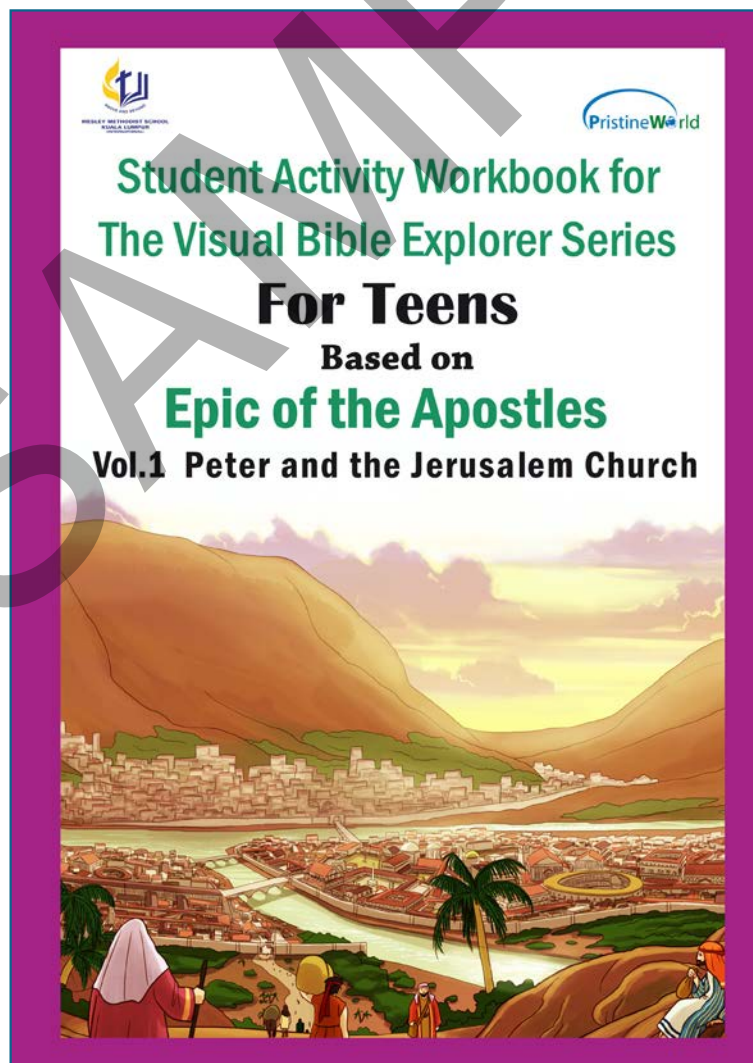


Teacher's Guide for Teens

Based on

Epic of the Apostle

Vol.1 Peter and the Jerusalem Church



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Epic of the Apostle Vol.1

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Epic of the Apostles Vol. 1

Lesson 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

Based on the lecture powerpoint presentation – Introduction to the Bible – provided in the Teacher’s Kit

Bible Truth: Jesus coming to earth and the growth of the church is a historical reality. Although it may have seemed like an awkward period in history, but the coming of the Messiah happens in a time and place that God has planned.

Lesson: The coming of Jesus the Messiah and God’s giving of the Holy Spirit to all believers takes place to fulfill God’s promise to provide salvation to all believers.

Key Verse: Romans 15:4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. (NIV)

The objective of this lesson is to help the students gain an introductory understanding of the Bible.

Multimedia: There is no DVD-R chapter accompanying this lesson. You may use the powerpoint presentation slides or create your own multimedia from Youtube.

Answers to Workbook

Questions

Refer to the lecture slides prepared by Pristine World

1. The word Biblio in Greek means a library of books. The Bible is a compilation of books.
2. There are 39 books in the Old Testament
3. There are 27 books in the New Testament
4. Testament or Covenant as used in the Bible means a solemn binding agreement designed by God. It is made between God and humankind with conditions for blessings and punishment. It is a basis for God and humankind to have a relationship.
5. The first five books of the Old Testament are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
6. The first five books of the New Testament are: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts of the Apostles.
7. Some genres or types of literature found in the Bible include: Law, History, Poetry, Letters and Prophetic literature.
8. After the great flood during Noah’s time, God made a covenant with Abraham to head and lead His people.
9. After the Israelites had been enslaved in Egypt for 430 years, God used Moses to lead them out.
10. Joshua, the successor of Moses led the Israelites into the Promised Land.
11. Saul (son of Kish) was the first king of Israel
12. David (son of Jesse) was the king who brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.
13. Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah

Challenge Questions.

Refer to the lecture slides prepared by Pristine World

1. Write down 3 key themes found in the Bible.
 - a. God is holy and cannot tolerate sin
 - b. Humankind have sinned since the time of Adam
 - c. God offers salvation through Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection as a payment for our sins for those who would believe and follow Him
2. Prophecies about what the Messiah would do:
 - a. He will perform miracles of healing
 - i. The blind, deaf, mute and lame will be healed – Isaiah 35:4-6
 - ii. The lame will leap for joy (Isaiah 35:6)
 - b. He will be compassionate and preach God’s good news
 - i. He will be compassionate (Isaiah 42:3)
 - ii. Proclaim good news to the poor (Isaiah 61:1)
 - iii. Proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners (Isaiah 61:1)
 - c. He will bring Salvation to the Gentiles
 - i. He will be a light to the Gentiles and bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6)

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Lesson 2: INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ACTS

Based on the lecture powerpoint presentation – Introduction to Acts of the Apostles

Bible Truth: The Gospel is for all people. This was a fulfillment of God's will, prophesied from the Old Testament and repeated in the Gospels.

Lesson: The worship of God is not just the rituals performed at a specific place like the Temple of Jerusalem but is performed by faith and by our actions, and it does not matter whether it is in Judea, Samaria or any other part of the world.

Key Verse: John 4:24 God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.^(NIV)

The objective of this lesson is to help the students gain an overview introductory understanding of the book of Acts and its historical background.

Multimedia: There is no DVD-R chapter accompanying this lesson. You may use the powerpoint presentation slides or create your own multimedia from Youtube.

Answers to Workbook

Questions

Refer to the lecture slides prepared by Pristine World

1. The author of the book of Acts was Luke.
2. He was the travelling companion of the Apostle Paul.
3. The book of Acts was written c.AD 60-62.
4. Acts is the continuation of the Gospel of Luke.
5. The book of Acts is found in the New Testament in the Bible.
6. Tiberius was the emperor of Rome at the beginning of the story of Acts.
7. The most common language spoken in the Roman Empire at that time was Greek.
8. Name 5 characters found in the book of Acts of the Apostles:
 - a. Simon Peter
 - b. Apostle John
 - c. Deacons Stephen & Philip
 - d. James (the Just) the brother of Jesus
 - e. Joseph Barnabas
 - f. Paul of Tarsus
 - g. Cornelius
 - h. Silas
 - i. Luke
 - j. Timothy
9. The story of Acts begins in the city of Jerusalem
10. Some of the people groups found in Acts
 - a. Jews – people descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who practice Judaism
 - b. Gentiles – the non-Jews
 - c. Hebraic Jews – Jews who spoke Hebrew
 - d. Hellenistic Jews – Jews who lived outside Israel and grew up learning Greek language and understood the Greek or Hellenistic culture
 - e. God fearers or God worshippers – Gentiles who worshipped the God of Israel but did not go through circumcision or practice all the Mosaic rituals
 - f. Proselytes – Gentiles who had converted to

Judaism and undergone circumcision and practice all the Mosaic rituals

11. Ask the students to read the text book pages 18-21 and write a short description in their own words.

Challenge Question

1. Although the Roman Empire did not sympathise with Christianity, it provided advantages which were used by the apostles to spread Christianity. We must emphasise that this was God's timing to bring Jesus into the world and introduce the Gospel to the Gentiles. Some of these advantages were:
 - a. Roman Peace – Pax Romana. There was a general peace in the empire during this time, which allowed the apostles to travel without danger of war.
 - b. Roman Roads – The Romans built excellent roads which were used by many travellers and which linked many cities far and wide. Trade routes used by merchants covering not just overland roads but also sea lanes. The apostles used these roads to bring the Gospel to faraway cities and countries.
 - c. The Greek language – Everywhere the apostles went, they could use the Greek language to speak to people much like the way English is used to communicate in many countries of the world. Even if people spoke Greek as a second language, they would still be able to understand it and that was enough for the apostles to share the Gospel with them.
 - d. Roman Law – the apostles used the fact that there was law throughout the empire. The apostles wherever they could abided by the law except when it conflicted directly with God's laws. As such, in many cases, Paul and Silas was able to claim Roman citizenship to demand justice for any ill-treatment they received.

Epic of the Apostles Vol. 1

Lesson 3: BIRTH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

Based on chapter 1 of the text book and story 1 of the multimedia DVD-R

Bible Truth: It is promised in the Old Testament and now fulfilled in the New Testament. God gives His Spirit to live in all believers. The Holy Spirit tells us that we belong to God and teaches us from the Bible what is right and wrong.

Lesson: This is the first step in the building of the New Testament Church where God builds His temple not as a building but in the hearts and lives of believers.

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

Lesson Objective: That the students understand that in Christianity, God lives in each one of His children (believers). The emphasis is not on God dwelling in buildings but inside us. The Holy Spirit empowers the apostles to be witnesses in Jerusalem and as a result the New Testament church is born with many being added to their numbers.

Multimedia: The lesson is based on chapter 1 in the text book and the DVD-R

Answers to Workbook

Questions

1. After His resurrection, Jesus stayed with His disciples for 40 days before He ascended to heaven.
2. 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
3. Immediately after Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples saw two men dressed in white standing among them. They were angels. They told the disciples that one day, Jesus would return just as He had ascended.
4. After praying and drawing lots, Matthias was chosen to replace Judas Iscariot to be one of the 12 apostles.
5. Ask the children to read the passage and describe it in their own words.
6. When the crowd saw the apostles speaking in foreign languages, their first reaction was they thought the apostles were drunk. There were 14 countries mentioned. Refer to page 7 of the workbook for the names of the countries.
7. Ask the students to summarise what Peter said (Acts 2:14-40).

Challenge Questions

1. Ask the student to summarise the gospel based on the passage and what Peter said.

Application Questions.

1. Ask the students to remember an event where they discovered something good and which they could share with their friends. The news would benefit their friends and did not take anything away from them. How did they feel after that, i.e. after seeing their friends benefit from their sharing.
2. The apostles were equipped with the Holy Spirit coming into their lives and giving them gifts such as boldness to preach, clarity of understanding and an extraordinary ability to speak in foreign language.

Challenge Application Question.

1. Ask the students to share.

Answers to Multimedia Quiz

1. D Refer to Acts 1:1 and to Luke 1:1-4
2. C Refer to Acts 1:8
3. B Refer to Acts 1:8
4. A Refer to Acts 2:2-3
5. A Refer to Acts 2:14
6. E Refer to Acts 2:22
7. E Refer to Acts 2:41

Answers to Discussion Questions in the Multimedia

1. **Summarize in your own words what Jesus commanded His disciples to do before He was taken to heaven.**

Points to consider:

- Acts 1:4 Jesus instructed His apostles not to leave Jerusalem until they have received the gift of the Holy Spirit
- Acts 1:8 They will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them
- They were to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

2. **Summarize in your own words the message Peter preached in front of the crowd. Peter preached a sermon to explain what they were observing and what had happened. If there is enough time, ask the children to summarise in their own words the sermon Peter preached in Acts 2:14-40**

Some points to consider:

- The apostles were not drunk. Rather, their speaking in tongues was the result of God giving them the Holy Spirit which He had promised in the Old Testament: Joel 2:28-32
- Jesus of Nazareth was sent by God. He performed signs and wonders and died for our sins
- God raised Jesus from the dead
- The apostles were His witnesses
- Jesus is both Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36)
- Peter asked the people to repent of their sins, turn to God and be baptised in Jesus' name. Then they would receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

3. **How do you think the people felt when they heard the words of Peter and state your reasons.**

Points to consider:

- Acts 2:37 – Peter's words pierced their hearts and convicted them of their sins
- Many of them believed, were baptised and joined the church – about 3,000

4. **What is your own response to the message given by Peter?**

Ask the children how they would respond to this message. Peter's preaching was recorded and preserved for us to read it, even today. What is our response? If there is an opportunity, you can lead your children in saying the sinner's prayer and receiving Jesus into their hearts as Lord and Saviour.

Epic of the Apostles Vol. 1

Lesson 4: PETER AND JOHN

Based on chapter 2 of the text book and story 2 of the multimedia DVD-R

Bible Truth: Sharing about who Jesus is and what He has done for us is the best gift we can give to others.

Lesson: The apostles risk their own security by obeying God rather than man.

Bible Reference: Acts 3:1-25; 4:1-31

Key Verse: Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Acts 3:6 (NIV)

Lesson Objective: Peter and John testify that faith in Jesus is the source of the miraculous healings and it is through faith in Jesus that God will give salvation to all who will believe. Sharing about who Jesus is and what He has done for us is the best gift we can give to others.

Multimedia: The lesson is based on chapter 2 in the text book and the DVD-R

Answers to Workbook

Questions

1. The community of Christians at the beginning of Acts was about 120. This is mentioned in Acts 1:15. But after Peter had preached his Spirit inspired sermon, their numbers increased to about 3,000. That is mentioned in Acts 2:41. In Acts 4:4 it says the number of believers had grown to 5,000.
2. Peter and John were walking to the Temple to pray when they met a man who was lame from birth.
3. The lame man asked them for money. Peter said, "Look at us, silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."
4. The lame man jumped up and walked. Then he was walking and leaping and praising God.
5. Peter used the opportunity to share the Gospel with the onlookers. This is recorded in Acts 3:12-26. You can ask the students to summarise this sermon.
6. Peter and John were arrested by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard and some of the Sadducees and were brought before the council of rulers.
7. When the High Priest ordered Peter and John not to preach in Jesus name again, Peter and John replied with a question: Should they listen to the priests and rulers or should they listen to God. He asked them to judge who they should listen to.
2. The rulers were afraid that more and more people were going to follow the teachings of Peter and John and turn away from the priests. They had falsely accused and sent Jesus to death just about 50 days ago and were afraid the number of followers of Jesus were now going to grow and they might rebel against the rulers.

Application Questions.

1. Peter and John were not as well educated as these priests and rulers. They were fishermen from Galilee, the 'kampong' or country-side area. However, Peter and John were real eye-witnesses to all the miracles that Jesus had performed and all the lessons that Jesus had taught. They therefore were right to be confident to preach whatever they had seen and been taught.
2. Ask the students to share how they felt when they experienced something unexpectedly good in their lives. Who did they attribute it to? Was it pure luck, their own cleverness or to an unexplained supernatural force or to God? Based on who they attribute the 'good thing that happened' to, what was their response? If it was pure luck, then what would their response be But if it was God's blessing, then how would they respond. Ask them to share but do not make any judgement.

Challenge Questions

1. Peter was referring to Jesus Christ who was rejected by the priests and rulers and sentenced to death but is now the capstone, or cornerstone or foundation stone.

Challenge Application Question.

1. If we face a situation where people ask us to do an action which is against our conscience or against our principles or against our beliefs in the Bible, what would we do?

Answers to Multimedia Quiz

1. C Refer to Acts 3:2
2. C Refer to Acts 3:4
3. D Refer to Acts 3:6
4. D Refer to Acts 3:7-8
5. C Refer to Acts 4:4
6. A Refer to Acts 4:22
7. E Refer to Acts 4:19-20

Answers to Discussion Questions in the Multimedia

1. **What did Peter tell the people when they were amazed at seeing the crippled man healed?**

Peter used the opportunity to tell the people the crippled man was healed through faith in Jesus (Acts 3:15). Peter also emphasized that Jesus was sent by the same God they all worshipped, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Acts 3:13). Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.

2. **Why were Peter and John arrested? Why were the Temple officials worried about what Peter and John were doing?**

Peter and John were arrested because the Temple officials were worried about what they were preaching and teaching.

Points to consider:

- Only 49 days ago (from Passover to Pentecost) they had framed and caused the execution of Jesus. Now His followers were telling people that Jesus is alive and had the power to heal. This claim was supported by an actual healing. If the apostles were right, then they, the Temple officials, had done a terrible deed by putting Jesus to death on the cross.
- Many people were following the apostles. They joined this 'church' movement by the thousands. This reduced the followers of the Temple movement.

3. **How did the chief priests and Temple officials view the qualifications of Peter and John?**

Based on the text (Acts 3:7 and 13), it showed that the Temple officials did not respect or recognize the qualifications or the rights of the apostles to teach.

4. **What was Peter and John's response when they were told not to speak of Jesus of Nazareth?**

Peter and John gave an answer that was not hard to live up to. Ask the children if they understand what this means? We should obey God rather than man. The apostles teach us to obey the Government under normal circumstances (Romans 13:1-7). Peter himself later encouraged the church to submit to earthly authorities (1 Peter 2:13-15). Only when these authorities went directly against the commandments of God or the teachings of the Bible are Christians to discern between following God and following earthly authorities.

Epic of the Apostles Vol. 1

Lesson 5: LIFE IN THE EARLY JERUSALEM CHURCH

Based on chapter 3 of the text book and story 3 of the multimedia DVD_R

Bible Truth: When we tell lies, we are actually lying to God and not only to the people we lie to.

Lesson: The early church shared their wealth and helped those who were in need. They came together to worship and be taught by the apostles.

Bible Reference: Acts 5:1-11

Verse to ponder: Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices. Colossians 3:9. (NIV)

Lesson Objective: What happened to Ananias and his wife was a warning that we cannot lie to God and that there is no place for hypocrisy or deceit in the church.

That the children will remember that when they tell lies, it is to God they are lying and not to people.

A second important lesson is that they learn from the early church the importance to help those in need

Multimedia: The lesson is based on chapter 3 in the text book and the DVD-R

Answers to Workbook

Questions

1. The followers of Jesus were known as 'Nazarenes' or people of 'the Way' or just 'believers'.
2. The believers helped each other especially those in need by sharing their possessions and from time to time, they even sold their property, land, house or other items and brought the money from the sales to the apostles' feet
3. Joseph the Levite originally came from Cyprus. He sold a piece of land and gave all the money from the sale to the apostles to be given to the poor amongst them. His other name was Barnabas
4. Ananias and Sapphira sold a property and gave part of the proceeds to the apostles and kept part of it for themselves. However they told the apostles that they had sold and given the entire proceeds from the sales. It was a lie. It would have given them more credit and respect than they had deserved.
5. The early believers often met in Solomon's Colonnade in the Temple to listen to the apostles teach and see them perform healing miracles.
6. They were put in prison again because the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of Sadducees, were filled with jealousy (Acts 5:17).
7. Acts 5:20 describes to us what the angel said. The angel opened the doors of the jail and brought them out and then said to them "Go, stand in the temple courts and tell the people all about this new life."

8. Acts 5:26 tells us that the temple guards re-arrested the apostles but did not use force because they were afraid that the people would stone them.
9. Read Acts 5:29-32

Challenge Questions

1. Gamaliel was a Pharisee, a teacher of the law, who was honoured by all the people. He stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside while he spoke privately with the council. He told the council that previously there were two cases of rebels; a Theudas with 400 men and later a Galilean named Judas who also led a band of people in revolt. In both cases the leaders were killed and eventually all the followers were dispersed and nothing came of their movement. He argued that if this 'Jesus' movement was not from God, it will eventually die a natural death and all the followers will disperse. But if the movement is from God, then they might even be fighting against God. So it would be better to let them go.
2. The rulers and priests did not want the apostles to preach in the name of Jesus because only about 2 months ago, they had accused Jesus of blasphemy and handed him over to the Gentiles to be crucified. They did not want the name of Jesus to be preached in case the people blamed them for an unjustified execution.

Application Questions.

1. How do we know when something is from God or from human plans? How can we support a plan from God or oppose a plan that is from wicked human design?
 - a. We must seek wisdom and guidance humbly and prayerfully from God
 - b. God will not give a plan that is against His written word found in the Bible.
 - c. Does the plan honour God and is it beneficial to many people? Not just a small select group.
 - d. Seeking council from other mature and trustworthy Christians
 - e. If we know a plan is not from God, then we do not have to support it.
2. The apostles had the attitude of doing what they believed was right before God. If they were punished for doing right then they could rejoice because it was suffering for Christ. They knew their reward would be in heaven. If we have been prejudiced, or punished for not doing something we believed was wrong then we can be proud that we had stood up for our beliefs. Even if our stand did not make a difference in the outcome of a situation, we can rest assured that God has seen our effort or sacrifice.

Challenge Application Question.

1. This story may be difficult to explain in our modern times but it must be remembered that this was 2000 years ago and the church was struggling in birth pangs. From Old Testament days, sin was always viewed very seriously. If Ananias and Sapphira had been able to deceive the apostles and taken more credit than they should have, then the whole church would have been undermined. This was divine judgment on the couple who had colluded to lie to the apostles. Sapphira was given a chance to change here answer but she continued to insist on lying. Her judgment came just as quickly. By this divine judgment, the whole community could see that God meant serious business concerning matters of the moral laws. The result was that the community feared and revered God more. But God has also provided a way for us to receive forgiveness when we have sinned. It is to prayerfully confess our sins and ask for forgiveness in Jesus name. Then we should also repent of our sins.

Answers to Multimedia Quiz

- | | | | |
|------|---------------------|------|--------------------|
| 1. A | Refer to Acts 4:35 | 5. B | Refer to Acts 5:34 |
| 2. D | Refer to Acts 4:36 | 6. D | Refer to Acts 5:40 |
| 3. E | Refer to Acts 5:1-2 | 7. A | Refer to Acts 5:41 |
| 4. B | Refer to Acts 5:20 | 8. E | Refer to Acts 5:42 |

Answers to Discussion Questions in the Multimedia

1. **Why did Barnabas sell a piece of land and give the money to the apostles?**

Many people who had just joined the New Testament church were from far away countries (Acts 2) and were poor. This created a need for food and shelter for this large and expanding community. Some of those who were more wealthy, such as Barnabas, decided to help out.

Points to consider:

- Being inspired by the Holy Spirit not only led to authoritative preaching but Christian fellowship and generosity.
- Joseph Barnabas was probably not the only person who gave generously, but was singled out because he would appear again later in the story.
- (Refer to Tyndale New Testament Commentary on Acts by I. Howard Marshall)

2. **Why do you think Ananias and Sapphira were dishonest and lied to the apostles?**

Ananias and Sapphira tried to claim more credit for their gift than what they deserved. It was a dishonest attempt to show how good and generous they were.

Points to consider:

- Some children may ask if the punishment they received was too harsh. This is a time when sin is taken very seriously and in which a person convicted of sin against the Holy Spirit might well suffer a fatal shock. Should we regard sin any less seriously today?
- Peter did give Sapphira a chance to 'come clean' i.e. to tell the truth and receive forgiveness, but she failed the test and died also.

3. **What was Gamaliel's reasoning in asking the Sanhedrin to let the apostles go?**

Gamaliel advised against premature and excessive punishment of the apostles because:

- The apostles had performed miracles in public and had a strong following of supporters. This group of new and casual followers could become ardent and violent supporters if they made martyrs of the apostles.
- There was a possibility that this was the work of God, and as priests, they had to be fully satisfied first that it was not the work of God. Otherwise they could be working against the very God they claimed to serve.

4. **What would your response be if you were one of the apostles who had just been set free?**

Ask the children to imagine themselves in the position of the apostles and how they would have responded with the judgment passed.

Points to consider:

- When should they quietly accept unjust punishment?
- When should they protest and appeal for justice as Paul did later?

5. **What does this story teach you about God and His actions behind the scenes?**

Ask the children to summarise the story and make their comments on when / where they could see God's hand at work in the story.

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Lesson 6: STEPHEN - PERSECUTION AND SCATTERING OF THE JERUSALEM CHURCH

Based on chapter 4 of the text book and story 4 of the multimedia DVD_R

Bible Truth: We are called to forgive those who do evil to us. God sometimes allows suffering but His purposes cannot be stopped. The Gospel spreads faster during the time of persecution.

Lesson: Acts 7:49-53 Another note about how God cannot be limited to buildings made by man.

Bible Reference: Acts 6:1 – 8:3

Verse to Think About: For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. Matthew 6:14. (NIV)

Lesson Objective: God sometimes allows suffering but His purposes cannot be stopped. The Gospel spreads faster during the time persecution. That the children will follow Jesus' example in loving those who treat them badly and praying for them.

Multimedia: The lesson is based on chapter 4 in the text book and the DVD-R

Answers to Workbook

Questions

1. The two groups of Christians found in Acts chapter 6 are: The Hebraic Jews – those who lived in Judea and spoke Hebrew; and the Hellenistic Jews – those who lived outside Judea and spoke Greek as their first language.
2. The Hellenistic Jews complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. (Acts 6:1)
3. The apostles gathered all the disciples or followers together, men and women, and asked them to choose seven men from among them who were known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. They would then be given the responsibility of food distribution. This was so that the apostles could focus on prayer and the ministry of the word.
4. The word of God spread and the number of disciples increased. During this time a large number of priests became obedient to the faith also.
5. In Acts 6:5 Stephen is described as a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 6:8 Stephen was a man full of God's grace and power, who performed great wonders and signs among the people.
6. Stephen was preaching at the Synagogue of the Freedman when Jews from Cyrene, Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia began to argue with him. This is recorded in Acts 6:9.
7. Stephen was accused of speaking 'blasphemous words against Moses and against God.' False witnesses were produced to accuse Stephen of speaking against the Temple and against the law. They claim to have heard Stephen say that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to the Jews.
8. The high priest asked Stephen, "Are these charges true?"
9. Summarising from Acts 7:46-50, Stephen quoted from the Old Testament by saying, God does not live in houses made by human hands. Heaven is the throne of God and earth is a mere footstool. What kind of house can any human build for God?
10. Stephen reminded the Jews that they had disobeyed the prophets from ancient times and they are still resisting the Holy Spirit and when God sent the Messiah, they murdered Him too. Although the Jews had the special honour of being given the Law, they had not obeyed it.
11. The last words of Stephen before he died was "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." Acts 7:60

Challenge Questions

1. In Acts 6:1-2 the apostles assigned the distribution of food to 7 specially selected men. Why didn't they do the work themselves? The reason given was so that they could devote themselves, their time and attention to prayer and the ministry of the word. The New Living Translation uses the phrase 'teaching the word of God'. This was a very critical time. The apostles were the few who had followed Jesus in the last three years of Jesus' ministry on earth. They were eyewitnesses to the teaching and healing wonders of Jesus. They had to impart the teachings of the word to the new disciples. There were so many thousand new disciples or followers of Jesus now. The apostles had to have an intensive programme of teaching to try and 'bring up to speed' all the new disciples so that they could go and make more disciples. It was an intensive period of teaching and learning before persecution came and scattered the church which did happen. But by then, many of the new disciples were already well equipped to preach the gospel.
2. Saul was specifically mentioned in Acts 7:58 to show his complicity in the murder of Stephen. Saul later known as Paul would refer to his actions here with regret and sorrow and so Luke had to give us an account of the actual event here. Saul came from Tarsus a province of Cilicia. It is mentioned in Acts 6:9 that people from Cilicia argued with Stephen. It is very likely that Saul was among them as he was from Cilicia. But later Saul would learn the truth of the gospel and he would become one of the foremost apostles who preached the gospel and set up churches in many Gentile countries.

Application Questions.

1. Ask the students to read Luke 23:34 and compare it with the words of Stephen in Acts 7:60. Ask the students give their own comments and opinion

Challenge Application Question.

1. Ask the students to give their opinions.

Answers to Multimedia Quiz

1. B Refer to Acts 6:1
2. E Refer to Acts 6:3
3. E Refer to Acts 6:13
4. D Refer to Acts 7:55-56
5. C Refer to Acts 7:57
6. A Refer to Acts 7:58
7. B Refer to Acts 7:60
8. C
9. B Refer to Acts 8:1&3

Answers to Discussion Questions in the Multimedia

1. **Why did the apostles ask the church to select seven people, full of the Spirit and wisdom, to help them in the administrative matters of the church?**
Points to consider:
 - The church as growing rapidly. There were now more than 5,000 members. The 12 apostles found it difficult to serve them as well as carry on the task of teaching and preaching.
 - Some groups i.e. the Greek speaking believers complained that their widows were overlooked in the distribution of food.
 - The apostles now had to delegate some of the daily work to qualified people who could help.
 - The apostles wanted to concentrate on the task of teaching the word of God and prayer (Acts 6:2-4).
 - Note the qualification of the seven (sometimes referred to as deacons): full of the Spirit and wisdom.
2. **Why do you think the people of the Synagogue were so angry with Stephen?**
Background history. The 'Freedmen' referred to in Acts 6:9 were probably Jews who once were Roman prisoners and slaves (or their descendants) who had later been granted their freedom. A large number of Jews were taken prisoner by the Roman general Pompey (66 BC) and later released in Rome. You can ask the older children this question and ask them to give reasons for their answers. There are no direct answers to this question in the Bible but it is more important to hear their reasons.
3. **Why didn't the Lord send an army of angels to protect or rescue Stephen?**
Ask the children to give their own opinions. Points to consider:
 - Why didn't God send an army of angels to protect Jesus when the Temple guards and Romans came to arrest Him at the Garden of Gethsemane? (Matt 26:53)
 - Why did God allow Jesus to go through the temptation in the wilderness and only after He had been tempted, sent angels to minister to Him?
 - Acts 8 tells us that as a result of the persecution that followed after Stephen's death, the gospel spread throughout the Judean countryside and Samaria.
4. **What do we learn about Stephen and Saul in this story?**
Ask the children to describe the characteristics of Stephen and Saul. How were they similar, yet different? Knowing that, later Saul would later become Paul the great apostle and missionary, what characteristics can we see in Saul even in this story?

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Lesson 7: THE GOSPEL SPREADS TO SAMARIA

Based on chapter 5 of the text book and story 5 of the multimedia DVD-R

Bible Truth: Sometimes God will use difficult circumstances to make us realise that our lives have grown so comfortable that we miss out on what God wants us to do.

Lesson: The Gospel spreads across the first ethnic boundary. Samaritans are the first non-Jews to receive the Good News.

Bible Reference: Acts 8:1-40

Verse to Think About: Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24. (NIV)

Lesson Objective: The persecution of the church by the Jewish leaders causes the believers to flee Jerusalem and to spread the gospel to the Judean countryside and to Samaria. Sometimes God will use difficult circumstances to make us realise that our lives have grown so comfortable that we miss out on what God wants us to do. That the students will examine their lives to see if they are following what God wants them to do.

Multimedia: The lesson is based on chapter 5 in the text book and the DVD-R

Answers to Workbook

Questions

1. Saul was leading the persecution in Jerusalem.
2. The believers who fled Jerusalem and scattered to the countryside preached and shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ wherever they went.
3. Philip travelled to Samaria and proclaimed the gospel there.
4. Miraculous signs were performed by Philip such as healing of paralytics and cripples and even casting out of demons.
5. The Bible does not give much detail about what was in Philip's report. However based on what was described in Acts 8:1-13, we can deduce that the report included all the things that were stated in the passage of verse 1 to 13 of chapter 8. In the text book, we have dramatized the report but it is based on the passage mentioned.
6. The Jerusalem church sent Peter and John to see what was happening in Samaria.
7. Ask the students to write in their own words. The answer is found in Acts 8:17-25.
8. The answer is found in Acts 8:26-39.
9. After the encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch, Philip appeared at Azotus and travelled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea (Acts 8:40).

Challenge Questions

1. This was at a time when the New Testament church had just started. The Jerusalem church acted like the governing body. The apostles who had followed Jesus and studied directly from the Master were the only ones who could teach. Otherwise there could be a lot of false teachings and people trying to take advantage of the new growing number of believers to form sub groups or deviant groups. The leaders of the church in Jerusalem had to see for themselves that what was happening in Jerusalem was really in line with scripture before they could say that this was the true working of God. The apostles sent Peter and John because they were highly regarded and respected by all the disciples. Peter and John were also 2 of the 3 disciples who were very close to Jesus. Peter was also commissioned by Jesus to be the leader of the church after His resurrection. If Peter and John could witness and testify that God was bringing the Samaritans into His kingdom as Philip had reported, then it must be so.
2. The eunuch was reading a passage from the Old Testament found in Isaiah 53:L7-8.
*⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

⁸ By oppression[a] and judgment he was taken away.

Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished (NIV)

Jesus' suffering and death on the cross had been prophesied by Isaiah who lived 700 years ago. This passage together with many other passages found in the Old Testament showed that Jesus was God's Messiah sent to free us from sin. Philip then explained to the Eunuch how Jesus had come and fulfilled all these Old Testament prophecies. The Eunuch believed and asked to be baptised immediately.

Application Questions.

1. Sometimes adverse situations gives us opportunities to do good things. Example a friend has problems. How can we help? Doing good without expecting returns will bring about better trust. Sometimes we may face difficult situations ourselves. How we conduct ourselves will show others what kind of people we are. Ask the students to share their experiences. They may be Christian or non-Christian. There are still live testimonies which we all can learn from.
2. Philip went wherever the Holy Spirit brought him and proclaimed the gospel there. Where there was a need like Samaria, he performed many miracles, signs and wonders. Where he needed just to share from God's word, he did so, correctly explaining how the prophecies of the Old Testament about the coming Messiah were fulfilled through Jesus Christ. When have we been in situations where we feel led to be at a place initially not knowing why we are there but later finding out there were good reasons. Ask the students to share.

Challenge Application Question.

1. Ask the students to share their thoughts.
 - a. For the Christian student the logic flow can be as follows. Can we buy status, blessing, talents and spiritual gifts from God? Most would answer or should answer NO. When are we tempted to make such assumptions? When was the last time you donated money with the expectation that you should receive greater respect for making such a donation? When was the last time you did something wrong and instead of repenting and asking God for forgiveness you donated money to some charity and continued the sinful action? When was the last time you thought that by appearing to do all the spiritual actions you could gain respect from people and have greater influence over them? Is this a good motive? When instead of giving God time we just substitute it with some money. Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.
1 Sam 15:22 b (NLT)

- b. For the non-Christian student the logic flow can be as follows. If we believe that God is the one who gives us our talents and gifts – do you think we can buy these blessings with money? Why do you think God who created the Universe and owns everything, would want a little money from us? When might you have tried to buy a favour from God? When we know we have done something against our conscience, instead of repenting we 'pay a fine' to God and keep on doing it.
2. Approach God in humility, asking God to bless us with good things so that God's name is honoured or we can bless others with it. Asking God for talents and gifts so that it will benefit the Church and bless others is in line with Scripture.

Answers to Multimedia Quiz

1. B Refer to Acts 8:4
2. D Refer to Acts 8:5
3. D Refer to Acts 8:6-7
4. E Refer to Acts 8:14
5. D Refer to Acts 8:20
6. C Refer to Acts 8:27
7. E Refer to Acts 8:28
8. A Refer to Acts 8:39

Answers to Discussion Questions in the Multimedia

1. **Why do you think the Jerusalem church sent Peter and John to see what was happening in Samaria?**
Up to this point in time, the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were not sure whether Gentiles and Samaritans (mixed Jewish race) could receive the Holy Spirit. In Luke 9:51-59, apostle John and his brother James had asked Jesus if they should call down fire from heaven to burn up a Samaritan village that refused to welcome them. Now Luke records that this same John together with Simon Peter was called to go to a town in Samaria to see if God had really granted them forgiveness and entry into His kingdom.
Points to consider:
 - There is an orderly way in which God led His church even as it was expanding. Peter and John were chosen to go and witness what was happening in Samaria. They would then officially confirm that the Holy Spirit had been given to the Samaritans and therefore God had accepted them into His kingdom.
2. **Why did the Lord lead Philip to meet the Ethiopian eunuch?**
Ask the children this question. Even young children can be asked to answer as long as they can understand the question.
3. **What does this story teach us about the way God works?**
Ask volunteers to summarize the story. Then ask other volunteers to comment where they can see God's divine intervention, and how it affected the growth of the church.

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Lesson 8: SAUL THE PERSECUTOR MEETS JESUS ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

Based on chapter 6 part 1 of the text book and story 6 part 1 of the multimedia DVD-R

Bible Truth: Our lives will be changed when we truly know Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

Lesson: God disciplines Saul to prepare him for his task ahead as the apostle Paul. We must be willing to accept God's discipline to become better people.

Bible Reference: Acts 9:1-22

Verse to Think About: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17. (NIV)

Lesson Objective: Our lives will be changed when we truly know Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. God disciplines Saul to prepare him for his task ahead as the apostle Paul. We must be willing to accept God's discipline to become better people. When we learn of our mistakes, let us not be afraid to admit our error and change our ways.

Multimedia: The lesson is based on chapter 6 part 1 in the text book and the DVD-R. Play chapter 6 of the multimedia until Acts 9:22. And Quiz Questions 1 until Q7. Do Discussion Question 1.

Answers to Workbook

Questions

1. He was a young Pharisee who was very zealous in destroying the church of Jesus Christ
2. He obtained letters from the high priest to authorise him to go to Damascus and imprison all the followers of Jesus in that city.
3. While he was on the road to Damascus a bright light flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"
"Who are you, Lord?" asked Saul. The voice replied, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." Saul then became blind and had to be led into the city (Acts 9:4-8).
4. Ananias was afraid because he knew that Saul was coming to Damascus to arrest the followers of Jesus.
5. The Lord Jesus told Ananias that He had plans for Saul to bear witness for Him before kings and princes and that he would suffer.
6. Ask the students to describe the story told in Acts 9:17-19.

Challenge Questions

1. Saul was very zealous and devoted to his faith in Judaism. He saw that many Jews were being converted into the new faith called 'The Way' or

Nazarenes at that time. He realised that this new faith was a threat to Judaism because although they were still Jews, but they no longer followed the Jewish rituals of sacrifice. At this point and even till today, Judaism is an important point in the Jewish national culture and identity. He wanted to 'nip' the problem at the bud, i.e. while it was still young. Gamaliel was Saul's teacher (Acts 22:3). Gamaliel was the one who told the ruling council to release the apostles in Acts 5:34 because one cannot fight against the work of God and if it were the work of mere man, it would die off by itself.

2. The event referred to here is the martyrdom of Stephen and the subsequent persecution of the believers led by Saul. Saul later known as Paul would see his past zealous life with regret but he also knew that God had called him from his terrible past to do an important duty in his new life.
 - a. Acts 22:3-5 3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. 4 I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, 5 as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their as

sociates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished (NIV).

- b. Acts 22:20 And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' (NIV)
- c. Acts 26:10 And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord's people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them (NIV).
- d. Romans 1:32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them (NIV).
- e. Galatians 1:13 For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it (NIV).
- f. Philippians 3:4-7 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. 7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ (NIV).

Application Questions.

1. Before Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, he was a proud, arrogant and zealous to the point of being violent for his beliefs. When he left Jerusalem he was highly regarded by the high priest who had given him letters to go to Damascus to arrest the Christians in that city. Saul was a young proud Pharisee who was taught by Gamaliel, a very highly respected teacher in the ruling circle. He had access to the top local person i.e. the high priest. People feared him. After he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, he was blinded. Realising that so many things he had done in Jerusalem for God, was really against God, he must have been very confused and had to re-think his beliefs and convictions. When he stepped into Damascus he was led as a blind man and hid in the house of a believer. He did not eat or drink for three days. When Ananias found Saul, this proud Pharisee, now blinded, confused and half starving must have been glad that somebody could explain what happened to him and helped him to miraculously receive back his sight – both physically and spiritually. Ask the students to think was there a time when they were very proud about what they were or had achieved and had to be brought down to earth or disciplined by God before they could really improve. What steps did they have to take before they were back on the path of improvement and progress?

Challenge Application Question.

1. Ask the students to share their experience

Answers to Multimedia Quiz

1. B Refer to Acts 9:2
2. E Refer to Acts 9:4-6
3. C Refer to Acts 9:9
4. D Refer to Acts 9:11
5. B Refer to Acts 9:13
6. D Refer to Acts 9:15-16
7. E Refer to Acts 9:21

Answers to Discussion Questions in the Multimedia

1. ***How do you think Ananias felt when the Lord instructed him to go and pray for Saul? What would you have done?***

Ask volunteers to describe what Saul had done so far. Imagine if they were a Christian in Damascus. How would they have reacted as they received news about what Saul was doing to Christians in Jerusalem? Now they heard that Saul was coming to Damascus with letters from the High Priest to do the same in Damascus. Suddenly, late one night they received a message asking them to go to a quiet place to pray for this persecutor named Saul. What would they do?

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Lesson 9: SAUL MEETS THE APOSTLES

Based on chapter 6 part 2 of the text book and story 6 part 2 of the multimedia DVD-R

Bible Truth: We are called to encourage one another in the body of Christ to live in ways that are right in God's eyes and pleasing to Him.

Lesson: When was the last time we were given a second chance? What did we do?

Bible Reference: Acts 9:23-31

Verse to Think About: And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Hebrews 10:24. (NIV)

Lesson Objective: Our lives will be changed when we truly know Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. God disciplines Saul to prepare him for his task ahead as the apostle Paul. We must be willing to accept God's discipline to become better people. When we learn of our mistakes, let us not be afraid to admit our error and change our ways.

Multimedia: The lesson is based on chapter 6 part 2 in the text book and the DVD-R. Play chapter 6 of the multimedia from Acts 9:19 onwards until the end and Quiz Questions from question 8 until the end. Do discussion Question 2, 3 and 4

Answers to Workbook

Questions

1. Ask the students to re-tell Acts 9:23-31 in their own words
2. When Saul learned of the conspiracy to murder him, his followers helped him to escape by lowering him in a basket from a window in the high walls of Damascus.
3. When Saul tried to meet up with the apostles, their first reaction was one of suspicion. Explain that this was natural because the apostles had seen how Saul was a key person in a mob that had murdered Stephen. Then Saul led a persecution which resulted in many believers being imprisoned and others fleeing away from Jerusalem. He left Jerusalem with letters from the high priest to arrest believers in Damascus but now he is back claiming to be a believer himself. They must have thought he was pretending to be a spy to fish for more Christians.
4. Finally it was Barnabas who came to Saul's help. He must have spoken with Saul himself and then personally testified to the apostles that he believed Saul was now a changed man.
5. Ask the students to write what they thought and send it as a whatsapp message.

Challenge Questions

1. Saul must have been preaching the gospel in Damascus. Time must have passed for Saul to have gained followers.
2. Ask the students to try and write out a play with words for characters such as: Saul, Barnabas, Peter and James the brother of Jesus. According to Galatians 1, Saul met with these two apostles together with Barnabas.

Application Questions

After becoming a Christian, Saul had undergone a big change of status with the world. Refer to the Bible passages and trace out how significant these changes were and comment on what could have driven Saul to accept these changes.

Saul before he became a Christian	Saul after he became a Christian
Acts 8:1 Approved of the Jews killing Stephen	Acts 9:8-9 he was led as a blind man into Damascus. He could not see and did not eat or drink for 3 days
Acts 8:3 Persecuted the Church dragging men and women to jail	Acts 9:20-22 He preached in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. People question what caused the turnaround, but Paul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah
Acts 9:1-2 He carried letter from the high priest authorizing him to go to Damascus to arrest Christians. Note: the high priest was highest Jewish authority next only to the local king.	Acts 9:23-25 He learned of a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him. His followers lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall by night.
Acts 9:13 Saul came to Damascus with intention to harm all the Christians	Acts 9:26,29-30 Saul tried to preach the gospel in Jerusalem among his old friends the Hellenistic Jews but now they tried to kill him. Now he is the target of a conspiracy to murder. He had to flee Jerusalem

The point of this exercise is to show how much Saul's status in the eyes of the world had dropped. He would have to undergo much persecution, and even worse later. What kept him going on? It has to be that he had found the truth in Jesus Christ.

Ask the students to write about when they had to do something good but it was not received well or it did not make them popular. How did it make them feel?

Challenge Application Question

1. After Saul left Jerusalem for Tarsus, the churches in Judea, Samaria and Galilee enjoyed a time of peace. The church had undergone heavy persecution. At first the persecution was led by Saul. This caused a dispersion of the believers which then led to the gospel being spread to the Judean country side and Samaria and even to parts of North Africa. Now there needed a time of rest for the church to strengthen and grow in the teaching of the word and in spiritual maturity. This rest was probably God's way of allowing the church time for recuperation and growth.

Answers to Multimedia Quiz

8. E Refer to Acts 9:26
9. E Refer to Acts 9:27

Answers to Discussion Questions in the Multimedia

2. **How do you think the apostles felt when they heard that Saul had returned to Jerusalem and wanted to meet them? What would you have done?**

You are one of the apostles in Jerusalem. Saul has ravaged your church. Your members are either imprisoned or are running away to the countryside. Saul left on an inquisition to Damascus. Then the news coming in is confusing. Without the benefit of TV or internet, the only news comes from witnesses or by word of mouth. The conflicting rumours are not confirmed officially. Now Saul has returned to Jerusalem and wants to meet up with the apostles. You are one of the apostles. What would you do?

3. **What can we learn from this story about Barnabas? How can we apply this in our life?**

If there is enough time, you can try a role playing exercise. Ask someone to play Apostle Peter and another to play Barnabas. Now ask 'Barnabas' to bring Saul's request i.e. to meet with the apostles, to 'Peter'. Then ask 'Peter' to respond and 'Barnabas' to plead for Saul/Paul with good reasons. See how the conversation comes out and ask the class to decide who has more convincing reasons.

4. **What can we learn from this story about God and how He chooses people to do His work?**

Ask the children, what was Saul's character before his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus? What were some of his good characteristics which God would use later on? What were some of his bad characteristics which the Holy Spirit would help him discard later in his life and ministry?

Epic of the Apostles Vol. 1

Lesson 10: PETER'S MIRACLES AND VISION

Based on chapter 7 and 8 in the text book and story 7 and 8 in the multimedia DVD-R

Bible Truth: God's people are empowered to do great things for Him not because of their abilities or how good they are but because of the Holy Spirit living in them.

Lesson: God's Spirit leads the apostles beyond ethnic and cultural boundaries. We must be willing to work across cultural boundaries.

Bible Reference: Acts 9:32-10:48, 11:1-18

Verse to Think About: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty. ^(NIV)
Zechariah 4:6b.

Lesson Objective: The Holy Spirit enables Peter to perform great miracles and shows him through a vision that the gospel is for all including the Gentiles. Peter realises that God is giving the church a new direction to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

That the student will rely on the Holy Spirit and not on their own abilities in all that they do for God.
That the student will thank God for His gift of salvation that is given to everyone who believes and follow His teachings.

Multimedia: Based on chapter 7 and 8 in the text book and DVD-R

NOTE: In the Teens workbook we have combined chapter 7 and 8 because it is difficult to separate the lessons. The two chapters repeat a similar event to emphasis its significance in the history of the church. We tell it in two chapters in the Sunday school environment but for teens it is better to combine them. However, if time is needed to complete the many questions in the workbook, the teacher can break this into two sessions.

Answers to Workbook

Questions

1. Peter was in the town of Lydda when he met and healed Aeneas the paralysed man. Ask the children to look at the map and locate the town of Lydda.
2. The Bible says all who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him healed and believed and followed Jesus (Acts 9:34).
3. Peter travelled to Joppa where the disciples asked him to pray for a beloved sister named Tabitha. Even though she had died and her body had been washed and placed in an upstairs room (to indicate that she had really died and some hours had passed), Peter went to her side and prayed for her. She became alive again.
4. Cornelius and his family were God-fearers. Refer to the text book about who God-fearers are. They were a category of believers in the God of Israel but who were not yet circumcised. Cornelius lived in Caesarea. Ask the students to look at the map to see where Caesarea is. The message he received from the angel was to look for someone named Peter in Joppa.
5. Peter was sitting and praying on the roof of the house when he received a vision. Ask the students to describe the vision mentioned in Acts 10:9-19.
6. While Peter was sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the people in the house of Cornelius the Holy Spirit came upon all who heard the message. Ask the students to describe the events mentioned in Acts 10: 34-48.
7. Back in Jerusalem the circumcised believers criticized Peter for entering the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them. They questioned Peter's judgment in doing this instead of rejoicing with him about the uncircumcised people believing in Jesus.
8. Ask the students to describe Acts 11:5-18
9. The answer is in Acts 11:17-18.

Challenge Questions

1. The unclean food symbolised the uncircumcised people. What God has washed refers to those who although not in the original family of circumcised Israelites, they had become believers and God had given them the gift of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of the speaking of tongues, they should now be regarded as clean or as part of the family of God.
2. Ask the students to give their opinion. This was another major turning point in the history of the church. Now Gentiles, who were uncircumcised and did not observe Israel's dietary laws were accepted into the Kingdom of God. This was accepted after the testimony of a very important witness, Simon Peter plus other Jews from Jerusalem. Now the Jerusalem church, up to this point still the HQ church, had accepted this fact. Luke puts this story on record and just to be sure no one missed it, he repeats the story.

Application Questions

1. Ask the students to discuss and share their views or share their own stories
2. Ask the students to read Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8 and share their opinion.

Challenge Application Question

1. At this point in time and Acts chapter 11, the Gospel of Jesus Christ had spread beyond the borders of Jerusalem and Judea. But it was mostly spread amongst the Jewish people. The barrier between Jewish Judaism and the world of the non-Jews was great. Circumcision, Kosher or dietary laws, and ritualistic laws still stood between them. It was difficult for the apostles who were all Jews to cross this boundary. God prepared Peter for this event by giving him a vision and then sending him to the home of a prominent Gentile to witness what God wanted the apostles to do. Ask the students to share their thoughts.

Answers to Multimedia Quiz

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| 1. B | Refer to Acts 9:33 | 9. A | Refer to Acts 11:5 |
| 2. D | Refer to Acts 9:36 | 10. E | Refer to Acts 11:6 |
| 3. C | Refer to Acts 9:43 | 11. C | Refer to Acts 11:7 |
| 4. B | Refer to Acts 10:1-2 | 12. B | Refer to Acts 11:8 |
| 5. C | Refer to Acts 10:27 | 13. C | Refer to Acts 11:9 |
| 6. A | Refer to Acts 10:45-46 | 14. C | Refer to Acts 11:10 |
| 7. C | Refer to Acts 10:47-48 | 15. D | Refer to Acts 11:18 |
| 8. D | Refer to Acts 10:28 and 11:2-3 | | |

Answers to Discussion Questions in the Multimedia

1. **What was Tabitha also named Dorcas well known for?**
Acts 9:36 tells us that Tabitha or Dorcas was well known for doing kind things for others and helping the poor. Acts 9:39 emphasises the point again.

2. **Would Peter have welcomed the three men sent by Cornelius into his house?**

Peter would have struggled with this question as he says so in Acts 10:28, it being unlawful for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile home and likewise, vice versa for a Gentile to enter a Jewish house. The kind centurion who wanted Jesus to heal his servant also recognized this as recorded in Luke 7:1-10. Paul later makes the point that belief in Jesus Christ breaks the barrier between Jews and Gentiles (Colossians 3:11).

3. **Why were the Jewish disciples surprised that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been given to the Gentiles? Why did Peter suggest that they to be baptised immediately?**

The Jewish Christians were taught and brought up in the Old Testament teachings. They found it hard to accept that God was now 'pouring' His Spirit to all who believed in Jesus Christ. These Gentiles had not undergone circumcision or taken part in Jewish rites or kept Sabbath and Mosaic dietary laws. Yet, God showed that He had accepted them based on their faith in Jesus Christ.

4. **How do you think Peter felt when he first saw the vision and heard the voice telling him to kill and eat any of the animals?**

Ask the children if there is any food they don't like because they think tastes 'yucky' and have not been eating it for many years. Then later, their parents tell them to eat it because it is good for their health. That was how Peter must have felt, and worst, because he was taught from young that such food was unclean and unlawful. But now, a very clear message from God was telling him to kill and eat (three times). God was gently, slowly revealing to him that the Gospel was for all, including the Gentiles.

5. **What do you think Peter and the other brethren learnt when they saw the Holy Spirit come upon all those who believed in the house of Cornelius?**

Luke records that in Acts 10:44-46, the Jewish Christians who were present with Peter witnessed the pouring of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles and so they did not object to them being baptised. Later, in Acts 11:15-18, after hearing the testimony of Peter and those present in the home of Cornelius, the church in Jerusalem accepted the fact that Gentiles who repented and put their trust in Christ could receive forgiveness and eternal life.

6. **What can we learn from this story about the Christians at that time and about God?**

Points to consider:

- Up to this point, most of the Christians were Jewish and still held on to the Old Testament laws.
- However, they were obedient and were willing to learn from what the Holy Spirit was showing them.
- God gently, but progressively revealed, His plan and purposes to the Church. The gospel was for the whole world, but it would be a step at a time. First the Jews, then the Samaritans (mixed- Jews) and finally the Gentiles (non-Jews).
- At this point you can ask the children to invite Jesus into their hearts as their Lord and Saviour or if they have done so already, to re-dedicate themselves to Jesus.

Epic of the Apostles Vol. 1

Lesson 11: BARNABAS THE ENCOURAGER AND THE ANTIOCH CHURCH

Based on chapter 9 of the text book and story 9 of the multimedia DVD-R

Bible Truth: There is a fast growing church in Antioch and Barnabas, a man full of the Holy Spirit and faith, is sent to oversee it. Barnabas, led by the Holy Spirit, goes and personally encourages Saul to join him in building up the Antioch church.

Application: God uses believers who are good and faithful and empowered by His Holy Spirit to encourage and build up His church.

Bible Reference: Acts 11:19-30

Memory Verse: He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. Acts 11:24. (NIV)

Lesson Objective: There is fast growing church in Antioch and Barnabas, a man full of the Holy Spirit and faith, is sent to oversee it. Barnabas, led by the Holy Spirit, goes and personally encourages Saul to join him in building up the Antioch church. Barnabas chose Saul to help him based on his belief that Saul was the right person for the job, even though Saul was a former persecutor of the church and when Saul first tried to meet the apostles he had received a cold welcome. Barnabas did not choose a politically correct or popular person. He chose with wisdom given to him by the Holy Spirit. Help the students to learn to follow this example.

Multimedia: Based on chapter 9 in the text book and DVD-R

Answers to Workbook

Questions

- Men from Cyprus and Cyrene went to Antioch and they began preaching to the Greeks or non-Jews and the Lord's hand was with them. A great number of the people believed and turned to the Lord (Acts 11:20).
- Ask the students to recall all that has been mentioned about Barnabas in Acts up to this point.
- Barnabas was sent to see what was happening in Antioch by the Jerusalem church. When he arrived he realised that it was the work of God that so many had turned to follow Jesus. He was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people continued to join the church (Acts 11:22-24).
- The numbers in the church must have grown a lot by now and Barnabas realised he needed help. So he called Saul to join him.
- Ask the students to look at the map and see where Tarsus was in relation to Antioch. He had to travel a distance to look for Saul. Refer to the map on pg. 25 in the student workbook.
- The prophet Agabus was among some prophets who came from Jerusalem to Antioch. He predicted through the Holy Spirit that a severe famine was going to spread over the entire Roman world. This happened during the reign of Claudius (Acts 11:27-28).
- When the believers in Antioch heard about this they decided they would take a collection to help the believers in Judea and then they sent their gift to the elders in Judea by Barnabas and Saul.

Challenge Questions

- What we know about Saul up to this point in Acts:
 - He was a Jew who was born in Tarsus in the province Cilicia. He understood Greek and probably could relate with the Hellenistic culture
 - He was educated in Jerusalem and knew how the Jews think also.
 - Saul was a highly learned man. He was trained by one of the best teachers to be a Pharisee. The Pharisees were the strictest sect of Jewish

teachers at that time which meant that he understood the Mosaic laws very well. By this training he would also have to be knowledgeable in Hebrew.

- d. He was a passionate and zealous person. He persecuted the church when he thought the church was wrong. Once he realised his mistake, he passionately preached the gospel wherever he went and even at great risk to his own life.

Based on the above information about Saul, Barnabas was probably very impressed that Saul had a lot of potential and needed someone to guide him at this point in time. Barnabas, as noted was full of the Holy Spirit. So it is probably also at the prompting of the Holy Spirit that Barnabas decided he had to call Saul to join his ministry in Antioch.

2. The Antioch church was the first predominantly Gentile Church. First church outside of Jerusalem and the land of Israel. The first where the believers were called Christians. At that time, the term Christian or followers of Christ were used in a derisive manner. Something like, those 'Jesus follower fellas'.

Application Questions

1. The planting of the church in Antioch was not planned by the Jerusalem church. It was planted by believers who returned to their adopted countries and who decided to share the gospel with residents of that city. The church spontaneously grew from the preaching and sharing of individuals who were convicted by the Holy Spirit to testify the goodness of God. Of course later when Barnabas and Saul arrived, then they would have brought proper teaching to the church. The point here is that the believers from Cyprus and Cyrene started sharing the gospel with whoever was listening possibly while they were doing business in that place. Ask the students how they share good news or do good things where there is an opportunity. The Christian students can share about how they witness when there is opportunity.
2. When the believers in Antioch heard about a famine and the needs of the church in Judea, what did they do? Ask the students what can we learn from this or share some experience they have in the past?

Challenge Application Question

1. We know that Barnabas came from Cyprus. He had been trained by the apostles from the beginning by the apostles since the first Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers. He was a good choice to visit the Antioch church. But what did he do? We know that the Antioch church was predominantly Gentile. Did Barnabas insist that the believers should be circumcised first? Did he insist they should follow all the dietary laws? No he did not. Instead he encouraged them in their faith in Jesus. I believe the Holy Spirit had given Barnabas wisdom in handling the Antioch church so that they continued to grow in great numbers. Ask the Christian students for their opinion.

Answers to Multimedia Quiz

1. B Refer to Acts 11:19
2. A Refer to Acts 11:20
3. E Refer to Acts 11:22
4. C Refer to Acts 11:24
5. E Refer to Acts 11:25
6. B Refer to Acts 11:25
7. D Refer to Acts 11:28
8. A Refer to Acts 11:30
9. C Refer to Acts 12:25

Answers to Discussion Questions in the Multimedia

1. **Why did Barnabas search for Saul in Tarsus when he needed help in Antioch?**

Points to consider:

- Antioch had a predominantly Gentile population. Many of the Christians were either Hellenistic Jews or Gentiles.
- Barnabas was a Hellenistic Jew – born in Cyprus.
- Paul was a Hellenistic Jew – born in Tarsus – but trained as a Pharisee in Jerusalem. He studied under a famous teacher, Gamaliel. Therefore he was knowledgeable in the Old Testament, but yet understood the Greek culture.

2. **How do you think Saul felt when he was approached by Barnabas to help him in the Antioch church?**

Ask the children to answer and give their own opinions.

Points to consider:

- About 7 years ago, Saul/Paul was sent away from Jerusalem.
- Not very much is said about this period of Paul's life.
- Now, a friend and respected leader from Jerusalem asks him for help to build up the Antioch church.
- How would they feel and what would they do?

3. **How do you think the believers in Antioch and Jerusalem reacted when they heard that Saul was coming to the church in Antioch?**

Like the earlier question, this question has no definitive answers. This question attempts to get the children to give an opinion and to back it up with reasons. Perhaps you could ask the (11-12 yrs) older children to debate this question: one team argues why the Antioch church might have reacted negatively while the other team argues that they reacted positively.

4. **How do you think God uses people like Barnabas and us in carrying out His will?**

Ask the children what they think was Barnabas's main contribution to the Antioch and the early church.

Points to consider:

- He was generous.
- He was a 'good man, full of the Holy Spirit'.
- He encouraged the Antioch church and many people to joined.
- He encouraged Paul.
- He encouraged John Mark.
- As a result of his encouragement, the gospel spread far and wide.

Epic of the Apostles Vol. 1

Lesson 12: PERSECUTION IN JERUSALEM AND PETER'S ESCAPE

Based on chapter 10 of the text book and story 10 of the multimedia DVD-R

Bible Truth: We are not to be discouraged when bad things happen to us but we are to pray to God and trust Him to deliver us.

Application: Learn to see opportunities in difficult situations for us to do good and spread God's word.

Bible Reference: Acts 12:1-25

Memory Verse: I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.
Psalm 34:4. (NIV)

Lesson Objective: We are not to be discouraged when bad things happen to us but we are to pray to God and trust Him to deliver us. Learn to see opportunities in difficult situations for us to do good and spread God's word. That the children will pray to God and place their trust in Him when they face problems and difficulties in their life.

Multimedia: Based on chapter 10 in the text book and DVD-R

Answers to Workbook

Questions

1. King Herod was the local ruler at that time. To be precise, he is Herod Agrippa I the grandson of Herod the Great who murdered the children of Bethlehem during the birth of Jesus. But an answer with King Herod should be sufficient since that is mentioned in Acts 12:1.
2. He arrested John the brother of James and executed him. He saw that this pleased the Jews, or at least the Jewish leader, he then proceeded to have Peter arrested.
3. He intended to bring Peter out for public trial after the Passover festival and have him executed.
4. Herod had 4 squads each with 4 soldiers to guard Peter so make sure he did not escape.
5. Ask the students to describe the rescue by the angel found in Acts 12:6-12.
6. Once Peter realised that he was free, he went to the home Mary the mother of John Mark.
7. When Herod found out that Peter was missing from prison he made a thorough search and could not find him. Then he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed
8. Peter left Judea and went to Caesarea and stayed there for some time.
9. Ask the students to relate the story found in Acts 12:20-24.

Challenge Questions

1. Herod Agrippa was king over the Jews. He was aware of the Jewish laws of blasphemy. He must never assume to take the place of God. But when the foreigners gave him praises which were for God only by Jewish laws, Herod happily accepted it. By doing so he was assuming the place of God. He therefore received the punishment of blasphemy. Since people did not have the power to punish him, he thought he would not be caught. But the sin does escape God's judgment. The author Luke has shown how careful the apostles were never to receive worship or praise which was reserved for God. When Peter entered the house of Cornelius and the servants bowed before him, Peter quickly corrected them and told them he was only human, just like them.
2. Herod had 16 guards to watch Peter. At night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers. He was bound with not one, but two chains and guards stood at the entrances. The angel led Peter through a first and second set of guards and then opened an iron gate which allowed them to go to the city.

Application Questions

1. The church of Jerusalem and all the believers were praying for Peter's safety. When Peter was rescued they could not believe that their prayers had been answered (Acts 12:13-17). It is ironic and funny that the people who were praying so hard for him, could not believe it when Peter presented himself in front of their house. They thought the person at the gate was an angel coming to announce to them some terrible news.
2. Ask the students to think about when we are tempted to take credit for things we did not do or what is our response when we know someone is praising us too much?

Challenge Application Question

1. Ask the students to consider this question. After Peter was rescued from prison, he presented himself to the apostles and believers in Jerusalem. Then he left for Caesarea. From later epistles, we know that Peter travelled to parts of Asia, Galatia and Corinth where Saul had set up churches. Peter continued to preach. What can we learn from Peter's actions after his prison and near death experience with King Herod? He had stayed in Judea until now. The historian Josephus tells us that Herod Agrippa died after blaspheming God around the year 44 AD. This means that Peter had stayed mostly in Judea for about 14 years after receiving the Great Commission from Jesus to go to the ends of the earth. Now it is as though God is giving him a push to go out beyond Judea to the ends of the earth and fulfil the Great Commission.

Answers to Multimedia Quiz

1. C Acts 12:1 mentions King Herod. From the history notes given in the introduction we have stated that this refers to Herod Agrippa I.
2. D Refer to Acts 12:3
3. B Refer to Acts 12:2
4. A Refer to Acts 12:3
5. C Refer to Acts 12:7-10
6. D Refer to Acts 12:12
7. C Refer to Acts 12:13
8. E Refer to Acts 12:17

Answers to Discussion Questions in the Multimedia

1. **Why was Herod Agrippa I given a severe punishment?**
This event probably took place sometime in AD 44. Herod Agrippa gave an audience to representatives from nearby cities of Tyre and Sidon. After giving an address, the people called him a god and not a man (Acts 12:22). Herod accepted their praise and in doing so had sinned against God. Bible commentaries explain that God Himself acts against those who try to usurp His position and claim divine honours for themselves. Therefore Herod was punished. Josephus the Jewish historian, records this event with almost similar details.
2. **Why did Peter think he was still dreaming even after he had been led out of the prison already?**
Ask the children to discuss this and give their opinions.
3. **How do you see God at work in this chapter?**
Ask volunteers from among the children to summarise this chapter and share their thoughts of how God has been acting behind the stories.

Epic of the Apostles Vol. 1

Lesson 13: EPILOGUE TO EPIC OF THE APOSTLES VOL. 1

Based on chapter 11 of the text book and story 11 of the multimedia DVD-R

Application: Revise the Memory Verse from lesson 3:

MV: 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 (NIV)

Revise the key lessons learnt from Acts Vol.1

1. Salvation is given through faith in the Lord Jesus. There is no other way back to God except by faith in Christ Jesus.
2. The apostles have been given the task of spreading the Gospel message. They take their mission seriously even when facing opposition.
3. The apostles receive guidance from Scriptures and obey the instructions of the Holy Spirit. This enables them to share the Gospel effectively.

Lesson Objective: Revise the key lessons learnt from Acts Vol.1

1. Salvation is given through faith in the Lord Jesus. There is no other way back to God except by faith in Christ Jesus.
2. The apostles have been given the task of spreading the Gospel message. They take their mission seriously even when facing opposition.
3. The apostles receive guidance from Scriptures and obey the instructions of the Holy Spirit. This enables them to witness effectively.

Multimedia: Based on chapter 11 of the text book and DVD-R

Answers to Workbook

Questions

1. Acts 1:8 Jesus told His disciples, '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.' Jesus instructed His apostles to be his witnesses from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. Another verse is Matthew 28:19.
2. The Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to be effective preachers and teachers of the Gospel.
3. The Holy Spirit empowered Peter to give the first sermon on Pentecost day when 3000 joined the church. Later Peter was able to stand before the Sanhedrin and testify about Jesus. Previously he denied Jesus 3 times when questioned by some simple people. Now he was fearless before the ruling council. Philip was able to perform miracles and preach effectively. Barnabas was able to build the Antioch church up being full of the Holy Spirit. This is not an exhaustive list.
4. They share what material possessions they had with each other.
5. Ask the students to review the text book and go through the list.

6. Review the text book
7. Look at all the speeches given by Peter where he explains the work of Jesus on the cross.

Application Questions

1. Ask the students to review the lessons and write down their thoughts
2. Ask the students to think about what lessons they can learn and adopt from the study of Acts.

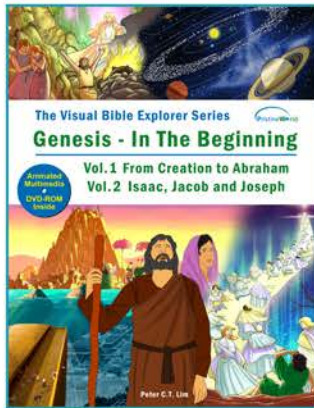
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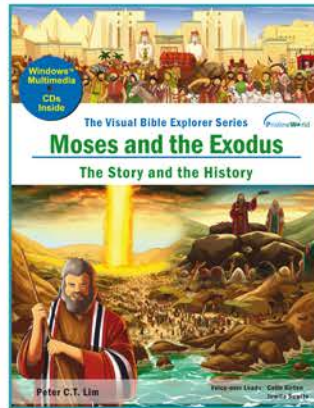
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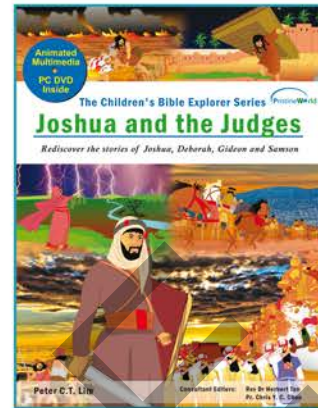
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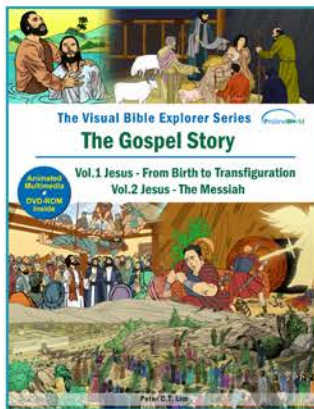
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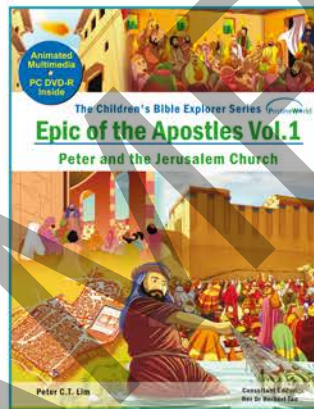
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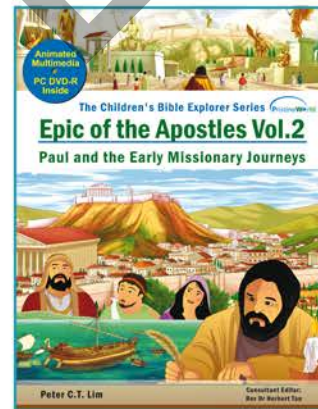
Joshua and the Judges



The Gospel Story



Epic of the Apostles Vol. 1



Epic of the Apostles Vol. 2



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