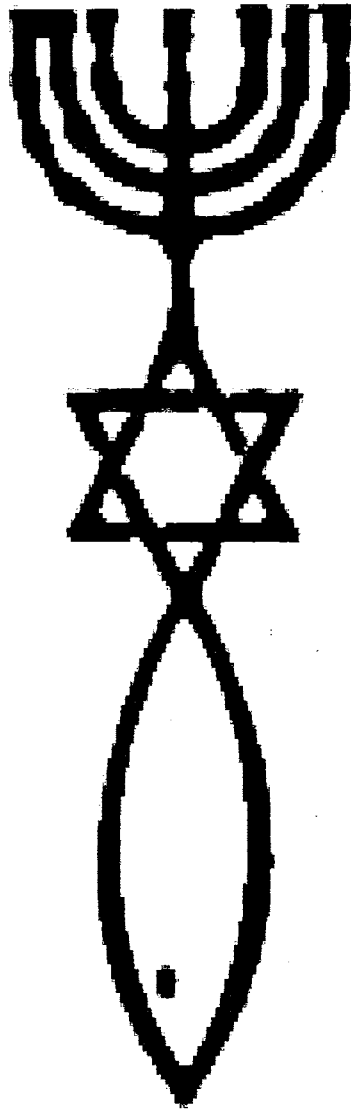


The Early Church

A Bible Times Experience

*"You have been grafted in"
Romans 11:17-18*



*"...but you shall receive power
when the Holy Spirit has
come upon you and you shall
be my witness both in
Jerusalem and in all Judea
and Samaria and even to the
remotest part of the earth..."
Acts 1:8*

MARKETPLACE
Ruggles Camp and Retreat Center

2015

MESSIANIC SEAL

This emblem or unique symbol, which has become known as the Messianic Seal, was apparently used by Jewish believers who called themselves Nazarenes in the first Messianic Church over 2000 years ago. The Messianic Seal was found etched/inscribed on artifacts excavated from Mt. Zion prior to the 1967 Six-Day War by a Greek Orthodox monk, who was living as a hermit in the Old City of Jerusalem. The artifacts were discovered in a grotto near the Tomb of David and the traditional site of the Upper Room. The ceremonial artifacts are believed to have been used by "James the Just," the half-brother of Jesus and the Apostles. Pottery upon which this seal is etched bears the Aramaic inscription "For the Oil of the Spirit", and was kept hidden until 1990.

The symbol consists of a Menorah, or seven branched lampstand which has been a symbol of Jesus identify from ancient times (Exodus 25:31-40). The Fish has been a symbol of Christian identity for nearly 200 years. The Star of David is made with the base of the Menorah and the tail of the Fish coming together, connecting the two in the center. A study of God's Word tells us that when Christ returns, He will sit on David's throne to reign over His kingdom. The Star of David, which is used on the white and blue flag of Israel, is formed from the two triangles. The triangle is a symbol of the Holy Trinity-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The design this year is rich with symbolism. Be a "missionary" and share the Good News with others!



MARKETPLACE

"A Bibletimes Experience"

This unique **EXPERIENCIAL APPROACH** to learning program recreates a Bibletimes village, **MARKETPLACE**, and is designed to lead children through dynamic experiences of scripture. The purpose is to help the Bible come alive to the children as they experience for themselves what it was like to live in Bible times.

A carefully thought-out curricula of six cycles taught in sequence for six summers has been designed to enhance and give a specific theme for each year. A child who attends all six years will have an exposure to the word of God from the beginning in the Old Testament to the end of the New Testament.

- Year A GENESIS, THE BEGINNING - focus on the Creation, creation and fall of mankind, and the story of Noah and the flood.
- Year B WE ARE A COVENANT PEOPLE - takes us from the call of Abraham to the Exodus. The forming of God's chosen people, His covenant with them, life in Palestine and Egypt, and God bringing them out of slavery as seen through the lives of Abraham, Jacob and Moses.
- Year C GROWING IN FAITHFULNESS - from Exodus to the Exile, features life in the Promised Land, the time of judges and kings, and the preaching of the prophets as seen through the lives of Joshua, Ruth, and David.
- Year D SING UNTO THE LORD A NEW SONG - the time of Exile, including the story of Esther, and the Promises of God as told by the prophets. The return from Exile, resettlement, rebuilding the Temple and walls in Jerusalem, and the renewal of the Covenant as God's people begin to hope in the promise of the Messiah. Daniel, Esther, Nehemiah and Ezra are the focus.
- Year E THE PROMISED MESSIAH - Jewish customs, culture and celebrations played an important role in the childhood, ministry and mission in the life of Jesus. Special focus is on the Passover and how this feast affected His life and the events in His life.
- Year F THE EARLY CHURCH - a study of the early church from Pentecost to the deaths of Peter and Paul in Rome shows the spread of Christianity from Judea through the Empire. The growth, life, persecutions and sufferings of these "followers" as seen in the lives of Peter, Paul, Lydia and Timothy are the focus.

The Lord's Prayer

Practice in prayer needs to be an important part of your job at Marketplace this year. The early church memorized this prayer probably to use as a tool so that they could remember the different topics Jesus suggested using in prayer. I suggest you go over this guideline with your town and then have the children say (pray) things that have meaning to them in each of these topics.

INDEX SENTENCE	TOPIC	MEANING
Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.	Worship	Acknowledges God's worth Know that God is our personal Father He is our creator, healer, provider, He is righteous, there always, sovereign He knows what will happen in the future.
Thy kingdom come.	Allegiance	We tell God He is the boss of our lives. We pledge to follow God's sovereign rule. We believe and obey God.
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.	Submission	The result of undivided allegiance to God. You must know and understand the Word of God to know you are doing God's will, not your will.
Give us this day our daily bread	Petition	Asking God to give us our every need. Shows your total dependence on God. Make sure your motives are in line with God's. Jesus tells us to keep on asking, to be persistent.
	Intercession	Plural pronouns. We are to pray for others.
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.	Confession	Being able to express to God things you have done wrong and asking God to forgive you. We have to be able to forgive people who have done things to us for God to forgive us.
And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil.	Watchfulness	God does not tempt us to do evil. Asking God to keep us strong in His ways. This acknowledges how weak our flesh is.
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.	Worship	Coming back to the feet of the Father in praise.

ACTS 1:1-9

The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, 2 until the day when He was taken up, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. 3 To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by the many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. 4 And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, *"Which," He said, "you heard from Me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."* 6 And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, *"It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."* 9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

ACTS 2:1-21

And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise, like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. 5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 and when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and marveled, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born, 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Lybia around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs - we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." 12 And they continued

(2)

in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' 13 But others were mocking and saying, 'They are full of sweet wine.' 14 But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: 'Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words. 15 For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; 16 but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 17 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT UPON ALL MANKIND...

21 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.'

ACTS 2:41-47

So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who believed were together, and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

READ AND THEN RE-READ MARKING WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?
WHY? HOW? LOOK FOR THE OBVIOUS!

BACKGROUND

During Jesus' ministry here on earth He told His followers that they would become world travelers taking the news (Good News) about Him to far away places (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8). He promised they would be "...clothed with power from on high...(Luke 24:49). He also assured them that wherever the adventure took them, He would go with them (Matthew 28:20).

After the Lord Jesus had ascended to heaven, the eleven disciples and a small group of those who believed in Christ were left on earth. Instead of being sad, they met together to praise God and pray in the large upper room where Jesus had eaten His last supper with them. Acts 1 tells us there were 120 of them gathered there ten days after Jesus' ascension which was a day the Jews called PENTECOST. Pentecost was the annual Jewish barley festival held late in May or early June, fifty days after the celebration of Passover. Pentecost was Israel's day of thanksgiving. Thousands (possibly 100,000-150,000) of pilgrims moved through the streets of Jerusalem to the temple area for worship unaware that in a nearby loft something was about to happen that would change the course of history!

In our second cycle we studied, "We Are A Covenant People." We learned that Covenants play a big part in the history of God's relationship with people. God's covenants are formal statements describing His commitments. The Mosaic Covenant, called that because God communicated it through Moses, was also known as the "Old" Covenant. At Pentecost, the anniversary of the Old Covenant, the Holy Spirit introduced a "New" Covenant (new terms for relating to God). The Old Testament arrangement based on religious rule keeping and animal sacrifices was canceled (Hebrews 8:13). Since Jesus came and the Spirit was poured out, knowing God was now a new ballgame! Today we relate to God through His Spirit who lives in everyone who trusts Jesus. God's Spirit living in us writes God's laws on our mind and hearts (Hebrews 8:10;10:16-17) and guarantees God's commitments will be carried out. Pentecost was the start of a new way to know and live with God.

"Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit..." Acts 2:2-4a

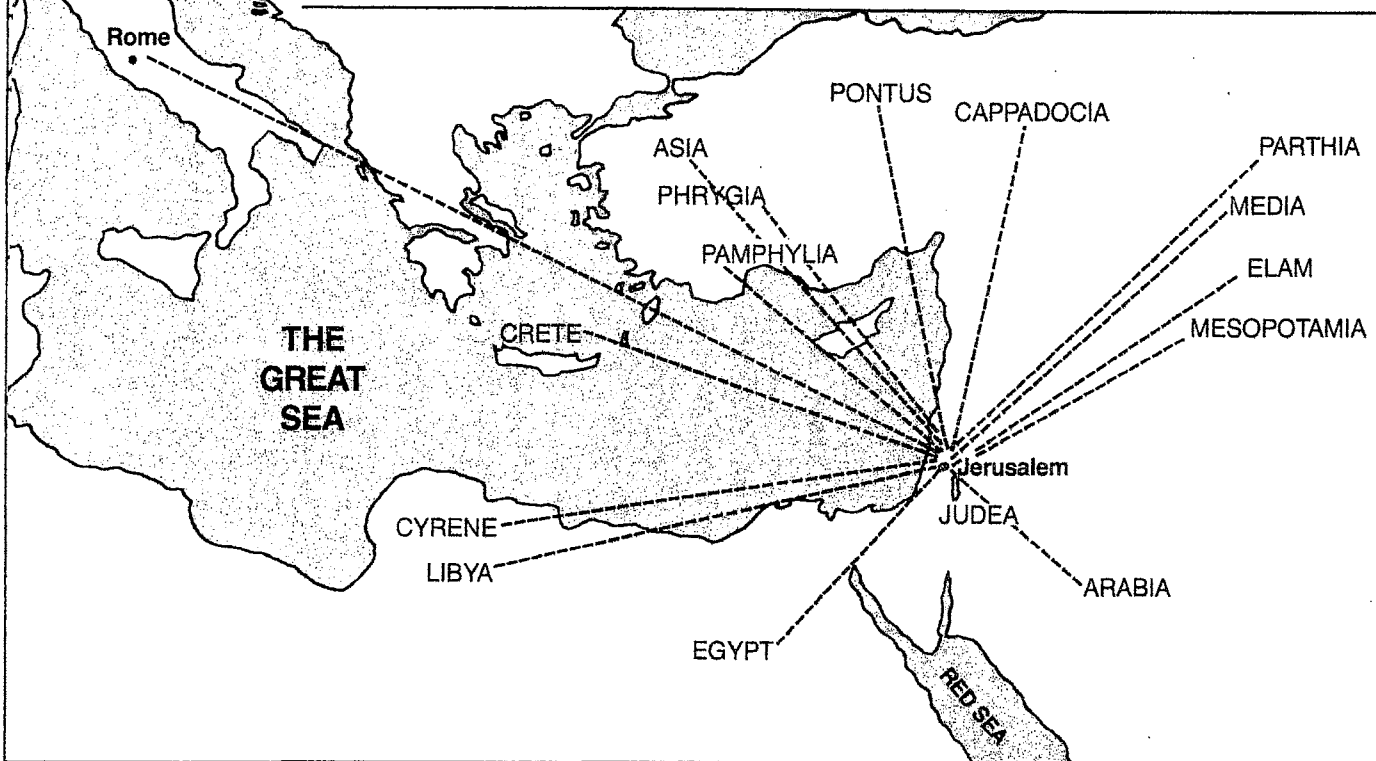


Billy Graham states, "The day of Pentecost in the New Testament on which the Holy Spirit came was a day of "first-fruits" - the beginning of God's harvest in the world, to be completed when Christ comes again. Pentecost in the New Testament marked the commencement of the present age of the Holy Spirit."

When the Spirit of God came, they began to speak of Christ and His gospel with a power that none of them had known before. People who had heard the noise and been drawn to the place were Jews from many lands, yet every man heard these believers of Jesus speaking a language they understood.

The Nations of Pentecost

Pentecost, a Jewish feast also known as the Feast of Weeks, marked the completion of the barley harvest. On this annual holiday about 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus, Jewish people from throughout the Roman Empire were gathered in the city of Jerusalem to observe this great religious holiday. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles, they began to speak with "other tongues," and these people from other nations understood them perfectly (Acts 2:5-13). This map shows the different regions of the Roman Empire represented in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost.



Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts © 1993 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Lessons from Jewish Pentecost about the Holy Spirit

What Pentecost Celebrates	How Celebrated	What It Pictures about the Spirit
Harvest God's goodness in providing food	The first sheaf of barley is presented to the Lord in thanksgiving and anticipation of a full harvest ahead.	The 120 are the first "sheaves" of a spiritual harvest, which will gather people all over the world to Christ through their witness.
Community Equality of God's people	Most inclusive festival. Everyone invited (Deuteronomy 16:11). All social classes participate as equals.	The Spirit is for the <i>whole</i> church; <i>all</i> who believe in Jesus are equipped by the Spirit to do God's work <i>together</i> (John 7:37-39).
Acceptance God's acceptance of imperfect people	Festival bread is common bread of Israelite homes (see GWHN, pages 8-9), made with yeast—symbol of sin (Leviticus 23:17).	God accepts and empowers ordinary people still struggling with spiritual imperfections and uses them as workers in his harvest.
Commitment God's commitments to his people	Remembering God's gift of the Mosaic Covenant, the Law, at Mt. Sinai, fifty days after first Passover (Exodus 20:1-17).	Spirit's coming inaugurated the New Covenant in Christ; the Spirit writes God's laws on believers' hearts (Hebrews 8:10).

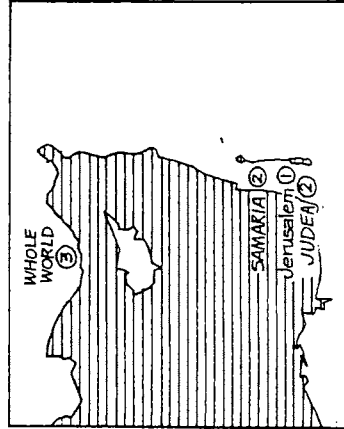
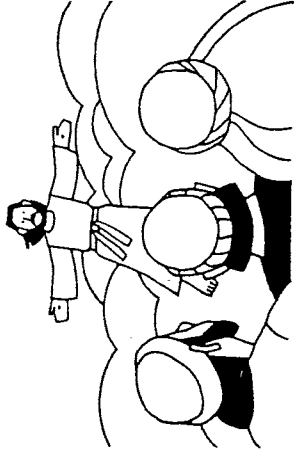
When Events Happened



Main Events

The Book of Acts

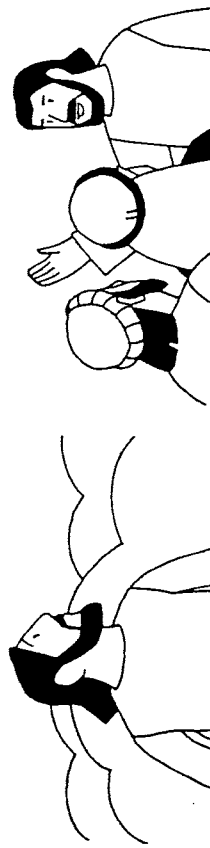
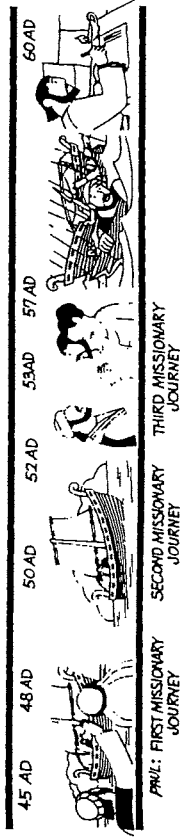
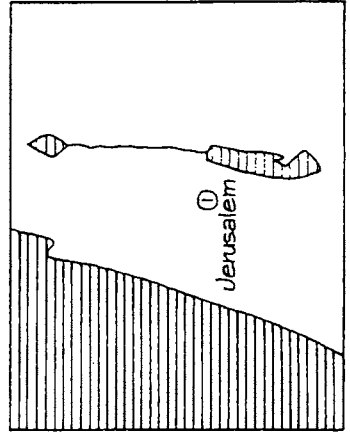
Chapters 1—28 Luke starts the book of Acts where his first book, Luke, ends. The Gospel of Luke closes with Jesus going back to heaven. This is the opening scene in Acts (see Luke 24:49-51; Acts 1:10,11).



The action of the book follows the plan Jesus gave in Acts 1:8. The book divides into three sections. (1) The Church began in Jerusalem. (2) Then the action moved to Judea and Samaria. (3) Then it spread to the whole world.

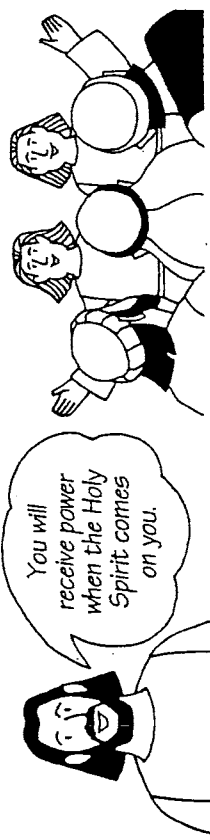
The Gospel Is Preached in Jerusalem

Chapters 1—7 After Jesus went back to heaven, the Holy Spirit came just as Jesus promised. He gave Jesus' followers power to tell others the good news of the gospel. Jesus' followers preached the gospel first in Jerusalem.



Chapter 1: Forty days had passed since Jesus rose from the dead. It was time for Jesus to return to His Father.

Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Spirit.



Jesus told His disciples they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel—the good news about Jesus.

Then Jesus went back to heaven. Two angels told Jesus' disciples that someday Jesus will return to earth—just as they saw Him go into heaven.



Jesus' friends and followers gathered together in Jerusalem and prayed. They chose a person to take Judas' place as the twelfth disciple.

Chapter 2: In Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. (See "Pentecost" on the chart on page 43.)



The Holy Spirit caused the believers to speak in many different languages.



Both Jews and converts to Judaism from many different countries heard God's message in their own languages. They were amazed.



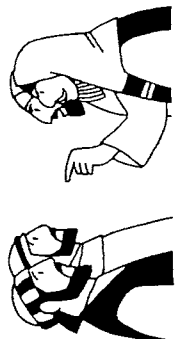
Peter preached to thousands of people. His message was 'Jesus is the Messiah. Repent—turn from your sin. Be baptized in the name of Jesus.'



Three thousand people believed on Jesus as the promised Messiah (Savior). The believers met together for food, fellowship, prayer and hearing God's Word.



Chapters 3—5: Peter healed a lame man in the name of Jesus Christ. Then he preached to many people. The number of believers grew to about 5,000.



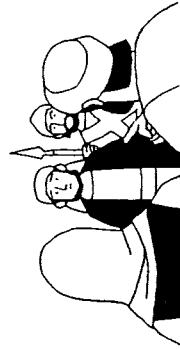
Men of the religious council, the Sanhedrin, made trouble for Peter and John. They ordered Peter and John not to preach the gospel. But Peter and John continued preaching.



The council had Peter and John put into prison. An angel of God freed them. They continued to preach the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit.



Chapters 6:7: Seven deacons were chosen to care for the needy. Stephen, one of the deacons, did many miracles and preached about Jesus.



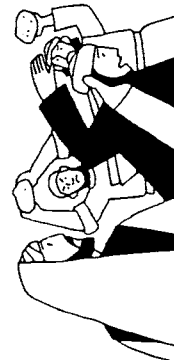
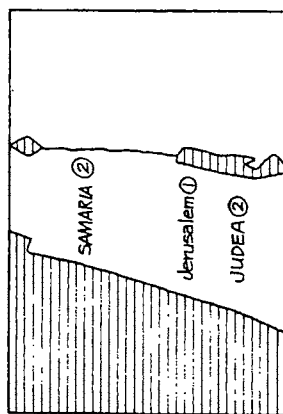
Stephen's enemies took him before the religious council. False witnesses told lies about him.



Stephen preached about Jesus to the religious council. The men became angry and Stephen was killed.

■ The Gospel Is Preached in Judea and Samaria

Chapters 8—12 In Acts 1:8 Jesus said to preach not only in Jerusalem, but also in Judea and Samaria and the remotest parts of the earth. The believers continued preaching in Jerusalem until persecution drove them out into other places. Chapters 8—12 tell about their witness in Judea and Samaria.



Chapter 8: Saul, a religious leader, watched as Stephen was killed. Saul was determined to stop Jesus' followers.



Saul began putting believers in prison. Many believers escaped from Jerusalem and went to other parts of the country.



In Samaria, a magician tried to buy the disciples' power. Peter told the man he needed to repent of his wickedness and ask God's forgiveness.



Philip used the writings of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah to help a man from Ethiopia believe in Jesus.



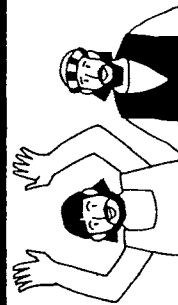
Chapter 9: As Saul was going to Damascus, Jesus made him blind. Jesus spoke to Saul and told him what to do.



Saul preached in the Jewish synagogues (places of worship) in Damascus. He said, "Jesus is God's Son." The people were amazed to hear Saul say this.



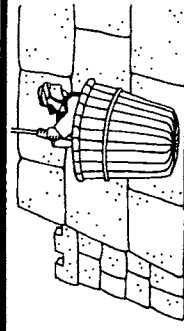
When Saul tried to join the believers in Jerusalem, they were afraid of him. But Barnabas told them what had happened to Saul when he went to Damascus.



God used Peter to tell the people at Lydda about Jesus. When Peter healed a paralyzed man in Jesus' name, many people believed in Jesus.



The man sent to heal Saul taught him about Jesus. Saul became a follower of Jesus.



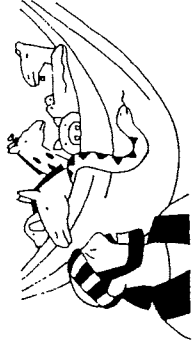
The religious leaders plotted to kill Saul. The believers helped him escape through an opening in the Damascus wall. They let Saul down in a basket.



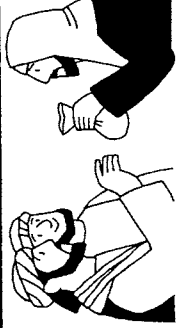
Saul preached boldly about Jesus in Jerusalem. His enemies plotted to kill him. The believers in Jerusalem helped Saul escape to Tarsus.



A lady in Joppa made clothing for people who needed it. When she died, God used Peter to bring her back to life. Many people in Joppa believed in Jesus.



Chapter 10: God sent Peter a vision that the news about Jesus is for everyone—both Jews and Gentiles (people who are not Jews).



Chapter 11: Barnabas was sent to guide the new church in Antioch. The church grew. The people in Antioch sent money to help needy Christians in Judea.

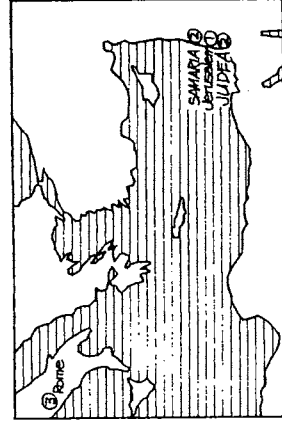


An angel freed Peter from prison.



Chapter 12: King Herod had James killed and Peter put into prison. The believers prayed for Peter.

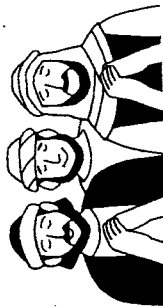
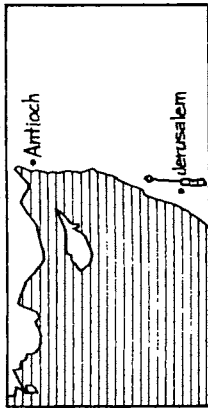
Peter went to the believers' prayer meeting. The people were excited to see how God answered their prayers.



■ The Gospel Spreads Out to the World

Chapters 13—28 In just a short time, the preaching of the gospel spread from Jerusalem, the center of the Jewish nation, to Rome, the center of a world empire.

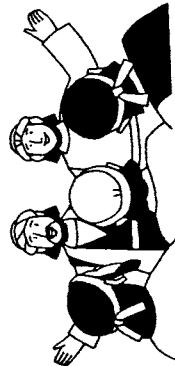
Up through Acts 12 we have seen the beginning of the church, with Peter as its leader, in Jerusalem. In Acts 13-28 we will see Paul and the church at Antioch. Paul's three missionary journeys start from Antioch—not Jerusalem.



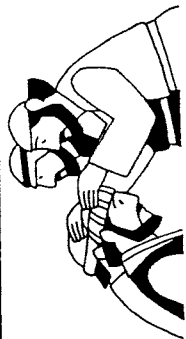
Chapters 13, 14: Paul's First Missionary Journey—During a prayer meeting the Holy Spirit gave the church (believers) at Antioch a special message.



Paul and Barnabas visited many cities and helped people learn to love Jesus.



Paul and Barnabas went on to other cities to preach the gospel. Then they returned to Antioch and told the believers there all that God had done.



He told them to send Paul (Saul's new name) and Barnabas to preach the gospel to people in many other countries. The church at Antioch did this.



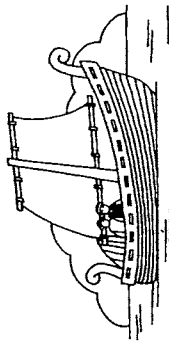
At Lystra, Paul healed a lame man. The people thought Paul and Barnabas were gods. Believing that he taught lies against God, enemies of Paul from other cities tried to kill him.



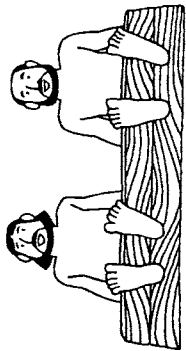
They told how Gentiles (non-Jews) from many countries had become followers of Jesus. Some men came and said that these new believers must obey all the Mosaic Laws.



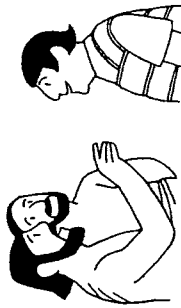
Chapter 15: The apostles decided that a person does not have to obey all the Mosaic laws in order to be right with God.



Chapters 15:36—18:22: Paul's Second Missionary Journey—Paul wanted to visit the believers from his first journey. This time Silas went with him.



In Macedonia, Paul and Silas were beaten and put in prison. They prayed and sang praises to God.



An earthquake opened the prison doors. When Paul and Silas didn't run away, the jailer believed in Jesus.



In Thessalonica, many people believed in Jesus after hearing Paul. But some jealous people stirred up an angry mob and started a riot.



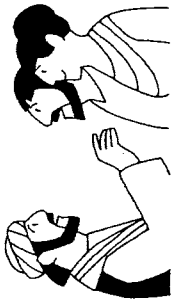
In Berea, Paul and Silas taught eager listeners who studied God's Word daily.



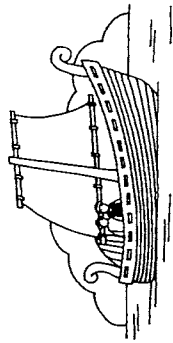
In Athens, Paul talked with interested listeners. Some believed and some did not.



When the Jews wouldn't believe in Jesus, Paul wanted to stop preaching to them and teach only Gentiles. God told Paul the good news is for everybody!



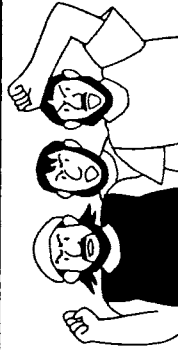
When Paul felt discouraged, God gave him new friends and a new vision of the work He had for Paul to do. God promised to take care of Paul.



Chapters 18:23—20:38: Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Paul again decided to visit the believers in the cities he had preached in before.



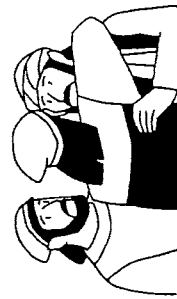
Paul encouraged the believers in many cities (see the maps on page 243.)



When Paul preached in Ephesus, he got in trouble with the makers of silver idols. When the trouble was over, Paul went on to other cities.



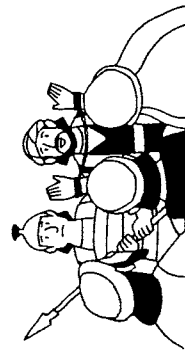
On the way back, Paul asked the leaders at Ephesus to come and meet with him.



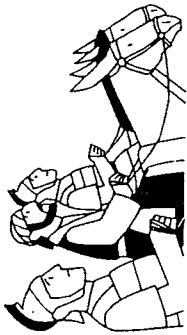
He said good-bye to them and gave them advice. He did not know whether or not he would see them again.



Chapter 21: Paul returned to Jerusalem. Some of the people thought Paul was teaching Jews to turn away from Moses. They wanted to kill him.



Chapter 22: Paul tried to explain his faith in Jesus Christ. What he said angered the crowd. Soldiers took him to jail.



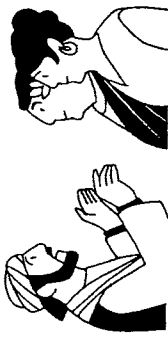
Chapter 23: God told Paul that he would preach in Rome. Soldiers took Paul to Caesarea to keep him from being murdered by an angry mob.



Chapter 24: Paul defended himself before Felix, the governor. But for two years Felix would not make a decision—and Paul was kept a prisoner.



Chapter 25: Felix was replaced by Festus, a new governor. When Festus put Paul on trial, Paul demanded to see Caesar, the Roman emperor.



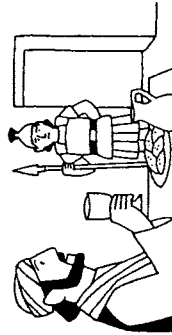
Chapter 26: Paul told his story to Festus' visitor, King Agrippa. His listeners found Paul innocent of any crime. But they still had to send him to Rome.



Chapter 27: On the way to Rome, Paul's ship was wrecked in a storm. Everyone was safely washed ashore on an island.



Chapter 28: On the island, Paul was bitten by a snake. But God kept him from being harmed by the snake. God used Paul to heal many who were sick.



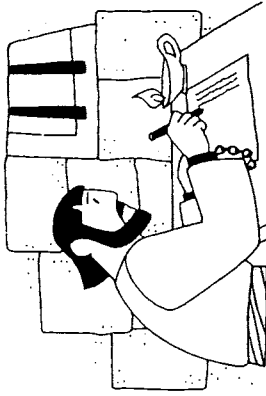
Paul was then taken to Rome. In Rome Paul was kept a prisoner in his own rented house for two years.



Even as a prisoner, Paul used every opportunity to preach the gospel. Many people became Christians.

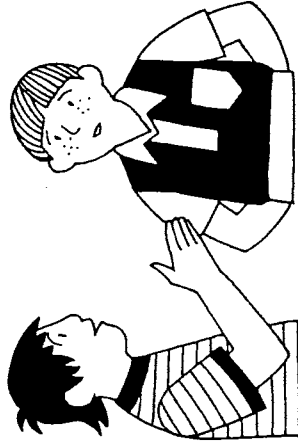
■ Letters Paul Wrote from Rome

While Paul was a prisoner, he wrote many of his letters: Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, Philipians. Paul was in a dungeon in Rome, waiting to be killed, when he wrote his second letter to Timothy.



■ After the Book of Acts

The acts of the Holy Spirit are still going on today. Believers in Jesus are still called to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). We are called to tell others the good news about Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. Who will YOU tell about Jesus?



Christ

in the Book of Acts

The apostles taught about Jesus at every opportunity.

Whenever they taught, they told of Jesus' death and resurrection. Often they reminded their listeners of the words of the prophets who told of Jesus' coming.

In chapter 1, Jesus spoke with His disciples and told them to be witnesses of all He had said and done. Then Jesus returned to heaven. The Holy Spirit gave Jesus' followers the power to tell people about Jesus.

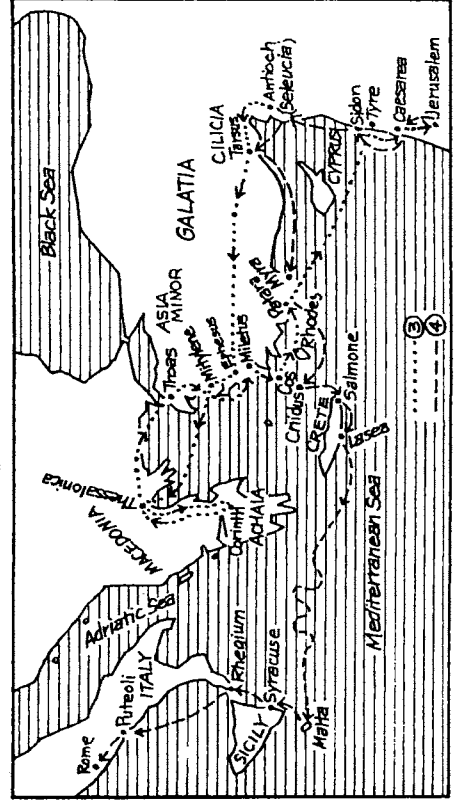
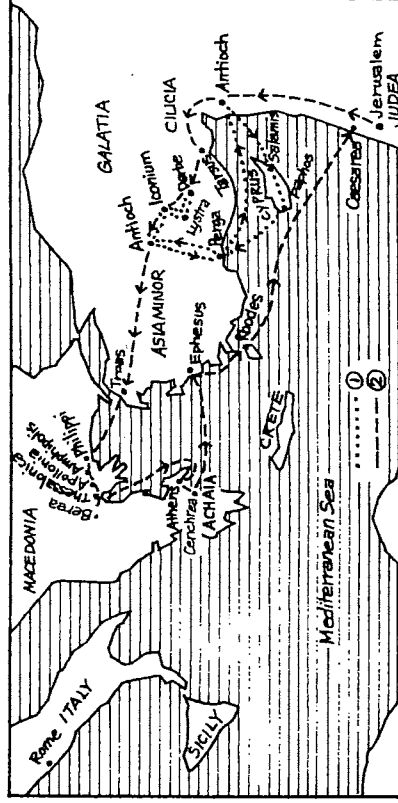
In chapter 9, Jesus spoke to Saul from heaven. Shortly after this, Paul (Saul) became a believer. At that time Ananias said to Paul, "The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One (Jesus) and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard" (Acts 22:14, 15). Paul traveled all over the world telling people about Jesus Christ.

Where It All Happened

Luke wrote his second book, Acts, from Rome where he was with Paul. Find Rome on the map.

Luke recorded Paul's three missionary journeys and his trip to Rome. Read the four stories as they are listed here. Find each city where Paul stopped on his four trips. Also read what Paul did and said at these places.

- ① Paul's first missionary journey: Acts 13:1—14:28
- ② Paul's second missionary journey: Acts 15:36—18:22
- ③ Paul's third missionary journey: Acts 18:23—21:26
- ④ Paul's trip to Rome: Acts 21:27—28:31



MEMORY VERSES

This year participants must go to the Memorization Booth at the Marketplace to receive 3 denarii (pronounced din-AIR-ee-eye), Roman coins, that can be spent to purchase items. In order to receive their coins they must be able to say the Memory Verse for the day. An extra coin will be given each day when they say the Key Verse found in Acts 1:8. We have discovered these coins help participants "budget" their time, spending more time on each project instead of rushing through all of them and makes them feel important as they purchase the crafts and snacks. Shopkeepers, it is important that the coin is returned when the craft is completed. This encourages them to finish the task!

KEY VERSE Theme: EARLY CHURCH

*"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*

Day 1 POWER TO BE A DISCIPLE

*Peter said, "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*

Day 2 GROWING AS A CHRISTIAN

*"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves.
Do what it says." James 1:22*

Day 3 RUN THE RACE WITH ENDURANCE

*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race.
I have kept the faith." II Timothy 4:7*

Note: Michelle and her preschool workers have prepared a "simplified" verse to help the younger children be able to participate.

Marketplace

The qualifications for Elders of the early church are found in the Bible in 1 Timothy and Titus. These qualifications include:

- ◆ Self-Controlled
- ◆ Friendly To Strangers
- ◆ Kind and Gentle
- ◆ Able To Teach
- ◆ Not A Troublemaker
- ◆ Not a New Follower
- ◆ Not Bossy
- ◆ Loves What Is Good
- ◆ Honest
- ◆ Not a Lover of Money
- ◆ Has a Good Reputation
- ◆ Not Quick-Tempered
- ◆ Upright and Holy
- ◆ Enjoys Doing Good Things

The duties of a Deacon probably including assisting the Elder, caring for the poor, and overseeing the community's meals. The qualifications for a deacon include:

- ◆ Good reputation
- ◆ Sincere
- ◆ Honest
- ◆ Not Bossy
- ◆ Tested
- ◆ Enjoys Doing Good Things

Day 1 POWER TO BE A DISCIPLE
Acts 1-2; 9:1-31; 12:1-19

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."*

- Opening Session** **WE BEGIN.....**
Pentecost -the coming of the Holy Spirit
Peter's transformation into a leader in the Early Church
Persecution and dispersion of the "church" in Jerusalem.
- Church Meeting** Church family at Church location
Elder(Leader) will share background information about the church their group is named after.
- Storyteller** Located in a tent on the grounds, the storyteller will tell the story from Acts 12:1-19 about Peter's imprisonment and will share how Christians today are suffering and being imprisoned.
- Theater** *The Visual Bible*, Volume 1, on the book of ACTS. Today is the account of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the danger, struggle and triumph that marked the birth of the Early Church as told by the physician, Luke, in Acts 1-4:32. Located in the Boys Dorm.
- Synagogue/Church-** Located in the Chapel, the "rabbi"(teacher) will focus on how we can have power to be a disciple. He will explain what it means to *"...repent and be baptized..."* and why the Jews celebrated Pentecost.
Repent = to turn your heart and lifestyle toward Christ.
Be baptized = to change identity. To become identified with Christ. An outward symbol of your inward identity with Christ.
- Holy Spirit = One part of the Trinity. A gift promised from God to all believers which gives them the ability to boldly proclaim the gospel. It is a spirit of truth which lives in believers to guide, lead and intercede for them.

Day 1

Church Meeting with Group

(Begin or end your group with prayer. TELL the information! Don't read it! Talk about it ! Make it interesting! This lays the foundation for the events of the day.)

THE YOUNG CHURCH

At Pentecost when the believers were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, the church started growing by leaps and bounds. In the beginning, most of the churches began at the Jewish synagogues, but as time went by the Jews, especially their leaders, had a real problem with the idea of Jesus being God's Son and the fact that Christ had been resurrected from the dead. The Jews began to persecute the "believers" because they felt that what the apostles were proclaiming was totally against God and was a threat to their beliefs. Thus members of "THE WAY" started meeting in each others homes.

During this time the apostles, being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, were able to boldly proclaim the GOOD NEWS that Jesus Christ was indeed the Savior (Messiah) God had sent. They were able to expel demons from people and heal the sick. The Lord added to their numbers daily those who were being saved.

Members of the young church were an extremely tight knit group. They spent a lot of time with each other. In Acts 2:42-47 the Bible tells us how the church in Jerusalem devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship with each other, the breaking of bread, and to prayer. They ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. They were a faithful, loving, zealous group of believers.

Acts 4:32-35 goes on to explain how they were of one heart and one mind. None of them claimed any of his possessions as their own; they shared all they had with one another so that all were equal. Those who owned land or houses would sell them as the need arose. They would give this money to the apostles to distribute to those in need.

(James 5 tells us the importance of confessing our sins to one another and praying for each other.)

When Christians first started organizing they were called, "People of the Way." In Antioch, the church that Paul made his home base, was the first time that it was recorded that members were called, CHRISTIAN, meaning belonging to/ or follower of Christ.

As Paul set up churches, he appointed elders in each church for the spiritual growth of the members. (Hence, we call our Group Leaders - Elders. Note the characteristics listed in this booklet for an Elder!) **OUR PRAYERS ARE WITH YOU AS YOU UNDERTAKE THIS AWESOME TASK! Remember! You are "empowered" by His Holy Spirit!**

MEALTIME GUIDELINES

An " AGAPE FEAST"

We read in Acts 2:37-47 that following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Peter and the Apostles proclaimed with boldness the Gospel:

Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer...And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Our lunch meal this year will be called an Agape Feast. In Bible times sitting down at a table to share a meal with someone meant that you accepted that person. As shown above, the table of fellowship enjoyed daily by the first believers was a religious experience. These daily meals gradually gave way to a weekly meal referred to later as an Agape Feast. The Greek word Agape is rendered both as brotherly, unconditional love and charity. Over time these feasts were replaced by weekly worship services.

Typically, the feast was held in the home of a wealthier member, who had the space to accommodate several families. The Elder would have presided over the service, assisted by the Deacons. Persons would recline and prop themselves up on their elbows around a low table. (This is where you will need to have a blanket, sheet or tarp for your group to sit on.)

Food was eaten with the fingers and the bread was used to dip the food. (Hands were washed frequently during the meal.)

In order to participate in this common meal, one had to first be a member of the body of believers. In order to be a member, one had to make a profession of belief in Jesus as Lord and in the fact of His resurrection.

Romans 10:9 *"...if you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*

Members also had to be baptized. I Corinthians 11:23-25 states, *"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."*

It is interesting to note here that later persecutions of the Christians revolved around rumors surrounding the Agape Feast. At these "secret meals" they were accused of practicing cannibalism by "...eating their God" (at the Lord's Supper); and incest because they were greeting each other with a holy kiss. The third charge was "atheism" for refusing to worship the emperor.

Most of what we know about these things come from the writings of Paul. His letters include instructions on how the meals were to be conducted, words of advice against eating and drinking too much, and guidelines as to the general tone of the proceedings.

The ELDER was a leader in the early church. An Elder was an older person whose role in the group was like a parent's role in the family. Because of their maturity in the faith their experience and wisdom helped with decisions that needed to be made. Qualifications for an Elder are stated by Paul in Titus 1:5-14 and by Peter in I Peter 5:1-4. (You will find these listed on the purple sheet in your booklet.)

Other leaders in the early church were called Deacons. One of the responsibilities of these Deacons was to oversee the community's meal. Each day we would like for you, the Elder of your group, to select 2-3 from your group who will be responsible for the preparation of your meal. Two will go to the Dining Hall to pick up the food and drink and one or two (depending on the size of your group) will prepare the area for the coming food, the serving of the food, and the cleaning up of the area. When choosing those to serve as Deacons remind your group that the qualifications for this job are found in the Bible. I Timothy 3:8-13 >Good Reputation >Sincere >Honest >Not Bossy >Enjoys Doing Good Things

It is believed that the Lord's Prayer was recited at the Agape Feast. When the children are seated, lead the children in a prayer of thanks, followed by the Lord's Prayer. You may do this any way you feel comfortable - popcorn prayers, open-ended prayers ("Lord, I thank you for..) or any way that causes them to feel included.

AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH MEAL, under the direction of the Elder, a time of "In Memory of Our Lord" would start each meal. All would partake of a piece of bread and sip of the juice in memory of the Lord, as Christ commanded. Have the children break off a small piece of their bread and eat it, and drink a sip of their juice as you, the Elder read I Corinthians 23-25. At the close, of the Lord's Supper, everyone is asked to say, "Maranatha!" This is an Aramaic phrase expressive of Christ's return and means, "Our Lord, come!"

Elder: ...*The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way, after supper He took the cup saying, "This is the new covenant in My blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me.* I Corinthians 11:23-25

ALL: Maranatha!

(Now is the time the meal would be eaten! The Deacons are responsible for making sure that everyone is served. Remind everyone that at this meal everyone showed loving, caring concern for each other - "an Agape (love) Feast!" It was a relaxed, un-hurried meal!)

After the meal everyone remained where they were for the educational part. This would include stories of the things that Jesus taught, listening to letters from their important spiritual leaders, which included practical advice for their own conduct such as the letters from Peter and Paul. They also used this time to discuss problems.

The Elder, acting as a moderator, can now give the group time to share. Try to be a good steward of the time you have and do not let them get distracted from the purpose of this time together. Use this opportunity to discuss the events of the morning. If there is a question you cannot answer, be honest, and tell them you are not sure of the answer, but will find out. Marketplace is blessed with many "professional" people who can help you find the answers. Just ask!

As Matthew 26:30 tells us, after singing a hymn, Jesus and His disciples went out to the Mount of Olives. The Agape Feast is over and singing a song together is a great way to end your time of sharing. "Jesus Loves Me" is familiar to all. The second day you may ask if someone has a suggestion for a song that everyone will know.

(Remember your time and allow time for the chosen Deacons of the day to take back the food trays.)

ELDER: Would you bow your heads as I read the closing benediction:

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

(II Corinthians 13:14)

To the ELDER:

(A reminder that you will need to be aware of where you are scheduled to be, following the meal, so that you will be on time. You are KEY to making this an effective ministry to your group. Remember, "*God does not call the equipped; He equips those He calls to serve.*" Our prayer for you is that you will seek the leading and guiding of the Great Helper that we are learning about, God's Holy Spirit, who is ever present in the lives of believers.)

Day 2 GROWING AS A CHRISTIAN
Acts 16:11-40

Memory Verse: *“Do not merely listen to the Word and so deceive yourselves, do what it says!”*

Opening Session Lydia , a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, first European convert under the preaching of Paul, tells her story and explains the role of women in the young church as found in Acts 16:11-15.

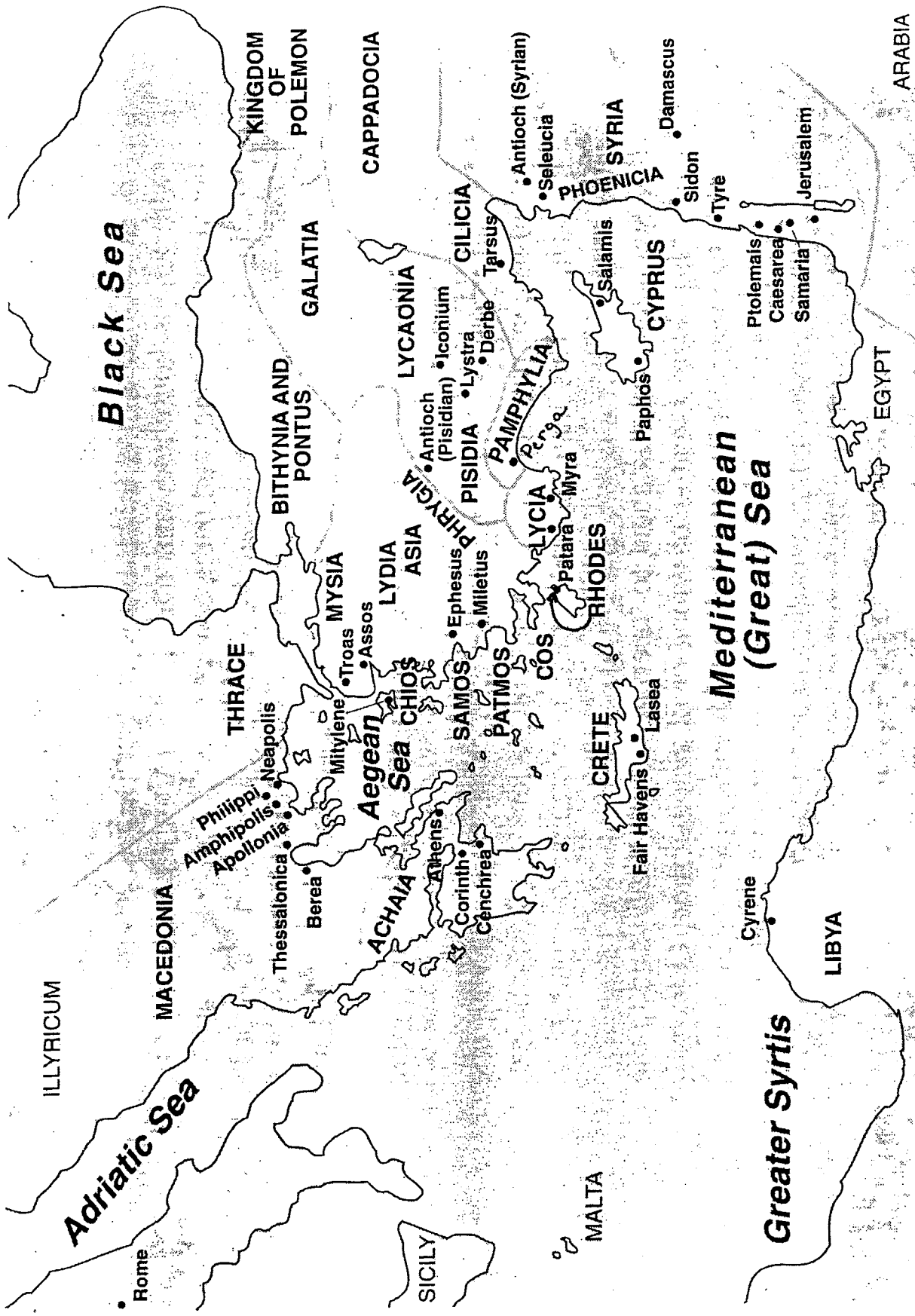
Church Meeting Elder will discuss how the message of Christ goes out beyond Jerusalem to the Gentiles. Discussion should explain the differences and problems between the Jews and the Gentiles.

Storyteller Introduction to Saul/Paul, his Damascus experience, his second missionary journey, how he met Lydia, his imprisonment and his witness to a jailer. Acts 16:11-40

Theater *The Visual Bible*, Volume II of ACTS. Sail again with Luke as he tells how the seeds of the new church are scattered throughout the land... of Peter, Philip,. John (and others), as the infant church struggles and grows. Learn about Saul's encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. And Peter's vision of the sheet.

Synagogue/Church Review “Where does the power to be a disciple come from?” What does it mean to “Grow as a Christian?” What is a Christian? What can we learn from looking at the lives of Lydia and Paul. Paul was a Jew, Lydia was a Gentile. What was the difference? Why were there problems between the Jews and Gentiles? How can I be a “doer” of the Word?

Note: The scripture in James 1:22 goes on to explain that anyone who listens to the Word that does not do what it says is like a person who looks at his face in a mirror and after looking, forgets what he looks like. God expects us to put His Word in our hearts and put it to work in our lives (Put it into ACTION!). We can only succeed at this by asking the Holy Spirit to give us the strength and to guide us.



Day 2

Church Meeting with Group

(Remember that it is important that you take time to pray and share this information with your group)

THE "GOOD NEWS" MESSAGE GOES TO THE GENTILES

The Jews are a very proud race of people. Most of the Old Testament is about the history of the Jewish people and their relationship with God. God made a covenant (a binding agreement) with Abraham and said, *"I will be your God and you will be my people."* God promised Abraham that he would be the forefather of a people that would be more numerous than the stars in the sky! These were God's chosen people. We know from the Bible that Abraham had a son in his old age whose name was Isaac, who had a son, named Jacob. Jacob's name was changed, by God to Israel. He had twelve sons. Those twelve sons were: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. Joseph's sons were Ephraim and Manasseh. We are familiar with these names because at Marketplace we use these names to name our family groups on the years when we study the Old Testament. These descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who were chosen by God, became the Children of Israel, or Israelites. When they were slaves in Egypt they were called, "Hebrews." We know them today as Jews.

God also promised that from Abraham's descendants a Messiah, or Savior, would come to provide salvation for them. Since we know the "rest of the story" we know that the Bible tells us that when Jesus did come, they rejected him. Jews today are still looking for God's promised Messiah.

When Moses led these Children of Israel out of Egypt, God gave these people laws to follow so that they would have a guideline to show them how to live a perfect life in harmony with God. But it was very hard for them, and us today, to follow these laws in our own effort. Do you remember some of the Commandments that God gave them?

In Jesus' day, there was a group of Jewish people who worked very hard to follow all of God's laws. They were called Pharisees. They worked so hard at following the laws that they completely missed the reason God gave them the laws. God gave these laws to help people show love for God and for each other. This was to keep man God-centered instead of self-centered. But the Pharisees got hung up on making sure they followed all the laws instead of working on a relationship with God. In fact, they added to the laws that God had given them to be sure that they did not break any of God's rules.

For example, one of the Commandments said to *"...remember the Sabbath....keep it holy."* God gave His people this rule so that they would worship Him and rest on a special day each week. No one can work every day without taking a break as they get too worn out and become ineffective. People need to remember the importance God

plays in their life. The Pharisees took this Commandment and wrote book after book of what you were not allowed to do on the Sabbath. For instance, dragging a chair across the floor and spitting were both considered “plowing.” Plowing was considered work and you were not allowed to work on the Sabbath. They added 613 rules and regulations.

Jesus did not follow all their silly rules! In fact, the Bible talks of how Jesus healed people on the Sabbath. He and His disciples picked grain and ate it on the Sabbath! This made the Pharisees very angry. They did not realize that Jesus was the Messiah whom God had sent to them. Even though they witnessed His miracles and teachings, they just could not see Him as the Savior that God had promised.

There were Jews that believed that this Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. When Jesus first preached, He focused on teaching to the Jews, but as time went on He made it clear that His message was for all people. At the time of His crucifixion the majority of believers were those who had been brought up Jewish.

As Christian Jews scattered from Jerusalem, churches popped up throughout Judea and Samaria and the Roman Empire. Paul played a big role starting churches and in bringing Gentiles, like Lydia, to Christianity. Paul spent his life traveling and telling the good news (Gospel) of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is the belief that Jesus Christ is God’s Son, that He came to earth and lived among us as an example, was crucified, died, and was buried. He arose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of God, the Father. He did all of that so that whoever believes in Him, making Christ and God the center of their lives, will be saved from their sin and live eternally with Him in heaven. As believers (Christians), we have God’s Holy Spirit living within us to help us proclaim the Gospel to others and to empower/equip us to do His will.

A reminder that the KEY VERSE for these three days is found in Acts 1:8, *“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.”*

The disciples and other Jewish Christians had a problem with this. THEY were God’s chosen people, and they couldn’t believe that God wanted to save the Gentiles. They had always been taught that Gentiles were unclean! Jews had not been allowed to let Gentiles into their homes or to eat meals with them. They did not associate with Gentiles. Therefore, there was some problems with Gentiles being accepted into the young Christian church. The Jews felt they were superior. There was also a problem with all the rules and regulations that the Jewish leaders had developed. (All 613 of them!) Paul wrote many letters explaining that it is by faith that a person is saved, not by how obedient they are to all the Jewish rules. Much time had to be spent evaluating which Jewish customs should be put into practice in the Christian church.

Today the Christian faith is very different from the Jewish faith. We have only scratched the surface on some of these issues. It is our hope that you will read and study further so you are “equipped” to lead your group.

Day 3 RUN THE RACE WITH ENDURANCE
ACTS 16:1-3; 17:15; 18:5 II Timothy 4:7; Ephesians 6:10-18a

Memory Verse *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith;"* II Timothy 4:7

Opening Session Timothy shares his experiences with Paul. He has watched Paul live his life for Jesus and now he, Timothy, hopes to carry on Paul's work. (Missionary.) Add to the Scriptures listed above Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; Hebrews 13:23 and I Timothy to get a picture of this relationship.

Church Meeting Elders will have their church share what they have heard in the Opening Session. Also talk about what had impressed them most the past two days in learning about the Early Church.

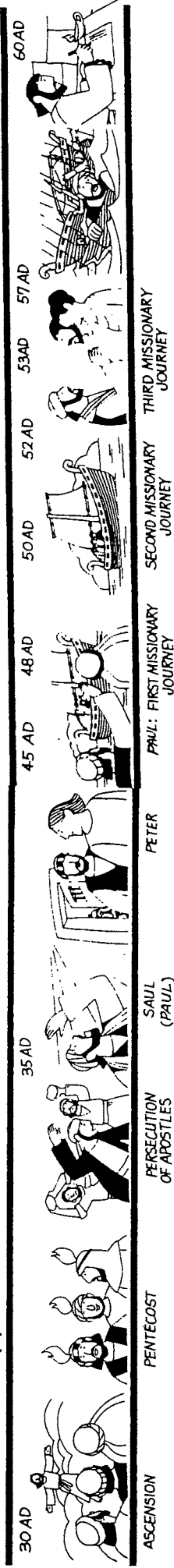
Storyteller We will learn about Timothy's relationship with Paul. Paul wrote two letters to Timothy to encourage, warn, instruct, and to *"Guard, through the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you."* II Timothy 1:14 Paul was a "big brother" to Timothy. *"Be strong ...be diligent. To present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth."* II Timothy 2:15. We also see that we need each other!

Theater *The Visual Bible*, ACTS, Volume III. Luke tells of Paul and Barnabas, the healing of the lame man, the stoning of Paul, his Macadonian vision, Paul and Silas in prison, the jailer converted, returning to Lydia's home in Philippi, and on to Beroea . Acts 14-17:31 Perseverance!

Church/synagogue To run the race with endurance one must be equipped. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:10-18a about the equipment we need- the *"...armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm..."* We will learn about the pieces of this **armor**: Belt of truth, Shield of Faith, Sword of the Spirit, Breastplate of Righteousness, Helmet of Salvation and Footwear of the gospel of peace. **PRAY** in the Spirit on all occasions!

The results of a Christian running the race for God? *"in the future there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day..."* II Timothy 4:8

When Events Happened



Sequence of Events in Paul's Life after His Conversion

*There are differing opinions on these dates. For continuity's sake this chart will be the basis for dates pertaining to Paul's life.

Year A.D.	Event
33-34	Conversion, time in Damascus
35-47	Some silent years, except we know that Paul: 1. Spent time in Arabia and Damascus 2. Made first visit to Jerusalem 3. Went to Tarsus, Syria-Cilicia area 4. Was with Barnabas in Antioch 5. With Barnabas took relief to brethren in Judea—Paul's second visit to Jerusalem 6. Returned to Antioch; was sent out with Barnabas by church at Antioch
47-48	First missionary journey: <i>Galatians written(?)</i>
49	Apostolic Council at Jerusalem—Paul visits Jerusalem (compare Acts 15 with Galatians 2:1)
49-51	Second missionary journey: <i>1 and 2 Thessalonians written</i>
52-56	Third missionary journey: <i>1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans written</i>
56	Paul goes to Jerusalem and is arrested; held at Caesarea
57-59	Appearance before Felix and Drusilla; before Festus; before Agrippa
59-60	Appeals to Caesar, sent from Caesarea to Rome
60-62	First Roman imprisonment: <i>Ephesians, Philemon, Colossians, and Philipians written</i>
62	Paul's release; possible trip to Spain
62	Paul in Macedonia: <i>1 Timothy written</i>
62	Paul goes to Crete: <i>Titus written</i>
63-64	Paul taken to Rome and imprisoned: <i>2 Timothy written</i>
64	Paul is absent from the body and present with the Lord (Others put Paul's conversion about A.D. 35, his death in A.D. 68.)

You are a CHRISTIAN in the Early Church-

In order to find the location and time of the worship service you had to identify other Christians to know who to ask. But you had to be very careful because if you are caught, you will be put in prison and martyred! Therefore, to identify other Christians, those who were Christians used the Ichthus (fish) symbol to identify each other. They would do this by writing in the air, in the dirt, etc

An Ichthus symbol looks like this:



One person would begin this symbol like this:



If the other person was a Christian, they would finish the symbol like this:



Thus, the finished symbol would look like this:



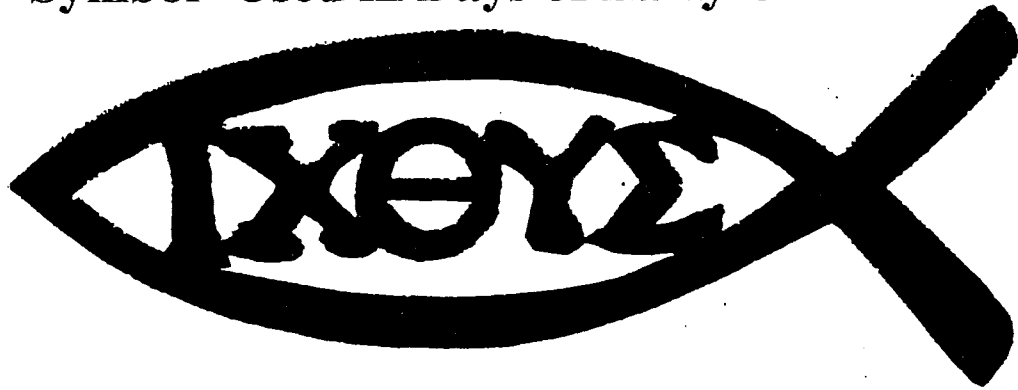
When Christians identified each other they knew that they were then free to talk to each other. But they had to be very careful not to congregate in groups with other Christians. They had to make sure that they were not followed to the secret worship service or the entire group could be imprisoned and killed!

If one was caught then they had to make the decision whether to defend their faith and be martyred or to bow and worship the emperor to save themselves.

*ELDERS, make sure each one in your group know how to make this symbol of identification. Practice during your time together.

Another method of identifying where the secret meeting was to be was to fly a kite! Yes, the color of the kite and it's tails would tell the neighborhood where the meeting was to be held. One cannot say exactly how long kits have been around but earliest writings describing a kite were found in China and are believed to be over 2500 years old. (And we think of the kite as a "modern day" invention.) At the Marketplace one can see how to make a sled kite using dowel rods, a garbage bag, some tape and a straw.

Symbol Used in Days of Early Church



The FISH (ICHTHUS) was a common and easily recognizable symbol for “Jesus Christ” and later came to mean “Christian” or “Follower of Christ.” It represented “Jesus” because the five letters of the word “fish” in Greek provide an acrostic or first letters of the phrase “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior.”

Ι Χ Θ Υ Σ (Pronounced ICHTHUS) is the Greek word for "Fish".

This symbol appeared on the walls of some of the catacombs of early Christians, where Jesus is represented or pictured in the drawings as a FISH. It is unknown exactly when the symbol was first used, but it became a secret symbol of Communication used by the early Christians to identify one another during times of persecution.

To read this cryptogram, one must arrange vertically the letters of the Greek word for “fish” and then used each one as the initial of another word as follows:

Ι	ησους	–	Iesous	–	Jesus
Χ	ριστος	–	Christos	–	Christ
Θ	εου	–	Theou	–	Of God
Υ	ιος	–	Uios	–	Son
Σ	ωτηρ	–	Soter	–	Saviour