

LESSON 46

New Believers

ACTS 2:42-47



BIBLE TRUTH

THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL IS EFFECTIVE TO
SAVE AND CHANGE SINFUL HEARTS

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 124)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is the Gospel?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES: coloring page for NT Lesson 46—one for each child; markers or crayons

Sharing All They Have

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a large quantity of popped popcorn; a small bag with enough popcorn for each child to receive two pieces
- ✓ picnic blanket
- ✓ small table
- ✓ large bowl
- ✓ cups
- ✓ water pitcher

What Did the Early Church Do?

SUPPLIES: puppet (optional); coin (Have the puppet help the children with the answers. If you don't have a puppet you can do this with an adult helper.)

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60–75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In today's lesson the children will learn how the lives of the new believers were affected by the gospel.

Introduce the lesson by asking the class the following questions:

- Does anyone here know what creature turns into a butterfly?
(a caterpillar)

- How does the caterpillar change into a butterfly?
(The caterpillar becomes a butterfly through the process of metamorphosis that occurs within a chrysalis. Accept any answer that is on topic.)

- Who made the caterpillar able to do this?
(God)

When a caterpillar becomes a butterfly it undergoes a change into an entirely different creature. God's power and design do this work. The same is true in hearts of men and women and boys and girls. Once we are forgiven of our sins, God changes our hearts to love the things that God loves.

Take time to pray and thank God for changing us into people who love him. Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 124, "New Believers," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION **5 MIN**

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **How did God bless the early church?**
(God poured out his Spirit on the early church to give them faith. Through the apostles God continued to perform wonders, bringing a sense wonder and awe to the people and helping them to understand that God was with them.)

- **How did their joy-filled lives affect those around them?**
(Acts 2:47 tells us that God continued to add to their number. So, as they lived lives joyfully dedicated to God and one another, people must have seen and asked why they were doing what they were doing. John 13:35 tells us, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”)

- **What were the people selling?**
(The people were selling their possessions, the things they owned.)

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today’s Bible story fit into God’s greater plan of redemption?

The behavior of the very first converts in the book of Acts shows us the fruit of the gospel through the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. These people were transformed from being mockers of Christ. In fact, some of them were probably in the crowd who had demanded that Jesus be crucified. Yet now, we see them selling their possessions to share with other Christians who had need. Peter, affected by this first dramatic gospel transformation, went on to exhort all new believers to reject their sinful past and live holy, upright lives (see 1 Peter 1:14–15).

The gospel takes someone’s worldly self-focus and turns their heart heavenward. The first converts went from hating Jesus to loving him. They served others and worshiped God through Christ. Only the Spirit of God can change hearts this way. The gospel continued to transform lives as more new converts were added each day.

SNACK QUESTIONS **10 MIN**

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **The early church made fellowship their top priority. What things can steal away our love for the church?**
(Just about anything can become more important than God. We can love television more than God or a football game or maybe even our sleep, not wanting to get up for church.)

- **Why do you think the early church was so filled with joy?**
(Their joy came from being filled with the Spirit of God. The Spirit enabled them to understand the gospel—that they were forgiven because of Jesus’ death and that Jesus had risen. They realized that Jesus was the king they had always looked for.)

- **Do people feel this same joy today?**
(Yes, often when people first realize that Jesus is truly God they are filled with the same joy.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5-10 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS **20-30 MIN**

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 46—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **Why were the people so happy?**
(The people were filled with joy because they finally believed in Jesus and realized their sins were forgiven.)

- **What did the people do for each other?**
(They shared their things, prayed, and worshiped the Lord together.)

- **Was anything more important than Jesus and the church to them?**
(*No, in the early days of their new life in Christ, nothing was more important than Jesus and his church.*)

Sharing All They Have

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a large quantity of popped popcorn; a small bag with enough popcorn for each child to receive two pieces
- ✓ picnic blanket
- ✓ small table
- ✓ large bowl
- ✓ cups
- ✓ water pitcher

Before class put some of the popcorn into a small bag—enough so that each child can have two pieces.

In class set out a blanket in the middle of the room. (Keep the large bag of popcorn hidden.) Tell the children you are going to act out the sharing of the early church in the book of Acts. After reading the story tell the class that you are going to give popcorn to one child and the others can only have some if they will share. Give the small bag of popcorn to one of the children.

Encourage the child to share the popcorn with the other children. Tell the children that they can eat their popcorn as they receive it. If you see one child with three pieces of popcorn, encourage them to share the third piece with another child. After all the popcorn is eaten ask them how it felt to share. Try and draw out the fact that they really would have enjoyed having more.

Ask them why it was so easy for the early Christians to share. The answer, of course, is that Jesus had poured out his Spirit on them and saved them from their sins. They now knew that Jesus was God and that he could supply all their needs abundantly. Tell the children that Jesus is Lord over all and if we trust him, we are trusting in the one who can supply all that we need.

At this point produce the large bag of popcorn, empty it into a bowl, and invite the children to partake. The goal is to amaze the children with the stark difference between the first small portion and the second huge portion of popcorn.

Talk to the children about how the early church was so grateful for the gospel and amazed at what Jesus had done, much like the children are amazed at the large amount of popcorn.

What Did the Early Church Do?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ puppet (optional)
- ✓ coin

See if the children can remember some of the things that the early church did in response to the preaching of the gospel. Use the puppet (or a helper) to give some clues to the teams. You can have fun interacting with the puppet. At first scold the puppet for giving away the clues, but have the puppet appeal, saying that he is just helping the children. Tell the puppet OK, but only small clues.

The early church...

- devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching (the Bible).
- devoted themselves to fellowship (meeting together).
- devoted themselves to the breaking of bread (communion).
- devoted themselves to prayer.
- held all things in common.
- sold their possessions and gave to any in need.
- attended the temple together (went to church).
- broke bread in their homes (ate meals together).
- received their food with glad and generous hearts.
- praised God.
- were friends with their neighbors who were not part of the church (had favor with all the people).

At the end, remind the children that these were some of the same people who had crucified Jesus. Explain to them that the power of the gospel preached by Peter touched the people's lives and transformed them by the Holy Spirit.

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today's lesson.

