

WE OBEY GOD

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

CHURCH PERSECUTE PREACH GOSPEL BODY OF CHRIST

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Acts 4

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help children understand that although the first Christians were persecuted, they continued to preach the gospel of Christ, and the church continued to grow

MEMORY VERSE

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

In his first sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter accused the Jews of having killed Jesus, and declared that he had risen (2:23-24). Miraculously, the result of this was the conversion of 3,000 people. Peter escaped persecution.

But after he had healed a well-known paralytic man, then in his second sermon condemned the Jews for the murder of the Messiah, and announced to them that in Jesus, there is resurrection from the dead, and then approximately 5,000 men heard the word and believed (4:4), the Sadducees decided that it was too much. This provoked the first persecution. The result was the imprisonment of Peter and John.

The Sadducees were one of the most important religious groups in Israel during the time of Jesus. They believed neither in resurrection nor in eternal life. They were more concerned about appearing good than with obeying God. When Peter and John were asked about this act of healing, Peter made the most significant statement found in the book of Acts (4:12): “Salvation is found only in Jesus Christ.” Religious leaders marveled at the freedom and authority with which Peter and John spoke without any theological training. They could not deny the authority and power of the Holy Spirit in the apostles’ lives, for the crippled man had been healed.

After warning them to not speak about Jesus again, Peter and John were released. But the apostles ignored this command saying,

“Judge whether it is right before God to obey you rather than to obey God; because we cannot stop telling what we have seen and heard.”

After being released, they met with the brothers of the Church and told them what had happened. Together they prayed to God, but they did not ask for protection, but rather for courage to go and preach. When they prayed, the place where they were gathered trembled, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God without fear.

When believers pray, they receive a response from God. Even in the face of the persecution towards those who obey God’s commands, the work of salvation will continue to be made known, because that is the will of God. That is why we should not fear.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Activity: Prison Bars

Give each of your group Student Activity Sheet #281-A titled “Prison Bars.” Then, ask: “Why do people get locked up in a prison?” (Because they disobey the laws, or through persecution)

“Do you think those people deserve to be there? Why? Why not?” (Most children will say “yes” and explain that much of the time when people do not obey the law, they deserve to be imprisoned.) “Do you think that someone has ever been imprisoned for doing something good?” (persecutions, listen to their opinions)

TEACH THE LESSON

Children of this age like to hear stories of real-life heroes. If possible use pictures or drawings to add interest to the story. You can also ask two adults (in advance) to help with your group by dressing up as Peter and John, and reading their part in the story. Ask some of your children to volunteer as the other characters.

Narrator: Peter and John walked towards the temple.

Peter: Hey, John, what time is it?

John: Almost three. We must go to the temple to pray.

Narrator: Peter and John walked towards the temple. As they arrived, they saw a lame man sitting next to the gate that was called “Beautiful”.

John: Why are you sitting here?

Lame man: I cannot walk. I was born like this. I cannot work to earn money, so I sit here and ask those who come to the temple to help me. Do you have money to give me?

John: I am sorry, but I do not have any money, do you, Peter?

Peter: Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.

Narrator: (with enthusiasm): Then he took him by the right hand and lifted him up. Immediately his feet and ankles straightened, jumping up, he stood and walked. He went with them into the temple, walking, leaping, and praising God. All the people were astonished at what had happened.

Peter: Israelites, why do you marvel at this? Why do you set your eyes on us, as if by our power we have made him walk?

Narrator: However, not everyone was happy that the lame man was healed. The rulers of the temple were very angry.

Temple leader: What are you doing here? Who gave you permission to teach? We do not like what you say about Jesus. We all know he was crucified. We do not want you to tell more stories about him being resurrected! Either you stop talking, or we will put you in jail!

Narrator: Then the soldiers took Peter and John and threw them into prison. But many of those who had heard their message, believed, and their number grew to about 5,000 men. The next day, they brought Peter and John to the Council. The man who was healed was standing there too. The priests began to question the apostles.

Temple leader: By what power or in what name have you done this?

Peter: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead, through him this man stands before you, healed.

Narrator: Then, seeing the courage of Peter and John they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

Temple leader: Gentlemen, we give you your freedom on the condition that you refrain from preaching and teaching about Jesus. Do you understand this?

Peter and John: Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.

Narrator: After that, the rulers of the temple could not think of anything to say or do. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. So, after threatening them, they let them go free. Peter and John went to their fellow believers and told them all that had happened to them.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Review

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #281-B and #281-C and help the group review the lesson.

Activity: Persecuted Christian's hall of fame

In the history of the Christian Church, we know that many people have been persecuted because of their faith. Give your children the worksheet with the "Persecuted Christian's Hall of Fame" and have them look up the Bible verses and write down how these heroes of the Bible were persecuted.

Jesus (John 19:1-6). He was whipped, they made him wear a crown of thorns, and he was beat and crucified.

Stephen (Acts 7:56-60). They threw him out of the city and stoned him.

Paul (2 Corinthians 11:23-27). He was beaten; he was imprisoned many times, stoned.

Whose place is this? (2 Timothy 3:12)

(Those who want to live with Christ Jesus in their hearts will suffer persecution.)

Activity: How Do We Survive Persecution?

Give your children Student Activity Sheet #281-D entitled "How Do We Survive Persecution?" Have them fill in the columns as you discuss this as a group. Ask them: "What would you do if you were persecuted for believing in Christ?" Explain that this may happen to them, but they can be prepared to face this situation. Say: "This exercise will help you to be prepared."

1. Do not be taken by surprise! Make a list of situations in which you could be persecuted for what you believe. (People could make fun of you for not wanting to sin, like lying, stealing, or hurting someone.)
2. What was the secret of the courage of Jesus, Peter, John, Stephen and Paul? (The Holy Spirit gave them strength to continue and face persecution, because God was with them.)
3. How can the Christian community help make persecution more bearable? (The Christian community can encourage us to do the right thing. They can pray and take care of us.)
4. What can you do to protect yourself? Ephesians 6:10-18 (The Armor of God)
5. Why must we face persecution with honor? Matthew 5:11-12. (Because we will be rewarded if we do. There are people who will lie and do not want to hear the message of God. They will try to make us doubt our faith, but we know that we are not alone.)

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Ask if they have already memorized the verse. If most of them already know it, repeat it aloud. To review, play this simple game. You say the first word. Have the girls say the next, and the boys the next, and so on until you have said the whole verse. You can do it several times, this way those who do not know it yet will learn it.

WRAP-UP

Pray

End the session by praying with the children, thanking God for today's lesson and asking his help to be good Christians.

Encourage

Encourage the group to live with Christ Jesus in their hearts and be willing to suffer persecution.

Invite

Thank your children for their attendance and announce something about the next lesson to increase their interest. Remind them that they will begin a new unit of lessons, and this is a good time to invite new group members.