



## The Apostles Were Arrested (Acts 5)

Dear families,

In Acts 5, we find the apostles performing many signs and wonders through the power and grace they received from the Holy Spirit. The healing power of the Holy Spirit displayed through Peter, in particular, was so compelling that people laid the sick in the path of his shadow. United in purpose, the apostles also continued their mission to share the gospel with those around them, and as a result, they filled Jerusalem with their teaching! However, with the favor of their community came the opposition of the Jewish leaders who grew jealous of the apostles' ministry.

How did the early church navigate the ups and downs of their ministering experiences? What choices did they make when faced with rejection and suffering?

Instead of cowering to the demands of the religious leaders to stop sharing the gospel, the apostles rejoiced in being counted worthy of mistreatment in Jesus' name. They continued to be faithful to Jesus' command to share the gospel and, leaving directly from the presence of the Sanhedrin, they made a daily practice of preaching and teaching the good news of Jesus Christ in the temple and from house to house.

Even when the apostles experienced persecution and shameful mistreatment, the power of God at work was evidenced in their boldness to continue to preach the name of Jesus. Amidst many uncertainties and challenging circumstances, they remained steadfastly assured of the power of

the gospel to save anyone who believes. On this truth they placed their hope as they rejoiced in their suffering.

As you prepare to discuss this session with your kids, consider all that the apostles endured as they sought to share God's Word so that people might hear and believe in the name of Jesus. If you find yourself in a difficult circumstance, thank God for their example of endurance despite times of trouble. Help your kids understand that when we face rejection and suffering, Christ remains near to us, just as He did to His church so long ago. We, too, can count it all joy as we face trials and trust that Jesus is worth giving our lives to.

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** Jesus wants us to tell others about Him.
- **Younger Preschool:** Jesus calls His followers to tell others about Him, even when it is hard. God uses everything for His glory.
- **Older Preschool:** Jesus calls His followers to tell others about Him, even when it is hard. Jesus suffered, and His followers will too. We can have joy in hard times, knowing God uses everything for His glory.
- **Kids:** Jesus calls His followers to be faithful and tell others about Him, even in times of trouble. Just as Jesus experienced rejection and suffering, so will His followers. We can have joy in suffering, knowing God uses our suffering, like Christ's, for His glory.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Preschool:** Why did Jesus become a person? Jesus became a person to rescue sinners.
- **Kids:** Why did Jesus become human?

### **KEY PASSAGE**

*This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** Jesus took our punishment. Isaiah 53:5
- **Younger Preschool:** Jesus took our punishment. Isaiah 53:5
- **Older Preschool:** Punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. Isaiah 53:5
- **Kids:** He was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. Isaiah 53:5

**\*\* Next week: The Church Handled a Problem (Acts 6)**



## The Church Handled a Problem (Acts 6)

Dear families,

Acts 6 relays a time when a complaint within the church led to an opportunity for delegation and good deeds. As the apostles continued spreading the word of Jesus and His resurrection, more people began to believe the good news and the church grew in number. Amid this growth, the task of caring for the Hellenistic widows was being neglected.

How did the apostles handle this complaint between the different groups of believers in their church? How did they choose to pursue unity despite the different needs and giftings of those in their community?

In this chapter, we witness how the apostles chose not to ignore the critiques of the Hellenistic Jews. Instead, the members of the Twelve sought to bring more individuals into service opportunities for God's glory—a proposal that pleased the whole church. From this newfound service initiative came the deacon ministry!

The apostles' approach to this complaint was rooted in their desire for unity within the body of Christ and the proclamation of the gospel. They instructed the church to select seven men of good character, sound wisdom, and obedience to the Holy Spirit to care for the widows in need of help. With this delegation of duties, the disciples could continue their work of prayer and preaching the Word. As the deacons served and the apostles preached the Word, the gospel reached even further, and a large group of priests came to faith in Jesus.

Help kids see how they can serve within their church—even now as children! Explain how your work as a Bible study leader is fulfilling the Great Commission in this moment! We all have the important job of sharing God’s Word with others. God is pleased by our obedience and service and may choose to use it to take the gospel even further.

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week’s Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** We can serve others so people all over the world can hear and believe the good news about Jesus.
- **Younger Preschool:** Everyone in the church has an important job to do to serve God’s people and help spread the gospel. Jesus wants us to serve others so that people all over the world can hear and believe the news of His death and resurrection.
- **Older Preschool:** Jesus’ friends believed that everyone in the church had an important job to do to serve God’s people and help spread the gospel. Jesus wants us to serve others so that people all over the world can hear and believe the news of His death and resurrection.
- **Kids:** The apostles believed that everyone in the church had an important job to do to serve God’s people and help spread the gospel. Jesus wants us to serve others so that the message of His death and resurrection can be heard and believed all over the world.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Preschool:** Why did Jesus become a person? Jesus became a person to rescue sinners.
- **Kids:** Why did Jesus become human?

### **KEY PASSAGE**

*This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** Jesus took our punishment. Isaiah 53:5
- **Younger Preschool:** Jesus took our punishment. Isaiah 53:5
- **Older Preschool:** Punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. Isaiah 53:5
- **Kids:** He was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. Isaiah 53:5

**\*\* Next week:** Stephen Was Arrested (Acts 6–7)



### **Stephen Was Arrested (Acts 6–7)**

Dear families,

Acts 6 and 7 detail the story of Stephen, the first follower of Jesus martyred for his unwavering boldness in proclaiming Jesus as Lord. Despite the rejection Stephen faced, he remained firm in his gospel witness to those in the Sanhedrin. Recounting the stories of the Old Testament, Stephen declared God’s faithfulness to bring the Messiah into the world, even through the rebellious nation of Israel.

How was Stephen able to boldly declare the gospel and endure persecution? What parallels can we make between Jesus and Stephen that encourage us in our faith?

When asked for confirmation of the accusations against himself, Stephen's response was to walk the high priest through the Old Testament’s accounts of God's promises. Stephen made known the rebellion of the Jewish people—how they rejected God's Word and resisted the Holy Spirit. He spoke of what God declared back then and how God’s promises came to completion in the death and resurrection of His only Son, Jesus. Stephen believed the promises of God and had faith in the Righteous One who died for the sins of the world. Stephen was able to face such terrifying persecution and death because he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

As Stephen stood among the Jewish leaders, Scripture tells us that “his face was like the face of an angel.” While the leaders’ countenance only displayed anger and outrage, Stephen mirrored the ways of Jesus on his face, in his boldness, and through the forgiveness he prayed over the

Sanhedrin members' sins. As Jesus' followers, we also will face opposition from others. Yet, while we await the return of Christ, we can reflect His love and truth to those around us.

Consider what it looks like for followers of Jesus to be so filled with the Holy Spirit that they remain on mission for the gospel no matter the cost. How could God use our faithful witness of the gospel to save even those most hostile to the good news? Explain to your kids that when we find our comfort and hope in Jesus, we can withstand rejection we may face, as we exchange the momentary approval of man for the eternal favor and blessings of God.

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** We can follow Jesus even when it is hard because Jesus died for us.
- **Younger Preschool:** People hurt Stephen because he followed Jesus. When people are mean to us because we love Jesus, we can be brave because people hurt Jesus too. Jesus died and came back to life, and one day we will live with Him forever.
- **Older Preschool:** Jesus told His disciples that people would hurt them for loving Him. When people are mean to us because we love Jesus, we can be brave because people hurt Jesus too. Jesus died and came back to life, and one day we will live with Him forever.
- **Kids:** Jesus told His followers that they would be persecuted—hated, hurt, or even killed—for loving Him. Jesus also said that those who suffer for Him would be blessed. We can face suffering in this life because Jesus suffered first. He died and then rose again, and He is waiting for us in heaven.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Preschool:** Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to rescue sinners.
- **Kids:** Why did Jesus become human?

### **KEY PASSAGE**

*This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** Jesus took our punishment. Isaiah 53:5
- **Younger Preschool:** Jesus took our punishment. Isaiah 53:5
- **Older Preschool:** Punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. Isaiah 53:5
- **Kids:** He was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. Isaiah 53:5

**\*\* In 2 weeks (Feb 23rd):** The Church Spread Out (Acts 8)



## The Church Spread Out (Acts 8)

Dear families,

The story of the Ethiopian official's baptism began with an angel giving a command to Philip, an apostle of Jesus Christ. Philip's on-the-spot obedience led him to clarify the Scriptures and point the Ethiopian official to Christ. As a result of Philip's desire to live on mission, the Lord provided an opportunity for the gospel to spread further throughout the world.

In what ways did the context of Acts 8 seem inopportune for spreading God's Word? How did Philip's willingness to be led by the Holy Spirit play a part in this story of practical evangelism?

In the beginning of today's reading, we see the rippling effects of Stephen's stoning (Acts 7). Severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all but the apostles scattered while Saul ravaged the church. However, as these believers dispersed, they continued living on mission, preaching the Word of God boldly rather than cowering to their circumstances.

Making his way down the road God chose for him, Philip came across this traveling eunuch who needed someone to explain the meaning of Isaiah 53. Just as we read in Romans 10 that we cannot believe God's truth without hearing or having it preached, the Ethiopian official declared that he needed a guide. While Philip did not know everything about the mysteries of God, he trusted that the Holy Spirit guided him down that desert road with divine purpose.

As you teach on the Lord's faithfulness amidst His people's trials, emphasize the simplicity of this story: a follower of Jesus stepped confidently into a situation where the Lord had gone before him. How can you show your kids that He will do just the same for them today as they share the gospel with others—just as you are relaying His truths to them in this story?

Teach kids that all who hear the good news of Jesus Christ and believe in Him are welcomed into God's kingdom. Like Philip, may we trust and obey the leading of the Holy Spirit for the sake of making the gospel known to others.

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** God wants us to tell others about Jesus.
- **Younger Preschool:** The Holy Spirit led Philip to help the man understand the good news about Jesus: Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and He is alive.
- **Older Preschool:** The Holy Spirit led Philip to help the man understand the good news about Jesus: Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and He is alive.
- **Kids:** The Holy Spirit led Philip to help the Ethiopian official understand the good news about Jesus: Jesus died on the cross for our sins and was raised from the dead, just like the Old Testament prophets said.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Preschool:** Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to rescue sinners.
- **Kids:** Why did Jesus become human?

### **KEY PASSAGE**

*This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** Jesus took our punishment. Isaiah 53:5
- **Younger Preschool:** Jesus took our punishment. Isaiah 53:5
- **Older Preschool:** Punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. Isaiah 53:5
- **Kids:** He was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. Isaiah 53:5

**\*\* Next week:** Jesus Suffered for Us (Philippians 2)





## Jesus Suffered for Us (Acts 2)

Dear families,

In Philippians 2, the apostle Paul expounds upon Christ's humility and its implications for how we live and interact with others. Though we may struggle with the paradox of His infinite power and meekness, Christ's humility serves as the truest example for us to follow as we adopt His attitude so that the world may confess Jesus as Lord.

How does Christ's humility encourage us to follow in His steps? How can we joyfully demonstrate Jesus' sacrificial mindset?

The sufferings of Jesus were rooted in humility as He sought not what was best for Himself, but rather what was for the good of sinful people. His obedience to deny Himself and seek the Father's will demonstrates the same mindset we should have toward one another. The love Christ has shown us through His humble death exhorts us to show this same love to others, trusting that God will use our humble efforts to shine like stars in a dark world. As followers of Christ, we seek to emulate His self-sacrifice, trusting that God is glorified through it and that we, who are in Christ, will one day be exalted with Him. (1 Peter 5:6) Yet as Paul reminds us, we remember that it is God working in us to help us have the desire and the ability to conform more into the image of Christ. (Phil. 2:13)

While being willing to humbly put another's needs above ours doesn't come easy, we can look to Jesus who for the joy set before Him endured the cross—knowing that His sacrificial death

would mean everlasting life for us. Though it may seem like rejoicing has no place in humble self-sacrifice, Paul wanted us to see that this fruit of the Spirit is ours for the taking when our eyes are set on Jesus.

Help your kids see that we can find encouragement in Christ's story, just as the early church did. The reality of Jesus' suffering helps us live humbly so that we can exalt His name and will above our own. Just as Christ did not begrudgingly take to the cross, so, too, are we to walk in obedient sacrifice, knowing that our hope is not in vain. He rescued us through His own suffering that we might find His strength amidst our lack. When we trust in Him, we find new life and the forgiveness we need.

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** Jesus died on the cross to rescue people from their sins.
- **Younger Preschool:** Jesus came to earth. He died on the cross to rescue people from their sins. Jesus rose from the dead and is alive! Everyone who trusts in Jesus has forgiveness and life with God forever.
- **Older Preschool:** God's Son, Jesus, came to earth as a man. Jesus never sinned, but He died on the cross to rescue people from their sins. Jesus rose from the dead and is alive! Everyone who trusts in Jesus has forgiveness and life with God forever.
- **Kids:** Jesus, the Son of God, humbled Himself by coming to earth as a man. Jesus never sinned, but He died on the cross to rescue people from their sins. Jesus rose from the dead and is alive! Everyone who trusts in Jesus has forgiveness and life with God forever.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Preschool:** Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to rescue sinners.
- **Kids:** Why did Jesus become human?

### **KEY PASSAGE**

*This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** Jesus took our punishment. Isaiah 53:5
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- **Kids:** He was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. Isaiah 53:5

**\*\* Next week: Peter Performed Miracles (Acts 9)**



### **Peter Performed Miracles (Acts 9)**

Dear families,

Peter's miracles in Acts 9 showcase the power of the Holy Spirit at work within the early church. Though the people who witnessed and heard of these healings and resurrections were amazed and intrigued, Peter did not perform them to wow the crowd or to even illustrate his own strength. Rather, he met people's needs as a means of demonstrating God's power at work, that more may come to saving faith in Jesus and truly believe Him to be Messiah and Lord.

What was the significance of the restoration of Aeneas and the revival of Dorcas? What did these events reveal about Christ's saving power through the faith of Peter?

Both instances of Peter's miraculous acts were evidence of Christ's power to heal despite the impossible circumstances. While Christ's power through Peter brought physical healing to the man in Lydda, it also brought spiritual healing to the people in Lydda and Sharon as they turned to the Lord. Similarly, Dorcas' resurrection was used by God to draw many people to faith in Christ—the One who holds power over the grave.

These miracles performed by Peter point to the reality of Jesus' power and to the proof that He is still alive within His followers. The usual patterns of sickness and death were not the final endings for Aeneas and Dorcas; rather, they were the work of the Lord's restoration and

redemption—pointing to the reality that everlasting life is ours through the power of Jesus. And through these events, we are encouraged to remember the hope we have in Christ, who is making all things new.

As you talk with your kids this week, remember that you, too, get to share the good news of hope and healing to the next generation of young disciples. Just as Peter “called the saints and widows and presented [Dorcas] alive,” so, too, are you proclaiming the gift of everlasting life you have in Jesus.

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week’s Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** God gave Peter power to do miracles like Jesus.
- **Younger Preschool:** God's Spirit gave Peter power to do miracles. People saw what happened and believed in Jesus. These miracles remind us of Jesus. Jesus' miracles proved that He is the Son of God.
- **Older Preschool:** The Holy Spirit gave Peter power to do miracles. People saw what happened and believed in Jesus. These miracles remind us of Jesus. Jesus' miracles proved that He is the Son of God.
- **Kids:** When the Holy Spirit gave Peter power to perform miracles, people saw what happened and believed in Jesus. These miracles remind us of Jesus’ miracles, which proved He is the Son of God who came to bring salvation to the world.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

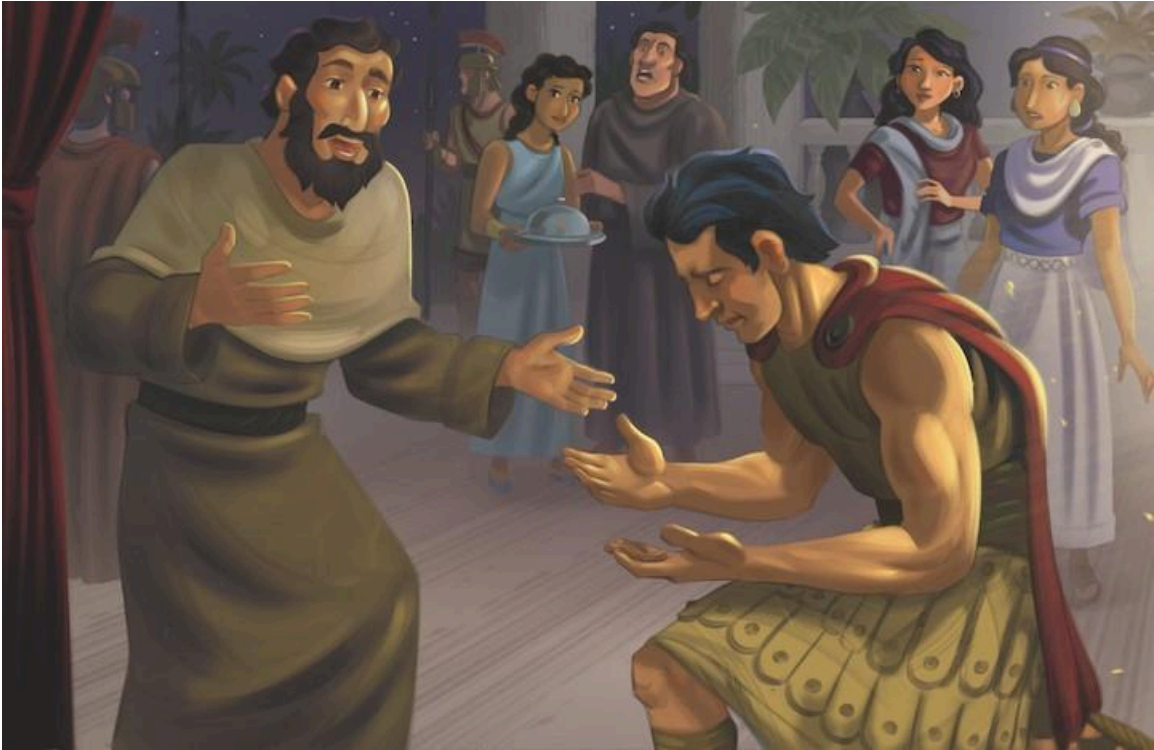
- **Preschool:** What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.
- **Kids:** What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

### **KEY PASSAGE**

*This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** The church has many people who help. 1 Corinthians 12:12
- **Younger Preschool:** Like a body has many parts, the church has many people who work together. 1 Corinthians 12:12
- **Older Preschool:** For just as the body is one and has many parts ... so also is Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12
- **Kids:** For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12

**\*\* Next week:** Peter Learned That Jesus Is for All (Acts 10)



## **Peter Learned That Jesus Is for All (Acts 10)**

Dear families,

The story of Peter’s revelation in Acts 10 reveals a core tenet in the gospel of Jesus Christ: God saves all who come to faith in His Son, regardless of their past, cultural differences, or their upbringing. The gospel is for all people, and it took Peter—just as it will require us today—great humility to see that God shows no favoritism. The ones whom God calls clean are clean; the ones He brings into His family are in His family forever.

What did these visions reveal to both Cornelius and Peter? How did these animals in the vision correlate to a deeper truth about God’s gift of salvation and invitation for all?

God prepared both Cornelius and Peter for the invitation that would change the makeup of Jesus’ church forever. Cornelius, a God-fearing Gentile centurion, was not welcome within Jewish social circles nor was he accepted in any way as clean according to Jewish beliefs. Even still, God used him to open Peter’s eyes to the reality that the gospel builds bridges between people groups rather than divide them even further.

Peter’s vision seemed to be much less direct than Cornelius; yet God was patiently repetitive in instilling the greater message that the ones whom He purifies through faith are brought into the family of God—with no stipulations due to custom or culture. This revelation was contrary to the Jewish traditions and defied favoritism, which later caused tension within the early church. (Acts

11:1-18) Still, as Peter preached the good news and declared that Jesus is Lord of all, the Holy Spirit fell on all who believed the gospel—confirming God's desire to save anyone who trusts in Jesus.

Explain to your kids that the good news of Jesus Christ is for all people, and we are all called to faithfully invite others to believe the good news of Jesus Christ. May this reality be as true in our churches and social circles today as it was in Cornelius' home all those centuries ago.

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** God showed Peter that the good news about Jesus is for everyone.
- **Younger Preschool:** God showed Peter that the good news about Jesus is for everyone. God wants believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus no matter what. Jesus is the Lord of all.
- **Older Preschool:** God showed Peter that the good news about Jesus is for everyone. God wants believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus no matter who they are or what they do. Jesus is the Lord of all.
- **Kids:** God showed Peter that just as there is no “clean” and “unclean” food in Christ, there are no “clean” and “unclean” people. God calls believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus, no matter who they are or where they come from. Jesus is the Lord of all.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Preschool:** What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.
- **Kids:** What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

### **KEY PASSAGE**

*This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** The church has many people who help. 1 Corinthians 12:12
- **Younger Preschool:** Like a body has many parts, the church has many people who work together. 1 Corinthians 12:12
- **Older Preschool:** For just as the body is one and has many parts ... so also is Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12
- **Kids:** For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12

**\*\* Next week:** Gentiles Became Part of the Church (Acts 11)



## **Gentiles Became Part of the Church (Acts 11)**

Dear families,

Acts 11 recounts the first time people were called “Christians” because they were recognized as followers of Jesus. In this passage, Peter was criticized by some of the believing Jews for going into the house of Cornelius and eating with Gentiles; however, these same critics later realized that God's power was at work even among the Gentiles.

How did the church in Antioch demonstrate God's plan for all people to be saved through the gospel? What is the proper response of Christ followers upon hearing that the lost have been found through coming to faith in Jesus?

The church in Antioch displayed the power of the gospel as Gentile believers and Jewish believers became one body under the headship of Christ. It was the transforming power of the Holy Spirit that held these brothers and sisters together, allowing for differing customs and backgrounds to be overcome. In fact, when Peter defended the Gentile salvation to the church in Jerusalem, he recited Jesus' words from Acts 1:5 on the baptism of the Spirit. He reminded the naysayers among them that if the Gentiles truly received the Spirit, why should the rest of them get in the way of God's salvation at work? The evidence of the Holy Spirit among them, leading them to live in holy fellowship and bold proclamation, proved that God's hand was working in the lives of those who were previously outside the faith.

Turning away from their disapproval, the members of the circumcision party first became stunned into silence and then glorified God for the repentance of these new Gentile followers. May we, too, be quick to move to celebration and praise when anyone trusts in Jesus for salvation, rather than be unsure or prone to criticism. Let our own hearts seek to pray that the Spirit produces good fruit in the lives of those who proclaim His truth, encouraging and lifting them up as they seek and serve His name alongside us.

Highlight God's goodness in bringing these new followers to Himself. Encourage your kids to share the gospel with those who may be different from themselves, trusting that the good news of Jesus brings us together for the good of His church and the glory of God.

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** We can celebrate when others believe in Jesus.
- **Younger Preschool:** The gospel spread even when people tried to stop it. The good news about Jesus is for everyone. God wants us to celebrate when others believe in Jesus.
- **Older Preschool:** The gospel continued to spread even when people tried to stop it. The good news about Jesus is for everyone. God wants us to celebrate when others believe in Jesus.
- **Kids:** Even though some people tried to stop it, the gospel spread throughout the earth—not only to Jews but also to Gentiles. The good news about Jesus is for everyone. God calls us to celebrate when others believe and help them know and love Jesus more.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Preschool:** What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.
- **Kids:** What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

### **KEY PASSAGE**

*This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** The church has many people who help. 1 Corinthians 12:12
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- **Kids:** For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12

**\*\* Next week:** Peter Was Rescued from Prison (Acts 12)





### **Peter Was Rescued from Prison (Acts 12)**

Dear families,

Acts 12 tells the story of God's divine and miraculous rescue of His apostle Peter. While King Herod sought to make an example of Peter, it was God alone who was able to showcase His power and might amidst the persecution of the church. This passage highlights the power of prayer amidst hardship and how God's purposes for His church will prevail despite the futile attempts of the enemy.

What can we learn about God's plans despite persecution and suffering? What can we learn about living on mission even during our most difficult circumstances?

God's plans for the good of His church, even during persecution, include the fervent prayers of the saints. The intercession of these faithful believers revealed that their only hope was in the Lord, and it was their prayers that were used by God to rescue Peter from prison. As God answered their prayers, He showcased His power to thwart the evil plans of those who wish to harm His church. Peter's incredible escape from prison reflects the same hope that we who have trusted in Jesus receive as the chains of sin fall off, and we are set free from condemnation. God's purpose for His church was by no means coming to an end in that prison cell; rather the word of God spread and multiplied. (Acts 12:24)

The consequence of declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ was costly for Peter and for James, who was executed by Herod. Though Herod's sentence for James was death, to die would mean this disciple's gain. Peter knew the consequences of sharing the gospel, yet he also believed that Jesus was worth giving his life to, trusting that the salvation of others was worth the risk as well. Even still, God granted Peter salvation from this prison cell so that he could continue living on mission for Him.

May we be aware that God has done more than send an angel to rescue us from earthly hardship. He sent His very Son to rescue us from the eternal consequence of our sins. Christ's sacrifice on our behalf offers the hope we need to endure difficulties and the boldness we need to share His divine hope with others.

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** God hears and answers prayers.
- **Younger Preschool:** God heard the prayers of the people. He had a plan for Peter, and He helped him escape from prison. Peter wanted to share the good news about Jesus no matter what.
- **Older Preschool:** God heard the prayers of the people. He had a plan for Peter, and He helped him escape from prison. Peter knew he might die because he believed in Jesus, but he wanted to share the good news about Jesus no matter what.
- **Kids:** God answered the people's prayers for Peter. God had a plan for Peter and the church, and He rescued Peter from his enemies. Peter knew he would face death because he believed in Jesus, but he kept going so he could share the good news of the gospel.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Preschool:** What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.
- **Kids:** What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

### **KEY PASSAGE**

*This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** The church has many people who help. 1 Corinthians 12:12
- **Younger Preschool:** Like a body has many parts, the church has many people who work together. 1 Corinthians 12:12
- **Older Preschool:** For just as the body is one and has many parts ... so also is Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12
- **Kids:** For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12

**\*\* Next week:** We Are Part of One Church (1 Corinthians 12))



## **We Are Part of One Church (1 Corinthians 12)**

Dear families,

The twelfth chapter of Paul's letter to the church in Corinth is known for its role in encouraging the church body toward unity. Steering us away from division and partiality, this passage reminds us that we each have a role to play in Christ's mission of sharing the gospel. Our differences can serve to strengthen us, if only we walk together in obedience to Jesus' mission through the power of the Holy Spirit.

How can we best determine how to serve within the body of Christ? What does unity look like in the modern-day church?

It can often be difficult to determine how we can serve within the church. We might even feel like the service we have to offer is unimportant. Yet, Paul wrote to encourage the Corinthian church to remember that all roles within the body of Christ are indispensable. As we seek to serve within the church we can consider our interests, passions, and giftings, which are given to us by God for His glory. Like Paul wrote in verse 17, if we all try to take on the same role within the church, we do not function in the ways God designed us. Therefore, we can trust that the gifts and interests God has given us play an important role in the purpose of His church and in the edification of the saints toward gospel-centered unity.

Though we may not all be called to be pastors, we might be given the roles of Sunday School teachers, small group leaders, camera operators, sound engineers, bakers, meal deliverers,

and so on for our churches. Paul calls us to pursue unity in the body, even amidst our diverse giftings in the church. He reminds us that the same Spirit is active within all believers, yet working uniquely within each of us as He calls us to serve for our common good. We can rejoice that God uses diverse people with various giftings to demonstrate how the Spirit unites us all to one another through Christ.

As you discuss the story with your kids, remember that every member of the body of Christ, including you and any of your kids who have trusted in Jesus, have an essential role to play in building up God's church! As you boldly proclaim these truths of the gospel, pray that your family will pursue unity and seek how they can serve within the body of Christ.

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** Believers are part of one church.
- **Younger Preschool:** Paul told the believers in the church to come together. Jesus saves sinners. Because of Jesus and what He has done, believers can come together as one church.
- **Older Preschool:** Paul told the believers in the church to come together because of the gospel. Jesus saves sinners. Because of Jesus and what He has done, believers can come together as one church.
- **Kids:** Paul told the believers in the Corinthian church to come together because of the gospel. He reminded them that Jesus saves sinners. Because of Jesus and what He has done, believers from every nation, tribe, people, and language can humbly come together as one body—the church.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Preschool:** Who is the church? The church is all Christians around the world.
- **Kids:** What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

### **KEY PASSAGE**

*This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** The church has many people who help. 1 Corinthians 12:12
- **Younger Preschool:** Like a body has many parts, the church has many people who work together. 1 Corinthians 12:12
- **Older Preschool:** For just as the body is one and has many parts ... so also is Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12
- **Kids:** For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12

**\*\* Next week:** Paul Became a Christian (Acts 9)



## Paul Became a Christian (Acts 9)

Dear families,

The Acts 9 story of how Saul of Tarsus came to be a follower of Jesus is a widely known passage that reveals an essential truth for us as believers: God has the power to transform the hearts and lives of anyone who places their faith in Him. The power of the Holy Spirit changes us from the inside out, and the same Lord who transformed Saul causes us to walk in new life when we turn to Christ.

What do we learn about the role of God's saving grace in this story? How can our testimonies reflect the same Spirit-empowered life change as Saul's?

God sought out Saul for the work of His kingdom, despite the hostility and malice this former Pharisee had toward the Christian church. Nothing in Saul's story—not even the wrongful executions and imprisonment of Christ's disciples—was too big for God to forgive by grace through faith in His Son, Jesus. Through his experience on the road to Damascus, Saul realized the weight of his own sin, the power of this mighty God, and the only chance he had in being made right before Him: surrendering his life to Jesus. Nothing Saul did could separate him from God's love for him in Jesus. The same is true for us!

Later, in a letter to his protégé Timothy, Saul—also known by his Greek name, Paul—wrote, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”—and I am the worst of them” (1 Tim. 1:15).

He knew he needed God's grace to be made right before the Father and that trusting in Jesus was his only means of being saved.

Teach the kids in your family that all of us, no matter how young or old we are, needed Jesus to come into the world to save us. The gospel transforms our hearts and propels us to share the life we've found in Jesus with all who will listen. How can you equip your family with the excitement and knowledge of Jesus Christ that will lead them to share of His love, just as Paul did?

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** *God changes us to be like Jesus.*
- **Younger Preschool:** *Paul was an enemy of Jesus, but then God changed him. When we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out.*
- **Older Preschool:** *Paul was an enemy of Jesus and His followers, but then God changed him. Jesus came to earth to save sinners like Paul. (1 Timothy 1:15). When we trust in Jesus, He changes us from the inside out.*
- **Kids:** *Jesus appeared to Saul and changed him inside and out. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. (1 Timothy 1:15) Jesus called Saul, who was once an enemy to Christians, to spend the rest of his life telling people the gospel and leading them to trust in Jesus.*

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Younger Preschool:** Who can be saved? Anyone who trusts in Jesus is saved.
- **Older Preschool:** Who can be saved? Anyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven of their sins.
- **Kids:** Who can be saved? Anyone who trusts in Jesus can be forgiven of their sins and be right with God.

### **KEY PASSAGE**

*This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** God sent Jesus to save people. John 3:17
- **Younger Preschool:** God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to save people. John 3:17
- **Older Preschool:** "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." John 3:17
- **Kids:** "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." John 3:17

**\*\* Next week:** Paul Became a Missionary (Acts 13–14)



### **Paul Became a Missionary (Acts 13–14)**

Dear families,

The beginnings of Paul's journey as a missionary in Acts 13–14 showcased the power and providence of God, even amid harsh persecution. From being sent out and set apart by the Holy Spirit to being wrongly celebrated as gods and experiencing mistreatment and stonings, Paul remained fixed on the hope he found in Jesus. No matter the circumstances he faced, he kept proclaiming Jesus' name and paving the way for the gospel to be known around the world.

What patterns do we see in Paul's life that propelled the gospel farther? What role do hardships play in our spiritual lives as we, too, seek to live on mission for Christ and His good news of salvation?

As we read of Paul's journeys, we find that he continually sought to abide in Christ through the spiritual disciplines of fasting, prayer, and sharing the gospel. We also see that he did not back down from difficult situations; not even false prophets and sorcerers could derail him from proclaiming God's truth! Despite the grueling hassles of life on the road and not having a place to call home, Paul chose obedience to God's calling above any earthly comfort as he trusted the glories of heaven far outweighed any momentary affliction.

While many insulted Paul, opposed him, and rejected the words of life he spoke, he shook the dust off his feet and pressed on, filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. This same Spirit that filled Paul and sustained him on his missionary journeys also lives in us who trust in Christ. Paul's

dependence on the Spirit and his obedience to the gospel mission provide a model for us to follow as we seek to live on mission.

Encourage your kids to recognize Paul's perseverance and how the love of Jesus compelled him to share the gospel no matter the difficulties he faced. Ask the Lord to assist you as you live out this conviction through teaching it to the next generation of Christ followers.

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** We tell others about Jesus so they can hear and believe.
- **Younger Preschool:** Paul shared the good news about Jesus with anyone who would listen. Many people believed in Jesus, and the church grew. God wants us to tell others about Jesus so they can be saved from their sins.
- **Older Preschool:** Paul shared the good news about Jesus with anyone who would listen. Many people believed in Jesus, and the church grew. The Holy Spirit wants us to tell others about Jesus so they can be saved from their sins.
- **Kids:** God had a plan for Paul to share the gospel with Gentiles, no matter what troubles he faced. Many believed in Jesus. The church grew and the gospel spread so that people all over the world could be saved from their sins by trusting in Jesus.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Younger Preschool:** Who can be saved? Anyone who trusts in Jesus is saved.
- **Older Preschool:** Who can be saved? Anyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven of their sins.
- **Kids:** Who can be saved? Anyone who trusts in Jesus can be forgiven of their sins and be right with God.

### **KEY PASSAGE**

*This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** God sent Jesus to save people. John 3:17
- **Younger Preschool:** God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to save people. John 3:17
- **Older Preschool:** "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." John 3:17
- **Kids:** "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." John 3:17

**\*\* Next week:** Jesus Can Forgive Anyone (2 Corinthians 5)





## Jesus Can Forgive Anyone (2 Corinthians 5)

Dear families,

One theme Paul wrote about in the book of 2 Corinthians is the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ. He shared of his own need for reconciliation with God and how he—like us—had been tasked with taking part in the Lord's ministry of reconciliation. Being a part of God's family means bringing others into His kingdom, too.

How can anyone be forgiven of their sins? What does it look like to live as one forgiven by God?

Like Paul, we are all in need of the Lord's forgiveness because we have all sinned against Him. Paul reminded the Corinthian church that forgiveness of sins has been made possible through Christ's perfect sacrifice. It is faith in Jesus alone that reconciles us to God, and it is faith in Jesus by which our sins are not counted against us. Through Jesus' willing sacrifice on our behalf, He was made sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. Thus, forgiveness is given to anyone who turns to Christ as Savior and Lord.

Paul continued to encourage the Corinthians to live as forgiven people who are compelled by the love of Christ to share the gospel with others. No longer should we live for ourselves, seeking after the ways of the world. Rather, we live as new creations, set on making much of Jesus and declaring how only He can reconcile us to God. The hearts of forgiven people saved by grace have a deep desire for others to know the love of Jesus and be saved.

As you prepare for this week, consider the forgiveness you've received from God. How has repentance played a role in your life as a believer? What is your testimony of being brought from death to life, and how can you share it with the kids in your family? Ask God to make the reality of His power to save and forgive real in the hearts and minds of your family members today.

## **FAMILY TALKING POINTS**

### **CHRIST CONNECTION**

*This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.*

- **Babies & Toddlers:** Jesus can forgive anyone.
- **Younger Preschool:** Jesus can forgive anyone. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and invites us into His family forever.
- **Older Preschool:** Jesus can forgive anyone. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and invites us into His family. He calls us to tell others about Him so they might believe in Jesus and follow Him.
- **Kids:** Jesus can forgive anyone. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and invites us into His family. He calls us to tell others about Him so they might believe in Jesus and be saved.

### **BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER**

*This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.*

- **Younger Preschool:** Who can be saved? Anyone who trusts in Jesus is saved.
- **Older Preschool:** Who can be saved? Anyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven of their sins.
- **Kids:** Who can be saved? Anyone who trusts in Jesus can be forgiven of their sins and be right with God.

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- **Kids:** "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." John 3:17