



10.16.11/ Acts 8:1-8

Materials Needed

Pen and paper

Opening Discussion

Ask the children to share a difficult situation they have faced (or that someone they know may have faced). Examples could include sickness, death, bullying, etc. Explain that in today's passage, we'll see how God can take our difficult circumstances and use them to help spread the news of Jesus to others.

Read Acts 8:1-8

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.

Summarize the Passage

Exciting things had been happening in Jerusalem after God sent the gift of the Holy Spirit (Draw a circle on the paper and write "Jerusalem" in the center). Many people believed in Jesus and were saved from their sins. The church was growing rapidly. But soon, as a result of the mighty works God was doing in Jerusalem, enemies started trying to stop people from believing in Jesus and persecution began. Persecution means that Christians were being treated unfairly and cruelly for teaching about Christ. In many cases they were being put in jail or even beaten. One of the apostles, Stephen, was even stoned to death because he was teaching about Jesus. God knew that there were people outside of Jerusalem that needed to hear the Good News about Jesus and that it was time for the believers to leave the comfort of Jerusalem and go to other places like Judea and Samaria (Draw a bigger circle around the first circle and write "Judea" and "Samaria" in that space).

Discussion

Read Acts 1:8 to refresh your memories with Jesus' final instructions to the apostles before He returned to heaven.

"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."

How does this instruction relate to our passage today? (Draw a larger circle around the other two and write "Raleigh" or "Durham," etc. and explain that this command is still true for us today when we are followers of Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit!)

Questions

1. The believers that left Jerusalem weren't running scared from the persecution of their enemies, they were being obedient to Jesus' command to go and share the Good News of Jesus. We have that same command today. How are you sharing the Good News about Jesus in your daily life? *Allow children to answer. To help guide them, ask how they might share at school, on their sports teams, or to their friends in the neighborhood.*
2. In verse 3, we see what Saul did to try to silence the Christians living in Jerusalem. Imagine sitting at your table with your family and Saul busts down your door and drags you and your family off to jail. If you were a believer living in Jerusalem, what



do you think you would feel like? *Scared, anxious, worried, uncomfortable, etc.* How do you think the believers were able to be courageous and leave their homes and continue to preach the Good News, even in new areas far away from all they'd ever known? *They were filled with the Holy Spirit and God enabled them to press on. And the joy of having a relationship with Christ far outweighed the difficult circumstances that were around them.*

Reflection/Prayer

Think about the difficult time you shared at the beginning of our time together. Ask God to show you how those hard times may be used to help you show Jesus to others (Leaders, if you have an appropriate example to share, do so at this time). Invite the children to speak to their parents if they have questions about what it means to follow Jesus.

Heavenly Father, we pray that the Holy Spirit will guide us in spreading your Good News to the ends of the earth. We pray that this week, you will provide opportunities for us to share how much we love you with our friends and family. Thank you for the Good News of Jesus Christ!