

Little Churches All Around (Missions)

Teacher Pep Talk: So, the church grew. The Great Commission was a BIG job, and God had provided the power to do this big job by sending the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Now the Believers would never be alone. They had received the Spirit of Power from on high, just as Jesus had promised, and now they were ready to get started on this big job! As they moved around they told others about Jesus. And soon the first missionaries were sent out by the church to other places.

You will need: Various items depending on the Activities chosen

Major Points: The Believers were to Tell Others about Jesus
The Holy Spirit would Help Them Do This
The Believers went to New Places
They Told People About Jesus (Missions)
Now We Can Know About Jesus

Scripture Ref: Acts 2, Acts 8:1, and Acts 9 (Saul's Conversion)

Memory Verse: Acts 9:31 ...the church (encouraged by the Holy Spirit) ...increased in numbers.

Lesson: **The Believers were to Tell Others about Jesus**

- Can you keep a secret? (*Wait for answers.*) What if it was a really BIG secret? Would you tell anyone? Who would you tell?
- What if you knew really great news and it wasn't a secret? What if you could tell other people? Would you tell them? Who would you tell first? (*Wait for answers.*)
- The Disciples (the ones who first believed in Jesus) had been given a BIG job. Jesus had asked them to out into the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to do everything he had commanded them to do.
- Wow! That is a BIG job!
- The Believers were to tell others about Jesus.

The Holy Spirit would Help Them Do This

- God had sent the Holy Spirit to all of the Believers.
- The Holy Spirit was called the Spirit of Power. Let's all say that together... "The Spirit of Power!" (*Have some fun with this!*) Sounds sort of like a super-hero doesn't it? The Spirit of Power!
- Anyway, God had sent the Holy Spirit to all of the Believers. And since the Holy Spirit is The Spirit of Power (!) He was able to help the Believers do that really big job they had been given to do. That is really great news! (We should tell someone!)

The Believers went to New Places

- So, Jesus had told His Disciples to go into all of the world. (Hm... What about that?)
- Actually, at first they were pretty happy right where they were.
- They were busy telling everyone in Jerusalem all about Jesus
- And, at first, lots and lots of people listened and believed too!
- But then, almost all of a sudden, some of the people in the town became really unhappy with them.
- They didn't want to hear about Jesus any more. They said things that weren't true about the Believers. (It got really bad.)
- Some were forced to leave town because it was too dangerous.
- So, many of the Believers went out into new places.
- And guess what they did when they got there?

They Told People about Jesus (Missions)

- Everywhere the Believers went they told people about Jesus.
- They told them the "Good News" about Jesus. (The Gospel.)
 - That God had sent His Son, Jesus, who was the Promised Savior (or the Messiah.)
 - That (like the scriptures said) He died (paying for our sins) and He was raised from the dead to live forever.
 - That Jesus is both Christ and Lord!
 - And that if we believe on His name we will be saved
 - That was Good News!
- When people believed, they started more churches
- When people go far away to tell about Jesus we call it missions.

Now We Can Know About Jesus

- So, the Believers told people about Jesus everywhere they went
- People heard them and believed. Then they told other people.
- And on and on and on... for years and years and years
- Until at last someone told me about Jesus and I believed. And now I am telling you about Jesus (and you can believe too.)
- And one day, maybe you will tell someone else about Jesus so that they can know Him and believe in Him as well!

Let's pray and thank God that we can know Jesus.

Prayer: Dear God,
Thank you that we can know Jesus
Thank you that you sent the Holy Spirit.
Thank you that you love us.
We love you back.
Amen.

Suggested Activities: *(Choose 2-3 that seem to work well with your group.)*

Good News – *The children will make a poster saying “I’ve Got Good News!”*

Before Class: Make a copy of the activity sheet for each child, or provide blank paper for them to draw upon. Also provide markers, crayons, glue, scissors, and newspaper.

During Class: Give each child a copy of the activity sheet or blank paper. Have them color the words “I’ve Got Good News!” Alternatively, older children may enjoy tearing or cutting out small pieces of newspaper to glue on the letters of the words “Good News!”

Globe or Map of World – *The children will look at a globe or a map of the world.*

Before Class: Bring a globe or a map of the world to your class and display it.

During Class: Show the globe (or map) to the children. Discuss where your country or state is. Show some of the neighboring countries. Look at different continents. Also look at the oceans and talk about how since they are water they are shown as blue, etc. Find the country of Israel (located in the Middle East) and identify the city of Jerusalem. Point out that this is where Jesus was crucified and where He was raised from the dead. It was in Jerusalem that the Holy Spirit came to the Believers at Pentecost. It was here that the church started. And it was from here that the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ has gone out around the world. Where did it have to travel to get to your country, to your town, to your classroom, and to you? Consider the following questions: What is near to you? What is far away from you? Who could you tell about Jesus?

Missions Story – *The children will hear a mission story.*

Before Class: Determine which mission story will be told and who will tell it. Do you have a missionary at your church? Does this person work well with children? Perhaps you might consider inviting him/her to your classroom to tell part of their story. Discuss with the missionary ahead of time what they will tell the children. Alternatively, choose a story of a famous missionary to read to the children. (Example: Hudson Taylor, who was a missionary to China in the mid 1800’s.) Check your church library or with your pastor for ideas. Or tell the story of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (to Paul the Apostle) on the Road to Damascus (found in Acts 9:1-19.) You may read “The Story of a Changed Man” found below. **NOTE:** *If you tell the story of the conversion of Saul, you may need an extra day of classroom time to allow time to tell the story and finish the lesson.*

During Class: Tell the mission story to the children. Use “Show and Tell” items to make the story more realistic and to help focus the children’s attention.

The Story of a Changed Man – *The children will hear the story of Saul of Tarsus.*

Before Class: Read through the provided story several times to familiarize yourself with it; so that it will be easy for you to present. Consider having a child stand in for the part of Saul/Paul and maybe for Ananias too as you tell the story. If so, have some cards (or nametags) with the names SAUL and PAUL on them, to show the children that Saul’s name changed. Also bring a blindfold to show that Saul was blinded and then healed.

During Class: Present the story. Put a nametag on the child representing Saul that says Saul (or have him hold a card.) When he is blinded, put the blindfold on him. When Saul is healed, remove the blindfold. Change nametags (or sign) when name changes.

The Story of a Changed Man – The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus

Once a long time ago (*notice that I didn't say "once upon a time," because once upon a time is for pretend stories and this is a real story...*) Once a long time ago there was a young man named Saul. Saul was a hard man; a very well educated, Jewish man. He knew everything there was to know about the Law and the Scriptures, and he was so committed to his beliefs that he actually picked on people who believed differently.

Saul knew there were people around who believed in Jesus as their Lord and Savior; they were called Believers. He thought they were wrong – AND he did EVERYTHING he could do to stop them; including throwing some of them in to prison! Everyone who believed in Jesus knew about Saul... and they tried very hard to stay away from him!

Then, one day Saul was out walking on a road to a city called Damascus. He had gotten permission to go there and to arrest the Believers who lived there and put them in to jail! But while Saul was out walking on the road, suddenly he saw a bright light and heard a voice calling his name. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. (*Uh, oh. Now things had changed! Now Saul knew that Jesus was the Lord! This changed Saul forever.*)

Then Jesus told Saul – "Get up and go into the city. There you will be told what to do." So, Saul got up and went into Damascus, but his friends had to lead him by the hand, because now Saul was blind! Saul stayed blind for 3 days then God sent one of the Believers (named Ananias) to see Saul, to lay hands on him, and cure his blindness.

Ananias had already heard about Saul and about all the bad things he had done to the Believers. So, when God told him to go visit Saul and to help him get back his sight, old Ananias said something like, "Excuse me? You want me to do WHAT, God? Because, I've heard stories about this guy and I don't really want to go over there and talk to him."

But Ananias trusted God. He believed Him when God told him that Saul would now be used to tell others about Jesus. So he went and did what God had said. He found Saul and told him: "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." The Bible says that immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. And then Saul was baptized right away. Isn't that wonderful?

Then something else wonderful happened. Because Saul was a changed man, he became a missionary. He went all over the world telling people about Jesus. Yes, Saul was a changed man because he believed on Jesus as his Lord. In fact, Saul was so changed that people even began calling him by a new name. Now they called him Paul!

Later Saul (*I mean Paul*) wrote letters to the Believers in the churches he had started. We still have those letters in our Bibles today; they are called "books" are called by the names of the churches they were first sent to. These letters still help Believers (like you and me) to this very day! I'm so glad Saul became a changed man! – **THE END**

Letters Paul Wrote – *older children will learn about the letters of Paul the Apostle.*

Before Class: Familiarize yourself with the books of the Bible that were written by the Apostle Paul (who was formerly known as Saul of Tarsus.) A list is provided below. You may want to make a poster of the names of the books of the Bible along with the names of the towns. That way the children can see the similarity in the names and understand why these books of the Bible have such unique names.

During Class: Explain to the children that Saul of Tarsus became a changed man, after he met the risen Christ (Jesus) on the Road to Damascus. People even started calling him by a new name: Paul. Paul became a missionary. He traveled all over the known world at the time, telling people everywhere about Jesus. Wherever he went people believed in Jesus, and they started new little churches in those places. As Paul traveled, he would sometimes write letters back to the people in those churches, helping them understand what God had done for us as Believers and how we should live.

We still have these lovely letters today. God has preserved them for us in the Bible. Now Paul's letters are called "books" of the Bible. They are called by the names of the people who received the letters. Some of the letters were to whole churches, and so they are now known by the places or towns where the churches were. Other letters were written to just one particular person or another. They are known by the name of that one person.

Book of the Bible	Place Where the Church Was
Romans	Rome
Corinthians (I & II)	Corinth
Galatians	Galatia
Ephesians	Ephesus
Philippians	Philippi
Colossians	Colossi
Thessalonians (I & II)	Thessalonica
These letters were written to one person	
Timothy (I & II)	
Titus	
Philemon	

Other Missionaries – *The children will learn of other missionaries and their journeys.*

Before Class: Obtain a map of the missionary journeys of Paul, or a similar map. Locate Jerusalem. Also find places such as modern day Turkey, Greece and Rome. This is where some of the first missionary journeys went. Show the children in class.

During Class: Tell the children that when new people believed in Jesus, they set up new churches that met and grew. But there were still people who didn't know about Jesus. So, at God's instructions, the church began to send out men to go to new places to tell others about Jesus. Some of the first ones were Paul, Silas, Barnabas, and Mark. These men went on long trips (journeys) in other countries to tell others about Jesus. Today, when we send out people to tell others about Jesus, we call them **missionaries**; and we say that they are doing mission work, because they are sent on "a mission."

I've Got

GOOD

NEWS!