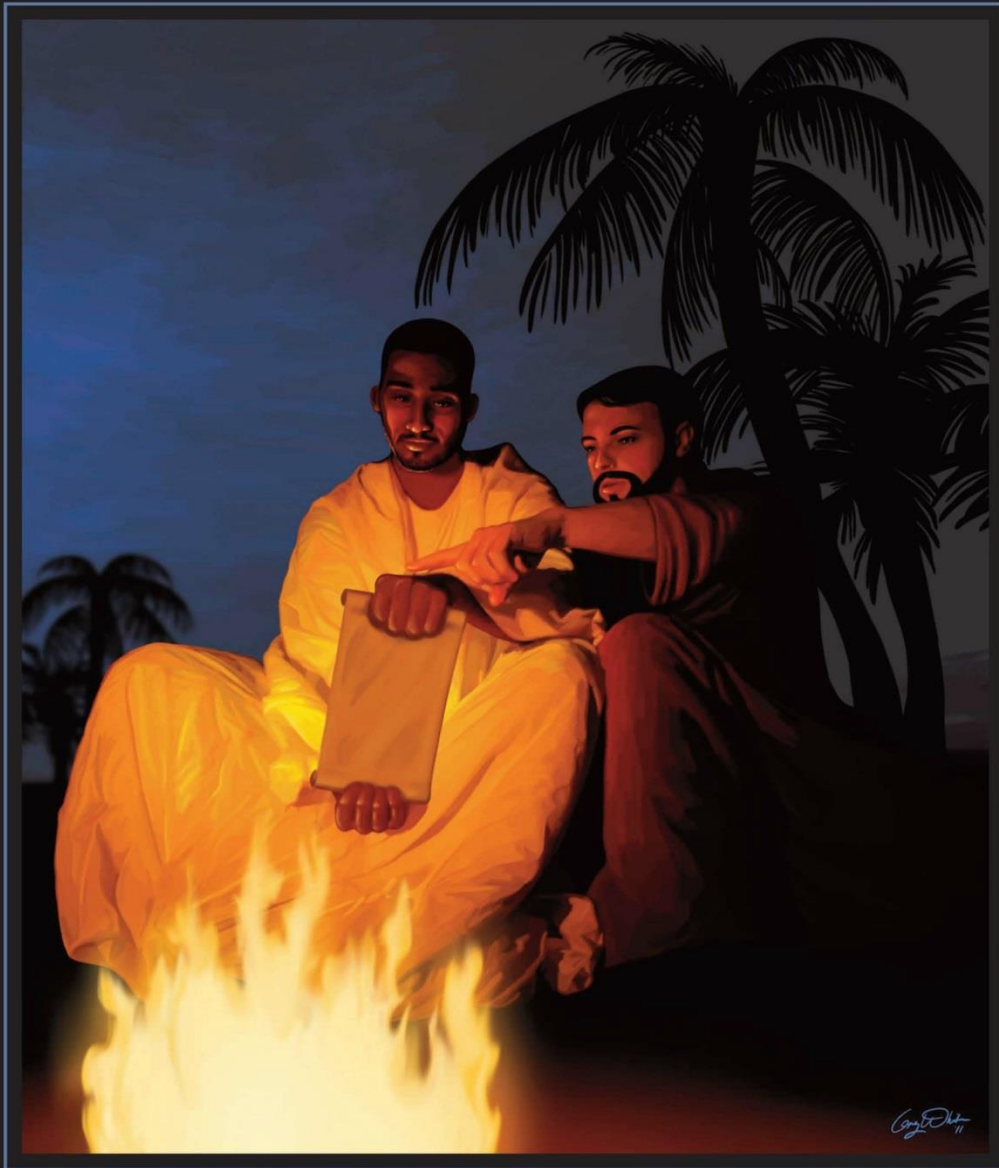


# BIBLE STUDIES FOR CHILDREN

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# ACTS



**Bible Studies for Children**

**A C T S**

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The first Children’s Bible Quiz, created by Rev. William (Bill) Young, was introduced with three demonstration teams from the Kansas City District – Kansas City First, Kansas City St. Paul’s, and Overland Park – at the 1968 General Nazarene Young People’s Society Convention in Kansas City, Missouri (USA).

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# welcome!

Welcome to *Bible Studies for Children: Acts!* In this collection of biblical studies, the children learn about how Jesus' disciples spread God's love to the whole world! The Book of Acts was written by a doctor named Luke who travelled with Paul on his journeys. The Book of Acts tells about Jesus' resurrection and ascension, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the Church. It even tells when and where the word Christian was first used. Acts tells us how Christians today can continue to spread the good news about God's love.

*Bible Studies for Children: Acts* is one of six books in the *Bible Studies for Children* series. These studies help children to gain an understanding of biblical chronology and the meaning of biblical events. As the children learn about the lives of the people in these studies, they discover God's love for all people and their place in his plan. God sometimes uses miracles to achieve his purpose. He often works through people to accomplish what he wants to do.

The philosophy of *Bible Studies for Children* is to help the children to understand what the Bible says, to learn how God helped the people, and to grow in their relationship with God. This includes biblical study, biblical memorization, and application of biblical teachings in real life situations.

Bible Studies for Children uses the New International Version of the Bible.

## BOOKS

The following is a short description of the books in this series and the way that they interact with each other.

**Genesis** provides the foundation. This book tells how God created the world from nothing, formed a man and a woman, and created a beautiful garden for their home. These people sinned, and they experienced the consequences for their sin. Genesis introduces the plan of God to reconcile the broken relationship between God and the people. It introduces Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God made a covenant with Abraham and renewed that covenant with Isaac and Jacob. Genesis ends with the story of Joseph who saves civilization from famine. The famine compels the people of God to move to Egypt.

**Exodus** tells how God continued to keep his promise to Abraham. God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The Lord chose Moses to guide the Israelites. The Lord set up his kingship over the Israelites. He led and ruled the Israelites through the establishment of the priesthood and the Tabernacle, the Ten Commandments and other laws, and the prophets and the judges. At the end of Exodus, only a part of the covenant of the Lord with Abraham is complete.

**Joshua/Judges/Ruth** tells how God completed his covenant to Abraham that began in Genesis. The Israelites conquered and settled into the land that God promised to Abraham. The prophets, the priests, the Law, and the worship rituals declared that God was the Lord and the King of the Israelites. The 12 tribes of Israel settled into the Promised Land. This study emphasizes these judges: Deborah, Gideon, and Samson.

In **1 and 2 Samuel**, the Israelites wanted a king because the other nations had a king.

These books tell about Samuel, Saul, and David. Jerusalem became the centre of the combined nation of Israel. This study shows how the people react differently when someone confronted them with their sins. While Saul blamed others or made excuses, David admitted his sin, and he asked God for forgiveness.

**Matthew** is the focal point of the entire series. It focuses on the birth, the life, and the ministry of Jesus. All the previous books in the series pointed to Jesus as the Son of God and the Messiah. Jesus ushered in a new era. The children learn about this new era in several events: the teachings of Jesus, his death, his resurrection, and the mentoring of his disciples. Through Jesus, God provided a new way for the people to have a relationship with him.

At the beginning of **Acts**, Jesus ascended to heaven, and God sent the Holy Spirit to help the Church. The good news of salvation through Jesus Christ spread to many parts of the world. The believers preached the gospel to the Gentiles, and missionary work began. The message of the love of God transformed both the Jews and the Gentiles. There is a direct connection between the evangelism efforts of Paul and Peter to the lives of the people today.

## **CYCLE**

The following cycle of using this series is specifically for those who participate in the optional Quizzing aspect of *Bible Studies for Children*. You will find more information about this in the section called “Children’s Bible Quizzing” (page 143).

\* Acts (2012-2013)

Genesis (2013-2014)

Exodus (2014-2015)

Joshua/Judges/Ruth (2015-2016)

\* 1 & 2 Samuel (2016-2017)

Matthew (2017-2018)

\*Indicates a World Quiz Year

## **SCHEDULE**

Each book in the series has twenty studies. Allow one to two hours of class time. The following schedule is a suggestion for each study.

- 15 minutes for Activity
- 30 minutes for Biblical Lesson
- 15 minutes for Memory Verse
- 30 minutes for Additional Activities (optional)
- 30 minutes for Quizzing Practice (optional)

## **TEACHER’S PREPARATION**

Thorough preparation of each study is important. The children are more attentive and gain better understanding of the study if you prepare it well and present it well. **Bold text** in each study indicates suggested words for you to say to the children. The following steps will help you prepare.

**Step 1: Quick Overview.** Read the Memory Verse, Biblical Truth, and Teaching Tips.

**Step 2: Bible Passage and Biblical Commentary.** Read the verses in the Bible study passage and the information in the Biblical Commentary, and any Words of Our Faith.

**Step 3: Activity.** This section includes a game or other activity to prepare the children for the biblical lesson. Become familiar with the activity, the instructions, and the supplies. Bring any necessary supplies to the class with you. Set up the activity before the children arrive.

**Step 4: Biblical Lesson.** Review the lesson and learn it so that you tell it as a story. An easy-to-read version of the scripture passage is included at the end of this book to help you prepare. The children want the teacher to tell the story rather than to read it from the book. Use the Words of Our Faith from each lesson to provide additional information as you tell

the story. After the story, use the review questions. They will help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

**Step 5: Memory Verse.** Learn the memory verse before you teach it to the children. A list of the memory verses and suggested memory verse activities are on pages 110-112. Choose from the activities to help the children to learn the memory verse. Become familiar with the activity that you choose. Read the instructions and prepare the supplies that you will bring to class.

**Step 6: Additional Activities.** The additional activities are an optional part of the study. These activities will enhance the children's biblical study. Many of these activities require additional supplies, resources, and time. Become familiar with the activities that you choose. Read the instructions and prepare the supplies that you will bring to class.

**Step 7: Quizzing Practice.** Quizzing is the competition part of *Bible Studies for Children*

and you will find more information in the section called "Children's Bible Quizzing" (page 143). Quizzing is an optional part of the study. If you choose to participate in quizzing, spend time with the children in their preparation. There are practice questions for each study. The first ten questions are for a basic level of competition. The questions are simple, and there are three possible answers for each question. The next ten questions are for an advanced level of the competition. There are four possible answers for each question, and these questions are more comprehensive. Children, with the guidance from their teacher, choose their level for the competition. Based on the number of children and the resources that are available, you may choose to offer only the basic level or only the advanced level. Before you ask the practice questions, read the scripture passage to the children.

## MEMORY VERSE

“We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him” (Acts 5:32).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

The Holy Spirit is God’s gift to us.

## TEACHING TIP

- As you lead the Bible study, explain to the students that we can learn to recognize guidance from the Holy Spirit. We can witness to others by obeying the Holy Spirit.

# STUDY ONE

**ACTS 1:1-11; 2:1-8, 12-21, 36-47**

## THE PROMISED GIFT

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Luke’s book, Acts of the Apostles, invites readers to continue the mission of Christ until his return.

For forty days, Jesus prepared his followers to continue his mission. “Forty” reminds us of those who were tested before they began their ministries: The Israelites as they wandered in the desert, Moses on Mt. Sinai, Elijah as he fled to Horeb.

Jesus echoes the prophecy of Isaiah 32:15. It is the Spirit who enables believers to effectively witness to the entire world.

Jesus’ followers were baptized with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Originally, Pentecost (also known as the Feast of Weeks) celebrated God’s gift of the Ten Commandments to Moses and the people of Israel, fifty days after the Exodus from Egypt. For Christians today, Pentecost is a celebration of God’s gift of his Spirit to all believers, fifty days after Easter Sunday.

God poured out his Spirit on the community of believers. The Spirit unified them and gave them a passion to follow Christ. They received the power to intelligibly communicate the truth of Jesus to the entire world.

Peter invited his listeners to repent and to be baptized. New believers joined the community of faith, and they grew in their faith by obeying the apostles’ teaching, praying daily, and sharing with those in need. In these first two chapters, we see the start of Jesus’ mission to bring freedom from sin and to see that message spread to the ends of the earth.

The Early Church had hope. They saw that God continued to transform them by the power of the Holy Spirit.



God was revealing his kingdom on earth. They were excited to share this good news with everyone. As believers, we continue the mission started by the faithful Church over two thousand years ago. Likewise, we can experience the power of the Holy Spirit, and, we will be witnesses of God's kingdom when God changes us.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

**the Holy Spirit** — the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit empowers us to live for God as we trust Jesus as Saviour.

**Jesus Christ** — Jesus is God's son, the Saviour of the world. Jesus is fully God and fully human. Christ is a Greek word that means "the anointed one."

**the Messiah** — Messiah is a Hebrew word that means "the anointed one" and is usually translated as "the Christ." It refers to Jesus Christ.

**Peter** — one of Jesus' 12 disciples. He preached the first sermon at Pentecost and was a leader in the Early Church.

**Jerusalem** — the centre of the Jewish religion. Jerusalem is the geographical focal point for much of the Bible.

**Pentecost** — a Jewish religious festival held 50 days after Passover. Christians celebrate this as the day the Holy Spirit came and the Early Church was born.

**the Apostles** — early leaders of the Christian Church who were specially chosen by Jesus. They were God's ambassadors as the Church grew and spread.

**baptism** — a public ceremony that symbolizes a person's rebirth in Jesus Christ. Baptism is a ritual in which a believer is immersed in

water or has water sprinkled or poured on his or her head. A believer chooses to be baptized to show that they are beginning a new life in Christ.

**the Jews** — people who practice the Jewish religion. God established a covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15 and 17. The Jews are known as the descendants of Abraham and his son and grandson (Isaac and Jacob). The Bible also calls them Israelites.

**prophecy** — a message from God to people. Some prophecies tell what will happen in the future.

## ACTIVITY

Invite two children to stand at the front of the classroom. Tell the others to look at them for 10 seconds. Then, send the two children to a place where no one can see them.

While they are gone, have the other children describe them to you. Write down all the details. You may prompt them with questions. For example, ask things like this:

- Were the two children wearing a jacket?
- Did they have anything in their hands?
- What colour were their shoes?

Bring the two children back into the room. Review the descriptions of the children.

Ask, **How accurately did we describe them?** Allow time for the children to respond. Then, say, **We used a lot of words to talk about these two people. Now, if they left this room and someone asked you to describe them again, you could talk about them more accurately because you have looked at them closely. Today we are going to learn how Jesus asked his friends to talk about him.**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 113-115.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **Have you ever felt God leading you? How do you recognize God's direction? Discuss this topic together.**
2. Read the memory verse, Acts 5:32. **To whom does God give the Holy Spirit?**
3. **What struggles has the Holy Spirit helped you to overcome?**
4. **Baptism is a way to show that you are devoted to Jesus Christ. It is also a sign to others that you want to become a part of God's family, the Church. Have you been baptized? Why or why not?**

Say, **In this lesson, you will learn that God worked through the believers in the Early Church. But God's good work did not end there. You are a part of God's story, too. God's gift of the Holy Spirit will help you to be bold and courageous as you live for him.**

## MEMORY VERSE

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Choose from any of these options to enhance the study.

1. Find a Bible with a concordance and research the term "Holy Spirit." Study several additional passages that reference the Holy Spirit and read them to the class. Discuss what these passages teach about the Holy Spirit.
2. Research the Feast of Weeks, also called Pentecost. What was the significance of this time? What usually happened during this celebration time?

## QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 1:1-11; 2:1-8, 12-21, 36-47 to them.

### **1 To whom is the book of Acts written? (1:1)**

1. Caesar
2. Luke
3. Theophilus

### **2 About what did Jesus speak when he appeared to the apostles for forty days? (1:3)**

1. About the kingdom of God
2. About his resurrection
3. About his miracles

### **3 While he ate with the apostles, Jesus told them not to do something. What was it? (1:4)**

1. Do not eat too much.
2. Do not leave Jerusalem.
3. Do not tell anyone that you saw me.

## **4** With what did John baptize? (1:5)

1. With the Holy Spirit
2. With oil
3. **With water**

## **5** Jesus said that the apostles would receive something after the Holy Spirit came on them. What was it? (1:8)

1. Love
2. **Power**
3. Gifts

## **6** Jesus said that the apostles would be his witnesses when the Holy Spirit came. Where were they to be witnesses? (1:8)

1. In Jerusalem, in Judea, and in Samaria
2. To the ends of the earth
3. **Both answers are correct.**

## **7** Who will prophesy when God pours out his Spirit on all people? (2:17-18)

1. Sons and daughters
2. God's servants, both men and women
3. **Both answers are correct.**

## **8** How many were added to the number of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost? (2:41)

1. About 1,000
2. **About 3,000**
3. About 5,000

## **9** To what did the believers devote themselves? (2:42)

1. To fellowship and prayer
2. To the breaking of bread
3. **Both answers are correct.**

## **10** How often did the believers meet? (2:46)

1. **Every day**
2. Only on Sundays
3. Once each week

## **QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 1:1-11; 2:1-8, 12-21, 36-47 to them.

### **1** While he ate with the apostles, what did Jesus say to them? (1:4-5)

1. "Do not leave Jerusalem."
2. "Wait for the gift my Father promised."
3. "You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

### **2** Jesus said that the apostles would be his witnesses when the Holy Spirit came. Where were they to be witnesses? (1:8)

1. In Jerusalem
2. In all Judea and Samaria
3. To the ends of the earth
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

### **3** What did the two men dressed in white say? (1:10-11)

1. "Do not be afraid."
2. **"Jesus will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."**
3. "Go to your homes. There is nothing to see here."
4. "Jesus went away to prepare a place for you."

#### **4 What happened when the day of Pentecost came? (2:1-4)**

1. They heard a sound like the blowing of a violent wind.
2. They saw tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.
3. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

#### **5 Who were staying in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost? (2:5)**

1. Cornelius and his family
2. **God-fearing Jews from every nation**
3. Jesus and the apostles
4. Three women named Mary

#### **6 Peter quotes from an Old Testament prophet on the day of Pentecost. Which prophet was it? (2:16-21)**

1. Isaiah
2. Jeremiah
3. **Joel**
4. Samuel

#### **7 Of what did Peter say that Israel should be assured? (2:36)**

1. **“God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”**
2. “John is the only one who should baptize people.”
3. “Jesus will tell us about his return.”
4. “We apostles saw Jesus.”

#### **8 For whom is the promised Holy Spirit? (2:38-39)**

1. For you and your children
2. For all who are far off
3. For all whom the Lord our God will call
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

#### **9 What did the believers do after they sold their possessions and goods? (2:45)**

1. **They gave to anyone who had a need.**
2. They kept the money for themselves.
3. They gave their money to the church.
4. They bought other things.

#### **10 Finish this verse: “We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given ...” (Acts 5:32)**

1. **“... to those who obey him.”**
2. “... to those who call on his name.”
3. “... to everyone who asks.”
4. “... to those who received his spirit.”

## MEMORY VERSE

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

The Holy Spirit gives us the courage to witness about Jesus.

## TEACHING TIP

- As you lead the Bible study, witness to students by revealing how God has worked in your life.

# STUDY TWO

**ACTS 3:1-16; 4:1-22**

## BETTER THAN MONEY

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

As Peter and John approached the Temple for prayer, a beggar called out and asked them for money. Because of the beggar’s physical condition, he was unable to worship God in the Temple. He was unclean, an outsider. Instead of giving money, Peter healed him in the name of Jesus. (See Luke 13:10-13 for a similar incident by Jesus, one of the many stories where Jesus healed people.) In this story we get a glimpse of what the book of Acts is about: the early believers shared the good news about Jesus and salvation with everyone, not just the religious insiders.

The beggar, fully restored, joins Peter and John in praising God. Peter declared that the healing of the beggar happened by the name of Jesus. We see that Jesus’ power is not limited. He can do miraculous things in order to heal and save people.

The religious leaders arrested Peter and John. However, the apostles were prepared because Jesus taught them not to worry about what to say when this happens. Instead, the Holy Spirit would help them (Luke 12:11-12). So, guided by the Holy Spirit, Peter spoke confidently in front of this group of angry, religious leaders. He repeated his message of good news about Jesus, who alone brings salvation.

The Sanhedrin did not want this message about Jesus to spread. They commanded the apostles to stop preaching in the name of Jesus. Peter and John recognized that their first obligation was to obey God. The Spirit enabled Peter, the faithful witness, to speak courageously. Only months earlier, Peter denied his association with Jesus. However, after Pentecost, he was able to publicly defend his Lord.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

**the Sadducees** — Jewish leaders from families of priests who believed in following strictly the Law of Moses. They did not believe in the resurrection of the dead or in angels. (They were also called “teachers of the law.”)

**to repent** — to turn away from the sin and to turn to God.

**clean & unclean** — categories that define certain people, animals and food according to Jewish law and customs. Usually, someone could make an unclean thing clean by performing a special ritual, called a ceremonial washing. In the New Testament, Jesus demonstrated that clean and unclean was more internal than external. Only God can make a person clean. See Ezekiel 36:24-27 for more information.

**salvation** — everything that God does to forgive people of their sins and to help them obey him. Only God can save people from sin.

**the Sanhedrin** — a group of Jewish leaders who acted as a legal court.

**a witness** — someone who tells others what he or she saw or experienced. A Christian witness is a person who tells others about Jesus and salvation.

**a temple** — a special place of worship in Jerusalem used by the Jews in biblical times. The first temple was built by Solomon. See 1 Kings 6 for details.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- masking tape, optional (you may choose another way to designate “the jail” for your lesson)

Before class, use the masking tape to designate a large square area on the floor to be “the jail.” This area should be large enough for students to stand or sit.

During the study, read and discuss the Bible story’s main points. Lead the conversation so that children will talk about Jesus. Every time a student mentions Jesus, he or she must go to jail. Say, **In the time of Peter and John many believers were arrested and sent to jail for speaking about Jesus. What do you think they did in prison?**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson’s scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 115-116.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **What did Peter and John share with the beggar? Do you think it was valuable? Why or why not?**
2. **Did the beggar receive what he expected? If you were the beggar, how would you feel about your healing experience?**
3. **When you repent from sin, God often begins to change your mind and thoughts about some subjects. In what ways has God changed your thoughts? What other things begin to**

**change when you change your thoughts?**

**4. How do you think Peter and John felt standing in front of the very people who had sentenced Jesus to death? Was the Holy Spirit with Peter and John? How do you know?**

**5. Can you think of some times when it is difficult for Christians to do what is right instead of going along with the crowd?**

Say, **Sometimes it is difficult for Christians to do what is right. However, we can be confident that the Holy Spirit will be with us when we obey God. The Holy Spirit is our source of hope, courage, and peace.**

### **MEMORY VERSE**

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Choose from these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Use a computer or reference books to research another religion. What does that religion say about how to obtain salvation? What are the steps a person must take? Compare this to what we believe. Read Acts 4:12 again. What do you believe about salvation? Share your research with the class.
2. Find out as much information about the Temple as you can and draw or build a model of it.

## **QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 3:1-16; 4:1-22 to them.

**1 When did Peter and John go to the Temple? (3:1)**

1. At the time of prayer
2. At three o'clock in the afternoon
3. **Both answers are correct.**

**2 What was the name of the temple gate? (3:2)**

1. Gorgeous
2. **Beautiful**
3. Handsome

**3 What happened after Peter took the crippled man by the hand? (3:7-8)**

1. **The crippled man jumped to his feet and began to walk.**
2. The crippled man fell down and cried.
3. Peter carried the crippled man into the temple courts.

**4 By faith in the name of Jesus, what happened to the crippled man? (3:16)**

1. He became a preacher.
2. **The man was made strong.**
3. He received a lot of money.

**5 What did the priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees do with Peter and John? (4:1-3)**

1. They tried to kill them.
2. They paid them for healing the crippled man.
3. **They seized them and put them in jail.**

**6** The number of believers grew after Peter and John healed the man. To how many people did the number grow? (4:4)

1. About 5,000
2. About 7,000
3. About 10,000

**7** How does the book of Acts describe Peter when he spoke to the rulers and elders of the people? (4:8)

1. Peter was excited.
2. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit
3. Peter was afraid.

**8** Who is the stone that the builders rejected, who has become the capstone? (4:10-11)

1. Peter
2. Jesus
3. John

**9** What happened when the rulers and elders of the people saw the courage of Peter and John? (4:13)

1. They were afraid.
2. They were excited.
3. They were astonished.

**10** After Peter and John healed the crippled man, what command did the rulers and elders of the people give them? (4:18)

1. "Go home and get some rest."
2. "Share with everyone what you saw and heard."
3. "Do not speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus."

## QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 3:1-16; 4:1-22 to them.

**1** What did the crippled man do at the temple gate called Beautiful? (3:2)

1. He ate there.
2. He sold fruits and vegetables there.
3. He begged there every day.
4. He rested there while others worshiped.

**2** How much silver and gold did Peter give the crippled man? (3:6)

1. None
2. 10 shekels
3. A half-shekel
4. 100 shekels

**3** After the crippled man began to walk, what did he do? (3:8)

1. He went with Peter and John into the temple courts.
2. He walked and jumped.
3. He praised God.
4. All of the answers are correct.

**4** Of what were Peter and John witnesses? (3:15)

1. That the crippled man faked his infirmity
2. That the crippled man was a thief
3. That God raised Jesus from the dead
4. That Jesus came back in the same way He was taken up



## **5** What made the man strong? (3:16)

1. Magic
2. Medicine
- 3. Faith**
4. Peter's own power

## **6** Peter and John were put in jail. What happened afterwards? (4:3-4)

- 1. Many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.**
2. The crippled man who was healed went free.
3. Peter and John escaped.
4. All of the answers are correct.

## **7** In whose name did Peter say that the man was healed? (4:9-10)

1. In Peter's name
2. In God's name
3. In the name of the citizens of Jerusalem
- 4. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**

## **8** Peter and John said they could not stop speaking about something. What was it? (4:19-20)

1. About the man who was healed
2. About how Jesus ascended into heaven
- 3. About what they saw and heard**
4. About the way they were mistreated in jail

## **9** Why did the rulers allow Peter and John to go free? (4:21)

1. Because Peter and John paid a fine
- 2. Because all the people were praising God for what had happened**
3. Because the jail was full
4. Because someone bribed them

## **10** Finish this verse: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men..."(Acts 4:12)

1. "...to which we must obey."
2. "...as strong as the name of Jesus."
3. "...that we must fear."
- 4. "...by which we must be saved."**

## MEMORY VERSE

“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Hebrews 13:16).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God meets the needs of others through obedient people.

## TEACHING TIP

- Help children to understand the motive behind Ananias and Sapphira’s deception. Motive is the reason we do the things we do. God cares about how we respond to others outwardly. But he also cares about how we respond to him inwardly.

# STUDY THREE

**ACTS 4:23—5:11**

## ONE IN HEART AND MIND

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

The believers of the Early Church sometimes chose to share their property, or the money from the sale of their property, with others. Charity among the community encouraged friendship, maturity, and a radical trust in God. However, giving money and property was voluntary.

There are two different examples of believers who shared their possessions: one through honesty and one through deceit.

Barnabas sold a field and gave the money to the apostles. This is an example of a faithful and honest giver. Later, we will learn about Barnabas’s role as an encourager to the believers when he supported Paul in ministry.

In contrast to Barnabas were two other believers: Ananias and his wife Sapphira. They also sold their property, but they kept some of the money for themselves. When they gave part of the money to the disciples, they pretended that it was the full amount. In this story, we have the first record of sin in the Early Church. They sinned by lying to God and others.

The apostles gave both of them the opportunity to repent, but they continued to lie. Their punishment was quick, and they both died.

Ananias and Sapphira’s punishment may seem harsh. However, the Early Church learned an important lesson. Even though their faith in Jesus freed them from some of the restrictions of the Jewish laws, it did not mean that they were free to be immoral. Lying and disrespect for authority had no place in the community of faith.

Unfortunately, the Spirit’s work in the lives of Ananias and Sapphira did not change their love of prestige and

money. However, the Spirit's work in the lives of believers should lead to freedom and generosity, as exemplified by Barnabas. Let's follow his example!

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

a **believer** — a person who believes that Jesus is God's Son. Believers accept Jesus as their Saviour, and they love and obey him.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- An inexpensive gift for each child (for example: a piece of fruit, bread, cookie, candy, toy or trinket)
- play money (Use money from a game or create your own by cutting out strips of paper and writing different amounts on each one)

Distribute inexpensive gifts to some, but not all, of the children.

Instruct them not to play with or eat their new possession. Designate an adult leader or one child to be in charge of the play money. Encourage children to sell their possessions and give the money to someone who does not have a possession. Encourage the banker to buy and sell items so that in the end, every child has a gift.

Say, **The gifts represent our daily needs. God intends for us to be compassionate and generous to one another. When we share, we will help those in need. The early Christians helped others, and we can help others also.**

Discuss how the early Christians helped each other by selling some of their possessions to help those in need.

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 116-118.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **When Peter and John were released from prison, they returned to the believers and prayed together. They asked for boldness to preach God's Word. How important should prayer be in our lives?**
2. **The believers shared what they had with those in need. How can Christians today share what they have with people who are in need?**
3. **Ananias and Sapphira were not honest with God. People can be dishonest in different ways. What are some ways people can be dishonest?**
4. **After the death of Ananias and Sapphira, the Early Church saw that their choices had consequences. What do you think they learned from this experience?**

Say, **God wants us to see that our choices affect our world and our relationships. Bad choices cause negative consequences, and good choices cause positive consequences. God loves us. God is both merciful and just in his love. We**

**can be confident that he is a good judge. He will always do what is right.**

### **MEMORY VERSE**

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Choose from any of these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. In Acts 4:24-30, the believers prayed, praising God for all that he did. They asked him for boldness to preach the Word. Read their prayer. Then, with your students, write "a believers' prayer" that you can recite together. The "believers' prayer" in Acts mentioned scripture that was familiar to those people. It also mentioned problems and praises that were common to that group of believers. Use the prayer in Acts as a pattern to write a prayer that is meaningful to your class.
2. Barnabas was one of the believers who sold land and brought the money to the apostles. A person's name often has a special meaning. The name Barnabas means "someone who encourages." Ask the students if their names have a special meaning. If possible, research the meaning of some of the names of your students before class.
3. Provide a piece of paper for each student. Assist them with writing their names in large, fancy lettering. Decorate the page, and draw a thick, black border at the edge of each one. Encourage the students to hang the sign in their bedrooms or on the walls of their homes.

## **QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 4:23-5:11 to them.

**1 After Peter and John gave their report, the people prayed. What happened afterwards? (4:31)**

1. The place where they were meeting was shaken.
2. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.
3. **Both answers are correct.**

**2 Who were one in heart and mind? (4:32)**

1. The Jews
2. **All the believers**
3. The Gentiles

**3 What did the believers do with their possessions? (4:32)**

1. **They shared everything they had.**
2. They became selfish and kept everything to themselves.
3. None of them had possessions.

**4 How many needy persons were among the believers? (4:34)**

1. Just a few
2. Hundreds
3. **None**

**5 What does the name Barnabas mean? (4:36)**

1. Son of God
2. **Son of Encouragement**
3. Son of Thunder

**6 Who sold a piece of property and kept back part of the money? (5:1-2)**

1. Ananias and Sapphira
2. Barnabas and Joseph.
3. Both answers are correct.

**7 Peter said that Ananias lied. To whom did he lie? (5:3-4)**

1. To Peter
2. To his wife, Sapphira
3. To the Holy Spirit

**8 Peter asked Sapphira, “Is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?” What was Sapphira’s answer? (5:7-8)**

1. “Yes, that is the price.”
2. “What did Ananias say?”
3. “No, we received more.”

**9 What happened to Sapphira? (5:10)**

1. She fell at Peter’s feet and died.
2. She was buried next to her husband.
3. Both answers are correct.

**10 Finish this verse: “And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices...” (Hebrews 13:16)**

1. “...you will be rewarded.”
2. “...God is pleased.”
3. “...come great things.”

## QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 4:23-5:11 to them.

**1 What did the people do when Peter and John reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them? (4:23-24)**

1. They raised their voices in prayer to God.
2. They cried out in disbelief.
3. They tore their clothes and mourned.
4. They celebrated.

**2 After Peter and John were released, the people prayed. What happened afterwards? (4:31)**

1. The place where they were meeting was shaken.
2. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.
3. They spoke the word of God boldly.
4. All of the answers are correct.

**3 Who shared everything they had? (4:32)**

1. Only Peter and John
2. Only the women and children
3. All the believers
4. No one

**4 Who was called Barnabas? (4:36)**

1. Peter, one of the apostles
2. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus
3. The high priest
4. The apostle who replaced Judas Iscariot

**5 What did Barnabas do with the money from a field that he sold? (4:36-37)**

1. He kept all the money for himself.
2. He kept some of the money for himself.
3. He bought a house for the apostles.
4. **He put it at the apostles' feet.**

**6 According to Peter, to whom did Ananias lie? (5:3)**

1. The apostles
2. His wife, Sapphira
3. **The Holy Spirit**
4. All of the answers are correct

**7 When did Ananias fall down and die? (5:3-5)**

1. When he saw Peter
2. When Sapphira told him that Peter knew what they had done
3. **After Peter said that Ananias had lied to God**
4. When the apostles asked Peter about the money

**8 How much did Sapphira say they got for the land? (5:7-8)**

1. Not enough
2. **The amount that Ananias gave to the apostles**
3. More than Ananias gave to the apostles
4. She did not know how much they got for the land.

**9 What seized the whole church and all who heard about Ananias and Sapphira? (5:11)**

1. An overwhelming peace
2. **A great fear**
3. A fierce anger
4. A sense of pride

**10 According to Hebrews 13:16, what should we not forget?**

1. To say our prayers before bed each night
2. To give all our money to the poor
3. **To do good and to share with others**
4. To read the Bible and to go to church

## MEMORY VERSE

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God is with us, even in times of persecution.

## TEACHING TIPS

- Remind the children that we should always take a stand for what is right, even when we stand alone. We must depend on God’s help to stand strong against the crowd.
- Forgiveness and reconciliation are important concepts to learn. However, children also should know that God values justice and right relationships. God calls us to protect and to care for children who are harmed or abused.

# STUDY FOUR

**ACTS 6:1-15; 7:51—8:3**

## STEPHEN’S STONING, SCATTERING CHURCH

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

The Early Church faced many problems including prejudice and persecution. The first Christians were known for their generosity and charity. However, a problem of unfair food distribution threatened to divide the Church. The apostles handled the conflict well. They recognized the need for more leaders to work in specific areas of ministry. Stephen was one of these leaders to whom the apostles gave administrative duties. The apostles chose him and six others. These men were wise and filled with the Spirit. Because of their faithfulness, the good news about Jesus spread quickly.

Stephen’s ministry was not limited to food distribution. He preached and performed miracles, like the ones prophesied by Joel and mentioned in Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost. Like Peter, his preaching was not welcomed by some religious leaders. They lied, and hired other people to lie, so that Stephen would be brought to their religious court, the Sanhedrin, for a trial. Though Stephen was innocent and his accusers were liars, the Sanhedrin executed him.

Stephen’s life and death are similar to other biblical narratives. Stephen’s vision of God is an echo of the story of Moses’ meeting with God on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 34:29). The accusations made against Stephen are similar to those made against Jesus. Stephen compared his accusers to the unrepentant Israelites in the desert. Like Jesus, Stephen’s concern at the time of his death was the forgiveness of his killers. Stephen became the first Christian martyr, and he

reflected the heart and mind of Jesus in life as well as at his death.

After Stephen's execution, a period of persecution against the Church began. At the end of Stephen's story, the reader of Acts is introduced to Saul, a main character in the book. Saul and other opponents of Christianity tried to eliminate the message of Jesus Christ by persecuting the early believers.

However, instead of hindering the message, this persecution scattered the believers and caused God's message to spread further. These believers trusted the Holy Spirit to help them each day to be bold and share God's message everywhere they went.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

**blasphemy** — the act of speaking inappropriately about God. People often accused Jesus of blasphemy.

**a prophet** — someone whom God has chosen to receive and deliver his messages.

**a synagogue** — The word means "assembly" and in the Bible it refers to a Jewish place of prayer.

**persecution** — physical abuse, ridicule, or suffering a person experiences from others because of what he or she believes.

**prejudice** — a preconceived idea or bias toward members of a certain group.

**forgiveness** — the act of releasing someone from a punishment that they deserve.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- glow sticks, small flashlights, or candles

During the study give each child a glow stick, flashlight, or candle. Have the children stand in a line. Turn out the lights and tell the

first child to create a light (break a glow stick, turn on the flashlight, or light the candle). Then tell the next child in line to do the same. Continue down the line to create a chain of lights. Ask, **What is the room like before the lights are lit? What happens as more people illuminate their lights? How does this illustrate what happens in the world as people hear about the gospel? Say, Just as we created a chain of lights together, the disciples needed help to take care of the believers and spread the light of the good news about Jesus. What did they do to get the help they needed?**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 118-119.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **Why were the Grecian Jews unhappy? Explain your answer. How do Christians today take care of those in need?**
2. **When you have a difference of opinion with a brother or sister, how can you reach a fair decision?**
3. **How was Stephen's reaction to those who were stoning him similar to**



what Jesus did on the Cross?

4. Saul began persecuting the church after Stephen's death. Are Christians today persecuted? Have you ever experienced persecution?
5. How do you think God wants us to respond when we face issues of unfairness and persecution? Read Micah 6:8.

Say, **There will be many things that happen to us in life which we will not be able to control. However, we do have the ability to choose our response to those things. God expects us to demonstrate love, mercy, justice and to humbly obey him at all times.**

### MEMORY VERSE

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Stephen was executed because of his faith. Ask the students to research other people who were killed for their faith (martyrs). Use a Bible encyclopaedia or dictionary to find the information.
2. Help the students to interview older people in their families, churches or communities. Ask questions about people who have died. Make a note of the person's name, age at time of death, and any other information available. Inquire about the person's faith and what type of influence he or she had on those around them. Compare and contrast this to Stephen's life and death.

## QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 6:1-15; 7:51—8:3 to them.

### 1 What were the Grecian Jews complaining about? (6:1)

1. Their men did not have enough work.
2. Their widows were overlooked.
3. Both answers are correct.

### 2 Who was a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit? (6:5)

1. Stephen
2. Nicolas
3. Philip

### 3 Against what could the members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen not stand up? (6:9-10)

1. The wisdom of Stephen
2. The Spirit by whom Stephen spoke
3. Both answers are correct.

### 4 When the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, they noticed something about his face. What was it? (6:15)

1. His face was full of fear.
2. His face was like the face of an angel.
3. His face showed no emotion.

### 5 How were the members of the Sanhedrin just like their fathers? (7:51)

1. They always resisted the Holy Spirit.
2. They did not give food to the widows.
3. They always followed the Holy Spirit.

## **6** What did Stephen see when he looked up to heaven? (7:55-56)

1. He saw the angels bowing at the feet of God.
2. He saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.
3. He saw the apostles next to Jesus.

## **7** What did Stephen pray while he was being stoned? (7:59)

1. "Lord Jesus, take this punishment from me."
2. "Lord Jesus, punish these people."
3. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

## **8** Who gave approval to Stephen's death? (8:1)

1. Saul
2. Peter
3. John

## **9** What happened on the day of Stephen's death? (8:1)

1. Many people became sick and died.
2. The Holy Spirit filled all the believers.
3. A great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem.

## **10** After Stephen's death, what did Saul do? (8:3)

1. He began to destroy the church.
2. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.
3. Both answers are correct.

## **QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 6:1-15; 7:51—8:3 to them.

### **1** How does the book of Acts describe Stephen? (6:5)

1. A man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit
2. A wealthy man with a lot of property
3. A man with an unimportant job
4. All of the answers are correct.

### **2** What happened when the members from the Synagogue of the Freedmen tried to argue with Stephen? (6:9-10)

1. They won their arguments.
2. They could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke.
3. Stephen became angry and argued with them.
4. The Lord struck them down.

### **3** What were some men persuaded to say about Stephen? (6:11)

1. "We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God."
2. "Stephen did nothing wrong; let him continue working among us."
3. "Take Stephen and his lies away from us."
4. "Every word that Stephen speaks is true."

**4 What did those who were sitting in the Sanhedrin see when they looked intently at Stephen? (6:15)**

1. They saw that his eyes were closed.
2. They saw him laughing.
3. They saw angels surrounding him.
4. **They saw that his face was like the face of an angel.**

**5 What did Stephen do when he was full of the Holy Spirit? (7:55)**

1. He looked up to heaven.
2. He saw the glory of God.
3. He saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

**6 What did the witnesses of Stephen's stoning do? (7:58)**

1. They prayed for Stephen.
2. They cried out in anguish.
3. They cheered for those who were stoning him.
4. **They laid their clothes at the feet of Saul.**

**7 What did Stephen cry out when he fell on his knees? (7:60)**

1. "Lord, punish them for this sin against me."
2. "Lord, please help me."
3. **"Lord, do not hold this sin against them."**
4. "Lord, protect the other believers."

**8 Who were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria because a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem?**

1. **Everyone except the apostles.**
2. Only Phillip and Stephen.
3. All the Jews.
4. No one.

**9 What did Saul begin to do after Stephen's death? (8:3)**

1. Destroy the church
2. Go from house to house
3. Drag off men and women and put them in prison
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

**10 Finish this verse: "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive..." (James 1:12)**

1. "... immeasurable rewards and eternal life."
2. **"... the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him."**
3. "... all that he desires."
4. "... ten times what he sacrificed."

## MEMORY VERSE

“The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple” (Psalm 119:130).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God helps us to understand his words so that we may have a relationship with him.

## TEACHING TIPS

- When John and Peter went to Samaria to greet the believers, it was an historic event. There were hundreds of years of separation, resentment, and contempt between the Jews and the Samaritans. Years of animosity gave way to a spirit of unity and oneness as these men became brothers in Christ.
- In this story, Ethiopia refers to a different place than present-day Ethiopia. It was a combination of present-day southern Egypt and northern Sudan. In the Bible, this area is also referred to as Cush and Nubia.

# STUDY FIVE

## ACTS 8:4-40

## PHILIP ON THE ROAD

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

After the Church scattered, believers preached wherever they went.

Philip was one of the early believers who left Jerusalem because of the persecution. He went to Samaria and preached about the kingdom of God. Because of his obedience, many people believed and were baptized, including a sorcerer named Simon.

Because of Philip’s faithful work, Peter and John came from Jerusalem to pray for the new believers. The apostles put their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw this, he wanted to buy the ability to give the Holy Spirit to people. Like Ananias and Sapphira, we have a story of an early believer committing a sin, and the apostles quickly correcting the situation.

Peter rebuked Simon because he was more impressed with the display of power than the concern for other people’s salvation. He wanted to control God’s Spirit so that he could continue to be a powerful person. Peter said that Simon’s heart was not right before God. Peter told him to repent of his wickedness. Simon recognized Peter’s authority and asked him to pray for him. It is unclear whether Peter did this or not, or if Simon repented for his sin. Repentance involves a change of thought, intentions, and actions: to turn away from selfish desires and to turn toward God.

Next, the Spirit led Philip to speak to an Ethiopian eunuch. According to Deuteronomy 23:1, a eunuch was not allowed to enter the Temple. Even so, he was a devout man, and he went to Jerusalem to worship. He was on his way home when he met Philip. Philip explained to him

that Jesus was the Christ. This news about Jesus helped the Ethiopian to better understand God's message of love. This revelation changed his life. Philip baptized the Ethiopian.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

a **sorcerer** — a person who practices black magic, or uses incantations or spells to gain supernatural powers through evil spirits. Simon was a sorcerer who bragged about his own power rather than the power of God.

to **sin** — to disobey God. Sin is putting your own will above God's will. Sin can refer to a person's spiritual condition or to an action.

a **eunuch** — a man who is not able to have children. Eunuchs were often members of the royal court.

## ACTIVITY

Before the study, recruit an adult who enjoys doing funny and silly actions that will make the children laugh. During the study, encourage the children to play the game "follow-the-leader." The leader will perform an action (jump up and down, hope on one foot, twist his or her ears, and so on). The children imitate the leader's action. After a few seconds, the leader will do a different action and the students must do exactly what the leader does. Play the game for as long as time allows.

Say, **Today's Bible study is about Philip. Saul searched for Christians to arrest. He went from house to house to find them. Because it was no longer safe to stay in Jerusalem, the Christians scattered in many different directions. When Philip left Jerusalem, he was following his leader—God. God's Spirit led Philip to Samaria and to the desert. In today's**

**study we will learn more about what Philip did as he followed his leader.**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 119-121.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **The persecution of the believers caused them to scatter to many different regions. How did this become a good thing?**
2. **Why was it such a major event when the apostles sent Peter and John to Samaria?**
3. **Have you seen broken relationships that were healed and united by the power of the Holy Spirit? Share those stories with each other.**
4. **Philip obeyed the Lord. How important is it for you to obey the Lord? Explain your answer.**
5. **The Ethiopian asked to be baptized. Have you been baptized? Do you think it is important to be baptized? Why?**

Say, **God is capable of doing miracles when people boldly obey God. The Holy Spirit will help us to choose obedience to God above our own pride or selfishness.**

## MEMORY VERSE

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Choose from any of these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Create a Bible verse test using the passage for today's Bible study. Write sentences from the passage but leave out the most important word. Distribute the tests among the children, and ask them to complete them. Example: Philip went down to a city in \_\_\_\_\_ (8:5).
2. Philip and the Ethiopian were different in many ways. They had very different physical characteristics. They were from different countries, and they were from different cultures. Choose another culture that interests you. Create a report on what you discover. What are some interesting differences? What are some things your culture has in common with the other culture? When we know about another person, it becomes easier to share God's love with them. Remember, God invites everyone to accept his salvation. Share what you discovered with the children.

## QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 8:4-40 to them.

### **1** What did Philip do in Samaria? (8:5)

1. He worked for the city.
2. **He proclaimed about Christ.**
3. He practiced sorcery.

### **2** Who practiced sorcery in the city of Samaria? (8:9)

1. **Simon**
2. Philip
3. Saul

### **3** Why did people follow Simon the sorcerer? (8:9-11)

1. Because he could heal them
2. **Because he amazed them for a long time with his magic**
3. Because he gave them a lot of money

### **4** What happened when Peter and John placed their hands on the new believers of Samaria? (8:17)

1. **They received the Holy Spirit**
2. They heard the sound of a violent wind
3. Nothing

### **5** What did Simon do when he saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of hands? (8:18)

1. He offered to become a disciple of Peter and John.
2. **He offered Peter and John money.**
3. He laid his hands on Peter and John.

### **6** What did Peter tell Simon the sorcerer to do after he tried to pay to receive the Holy Spirit? (8:20-22)

1. "Repent of the wickedness."
2. "Pray to the Lord."
3. **Both answers are correct.**

### **7** What was the Ethiopian doing when Philip met him? (8:28)

1. Sleeping
2. **Reading the book of Isaiah**
3. Begging for money

## **8 Who told Philip to go to the Ethiopian's chariot and stay near it? (8:29)**

1. An angel of the Lord
2. **The Spirit**
3. Peter

## **9 Who baptized the Ethiopian? (8:38)**

1. John
2. Simon
3. **Philip**

## **10 What did the Ethiopian do after he was baptized? (8:39)**

1. **He went on his way rejoicing.**
2. He went away sad.
3. Both answers are correct.

### **QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 8:4-40 to them.

## **1 What did those who had been scattered do wherever they went? (8:4)**

1. **They preached the word.**
2. They hid in their homes.
3. They prayed that God would destroy their enemies
4. All of the answers are correct.

## **2 Why did the people follow Simon? (8:11)**

1. **He amazed them for a long time with his magic.**
2. He paid them to follow him.
3. He preached about Christ.
4. All of the answers are correct.

## **3 What did the men and women do when they believed Philip and his preaching? (8:12)**

1. They stoned Simon.
2. They gave all their money to the poor.
3. They dedicated their children to God.
4. **They were baptized.**

## **4 What did Simon want the apostles to give him? (8:18-19)**

1. **The ability so that everyone he laid his hands on would receive the Holy Spirit**
2. The ability to preach like the apostles
3. The secrets of the apostles
4. The Holy Spirit

## **5 What did Peter say to Simon when he tried to buy the gift of God with money? (8:20-23)**

1. "You have no part or share in this ministry."
2. "Your heart is not right before God."
3. "Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord."
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

## **6 Why did the Ethiopian eunuch go to Jerusalem? (8:27)**

1. To sign agreements between his country and Jerusalem
2. To visit Candace, queen of the Ethiopians
3. To purchase food and clothing
4. **To worship**

## **7 What was the Ethiopian reading when Philip met him? (8:28)**

1. The book of Revelation
2. **The book of Isaiah**
3. Treasury reports
4. The book of Jeremiah

**8 What did Philip tell the Ethiopian when he asked about the person mentioned in the book of Isaiah? (8:34-35)**

1. Philip told him the good news of Jesus.
2. Philip told him about Stephen's stoning.
3. Philip told him that he did not understand what the prophet meant.
4. Philip told him that he must first be baptized.

**9 Where did Philip appear after he baptized the Ethiopian? (8:40)**

1. In Azotus
2. In Samaria
3. In Ethiopia
4. In Jerusalem

**10 According to Psalm 119:130, what gives light and understanding to the simple? (Psalm 119:130)**

1. The sun
2. A picture of Jesus
3. The unfolding of God's words
4. The moon and stars



## MEMORY VERSE

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God transforms who we are and how we live.

## TEACHING TIPS

- Damascus was a city on the edge of a desert. It was a very busy trading centre about 225 kilometres from Jerusalem. The trip would take about a week and a half on foot, which was the normal way of travel.
- Acts 8:18 and 9:17 refers to the “laying on of hands.” This was a common biblical practice, and the Church still does this today. When we lay our hands on someone, we are representing the Spirit of God in the form of a physical touch.

# STUDY SIX

## ACTS 9:1-31

## SAUL TRANSFORMED

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Saul’s story of transformation is one of many dramatic conversion stories in Acts. This type of experience does not happen to everyone, but the story reminds us that God reaches people through a multitude of methods.

Saul’s conversion happened after his personal encounter with the risen Christ. After his conversion, Saul became part of the same community of believers that he persecuted. Ananias and most of the believers in Damascus knew about Saul and feared him. However, the Lord used Ananias to heal Saul and to welcome him into the community of believers. Barnabas encouraged the other disciples to accept Saul, and he became a friend and supporter of Saul’s ministry.

Because of Saul’s past lifestyle, God was able to use him in unique ways to share the gospel with Jews, and, later, to share it with Gentiles.

Saul suffered persecution because he refused to yield to the pressure of Christ’s adversaries. Those who discounted Jesus as Lord and Christ also resisted Saul’s testimony. It is common for faithful followers of Jesus to experience opposition, since people who seek positions of power often disregard Jesus and his message.

Even though Saul had a dramatic experience of conversion, he did not stop growing as a disciple of Christ. His growth continued throughout his life. Each day he learned more about who God wanted him to be. As other believers taught him more about Jesus, his zeal for proclaiming the faith to all people grew. Previously, he brought fear and death to people, but after he met Jesus he proclaimed hope and life.

As Christians, God asks us to do many of the same tasks as those early believers. Ananias and Barnabas teach us to encourage one another despite our fears. From Saul, we learn to proclaim hope and light to those who live in fear and darkness. Like so many other early believers, most of whom are never named in Acts, we learn our job is to be faithful witnesses to the on-going work of Christ.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

**faith** — trust in God that leads people to believe what God has said, depend on him, and obey him. Faith is trust in action.

**Saul** — also known as Saul of Tarsus, Saul was a Roman citizen who dedicated his early life to persecuting Christians. He converted to Christianity, and became a prominent leader of the Early Church. After his conversion he was called Paul.

**the Gentiles** — any person who is not a Jew.

**the Church** — the people who know and love God and his Son, Jesus. The Church is all believers, everywhere. The “Early Church” is a term which refers to the first believers, and contemporaries of Paul.

**the Way** — the Christian faith. At first, the word “Christian” was not used to describe those who believed in Jesus. Instead, the early Christians used the phrase “followers of the Way” to describe themselves. In John 14:6, Jesus describes himself as “the Way.”

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- Pieces of paper (one for each child)
- Pen or pencil

Before class, write the words of 2 Corinthians 5:17 on pieces of paper. Prepare enough for

each child. Distribute the verses to the children. Say, **God has the power to change a person’s life. In today’s study, we learn about a man who changed completely. Here is a Bible verse that tells about this change.**

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Discuss the meaning of any words or phrases that are unfamiliar to the children.

Help the children to form groups of two so that they can help each other memorize the verse. Instruct the children to take turns reading a word of the verse. The first child reads the first word, then the other child reads the second one. The first child then reads the third word, and the other child reads the fourth one. Continue until the children can say the verse without looking at the paper.

Say, **In today’s study, Saul changed his ideas and beliefs about Jesus. You can take the paper with the verse to your home and teach the verse to someone else.**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson’s scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 121-122.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **Why did Saul hate Jesus’ followers so much?**

2. **Why do you think the conversion of Saul is so important?**
3. **If you had been Ananias how do you think you would have felt when the Lord told you to go talk to Saul?**
4. **Barnabas accepted Saul as a person whom God changed. How do you accept people who have been changed by the Lord? Are you willing to lay aside old feelings and help a new Christian?**
5. **When Saul arrived in Damascus, Ananias was praying. Do you think this was helpful to Ananias as he tried to understand what God asked of him? Why?**

Say, **God often works in ways that we do not expect. We must put aside our own ideas and trust him. Prayer is important for exactly this reason. Prayer is not only talking to God, but also listening. God often reveals his will for us when we pray and seek his direction.**

### **MEMORY VERSE**

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Choose from these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Discuss ways that God communicated with Saul and Ananias (light, voice, vision, another believer, and so on). Write each of these methods on a separate piece of paper. Provide a large sheet of paper and some crayons, pens or pencils. Ask for volunteers to select one of the small pieces of paper.

Then, ask him or her to draw something to represent that method of communication. Assist them as needed. For instance, if the piece of paper has "voice" written on it, the child could draw a mouth. Let the other children try to guess which form of communication the child drew. Display on the classroom wall the new poster along with the Bible verse. Say, **God used some unusual ways to talk to Saul and Ananias. God still communicates with us today. He wants to hear from you.**

2. Say, **God still communicates with people today.** Ask the children to tell ways that God might speak to them. Make a list of these methods on a chalkboard or a large piece of paper. Include such methods as prayer, music, poems, songs, Bible verses, Bible lessons, sermons, testimonies, friends, other Christians, family members, and books. Say, **God loves us and shows concern for what we experience. He knows when we are discouraged or in need of some help. If you want to hear from God, remember the list we made. Imagine all the unique ways God could use to communicate with you. Be ready to hear him!**

## QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 9:1-31 to them.

**1 Who breathed out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples? (9:1)**

1. Philip
2. Saul
3. Peter

**2 Who said, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (9:4-5)**

1. Stephen
2. Peter and John
3. Jesus

**3 What happened when Saul got up from the ground? (9:8)**

1. He ran away.
2. He could not see anything.
3. He looked for the voice that spoke to him.

**4 In Damascus, to whom did the Lord call in a vision? (9:10)**

1. The Ethiopian
2. John
3. Ananias

**5 What did the Lord tell Ananias to do in Damascus? (9:11)**

1. "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street."
2. "Ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul."
3. Both answers are correct.

**6 What happened when Ananias placed his hands on Saul? (9:17-18)**

1. Saul's sight was restored and he ran away.
2. Something like scales fell from Saul's

eyes, and he could see again.

3. Saul arrested Ananias and dragged him to prison.

**7 What happened after Saul could see again? (9:18-19)**

1. He was baptized.
2. He ate some food.
3. Both answers are correct.

**8 When did Saul begin to preach in the synagogues in Damascus that Jesus is the Son of God? (9:20)**

1. After about a week
2. After he received enough training
3. At once

**9 Who baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ? (9:22)**

1. Saul
2. Ananias
3. Peter

**10 Who took Saul to the apostles and told them about Saul? (9:27)**

1. Peter
2. Barnabas
3. Ananias

## QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 9:1-31 to them.

**Against whom was Saul breathing out murderous threats? (9:1)**

1. The Lord's disciples
2. The high priest
3. Only the twelve apostles
4. All of the answers are correct.

## **2 Why did Saul want letters for the synagogues in Damascus? (9:1-2)**

1. So that he could tell them about the new high priest
2. **So that if he found anyone who belonged to the Way, he could put them in prison**
3. So he could tell them what they were doing wrong
4. So he would have permission to preach there

## **3 What happened as Saul neared Damascus? (9:3-4)**

1. Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.
2. He fell to the ground.
3. He heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

## **4 The Lord said Saul was his chosen instrument. What would Saul do? (9:15)**

1. He would lead the Jews into the promised land.
2. **He would carry the Lord's name before the Gentiles, their kings, and the people of Israel.**
3. He would persecute the Jews and the Gentiles.
4. He would punish anyone who stood in the way of the disciples.

## **5 Why did Saul's followers take him by night and lower him in a basket through an opening in the wall? (9:23-25)**

1. Because the gates were locked
2. **Because the Jews conspired to kill him**
3. Because Saul's followers were ashamed of

him

4. Because Saul was still blind

## **6 Who was afraid of Saul when he came to Jerusalem? (9:26)**

1. The Jews and Gentiles
2. His friends and family
3. **The disciples**
4. Barnabas and John

## **7 What did Barnabas tell the apostles about Saul? (9:27)**

1. How Saul on his journey to Damascus saw the Lord
2. How the Lord spoke to Saul
3. How in Damascus Saul preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

## **8 What happened when the brothers learned that the Grecian Jews tried to kill Saul? (9:29-30)**

1. **They took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.**
2. They arrested the Grecian Jews.
3. They guarded Saul with guns and spears.
4. They disowned Saul.

## **9 What happened to the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria? (9:31)**

1. It enjoyed a time of peace.
2. It was strengthened.
3. It was encouraged by the Holy Spirit and grew in numbers.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

**10** Finish this verse: “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, ...”  
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

1. “... to be forever forgotten!”
2. “... **the new has come!**”
3. “... and has been washed as white as snow!”
4. “... eternal life is yours!”

## MEMORY VERSE

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God is able to change the way that we think.

## TEACHING TIP

- Joppa is a town on the Mediterranean coast, about 56 kilometres from Jerusalem.

# STUDY SEVEN

## ACTS 10:1-23

## TO EAT OR NOT TO EAT

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

God sometimes used visions to reveal his will and purpose. Two visions occur in this story.

Cornelius was a Gentile soldier who lived in Caesarea. Acts describes him and his family as “devout and God-fearing” (10:1). Cornelius was a man with authority whose devotion to God was displayed in acts of generosity and faithful prayers.

Early believers prayed three times a day (at nine o’clock in the morning, noon, and at three o’clock in the afternoon). So, it is not surprising to see that Cornelius was praying. During his prayer time, he saw an angel of God who told him to send for Peter. The story does not tell us if Cornelius experienced any doubt at this request, but he must have known that Jews were not allowed to enter the home of a Gentile. Yet, Cornelius faithfully obeyed God.

In the next part of the story, Peter also saw a vision. While in Joppa, he had a vision of a sheet descending from heaven with all kinds of animals in it—unclean and clean animals. Based on Jewish law, Peter knew that he was not allowed to eat anything that was labelled as unclean. However in this vision God spoke to Peter and told him “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean” (10:15). Peter did not understand what the vision meant, but he would find out very soon.

The men that Cornelius sent arrived. Because of the vision, Peter did two things that Jewish law did not allow: he invited the men to spend the night, and the next day, he went to Cornelius’ house. God was breaking down cultural barriers that separated Jews and Gentiles.

The Holy Spirit worked simultaneously in the lives of Cornelius and Peter to spread God's message to new people. Because both of these men were obedient and receptive to new ideas, many people believed in God.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

**righteous** — to be in right relationship with God and to obey him because of that relationship. To be righteous is to be like Christ in thoughts, words, and actions.

**the Law of Moses** — the rules that God gave to Moses to teach the people of Israel how to live. Sometimes, the Law of Moses is simply called the Law. These rules are found in the first five books of the Old Testament.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- Pieces of paper (one for each child)
- Pen or pencil
- A sheet, a large piece of cloth, or a large piece of paper
- Paper to make a small sign

Before class, write the word “Jew” or “Gentile” on pieces of paper. Provide one piece of paper for each child. If possible, have an equal number of each word. On one piece of paper, write “Cornelius.” Place a sheet, a large piece of cloth, or a large piece of paper on the floor. Write the words “God’s Kingdom” on a piece of paper. Place this sign in the middle of the cloth.

Say, **The Jews were people who believed in God and followed the Jewish laws. Jewish people considered themselves to be God’s people and a part of God’s kingdom. Anyone who was not a Jew was a Gentile.**

Distribute the papers to the children. Point out the cloth and the sign.

Say, **I want everyone who has the word “Jew” to stand on this cloth.**

In New Testament times, there were Gentiles who knew about God, followed his laws, and prayed to him daily. Cornelius was one of these. Ask the person who has the paper with Cornelius to step on to the cloth.

Say, **In today’s study, we learn how God worked through Cornelius to help Peter to learn an important lesson. Keep your papers. At the end of the study, we learn how Gentiles became a part of God’s kingdom. Then all of you can join “God’s kingdom” on the cloth.**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson’s scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 122-123.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **Why do you think the angel told Cornelius to send men to bring Peter back to his house?**
2. **Why was Peter concerned when the voice told him to kill and eat the animals he saw in the sheet?**
3. **What would the world be like if everyone was the same? If everything was**



**one colour or one shape? Or if there was only one kind of food to eat? Why do you think God created such a variety of people?**

4. **How do you treat people who are different from you? How do you think God wants you to treat people who are different?**

Say, **We sometimes attempt to make others like ourselves. But that is not a good goal. We can love and value a person because they are created by God. It is a better goal for us to want to be like Christ. Believers can be very different in looks and culture. But these same believers can also find familiar attitudes and actions when they are guided by the Holy Spirit.**

### **MEMORY VERSE**

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Choose from any of these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Say, **In every culture, people find ways to communicate through gestures or motions. What are some polite gestures we use to communicate?** Discuss gestures you use to communicate the following ideas: say hello, say good-bye, something smells bad, sit down, stand up, come here, and I love you.

Say, **In today's study, we learn that people can change their ideas or their way of thinking. God can help us to change our thoughts. Here is a gesture to help us remember this.** Point

upward as if to God, and then tap your first finger to your temple or forehead. Let the children practice this. Say, **God helped Peter to change completely his ideas about who may become a follower of Jesus.**

2. Provide paper and crayons for the children to draw a picture of one of their night-time dreams. Ask for volunteers to share briefly. Ask, **How did Peter's vision change his life and his work for God? How did Peter's vision change your life and your relationship with God?**

### **QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 10:1-23 to them.

#### **1 How does the book of Acts describe Cornelius and his family? (10:2)**

1. **Devout and God-fearing**
2. Tax-collectors and sinners
3. Regular, normal people

#### **2 Who appeared to Cornelius in his vision? (10:3)**

1. The Lord
2. An indistinct figure
3. **An angel of God**

#### **3 About what time did Peter go up on the roof to pray? (10:9)**

1. **At Noon**
2. At midnight
3. Both answers are correct.

#### **4** What did Peter see while he was praying? (10:11-12)

1. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners.
2. He saw Cornelius's men approaching the city.
3. He saw an angel appear before him.

#### **5** What did the large sheet contain? (10:12)

1. All kinds of four-footed animals
2. Reptiles of the earth and birds of the air
3. Both answers are correct.

#### **6** Peter said that he never ate anything impure or unclean. What did the voice say afterwards? (10:14-15)

1. "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."
2. "You are correct, Peter, do not eat these animals."
3. "The Lord has made these animals clean enough to eat."

#### **7** How many times did Peter see the vision of the large sheet? (10:16)

1. One time
2. Three times
3. Ten times

#### **8** What did Peter ask the men that Cornelius sent? (10:21)

1. "What do you want to eat?"
2. "Why have you come?"
3. "Where will you stay the night?"

#### **9** Whom did Peter invite into the house to be his guests? (10:19, 23)

1. Cornelius
2. The three men
3. Both answers are correct.

#### **10** What did Peter do the day after his vision? (10:23)

1. He went with Cornelius's men.
2. He went to Jerusalem.
3. He went to the synagogue to pray.

### **QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 10:1-23 to them.

#### **1** How does the book of Acts describe Cornelius? (10:1-2)

1. He was a devout and God-fearing man.
2. He gave generously to those in need.
3. He prayed to God regularly.
4. All of the answers are correct.

#### **2** How did Cornelius react to the angel of God? (10:3-4)

1. He fell to his knees.
2. He stared at him in fear.
3. He welcomed him into his house.
4. All of the answers are correct.

#### **3** What happened while Peter prayed? (10:9-11)

1. He became hungry.
2. He fell into a trance.
3. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners.
4. All of the answers are correct.

**4 What did a voice say to Peter when he saw the sheet that contained different animals? (10:12-13)**

1. **“Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”**
2. “Share these animals with those who are coming to see you.”
3. “Sacrifice these animals at the temple.”
4. “These animals are clean enough for you to eat.”

**5 What did Peter say that he had never eaten? (10:14)**

1. Any animal of any kind
2. Any kind of fruit or vegetable
3. **Anything impure or unclean**
4. Anything with fat on it

**6 What did the voice say after Peter said he never ate anything impure or unclean? (10:14-15)**

1. **“Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”**
2. “You are correct, Peter, do not eat these animals.”
3. “The Lord has made these animals clean enough to eat.”
4. All of the answers are correct.

**7 What did the Spirit say to Peter while he was still thinking about the vision? (10:19-20)**

1. “Three men are looking for you.”
2. “Get up and go downstairs.”
3. “Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

**8 Who said, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?” (10:21)**

1. Simon, the tanner
2. A man sent by Cornelius
3. **Peter**
4. Cornelius

**9 Why did an angel tell Cornelius to ask Peter to come to Cornelius’s house? (10:22)**

1. **So that Cornelius could hear what Peter had to say**
2. So that Peter could prepare unclean animals for Cornelius
3. So that Cornelius could gain more respect from the Jewish people
4. All of the answers are correct.

**10 The next day, who went with Peter and the three men? (10:23)**

1. Simon the tanner and three men
2. **Some of the brothers from Joppa**
3. All of Peter’s family
4. All of the answers are correct.

## MEMORY VERSE

“Then Peter began to speak: ‘I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right’” (Acts 10:34-35).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God’s salvation is available to everyone.

## TEACHING TIP

- According to Jewish law, unclean animals have a solid hoof. Pigs are considered unclean and may not be eaten. Sheep and cows are considered clean animals and may be eaten. Discuss with your class different items that another culture eats but yours does not, or items your culture eats, but may be considered inedible in another culture. Remind children that God loves everyone.

# STUDY EIGHT

**ACTS 10:24-28, 34-48; 11:19-26**

## GOD DOES NOT PLAY FAVOURITES

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Peter’s vision of the clean and unclean animals was very mysterious. He trusted God and went to Cornelius’ house. Once again, Peter had the opportunity to preach to a large crowd. This sermon was different from the one he preached on the day of Pentecost. It was not filled with quotes from the Jewish scriptures. Instead, Peter talked about who Jesus was and how he accepts anyone who believes in him (10:34).

This was something new, because the Jewish people believed fervently that they were not like other people. They believed that God favoured them over everyone else in the world. Peter, a devout Jew and at the same time a devout Christian, preached a new message: God does not show favouritism. God’s Spirit interrupted Peter. These Gentiles received the Holy Spirit just like the Jewish believers did at Pentecost. Then, they were baptized by Peter.

Because of the vision that God sent to him, Peter began to understand that God’s salvation through Christ is for all people. Peter wrote about this in his own letters, 1 and 2 Peter. God revealed his desires to Peter, and Peter was courageous enough to accept what he heard and to tell others about it.

God had an ever-expanding mission to accomplish. It started in Jerusalem, but God wanted to spread the good news about Jesus to the ends of the earth. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God helped Peter to understand this mission. The Gentiles who once were outsiders are invited to share in Israel’s blessings.

The mission to the Gentiles continued when Barnabas visited the church in Antioch. Barnabas invited Saul to

join him to teach these new believers what it meant to follow Jesus. They stayed in Antioch for a year, and believers there were the first ones to be called Christians.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

a **Christian** — a person who renounces sin, accepts Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and obeys him. This experience is also called “being born again.”

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- 10-12 Pieces of paper in two colours (If you do not have coloured paper, then put an asterisk on the back of one set of papers.)
- Pen or pencil

Before class, divide the words of Acts 10:34-35 into small phrases. Write one phrase on each piece of paper. Make two sets of papers: one on each colour paper. Hide the papers randomly in the room.

In class, divide the children into two teams. Say, **The memory verse for today is Acts 10:34-35.** Read the verse, then tell the teams that the words of the verse are on papers hidden in the room. Instruct the teams to search the room, but only take the paper of their team's colour. Then, when they find all their pieces, they will arrange the phrases in the correct order. Tell each team to say the words of the verses three times.

Say, **These verses teach us an important lesson that Peter needed to learn. They changed Peter's idea of who may become a follower of Jesus. Until this time, the disciples preached only to the Jews. Now, the disciples will take the gospel to the Gentiles.**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 123-124.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **Why was it so unusual for Peter, a Jew, to visit Cornelius's house? Has God ever asked you to do anything unusual?**
2. **What were the main points of Peter's message to Cornelius's family and friends?**
3. **Compare what happened to the Gentiles in this story (10:44-46) and what happened to the Jews on the day of Pentecost (2:1-4). Why were the Jewish believers that came with Peter so amazed when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles?**
4. **What kind of man was Barnabas? Do you know any people today who are like Barnabas?**

Say, **In Antioch, Barnabas and Saul continued to meet with people and teach them. It was there that believers were called Christians for the first time. People recognized this group as being different than others because they followed Christ. Take time to think about your identity. People should be**

able to recognize us as followers of Christ in the same way that they identified those early believers.

### MEMORY VERSE

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Choose from these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Conduct an interview session with Peter. Contact an adult to represent Peter and answer questions about Peter's activities in this Bible study. Let the children be reporters who ask Peter questions about his activities and thoughts. If possible, provide a list of questions for the adult before the class. Give the questions to the children during the class. If there is enough time, let the children ask their own questions.

Say, **Peter learned an important lesson about God. What was it?** (That God's salvation is available to everyone.)

2. Invite guests to tell how they became a Christian. If possible, ask some people who did not grow up in a Christian home. If your community has people from different nations or cultures, invite people from these groups to testify. Point out that God welcomes everyone into his kingdom.

### QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 10:24-28, 34-48; 11:19-26 to them.

### 1 What did Cornelius do when Peter entered the house? (10:25)

1. He offered Peter something to eat.
2. **He fell at Peter's feet in reverence.**
3. He gave Peter a hug.

### 2 What did God show Peter? (10:28)

1. **That he should not call any man unclean or impure**
2. The directions to get to Cornelius's house
3. Everything he needed to know

### 3 Who does not show favouritism but accepts people from every nation who fear Him and do what is right? (10:34)

1. John
2. Paul
3. **God**

### 4 With what did God anoint Jesus? (10:38)

1. With oil and water
2. **With the Holy Spirit and power**
3. Both answers are correct

### 5 What happened to Cornelius, his relatives, and friends, while Peter was talking to them? (10:44)

1. Jesus appeared.
2. **The Holy Spirit came on them.**
3. Both answers are correct.

### 6 What did Peter hear when the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to the Gentiles at Cornelius's house? (10:46)

1. The sound of thunder
2. The voice of God
3. **The Gentiles speaking in tongues and praising God**

**7 In whose name did Peter order that the Gentiles be baptized? (10:48)**

1. In the name of Jesus Christ
2. In the name of the high priest
3. In the name of Cornelius

**8 What did Barnabas encourage the people in Antioch to do? (11:23)**

1. To turn from their wicked ways
2. To remain true to the Lord with all their hearts
3. To preach only to the Jews

**9 Why did Barnabas go to Tarsus? (11:25)**

1. To tell others the good news of Jesus Christ
2. To take a vacation
3. To look for Saul

**10 What were the disciples called at Antioch? (11:26)**

1. Followers
2. Christians
3. People of Jesus

**QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 10:24-28, 34-48; 11:19-26 to them.

**1 What happened when Peter entered Cornelius's house? (10:25-26)**

1. Cornelius met Peter.
2. Cornelius fell at Peter's feet in reverence.
3. Peter said, "Stand up, I am only a man myself."
4. All of the answers are correct.

**2 What did Peter tell Cornelius about Jesus and God? (10:40, 43)**

1. God raised Jesus from the dead and caused him to be seen.
2. All the prophets testify about Jesus.
3. Everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.
4. All of the answers are correct.

**3 After Jesus was raised from the dead, who saw him? (10:41)**

1. All the people
2. Witnesses whom God chose
3. All of the Jews
4. Only Jesus' family

**4 What command did Jesus give to those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead? (10:41-42)**

1. To preach and to testify about him
2. To heal and to cast out demons
3. To tear their clothes and to mourn
4. To celebrate and to dance

**5 Who will receive forgiveness of sins through Jesus' name? (10:43)**

1. Only the Jews
2. All the Gentiles
3. Everyone who believes in Him
4. Only those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead

**6 What happened while Peter was speaking with Cornelius? (10:44)**

1. The Jews got angry and left.
2. Heaven opened up and a dove landed on Peter's shoulder.
3. A large storm came and everyone got wet.
4. The Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

## **7 Why were the believers who had come with Peter astonished? (10:45-46)**

1. **Because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles**
2. Because the Gentiles could not speak
3. Because the Gentiles were healed of all their diseases
4. All of the answers are correct.

## **8 How does the book of Acts describe Barnabas? (11:24)**

1. An old man with a large family
2. **A good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith**
3. A selfish and jealous man
4. All of the answers are correct.

## **9 What did Barnabas do when he found Saul in Tarsus? (11:25-26)**

1. He told him everything he had seen and heard.
2. He begged to stay with him in Tarsus.
3. **He brought him to Antioch to meet with the church and teach.**
4. He sent him back to Jerusalem to preach to the Gentiles.

## **10 Where were the disciples first called Christians? (11:26)**

1. Samaria
2. Tarsus
3. Jerusalem
4. **Antioch**



## MEMORY VERSE

“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16*b*).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God answers prayer.

## TEACHING TIP

- As you lead the Bible study, be sensitive to children as you help them to understand the execution of martyrs. Children may be upset, disturbed, or frightened by this truth. Emphasize that God is always with us regardless of what happens to us.

# STUDY NINE

**ACTS 12:1-19; 13:1-12**

## PETER’S PRISON BREAK

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

James 5:16 says, “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” Throughout the book of Acts we see how true this statement is. It is especially evident in today’s two stories as we see the results of the believers’ prayers.

First, God heard the believers’ prayers, and amazingly rescued Peter from prison. Peter’s miraculous deliverance came just in time, since he was sentenced to die the next morning. In faith, the church believed and trusted in God’s power. However, even if Peter was killed (like Stephen was), their prayers would not have been ineffective or unimportant. God is honoured when people demonstrate faith in difficult circumstances. See Hebrews 11 for more examples of this.

The second story is found in chapter 13. The church in Antioch gathered to worship and to fast. During this time, the believers discerned the Spirit’s call on Barnabas and Saul to preach the gospel to other nations. After the church received this direction, they prayed for Saul and Barnabas then sent them to begin their new mission. The phrase “laying on of hands” (13:3) shows that they were supported by the church to be their representatives.

As believers called by God to do his work, we need the prayers and support of other Christians in order to be effective. Peter, Saul, and Barnabas had this support. When we pray, we demonstrate trust in God’s power, even when God displays power in a way that we don’t understand.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

**the Passover** — the annual Jewish feast that celebrates God's deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. See Numbers 9:4-5 for more information.

**to execute** — to put to death, especially as a legal penalty.

**to fast** — to abstain from something, usually food, or certain types of food, as a type of spiritual discipline. Christians use times of fasting to pray and focus on God.

**prayer** — a conversation with God that includes both talking and listening. We can pray anytime, anywhere, about anything.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- Strips of paper (8 per child; approximately 20 x 3cm)
- Tape or a stapler

Before class, make a sample of a paper chain. Create the first link by making a circle and fastening it with tape or a staple. Insert another paper into the circle and fasten it. Continue until you have a chain with eight links. The links should be large enough in diameter so that most children can insert their hands into the first and last link.

In class, show the children your chain. Help the children make their own chains. Let the children wear the chain on their wrists as you study today's Bible passage. When Peter's chains are broken in the story, tell the children to break their chains.

Say, **In today's study, Peter is in jail. He wears chains. Guards are there to keep him from an escape. Only God could save Peter's life.**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 124-126.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **How do you think Peter felt when the angel woke him?**
2. **How do you think you would have felt if you were in the prayer meeting at Mary's house when Peter arrived?**
3. **Why did the church at Antioch send Barnabas and Saul to do a special work? Does God still send people today?**
4. **Does God still do amazing miracles today? Explain your answer.**

Say, **God wants to commune with us. He waits for us to meet and talk with him. We can be confident that he will hear us when we pray and that he will answer our prayers. Take time to pray aloud together. Give each child an opportunity to pray if they wish. Pray for each child and call them by name.**

## MEMORY VERSE

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Choose from any of these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Talk to the students about what it means to fast. Use a Bible dictionary to help you understand fasting. Discuss with the children what you discover. Then say, **In today's study, the believers fasted and prayed. During this time, the Holy Spirit told them to release Paul and Barnabas for a special assignment. When we fast, do we always give up food? What other sacrifices can we make to let God know we really want to hear from him?** Let the students list these on a board or large piece of paper. (time, money, TV, games, favourite activity)  
Say, **When we pray and fast, we stop doing something that we normally do and give our attention during that time to God.**
2. Invite one or two people to talk to the children about the ways that God answered prayer in their lives. Help the students to understand that God hears every prayer. Children should not be discouraged if God does not answer a prayer immediately. God may answer us with "yes," "no," or "wait." However, sometimes God may answer in an unexpected way! Be ready to listen for God's answers and accept them when they come.

## QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 12:1-19; 13:1-12 to them.

**Whom did King Herod have put to death with the sword? (12:2)**

1. James, the brother of John

2. Barnabas
3. Peter

**2 How did the church pray for Peter while he was in prison? (12:5)**

1. Slowly
2. Earnestly
3. Once a week

**3 Who suddenly appeared in the prison cell with Peter? (12:7)**

1. An angel of the Lord
2. King Herod
3. The other Christians

**4 What did Peter think was happening as he followed the angel out of the prison? (12:9)**

1. He thought he was being kidnapped.
2. He thought it was his friend pretending to be an angel.
3. He thought he was seeing a vision.

**5 What were many people doing at the house of Mary the mother of John? (12:12)**

1. Worrying about Peter
2. Praying
3. Worshipping God

**6 Who came to answer the door when Peter knocked at the outer entrance? (12:13)**

1. Mary the mother of John
2. One of the apostles
3. A servant girl named Rhoda

**7 How did the people feel when they opened the door and saw Peter? (12:16)**

1. They were afraid.
2. They were astonished.

3. Both answers are correct.

## **8 Whom did the Holy Spirit say to set apart for him? (13:2)**

1. Barnabas
2. Saul
3. **Both answers are correct.**

## **9 Who was Bar-Jesus? (13:6-7)**

1. A Jewish sorcerer and false prophet
2. An attendant to Sergius Paulus
3. **Both answers are correct.**

## **10 What happened to Elymas the sorcerer when he opposed Barnabas and Saul? (13:6-11)**

1. **He became blind.**
2. An angel struck him dead.
3. He was arrested.

## **QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 12:1-19; 13:1-12 to them.

## **1 What did King Herod do when he saw that James's death pleased the Jews? (12:2-3)**

1. He killed James's brother, John, as well.
2. He put many others to death.
3. **He seized Peter also.**
4. Herod believed and was baptized.

## **2 How was Peter guarded in prison? (12:4)**

1. **By four squads of four soldiers each**
2. By two soldiers outside the gate
3. By a full squadron of soldiers
4. By King Herod himself

## **3 What happened while Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains? (12:6-7)**

1. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared.
2. A light shone in the cell.
3. The chains fell off Peter's wrists.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

## **4 What happened first when the angel and Peter came to the iron gate leading to the city? (12:10)**

1. **It opened by itself.**
2. The angel left Peter.
3. The guards caught Peter.
4. Peter realized that he was not dreaming.

## **5 Whom did the people at Mary's house think was at the door? (12:15)**

1. Peter
2. An angel of the Lord
3. A guard looking for Peter
4. **Peter's angel**

## **6 What did Peter do when the people opened the door and saw him? (12:16-17)**

1. He motioned with his hand for them to be quiet.
2. He described how the Lord had brought him out of prison.
3. He told them to tell James and the other brothers about his rescue.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

## **7 What happened while the prophets and teachers in Antioch worshipped the Lord and fasted? (13:1-2)**

1. They heard the news of Peter.
2. **The Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me**

**Barnabas and Saul.”**

3. They were filled with pain at the death of James.
4. All of the answers are correct.

**8 Who went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus? (13:4)**

1. Barnabas and Saul
2. Peter and John
3. The apostles
4. All of the prophets and teachers

**9 What did Barnabas and Saul do when they arrived at Salamis? (13:5)**

1. They preached to the Gentiles.
2. They baptized both Jews and Gentiles alike.
3. **They proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues.**
4. They healed people and cast out demons.

**10 In what story does Saul's name change to Paul? (13:9)**

1. The story about Stephen's stoning
2. The story about Saul's conversion
3. The story about Pentecost
4. **The story about Sergius Paulus and Bar-Jesus**

## MEMORY VERSE

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:2-3).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God wants his people to respect each other, even when they disagree.

## TEACHING TIPS

- Paul was a missionary and a writer of the early church. He wrote 13 letters which comprise almost one-fourth of the New Testament. He wrote some of his letters from a Roman jail.
- If children ask about circumcision you might say, Circumcision had a special religious meaning in the Bible. In the Old Testament it was the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham. This is why some New Testament Jews thought all males should be circumcised in order to be saved. Paul tried to help people to understand that it was permissible, but not necessary.

# STUDY TEN

**ACTS 14:26-28; 15:1-12, 22-41**

## THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Some of the Jewish laws mentioned in Acts are difficult for us to understand since our culture is different. The new believers in Antioch did not have a Jewish background. There was some confusion over what parts of Jewish law all believers must respect, regardless of their background. The letter that the Jerusalem church sent answers their questions, but it raises some questions for us today.

- *Why were these four laws so important?*  
These laws refuted common pagan practices in Antioch associated with polytheism (worshipping many gods). The new believers were encouraged to believe uniquely in Jesus. By avoiding these practices, the new Christians witnessed to others about the inward change that Christ was making in them. These laws also helped keep the peace between the Jewish believers and the Gentile ones.
- *Were they required to obey other laws (the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.)?*  
Yes. The Gentiles were still required to live according to the moral principles given in the Law and the Ten Commandments. Initially, God wrote the Law on tablets of stone. The prophets showed that God also wrote the Law on the hearts of both Jews and Gentiles (Jeremiah 31:33). Jesus brought new light to the Law when he created a new covenant based on inward transformation. This means that God changes our intentions first, then our actions, as we choose to obey him in honesty. Although we are not bound by

the same laws from the Old Testament, our hearts should be transformed by the moral principles behind those laws.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught his followers to obey God wholeheartedly, not just keep the laws. The Gentile believers in Antioch were required to follow these principles. These requirements helped them internalize the Law. They also help us to understand what it means to follow Jesus' commands, not because they are a requirement, but because we love God.

This lesson also addresses a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas. Christians may, at times, disagree. Despite this, they should strive to find peaceful solutions. Christians should never let disagreements interfere with spreading the Gospel.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

a **pagan** — someone who does not believe in God. Some pagans worship many gods. Others don't worship any god.

**Sermon on the Mount** — the passage of scripture in Matthew 5-7. It is the longest recorded teaching of Jesus in the Bible. In this sermon, Jesus describes how Christians should live in relation to God and others.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- Paper for each student
- Pencil for each student

Before class, prepare a list of five categories of items that children love (for example: food, game, book, animal, and place).

In class, distribute the paper and pencils. Ask the children to write their favourite item in each category. Then select two volunteers. Ask

each volunteer to tell what the favourite item is in the first category and tell why it is his or her favourite.

Say, **Each of you thinks that your item is the best. Could the other person convince you that you are wrong and that he or she is right? If not, can you agree to disagree about this one subject and still be friends? If so, say to each other: "We agree to disagree and still be friends."**

Let those volunteers return to their seats, and ask for two different volunteers. Continue until everyone reads their responses. Encourage the volunteers to say "We agree to disagree and still be friends."

Say, **In today's study, we learn that Paul and Barnabas disagreed. We will see how they solved their disagreement.**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 126-127.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **When Barnabas and Paul arrived back in Antioch, they reported all that God had done through them. Today we call this accountability. Are you accountable to anyone?**

2. **Some of the believers disagreed about what new believers should do. When Christians today disagree, what should they do?**
3. **How did God show that he accepted the Gentile believers?**
4. **Do you ever need encouragement? Who encourages you? Who do you encourage?**

Say, **God gives us minds with which to think. Sometimes people think in different ways about a certain thing. This is part of what makes people unique. God will give us the grace to disagree in a respectful manner. In all circumstances, we must remember to seek God's will for us rather than our own will.**

### MEMORY VERSE

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Choose from any of these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Say, **In today's Bible study, the Council of Jerusalem sent a letter of encouragement to the Gentile Christians. Today, Christians still need encouragement as they live each day.** Talk about some of the people in your church who might need encouragement. Provide paper and art materials for the children. Ask them to write a note of encouragement, to write and illustrate a Bible verse, or to draw a picture to brighten their day. After class, work with the pastor to deliver these projects to those who need encouragement.

2. Help the class to make a list of times when children disagree. Which of these actions can cause trouble for the child? Are any of these actions pleasing to God? Read Ephesians 4:2-3. How does God want children to solve disagreements?

Provide a time of prayer for the children to talk to God about situations they experience. Encourage the children to ask God to help them solve the disagreements in a Christian way.

## QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 14:26-28; 15:1-12, 22-41 to them.

### 1 How long did Paul and Barnabas stay in Antioch with the disciples? (14:28)

1. For one month
2. For a few years
3. **For a long time**

### 2 Whom did the church send to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders? (15:2-3)

1. Paul and Barnabas
2. The men from Judea
3. The Gentiles

### 3 How did the brothers feel when they heard the news of how the Gentiles had been converted? (15:3)

1. They were extremely upset.
2. **They were very glad.**
3. They were scared.



**4 What did some believers who were also Pharisees say that the Gentiles must do? (15:5)**

1. Be circumcised
2. Keep the Law of Moses
3. **Both answers are correct.**

**5 How did God show that he accepted the Gentiles? (15:8)**

1. By putting a mark on their heads.
2. By cursing the Jews' livestock.
3. **By giving the Holy Spirit to them**

**6 Through what did Peter say we are saved? (15:11)**

1. Through the Law of Moses and the prophets.
2. **Through the grace of our Lord Jesus**
3. Both answers are correct.

**7 Who became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miracles and wonders God did among the Gentiles? (15:12)**

1. No one
2. **The whole assembly**
3. Only the apostles

**8 The apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. Whom did they choose? (15:22)**

1. **Judas and Silas**
2. Peter and John
3. Mary and Martha

**9 What did Judas and Silas say in Antioch? (15:32)**

1. They said very little.
2. **They said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers.**
3. They said exactly what the letter said.

**10 What did Paul and Silas do in Syria and Cilicia? (15:40-41)**

1. **They strengthened the churches**
2. They built new churches
3. Both answers are correct.

**QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 14:26-28; 15:1-12, 22-41 to them.

**1 To whom did God open the door of faith? (14:26-27)**

1. To the Jews
2. To Paul and Barnabas
3. **To the Gentiles**
4. To the apostles

**2 Some men taught that one must be circumcised in order to be saved. Why did they believe this? (15:1)**

1. **Because it was according to the custom taught by Moses**
2. Because it was according to the Gentile custom
3. Because it was according to the custom taught by Jesus
4. Because it was according to the custom in Antioch

**3 Whose law did the Pharisees say that the Gentiles must be required to obey? (15:5)**

1. The Law of the Gentiles
2. The Law of the Peter
- 3. The Law of Moses**
4. The Law of the land

**4 How did God show that he accepted the Gentiles? (15:8)**

1. By setting them free from jail
2. By the power he gave to Peter
- 3. By giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to the Jews**
4. By sending them a vision

**5 How did the letter to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia describe Barnabas and Paul? (15:26)**

1. Men who were tired and in need of a place to rest
2. Men who would do anything for their fellow Jew
3. Men who needed to learn the Law of Moses
- 4. Men who risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**

**6 Why did the apostles and elders send Judas and Silas to Antioch? (15:27)**

1. To see what was happening with the Gentiles
2. To ask them for money
- 3. To confirm by word of mouth what they were writing**
4. To persecute the Gentiles

**7 From what did the letter say the Gentiles should abstain? (15:29)**

1. From food sacrificed to idols, and from blood
2. From the meat of strangled animals
3. From sexual immorality
- 4. All of the answers are correct.**

**8 Why did Paul not think that it was wise to take John, also called Mark, with them? (15:37-38)**

1. Because he was a Gentile
2. Because he was ill and unfit for travel
3. Because he had a family that needed him
- 4. Because he had deserted them in Pamphylia**

**9 What happened because of Paul and Barnabas's sharp disagreement? (15:39)**

1. They apologized and forgave each other.
- 2. They parted company.**
3. They stopped preaching and teaching.
4. They took a vacation.

**10 What did Paul do when he travelled through Syria and Cilicia? (15:41)**

- 1. He strengthened the churches.**
2. He decided to travel first by land and then by sea.
3. He asked Barnabas and Mark to join him.
4. All of the answers are correct.

## MEMORY VERSE

“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:38).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God gives us the opportunity to accept his gift of salvation.

## TEACHING TIP

- If a prisoner in a Roman prison escaped, the guard or guards of that person would be killed in place of the prisoner. This is why the jailer in Philippi was going to take his own life.

# STUDY ELEVEN

## ACTS 16:6-40

## PAUL’S WITNESS IN PHILIPPI

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

In today’s lesson, we read about three people who were influenced for good by the gospel in Philippi: Lydia, a girl who predicted the future, and a jailer.

In Philippi, Paul met some women gathered at the river. Lydia, one of these women was a successful businesswoman, a dealer in purple cloth. Purple cloth was commonly sold to wealthy people or to those associated with royalty. Socially, Lydia was a success, but her spiritual needs were only satisfied through Christ. Lydia’s conversion and hospitality established her home as the base for continued missions in Philippi.

There was a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. In Jesus’ name, Paul commanded that the demon come out of her. The exorcism prevented her owners from continuing to make a profit, so Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned. This is one of many times that Paul would endure suffering because of his faith in Jesus, as predicted in Acts 9:16.

In prison, Silas and Paul sang hymns and prayed to God, while the other prisoners listened. They worshiped, even though they were suffering. Just like Paul and Silas, we can help others to see that God is at work in our lives regardless of our circumstances. When we praise God during adversity, it is a great testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit.

An earthquake provided an opportunity for escape. However, for Paul and Silas, it provided another opportunity to share the gospel. Not only did they save the life of the jailer, they pointed him to eternal life in Jesus.

Paul faithfully followed the Spirit's guidance, even though he led Paul in unexpected directions. Paul obeyed God by going to Macedonia instead of Phrygia and Galatia. While looking for a special place of prayer, Paul witnessed to Lydia. While preparing for a day of ministry, Paul freed a possessed girl. This causes him to be jailed. While in jail, he was able to witness to other prisoners as well as to the jailer. Through all of these unexpected events, Paul exuded confidence and faith in the Holy Spirit. We would be wise to follow Paul's example, proclaiming the message of Jesus no matter our circumstances, wherever we are.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- Items to prepare an obstacle course
- Scarf or other item for a blindfold

Before class, set up an obstacle course—a path with items that a child must walk around or jump over in order to reach the end. If possible, set up this course in another room, so that the children who participate cannot see the obstacles before they begin the activity. You can use cardboard boxes, sacks filled with old papers, or whatever you have. (Be aware of safety issues as you prepare the course.) Provide a scarf or small towel as a blindfold.

In class, select one volunteer to walk through the obstacle course. Take the volunteer and the other children to the course.

Say, **In our study for today, Paul wanted to go to Bithynia, but the Holy Spirit stopped him. After a vision from**

**God, Paul decided to go to Macedonia instead. Today, our volunteer represents Paul. He tried to decide where God wanted him to go. You can help to direct our volunteer through this course so that he or she will not stumble or fall.**

Choose another volunteer to give oral directions to the blindfolded child. If time permits, let other children volunteer to try the obstacle course.

Say, **God gives us the Holy Spirit to help us know what to do. God guided Paul to the places where he wanted Paul to go.**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 128-129.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **Wherever Paul travelled, he looked for people who needed to hear about God's love and forgiveness. Where can we go today to find people who need to hear that message?**
2. **Are people today ever possessed by a spirit like the slave girl was? How are people enslaved by sin?**
3. **We all have difficult times. How should we respond when we go through dif-**

**ficult circumstances like Paul and Silas did?**

**4. Today's story points out the fact that life is not always fair. How should we act and speak when life is unfair?**

Say, **Paul listened to the Holy Spirit and always followed his direction. In one story, an angel guided Paul out of prison. In another situation, Paul was freed from his chains during an earthquake, but Paul stayed in the jail. In each case, Paul witnessed to those around him about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We can follow Jesus because he is alive!**

### **MEMORY VERSE**

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Choose from any of these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Allow the children to dramatize the story of Paul and Silas in the jail. Provide paper and other materials for the children to make simple props, like the sword and the chains. Assign the Bible story characters to volunteers. Ask a volunteer to read the verses from Acts 16:6-40 as the other children perform.
2. Review these first steps of salvation with the children:
  - Admit that you have sinned. Tell God you are sorry for the sins. With God's help, stop doing things that are wrong.

- Believe that God loves you and that he sent Jesus to save you from your sins. Ask God to forgive you.
- Ask Jesus to be your Saviour and best friend. Love God, obey his commands, and tell others about Jesus. Tell other people what God has done for you.

Invite any children who want to accept God's salvation to do it today. Pray with the children and congratulate any children who take this important step. Find mature Christians who will help to mentor these children and to encourage them as they learn what it means to walk with Christ.

### **QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 16:6-40 to them.

#### **1 Where did the Holy Spirit keep Paul and his companions from preaching the word? (16:6)**

1. In Greece
2. **In Asia**
3. In Jerusalem

#### **2 Why did Paul conclude that God called them to preach the gospel in Macedonia? (16:9-10)**

1. **He had a vision of a man of Macedonia.**
2. He received a letter from Macedonia.
3. People urged him to go to Macedonia.

#### **3 Whom did Paul and his companions find at the river on the Sabbath? (16:13-14)**

1. Sadducees
2. **Lydia and some other women**
3. The brothers from Judea

## **4** How did the slave girl earn money? (16:16)

1. By fortune-telling
2. By selling fabrics and thread
3. By working as a cook

## **5** Why did the owners of the slave girl seize Paul and Silas? (16:19)

1. They wanted to make money off of their miracles.
2. **They realized that their hope of making money was gone.**
3. They were jealous of their powers.

## **6** What did Paul and Silas do at about midnight in prison? (16:25)

1. Pray
2. Sing hymns
3. **Both answers are correct.**

## **7** What caused the prison doors to fly open and everybody's chains to come loose? (16:26-27)

1. The prison guard decided to free everybody.
2. **A violent earthquake struck.**
3. There was an incredible thunderstorm.

## **8** The jailer asked Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" What did they say? (16:31)

1. "You must let us go free."
2. "You must give a tithe to the synagogue."
3. **"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."**

## **9** What did the jailer and his family do immediately? (16:33)

1. They freed Paul and Silas.
2. **They were baptized.**
3. They ran away.

## **10** Why was the jailer filled with joy? (16:34)

1. Because he was not punished for allowing Paul and Silas to escape.
2. Because he got off work early
3. **Because he had come to believe in God**

## **QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 16:6-40 to them.

### **1** What happened when Paul and his companions tried to enter Bithynia? (16:7)

1. They passed easily through the border.
2. The border guards questioned them thoroughly.
3. **The Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to enter.**
4. They changed their minds and left.

### **2** Who said, "Come over to Macedonia and help us"? (16:9)

1. **A Macedonian man that Paul saw in a vision**
2. A Macedonian beggar on the road to Troas
3. The Macedonian government
4. The church in Macedonia

### **3** Who was Lydia? (16:14)

1. A dealer in purple cloth
2. A woman from Thyatira
3. A worshiper of God
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

**4 In Philippi, a girl had a spirit by which she predicted the future. What happened after Paul became annoyed and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” (16:18-20)**

1. The spirit left the slave girl.
2. The owners of the slave girl seized Paul and Silas.
3. Paul and Silas were brought before the magistrates.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

**5 Why did Paul shout, “Do not harm yourself! We are all here!” (16:27-28)**

1. To assure Silas that he was still there
2. **To prevent the jailer from killing himself because he thought the prisoners escaped.**
3. To stop the other prisoners from fighting each other.
4. Because the magistrate was about to beat the jailer for setting them free.

**6 What did the jailer ask Paul and Silas? (16:29-30)**

1. “How did this happen?”
2. “Are you magicians?”
3. **“What must I do to be saved?”**
4. “Where did you come from?”

**7 Why was the jailer filled with joy? (16:34)**

1. **Because he and his whole family came to believe in God**
2. Because the prisoners escaped
3. Because he was no longer the jailer
4. All of the answers are correct.

**8 When did the magistrates send orders to release Paul and Silas? (16:35)**

1. **At daylight**
2. That very night
3. A week later
4. After a fortnight

**9 What did Paul want the magistrates to do? (16:37)**

1. To quietly release them from prison.
2. **To come themselves and escort him and Silas out of prison.**
3. To publicly apologize for beating them.
4. All of the answers are correct.

**10 Finish this verse: “Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive ...’ (Acts 2:38)**

1. “... life everlasting.”
2. **“... the gift of the Holy Spirit.”**
3. “... riches of unknown measure.”
4. “... everything the Lord has promised to you.”

## MEMORY VERSE

“You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard” (Acts 22:15).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God sends us out into the world to share his love.

## TEACHING TIP

- Paul recognized that the Athenians were religious. Many people claim to be religious, but they do not really know God. It is important for us to be not just religious, but to believe in Jesus Christ and accept Him as our Saviour—to really know him.

# STUDY TWELVE

## ACTS 17:1-34

## ON THE ROAD AGAIN

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

While Paul was in Athens, he saw many idols throughout the city. There was even one labelled as “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.” Athens was an elite city, home to a university and intellectuals who valued ideas and learning. Paul debated Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Epicureans pursued pleasure in order to achieve happiness. They sometimes used self-denial as a way to achieve long-term happiness. Stoics taught people to live in accordance with nature and to be emotionally unaffected by things.

Paul preached that the “Unknown God” that they worshiped was in fact, the one, true, and living God. He explained that God created the world, that he gives us life and breath, and that we are his children.

The gospel message that Paul preached challenged many of the ideas that were culturally acceptable to the Athenians. The Athenians were different than the Jewish people to whom Paul preached before. This new audience did not know the Jewish Scriptures. So, Paul taught them using language they understood. He used familiar metaphors to help them begin to understand God. He even used quotes from their literature to describe God. He spoke to these educated philosophers in a manner that appealed to their intellect. He presented the gospel in a captivating manner.

The Athenians longed for something authentic to worship. They searched for something that would give their



lives meaning and purpose. We know that their minds were open to the idea of a new God since they acknowledged an “Unknown God.” In the same way, many people in our world today search for God, but they do not know how to describe him. It is our responsibility to find ways to share the message of Jesus with all people, not just those with similar backgrounds. Jesus is the one for whom they search, and only he is able to fulfil their desire to know God.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

**the Sabbath** — the day God set aside for rest, worship, and doing good. For Jews, the Sabbath is the seventh day (Saturday.) Christians celebrate the Lord’s Day (Sunday) as their Sabbath, since this is the day that Jesus rose from the dead.

**a missionary** — a person called by God and sent by the Church to take the gospel to people of other countries or cultures.

**an idol** — anything that is worshiped instead of God or loved more than God. The city of Athens was full of idols made of gold, silver, or stone.

**the Areopagus** — a hill in Athens where a council of philosophers met to discuss philosophical issues. Paul spoke to this group about the resurrection of Jesus.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- A piece of paper for each child
- A pencil or pen for each child

Before class, write on the papers this declaration: “I am willing to go wherever God asks me to go to tell people about Jesus.” At the bot-

tom of the paper, draw a line for the signature of the child.

In class, Say, **We have studied the journeys that Paul made to many cities. Why did Paul travel to these cities?** (God asked Paul to tell the people about Jesus.) **What is a missionary?** (Someone who travels to another country or culture to tell the people about God and his plan of salvation through Jesus.) **How would the world be different if Paul stayed in Jerusalem and refused to travel?** (People in other places of the world might not hear about Jesus. God could have chosen someone else to spread the gospel, but he might not have Paul’s courage and determination.)

Say, **God may ask one of you to leave your hometown and travel to another place to spread the gospel. Would you say yes if God asked you to do that?**

Distribute the papers and pencils. Read the declaration, then pray and ask God to help the children to be willing to tell others about Jesus in the place where they live or in another place in the world. Encourage the children to sign their name if they are willing to share the good news of Jesus wherever they go and with whomever God asks them to share. Some children will sign immediately while others may want to sign it later. Tell the children to take the paper home and keep it in their Bible or in another safe place.

Say, **We thank God for Paul and other missionaries who spread the gospel to many areas of the world.**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson’s scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 129-131.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them. After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **Why do you think the Jews who caused trouble in Thessalonica were jealous of Paul? Sometimes, when someone has success in a venture, people are jealous. Have you ever been jealous of someone who did better than you did at something?**
2. **Why were the Bereans said to be of more noble character than the Thessalonians? Is it important to study the Scriptures to see if what someone says is true? Why or why not? How do you know if someone is teaching the truth?**
3. **How would you have felt if you were in the crowd of philosophers at the Areopagus listening to Paul speak? What would your response be to his words?**
4. **Do people still worship idols today? Explain your answer.**

Say, **Sometimes God sends people to far-away places or unfamiliar cultures to be missionaries and spread his good news. Other times, God calls people to be witnesses in the place where they already are. Whether we go or stay, thank God for the opportunities we receive to share his love with others.**

## MEMORY VERSE

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Choose from any of these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Say, **An idol is something or someone that a person worships instead of God. In the Old Testament, the people made idols of wood, gold or other metals, or rock. In the New Testament, the city of Athens was full of idols that the people worshipped. Today, some people still give top priority to something or someone besides God.**

Ask, **What are our idols today?** List the responses on a chalkboard or large sheet of paper. Some responses might be: money, fame, popularity, movie or rock stars, sports heroes, education, etc. **What would Paul say to people about giving top priority to these persons and things?**

2. Ask, **Have you ever witnessed an accident? Did someone ask you to tell them what happened?** (Let the children respond.) Read Acts 22:15. Say, **This verse has the word witness in it. What does it mean to be a witness for Jesus?** (You tell others your story of what Jesus did for you.)

Ask an adult to come to your class and tell how he or she became a Christian and how the Holy Spirit helps him or her to live as a Christian. Encourage the children to be witnesses for Jesus to their family and friends.

## QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 17:1-34 to them.

- 1 Who said, “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ?” (17:1-3)**
  1. Silas
  2. Paul
  3. Timothy
- 2 In whose house did the Jews search for Paul and Silas? (17:5)**
  1. Jason’s house
  2. Mary’s house
  3. Lydia’s house
- 3 What did the city officials do to Jason when they did not find Paul and Silas at his house? (17:6-9)**
  1. They flogged him.
  2. They questioned him.
  3. They made him post bond.
- 4 Who was sent to the coast when the Jews from Thessalonica went to Berea to stir up the crowds? (17:13-14)**
  1. Paul
  2. Silas
  3. Both answers are correct.
- 5 What distressed Paul while he was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens? (17:16)**
  1. It was taking them a long time to get there.
  2. He could not speak their language.
  3. The city was full of idols.

## 6 What was inscribed on an altar in Athens? (17:23)

1. “To the Lord Jesus Christ”
2. “To an unknown god”
3. “To the people of Athens”

## 7 What does God give all men? (17:25)

1. Life and breath and everything else
2. All of the riches of the world
3. Anything we ask for

## 8 Who is not far from each one of us? (17:27)

1. Paul
2. God
3. Peter

## 9 What did some of the Athenians’ poets say? (17:28)

1. We belong to him.
2. We are heirs to the kingdom.
3. We are his offspring.

## 10 How did God prove that he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice? (17:31)

1. By raising Jesus from the dead
2. By giving Paul the words to say
3. By offering judgment on earth

## QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 17:1-34 to them.

## 1 In Thessalonica, what did the Jews do because they were jealous? (17:5)

1. They repented and were baptized.
2. They beat up Paul and Silas.
3. They formed a mob and started a riot in the city.
4. They sent their high priest to prison.

## **2** Of what did the Jews in Thessalonica accuse Paul and Silas? (17:6-7)

1. Of defying Caesar's decrees, saying that **there is another king**
2. Of harbouring enemies among them
3. Of visiting the homes of sinners
4. Of performing miracles on the Sabbath

## **3** How did the Bereans receive the message? (17:11)

1. Reluctantly
2. Slowly, after consulting their priests
3. With closed minds
4. **With great eagerness**

## **4** What did the Jews in Thessalonica do when they learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea? (17:13)

1. They left Berea.
2. **They agitated the crowds in Berea.**
3. They calmed the crowds in Berea.
4. All of the answers are correct.

## **5** Paul debated a group of philosophers. What remark did some of them make? (17:18)

1. "He is trying to stir up trouble."
2. **"He seems to be advocating foreign gods."**
3. "This man preaches the truth."
4. "He is simply teaching."

## **6** What did all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spend their time doing? (17:21)

1. Talking about and listening to the latest ideas
2. Whatever they pleased
3. Worshipping their idols
4. Entertaining guests

## **7** How did Paul know that the men of Athens were very religious? (17:22-23)

1. **He found an altar with this inscription: "To an Unknown God."**
2. They had pictures of Jesus on the walls.
3. They obeyed the Law and the Prophets.
4. He found proof that Jesus was there.

## **8** While in Athens, how does Paul describe God? (17:24)

1. As a jealous God
2. As a God who is unattainable
3. **As the Lord of heaven and earth**
4. As an angry God

## **9** Who gives all people life, breath, and everything else? (17:24-25)

1. Paul
2. **God**
3. Zeus
4. Athena

## **10** For what has God set a day? (17:31)

1. "When he will flood the whole earth"
2. **"When he will judge the world with justice"**
3. "When he will prove his power"
4. "When he will return"

## MEMORY VERSE

“What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God encourages us to share his love even if others reject us.

## TEACHING TIP

- Paul’s trade was making tents. These tents were made of leather or woven from goat’s hair. This job is what Paul did to make money to provide for himself while he witnessed to other people he met.

# STUDY THIRTEEN

**ACTS 18:1-11, 18-28**

## TEACHING AND PREACHING

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Luke introduces us to fellow ministers who helped Paul: Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos.

When many in the Jewish population in Corinth refused to repent, Paul absolved himself of the responsibility to teach them. He focused on the Gentiles because they were responsive to the message. A vision from the Lord encouraged Paul to remain in Corinth, and he stayed there for 18 months. During this time, he had many opportunities to share the message about Jesus and to build relationships with people.

When Paul left Corinth, Priscilla and Aquila joined him. The three had much in common. They were business partners and shared a vocation. While they were in Ephesus, they met Apollos, a church planter from Egypt. Apollos was intelligent and knew the Scriptures. However, he did not know the entire story of Jesus. So, Priscilla and Aquila disciplined him. Apollos used what he learned, and he travelled to Achaia proclaiming and defending the faith.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul mentions the work of Priscilla and Aquila (16:19) and Apollos (3:6, 9). He says that he planted the seed of the gospel in Corinth, but Apollos came behind him and watered it by encouraging the believers and teaching them. God made it grow.

Ministry is not one person's job. It takes many people to do the job correctly. In today's lesson, we learn:

- We must be gracious when we admonish others.

Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos that his understanding of Jesus was not complete. Yet, they did this in private, so that they did not embarrass him.

- We all have a role in ministering to those around us and sharing the gospel with them.

At times it is easy to become discouraged if someone does not accept Christ. However, we can find peace in the knowledge that God can and will use all of us to help lead others to him. Just as he used Apollos to water the seed Paul planted, he can use us either in planting the seed of faith or helping it to grow.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- Chalkboard and chalk or marker board and markers

Before class, write this sentence on the board: "However, Paul obeyed God."

In class, say, **Today we will share in some of the difficult experiences of Paul. I will read a sentence, and then I want you to read this sentence from the board. You will repeat this sentence after every sentence I read.**

Read these sentences and pause for the children to respond.

- **In Jerusalem, the Christians were afraid of Saul.** *(However, Paul obeyed God.)*
- **In Salamis, a sorcerer tried to prevent Saul from witnessing to the**

**governor.** *(However, Paul obeyed God.)*

- **In Pisidian Antioch, some Jews caused trouble for Paul and Barnabas.** *(However, Paul obeyed God.)*
- **In Iconium, some Jews agitated the Gentiles and planned to mistreat and stone Paul.** *(However, Paul obeyed God.)*
- **In Lystra, some people stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city.** *(However, Paul obeyed God.)*
- **Paul and Barnabas disagreed about John Mark.** *(However, Paul obeyed God.)*
- **Paul wanted to go to Mysia, but the Holy Spirit told him to go to Macedonia.** *(However, Paul obeyed God.)*
- **In Philippi, officials put Paul and Silas in prison.** *(However, Paul obeyed God.)*
- **In Thessalonica, the Jews started a riot against Paul.** *(However, Paul obeyed God.)*
- **In Athens, a few people believed in Jesus, but others sneered at Paul.** *(However, Paul obeyed God.)*
- **In Corinth, the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, so he turned to the Gentiles.** *(However, Paul obeyed God.)*

Say, **Paul suffered through many difficult situations. You may experience ridicule or difficult situations also. Do not give up. Friends or family may not appreciate what you say or do as a Christian. However, like Paul, continue to obey God.**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 131-132.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **How do you think Aquila and Priscilla felt about having to leave Rome and move so far away?**
2. **Paul made friends with Aquila and Priscilla. How do you think they helped him? How do your friends help you?**
3. **Paul could have become discouraged when people did not want to hear his message. What did God tell him in 18:9-10?**
4. **In your own words, tell what happened when Apollos came to Ephesus and taught in the synagogue.**

Say, **As more and more people were rescued from their life of sin, the good news spread. The power of God was evident. Everyone heard about what was happening. Many people became followers of Jesus Christ. We can decide to follow Jesus Christ, just like the people to whom Paul preached.**

## MEMORY VERSE

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Choose from any of these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Write one half of the matching pairs on a piece of paper (See the list below). Distribute one paper to each child. Give time for the children to make the matches. Let the children tell how the person or place related to our studies in Acts.
  - Aquila | Priscilla
  - Paul | Silas
  - Crispus | Synagogue ruler
  - Apollos | Needed information
  - Athens | City with the idol of the unknown god
  - Lydia | Merchant of purple cloth
  - Jason | Opened his home to Paul
2. Provide crayons or markers and paper. Help the children to make a card for someone who is discouraged. Provide some Bible verses that the children can use on the cards.

## QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 18:1-11, 18-28 to them.

### Where did Paul go after he left Athens? (18:1)

1. To Thessalonica
2. To Corinth
3. To Antioch

## **2 Why did Paul stay with Aquila and Priscilla? (18:2-3)**

1. Because he was a tentmaker like them
2. Because they had a lot of money
3. Because they were from Italy

## **3 In Corinth, what did Paul do every Sabbath? (18:4)**

1. He reasoned in the synagogue.
2. He worked as a tentmaker.
3. He went home to Tarsus.

## **4 Who told Paul, “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent”? (18:9)**

1. The Lord, in a vision
2. Barnabas and Timothy
3. The believers in Corinth

## **5 How long did Paul stay in Corinth? (18:11)**

1. For two weeks
2. For a year and a half
3. Not very long

## **6 Why did Paul have his hair cut off at Cenchrea? (18:18)**

1. Because his hair was too long
2. Because he did not want anyone to recognize him
3. Because of a vow he had taken

## **7 What did Paul do throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia? (18:23)**

1. Strengthened all the disciples
2. Hid among the Gentiles
3. Both answers are correct.

## **8 What was the only baptism Apollos knew about? (18:25)**

1. The baptism of Peter
2. The baptism of John
3. The baptism of Jesus

## **9 What did Priscilla and Aquila do for Apollos? (18:26)**

1. Invited him to their home
2. Explained to him the way of God more adequately
3. Both answers are correct.

## **10 What did Apollos do upon arriving in Achaia? (18:27-28)**

1. He vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate.
2. He proved from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.
3. Both answers are correct.

### **QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 18:1-11, 18-28 to them.

#### **Why did Aquila and Priscilla come from Italy to Corinth? (18:1-2)**

1. Because they had friends and family there
2. Because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome
3. Because they were looking for work in Corinth
4. Because Priscilla needed a vacation



## **2 What did Paul do in the synagogue every Sabbath? (18:4)**

1. **He reasoned and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.**
2. He preached when the rabbi was not there.
3. He told of his travels.
4. He condemned the sinners.

## **3 What did Paul say when the Jews opposed him and became abusive? (18:6)**

1. “Your blood be on your own heads!”
2. “I am clear of my responsibility.”
3. “From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

## **4 Who accompanied Paul to Syria? (18:18)**

1. Barnabas and Timothy
2. **Priscilla and Aquila**
3. The brothers
4. No one

## **5 In Ephesus, what did Paul do when the Jews asked him to spend more time with them? (18:19-21)**

1. He accepted.
2. **He declined, but promised to come back if it was God’s will.**
3. He told them that he would pray about it.
4. He decided to stay for two more weeks.

## **6 How does the book of Acts describe Apollos? (18:24-25)**

1. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.
2. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervour and taught about Jesus accurately.
3. He knew only the baptism of John.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

## **7 What did Priscilla and Aquila do when they heard Apollos? (18:26)**

1. **They explained to him the way of God more adequately.**
2. They condemned him.
3. They sent word to Paul asking him to return immediately.
4. They quietly asked him to leave.

## **8 In Achaia, who was a great help to those who by grace had believed? (18:27)**

1. Paul
2. Barnabas
3. **Apollos**
4. All of the answers are correct.

## **9 In Achaia, what did Apollos prove from the Scriptures? (18:28)**

1. That Paul was the Christ
2. That the creation story was true
3. **That Jesus was the Christ**
4. That God judges everyone

## **10 According to Romans 8:31, who is for us? (Romans 8:31)**

1. No one
2. All of the believers
3. **God**
4. The Lord Jesus Christ

## MEMORY VERSE

“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).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

The Holy Spirit gives us power to do amazing things.

## TEACHING TIP

- During the riot, they took Paul to a theatre that was used for assemblies. This theatre could accommodate around 25,000 people. With the entire city gathered in one place, Paul saw an opportunity to address thousands of people at one time with the gospel of Christ. Help children to understand why the disciples felt Paul would face certain death at the hands of this massive, hostile crowd.

# STUDY FOURTEEN

**ACTS 19:1-12, 23-41; 20:7-12**

## RIOTS AND MIRACLES

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Paul’s ministry to the Ephesians evoked high emotions: positive emotions towards the Spirit, and deep-seated anger towards Christianity.

When Paul arrived in Ephesus, the believers there had not experienced the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul asked them some questions and then taught them about Jesus and the Holy Spirit. He baptized the new believers.

While in Ephesus, God performed miracles through Paul: healing diseases and driving out evil spirits. These acts were evidence of the Spirit’s work through Paul.

However, anger rose among the local silversmiths, who made a lot of money creating silver idols of the local god. Paul’s preaching threatened their way of life, both religiously and financially. They tried to stop Paul’s message, but were unsuccessful.

Despite the uproar in Ephesus, Paul continued to travel and preach the message of Christ. He understood that persecution and trials would be a part of his life.

### WORDS OF OUR FAITH

**repentance** — the act of turning away from sin and turning toward God. To feel sorry for sin, to ask for forgiveness, and to live for God.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- A map of the world
- A map of your country
- A map of your town

In class, Read Acts 1:8 to the children. Review the meaning of the word witness. Say, **Name the places mentioned in Acts 1:8.** Let the children respond. **Jerusalem is a city. Judea and Samaria are countries. The end of the earth represents all the other parts of the world. If you obey this verse, you will witness in your city, in your country, and in other parts of the world.**

**How can you witness to people in your town?** (You can witness to family and friends, to people in the stores, and to people you see at school and in other parts of the town.)

**How can you witness to people in other parts of your country?** (You can witness to family members or friends who live in other parts of the country. You may go on vacation to a different town.)

**How can you witness to people in other countries?** (You can write letters to missionaries. When you give to a missions offering, you help missionaries take the gospel to many different countries.)

**You can witness to people in your town, your country, and other parts of the world. You can obey Acts 1:8.**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 132-134.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **What is the difference between John's baptism and baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus?**
2. **Why do you think Paul quit speaking at the synagogue and went to a lecture hall to speak?**
3. **Explain what caused the riot with the craftsmen and other workmen in Ephesus. What was Paul's response to the crowd?**
4. **Why do you think Paul's disciples and friends did not want him to speak to the crowd?**

Say, **Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit. That means that he gave his whole life to God and that the Holy Spirit influenced his every thought, emotion, and desire. When Paul faced problems, the Holy Spirit was with him. God's will was done. Thank God that the same Holy Spirit that filled Paul is available to us today.**

## MEMORY VERSE

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Choose from any of these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Say, **In this study, we learned about some miracles. What were they?** (Paul brought Eutychus back to life. People used articles of clothing that Paul touched to heal people who were sick.)

Ask, **Does God still perform miracles today? Are you aware of anyone who experienced a miracle from God?**

Ask the pastor to talk to the children about miracles that still happen. Perhaps someone from your church has experienced a miracle.

2. The Ephesians accepted Jesus as Saviour, but they did not know about the Holy Spirit. Ask the students to scan the verses in Acts to determine how many times the phrase “Holy Spirit” appears in Acts. (If necessary, assign one or more chapters to each student.)

Ask, **How does the Holy Spirit help Christians?** List the roles of the Holy Spirit on a chalk board or a large sheet of paper. (The Holy Spirit is a comforter, guide, teacher, source of strength and courage, and a helper. The Holy Spirit helps during temptation and times of discouragement. The Holy Spirit brings peace, joy, hope, and understanding.)

## QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 19:1-12, 23-41; 20:7-12 to them.

**How many men were baptized and received the Holy Spirit in Ephesus? (19:5-7)**

1. Hundreds
2. **About twelve**
3. Just a few

**2 What happened after the disciples in Ephesus were baptized and Paul placed his hands on them? (19:5-6)**

1. The Holy Spirit came on them.
2. They spoke in tongues and prophesied.
3. **Both answers are correct.**

**3 Who did extraordinary miracles in Ephesus? (19:11)**

1. The disciples
2. **God, through Paul**
3. Everyone who believed

**4 About what did there arise a great disturbance in Ephesus? (19:23)**

1. **About the Way**
2. About Paul's past
3. About which man-made god was the greatest

**5 Who was Demetrius? (19:24)**

1. A preacher in Ephesus
2. **A silversmith who made shrines to the goddess Artemis**
3. A sorcerer

**6 What did Paul say that man-made gods are? (19:26)**

1. Foolish
2. Beautiful statues
3. **No gods at all**

**7 After Paul said that man-made gods were not gods, what happened? (19:26-29)**

1. **The whole city of Ephesus was in an uproar.**
2. Those worshiping in the shrines of Artemis were happy.
3. The disciples were upset.

**8 In the theatre in Ephesus, whom did the Jews push to the front? (19:33)**

1. Paul
2. Alexander
3. Demetrius

**9 What did the city clerk in Ephesus say that Paul and his men did not do? (19:37)**

1. They did not rob the temples.
2. They did not blaspheme their goddess.
3. **Both answers are correct.**

**10 What happened to Eutychus when he fell asleep in the window? (20:9-10)**

1. He fell to the ground and died.
2. Paul put his arms around him and told everyone that he was alive.
3. **Both answers are correct.**

### **QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 19:1-12, 23-41; 20:7-12 to them.

**1 What did Paul ask the disciples upon arriving in Ephesus? (19:1-2)**

1. "Has Apollos been here?"
2. "How many Christians are there here?"
3. **"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"**
4. "Do you remember who I am?"

**2 Why did Paul leave some of the people in Ephesus? (19:9)**

1. They became obstinate.
2. They refused to believe.
3. They publicly maligned the Way.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

**3 What happened when the handkerchiefs and aprons that touched Paul were taken to the sick? (19:12)**

1. The sick got worse and passed away.
2. **Their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.**
3. The handkerchiefs and aprons magically disappeared.
4. The Holy Spirit came upon the sick.

**4 How does the book of Acts describe Demetrius? (19:24)**

1. He was a silversmith.
2. He made shrines of Artemis.
3. He brought in no little business for the craftsmen.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

**5 What did Demetrius say would lose its good name? (19:27)**

1. The silversmith trade
2. The Lord, Jesus Christ
3. The worshippers of Artemis
4. All of the answers are correct.

**6 What did the workmen shout when they heard what Demetrius said? (19:28)**

1. "Long live the King!"
2. "We believe in Jesus Christ!"
3. **"Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"**
4. "Arrest Paul and persecute him!"

**7 Of what is the city of Ephesus the guardian? (19:35)**

1. Of many gods and goddesses
2. **Of the temple of Artemis and of her image**
3. Of the written word of God
4. All of the answers are correct.

**8 What did the city clerk say Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen could do? (19:38)**

1. Remain if they were peaceful
2. Riot in the streets as long as they wanted to
3. **Press charges if they had a grievance against anybody**
4. Make idols of different gods

**9 What happened to Eutychus while Paul was preaching? (20:9-10)**

1. He fell asleep.
2. He fell out of the window.
3. He died.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

**10 What did Paul do after he raised Eutychus from the dead? (20:10-11)**

1. He stopped preaching and went home.
2. **He broke bread, ate, and talked until daylight.**
3. He told Eutychus to stay awake.
4. All of the answers are correct.

## MEMORY VERSE

“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace” (Acts 20:24).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God entrusts us with the task of sharing the gospel.

## TEACHING TIPS

- Remember that some children have dealt with loss and grief in their lives. Be sensitive to the feelings of your students as you talk about how the followers of Paul felt when he left them.
- The James mentioned in 21:18, is the brother of Jesus. He became a believer after Jesus’ death and was a witness to the resurrection. He became a leader of the church in Jerusalem. Many feel that he probably wrote the book of James.

# STUDY FIFTEEN

**ACTS 20:17-24, 32-38; 21:17-19**

## PAUL’S AMAZING RACE

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Paul was faithful to the gospel even though it cost him a lot. He suffered numerous hardships in order to proclaim the truth of Jesus. Wherever he went, Paul expected to suffer on behalf of the message.

In Paul’s final exhortations to the church in Ephesus, he reminded them of his example. He worked hard to supply his own needs. In the same way he exhorted the Ephesians to work hard, to help the weak, and to share the gospel. He reminded them not to seek monetary rewards but to recognize the value of their relationships. See Matthew 5:1-12 for ways that Christians experience blessings from God.

One of the characteristics that defines Christians is their service to those on the margins of society. The stories of Acts demonstrate how believers shared their lives with each other, including their resources. This is the mission that Paul emphasized to the Ephesians.

Paul described his trials as a reminder that those who follow Jesus might encounter great hardships. It is the Holy Spirit who enables the follower to endure and persevere.

Paul’s report helped further to reconcile his troubled relationship with the leaders of the church in Jerusalem. His ministry to the Gentiles did not contaminate the faith. On the contrary, extending the message to the Gentiles

demonstrated the great grace and mercy of Jesus. The good news about Jesus was that God continually sought to bring all people to himself. We share in God's mission when we share Jesus with others.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

**grace** — everything that God does for us including his love, mercy, forgiveness, and power at work in our lives. God freely gives us his grace because he loves us, not because we deserve it.

**an exhortation** — a short speech conveying urgent advice or recommendations. Acts includes several exhortations from Paul to churches that he visited.

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on page 134.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **Why do you think Paul sent for the Ephesian elders?**
2. **What did Paul say about wanting money, gold, and fine clothes? What did Paul consider to be more valuable than these things?**
3. **What do you think Paul expected when he told them that he was going to Jerusalem?**

4. **Why were the elders so tearful when they said good-bye to Paul? Have you ever had to say goodbye to a friend you may never see again? How did you feel?**

Say, **Paul and the elders were sad when they realized they would not see each other again. Before they left, they knelt down and prayed. They knew that God would hear and answer their prayers when they turned to him for comfort. When we feel sad, prayer is always an appropriate response. God is near us in sad times as well as happy ones.**

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- A piece of paper for each child
- A pencil for each child

Before class, choose a task that you complete regularly (for example: preparing to go to work, shopping for groceries, planning, or helping children with their school work). Make a list of the steps you perform to complete the task.

Say to the class, **Here is a task that I do regularly. Here are the steps I take to complete that task.** Read your list. Distribute the paper and pencils. Instruct the students to think of a task that they do each day. They will create a list of the steps to complete the task. Let volunteers read their lists. Ask each volunteer, **If you omitted any of the steps, would you finish the task?** Allow time for the children to discuss the question.

Read Acts 20:24. Say, **Paul was determined to complete the task that God gave to him.**

Ask a volunteer to read Acts 13:46-47. Say, **In these verses, Paul told the Jews that they rejected his message about Jesus.**



**Therefore, God sent Paul to the Gentiles to preach the gospel to them. Paul reported to the leaders of Ephesus and Jerusalem. He told them that he wanted to complete the task that God gave to him. Paul travelled to many cities. He preached the gospel and followed the guidance of the Holy Spirit.**

Take time to pray with the children. Ask God to help the children to do whatever he wants them to do.

### **MEMORY VERSE**

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Choose from any of these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Ask a volunteer to read Acts 20:32-35. Say, In these verses, Paul said that he worked diligently to supply his own needs and the needs of others. He reminded the Christians to help others who are needy.

Discuss some service projects your class could do for needy people in your church or in your community (for example: collecting food or clothing for a needy family, cleaning an elderly person's yard, doing errands for a disabled person, providing a ride to church, or reading to a person who has poor eyesight). Encourage every child to participate in a project (with the class or by himself or herself).

2. Say, **When you go to school, you receive a report card. These grades tell how well you complete your work. Paul gave a report to the leaders in Ephesus and Jerusalem. He told what**

**he accomplished on his journeys.**

Ask for volunteers to read the following verses and write on the board what Paul reported: Acts 20:19-21; 20:24; 20:31; 20:34; and 20:35. Then, let the students decide on a grade to give to Paul for each of his statements.

### **QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 20:17-24, 32-38; 21:17-19 to them.

#### **1 How did Paul teach in Ephesus? (20:20)**

1. Publicly
2. From house to house
3. **Both answers are correct.**

#### **2 What did Paul declare to both Jews and Greeks? (20:21)**

1. That they must turn to God
2. That they must have faith in Jesus
3. **Both answers are correct.**

#### **3 Who compelled Paul to go to Jerusalem? (20:22)**

1. **The Spirit**
2. An angel
3. Barnabas

#### **4 What did Paul consider that his life was worth? (20:24)**

1. Everything
2. **Nothing**
3. Only a little

#### **5 What did the Holy Spirit warn Paul of in every city? (20:23)**

1. That prison was facing him
2. That hardships were facing him
3. **Both answers are correct.**

## **6** What did Paul not covet? (20:33)

1. Silver or gold
2. Clothing
3. **Both answers are correct.**

## **7** According to the words of the Lord Jesus, “It is more blessed to give than to...” (20:35)

1. “...take from others.”
2. “...receive.”
3. “...have too much.”

## **8** What grieved the elders in Ephesus the most? (20:38)

1. **Paul saying that they would never see his face again**
2. That Paul was coming back soon
3. That they could not go with Paul

## **9** What did the brothers do when Paul and his companions arrived at Jerusalem? (21:17)

1. **They received them warmly.**
2. They arrested them.
3. They gave them medical attention.

## **10** About what did Paul tell James and the elders when he arrived in Jerusalem? (21:19)

1. About the problems that the Jews caused
2. **About what God did among the Gentiles**
3. **Both answers are correct.**

### **QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 20:17-24, 32-38; 21:17-19 to them.

## **1** How did Paul serve the Lord while he lived in Ephesus? (20:17-19)

1. With fear and trembling
2. **With great humility and with tears**
3. With confidence and strength
4. With uncertainty and insecurity

## **2** How did Paul teach in Ephesus? (20:20)

1. With hesitation
2. **Publicly and from house to house**
3. While standing on a platform
4. Only to a small group of believers

## **3** What did Paul declare to both Jews and Greeks in Ephesus? (20:21)

1. That the gods of Ephesus were false gods
2. Everything that he knew
3. **That they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in the Lord Jesus**
4. Only what they could handle

## **4** Where did the Holy Spirit warn Paul that prison and hardships were facing him? (20:23)

1. In Jerusalem
2. In Asia
3. **In every city**
4. In the Jewish synagogues

## **5** To what did Paul commit the elders of the church? (20:32)

1. To each other
2. **To God and to the word of his grace**
3. To the leading of Silas and Timothy
4. To the people of Ephesus

## **6** Whose hands supplied Paul’s needs? (20:34)

1. His companions’ hands
2. The disciples’ hands

3. The Gentiles' hands
4. **His own hands**

**7 What happened after Paul finished speaking to the Ephesian elders? (20:36-37)**

1. He knelt down and prayed.
2. They all wept.
3. They embraced him and kissed him.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

**8 Who received Paul and the others warmly when they arrived at Jerusalem? (21:17)**

1. **The brothers and sisters**
2. No one
3. Everyone they saw
4. Only the twelve apostles

**9 About what did Paul report, in detail, when he arrived in Jerusalem? (21:19)**

1. About how the people of Ephesus did not believe
2. About the riots he had seen
3. **About what God did among the Gentiles through his ministry**
4. All of the answers are correct.

**10 Finish this verse: "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me..." (Acts 20:24)**

1. "...and win the gold medal."
2. **"...the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."**
3. "...even though the task is very hard."
4. "...and live a life of eternity in heaven."

## MEMORY VERSE

“Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say” (Exodus 4:12).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

When God asks us to speak for him, he will teach us what to say.

## TEACHING TIP

- Verses 4-16 are not included in this lesson’s passage selection. It is a summary of Paul’s salvation experience on the road to Damascus. Take time to remind your students of this story.

# STUDY SIXTEEN

**ACTS 21:27—22:3, 17-29**

## THIS IS MY STORY

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

The Roman commander rushed to prevent a riot. He ordered his soldiers to arrest Paul and bind him with two chains. He did this for Paul’s safety. This was the third time that the authorities came to the aid of Paul: first in 18:12-17 and then in 19:23-41. These instances served to further preserve and to spread the gospel.

Paul asked the commander for permission to speak to the people. With his consent, Paul addressed the crowd to explain his actions.

Paul called them “brothers and fathers” in their own language of Aramaic. Hearing this familiar language caused them to listen intently. He gave a testimony of his family, his tradition, and his heritage. He identified himself as a Jew. He showed that he was a credible speaker due to his knowledge of Jewish law and customs.

Clearly, he did not dismiss their concerns as trivial. He sought to establish a connection with them based on their native language, their common upbringing, and the fact that, like them, he was a religious zealot. Paul understood their zealous behaviour because he also persecuted Christians before his conversion. The distinction he made to the crowd was that they were zealots for the law, and he was now a zealot for God. Paul tried to explain to them that when he became a follower of Christ, he did not forsake Judaism.

His new faith led him to follow the God of Judaism as the one who also reaches out to the Gentiles. Once again, Paul defends his actions. The extension of God's grace to the Gentiles is not his idea, but God's. This explanation did not appease the crowd. Instead, they were appalled that Paul would claim that this was God's initiative.

The crowd wants to lynch Paul, so they tried to prove that he committed the sin of blasphemy—speaking inappropriately about God. In their way of thinking, it was impossible to consider that God did not favour Israel in an exclusive manner. Paul's preaching and actions, if they were truly of God, would destroy their understanding of God and their relationship to him. They were angry at Paul, but if Paul was telling the truth, they must be angry at God instead. This was an unacceptable situation for them. The only other option was to recognize that God accepts Gentiles and to submit to his will.

The commander ordered the soldiers to flog Paul. The commander was surprised when Paul identified himself as a Roman citizen, and he ceased Paul's punishment. It was illegal to flog a Roman citizen not found guilty. According to Roman law, all Roman citizens were excluded from any type of degrading forms of punishment such as flogging and crucifixion.

Paul shows us that witnessing is not complicated. We share our story of what we were like before God saved us. We then can share about the difference God made in our lives. God gave Paul the courage to share his story of salvation. Even though the crowd rejected Paul's message, God gave him the courage to speak and taught him what to say. God will do the same for us as we share our story with others.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

**to flog** — to beat severely with a scourge. A scourge is a leather whip with metal attached to the ends.

**a zealot** — A zealot was a member of a patriotic group of Jews in Judea during the time of the Early Church. They wanted to overthrow Roman rule. They vigorously and violently resisted the Roman government.

**to testify** — to tell about something. People who believe in Jesus tell others about him, how he is God's son and wants to be our Saviour. A **testimony** is when Christians tell about their experience with God.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- Paper for each child
- Pencil for each child
- Chalkboard and chalk or marker board and markers

Before class, write a brief biography about your life. Include your birth place, family, places you lived, school, and work. If you have one, bring a childhood picture of yourself to share with the class. Write about your church experience, such as the age when you began to attend church, conversion, and spiritual milestones.

Write on the board these topics: birth, places you lived, family, school, work or hobbies, church. In class, say, **A biography is the story of someone's life. A biography contains the information listed on the board and perhaps other topics too. Here is a brief biography about me.** Read your biography.

If time permits, let the children write information about each of the topics on the board. If time is short, ask volunteers to stand and to talk briefly about each of the topics.

Say, **In this study, we saw that Paul had the opportunity to witness to others. He witnessed when he told his life story and his spiritual story. He told how he became a follower of Jesus. You can witness to others when you tell your story and your love for Jesus.**

### **BIBLICAL LESSON**

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 134-136.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

- 1. The Asian Jews spread lies about Paul and what he taught. Have you ever heard anyone tell you something you knew was false? What did you do about it? Is it right to spread these lies? Why or why not?**
- 2. When the crowd became violent and shouted, "Away with him!" how do you think Paul felt? Do you think God was with Paul at that time? Explain your answer.**
- 3. Why do you think Paul wanted to speak to the crowd and tell his story?**

- 4. How is Paul the same as the other Jews in the story? How is he different? Why is this important?**

Say, **Have you ever been nervous about talking to someone? How about talking in front of a group? These things can make us nervous because we feel that we don't know what to say or do. Sometimes talking to others about the gospel is like that. We don't know how to talk to people about it or what to do. But God will teach us. He will show you what to do and what to say to someone who he has asked you to talk to about him. God simply wants us to be willing to talk to people about the gospel. He will take care of all the rest of the details. All we have to do is be willing to do what he asks.**

### **MEMORY VERSE**

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Choose from these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. You will need a beanbag or a small stone. Prepare several sheets of paper. Write one of these words on each piece: family, friend, and neighbour. Fold the papers in half and randomly place them on the floor around the room.

Ask for a volunteer. Give the beanbag to the volunteer and let the child try to toss it on one of the papers. If it hits a paper, he or she picks up the paper and reads the word. Ask the child to name someone in that category whom he or she can tell about Jesus. Con-

tinue until every child participates or the time is finished.

Say, **Paul constantly told people about Jesus. Wherever he went, whomever he saw, he told his story and his love for Jesus. You can do that also.**

2. Say, **Paul asked the commander to let him speak to the angry crowd in Jerusalem.** Ask the children to discuss why Paul wanted the crowd to hear his side of the story. Did he need to declare his innocence? Ask questions such as: Did he need to preserve his reputation? How did he calm the crowd? Was this one more opportunity to tell a large crowd the story of his conversion and call?

## QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 21:27—22:3, 17-29 to them.

- 1 Whom did the Jews assume Paul brought into the temple area? (21:29)**
  1. Peter
  2. Cornelius
  3. Trophimus
- 2 What happened immediately after the Jews dragged Paul from the Temple? (21:30)**
  1. They killed Paul.
  2. Paul regained strength.
  3. The gates were shut.
- 3 In Jerusalem, what did the rioters do when they saw the commander and his soldiers? (21:32)**
  1. They scattered.
  2. They stopped beating Paul.

3. Both answers are correct.

## **4 In Jerusalem, who arrested Paul and ordered him to be bound with two chains? (21:33)**

1. The commander
2. The rioters
3. The Jerusalem officials

## **5 Why did the soldiers carry Paul up the steps to the barracks? (21:35)**

1. Because Paul could not walk.
2. Because James tried to prevent Paul from leaving.
3. **Because the crowd was too violent.**

## **6 In what language did Paul speak to the crowd in Jerusalem? (21:40)**

1. Aramaic
2. Greek
3. Latin

## **7 What did the crowd do when they heard Paul speak in Aramaic? (22:2)**

1. They rioted.
2. **They became very quiet.**
3. They immediately believed in Jesus Christ.

## **8 Where did the Lord say he would send Paul? (22:21)**

1. To the people of Jerusalem
2. To an unknown location
3. **Far away to the Gentiles**

## **9 What did Paul say when the commander asked if he was a Roman citizen? (22:27-28)**

1. **“Yes, I am. I was born a citizen.”**
2. “No, I was just teasing.”
3. “I am a citizen of the Kingdom of God.”

**10** Finish this verse: “Now go; I will help you speak and will...”  
(Exodus 4:12)

1. “...protect you from all harm.”
2. “...reward you greatly.”
3. “...teach you what to say.”

**QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 21:27—22:3, 17-29 to them.

**1** What happened while the rioters were trying to kill Paul? (21:31)

1. The Greeks took over the temple.
2. News reached the commander of the Roman troops.
3. Paul was taken into heaven.
4. All of the Jews were seized.

**2** What did the commander order? (21:33)

1. He ordered that Paul be bound with two chains.
2. He ordered his soldiers to execute Paul.
3. He ordered that Paul receive a fair trial.
4. He ordered his soldiers to defend themselves.

**3** Why did the commander order that Paul be taken into the barracks? (21:34)

1. Because Paul was defiant
2. Because the crowd loved him and wanted him to stay in their town.
3. Because he could not get at the truth because of the uproar
4. All of the answers are correct.

**4** Who did the commander think Paul was? (21:38)

1. A false prophet
2. An escaped prisoner
3. A very dangerous person
4. An Egyptian who started a revolt

**5** What happened when the crowd heard Paul speak to them in Aramaic? (22:2)

1. They became very quiet.
2. They were outraged.
3. The Holy Spirit came upon them all.
4. The commander stopped him from speaking.

**6** What happened to Paul when he was praying in the Temple in Jerusalem? (22:17-21)

1. Paul fell into a trance.
2. The Lord told Paul to leave Jerusalem because the people would not accept his testimony about him.
3. The Lord said that he was sending Paul to the Gentiles.
4. All of the answers are correct.

**7** What did Paul do when the blood of Stephen was shed? (22:20)

1. He attempted to stop those who were killing him.
2. He turned his face so that he did not have to watch.
3. He stood there giving his approval.
4. He did nothing.



## **8 What did Paul ask if it was legal to do? (22:25)**

1. **To flog a Roman citizen who has not been found guilty**
2. To arrest someone without proof of their offense
3. To kill him without notifying his family
4. To flog anyone without a fair trial

## **9 What was Paul's answer when the commander asked, "Are you a Roman citizen?" (Acts 22:27)**

1. "No, I am not."
2. "I was born a Roman citizen, but I am no longer."
3. **"Yes, I am."**
4. "I will not tell you."

## **10 In Jerusalem, why was the commander alarmed? (22:29)**

1. Because Paul got sick in prison
2. Because Paul escaped from prison
3. Because he did not know what to do with Paul
4. **Because he put a Roman citizen in chains**

## MEMORY VERSE

“On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us” (2 Corinthians 1:10*b*).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God cares for us and delivers us.

## TEACHING TIPS

- Whitewash is a paint-like liquid made from limestone rocks. In Matthew, Jesus compared the Pharisees to whitewashed tombs. A whitewashed wall would look good but not be clean underneath.
- Remind the children that they should tell a trusted adult when someone hurts himself or herself, does something that hurts someone, or threatens to hurt someone. Telling is the right thing to do to keep others safe.

# STUDY SEVENTEEN

**ACTS 22:30—23:24, 31-35**

## A MURDEROUS OATH

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Again, Paul is in trouble and God delivers him.

The commander in Jerusalem arranged for the Sanhedrin to gather in order to determine why the Jews opposed Paul’s preaching. Paul made it clear that he was obedient to God by preaching about the resurrection of the dead. In anger, the high priest ordered those next to Paul to hit him. This gave Paul the opportunity to display his knowledge of the law. Then he revealed his status as a Pharisee and his belief in the resurrection.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were political and religious rivals. The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection, angels, or spirits. However the Pharisees believed in them. These two groups sought the attention of the Jewish people. They often cared more about their position and being right than they did about God’s approval. This worked to Paul’s advantage since the violent arguing prompted the commander to take Paul back to the safety of the barracks.

The next night, the Lord visited Paul. He told him to be brave. Paul was going to Rome, the capital of the empire, to testify about Jesus. Paul was encouraged and reminded that God is sovereign, even during chaotic circumstances.

In Jerusalem, Paul’s life was dangerous. Paul’s nephew reveals a plot to the Roman officials. The Jews planned to kill Paul. The commander listened to Paul’s nephew. Since the commander believed Paul was innocent, he went to

great measures to keep him safe. Paul's life was spared and he was able to continue spreading the gospel.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

**sovereign** — To be sovereign means to have the power to rule without limits. God is sovereign. His power to rule is not limited in any way, except when he limits himself.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- Pieces of paper
- Pen
- Chalkboard and chalk or marker board and marker

Before class, write each of the parts of matching pairs on separate pieces of paper:

Jonah | a huge fish  
the Israelites | the Red Sea  
the three Hebrew men | the fiery furnace  
David | Goliath  
Elijah | the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel  
Joseph | prison

If the children are not familiar with these stories, choose other ones that talk about faithful people in difficult situations.

Write the memory verse on the board (2 Corinthians 1:10*b*).

In class, say, **The Bible tells of many people whom God rescued from difficult situations.** Distribute the cards with people and difficult situations. Ask the children to find the person who holds a card that matches what they have. When the children find the correct partner, have them read together the words of 2 Corinthians 1:10*b*. When all the matches are

complete, ask the class to read together 2 Corinthians 1:10*b*.

Say, **God still watches over us today. He helps us when we experience difficult situations. We can pray and ask for his help.** Ask the children if they are aware of any people in difficult situations. Perhaps one of the children or one of the families experienced sickness or a tragedy. Take time to pray for these situations.

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 136-137.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **How do you think Paul felt as he stood before the Sanhedrin? How did he respond to the order from the high priest for those nearby to hit him?**
2. **The Lord encouraged Paul to trust him. How can you trust God even when it seems things are going wrong?**
3. **Why do you think the Jews were so angry with Paul that they took an oath to kill him?**
4. **How would you have felt if you were Paul's nephew and heard about the**

**plot to kill him? What would you have done?**

5. **Is there ever a time when you should tell someone about something you have seen or heard like Paul's nephew did?**

Say, **Paul's nephew overheard a pretty scary plan some of the Jews had to kill Paul. His nephew was in the right place at the right time. He ran to tell Paul what he heard and Paul told him who else to tell. The Roman commander made sure that Paul was transferred to Caesarea without getting harmed. God cared for Paul and delivered him in a time of need. God does the same for us.**

### **MEMORY VERSE**

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Choose from these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Say, **Paul's nephew saved Paul's life by telling the commander about an evil plot. It was important for the nephew to tell what he heard. Sometimes children tattle on their brother or sister or another child in order to cause trouble for them. Often it is something insignificant, but it will cause an adult to punish the other child.** Ask the children to discuss when it is important to tell an adult about what they see or hear. Write these ideas on the board. For example: when a child hurts himself or others; when a child threatens another child or person; when a child talks about killing

himself or herself; when a child steals something; when a child is involved with illegal drugs or alcohol.

Say, **It was important for Paul's nephew to tell what he heard. He saved his uncle's life.**

2. Talk about various life experiences that frighten children. For example: lost; alone in a bad storm; a natural disaster; illness with a high fever; death of a family member; arguments among family members. Provide materials for the children to illustrate an experience that would frighten them. Ask volunteers to tell what they drew. Close the session with prayer. Ask the children to lift up the papers to God and tell God they trust him to help children in those situations. Recite 2 Corinthians 1:10b with the children.

### **QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 22:30—23:24, 31-35 to them.

**1 What did Ananias, the high priest, order those standing near Paul to do? (23:2)**

1. Whip Paul on the back
2. **Strike Paul on the mouth**
3. Kill Paul

**2 What did Paul say after he insulted the high priest? (23:4-5)**

1. "I did not realize that he was the high priest."
2. "For it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'"
3. **Both answers are correct.**

**3 What happened after Paul said that he stood on trial because of his hope in the resurrection of the dead? (23:6-7)**

1. Paul was released.
2. A dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
3. Paul was sentenced to life in prison.

**4 What was the commander afraid would happen to Paul because the dispute became so violent in the Sanhedrin? (23:10)**

1. Paul would be torn to pieces by them.
2. Paul would escape into the crowd.
3. Both answers are correct.

**5 While in Jerusalem who stood near Paul and encouraged him? (23:11)**

1. The commander
2. The disciples
3. The Lord

**6 Who formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they killed Paul? (23:12)**

1. The disciples
2. Some Jews in Jerusalem
3. Both answers are correct.

**7 When did the Jews plan to kill Paul in Jerusalem? (23:15)**

1. When he was put in prison
2. While he was on the way to the Sanhedrin
3. When Paul was on a ship to Rome

**8 Who overheard the plot to kill Paul? (23:16)**

1. Paul's sister
2. Paul's brother-in-law
3. The son of Paul's sister

**9 Why did the commander order a detachment of 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 spearmen to go to Caesarea? (23:23-24)**

1. To fight the Jews
2. To escort Paul safely to Governor Felix
3. To assist the Jews in killing Paul

**10 Where was Paul to be kept in Caesarea? (23:35)**

1. In the prison
2. In Herod's palace
3. Both answers are correct.

## QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 22:30—23:24, 31-35 to them.

**1 After he arrested Paul, what did the commander do the next day? (22:30)**

1. He wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews.
2. He released Paul.
3. He ordered the chief priests and the Sanhedrin to assemble.
4. All of the answers are correct.

**2 What did Paul call Ananias, the high priest? (23:3)**

1. An evil man
2. A whitewashed wall
3. A godly man
4. A gracious person

**3** What did Paul say the high priest, Ananias, did by commanding that he be struck? (23:3)

1. Committed a great sin
2. Hurt his feelings
3. **Violated the law**
4. All of the answers are correct.

**4** Why did a dispute break out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees? (23:7-8)

1. The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection.
2. The Sadducees say that there are neither angels nor spirits.
3. The Pharisees acknowledge the resurrection, angels, and spirits.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

**5** In a vision, while in Jerusalem, where did the Lord say that Paul would go to testify? (23:11)

1. **To Rome**
2. To Samaria
3. To Judea
4. To Asia

**6** What were more than forty men involved in? (23:12-13)

1. A conspiracy
2. An oath not to eat or drink
3. A plot to kill Paul
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

**7** What did the son of Paul's sister do when he heard about the plot to kill Paul? (23:16)

1. He kept it a secret.
2. He formed an army to fight the Jews.
3. **He went into the barracks and told Paul.**
4. He prayed for God's protection.

**8** Whom did the commander order to go to Caesarea at nine o'clock on the night he learned of the plot? (23:23)

1. 200 soldiers
2. 70 horsemen
3. 200 spearmen
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

**9** Where was Paul to be kept under guard in Caesarea? (23:35)

1. In the home of the governor
2. In prison
3. **In Herod's palace**
4. On the streets

**10** According to 2 Corinthians 1:10b, what did Paul say that God would continue to do? (2 Corinthians 1:10b)

1. God will continue to call apostles to serve him.
2. God will serve us.
3. **God will continue to deliver us.**
4. God will find us when we need him the most.

## MEMORY VERSE

“For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God wants us to testify to his work in our lives.

## TEACHING TIP

- The editors chose not to include Acts 24:1—25:22 in the readings for this lesson. They did this to conserve space, and because many of the things that happen in these chapters are recounted in other passages. Read through these scriptures and summarize them for your children. It’s very interesting to read about Paul’s testimony and how he refuted the charges brought against him. His example is a good one to follow. He was cordial, yet direct with his accusers. A summary of this section will help the children have a better understanding of the entire book of Acts.

# STUDY EIGHTEEN

## ACTS 25:23—26:32

## PAUL’S LIVING TESTIMONY

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Festus was the Roman governor of Judea. He administered Roman law. Festus was newly appointed, so he requested the assistance of King Agrippa and Queen Bernice, Agrippa’s sister, to help solidify his report to Caesar about Paul. Festus hoped to absolve himself of responsibility by appealing to Agrippa.

Paul’s witness to King Agrippa included the statement from Jesus (on the road to Damascus), “It is hard for you to kick against the goads” (26:14). Herders used sticks with sharpened points called goads to prod cattle in the right direction. So, the proverb that Paul quoted was about futile resistance. The animal resisting only ended up hurting itself. Before his conversion, Paul fought against God. Paul recognized that it was actually to his detriment to resist God. He changed his mind and began serving Jesus rather than persecuting him.

Festus’s interruption of Paul’s speech in 26:24 actually served to emphasize Paul’s last point: the resurrection of Jesus. It is the hope in the resurrection that inspired Paul to preach the good news to the Gentiles, which resulted in upsetting the established Jewish tradition. Festus thought that Paul’s belief in the resurrection was crazy.

Agrippa noted that Paul’s conflict with the Jews was religious in nature, and separate from the legal matters of Rome. Paul chose to appeal his case to the Roman em-

peror. Otherwise, Agrippa and Festus could free him.

Paul's journey was almost over. He started in Jerusalem, then he spread the gospel all over the province of Judea. He declared the story of the risen Jesus to kings and emperors along the way. Eventually he would preach in Rome, the centre of the ancient world, and then to the ends of the earth.

## WORDS OF OUR FAITH

**Judea** — the homeland of the Israelites. Shortly before the time of Jesus, it was conquered by the Romans and became part of their empire.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- Chalkboard and chalk or marker board and markers

Before class, write the words of Acts 4:20 on the board. Also, write this sentence: "I go to Rome, and I will take \_\_\_\_\_."

In class, say, **In today's study, Paul spoke to King Agrippa. Agrippa did not find that Paul broke any Roman laws. However, Paul already appealed his case to Caesar. So, Paul would go to Rome, the capital of the empire, to present his case there.**

**Let's play a travel game. Think of something you would take with you if you planned to go to a big city like Rome. Each person will say, "I go to Rome, and I will take a \_\_\_\_\_." You tell what you will take. However, you need to listen carefully and remember what each person says that he or she will take.**

When every person has a turn, ask a volunteer to repeat what everyone said. For instance, the volunteer might say: "I go to Rome, and I will take a \_\_\_\_\_. Mary goes to Rome, and she will take a \_\_\_\_\_. John goes to Rome, and he will take a \_\_\_\_\_."

Another version of the game presents more of a challenge. The first person says, "I go to Rome, and I will take a \_\_\_\_\_." The second person says, "(first child's name) goes to Rome, and he takes a \_\_\_\_\_. I go to Rome, and I will take a \_\_\_\_\_." The third child repeats the names and objects of the first two people, and then states his name and object. The last child repeats everyone's name and all the objects. Say, **Wherever you go - to Rome or anywhere else - God goes with you. Wherever you go, God wants you to tell others about his love and about his Son, Jesus.** Read together Acts 4:20.

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 138-139.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **How do you think Paul felt when he heard Festus tell the king that he needed help, since he could not see**



any reason to charge Paul with a crime?

2. Why do you think Paul wanted to tell his story to King Agrippa?
3. When Paul testified to King Agrippa, Paul pointed out the change that took place in his life after his encounter with Jesus. If you are a Christian, what things are different about your life now than before you met Christ?
4. Paul told King Agrippa all about becoming a believer. If you had to tell someone about being a Christian, what would you say?

Say, Paul stood before King Agrippa and told the story of who he was before he met Jesus and who he was after Jesus changed his life. It could have been a very bad thing for Paul to tell how bad he was before he became a Christian. Instead, Paul knew that the important part of his story was that God transformed him. He wanted everyone to hear about it so that they too could be transformed.

### MEMORY VERSE

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Choose from these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Say, **To transform something is to make it different. God transforms a person when he or she becomes a Christian. This transformation does**

**not happen instantly. It happens as the person learns from God's Word, prays to God for help, and listens to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.**

On a chalk board or large piece of paper, make two columns. In one column, list the attitudes and actions of a person who is not a Christian. In the second column, list the attitudes and actions of a growing Christian. Help the children to realize the difference God can make in the life of a person. Say, **Paul told how God transformed his life. At first, he hated Christians and sent them to prison. Then, he became a Christian. He needed to change many of his attitudes and actions. He later wrote some letters that became books of the Bible. In these letters, he tells Christians how to live a godly life.**

2. Say, **Three times the Roman authorities declared that Paul was innocent of charges that people brought against him. Let's review what those charges were and who brought them.**

Divide the class into three teams. Assign each team one of these passages: Acts 23:6-10; Acts 25:25-27; Acts 26:30-32. Ask the teams to report who brought the charges, what were the charges, and the results.

## QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 25:23—26:32 to them.

### **1 Who came with great pomp and entered the audience room? (25:23)**

1. Agrippa
2. Bernice
3. **Both answers are correct.**

### **2 Why did Festus bring Paul before Agrippa? (25:26)**

1. Festus was angry at Paul and wanted someone else to punish him.
2. **Festus wanted to know what to write about Paul in the letter to Caesar.**
3. Festus wanted Agrippa to have faith in Jesus.

### **3 Why did Paul consider himself fortunate to stand before King Agrippa? (26:2-3)**

1. Because Agrippa was not a Jew
2. **Because Agrippa was acquainted with the Jewish customs**
3. Because Agrippa was rich and powerful

### **4 What did Paul beg King Agrippa to do? (26:3)**

1. To set him free
2. To punish the Jews
3. **To listen patiently to him**

### **5 Whom did Paul say that he put in prison in Jerusalem? (26:10)**

1. Those who did not pay taxes
2. **Many of the saints**
3. The governor of Jerusalem

### **6 Where was Paul going when a light from heaven blazed around him? (26:12-13)**

1. Jerusalem
2. Emmaus
3. **Damascus**

### **7 To whom would Christ bring the message of light? (26:23)**

1. To His own people
2. To the Gentiles
3. **Both answers are correct.**

### **8 Who said that Paul was out of his mind? (26:24)**

1. Agrippa
2. **Festus**
3. Bernice

### **9 What did Paul say about himself during his speech to Festus? (26:25)**

1. "I am not insane, most excellent Festus."
2. "What I am saying is true and reasonable."
3. **Both answers are correct.**

### **10 With what was King Agrippa familiar? (26:25-26)**

1. With all the laws of Moses
2. **With the things that Paul was saying**
3. **Both answers are correct.**

## QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 25:23—26:32 to them.

### **1** How did Agrippa and Bernice enter the audience room? (25:23)

1. They entered with great pomp.
2. They entered with the high ranking officers.
3. They entered with the leading men of the city.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

### **2** Why did Festus decide to send Paul to Rome? (25:25)

1. Because Paul deserved to be executed
2. **Because Paul made his appeal to the Emperor**
3. Because Felix told him to send him there
4. Because Paul offended Festus

### **3** Who gave Paul permission to speak for himself? (26:1)

1. Festus
2. The commander
3. **Agrippa**
4. All of the answers are correct.

### **4** Why did Paul say that he was on trial? (26:6)

1. Because the Jews hated him
2. **Because of his hope in what God had promised their fathers**
3. Because he preached to the Gentiles
4. Because Festus could not decide Paul's fate

### **5** What did Paul see on the road to Damascus? (26:13)

1. An angel of the Lord
2. Nothing
3. One crippled beggar
4. **A light from heaven**

### **6** What did Paul do before he saw Jesus on the road to Damascus? (26:9-10)

1. **He did all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus.**
2. He supported the church in all they did.
3. He worked as a tax collector.
4. He raised his children.

### **7** What message did Paul preach in Damascus, Jerusalem, and all Judea? (26:19-20)

1. That they should repent
2. That they should turn to God
3. That they should prove their repentance by their deeds
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

### **8** What did Festus say was driving Paul insane? (26:24)

1. **His great learning**
2. His unbelievable teachings
3. His prison sentence
4. His unshakable faith

### **9** What did Agrippa say to Festus? (26:32)

1. **“This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”**
2. “He should not have preached to the Gentiles.”
3. “He broke the law and should be punished.”
4. “He is surely an angel and not a man.”

**10** What did Peter and John say when they were told not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus? (Acts 4:20)

1. **“We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”**
2. “You should not judge others.”
3. “Do not threaten us!”
4. All of the answers are correct.

## MEMORY VERSE

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:23).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God wants us to put our hope in him.

## TEACHING TIP

- Remind children that God is the real hero in this story. God sent an angel with a message to Paul to verify his constant care. God has many ways to send encouragement to Christians.

# STUDY NINETEEN

**ACTS 27:1-2, 9-26, 33-44**

## FAITH DURING THE STORM

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

The story of Paul’s sea voyage to Rome is similar to many others in Greek literature. It is the result of obedience and submission, the opposite of the Old Testament journey of Jonah. Jonah’s disobedience threatened the lives of everyone on the ship. Paul’s obedience saved the lives of his shipmates.

Natural forces, beyond the control of the sailors, damaged the ship. There was no navigational guidance from the stars and sun, because they were blocked out by the storm. The skilled sailors tried at least four methods to salvage the ship. First, they secured the lifeboat. Second, they ran ropes under the ship to hold it together. Then, they lowered the anchor. Finally, they threw some cargo overboard. Despite these measures, the storm continued to beat the ship. The sailors lost hope.

Paul encouraged his fellow shipmates by sharing the angel’s message that none of them would be lost. He demonstrated great faith when he proclaimed to the crew the angel’s prophesy. Paul brought encouragement to his shipmates during the fury of the storm. It is encouraging to know that God is able to bring peace to us when we experience chaos in life.

### WORDS OF OUR FAITH

**an angel** — a supernatural messenger from God.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- An adult to tell the story of the shipwreck in a dramatic way
- Some tape on the floor to make the outline of a large ship
- A source of water to sprinkle on the children during the storm
- A fan to create some wind

Before class, use tape on the floor to make the outline of a large ship. Make it large enough for the whole class to sit inside. Ask an adult to tell the story of the shipwreck in a dramatic way. Ask a helper to be ready to start a fan to create the wind in the storm. Ask the helper to sprinkle water in the air to simulate the rain.

In class, say **I invite you to take a ride in my ship, and here is our captain.** Introduce the volunteer. He or she then asks all the children to come on board the ship. He or she then retells the story of Paul and the shipwreck. The helper will turn on the fan and sprinkle the water at the appropriate point in the story.

After the story, thank the volunteer. Say, **God wanted Paul to go to Rome. God gave hope to Paul during the storm. Paul then gave hope to the other sailors. The sailors did everything they could to save the ship and themselves — except to ask God for help. Paul helped the sailors know the one who is the true source of hope. God saved Paul's life and the life of everyone on the ship. God still brings hope to people today in the middle of difficult situations.**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 139-141.

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **Paul realized the danger in sailing at that time of year and tried to warn the others. Have you ever felt warned about danger? What happened?**
2. **Though he was a prisoner, Paul had hope because of his confidence in God. In what ways has God helped you through a difficult situation?**
3. **An angel brought encouragement to Paul. How has God brought encouragement to you? How have you been a source of encouragement to others?**
4. **What was your favourite part of this Bible story? Why?**

Say, **Paul was in a difficult situation on a boat in a storm in the ocean. But, he hoped in God and God promised through an angel that not one person on the boat would be harmed. Paul placed his hope in the right place—God.**

## MEMORY VERSE

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Choose from any of these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Bring to class a sheet and a lightweight ball. Have four children hold each of the corners of the sheet. Let the other children hold the sheet on the sides. The children will move the sheet to create the storm for the ship (the ball) in the centre. As the children move the sheet, they should keep the ship from rolling off the sheet and onto the floor. Point out that God protected Paul and everyone who was on the ship. Although the ship wrecked, the people lived.
2. Use this object lesson to talk about God's care for the men in the storm. Before class, gather a container (such as a dishpan) and some unpeeled fruit. An orange, apple, or banana will be good. Fill the container with water. Use the fruit to represent the ship that normally floated on the water. Press down on the fruit and notice that it floats back to the top of the water.

Say, **In the storm, the people on the ship thought they would drown. However, God protected the people. Even when the ship wrecked, all of the people swam to shore and lived.**

## QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 27:1-2, 9-26, 33-44 to them.

### **When did Paul's ship begin sailing? (27:9)**

1. After Pentecost
2. **After the Fast**
3. In December

### **2 Who warned that the voyage would be disastrous and bring great loss? (27:9-11)**

1. Julius
2. The pilot and the owner of the ship
3. **Paul**

### **3 What swept down from the island? (27:14)**

1. A wind of hurricane force
2. A "northeaster"
3. **Both answers are correct.**

### **4 What did the sailors do for fear that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis? (27:17)**

1. They lowered the sea anchor
2. They let the ship be driven along
3. **Both answers are correct.**

### **5 What did the sailors throw overboard on the third day? (27:19)**

1. The slaves
2. **The ship's tackle**
3. The food

### **6 What did Paul urge the men to do after they lost hope of being saved? (27:22)**

1. **To keep up their courage**
2. To turn around and sail home
3. To send out a call for help

### **7 During his voyage on the ship, in what did Paul have faith? (27:25)**

1. That everyone on board would die, except him
2. That the islanders would attack them
3. **That everything would happen just as God told him**

**8 After they ate as much as they wanted, how did the sailors lighten the ship? (27:38)**

1. By throwing the grain into the sea
2. By throwing the prisoners overboard
3. By cutting loose the anchors

**9 Whose life did the centurion want to spare? (27:43)**

1. All of the sailors' lives
2. His own life
3. Paul's life

**10 Who reached land in safety? (27:44)**

1. Only the soldiers
2. Only the prisoners
3. Everyone

### **QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 27:1-2, 9-26, 33-44 to them.

**1 Who was Julius? (27:1)**

1. The soldier that escorted Paul and some other prisoners to Rome
2. A centurion
3. A member of the Imperial Regiment
4. All of the answers are correct.

**2 Whose advice did the centurion follow? (27:11)**

1. The advice of the pilot and the owner of the ship
2. The advice of the centurion's wife
3. The advice of Paul
4. His own advice

**3 What was the wind of hurricane force called? (27:14)**

1. A typhoon
2. The northeaster
3. A bolt of lightning
4. The Great Storm

**4 What did the sailors do with the boat when it was caught in a storm? (27:17-19)**

1. They passed ropes under the ship to hold it together.
2. They lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along.
3. They threw the cargo and tackle overboard.
4. All of the answers are correct.

**5 What did the angel of God tell Paul on the ship? (27:23-24)**

1. Do not be afraid.
2. You must stand trial before Caesar.
3. God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.
4. All of the answers are correct.

**6 On the ship, what did Paul do with the bread? (27:35)**

1. He gave thanks to God, broke it, and ate it.
2. He threw it overboard.
3. He was not hungry.
4. All of the answers are correct.



## **7 What happened when they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach? (27:40-41)**

1. The ship struck a sandbar and ran aground.
2. The bow stuck fast and would not move.
3. The stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

## **8 Who kept the soldiers from carrying out their plan to kill the prisoners on board? (27:43)**

1. Paul
2. The owner of the ship
3. The island people
4. **The centurion**

## **9 What order did the centurion give to some of the prisoners? (27:43-44)**

1. **He ordered those who could swim to jump in and swim to land.**
2. He ordered those who could not swim to tie themselves to the mast of the ship.
3. He ordered a few of the prisoners to escape in the lifeboats.
4. All of the answers are correct.

## **10 Finish this verse: "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess,..." (Hebrews 10:23)**

1. "...for life is short."
2. "...for you cannot put your hope in people."
3. **"...for he who promised is faithful."**
4. "...for you never know what may happen tomorrow."

## MEMORY VERSE

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

God establishes his Church through faithful believers.

## TEACHING TIP

- Remind the children that God expects his followers today to continue Paul’s work to tell the world about Jesus Christ. We are all called to be his witnesses.

# STUDY TWENTY

## ACTS 28:1-31

## THE END IS THE BEGINNING

### BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

When Paul finally reached Rome, he continued his mission of preaching the story of Jesus. Paul shared the account of his arrest and trial as the introduction of his testimony to the Jewish leaders. Like every other time he spoke to a Jewish audience, the reaction to Paul’s message was mixed.

Paul quoted from Isaiah as he explained his experiences of sharing God’s story with the Jewish people. Referring to Isaiah 6:9-10, Paul reiterated God’s warning to the Jews. Paul reassured them that God would heal them if they chose humbly to receive the invitation to see, hear, understand, and obey God.

Paul probably experienced grief, knowing that his people did not accept the message of salvation. However, he continued to trust and obey God. In fact, Acts ends with a summary of Paul continuing boldly to preach the message of Jesus in Rome.

Throughout the second half of Acts, we read of Jewish rejection and Gentile acceptance of the gospel. Luke does not communicate in his book that the mission to the Jews was a failure. Some Jews accepted God’s message. The gospel is for everyone, both Jew and Gentile. There is hope that all will accept the message.

Jesus is our hope. With the power of the Holy Spirit, we can boldly proclaim this message to the world.

## ACTIVITY

You will need these items for this activity:

- A piece of candy or a small cookie for each child
- Five pieces of paper
- A marker

Before class, buy or make a small piece of candy or a cookie for each child. Make two signs: on one piece of paper write JEWS and on the other GENTILES.

In class, divide the children into two groups: the Jews and the Gentiles. Ask a volunteer from each group to hold the sign that you made.

Say, **I have some candy** (or some cookies). **Should I give them to the Jews or to the Gentiles? Why?** Let the children respond. Say, **I will give one to all of you.**

Let the children eat the treat then say, **When Paul entered a new city, he always spoke to the Jews first about the Gospel. However, many of the Jews refused to believe in Jesus. So, Paul preached the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul realized God wanted everyone to be a part of his kingdom. God wants you to be a part of his kingdom also.**

Review the steps of salvation. Invite any children who are not Christians to respond to God's call of salvation today. Pray with any who accept the invitation.

Say, **Paul travelled from Jerusalem to many cities. Wherever he went, he preached about Jesus. He fulfilled Acts 1:8 to go to Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the world. You can tell your story now wherever you go.**

## BIBLICAL LESSON

Prepare a Bible story based on the lesson's scripture verses.

An easy-to-read version of this lesson is printed in the back of this book, on pages 141-142

Children will understand the lesson better if you tell them the story rather than reading it to them.

After the story, encourage the children to answer the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. These questions help the children to understand the story and to apply it to their lives.

1. **How would you have felt if you were one of the islanders that saw Paul get bitten by the viper but not get sick? What would you have thought?**
2. **Why do you think the islanders were so generous with Paul and his companions when they got ready to leave?**
3. **In your own words, tell what happened when Paul spoke to the leaders of the Jews. What was their response to his message?**
4. **What do you think Paul did while he was in Rome? How many churches did he write letters to? Hint: Some of these letters are found in the New Testament.**

Say, **Every story in Acts tells us of how the early Christians were faithful believers. God built his Church upon Peter—a man who ran away from Jesus in his time of need, Paul—a man who hated and brutally persecuted Christians, and several others who were fishermen and carpenters—average people. God chose these people to establish his Church because they were faithful. With all their faults and shortcomings they came to**

**God and gave themselves to him to use for his purposes. God guides the faithful believer. He will guide you as you follow him.**

### **MEMORY VERSE**

Practice the study's memory verse. You will find suggestions for Memory Verse Activities on pages 111-112.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Choose from these options to enhance the children's Bible study.

1. Say, **Paul lived in Rome as a prisoner for two years. What do you think he did while he was a prisoner?** Let the children respond. **People could visit Paul while he was a prisoner. What did they talk about? Paul also wrote letters to people and to churches while he was a prisoner. Some of those letters became books of our Bible. Let's count them.**

Divide the children into teams. Provide at least one Bible for each team. Have the children read the first verse of all the books from 1 Corinthians to Philemon. Ask, **How many books did Paul write?**

2. Say, **God used faithful believers to start his Church. Were any of them royalty or aristocracy? Here is a list: Peter, Paul, John, Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos, Timothy, John Mark, and Eutychus. No. They were common people who loved God and Jesus. Who is responsible for the growth of the Church? Pastors are important. However, everyone in a local church must work to help his or her church to**

**grow. Every believer has a responsibility.**

Write these words on a chalkboard or large piece of paper "What can children do to help our church grow?" Ask for volunteers to write a way that children can help.

### **QUESTIONS FOR BASIC COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 28:1-31 to them.

- 1 What happened when Paul put a pile of brushwood on the fire? (28:3-5)**
  1. A snake bit Paul on the hand.
  2. Paul shook the snake off into the fire.
  3. **Both answers are correct.**
- 2 Who welcomed Paul and his companions to his home and entertained them for three days on the island of Malta? (28:7)**
  1. The king of Malta
  2. **The chief official of the island, Publius**
  3. Several of the widows of Malta
- 3 Who came to Paul after he healed Publius's father? (28:9)**
  1. **The rest of the sick on the island**
  2. All of Publius's family
  3. The chief officials of Malta
- 4 What did the islanders of Malta do for Paul and the crew? (28:10)**
  1. Honoured them in many ways
  2. Furnished them with the supplies that they needed
  3. **Both answers are correct.**

## **5** What happened when Paul saw the brothers from Rome? (28:15)

1. He thanked God and was encouraged.
2. He was angry at them because they put him in prison.
3. He asked them why they did not come see him in Jerusalem.

## **6** Why did the leaders of the Jews in Rome want to hear Paul's views? (28:22)

1. Because people everywhere were talking against this sect
2. Because they were excited to hear Paul's testimony
3. Because they received a letter from Jerusalem concerning Paul

## **7** When did the Jewish leaders in Rome begin to leave Paul? (28:25)

1. After Paul made his final statement
2. Around noon
3. Immediately after Paul began teaching about Jesus Christ

## **8** What did Paul say was sent to the Gentiles? (28:28)

1. Dreams and visions
2. God's salvation
3. Pain and suffering

## **9** What did Paul say that the Gentiles would do with the message of God's salvation? (28:28)

1. They would toss it aside.
2. They would not listen to it.
3. They would listen to it.

## **10** How long did Paul stay in Rome? (28:30)

1. Two years
2. Two months
3. Two weeks

### **QUESTIONS FOR ADVANCED COMPETITION**

To prepare the children for competition, read Acts 28:1-31 to them

## **1** What did the islanders of Malta do for Paul and his companions? (28:1-3)

1. Showed unusual kindness
2. Built a fire for them
3. Welcomed them
4. All of the answers are correct.

## **2** Why did the islanders say that Paul was a murderer? (28:4)

1. Because Paul was performing miracles
2. Because Paul seemed guilty and nervous
3. Because Paul was bitten by a snake
4. All of the answers are correct.

## **3** What happened to Paul when the snake bit him? (28:5-6)

1. Paul suffered no ill effects.
2. Paul swelled up.
3. Paul suddenly fell dead.
4. Paul became like God.

## **4** How was Publius's father healed? (28:8)

1. Paul went to see him.
2. Paul prayed for him.
3. Paul placed his hands on him and healed him.
4. All of the answers are correct.

## **5 What did Paul do when he saw the brothers in Rome? (28:14-15)**

1. **He thanked God and was encouraged.**
2. He hugged them and cried.
3. He turned his face from them because he was ashamed.
4. He asked for food and a place to stay.

## **6 Why did Paul say that he was bound with a chain? (28:20)**

1. Because he committed a crime deserving death
2. **Because of the hope of Israel**
3. Because his own people were guilty
4. All of the answers are correct.

## **7 How did Paul try to convince those in Rome about Jesus? (28:23)**

1. Through miraculous signs
2. **From the Law of Moses and from the Prophets**
3. Through stories of his travels
4. By telling them that he loved them

## **8 What did Paul say was sent to the Gentiles? (28:28)**

1. Money to build new churches
2. **God's salvation**
3. Pain and suffering
4. Persecution

## **9 What did Paul say that the Gentiles would do with the message of God's salvation? (28:28)**

1. They would toss it aside.
2. They would not listen to it.
3. **They would listen to it.**
4. They would not know what it means.

## **10 What did Paul do for two years while in Rome? (28:30-31)**

1. He stayed in his own rented house.
2. Boldly and without hindrance, he preached the kingdom of God.
3. He taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. **All of the answers are correct.**

# memory verses

*The following verses are the memory verses for each lesson. You may reproduce this page and distribute it to the children for study purposes.*

## **STUDY 1**

“We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him” (Acts 5:32).

## **STUDY 2**

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

## **STUDY 3**

“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Hebrews 13:16).

## **STUDY 4**

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12).

## **STUDY 5**

“The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple” (Psalm 119:130).

## **STUDY 6**

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

## **STUDY 7**

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and

approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2).

## **STUDY 8**

“Then Peter began to speak: ‘I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right’” (Acts 10:34-35).

## **STUDY 9**

“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16b).

## **STUDY 10**

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:2-3).

## **STUDY 11**

“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:38).

## **STUDY 12**

“You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard” (Acts 22:15).

## **STUDY 13**

“What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

### **STUDY 14**

“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).

### **STUDY 15**

“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace” (Acts 20:24).

### **STUDY 16**

“Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say” (Exodus 4:12).

### **STUDY 17**

“On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us” (2 Corinthians 1:10*b*).

### **STUDY 18**

“For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

### **STUDY 19**

“Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:23).

### **STUDY 20**

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

# memory verse activities

### **BIBLE VERSE FUN**

Ask the children to sit in a straight line. Tell the first child to stand, to say the first word of the verse, to wave both hands excitedly in the air, and to sit down. Ask the second child to stand, to say the second word of the verse, to wave both hands excitedly in the air, and to sit down. Continue until the verse is complete. If a child forgets a word or says the wrong word, let the other children tell the correct word. Encourage the children to say the verse quickly so that their motions look like an ocean wave.

### **BIBLE PASS**

You will need a Bible and a source of music for this activity.

Have the children sit in a circle. Give one child the Bible. When the music starts, tell the children to pass the Bible around the circle. When the music stops, the child holding the Bible says the Bible verse. Tactfully stop the music so each child has an opportunity to say the verse.



## **BIBLE VERSE RACE**

Write each word or phrase of a Bible verse on a piece of paper. Make two sets, one for each team.

Divide the class into two teams. Place a set of word cards on the floor in front of each team. Scramble the order of the cards. After a signal, let the first child on each team find the first word of the verse and run to a goal line. The child places the card on the floor and races back to the second player. That child picks up the second word of the verse and races with it to the goal line. Continue until one team completes the verse in perfect order. Allow time for the second team to complete its verse. Then have both teams recite the verse together.

## **BIBLE VERSE LINE UP**

Write each word or phrase of a Bible verse on a piece of paper.

Give each child a verse card. Instruct the children with cards to go to different parts of the room and hold up the card. Choose another child to line up the children in the correct order of the verse. Then have the class read the verse together.

## **HIDE AND SEEK MEMORY GAME**

Prepare papers and hide them in advance for this activity.

Write each word of the memory verse on a separate piece of paper. Hide the individual words around the room. Ask the children to find the words and to arrange them in the correct order. Recite the memory verse.

## **STAND UP VERSES**

Instruct the children to sit in a circle. Instruct the first child to stand and say the first word of the verse, and then he or she sits down. The second child stands and says the second word of the verse, and then he or she sits down. Continue until the children complete the verse. Encourage the children to play again, but to go faster than the previous time. Let the children see how quickly they can say the verse.

## **MISSING WORDS MEMORY GAME**

You will need a chalkboard, marker board, or paper for this activity.

Write the memory verse on a chalkboard or marker board. Ask the children to recite the verse. Permit a child to erase one word, and then ask the children to repeat the verse (including the missing word.) Continue until all the words disappear, and the children say the verse from memory. If a chalkboard or marker board is not available, write each word of the verse on a separate piece of paper, and ask the children to remove one word at a time.

# easy-to-read version of bible passages

## **STUDY 1**

### **The Promised Gift**

**Acts 1:1-11; 2:1-8, 12-21, 36-47**

**Luke Writes Another Book (1:1-5)**

Dear Theophilus,

The first book I wrote was about everything Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day he was carried up into heaven. Before he went, he talked to the apostles he had chosen. With the help of the Holy Spirit, he told them what they should do. This was after his death, but he showed them that he was alive, proving it to them in many ways. The apostles saw Jesus many times during the 40 days after he was raised from death. He spoke to them about God's kingdom. One time when Jesus was eating with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem. He said, "Wait here until you receive what the Father promised to send. Remember, I told you about it before. John baptized people with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

**Jesus Is Carried Up Into Heaven (1:6-11)**

The apostles were all together. They asked Jesus, "Lord, is this the time for you to give the people of Israel their kingdom again?"

Jesus said to them, "The Father is the only one who has the authority to decide dates and times. They are not for you to know. But the Holy Spirit will come on you and give you power. You will be my witnesses. You will tell people everywhere about me—in Jerusalem, in the rest of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world."

After Jesus said this, he was lifted up into the sky. While they were watching, he went into a cloud, and they could not see him. They were staring into the sky where he had gone. Suddenly two men wearing white clothes were standing beside them. They said, "Men from Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? You saw Jesus carried away from you into heaven. He will come back in the same way you saw him go."

**The Coming of the Holy Spirit (2:1-8, 12-13)**

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a noise came from heaven. It sounded like a strong wind blowing. This noise filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw something that looked like flames of fire. The flames were separated and stood over each person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit,

and they began to speak different languages. The Holy Spirit was giving them the power to do this.

There were some godly Jews in Jerusalem at this time. They were from every country in the world. A large crowd came together because they heard the noise. They were surprised because, as the apostles were speaking, everyone heard in their own language.

They were all amazed at this. They did not understand how the apostles could do this. They said, "Look! These men we hear speaking are all from Galilee. But we hear them in our own languages. How is this possible? We are from all these different places.

The people were all amazed and confused. They asked each other, "What is happening?" But others were laughing at the apostles, saying they were drunk from too much wine.

#### **Peter Speaks to the People (2:14-21, 26-41)**

Then Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles. He spoke loudly so that all the people could hear. He said, "My Jewish brothers and all of you who live in Jerusalem, listen to me. I will tell you something you need to know. Listen carefully. These men are not drunk as you think; it's only nine o'clock in the morning. But Joel the prophet wrote about what you see happening here today. This is what he wrote:

*God says: In the last days  
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.  
Your young men will see visions.  
Your old men will have special dreams.  
In those days I will pour out my Spirit  
on my servants, men and women,  
and they will prophesy.  
I will work wonders in the sky above.*

*I will cause miraculous signs on the earth  
below.*

*There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke.*

*The sun will be changed into darkness,  
and the moon will be as red as blood.*

*Then the great and glorious day of the Lord  
will come.*

*And everyone who trusts in the Lord will be  
saved.'*

"So, all the people of Israel should know this for certain: God has made Jesus to be Lord and Messiah. He is the man you nailed to the cross!"

When the people heard this, they felt very, very sorry. They asked Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

Peter said to them, "Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Then God will forgive your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you. It is also for your children and for the people who are far away. It is for everyone the Lord our God calls to himself."

Peter warned them with many other words; he begged them, "Save yourselves from the evil of the people who live now!" Then those who accepted what Peter said were baptized. On that day about 3000 people were added to the group of believers.

#### **The Believers Share (2:42-47)**

The believers spent their time listening to the teaching of the apostles. They shared everything with each other. They ate together and prayed together. Many wonders and miraculous signs were happening through the apostles, and everyone felt great respect for God. All the believers stayed together and shared everything. They sold their land and the things they

owned. Then they divided the money and gave it to those who needed it. The believers shared a common purpose, and every day they spent much of their time together in the Temple area. They also ate together in their homes. They were happy to share their food and ate with joyful hearts. The believers praised God and were respected by all the people. More and more people were being saved every day, and the Lord was adding them to their group.

## **STUDY 2**

### **Better Than Money**

#### **Acts 3:1-16, 4:1-22**

#### **Peter Heals a Crippled Man (3:1-10)**

One day Peter and John went to the Temple area. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, which was the time for the daily Temple prayer service. As they were entering the Temple area, a man was there who had been crippled all his life. He was being carried by some friends who brought him to the Temple every day. They put him by one of the gates outside the Temple. It was called Beautiful Gate. There he begged for money from the people going to the Temple. That day he saw Peter and John going into the Temple area. He asked them for money.

Peter and John looked at the crippled man and said, "Look at us!" He looked at them; he thought they would give him some money. But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold, but I do have something else I can give you. By the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth—stand up and walk!"

Then Peter took the man's right hand and lifted him up. Immediately his feet and legs became strong. He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk. He went into the Temple area with them. He was walking and jumping

and praising God. All the people recognized him. They knew he was the crippled man who always sat by the Beautiful Gate to beg for money. Now they saw this same man walking and praising God. They were amazed. They did not understand how this could happen.

#### **Peter Speaks to the People (3:11-16)**

The man was holding on to Peter and John. All the people were amazed. They ran to Peter and John at Solomon's Porch.

When Peter saw this, he said to the people, "My Jewish brothers, why are you surprised at this? You are looking at us as if it was our power that made this man walk. Do you think this was done because we are good? No, God did it! He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is the God of all our fathers. He gave glory to Jesus, his special servant. But you handed him over to be killed. Pilate decided to let him go free. But you told Pilate you did not want him. Jesus was holy and good, but you said you did not want him. You told Pilate to give you a murderer instead of Jesus. And so you killed the one who gives life! But God raised him from death. We are witnesses of this—we saw it with our own eyes.

"This crippled man was healed because we trusted in Jesus. It was Jesus' power that made him well. You can see this man, and you know him. He was made completely well because of faith in Jesus. You all saw it happen!"

#### **The Apostles and the Jewish High Council (4:1-22)**

While Peter and John were speaking to the people, some Jewish leaders came up to them. There were some priests, the captain of the soldiers that guarded the Temple, and some Sadducees. They were upset because of what Peter and John were teaching the people. By telling people about Jesus, the apostles were teaching

that people will rise from death. The Jewish leaders arrested Peter and John and put them in jail. It was already night, so they kept them in jail until the next day. But many of the people who heard the apostles believed what they said. There were now about 5000 men in the group of believers.

The next day the Jewish rulers, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander were there. Everyone from the high priest's family was there. They made Peter and John stand before all the people. They asked them over and over, "How did you make this crippled man well? What power did you use? By whose authority did you do this?"

Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said to them, "Rulers of the people and you older leaders, are you questioning us today about what we did to help this crippled man? Are you asking us what made him well? We want all of you and all the people of Israel to know that this man was made well by the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth. You nailed Jesus to a cross, but God raised him from death. This man was crippled, but he is now well. He is able to stand here before you because of the power of Jesus! Jesus is

*'the stone that you builders thought was not important.*

*But this stone has become the cornerstone.'*

Jesus is the only one who can save people. His name is the only power in the world that has been given to save anyone. We must be saved through him!"

The Jewish leaders understood that Peter and John had no special training or education. But they also saw that they were not afraid to speak. So the leaders were amazed. They also realized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. They

saw the crippled man standing there beside the apostles. They saw that he was healed, so they could say nothing against the apostles.

The Jewish leaders told them to leave the council meeting. Then the leaders talked to each other about what they should do. They said, "What shall we do with these men? Everyone in Jerusalem knows about the miracle they did as a sign from God. It's too obvious. We can't say it didn't happen. But we must make them afraid to talk to anyone again using that name. Then this problem will not spread among the people."

So the Jewish leaders called Peter and John in again. They told the apostles not to say anything or to teach anything in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "What do you think is right? What would God want? Should we obey you or God? We cannot be quiet. We must tell people about what we have seen and heard."

The Jewish leaders could not find a way to punish the apostles, because all the people were praising God for what had been done. This miracle was a sign from God. The man who was healed was more than 40 years old. So the Jewish leaders warned the apostles again and let them go free.

## **STUDY 3**

### **One in Heart and Mind**

#### **Acts 4:23—5:11**

**Peter and John Return to the Believers (4:23-31)**

Peter and John left the meeting of Jewish leaders and went to their own group. They told the group everything that the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders had said to them. When the believers heard this, they all prayed to God with one purpose. They said, "Master,

you are the one who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything in the world. Our ancestor David was your servant. With the help of the Holy Spirit he wrote these words:

*‘Why are the nations shouting?*

*Why are the people planning such useless things?*

*‘The kings of the earth prepare themselves to fight, and the rulers all come together against the Lord and against his Messiah.’*

That’s what actually happened when Herod, Pontius Pilate, the other nations, and the people of Israel all came together against Jesus here in Jerusalem. He is your holy Servant, the one you made to be the Messiah. These people who came together against Jesus made your plan happen. It was done because of your power and your will. And now, Lord, listen to what they are saying. They are trying to make us afraid. We are your servants. Help us to say what you want us to say without fear. Help us to be brave by showing us your power. Make sick people well. Cause miraculous signs and wonders to happen by the authority of Jesus, your holy servant.”

After the believers prayed, the place where they were meeting shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they continued to speak God’s message without fear.

#### **The Believers Share (4:32-37)**

The whole group of believers was united in their thinking and in what they wanted. None of them said that the things they had were their own. Instead, they shared everything. With great power the apostles were making it known to everyone that the Lord Jesus was raised from death. And God blessed all the believers very much. None of them could say they needed anything. Everyone who owned fields or

houses sold them. They brought the money they got and gave it to the apostles. Then everyone was given whatever they needed.

One of the believers was named Joseph. The apostles called him Barnabas, a name that means “one who encourages others.” He was a Levite born in Cyprus. Joseph sold a field he owned. He brought the money and gave it to the apostles.

#### **Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11)**

There was a man named Ananias. His wife’s name was Sapphira. Ananias sold some land he had, but he gave only part of the money to the apostles. He secretly kept some of the money for himself. His wife knew this, and she agreed with it.

Peter said, “Ananias, why did you let Satan fill your mind with such an idea? You kept part of the money for yourself and lied about it to the Holy Spirit! Before you sold the field, it belonged to you, right? And even after you sold it, you could have used the money any way you wanted. How could you even think of doing such a thing? You lied to God, not to us!”

When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. Some young men came and wrapped his body. They carried it out and buried it. And everyone who heard about this was filled with fear.

About three hours later his wife came in. Sapphira did not know about what had happened to her husband. Peter said to her, “Tell me how much money you got for your field. Was it this much?”

Sapphira answered, “Yes, that was all we got for the field.”

Peter said to her, “Why did you and your husband agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! Do you hear those footsteps? The men

who buried your husband are at the door. They will carry you out in the same way.” At that moment Sapphira fell down by his feet and died. The young men came in and saw that she was dead. They carried her out and buried her beside her husband. The whole church and all the other people who heard about this were filled with fear.

## **STUDY 4**

### **Stephen’s Stoning, Scattering Church Acts 6:1-15; 7:51–8:3**

#### **Seven Men Chosen for a Special Work (6:1-7)**

More and more people were becoming followers of Jesus. But during this same time, the Greek-speaking followers began to complain against the other Jewish followers. They said that their widows were not getting their share of what the followers received every day. The twelve apostles called the whole group of followers together.

The apostles said to them, “It would not be right for us to give up our work of teaching God’s word in order to be in charge of getting food to people. So, brothers and sisters, choose seven of your men who have a good reputation. They must be full of wisdom and the Spirit. We will give them this work to do. Then we can use all our time to pray and to teach the word of God.”

The whole group liked the idea. So they chose these seven men: Stephen (a man with great faith and full of the Holy Spirit), Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus (a man from Antioch who had become a Jew). Then they put these men before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

The word of God was reaching more and more people. The group of followers in Jerusalem became larger and larger. Even a big group of Jewish priests believed and obeyed.

#### **Some Jews Against Stephen (6:8-15; 7:51-53)**

Stephen received a great blessing. God gave him power to do great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. But some of the Jews there were from the synagogue of Free Men, as it was called. The group included Jews from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and Asia. They started arguing with Stephen. But the Spirit was helping him speak with wisdom. His words were so strong that these Jews could not argue with him.

So they told some men to say, “We heard Stephen say bad things against Moses and against God!” By doing this, these Jews upset the people, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law. They became so angry that they came and grabbed Stephen and took him to a meeting of the high council.

The Jews brought some men into the meeting to tell lies about Stephen. These men said, “This man is always saying things against this holy place and against the Law of Moses. We heard him say that Jesus from Nazareth will destroy this place and change what Moses told us to do.” Everyone there in the council meeting was staring at Stephen. They saw that his face looked like the face of an angel.

Then Stephen said, “You stubborn Jewish leaders! You refuse to give your hearts to God or even listen to him. You are always against what the Holy Spirit wants you to do. That’s how your ancestors were, and you are just like them! They persecuted every prophet who ever lived. They even killed those who long ago said that the Righteous One would come. And now

you have turned against that Righteous One and killed him. You are the people who received God's law, which he gave you through his angels. But you don't obey it!"

#### **Stephen Is Killed (7:54-59; 8:1-3)**

When those in the council meeting heard this, they became very angry. They were so mad they were grinding their teeth at him. But Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit. He looked up into heaven and saw the glory of God. And he saw Jesus standing at God's right side. Stephen said, "Look! I see heaven open. And I see the Son of Man standing at God's right side."

Everyone there started shouting loudly, covering their ears with their hands. Together they all ran at Stephen. They took him out of the city and began throwing stones at him. The men who told lies against Stephen gave their coats to a young man named Saul. As they were throwing the stones at him, Stephen was praying. He said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" He fell on his knees and shouted, "Lord, don't blame them for this sin!" These were his last words before he died.

Saul agreed that the killing of Stephen was a good thing. Some godly men buried Stephen and cried loudly for him.

On that day the Jews began to persecute the church in Jerusalem, making them suffer very much. Saul was also trying to destroy the group. He went into their houses, dragged out men and women, and put them in jail. All the believers left Jerusalem. Only the apostles stayed. The believers went to different places in Judea and Samaria.

## **STUDY 5**

### **Philip on the Road**

#### **Acts 8:4-40**

#### **Philip Tells the Good News in Samaria (8:4-25)**

[The believers] were scattered everywhere, and in every place they went, they told people the Good News.

Philip went to the city of Samaria and told people about the Messiah. The people there heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he was doing. They all listened carefully to what he said. Many of these people had evil spirits inside them, but Philip made the evil spirits leave them. The spirits made a lot of noise as they came out. There were also many weak and crippled people there. Philip made these people well too. What a happy day this was for that city!

Now there was a man named Simon who lived in that city. Before Philip came there, Simon had been doing magic and amazing all the people of Samaria. He bragged and called himself a great man. All the people—the least important and the most important—believed what he said. They said, "This man has the power of God that is called 'the Great Power.'" Simon amazed the people with his magic for so long that the people became his followers. But Philip told the people the Good News about God's kingdom and the power of Jesus Christ. Men and women believed Philip and were baptized. Simon himself also believed, and after he was baptized, he stayed close to Philip. When he saw the miraculous signs and powerful things Philip did, he was amazed.

The apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted the word of God. So they sent Peter and John to the people in Samaria. When Peter and John arrived, they



prayed for the Samaritan believers to receive the Holy Spirit. These people had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, but the Holy Spirit had not yet come down on any of them. This is why Peter and John prayed. When the two apostles laid their hands on the people, they received the Holy Spirit.

Simon saw that the Spirit was given to people when the apostles laid their hands on them. So he offered the apostles money. He said, “Give me this power so that when I lay my hands on someone, they will receive the Holy Spirit.”

Peter said to Simon, “You and your money should both be destroyed because you thought you could buy God’s gift with money. You cannot share with us in this work. Your heart is not right before God. Change your heart! Turn away from these evil thoughts and pray to the Lord. Maybe he will forgive you. I see that you are full of bitter jealousy and cannot stop yourself from doing wrong.”

Simon answered, “Both of you pray to the Lord for me, so that what you have said will not happen to me.”

Then the two apostles told the people what they had seen Jesus do. They told them the message of the Lord. Then they went back to Jerusalem. On the way, they went through many Samaritan towns and told people the Good News.

#### **Philip Teaches a Man From Ethiopia (8:26-40)**

An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip. The angel said, “Get ready and go south on the road that leads down to Gaza from Jerusalem—the road that goes through the desert.”

So Philip got ready and went. On the road he saw a man from Ethiopia. He was a eunuch and an important official in the service of Can-

dace, the queen of the Ethiopians. He was responsible for taking care of all her money. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship. Now he was on his way home. He was sitting in his chariot reading from the book of Isaiah the prophet.

The Spirit said to Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” So he went toward the chariot, and he heard the man reading from Isaiah the prophet. Philip asked him, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

The man answered, “How can I understand? I need someone to explain it to me.” Then he invited Philip to climb in and sit with him. The part of the Scriptures that he was reading was this:

*“He was like a sheep being led to the butcher.*

*He was like a lamb that makes no sound as its wool is being cut off.*

*He said nothing.*

*He was shamed, and all his rights were taken away.*

*His life on earth has ended.*

*So there will be no story about his descendants.”*

The official said to Philip, “Please, tell me, who is the prophet talking about? Is he talking about himself or about someone else?” Philip began to speak. He started with this same Scripture and told the man the Good News about Jesus.

While they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The official said, “Look, here is water! What is stopping me from being baptized?” Then the official ordered the chariot to stop. Both Philip and the official went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away; the official never saw him again. The official continued on

his way home. He was very happy. But Philip appeared in a city called Azotus. He was going to the city of Caesarea. He told people the Good News in all the towns on the way from Azotus to Caesarea.

## **STUDY 6**

### **Saul Transformed**

#### **Acts 9:1-31**

##### **Saul Becomes a Follower of Jesus (9:1-19a)**

In Jerusalem Saul was still trying to scare the followers of the Lord, even saying he would kill them. He went to the high priest and asked him to write letters to the synagogues in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted the high priest to give him the authority to find people in Damascus who were followers of the Way. If he found any believers there, men or women, he would arrest them and bring them back to Jerusalem.

So Saul went to Damascus. When he came near the city, a very bright light from heaven suddenly shined around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me?”

Saul said, “Who are you, Lord?”

The voice answered, “I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. Get up now and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do.”

The men traveling with Saul just stood there, unable to speak. They heard the voice, but they saw no one. Saul got up from the ground and opened his eyes, but he could not see. So the men with him held his hand and led him into Damascus. For three days, Saul could not see; he did not eat or drink.

There was a follower of Jesus in Damascus named Ananias. In a vision the Lord said to him, “Ananias!”

Ananias answered, “Here I am, Lord.”

The Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight Street. Find the house of Judas and ask for a man named Saul from the city of Tarsus. He is there now, praying. He has seen a vision in which a man named Ananias came and laid his hands on him so that he could see again.”

But Ananias answered, “Lord, many people have told me about this man. They told me about the many bad things he did to your holy people in Jerusalem. Now he has come here to Damascus. The leading priests have given him the power to arrest all people who trust in you.”

But the Lord Jesus said to Ananias, “Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. I want him to tell other nations, their rulers, and the people of Israel about me. I will show him all that he must suffer for me.”

So Ananias left and went to the house of Judas. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Saul, my brother, the Lord Jesus sent me. He is the one you saw on the road when you came here. He sent me so that you can see again and also be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Immediately, something that looked like fish scales fell off Saul’s eyes. He was able to see! Then he got up and was baptized. After he ate, he began to feel strong again.

##### **Saul Begins to Tell About Jesus (9:19b-31)**

Saul stayed with the followers of Jesus in Damascus for a few days. Soon he began to go to the synagogues and tell people about Jesus. He told the people, “Jesus is the Son of God!”

All the people who heard Saul were amazed. They said, “This is the same man who was in

Jerusalem trying to destroy the people who trust in Jesus! And that's why he has come here—to arrest the followers of Jesus and take them back to the leading priests.”

But Saul became more and more powerful in proving that Jesus is the Messiah. His proofs were so strong that the Jews who lived in Damascus could not argue with him.

#### **Saul Escapes From Some Jews (9:23-25)**

After many days, some Jews made plans to kill Saul. They were watching the city gates day and night. They wanted to kill Saul, but he learned about their plan. One night some followers that Saul had taught helped him leave the city. They put him in a basket and lowered it down through a hole in the city wall.

#### **Saul in Jerusalem (9:26-31)**

Then Saul went to Jerusalem. He tried to join the group of followers, but they were all afraid of him. They did not believe that he was really a follower of Jesus. But Barnabas accepted Saul and took him to the apostles. He told them how Saul had seen the Lord on the road and how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Then he told them how boldly Saul had spoken for the Lord in Damascus.

And so Saul stayed with the followers and went all around Jerusalem speaking boldly for the Lord. He often had arguments with the Greek-speaking Jews, who began making plans to kill him. When the believers learned about this, they took Saul to Caesarea, and from there they sent him to the city of Tarsus.

The church in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had a time of peace. And with the help of the Holy Spirit, these groups of believers became

stronger in faith and showed their respect for the Lord by the way they lived. So the church everywhere grew in numbers.

## **STUDY 7**

### **To Eat or Not to Eat**

#### **Acts 10:1-23**

#### **Peter and Cornelius, Part 1 (10:1-23)**

In the city of Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a Roman army officer in what was called the Italian Unit. He was a religious man. He and all the others who lived in his house were worshipers of the true God. He gave much of his money to help the poor people and always prayed to God. One afternoon about three o'clock, Cornelius had a vision. He clearly saw an angel from God coming to him and saying, “Cornelius!”

Staring at the angel and feeling afraid, Cornelius said, “What do you want, sir?”

The angel said to him, “God has heard your prayers and has seen your gifts to the poor. He remembers you and all you have done. Send some men now to the city of Joppa to get a man named Simon, who is also called Peter. He is staying with someone also named Simon, a leatherworker who has a house beside the sea.” The angel who spoke to Cornelius left. Then Cornelius called two of his servants and a soldier. The soldier was a religious man, one of his close helpers. Cornelius explained everything to these three men and sent them to Joppa.

The next day they were coming near Joppa about noon, when Peter was going up to the roof to pray. He was hungry and wanted to eat. But while they were preparing the food for Peter to eat, he had a vision. He saw something

coming down through the open sky. It looked like a big sheet being lowered to the ground by its four corners. In it were all kinds of animals, reptiles, and birds. Then a voice said to him, “Get up, Peter; kill anything here and eat it.”

But Peter said, “I can’t do that, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is not pure or fit to be used for food.”

But the voice said to him again, “God has made these things pure. Don’t say they are unfit to eat.” This happened three times. Then the whole thing was taken back up into heaven. Peter wondered what this vision meant.

The men Cornelius sent had found Simon’s house. They were standing at the door. They asked, “Is Simon Peter staying here?”

While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Listen, three men are looking for you. Get up and go downstairs. Go with these men without wondering if it’s all right, because I sent them.” So Peter went downstairs and said to them, “I think I’m the man you are looking for. Why did you come here?”

The men said, “A holy angel told Cornelius to invite you to his house. He is an army officer. He is a good man, one who worships God, and all the Jewish people respect him. The angel told him to invite you to his house so that he can listen to what you have to say.” Peter asked the men to come in and stay for the night.

The next day Peter got ready and went away with the three men. Some of the believers from Joppa went with him.

## **STUDY 8**

### **God Doesn’t Play Favourites**

#### **Acts 10:24-28, 34-48; 11:19-26**

##### **Peter and Cornelius, Part 2 (Acts 10:24-28)**

The next day they came to the city of Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them and had already gathered his relatives and close friends at his house.

When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him. He fell down at Peter’s feet and worshiped him. But Peter told him to get up. Peter said, “Stand up! I am only a man like you.” Peter continued talking with Cornelius. Then Peter went inside and saw a large group of people gathered there.

Peter said to the people, “You understand that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit anyone who is not a Jew. But God has shown me that I should not consider anyone unfit or say they are not pure.”

##### **Peter Speaks in the House of Cornelius (Acts 10:34-43)**

Peter began to speak: “I really understand now that God does not consider some people to be better than others. He accepts anyone who worships him and does what is right. It is not important what nation they come from. God has spoken to the people of Israel. He sent them the Good News that peace has come through Jesus Christ, the Lord of all people.

“You know what has happened all over Judea. It began in Galilee after John told the people they needed to be baptized. You know about Jesus from Nazareth. God made him the Messiah by giving him the Holy Spirit and power. Jesus went everywhere doing good for people. He healed those who were ruled by the devil, showing that God was with him.

“We saw all that Jesus did in Judea and in Jerusalem. But he was killed. They put him on a cross made of wood. But on the third day after his death, God raised him to life and let him be seen openly. He was not seen by everyone, but only by us, the ones God had already chosen to be witnesses. We ate and drank with him after he was raised from death.

“Jesus told us to go and speak to the people. He told us to tell them that he is the one God chose to be the Judge of all who are living and all who have died. Everyone who believes in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name. All the prophets agree that this is true.”

#### **God Shows That He Accepts All People (Acts 10:44-48)**

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who were listening to his speech. The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the Holy Spirit had been poured out as a gift also to people who were not Jews. They heard them speaking different languages and praising God. Then Peter said, “How can anyone object to these people being baptized in water? They have received the Holy Spirit the same as we did!” So Peter told them to baptize Cornelius and his relatives and friends in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

#### **The Good News Comes to Antioch (11:19-26)**

The believers were scattered by the persecution that began when Stephen was killed. Some of them went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. They told the Good News in these places, but only to Jews. Some of these believers were men from Cyprus and Cyrene. When these men came to Antioch, they began speaking to people who were not Jews. They told them the Good News about the Lord Jesus.

The Lord was helping these men, and a large number of people believed and decided to follow the Lord.

When the church in Jerusalem heard about this, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith. When he went to Antioch and saw how God had blessed the believers there, he was very happy. He encouraged them all, saying, “Always be faithful to the Lord. Serve him with all your heart.” Many more people became followers of the Lord.

Then Barnabas went to the city of Tarsus to look for Saul. When he found him, he brought him to Antioch. They stayed there a whole year. Every time the church came together, Barnabas and Saul met with them and taught many people. It was in Antioch that the followers of the Lord Jesus were called “Christ-followers” for the first time.

## **STUDY 9**

### **Peter’s Prison Break**

#### **Acts 12:1-19; 13:1-12**

#### **More Trouble for the Believers (12:1-5)**

During this same time, King Herod began to do harm to some of those who were part of the church. He ordered James, the brother of John, to be killed with a sword. Herod saw that many of the Jews liked this, so he decided to arrest Peter too. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. He arrested Peter and put him in jail, where he was guarded by a group of 16 soldiers. Herod planned to bring Peter before the people, but he wanted to wait until after the Passover festival. So Peter was kept in jail, but the church was constantly praying to God for him.

### **Peter Is Led Out of the Jail (12:6-19)**

One night, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two of the soldiers. More soldiers were guarding the door of the jail. Herod was planning to bring Peter out before the people the next day. Suddenly an angel of the Lord was standing there, and the room was filled with light. The angel tapped Peter on the side and woke him up. The angel said, "Hurry, get up!" The chains fell off Peter's hands. The angel said, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." Peter did as he was told. Then the angel said, "Put on your coat and follow me."

So the angel went out and Peter followed. He did not know if the angel was really doing this. He thought he might be seeing a vision. Peter and the angel went past the first guard and the second guard. Then they came to the iron gate that separated them from the city. The gate opened for them by itself. After they went through the gate and walked about a block, the angel suddenly left.

Peter realized then what had happened. He thought, "Now I know that the Lord really sent his angel to me. He rescued me from Herod and from everything those Jews thought would happen to me."

When Peter realized this, he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John, who was also called Mark. Many people were gathered there and were praying. Peter knocked on the outside door. A servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. She recognized Peter's voice, and she was very happy. She even forgot to open the door. She ran inside and told the group, "Peter is at the door!" The believers said to her, "You are crazy!" But she continued to say that it was true. So they said, "It must be Peter's angel."

But Peter continued to knock. When the believers opened the door, they saw him. They were amazed. Peter made a sign with his hand to tell them to be quiet. He explained to them how the Lord led him out of the jail. He said, "Tell James and the other brothers what happened." Then he left and went to another place.

The next day the soldiers were very upset. They wondered what happened to Peter. Herod looked everywhere for him but could not find him. So he questioned the guards and then ordered that they be killed.

### **Barnabas and Saul Given a Special Work (13:1-3)**

In the church at Antioch there were some prophets and teachers. They were Barnabas, Simeon (also called Niger), Lucius (from the city of Cyrene), Manaen (who had grown up with King Herod), and Saul. These men were all serving the Lord and fasting when the Holy Spirit said to them, "Appoint Barnabas and Saul to do a special work for me. They are the ones I have chosen to do it."

So the church fasted and prayed. They laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them out.

### **Barnabas and Saul in Cyprus (13:4-12)**

Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit. They went to the city of Seleucia. Then they sailed from there to the island of Cyprus. When Barnabas and Saul came to the city of Salamis, they told the message of God in the Jewish synagogues. John Mark was with them to help.

They went across the whole island to the city of Paphos. There they met a Jewish man named Barjesus who did magic. He was a false prophet. He always stayed close to Sergius Paulus, who was the governor and a very smart man. He invited Barnabas and Saul to come

visit him, because he wanted to hear the message of God. But the magician Elymas (as Barjesus was called in Greek) spoke against them, trying to stop the governor from believing in Jesus. But Saul (also known as Paul), filled with the Holy Spirit, looked hard at Elymas and said, “You son of the devil, full of lies and all kinds of evil tricks! You are an enemy of everything that is right. Will you never stop trying to change the Lord’s truths into lies? Now the Lord will touch you and you will be blind. For a time you will not be able to see anything—not even the light from the sun.”

Then everything became dark for Elymas. He walked around lost. He was trying to find someone to lead him by the hand. When the governor saw this, he believed. He was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

## **STUDY 10**

### **The Jerusalem Council**

**Acts 14:26-28; 15:1-12, 22-41**

#### **The Return to Antioch in Syria (14:26-28)**

And from there they sailed away to Antioch in Syria. This is the city where the believers had put them into God’s care and sent them to do this work. Now they had finished it.

When Paul and Barnabas arrived, they gathered the church together. They told them everything God had used them to do. They said, “God opened a door for the non-Jewish people to believe!” And they stayed there a long time with the Lord’s followers.

#### **The Meeting at Jerusalem (15:1-12)**

Then some men came to Antioch from Judea and began teaching the non-Jewish believers: “You cannot be saved if you are not circumcised as Moses taught us.” Paul and Barnabas were against this teaching and argued

with these men about it. So the group decided to send Paul, Barnabas, and some others to Jerusalem to talk more about this with the apostles and elders.

The church helped them get ready to leave on their trip. The men went through the countries of Phoenicia and Samaria, where they told all about how the non-Jewish people had turned to the true God. This made all the believers very happy. When the men arrived in Jerusalem, the apostles, the elders, and the whole church welcomed them. Paul, Barnabas, and the others told about all that God had done with them. Some of the believers in Jerusalem had belonged to the Pharisees. They stood up and said, “The non-Jewish believers must be circumcised. We must tell them to obey the Law of Moses!”

Then the apostles and the elders gathered to study this problem. After a long debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “My brothers, I am sure you remember what happened in the early days. God chose me from among you to tell the Good News to those who are not Jewish. It was from me that they heard the Good News and believed. God knows everyone, even their thoughts, and he accepted these non-Jewish people. He showed this to us by giving them the Holy Spirit the same as he did to us. To God, those people are not different from us. When they believed, God made their hearts pure. So now, why are you putting a heavy burden around the necks of the non-Jewish followers of Jesus? Are you trying to make God angry? We and our fathers were not able to carry that burden. No, we believe that we and these people will be saved the same way—by the grace of the Lord Jesus.”

Then the whole group became quiet. They listened while Paul and Barnabas told about all

the miraculous signs and wonders that God had done through them among the non-Jewish people.

#### **The Letter to the Non-Jewish Believers (15:22-35)**

The apostles, the elders, and the whole church wanted to send some men with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. The group decided to choose some of their own men. They chose Judas (also called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were respected by the believers. The group sent the letter with these men. The letter said:

From the apostles and elders, your brothers,

To all the non-Jewish brothers in the city of Antioch and in the countries of Syria and Cilicia.

Dear Brothers:

We have heard that some men have come to you from our group. What they said troubled and upset you. But we did not tell them to do this. We have all agreed to choose some men and send them to you. They will be with our dear friends, Barnabas and Paul. Barnabas and Paul have given their lives to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. So we have sent Judas and Silas with them. They will tell you the same things. We agree with the Holy Spirit that you should have no more burdens, except for these necessary things:

*Don't eat food that has been given to idols.*

*Don't eat meat from animals that have been strangled or any meat that still has the blood in it.*

*Don't be involved in sexual sin.*

*If you stay away from these, you will do well.*

*We say goodbye now.*

So Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas left Jerusalem and went to Antioch. There they gathered the group of believers together and gave them the letter. When the believers read

it, they were happy. The letter comforted them. Judas and Silas, who were also prophets, said many things to encourage the believers and make them stronger in their faith. After Judas and Silas stayed there for a while, they left. They received a blessing of peace from the believers. Then they went back to those who had sent them.

But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch. They and many others taught the believers and told other people the Good News about the Lord.

#### **Paul and Barnabas Separate (15:36-41)**

A few days later, Paul said to Barnabas, "We should go back to all the towns where we told people the message of the Lord. We should visit the believers to see how they are doing."

Barnabas wanted to bring John Mark with them too. But on their first trip John Mark did not continue with them in the work. He had left them at Pamphylia. So Paul did not think it was a good idea to take him this time. Paul and Barnabas had a big argument about this. It was so bad that they separated and went different ways. Barnabas sailed to Cyprus and took Mark with him.

Paul chose Silas to go with him. The believers in Antioch put Paul into the Lord's care and sent him out. Paul and Silas went through the countries of Syria and Cilicia, helping the churches grow stronger.

## **STUDY 11**

### **Paul's Witness in Philippi**

#### **Acts 16:6-40**

#### **Paul Is Called to Macedonia (16:6-10)**

Paul and those with him went through the areas of Phrygia and Galatia because the Holy Spirit did not allow them to tell the Good



News in the province of Asia. When they reached the border of Mysia, they tried to go on into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not let them go there. So they passed by Mysia and went to the city of Troas.

That night Paul saw a vision. In it, a man from Macedonia came to Paul. The man stood there and begged, "Come across to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we immediately prepared to leave for Macedonia. We understood that God had called us to tell the Good News to those people.

#### **The Conversion of Lydia (16:11-15)**

We left Troas in a ship and sailed to the island of Samothrace. The next day we sailed to the city of Neapolis. Then we went to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city in that part of Macedonia. We stayed there for a few days.

On the Sabbath day we went out the city gate to the river. There we thought we might find a special place for prayer. Some women had gathered there, so we sat down and talked with them. There was a woman there named Lydia from the city of Thyatira. Her job was selling purple cloth. She was a worshiper of the true God. Lydia was listening to Paul, and the Lord opened her heart to accept what Paul was saying. She and all the people living in her house were baptized. Then she invited us into her home. She said, "If you think I am a true believer in the Lord Jesus, come stay in my house." She persuaded us to stay with her.

#### **Paul and Silas in Jail (16:16-40)**

One day we were going to the place for prayer, and a servant girl met us. She had a spirit in her that gave her the power to tell what would happen in the future. By doing this she earned a lot of money for the men who owned

her. She started following Paul and the rest of us around. She kept shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God! They are telling you how you can be saved!" She continued doing this for many days. This bothered Paul, so he turned and said to the spirit, "By the power of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!" Immediately, the spirit came out.

When the men who owned the servant girl saw this, they realized that they could no longer use her to make money. So they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them to the public square to meet with the authorities. They brought Paul and Silas before the Roman officials and said, "These men are Jews, and they are making trouble in our city. They are telling people to do things that are not right for us as Romans to do."

The whole crowd turned against Paul and Silas. The officials tore the clothes off both men and ordered that they be beaten with rods. They were beaten severely and thrown into jail. The officials told the jailer, "Guard them very carefully!" When the jailer heard this special order, he put Paul and Silas far inside the jail and bound their feet between large blocks of wood.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing songs to God. The other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake so strong that it shook the foundation of the jail. All the doors of the jail opened, and the chains on all the prisoners fell off. The jailer woke up and saw that the jail doors were open. He thought that the prisoners had already escaped, so he got his sword and was ready to kill himself. But Paul shouted, "Don't hurt yourself! We are all here!"

## **STUDY 12**

### **On the Road Again**

#### **Acts 17:1-34**

The jailer told someone to bring a light. Then he ran inside and, shaking with fear, fell down in front of Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, “Men, what must I do to be saved?”

They said to him, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved—you and all who live in your house.” So Paul and Silas told the message of the Lord to the jailer and all the people who lived in his house. It was late at night, but the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Then the jailer and all his people were baptized. After this the jailer took Paul and Silas home and gave them some food. All the people were very happy because they now believed in God.

The next morning the Roman officials sent some soldiers to tell the jailer, “Let these men go free.”

The jailer said to Paul, “The officials have sent these soldiers to let you go free. You can leave now. Go in peace.”

But Paul said to the soldiers, “Those officials did not prove that we did anything wrong, but they beat us in public and put us in jail. And we are Roman citizens. Now they want us to go away quietly. No, they must come here themselves and lead us out!”

The soldiers told the officials what Paul said. When they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were afraid. So they came and told them they were sorry. They led them out of the jail and asked them to leave the city. But when Paul and Silas came out of the jail, they went to Lydia’s house. They saw some of the believers there and encouraged them. Then they left.

#### **Paul and Silas in Thessalonica (17:1-9)**

Paul and Silas traveled through the cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia. They came to the city of Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. Paul went into the synagogue to see the Jews as he always did. The next three weeks, on each Sabbath day, he discussed the Scriptures with them. He explained the Scriptures to show them that the Messiah had to die and then rise from death. He said, “This Jesus that I am telling you about is the Messiah.” Some of the Jews there believed Paul and Silas and decided to join them. Also, a large number of Greeks who were worshipers of the true God and many important women joined them.

But the Jews who did not believe became jealous, so they got some bad men from around the city center to make trouble. They formed a mob and caused a riot in the city. They went to Jason’s house, looking for Paul and Silas. They wanted to bring them out before the people. When they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the other believers to the city leaders. The people shouted, “These men have made trouble everywhere in the world, and now they have come here too! Jason is keeping them in his house. They all do things against the laws of Caesar. They say there is another king called Jesus.”

When the city leaders and the other people heard this, they became very upset. They made Jason and the other believers deposit money to guarantee that there would be no more trouble. Then they let them go.

### **Paul and Silas Go to Berea (17:10-15)**

That same night the believers sent Paul and Silas to another city named Berea. When they arrived there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. The people in Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica. They were so glad to hear the message Paul told them. They studied the Scriptures every day to make sure that what they heard was really true. The result was that many of them believed, including many important Greek women and men.

But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was telling people God's message in Berea, they came there too. They upset the people and made trouble. So the believers immediately sent Paul away to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. Those who went with Paul took him to the city of Athens. They returned with a message for Silas and Timothy to come and join him as soon as they could.

### **Paul in Athens (17:16-34)**

While Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens, he was upset because he saw that the city was full of idols. In the synagogue he talked with the Jews and with the Greeks who were worshipers of the true God. He also went to the public square every day and talked with everyone who came by. Some of the Epicurean and some of the Stoic philosophers argued with him.

Some of them said, "This man doesn't really know what he is talking about. What is he trying to say?" Paul was telling them the Good News about Jesus and the resurrection. So they said, "He seems to be telling us about some other gods."

They took Paul to a meeting of the Areopagus council. They said, "Please explain to us this new idea that you have been teaching. The things you are saying are new to us. We have

never heard this teaching before, and we want to know what it means." (The people of Athens and the foreigners who lived there spent all their time either telling or listening to all the latest ideas.)

Then Paul stood up before the meeting of the Areopagus council and said, "Men of Athens, everything I see here tells me you are very religious. I was going through your city and I saw the things you worship. I found an altar that had these words written on it: 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' You worship a god that you don't know. This is the God I want to tell you about.

"He is the God who made the whole world and everything in it. He is the Lord of the land and the sky. He does not live in temples built by human hands. He is the one who gives people life, breath, and everything else they need. He does not need any help from them. He has everything he needs. God began by making one man, and from him he made all the different people who live everywhere in the world. He decided exactly when and where they would live.

"God wanted people to look for him, and perhaps in searching all around for him, they would find him. But he is not far from any of us. It is through him that we are able to live, to do what we do, and to be who we are. As your own poets have said, 'We all come from him.'

"That's right. We all come from God. So you must not think that he is like something people imagine or make. He is not made of gold, silver, or stone. In the past people did not understand God, and he overlooked this. But now he is telling everyone in the world to change and turn to him. He has decided on a day when he will judge all the people in the world in a way that is fair. To do this he will use a man

he chose long ago. And he has proved to everyone that this is the man to do it. He proved it by raising him from death!”

When the people heard about Jesus being raised from death, some of them laughed. But others said, “We will hear more about this from you later.” So Paul left the council meeting. But some of the people joined with Paul and became believers. Among these were Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus council, a woman named Damaris, and some others.

## **STUDY 13**

### **Teaching and Preaching**

#### **Acts 18:1-11, 18-28**

#### **Paul in Corinth (18:1-11)**

Later, Paul left Athens and went to the city of Corinth. There he met a Jewish man named Aquila, who was born in the country of Pontus. But he and his wife, Priscilla, had recently moved to Corinth from Italy. They left Italy because Claudius had given an order for all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to visit Aquila and Priscilla. They were tentmakers, the same as Paul, so he stayed with them and worked with them.

Every Sabbath day Paul went to the synagogue and talked with both Jews and Greeks, trying to persuade them to believe in Jesus. But after Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul spent all his time telling God’s message to the Jews, trying to convince them that Jesus is the Messiah. But they disagreed with what Paul was teaching and started insulting him. So Paul shook the dust from his clothes. He said to them, “If you are not saved, it will be your own fault! I have done all I can do. After this I will go only to the non-Jewish people.”

Paul left the synagogue and moved into the home of Titius Justus, a man who was a worshiper of the true God. His house was next to the synagogue. Crispus was the leader of that synagogue. He and all the people living in his house believed in the Lord Jesus. Many other people in Corinth also listened to Paul. They, too, believed and were baptized.

During the night, Paul had a vision. The Lord said to him, “Don’t be afraid, and don’t stop talking to people. I am with you, and no one will be able to hurt you. Many of my people are in this city.” Paul stayed there for a year and a half teaching God’s message to the people.

#### **Paul Returns to Antioch (18:18-23)**

Paul stayed with the believers for many days. Then he left and sailed for Syria. Priscilla and Aquila were also with him. At Cenchrea Paul cut off his hair, because he had made a promise to God. Then they went to the city of Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. While Paul was in Ephesus, he went into the synagogue and talked with the Jews. They asked him to stay longer, but he refused. He left them and said, “I will come back to you again if God wants me to.” And so he sailed away from Ephesus.

When Paul arrived at Caesarea, he went to Jerusalem and visited the church there. After that he went to Antioch. Paul stayed in Antioch for a while. Then he left there and went through the countries of Galatia and Phrygia. He traveled from town to town in these countries, helping all the followers of Jesus grow stronger in their faith.

#### **Apollos in Ephesus and Corinth (18:24-28)**

A Jew named Apollos came to Ephesus. Born in the city of Alexandria, he was an educated

man who knew the Scriptures well. He had been taught about the Lord and was always excited to talk to people about Jesus. What he taught was right, but the only baptism he knew about was the baptism that John taught. Apollos began to speak very boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him speak, they took him to their home and helped him understand the way of God better.

Apollos wanted to go to Achaia. So the believers in Ephesus helped him. They wrote a letter to the Lord's followers in Achaia and asked them to accept Apollos. When he arrived there, he was a great help to those who had believed in Jesus because of God's grace. He argued very strongly against the Jews before all the people. He clearly proved that the Jews were wrong. He used the Scriptures and showed that Jesus is the Messiah.

## **STUDY 14**

### **Riots and Miracles**

#### **Acts 19:1-12, 23-41; 20:7-12**

##### **Paul in Ephesus (19:1-10)**

While Apollos was in the city of Corinth, Paul was visiting some places on his way to Ephesus. In Ephesus he found some other followers of the Lord. He asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

These followers said to him, "We have never even heard of a Holy Spirit!"

Paul asked them, "So what kind of baptism did you have?"

They said, "It was the baptism that John taught."

Paul said, "John told people to be baptized to show they wanted to change their lives. He told people to believe in the one who would come after him, and that one is Jesus."

When these followers heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Paul laid his hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came on them. They began speaking different languages and prophesying. There were about twelve men in this group.

Paul went into the synagogue and spoke very boldly. He continued doing this for three months. He talked with the Jews, trying to persuade them to accept what he was telling them about God's kingdom. But some of them became stubborn and refused to believe. In front of everyone, they said bad things about the Way. So Paul left these Jews and took the Lord's followers with him. He went to a place where a man named Tyrannus had a school. There Paul talked with people every day. He did this for two years. Because of this work, everyone in Asia, Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.

##### **The Sons of Sceva (19:11-12)**

God used Paul to do some very special miracles. Some people carried away handkerchiefs and clothes that Paul had used and put them on those who were sick. The sick people were healed, and evil spirits left them.

##### **Trouble in Ephesus (19:23-41)**

But during that time there was some trouble in Ephesus about the Way. This is how it all happened: There was a man named Demetrius. He worked with silver. He made little silver models that looked like the temple of the goddess Artemis. The men who did this work made a lot of money.

Demetrius had a meeting with these men and some others who did the same kind of work. He told them, "Men, you know that we make a lot of money from our business. But look at what this man Paul is doing. Listen to

what he is saying. He has convinced many people in Ephesus and all over Asia to change their religion. He says the gods that people make by hand are not real. I'm afraid this is going to turn people against our business. But there is also another problem. People will begin to think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis is not important. Her greatness will be destroyed. And Artemis is the goddess that everyone in Asia and the whole world worships."

When the men heard this, they became very angry. They shouted, "Great is Artemis, the goddess of Ephesus!" The whole city was thrown into confusion. The people grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, men from Macedonia who were traveling with Paul, and rushed all together into the stadium. Paul wanted to go in and talk to the people, but the Lord's followers did not let him go. Also, some leaders of the country who were friends of Paul sent him a message telling him not to go into the stadium.

Some people were shouting one thing and others were shouting something else. The meeting was very confused. Most of the people did not know why they had come there. Some Jews made a man named Alexander stand before the crowd, and they told him what to say. Alexander waved his hand, trying to explain things to the people. But when the people saw that Alexander was a Jew, they all began shouting the same thing. For two hours they continued shouting, "Great is Artemis of Ephesus! Great is Artemis of Ephesus! Great is Artemis ...!"

Then the city clerk persuaded the people to be quiet. He said, "Men of Ephesus, everyone knows that Ephesus is the city that keeps the temple of the great goddess Artemis. Everyone knows that we also keep her holy rock. No one

can deny this, so you should be quiet. You must stop and think before you do anything else.

"You brought these men here, but they have not said anything bad against our goddess. They have not stolen anything from her temple. We have courts of law and there are judges. Do Demetrius and those men who work with him have a charge against anyone? They should go to the courts. Let them argue with each other there.

"Is there something else you want to talk about? Then come to the regular town meeting of the people. It can be decided there. I say this because someone might see this trouble today and say we are rioting. We could not explain all this trouble, because there is no real reason for this meeting." After the city clerk said this, he told the people to go home.

#### **Paul's Last Visit to Troas (20:7-12)**

On Sunday we all met together to eat the Lord's Supper. Paul talked to the group. Because he was planning to leave the next day, he continued talking until midnight. We were all together in a room upstairs, and there were many lights in the room. There was a young man named Eutychus sitting in the window. Paul continued talking, and Eutychus became very, very sleepy. Finally, he went to sleep and fell out of the window. He fell to the ground from the third floor. When the people went down and lifted him up, he was dead.

Paul went down to where Eutychus was, knelt down beside him, and put his arms around him. He said to the other believers, "Don't worry. He is alive now." Then Paul went upstairs again, broke off some pieces of bread and ate. He spoke to them a long time. It was early morning when he finished, and then he

left. The Lord's followers took Eutychus home alive, and they were all greatly comforted.

## **STUDY 15**

### **Paul's Amazing Race**

#### **Acts 20:17-24, 32-38; 21:17-19**

**Paul Speaks to the Elders From Ephesus (20:17-24, 32-38)**

In Miletus Paul sent a message back to Ephesus, telling the elders of the church in Ephesus to come to him.

When they came, Paul said to them, "You know about my life from the first day I came to Asia. You know the way I lived all the time I was with you. The Jews planned things against me, and this gave me much trouble. But you know that I always served the Lord, sometimes with tears. I never thought about myself first. I always did what was best for you. I told you the Good News about Jesus in public before the people and also taught in your homes. I told everyone—Jewish and non-Jewish people—to change and turn to God. I told them all to believe in our Lord Jesus.

"But now I must obey the Spirit and go to Jerusalem. I don't know what will happen to me there. I know only that in every city the Holy Spirit tells me that troubles and even jail wait for me. I don't care about my own life. The most important thing is that I finish my work. I want to finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do—to tell people the Good News about God's grace.

"Now I am putting you in God's care. I am depending on the message about his grace to make you strong. That message is able to give you the blessings that God gives to all his holy people. When I was with you, I never wanted anyone's money or fine clothes. You know that

I always worked to take care of my own needs and the needs of the people who were with me. I always showed you that you should work just as I did and help people who are weak. I taught you to remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'You will have a greater blessing when you give than when you receive.'"

When Paul finished speaking, he knelt down, and they all prayed together. They cried and cried. They were especially sad because Paul had said they would never see him again. They hugged him and kissed him. Then they went with him to the ship to say goodbye.

**Paul Visits James (21:17-19)**

The brothers and sisters in Jerusalem were very happy to see us. The next day Paul went with us to visit James, and all the elders were there. After greeting them, Paul told them point by point all that God had used him to do among the non-Jewish people.

## **STUDY 16**

### **This is My Story**

#### **Acts 21:26—22:3, 17-29**

**Paul is Arrested (21:26-40)**

So Paul took the four men with him. The next day he shared in their cleansing ceremony. Then he went to the Temple area and announced the time when the days of the cleansing ceremony would be finished. On the last day an offering would be given for each of the men.

When the seven-day period was almost finished, some Jews from Asia saw Paul in the Temple area. They stirred up everyone into an angry mob. They grabbed Paul and shouted, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who is teaching things that are against the Law of Moses, against our people, and against this

Temple of ours. This is what he teaches people everywhere. And now he has brought some Greeks into the Temple area and has made this holy place unclean!" (The Jews said this because they had seen Trophimus with Paul in Jerusalem. Trophimus was a man from Ephesus. The Jews thought that Paul had taken him into the holy area of the Temple.)

An angry reaction spread throughout the city, and everyone came running to the Temple. They grabbed Paul and dragged him out of the holy area, and the gates were closed immediately. While they were trying to kill Paul, the commander of the Roman army in Jerusalem got word that the whole city was in a state of riot. Immediately the commander ran to where the crowd had gathered, taking with him some army officers and soldiers. When the people saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

The commander went over to Paul and arrested him. He told his soldiers to tie him up with two chains. Then he asked, "Who is this man? What has he done wrong?" Some people there were shouting one thing, and others were shouting something else. Because of all this confusion and shouting, the commander could not learn the truth about what had happened. So he told the soldiers to take Paul to the army building. The whole crowd was following them. When the soldiers came to the steps, they had to carry Paul. They did this to protect him, because the people were ready to hurt him. The people were shouting, "Kill him!"

When the soldiers were ready to take Paul into the army building, he asked the commander, "Can I say something to you?"

The commander said, "Oh, you speak Greek? Then you are not the man I thought you were. I thought you were the Egyptian

who started some trouble against the government not long ago and led four thousand terrorists out to the desert."

Paul said, "No, I am a Jew from Tarsus in the country of Cilicia. I am a citizen of that important city. Please, let me speak to the people."

The commander told Paul he could speak. So he stood on the steps and waved his hand so that the people would be quiet. The people became quiet and Paul spoke to them in Aramaic.

#### **Paul Speaks to the People (22:1-3, 17-29)**

Paul said, "My brothers and fathers, listen to me! I will make my defense to you."

When the Jews heard Paul speaking Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said,

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in the country of Cilicia. I grew up in this city. I was a student of Gamaliel, who carefully taught me everything about the law of our fathers. I was very serious about serving God, the same as all of you here today.

"Later, I came back to Jerusalem. I was praying in the Temple area, and I saw a vision. I saw Jesus, and he said to me, 'Hurry and leave Jerusalem now! The people here will not accept the truth you tell them about me.'

"I said, 'But, Lord, the people know that I was the one who put the believers in jail and beat them. I went through all the synagogues to find and arrest the people who believe in you. The people also know that I was there when Stephen, your witness, was killed. I stood there and agreed that they should kill him. I even held the coats of the men who were killing him!'

"But Jesus said to me, 'Leave now. I will send you far away to the non-Jewish people.'"



The people stopped listening when Paul said this last thing. They all shouted, “Get rid of this man! He doesn’t deserve to live.” They kept on shouting, ripping off their clothes and throwing dust into the air. Then the commander told the soldiers to take Paul into the army building and beat him. He wanted to make Paul tell why the people were shouting against him like this. So the soldiers were tying Paul, preparing to beat him. But he said to an army officer there, “Do you have the right to beat a Roman citizen who has not been proven guilty?”

When the officer heard this, he went to the commander and told him about it. The officer said, “Do you know what you are doing? This man is a Roman citizen!”

The commander came to Paul and said, “Tell me, are you really a Roman citizen?”

He answered, “Yes.”

The commander said, “I paid a lot of money to become a Roman citizen.”

But Paul said, “I was born a citizen.”

The men who were preparing to question Paul moved away from him immediately. The commander was afraid because he had already put Paul in chains, and he was a Roman citizen.

## **STUDY 17**

### **A Murderous Oath**

#### **Acts 22:30—23:24, 31-35**

**Paul Speaks to the Jewish Leaders (22:30—23:11)**

The next day the commander decided to learn why the Jews were accusing Paul. So he ordered the leading priests and the whole high council to meet together. He had Paul’s chains taken off and had him brought in to face the council.

Paul looked at the council members and said, “Brothers, I have lived my life in a good way before God. I have always done what I thought was right.” Ananias, the high priest, was there. When he heard this, he told the men who were standing near Paul to hit him in the mouth. Paul said to Ananias, “God will hit you too! You are like a dirty wall that has been painted white. You sit there and judge me, using the Law of Moses. But you are telling them to hit me, and that is against the law.”

The men standing near Paul said to him, “Are you sure you want to insult God’s high priest like that?”

Paul said, “Brothers, I did not know this man was the high priest. The Scriptures say, ‘You must not say bad things about a leader of your people.’”

Paul knew that some of the men in the council meeting were Sadducees and some were Pharisees. So he shouted, “My brothers, I am a Pharisee and my father was a Pharisee! I am on trial here because I believe that people will rise from death.”

When Paul said this, a big argument started between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The group was divided. (The Sadducees believe that after people die, they will not live again as an angel or as a spirit. But the Pharisees believe in both.) All these Jews began shouting louder and louder. Some of the teachers of the law, who were Pharisees, stood up and argued, “We find nothing wrong with this man. Maybe an angel or a spirit really did speak to him.”

The argument turned into a fight, and the commander was afraid that the Jews would tear Paul to pieces. So he told the soldiers to go down and take Paul away from these Jews and put him in the army building.

The next night the Lord Jesus came and stood by Paul. He said, “Be brave! You have told people in Jerusalem about me. You must do the same in Rome.”

#### **Some Jews Plan to Kill Paul (23:12-22)**

The next morning some of the Jews made a plan to kill Paul. They made a promise to themselves that they would not eat or drink anything until they had killed him. There were more than 40 of them who made this plan. They went and talked to the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders. They said, “We have promised ourselves that we will not eat or drink until we have killed Paul. So this is what we want you to do: Send a message to the commander from you and the high council. Tell him you want him to bring Paul out to you. Say that you want to ask him more questions. We will be waiting to kill him while he is on the way here.”

But Paul’s nephew heard about this plan. He went to the army building and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the army officers and said to him, “Take this young man to the commander. He has a message for him.” So the army officer brought Paul’s nephew to the commander. The officer said, “The prisoner Paul asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to tell you.”

The commander led the young man to a place where they could be alone. The commander asked, “What do you want to tell me?”

The young man said, “Some Jews have decided to ask you to bring Paul down to their council meeting tomorrow. They want you to think that they plan to ask Paul more questions. But don’t believe them! More than 40 of them are hiding and waiting to kill him. They have all promised not to eat or drink until they

have killed him. Now they are waiting for you to say yes.”

The commander sent the young man away, telling him, “Don’t tell anyone that you have told me about their plan.”

#### **Paul Is Sent to Caesarea (22:23-24; 23:31-35)**

Then the commander called two army officers. He said to them, “I need some men to go to Caesarea. Get 200 soldiers ready. Also, get 70 soldiers on horses and 200 men to carry spears. Be ready to leave at nine o’clock tonight. Get some horses for Paul to ride so that he can be taken to Governor Felix safely.”

The soldiers did what they were told. They got Paul and took him to the city of Antipatris that night. The next day the soldiers on horses went with Paul to Caesarea, but the other soldiers and the spearmen went back to the army building in Jerusalem. The soldiers on horses entered Caesarea, gave the letter to Governor Felix, and then turned Paul over to him.

The governor read the letter and asked Paul, “What country are you from?” The governor learned that Paul was from Cilicia. The governor said, “I will hear your case when the Jews who are accusing you come here too.” Then the governor gave orders for Paul to be kept in the palace built by Herod.

## **STUDY 18**

### **Paul’s Living Testimony**

#### **Acts 25:23—26:32**

#### **Paul Before Festus and King Agrippa (25:23—26:11)**

The next day Agrippa and Bernice came to the meeting with great show, acting like very important people. They entered the room with military leaders and important men of the city. Festus ordered the soldiers to bring Paul in.

Festus said, “King Agrippa and all of you gathered here with us, you see this man. All the Jewish people, here and in Jerusalem, have complained to me about him. When they complain about him, they shout that he should be killed. When I judged him, I did not find him guilty of any crime worthy of death. But he asked to be judged by Caesar, so I decided to send him to Rome. However, I don’t really know what to tell Caesar that this man has done wrong. So I have brought him before all of you—especially you, King Agrippa. I hope that you can question him and give me something to write to Caesar. I think it is foolish to send a prisoner to Caesar without making some charges against him.”

Agrippa said to Paul, “You may now speak to defend yourself.” Paul raised his hand to get their attention and began to speak. He said, “King Agrippa, I feel fortunate that I can stand here before you today and answer all the charges these Jews have made against me. I am very happy to talk to you, because you know so much about all the Jewish customs and the things the Jews argue about. Please listen to me patiently.

“All the Jews know about my whole life. They know the way I lived from the beginning in my own country and later in Jerusalem. These Jews have known me for a long time. If they want to, they can tell you that I was a good Pharisee. And the Pharisees obey the laws of the Jewish religion more carefully than any other group. Now I am on trial because I hope for the promise that God made to our fathers. This is the promise that all the twelve tribes of our people hope to receive. For this hope the Jews serve God day and night. My king, the Jews have accused me because I hope for this

same promise. Why do you people think it is impossible for God to raise people from death?

“I used to think that I should do everything I could against Jesus from Nazareth. And that’s what I did, beginning in Jerusalem. The leading priests gave me the authority to put many of God’s people in jail. And when they were being killed, I agreed that it was a good thing. I visited all the synagogues and punished them, trying to make them curse Jesus. My anger against these people was so strong that I went to other cities to find them and punish them.

#### **Paul Tells About Seeing Jesus (26:12-18)**

“One time the leading priests gave me permission and the authority to go to the city of Damascus. On the way there, at noon, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun. It shined all around me and those traveling with me. We all fell to the ground. Then I heard a voice talking to me in Aramaic. The voice said, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? You are only hurting yourself by fighting me.’

“I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“The Lord said, ‘I am Jesus. I am the one you are persecuting. Stand up! I have chosen you to be my servant. You will tell people about me—what you have seen today and what I will show you. This is why I have come to you. I will keep you safe from your own people and from the non-Jewish people, the ones I am sending you to. You will make them able to understand the truth. They will turn away from darkness to the light. They will turn away from the power of Satan, and they will turn to God. Then their sins can be forgiven, and they can be given a place among God’s people—those who have been made holy by believing in me.’”

### **Paul Tells About His Work (26:19-23)**

Paul continued speaking: “King Agrippa, after I had this vision from heaven, I obeyed it. I began telling people to change their hearts and lives and turn back to God. And I told them to do what would show that they had really changed. I went first to people in Damascus. Then I went to Jerusalem and to every part of Judea and told the people there. I also went to the non-Jewish people.

“This is why the Jews grabbed me and were trying to kill me at the Temple. But God helped me, and he is still helping me today. With God’s help I am standing here today and telling all people what I have seen. But I am saying nothing new. I am saying only what Moses and the prophets said would happen. They said that the Messiah would die and be the first to rise from death. They said that he would bring the light of God’s saving truth to the Jewish people and to the non-Jewish people.”

### **Paul Tries to Persuade Agrippa (26:24-32)**

While Paul was still defending himself, Festus shouted, “Paul, you are out of your mind! Too much study has made you crazy.”

Paul said, “Most Honorable Festus, I am not crazy. What I am saying is true. It all makes perfect sense. King Agrippa knows about all this, and I can speak freely to him. I know that he has heard about these things, because they happened where everyone could see them. King Agrippa, do you believe what the prophets wrote? I know you believe!”

King Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think you can persuade me to become a ‘Christ-follower’ so easily?”

Paul said, “It is not important if it is easy or if it is hard. I pray to God that not only you but that everyone listening to me today could

be saved and be just like me—except for these chains I have!”

King Agrippa, Governor Festus, Bernice, and all the people sitting with them stood up and left the room. They were talking to each other. They said, “This man has done nothing worthy of being put to death or even put in jail.” And Agrippa said to Festus, “We could let him go free, but he has asked to see Caesar.”

## **STUDY 19**

### **Faith During the Storm**

#### **Acts 27:1-2, 9-26, 33-44**

### **Paul Sails for Rome (27:1-2, 9-12)**

It was decided that we would sail for Italy. An army officer named Julius, who served in the emperor’s special army, was put in charge of guarding Paul and some other prisoners on the trip. We got on a ship from the city of Adramyttium that was ready to sail to different places in Asia. Aristarchus, a man from Thessalonica in Macedonia, went with us.

We had lost much time, and it was now dangerous to sail, because it was already after the Jewish day of fasting. So Paul warned them, “Men, I can see that there will be a lot of trouble on this trip. The ship, everything in it, and even our lives may be lost!” But the captain and the owner of the ship did not agree with Paul. So the army officer accepted what they said instead of believing Paul. Also, that harbor was not a good place for the ship to stay for the winter, so most of the men decided that we should leave there. They hoped we could reach Phoenix, where the ship could stay for the winter. Phoenix was a city on the island of Crete. It had a harbor that faced southwest and northwest.

### **The Storm (27:13-26, 33-38)**

Then a good wind began to blow from the south. The men on the ship thought, “This is the wind we wanted, and now we have it!” So they pulled up the anchor. We sailed very close to the island of Crete. But then a very strong wind called the “Northeaster” came from across the island. This wind took the ship and carried it away. The ship could not sail against the wind, so we stopped trying and let the wind blow us.

We went below a small island named Cauda. With the island protecting us from the wind, we were able to bring in the lifeboat, but it was very hard to do. After the men brought the lifeboat in, they tied ropes around the ship to hold it together. The men were afraid that the ship would hit the sandbanks of Syrtis. So they lowered the sail and let the wind carry the ship.

The next day the storm was blowing against us so hard that the men threw some things out of the ship. A day later they threw out the ship’s equipment. For many days we could not see the sun or the stars. The storm was very bad. We lost all hope of staying alive—we thought we would die.

The men did not eat for a long time. Then one day Paul stood up before them and said, “Men, I told you not to leave Crete. You should have listened to me. Then you would not have all this trouble and loss. But now I tell you to be happy. None of you will die, but the ship will be lost. Last night an angel came to me from God—the God I worship and belong to. The angel said, ‘Paul, don’t be afraid! You must stand before Caesar. And God has given you this promise: He will save the lives of all those sailing with you.’ So men, there is nothing to worry about. I trust God, and I am sure every-

thing will happen just as his angel told me. But we will crash on an island.”

Just before dawn Paul began persuading all the people to eat something. He said, “For the past two weeks you have been waiting and watching. You have not eaten for 14 days. Now I beg you to eat something. You need it to stay alive. None of you will lose even one hair off your heads.” After he said this, Paul took some bread and thanked God for it before all of them. He broke off a piece and began eating. All the men felt better and started eating too. (There were 276 people on the ship.) We ate all we wanted. Then we began making the ship lighter by throwing the grain into the sea.

### **The Ship Is Destroyed (27:39-44)**

When daylight came, the sailors saw land, but they did not know what land it was. They saw a bay with a beach and wanted to sail the ship to the beach if they could. So they cut the ropes to the anchors and left the anchors in the sea. At the same time, they untied the ropes that were holding the rudders. Then they raised the front sail into the wind and sailed toward the beach. But the ship hit a sandbank. The front of the ship stuck there and could not move. Then the big waves began to break the back of the ship to pieces.

The soldiers decided to kill the prisoners so that none of the prisoners could swim away and escape. But Julius the army officer wanted to let Paul live. So he did not allow the soldiers to kill the prisoners. He told the people who could swim to jump into the water and swim to land. The others used wooden boards or pieces of the ship. And this is how all the people went safely to land.

## **STUDY 20**

### **The End Is the Beginning**

#### **Acts 28:1-31**

##### **Paul on the Island of Malta (28:1-10)**

When we were safe on land, we learned that the island was called Malta. The people who lived there were very good to us. It was raining and very cold, so they built a fire and welcomed all of us. Paul gathered a pile of sticks for the fire. He was putting the sticks on the fire, and a poisonous snake came out because of the heat and bit him on the hand. When the people living on the island saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said, “This man must be a murderer! He did not die in the sea, but Justice does not want him to live.”

But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and was not hurt. The people thought he would swell up or fall down dead. They waited and watched him for a long time, but nothing bad happened to him. So they changed their opinion. They said, “He is a god!”

There were some fields around that same area. They were owned by a man named Publius, the most important Roman official on the island. He welcomed us into his home and was very good to us. We stayed in his house for three days. Publius’ father was very sick. He had a fever and dysentery, but Paul went to him and prayed for him. He laid his hands on the man and healed him. After this happened, all the other sick people on the island came to Paul, and he healed them too.

The people on the island gave us many honors. And after we had been there three months and were ready to leave, they provided us everything we needed for our trip.

##### **Paul Goes to Rome (28:11-15)**

We got on a ship from Alexandria that had stayed on the island of Malta during the winter. On the front of the ship was the sign for the twin gods. We stopped at the city of Syracuse. We stayed there three days and then left. We came to the city of Rhegium. The next day a wind began to blow from the southwest, so we were able to leave. A day later we came to the city of Puteoli. We found some believers there, who asked us to stay with them a week. Finally, we came to Rome. The brothers and sisters in Rome heard about us and came out to meet us at the Market of Appius and at the Three Inns. When Paul saw these believers, he thanked God and felt encouraged.

##### **Paul in Rome (28:16-31)**

When we came to Rome, Paul was allowed to live alone. But a soldier stayed with him to guard him.

Three days later Paul sent for some of the most important Jews. When they came together, he said, “My brothers, I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our fathers. But I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. They asked me many questions, but they could not find any reason why I should be put to death. So they wanted to let me go free. But the Jews there did not want that. So I had to ask to come to Rome to have my trial before Caesar. That doesn’t mean I am accusing my people of doing anything wrong. That is why I wanted to see you and talk with you. I am bound with this chain because I believe in the hope of Israel.”

The Jews answered Paul, “We have received no letters from Judea about you. None of our Jewish brothers who have traveled from there brought news about you or told us anything

bad about you. We want to hear your ideas. We know that people everywhere are speaking against this new group.”

Paul and the Jews chose a day for a meeting. On that day many more of these Jews met with Paul at his house. He spoke to them all day long, explaining God’s kingdom to them. He used the Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets to persuade them to believe in Jesus. Some of the Jews believed what he said, but others did not believe. They had an argument among themselves and were ready to leave. But Paul said one more thing to them: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet. He said,

*‘Go to this people and tell them:*

*You will listen and you will hear,  
but you will not understand.*

*You will look and you will see,*

*but you will not understand what you see.*

*Yes, the minds of these people are now closed.*

*They have ears, but they don’t listen.*

*They have eyes, but they refuse to see.*

*If their minds were not closed,  
they might see with their eyes;  
they might hear with their ears;  
they might understand with their minds.  
Then they might turn back to me and be  
healed.’*

“I want you Jews to know that God has sent his salvation to the non-Jewish people. They will listen!” Paul stayed two full years in his own rented house. He welcomed all the people who came and visited him. He told them about God’s kingdom and taught them about the Lord Jesus Christ. He was very bold, and no one tried to stop him from speaking.

# children's bible quizzing

Children's Bible Quizzing is an optional part of *Bible Studies for Children*. Each church and each child decides whether to participate in a series of competitive events.

Quizzing events follow the rules outlined in this book. Children do not compete against each other to determine a single winner. Churches do not compete against each other to determine a winner.

The purpose of Quizzing is to help the children to determine what they learned about the Bible, to enjoy the competitive events, and to grow in the ability to display Christian attitudes and Christian behaviours during competitive events.

In Quizzing, each child challenges himself or herself to attain an award level. In this approach, children quiz against a base of knowledge, not against each other. Quizzing uses a multiple-choice approach that allows every child to answer every question. Multiple choice questions offer several answers, and the child chooses the correct one. This approach makes it possible for every child to be a winner.

## QUIZZING SUPPLIES

Each child needs Quizzing numbers to answer the questions. Quizzing numbers are four cardboard squares

that each have a tab at the top with the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. The numbers fit inside a cardboard box.

You can order cardboard Quizzing boxes and numbers, pictured here, from the Nazarene Publishing House in Kansas City, Missouri, United States of America.

If cardboard Quizzing boxes and numbers are not available in your area, you can make your own Quizzing numbers from paper, paper plates, wood, or whatever you have available. Each child needs a set of Quizzing numbers.

Each group of children will need a person to score their answers. There is a reproducible score sheet on page 155. Use this score sheet to keep track of the answers of each child.

If possible, provide some type of an award for the performance of the children in each Quizzing event. Suggested awards are certificates, stickers, ribbons, trophies, or medals. Certificate templates are included on pages 152 and 153.

Please follow these rules. Competitions that do not operate in accordance with the *Children's Quizzing Official Competition Rules and Procedures* will not qualify for other competition levels.





## **AGES AND GRADES**

Children in grades 1-6\* may participate in Children's Quizzing competitions. Seventh graders, regardless of age, participate in Teen Quizzing.

## **BASIC LEVEL COMPETITION**

This competition level is for younger or beginning quizzers. Older quizzers who prefer an easier level of competition may also participate in the Basic Level. The questions for the Basic Level are simpler. There are three answers for each question, and there are fifteen questions in each round. The district or regional Children's Quizzing director determines the questions and the number of rounds at each Quizzing competition. Most competitions have two or three rounds.

## **ADVANCED LEVEL COMPETITION**

This competition level is for older quizzers or experienced quizzers. Younger quizzers who want a greater challenge may participate in the Advanced Level. The questions for the Advanced Level are more comprehensive. There are four answers for each question, and there are twenty questions in each round. The district or regional Children's Quizzing director determines the questions and the number of rounds at each Quizzing event.

## **SWITCHING BETWEEN LEVELS**

Children may switch between Basic Level and Advanced Level only for invitational Quizzing competitions. This helps the leaders and the children determine the best level for each child.

For the zone/area, the district, and the regional competitions, the local director must register each child for either Basic Level *or* Ad-

vanced Level. The child must compete at the same level for zone/area, district, and regional competitions.

## **TYPES OF COMPETITION**

### ***Invitational Competition***

An invitational competition is between two or more churches. Local Children's Quizzing directors, zone/area Children's Quizzing directors, or district Children's Quizzing directors may organize invitational competitions. Individuals who organize an invitational competition have the responsibility to prepare the competition questions.

### ***Zone/Area Competition***

Each district may have smaller groupings of churches that are called zones. If one zone has more quizzers than another zone, the district Children's Quizzing director may separate or combine the zones to create areas with a more equitable distribution of quizzers. The term area means combined or divided zones.

The churches located in each zone/area compete in that zone/area. The district Children's Quizzing director organizes the competition. Questions for the zone/area competitions are official questions.

E-mail [ChildQuiz@nazarene.org](mailto:ChildQuiz@nazarene.org) to request these questions from the General Children's Quizzing Office.

### ***District Competition***

Children advance from the zone/area competition to the district competition. The district Children's Quizzing director determines the qualifications for the competition and organizes the competition.

\*For countries other than the United States, grades 1-6 are generally ages 6-12.

Questions for district competitions are official questions. E-mail [ChildQuiz@nazarene.org](mailto:ChildQuiz@nazarene.org) to request these questions from the General Children's Quizzing Office.

### **Regional Competition**

The regional competition is a competition between two or more districts.

When there is a regional Children's Quizzing director, he or she determines the qualifications for the competition and organizes the competition. If there is not a regional director, the participating district directors organize the competition.

Questions for the regional competitions are official questions. To request these questions from the General Children's Quizzing Office, e-mail [ChildQuiz@nazarene.org](mailto:ChildQuiz@nazarene.org).

### **WORLD QUIZ COMPETITION**

Every four years, the General Children's Quizzing Office in conjunction with Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries International sponsors an international World Quiz. The Global Children's Quizzing Office determines the dates, the locations, the costs, the qualifying dates, and the overall qualifying process for all World Quiz competitions. E-mail [ChildQuiz@nazarene.org](mailto:ChildQuiz@nazarene.org) for more information.

### **DISTRICT CHILDREN'S QUIZZING DIRECTOR**

The district Children's Quizzing director operates all competitions according to the *Children's Quizzing Official Competition Rules and Procedures*. He or she has the authority to introduce additional Quizzing procedures on the district as long as the procedures do not conflict with the *Children's Quizzing Official Competition Rules and Procedures*. The district Children's

Quizzing director contacts the General Children's Quizzing Office, when necessary, to request a specific change in the *Children's Quizzing Official Competition Rules and Procedures* for a district. The district Children's Quizzing director makes the decisions and solves the problems within the guidelines of the *Children's Quizzing Official Competition Rules and Procedures*. The district Children's Quizzing director contacts the General Children's Quizzing Office for an official ruling on a specific situation, if necessary.

### **REGIONAL CHILDREN'S QUIZZING DIRECTOR**

The regional Children's Quizzing director creates a regional Children's Quizzing leadership team that consists of all of the district Children's Quizzing directors on the region. The regional Children's Quizzing director remains in contact with this team to keep the procedures consistent across the region. He or she operates and organizes the regional competitions according to the *Children's Quizzing Official Competition Rules and Procedures*. The regional Children's Quizzing director contacts the General Children's Quizzing Office to request any changes in the *Children's Quizzing Official Competition Rules and Procedures* for a specific region. He or she resolves any conflicts that arise with the help of the guidelines of the *Children's Quizzing Official Competition Rules and Procedures*. The regional Children's Quizzing director contacts the General Children's Quizzing Office for an official ruling on a specific situation, if necessary. He or she contacts the General Children's Quizzing Office to place the regional quiz date on the general church calendar.

In the United States and Canada, the regional Children's Quizzing director is a developing position. Currently that person does not preside over district Children's Quizzing directors on the region.

## **QUIZMASTER**

The quizmaster reads the competition questions at a Quizzing competition. The quizmaster reads the question and the multiple-choice answers two times before the children answer the question. He or she follows the *Children's Quizzing Official Competition Rules and Procedures* established by the General Children's Quizzing Office and the district Children's Quizzing director/regional coordinator. In the event of a conflict, the final authority is the district/regional Children's Quizzing director who consults the *Children's Quizzing Official Competition Rules and Procedures*. The quizmaster may participate in discussions with scorekeepers and the district/regional Children's Quizzing director about a challenge. The quizmaster may call a time-out.

## **SCOREKEEPER**

The scorekeeper scores a group of children's answers. He or she may participate in discussions with scorekeepers and the district/regional Children's Quizzing director about a challenge. All scorekeepers are to use the same method and the same symbols to insure correct tabulation of the scores.

## **OFFICIAL COMPETITION QUESTIONS**

The district Children's Quizzing director is the only individual on the district who may obtain a copy of the official zone/area and district competition questions.

The regional Children's Quizzing director is the only individual on the region who may ob-

tain a copy of the official regional competition questions. If there is not a regional Children's Quizzing director, one participating district Children's Quizzing director may obtain a copy of the official regional competition questions.

Order forms for annual official questions will be sent by E-mail each year. Contact the General Children's Quizzing Office at [ChildQuiz@nazarene.org](mailto:ChildQuiz@nazarene.org) to update your E-mail address. The official questions will arrive by E-mail to the people who request them.

## **COMPETITION METHODS**

There are two methods of competition.

### *Individual method*

In the individual method of competition, the children compete as individual children. The score of each child is separate from all other scores. Children from the same church may sit together, but do not add together the individual scores to obtain a church or a team score. There are no bonus questions for individual quizzers.

The individual method is the only method to use for the Basic Level competition.

### *Combination Method*

The combination method combines individual and team Quizzing. In this method, churches may send individual quizzers, the teams, or a combination of these to a competition.

The district Children's Quizzing director determines the number of children needed to form a team. All teams must have the same number of quizzers. The recommended number for a team is four or five children.

The children from the churches that do not have enough quizzers to form a team can compete as individual quizzers.

In the combination method, teams qualify for bonus questions. The bonus points awarded for a correct answer to a bonus question become part of the total score of the team, instead of a score for an individual quizzier. There are bonus questions with the official questions for zone/area, district, and regional competitions. Bonus questions typically involve the recitation of a memory verse.

The district Children's Quizzing director selects either the individual method or the combination method for the Advanced Level of the competition.

### **TIE SCORES**

Ties between individual quizzers or the teams remain as tied scores. All individual children or teams who tie receive the same recognition, the same award, and the same advancement to the next level of competition.

### **BONUS QUESTIONS**

Bonus questions are part of the Advanced Level, but only with teams, not individuals. Teams must qualify for a bonus question. Bonus questions occur after questions 5, 10, 15, and 20.

To qualify for a bonus question, a team may have only as many incorrect answers as there are members on the team. For example, a team of four members may have four or fewer answers that are incorrect. A team of five members may have five or fewer answers that are incorrect.

The bonus points for a correct answer become part of the total score of the team, not of the individual score of a child.

The district Children's Quizzing director determines the way that the children answer

bonus questions. In most situations, the child verbally gives the answer to the scorekeeper.

Prior to the reading of the bonus question, the local Children's Quizzing director selects one team member to answer the bonus question. The same child may answer all of the bonus questions in a game, or a different child may answer each bonus question.

### **TIME-OUTS**

The district Children's Quizzing director determines the number of time-outs for each church. Each church receives the same number of time-outs, regardless of the number of individual quizzers or teams from that church. For example, if the district director decides to give one time-out, each church receives one time-out.

The district Children's Quizzing director determines if an automatic time-out will occur during the game and the specific point at which the time-out will occur in each game.

The local Children's Quizzing director is the only individual who may call a time-out for a local church team.

The district Children's Quizzing director or quizmaster may call a time-out at any time.

The district Children's Quizzing director, prior to the start of the competition, determines the maximum length of the time-outs for the competition.

### **SCORING**

There are two methods for scoring. The district Children's Quizzing director selects the method.

#### ***Five Points***

- Award five points for every correct answer. For example, if a child answers 20 questions correctly in an Advanced Level

round, the child earns a total of 100 points.

- Award five points for every correct bonus answer in an Advanced Level team Quizzing round. For example, if every member of a team with four persons answers 20 questions correctly in an Advanced Level round and the team answers four bonus questions correctly, the team earns a total of 420 points.

Basic Level points will be lower as there are only 15 questions per round, and it is individual competition only.

### **One Point**

Award one point for each correct answer as follows:

- Award one point for every correct answer. For example, if a child answers 20 questions correctly in an Advanced level round, the child earns a total of 20 points.
- Award one point for every correct bonus answer in an Advanced Level team Quizzing round. For example, if every member of a team with four persons answers 20 questions correctly in an Advanced Level round and the team answers four bonus questions correctly, the team earns a total of 84 points.

Basic Level points will be lower as there are only 15 questions per round, and it is individual competition only.

## **CHALLENGES**

Challenges are to be an exception and are not common during a competition.

Request a challenge only when the answer marked as correct in the questions is actually incorrect according to the Bible reference given

for that question. Challenges issued for any other reason are invalid.

A quizzer, a Children's Quizzing director, or any other competition participant may not request a challenge because they dislike the wording of a question or answer or think a question is too difficult or confusing.

The local Children's Quizzing director is the only person who may issue a challenge to a competition question.

If an individual other than the local Children's Quizzing director attempts to issue a challenge, the challenge is automatically ruled as "invalid."

Individuals who issue invalid challenges disrupt competition and cause the children to lose their concentration. Individuals who consistently issue invalid challenges or create some problems by arguing about a challenge ruling will lose their privilege of challenging the questions for the remainder of the competition.

The district Children's Quizzing director, or the quizmaster in the absence of the district Children's Quizzing director, has the authority to remove the privilege of challenging questions from any or all individuals who abuse the privilege.

The district Children's Quizzing director determines how to challenge a competition question prior to the start of the competition.

- Will the challenge be written or verbal?
- When can a person challenge (during a game or at the end of a game)?

The district Children's Quizzing director should explain the procedure for the challenges to local Children's Quizzing directors at the beginning of the quiz year.

The quizmaster and district Children's Quizzing director follow these steps to rule the challenge.

- Determine if the challenge is valid or invalid. To do this, listen to the reason for the challenge. If the reason is valid, the answer given as the correct answer is incorrect according to the Bible reference, follow the challenge procedures outlined by the district.
- If the reason for the challenge is invalid, announce that the challenge is invalid, and the competition continues.

If more than one person challenges the same question, the quizmaster or district Children's Quizzing director selects one local quiz director to explain the reason for a challenge. After a question has one challenge, another person may not challenge the same question.

If a challenge is valid, the district Children's Quizzing director, or quizmaster in the director's absence, determines how to handle the challenged question. Select one of the following options.

**Option A:** Eliminate the question, and do not replace it. The result is that a game of 20 questions becomes a game of 19 questions.

**Option B:** Give every child the points he or she would receive for a correct answer to the challenged question.

**Option C:** Replace the challenged question. Ask the quizzers a new question.

**Option D:** Let the children who gave the answer that was listed as the correct answer in the official questions keep their points. Give another question to the children who gave an answer that was an incorrect answer.

## AWARD LEVELS

Children's Quizzing has the philosophy that every child has an opportunity to answer every question, and every child receives recognition for every correct answer he or she gives. Therefore, Children's Quizzing uses multiple-choice competition, and ties are never broken.

Children and churches do not compete against each other. They compete to reach an award level. All of the children and all of the churches who reach the same award level receive the same award. Ties remain as tied scores.

Recommended Award Levels:

Bronze Award = 70-79% correct

Silver Award = 80-89% correct

Gold Award = 90-99% correct

Gold All Star = 100% correct

Resolve all scoring and challenge decisions before presenting awards. The quizmaster and scorekeepers should be sure that all final scores are accurate prior to the presentation.

Never take an award from a child after the child receives an award. If there is a mistake, children may receive a higher award but not a lower award. This is true for individual awards and team awards.

## COMPETITION ETHICS

The district Children's Quizzing director is the person on the district who has the responsibility to conduct the competitions in accordance with the *Children's Quizzing Official Competition Rules and Procedures*.

- **Hearing Questions Before the Competition.** Since competitions use the same questions, it is not appropriate for the children and the workers to attend another zone/area, district, or regional competition prior to their participation in their own

competition of the same level. If an adult Quizzing worker attends another competition, the district Children's Quizzing director may choose to disqualify the church from participation in their competition. If a parent and/or child attends another competition, the district Children's Quizzing director may choose to disqualify the church from participation in their competition.

- **Worker's Conduct and Attitudes.** Adults are to conduct themselves in a professional and in a Christian manner. The discussions about disagreements with the district Children's Quizzing director, quizmaster, or scorekeepers are to be private. Adult Quizzing workers should not share information about the disagreement with the children. A cooperative spirit and good sportsmanship are important. The decisions and the rulings of the district Children's Quizzing director are final. Relay these decisions in a positive tone to the children and to the adults.

## **CHEATING**

Any cheating is serious. Treat the cheating seriously.

The district Children's Quizzing director, in discussion with the district Children's Ministries Council, determines the policy to follow in the event that a child or an adult cheats during a competition.

Make sure that all local children's ministries directors, children's pastors, and local Children's Quizzing directors receive the policy and the procedures of the district. Before accusing an adult or a child of cheating, have some evidence or a witness that the cheating occurred.

Ensure that the quiz continues and that the person accused of cheating does not suffer em-

barrassment in front of other people. Here is a sample procedure.

- If you suspect that a child cheated, ask someone to serve as a judge to watch the areas, but do not point out any child whom you suspect. After a few questions, ask the opinion of the judge. If the judge did not see any cheating, continue with the quiz.
- If the judge saw a child who was cheating, ask the judge to affirm it. Do not act until everyone is sure.
- Explain the problem to the local Children's Quizzing director, and ask the director to talk with the accused person privately.
- The quizmaster, the judge, and the local Children's Quizzing director should watch for continued cheating.
- If the cheating continues, the quizmaster and the local Children's Quizzing director should talk with the accused person privately.
- If the cheating continues, the quizmaster should tell the local Children's Quizzing director that he or she will eliminate the score of the child from official competition.
- In the case that a scorekeeper cheated, the district Children's Quizzing director will ask the scorekeeper to leave, and a new scorekeeper will take his or her place.
- In the case that someone in the audience cheated, the district Children's Quizzing director will handle the situation in the most appropriate manner.

## **UNRESOLVED DECISIONS**

Consult with the General Children's Quizzing Office regarding unresolved decisions.



# CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

presented to

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME

Congratulations for successfully completing  
*Bible Studies for Children: Acts*

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Location  
Teacher

# Award for Excellence



presented to

NAME

Great job! We recognize your outstanding  
achievement in *Bible Studies for Children: Acts*

DATE

Location

Teacher





# thank you!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the 2008-2009 Kids Reaching Kids Mission Offering Project: *The D-Code Challenge*. Your gifts made the *Bible Studies for Children* series of six books possible: 1 & 2 Samuel; Matthew; Acts; Genesis; Exodus; and Joshua, Judges and Ruth.

Every year, children from over 1,000 local organizations from all across the globe give to this project. In addition to the money raised for *Bible Studies for Children*, Kids Reaching Kids impacts children all over the world in a number of amazing ways. This special offering is named well. It really is a way for kids to help kids.

Here is an update on other projects sponsored by you through Kids Reaching Kids:

## **Kids Reaching Kids: *The Hope Project* (2009-2010):**

- Supplying basic needs for the children at Herstelling Compassionate Center in Guayana.
- Aiding the Haiti Hot Lunch program and Haiti Water Project.
- Caring for orphans of aids and vulnerable children in Africa.
- Bringing hope to families and to disabled children in Tonga.
- Helping children and families affected by the 8.9 magnitude earthquake in Japan.
- Helping orphans in Vidrare, Bulgaria.
- Helping inner-city children through Cincinnati Urban Promise in Ohio, USA.

## **Kids Reaching Kids: *Mission STAR Quest*:**

- Supporting the effort to find solutions of poverty at the Center of Hope in South Africa.
- Educating children and families in Mozambique through the Community Health Evangelism program.
- Purchasing computers and desks for Christian schools in the Middle East.
- Enabling the children at the Nazarene school in Beirut, Lebanon to have reliable heat and electricity.
- Aiding in the efforts of the Amador Street Hope Center in Vellajo, California, USA.
- Helping to rebuild churches and schools in Haiti and the Dominican Republic affected by hurricanes.

These are just a portion of all that Kids Reaching Kids is doing for children all across the world. In 2011-2012, children are raising money through *His Hands: Jesus, Miracles, Medicine and Me*. Money raised through this offering will help meet the medical needs for children and their families. All proceeds are divided equally among the six Nazarene world regions. Join us as we unite in Jesus Christ to bring hope to our world.

For more information about Kids Reaching Kids, and to support *His Hands* and future offering efforts, contact your regional SDMI representative. Also, visit our website at [www.kidsreachingkids.com](http://www.kidsreachingkids.com).

# BIBLE STUDIES FOR CHILDREN

# ACTS

**THIS BOOK IS A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS OF CHILDREN. IT IS WRITTEN TO HELP TEACHERS TO MENTOR CHILDREN AS THEY STUDY TOGETHER THE BIBLICAL BOOK OF ACTS. EACH LESSON INCLUDES A VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION, A BIBLICAL COMMENTARY, A LIST OF IMPORTANT WORDS, AND SOME ACTIVITIES. LESSONS ARE BASED UPON A BIBLICAL STORY. AFTER THE STORY, DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ARE PROVIDED TO ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO APPLY TO LIFE WHAT THEY LEARN.**

**THE GUIDE ALSO CONTAINS THE BASIC INSTRUCTIONS YOU WILL NEED TO ORGANIZE A QUIZZING PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN. THIS PROGRAM WILL CHALLENGE THE CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE OF BIBLICAL TEXT. THE COMPETITIVE GAMES INSPIRE CHILDREN TO STUDY THE BOOK OF ACTS. EACH LESSON INCLUDES BASIC AND ADVANCED REVIEW QUESTIONS. THIS BOOK INCLUDES THE *CHILDREN'S QUIZZING OFFICIAL RULES AND PROCEDURES*, AN ATTENDANCE SHEET, A SAMPLE SCORE SHEET FOR QUIZ COMPETITION, AND REPRODUCIBLE AWARD CERTIFICATES.**

