

2

Spreading the Word

Community
We experience God's love in our church.

POWER TEXT

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

KEY REFERENCES

- Acts 8:1-8
- *The Acts of the Apostles*, chap. 11, pp. 103-111
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 10, pp. 31-37
- Student story on page 32 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 3, The Father
- No. 11, Growing in Christ
- No. 14, Unity in the Body of Christ

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that love for Jesus binds us to Him and to each other.
- **Feel** joy in belonging to a group of God's people.
- **Respond** by rejoicing that they belong to His church.

POWERPOINT

God's love unites us and brings us joy.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

After the stoning of Stephen, the church is persecuted, especially by Saul. We might have expected that they would hide and stop preaching, but instead they move away from Jerusalem, preaching wherever they go. Philip goes to Samaria, preaching and performing great miracles. The unexpected outcome is that the church grows and is joyful in spite of the circumstances.

This is a lesson about community.

Even though separated by hardship and persecution, members of God's family are part of a community that perseveres in joyfully spreading His Word. God's people are not His people only when they go to church together. They are also a community of faith when they are scattered across the country or around the world. It is the story of Jesus and our love for Him that binds us together.

Teacher Enrichment

"There was danger that the disciples would linger [in Jerusalem] too long, unmindful of the Saviour's commission to go to all the world. . . . They began to think that they had no work so important as that of shielding the church in Jerusalem from the attacks of the enemy. . . . To scatter His representatives abroad, where they could work for others, God permitted persecution to come upon them. Driven from Jerusalem, the believers 'went everywhere preaching the word' " (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 105).

Acts 8:4 says, "Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went" (NIV). The Greek word translated "scattered" is *diaspeirō*, which means "to scatter like grain" or "to disperse." Because the scattered Christians witnessed, the persecution of Christians in Jerusalem had the opposite effect than the one the Jewish leadership expected. The message of a risen Christ spread. (See *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 212.)

What evidence of perseverance do I have in my life? What about Jesus' love binds me to Him?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson. Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	A. Ties That Bind B. Packing List	spools of thread, containers, *The SDA Hymnal*
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 27. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, food basket/bowl OR small travel bag, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	two copies of *Net Kids* script (p. 146) Bibles, "microphones," paper, pens/pencils Bibles, list of questions copied or written on a white/chalkboard, paper, pens/pencils, markers/chalk
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Scenarios*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Share the Caring*	stationery, stamps, pens/pencils, markers/chalk
* Closing		A. Prayer and closing comments B. Reminder to parents C. Coming up next week	

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READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:

- ☐ spools of thread
- ☐ containers
- ☐ *The SDA Hymnal*

Ties That Bind

Place several spools of thread in three or four containers on a table in the front of the room. Have the students stand at the back of the room. Instruct them to listen while you read the script. When they hear the word *church*, they are to come to a container, grab a spool of thread, stretch the thread one arm's length, break it, return to their place, and string the thread around their belt/watch band/button. Each time they hear the word *church* they are to get a string, placing the second string beside the first one, and so on. They will need to hurry to keep up with you, even though you talk slowly.

Script: **While Jesus was on earth, the disciples did not think of themselves as a *CHURCH*. But after the ascension, the disciples missed Jesus. They could have just returned to their old way of life. But they didn't, because the love of Jesus drew them together into a *CHURCH*. At first they spent their time together weeping and praying, but being together and sharing their love for Jesus made *CHURCH* a joyful place to be. Sometimes they stayed together late into the night, as when Peter was released from prison by an angel. He guessed where the *CHURCH* would be gathered in prayer meeting and went straight there. The believers could have been imprisoned for meeting together, but their prayer meetings were so joyful that nobody wanted to miss being at *CHURCH*. At first the believers thought that it was their job to stay in Jerusalem and tell people there all about Jesus. But when persecution came they moved away. The *CHURCH* members scattered to other places. And at every place, they told others about Jesus. So without realizing what was happening, the members of the *CHURCH* were helping it grow.**

Debriefing

Take one piece of thread and break it in front of the class, demonstrating how weak one thread alone is. Then ask everyone to hold all their threads together and test their strength. Ask: **What might these threads represent about us or the church?** (Being with other Christians makes us stronger; accept other responses.) Hold one end of all the threads in your hand while the students hold the ends of their threads. Have them fan out in the classroom. **If each of you has a strong tie to the church, what does that do for the church?** (It makes it strong too.) **Now suppose that one person in your church has to move away. What happens in the church?**

Ask students to choose the person with the longest tie as the person who moves away, and figure out a way to keep that person linked to the church. (They could join hands and stay connected or they might join their ties end to end, with the church holding one end and the "missionary" the other.) Sing "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" (*The SDA Hymnal*, no. 350). **Let's say together the power text, Romans 8:28,**

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Say: **Our power point today is:**

God's love unites us and brings us joy.

B

Packing List

Tell the students to sit in a circle.

Say: **You are disciples who have decided to leave Jerusalem and move to another place. You are deciding which of your possessions you will move and which you will leave. No one has anything to write with, so you must remember everything. To help yourself remember, you must say not only what you are going to take, but also what the people who speak before you are taking. The last person must repeat the whole list.** The first person in the circle will name an item. The second will repeat that name and add one. The third will repeat the first two items in order and add one and so on around the circle.

Debriefing

Ask: **What kind of items seem to be the most important to us? How would you feel if you knew the place you were moving was better than the place you now live?** (happy, less upset, etc.) **What advantages are there in moving from one place to another?**

Let's say together the power text, Romans 8:28:

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Say: **Our lesson this week is about a time in the early church when moving away from Jerusalem seemed like a terrible thing, but turned out to be a good thing. Looking at their experience, we will find out how:**

God's love unites us and brings us joy.

Prayer & Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"This Is the Day" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 98)
"Walking in the Spirit" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 73)
"We Are the Family of God" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 114)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students identify and mark with pushpins the location where the mission story is taking place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ food basket/bowl OR small travel bag

Say: **It's always a joy to be with other church members at events such as camporees, camp meetings, and youth rallies, but we can't always be with the Christians that we have met in other places. Yet we can help them spread the gospel by supporting their message with our offerings.**

Prayer

YOU NEED:
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Ask the students if they know of any missionaries or Christians who are working in other countries. Appoint a scribe to list on the board who and where they are. Pray specifically for these people, for those in today's mission story, and for the people from your church who have moved away. Close by praying for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, and for the visitors.

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ two scripts (p. 146)

Introducing the Bible Story

***The* Net Kids**

The *Net Kids* are an imaginative way to introduce the Bible story. If you prefer not to use this imaginary element, read over the script yourself and introduce the lesson concept in your own words.

(Refer to Lesson 1 for background and setup information.) Make two copies of the *Net Kids* script found on page 146 of this guide. Distribute to the students you have selected as early as possible. Allow practice time before using this activity.

Present the skit.

Debriefing

Say: **Tell me about a trip you have taken.** Ask questions such as: Where did you go? How did you get there? What did you like most about your trip? (Allow time for different students to respond.)

Say: **Today in our lesson we are going to talk about people who went on an unexpected trip at an unexpected time.**

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ "microphones"
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils

Experiencing the Story

Divide the class into groups. Within their groups, have the students read Acts 8:1-8. They will then pretend that they are a news reporting team. They will need a news anchor, two or three news correspondents on location, and two to four people (Philip, Saul, church deacon, person healed, new believer, Sanhedrin member, Temple priest, person who witnessed the stoning of Stephen, person who helped bury Stephen, etc.) to be interviewed. Each group will create a newscast reporting on the persecution and dispersion of members of the early church. The correspondents should be prepared to give background on Jesus, Pentecost, Stephen, etc. When each group is finished, they should put on their newscast for the class. Suggested questions for news correspondents to ask: 1. What is your name? 2. Where are you from? Why are you here? 3. Can you tell us what is going on here? 4. What was the mood of the crowd gathered here? 5. How do you explain the hope-filled expression on those people's faces who are mourning?

Debriefing

Ask: **If you had been living at that time, how do you think you would have felt when the persecutions started?** (scared, worried, etc.) **What would have been your plan of action? Remember:**

God's love unites us and brings us joy.

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ list of questions copied or written on a white/chalkboard
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils
- ☐ markers/chalk

Exploring the Bible

Write the following questions where the class can see them. Distribute Bibles, paper, and pens/pencils. Divide the class into groups and assign different questions to each group, then have the groups report to the whole class.

1. Read Acts 8:1. What does "on that day" refer to? (Skim the end of chapter 7.) (The day Stephen was killed)

2. Why do you think the apostles stayed in Jerusalem? (Perhaps to support and lead the church members who stayed there; to know what the Jewish leaders were planning, etc.)

3. Verse 2. What risks do you think these godly men took in burying Stephen? (This act identified them as believers, who might then be killed also.)

4. Verse 3. What did Saul do to try to destroy the church? (Arrested people and put them in prison.)

5. Verse 4. What was the effect of having church members scattered to other areas? (The word was preached everywhere they went; the gospel was taken to those living outside of Jerusalem/Judea.)

6. Verse 5. Where did Philip go? (to a city in Samaria)

7. The apostles stayed in Jerusalem. So this Philip is not the Philip who was one of Jesus' 12 disciples. Who was this Philip? Read Acts 6:1-6 to find out. (one of the seven deacons)

8. Verse 6. Why did the people pay close attention to what Philip said? (They heard him and saw what he did.)

9. Verse 7. What types of miracles did Philip do? (cast out evil spirits, healed paralytics and cripples) The miracles Philip performed were called signs. Explain what they were signs of. (of the truth of Philip's words about Jesus) Why were signs needed? (to convince people of the truth about Jesus)

10. Verse 8. What effect did Philip's visit have on this city? (There was great joy.)

Allow time to complete this assignment. Have the groups share their answers.

Say: **The persecution of the Christians living in Jerusalem seemed like a terrible thing. How did God bring a blessing out of this calamity?** (Christians who moved away from Jerusalem took the gospel to other areas; people in other areas were healed, learned about Jesus, and had joy in their lives.) **Let's say together the power text, Romans 8:28:**

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Remember our power point?

God's love unites us and brings us joy.

Say: **Even though the members of the early church were scattered across Judea and Samaria, they were united by their love for Jesus and their desire to tell others about Him. How was this experience one of joy?** (The message of Jesus brought joy to those who heard it; being healed brought joy to those who were healed and to their families; being part of a group of people who had hope in Jesus brought joy.)

3 APPLYING THE LESSON

Scenarios

Have the students number off, one, two, one, two, etc. Say: **I am going to read different scenarios. I want those of you who are number ones to think about how to handle the situation as if it were happening to you. I want number twos to think about how you could help a fellow Christian having the experience.** After you read each scenario, ask the ones: **What will you do?** Then ask the twos: **How can you help them?**

1. **Someone in your neighborhood steals items from an elderly woman's home and blames it on you. Although you tell her you're a Christian and wouldn't do such a thing, she doesn't believe you and calls the police.**

2. **Your school requires you to be in class on Sabbath morning. You ask to be excused, but your request is denied because other Seventh-day Adventists attend on Saturday. You get a zero for your schoolwork for every Saturday. Your chance of getting into a good school for advanced studies is dwindling.**

3. **You and another Pathfinder are out collecting food for a family in your church who have recently lost their father. The local constable says you need to have a permit. You explain that you are just trying to help another believer. It's nothing official. He insists on detaining you until your parents get home. That won't be for another three hours. You and the other Pathfinder are so upset you can't remember the Pathfinder director's or pastor's phone numbers.**

4. **Your uncle, who is raising you, forbids you to go to the Adventist church. He beats you when he finds that you have gone in spite of his command. The church has scheduled a baptism. Your uncle has sworn he will kill you if you are baptized.**

5. **Your friend Tom asks you questions about God. But when you invite him to church, Tom hesitates. He asks you to give him three reasons he should come with you.**

Debriefing

Ask: **What can God do for us even in negative situations?** (bring a blessing to us, etc.) **How can we find joy in difficult situations?** (from the support of other believers, etc.) **Repeat our power point with me:**

God's love unites us and brings us joy.

4 SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ stationery
- ☐ stamps
- ☐ pens/pencils

Share the Caring

Ask students to share if they were able to write a letter of encouragement to someone last week. Offer students the opportunity to write letters of encouragement today as well and to distribute them to members of your church community who are experiencing a difficult time. After Sabbath School class, distribute or mail these letters.

Debriefing

Ask: **What types of experiences might discourage a fellow church member?** (loss of job or family member, conflict with other people, lack of food, etc.) **How might a letter from you make that person feel?** (happy, joyful, etc.) **What does our power text remind us? Let's say it together:**

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

What does this week's power point say?

God's love unites us and brings us joy.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:
Pray again for missionaries and people who are living under difficult situations in various countries and in the church community. Pray that the class will support one another in everything.

Reminder to parents:
Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www .juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel =1.**

Coming up next week:
Say: **Saul is converted! We follow Jesus by serving others.**

Notes

Student lesson

Spreading the Word

How would you feel if you had to leave the only home you've ever known because of something you didn't even do? We often read about people who were driven from a place because of persecution. This story is about how a teen living at the time of the early church may have reacted.

The teenage girl was sure she was going to erupt. Standing outside the gate of Jerusalem, she leaned against a cart. Her stomach felt like a rope that had been tied and soaked in water. The hot sun, the sight of Stephen's dead body, and the women wailing in grief—all of it was too much. Her eyes frantically searched for her father. Spying him with a group of believers surrounding Philip, she just wanted to be near him.

The group split up.

"Abba," she cried, clutching her stomach.

"Daughter, I'm so sorry. I forgot you were with me," he said, rushing toward her. "You're sick. I knew I shouldn't have let you come."

"I want to go home," she whimpered. Her father whipped off his outer robe and laid it in the cart. He gently helped her in and draped canvas over the top to shield her from the sun.

Her father knew he'd get very little rest that night. He couldn't believe what he had seen today. It was definitely a turning point for the followers of Jesus. He was beginning to understand how angry the priests were against the believers. Saul, the young Pharisee was also in the crowd. Although he hadn't picked up so much as a pebble, Saul was an attentive observer of the stoning of Stephen.

When they reached home, the father walked around to the back of the cart to help his daughter.

"Feeling better?" he asked. She just smiled at him. Her head and stomach felt like her own again. Suddenly she heard someone call her father's name. The man sounded anxious and out of breath. She felt her stomach tighten again.

"Daughter," her father called.

"Yes, Father," she replied.

"Bring our guest some water. We will be meeting here instead of at Philip's."

When everyone had arrived, Father introduced the man whom she had heard speaking earlier. "Saul is on the warpath. Already he's going from house to house throwing believers into prison," the speaker said. "He has sworn to wipe us out. Philip has already gone. He thinks it's time for us to go to other places where we can spread the gospel freely."

"Is Samaria one of those places?" the father asked.

The speaker smiled. "Before He left, our Lord said we would be His witnesses in Samaria. Remember?" Everyone nodded. "Philip—and I—think the time has come."

The girl's head ached again. Leave Jerusalem and their home? The tears that she had held back streamed down her face.

She waited to talk with her father until everyone had left.

"Abba," she said.

"You're still awake?" he asked.

"How soon are we going to leave Jerusalem?" she asked.

"Probably in the next couple weeks."

"Oh," the girl moaned.

"I know it's not easy, but we must go," he said. "It's not safe for us here any longer."

Two weeks later they were traveling north from Jerusalem. They had packed only what they could take in the cart. News of Philip in Samaria had already reached the believers. The Samaritans had swarmed to hear Philip preach. Philip had impressed them not only with his words, but also with signs. He had healed the sick and cast out evil spirits, convincing the Samaritans that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

Now the girl and her father were moving to Phoenicia. It was so far away. It seemed like the end of the earth to her. "You know," her father said, "your mother would have been so happy."

The girl nodded yes. Before her mother had died, she had made her husband promise to take the good news to her family in Phoenicia.

"We probably should have moved to Tyre long ago," Father continued.

The girl thought about the house she had lived in all her life. She pictured the faces of her friends, whom she would never see again. Then her thoughts turned to her mother's family, to bringing them the news of the risen Christ.

"You know, Father," she said. Her father turned around from his place walking beside their donkey and looked at her.

"It's strange, isn't it?" she continued. "This persecution that's been so terrible has brought something good after all. Right?"

His smile said yes.

KEY REFERENCES

- Acts 8:1-8
- *The Acts of the Apostles*, chap. 11, pp. 103-111
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 10, pp. 31-37
- Our Beliefs nos. 3, 11, 14

POWER TEXT

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

POWER POINT

God's love unites us and brings us joy.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 19.

Sunday

READ Read Acts 7:54–58 and this week's story, "Spreading the Word."

REVIEW Begin memorizing the power text.

THINK When did a bad situation work for your good?

PRAY Thank God that you belong to a community of believers who can support one another in times of crisis.

Monday

READ Read Acts 7:59, 60.

SEARCH Look up the word "martyr" in the dictionary. What does it mean? How can a dead person witness?

FIND Where in the Bible is the word "martyr" used?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray that you will trust God to be with you, even when others are against you.

Tuesday

READ Read Acts 8:1, 2.

THINK Why did Stephen's death lead to persecution?

APPLY How do you decide whether to stay and fight or leave and be safe in a dangerous situation?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God that you are able to share the gospel.

Wednesday

READ Read Acts 8:3.

THINK In what ways could the believers support one another in this situation?

WRITE Write a letter of encouragement to someone.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray that your words and actions will uplift and support others in the church.

Thursday

READ Read Acts 8:4.

THINK What was good about the church being scattered? What did the apostles do everywhere they went?

SHARE Get the name and address of a missionary from your pastor and write that person a short letter.

PLOT Find a New Testament map and measure the distance between Samaria and Jerusalem.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray for the missionary you chose to write to.

Friday

READ Review Acts 8:5-8.

THINK Has anyone teased or hurt you for your faith? How did you react? What would have been the best way to respond when you were ridiculed for the sake of Jesus?

CREATE Write a story or skit about what happened in Jerusalem as if you are there.

PRESENT Perform your skit in family worship.

SAY Repeat the power text from memory.

PRAY Praise God for Christian friends who encourage you.