

## THE CHURCH: LEARNS TO WALK

All Activity Sheets

### KEY WORDS

DISCIPLE TEACH BAPTIZE EARLY CHURCH

### BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the preadolescents know some of the first steps of the early church and how we can imitate them today

### MEMORY VERSE

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20, NIV\*).

### PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

The approach you give to this lesson is very important. If you tell the preadolescents the way the early Christians lived as if it were a "story" that has already happened, the result will be negative.

But if you present it as a role model for today, it will be very different.

We're sure that if the Lord could give us advice on this point he would say: "Do as they did, because they clearly understood the Gospel of Jesus Christ!" You as a teacher know very well that some teachings of the Bible make or create a true "counterculture" in many respects. It seems as Christians we are sometimes, and often, at odds with the culture around us.

Therefore, many things that seem "normal" to the world, God does not approve. And on the other hand, the ways of life taught by the Gospel are foolish and even madness to a secular, worldly mind.

This lesson is precisely a special one for our time and may seem very rare, depending on the approach given by the teacher.

These early Church Christians gave freely from what they had to meet the needs of their brothers and sisters in the faith. They

were united in love every day, living in obedience to Christ's teachings. Therefore, they had a positive public testimony. Sadly, people of the world today do not always see or understand this giving, sharing lifestyle in Christians.

As a teacher, use your skill and creativity to instill in the preadolescents the idea that that was--and still is--the right way to live. The apostles and the first Christians worked as people full of the Holy Spirit. Without doubt, the unity to which the Lord had called them was powerful. That unity and love between them enabled them to share much more than a spoken message; they shared their earthly possessions. That was a powerful, lived-out message.

## **BIBLICAL COMMENTARY**

The way Christians lived in the early church was the way the Lord had planned the lives of his children. Jesus Christ did not come to earth to start a new religion. There were already many religions at that time. He came to bring a different way of life and to change people's hearts. And when the heart changes, the way people behave is completely different.

Selfishness gives way to generosity. We begin to discover the joy generated by the fact that we stop thinking only of our needs and give of ourselves to others.

It is very important that the preadolescents understand that the Christian life is precisely that, a way of life and not a religion full of laws and rules and a long list of things that can and cannot be done.

That life, simple, generous, clean, is what pleases the Lord and is what we see clearly in Acts 2:42: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching."

This means that there was a total unity of belief and spirit. And that produced a beautiful harmony.

But in addition to practicing that unity of belief, the Word says that they were faithful to those teachings the apostles had given them. That is, they kept and obeyed those principles and truths.

At this point, it is good to stop to imprint something vital in the minds and hearts of the preadolescents: that the Bible is not just a book to know, but a book to live out. That's how those early Christians acted. They lived what they believed.

That's why every teaching we read in the Bible must be put into practice so that sacred Scripture fulfills the function for which God placed it in the hands of mankind. The Word of God expresses it well: "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" (John 13:17).

But there is a most important point in the texts we're seeing. It is about the enormous generosity that those early Christians demonstrated.

Generosity always accompanies sensitivity. If we're sensitive to what is happening to our neighbor, then help and giving are set in motion.

Verse 45 says that they sold their property and possessions and gave the money to the apostles to distribute according to the needs of the people.

In the world, we're taught to get and keep, to have more for ourselves. However, the Bible instead tells us to open our hands and hearts to share. He tells us that the one who gives more will have more, and the selfish will end up being poor. "One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed" (Proverbs 11:24-25).

Because they were full of the Spirit, they were happy to go to the temple every day to worship God and thank him for so many blessings. Also, since they shared everything, everyone's needs were met. They gathered at home and broke bread to eat it with joy and simplicity of heart (v. 46).

They got along well and were honest and helpful to others. They were loved by all! They were "praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people" (v. 47).

In short, the Christians of the early Church authentically lived what they believed.

Today many Christians are inconsistent in what they say they believe and the way they live. Other people see this, and it drives them away from the Gospel.

In those early days of the Church, the Lord, pleased with those who lived godly lives, granted them power to perform miracles, signs and wonders. As a result, other people were amazed at what they were doing. And that gave even more authority to their preaching, and every day more people faithfully decided to follow Jesus. "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (v. 47).

Teacher, take advantage of this unit and challenge the preadolescents to give freely from what God gives them. Encourage them

to share “something” of what they have (for example, a used toy, in good condition and clean; a package of cookies; or as a group go to an old person’s home and clean the yard or garden, etc.). Encourage them to think of something that they themselves can do on their own. They may know a needy person or children who they wish to help. Rest assured that the preadolescents will never forget this kind of practical lessons. It can be an all-day Saturday picnic project at someone’s house or a Saturday afternoon project for a couple of hours. Allow them to use their creativity. Talk to your pastor and the owner of the house before carrying out the project; they’ll help you with more ideas.

## INTRODUCE THE LESSON

### Then and now

Give the group Student Activity Sheet #402-A (Then and Now). Ask the students to read the verses indicated and mark the figures. At the end of this section, they can color the figures. Provide crayons and colors.

### Sharing and Caring

Pass out Student Activity Sheet #402-B and #402-C (The Community of Believers, Believers Share and Care). There they’ll find that there are two biblical passages: Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-37. Divide into 2 or more groups, assign one of the passages to each group, and ask each group to read their passage and complete the sentences at the bottom of each page. When everyone is finished, discuss their answers. Encourage them to feel challenged to share with others the blessings God gives them.

Say: “That time was very special for all Christians. There was unity and fellowship. The presence of the Lord was with them.”

## TEACH THE LESSON

Today’s Bible story is based on Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37. Present this lesson as a role model for today. Say: “This lesson will help us make a difference in our world. We’re sure that if the Lord could give us advice on this point he would say: ‘Do as they did, because they clearly understood the Gospel of Jesus Christ!’ As a teacher I know very well that some teachings of the Bible make or create a true ‘counterculture’ in many respects. It seems as Christians we are sometimes, and often, at odds with the culture around us.”

After Pentecost, those who believed in Jesus were different. “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:42-47).

“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all, that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time, those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.” (Acts 4:32-37).

Ask: “What are some things that seem ‘normal’ to the world, but God does not approve?” (allow the students to respond)

Say: “On the other hand, the ways of life taught by the Gospel are foolish and even madness to a secular, worldly mind. This lesson is precisely a special one for our time and may seem very rare. These early Church Christians gave freely from what they had to meet the needs of their brothers and sisters in the faith. They were united in love every day, living in obedience to Christ’s teachings. Therefore, they had a positive public testimony.”

Ask: Can we say the same about the Christians we know today?” (allow the students to give some examples) Then say: “Sadly, people of the world today do not always see or understand this giving, sharing lifestyle in Christians.”

As a teacher, use your skill and creativity to instill in the preadolescents the idea that that was—and still is—the right way to live. Say: “The apostles and the first Christians worked as people full of the Holy Spirit. Without doubt, the unity to which the Lord had called them was powerful. That unity and love between them enabled them to share much more than a spoken message; they shared their earthly possessions. That was a powerful, lived-out message.”

## CONNECT THE LESSON

### Show others you are interested (cards)

Help the students prepare small cards for important people in their lives or for people or children who need to know Jesus. Pass out Student Activity Sheet #402-D (Show Others You Are Interested). Ask the students to follow the instructions. Provide cards, scissors, colors, crayons, markers, glue, etc., to make the cards.

## PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Divide the text into two parts. The first part we began to learn during the previous session and we will continue to learn this session, and the second part we will learn during the remaining two sessions.

First part: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ..."

Second part: "... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

At the time of memorization, write the first part of the text on the board. Repeat it with the students several times. Divide into two groups. Then give a blank sheet of paper to each group and pencils to each child. The first child will write the first word of the text, immediately pass the paper to the next person, who will do the same with the second word and so on. The team that finishes first writing the text correctly will be the winner. Prepare some prizes for students who learn it by memory. In the first part of the text there are 25 words. In the second part there are 24 words, plus the reference.

## WRAP-UP

### Pray

To finish the session, ask the children to pray by giving thanks for:

Their family.

Their friends.

Salvation, etc.

Everyone should close their eyes and mention something they're very grateful for. Wait for those who are thinking. It does not matter if they repeat the same thanks. In the end, mention those things that they did not remember, for example, health, freedom to worship God (there are many places where they cannot do that), school, church, people who love us, etc. Be sure to pray for each of the students, referring to them by their names. Thank the Lord for them. Give thanks to the Lord for the opportunity he gives us to be able to give, share, and help those in need.

### Encourage

Organize a basket or love box for people in your church who are going through need. If you think of a family with children who attend school, you may be able to help with school supplies. Allow the students to organize the project as it will be more meaningful and exciting for them. Encourage the group to pray for the family that will be helped and for the students willing to participate in the project.

### Invite

Sing an appropriate chorus. Say something interesting about the next session to encourage attendance. Remind the group to welcome visitors.