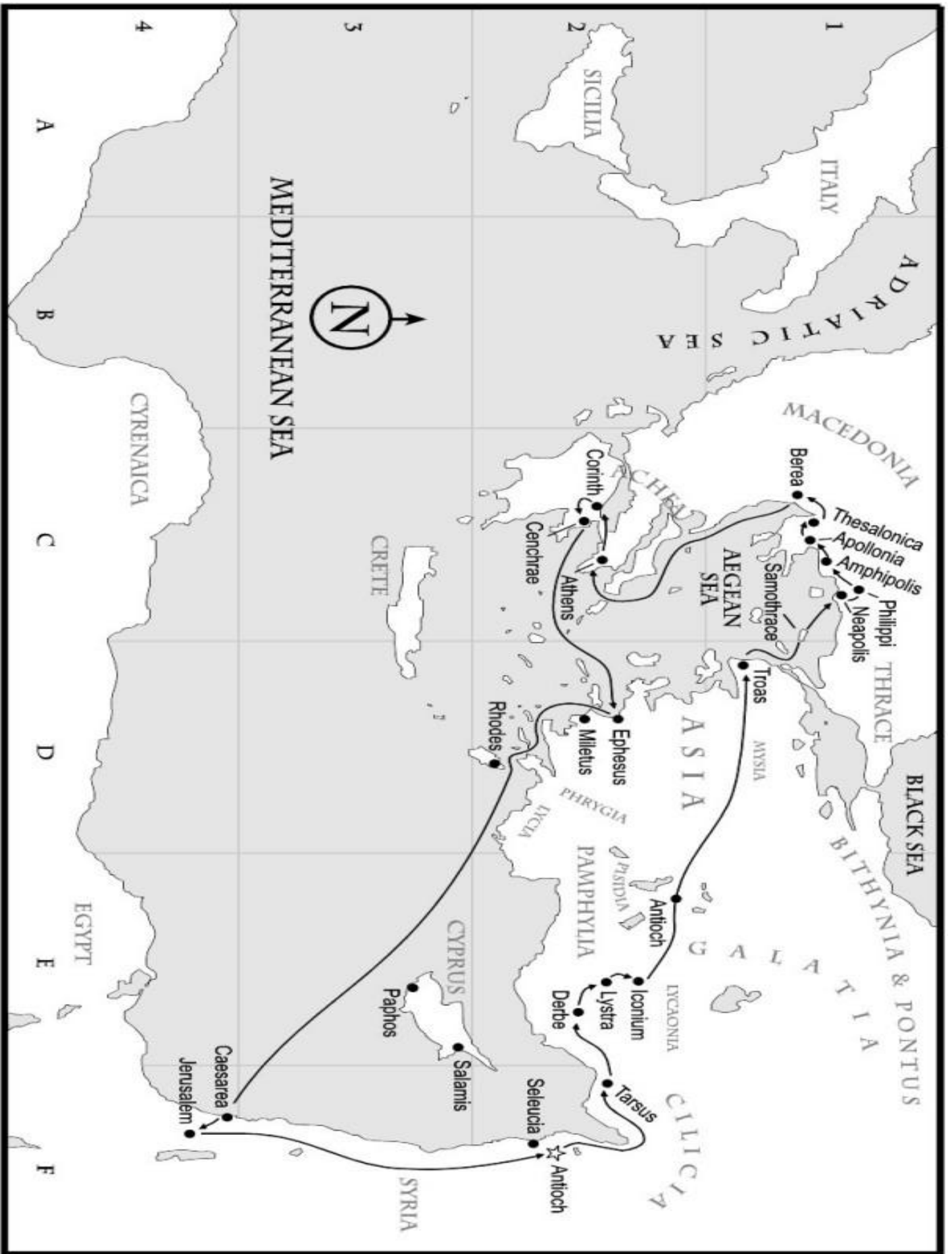
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PRAYER TOPICS:



PAUL BEGINS HIS SECOND JOURNEY

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Acts 16:1-10
Key Verse 6:10

FOLLOWED THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

PAUL CONTINUES ON HIS SECOND MISSION JOURNEY TO PHILIPPI

“He then brought them out and asked, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.’”

Acts 16:11-40

Key Verse 16:30-31

Have you ever had the courage to share your faith with someone or tell them about the Bible? How did it go? How did you feel? Did you do it again?

Paul had a vision that pointed him to go to Macedonia. So instead of going north he went west to Philippi. There he met several people who believed his message very personally. He and Silas also were arrested and put in prison, but God helped them to get out and they continued on their mission journey.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Trace Paul’s route to Philippi (11-12). What kind of city was Philippi (12)? What did they do when they arrived (13)? **How did one woman become a believer (14)? How did she reveal her changed life (15)?**

How did Paul help one slave girl (16-18)? What did the owners of the slave girl do to Paul and Silas (19-24)? **How do you think they felt?**

What did Paul and Silas do in prison (25)? **Why?** What did God do and what effect did it have on the jailer (26-30)?

How were the jailer and his family saved (31-32)? **How did the jailer reveal his changed life (33-34)?**

How did Paul and Silas turn this persecution into a victory (35-39)? How did they encourage the church at Lydia’s house (40)? **What do we learn in this passage about preaching the gospel?**

Application: Can you trust in God’s ability to work in the hearts of those around you? Do you have the faith and courage to speak the good news?

GOD HELPED THEM TO GET OUT AND THEY CONTINUED ON THEIR MISSION

PAUL CONTINUES ON HIS SECOND MISSION JOURNEY TO PHILIPPI

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Teachers Sheet
Acts 16:11-40
Key Verse 16:30-31

GOD HELPED THEM TO GET OUT AND THEY CONTINUED ON THEIR MISSION

