

Unit 34: The Church on Mission

Unit Description: Paul continued on his missionary journeys, encountering opposition yet finding new opportunities to proclaim the risen Christ. As missionary efforts continued, the church sought to protect its doctrine and demonstrate the power of the gospel through righteous living so others might trust in Christ.

Big Picture Question: What is our mission as Christians? Our mission is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.



SESSION 1: The Church Met Together

Acts 15



SESSION 2: Paul and Silas Started Churches

Acts 15-18



SESSION 3: Paul Visited the Churches

Acts 18-21



SESSION 4: We Are Here to Glorify God

Romans 15



UNIT 34 | SESSION 1

THE CHURCH MET TOGETHER

ACTS 15

KEY PASSAGE:

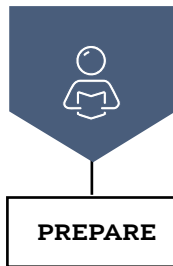
Psalm 96:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is our mission as Christians? Our mission is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

The church leaders met in Jerusalem to answer a tough question: Can a person be saved by faith alone or is something more needed? The early church agreed that because of Jesus' death and resurrection, He alone is all we need to be saved.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

As Paul and Barnabas began seeing both Jew and Gentile lives changed by the gospel, their work in planting churches and discipling believers faced a new problem: a false gospel of works. Today's Bible passage poses two big questions: Firstly, how exactly are people saved from their sins? Secondly, aren't works an important part of our lives as believers?

The answer to the salvation question lies in Peter's address to the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem. Peter boldly proclaimed that both Jews and Gentiles are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. He reminded the church that God has made no distinction between how Jews are saved or how Gentiles are saved. All are saved by having their hearts cleansed by faith. (Acts 15:9.)

Some Jewish believers followed the Pharisees and insisted that the Gentile believers should be circumcised. They thought that all believers had to follow the law of Moses, or else they could not truly be forgiven of sin. This incorrect view of Christ's atonement was a stumbling block to the new Gentile believers.

Though our good works and obedience to God's commands are evidence of His power inside us, they have never been the basis of our salvation. His gift of grace cannot

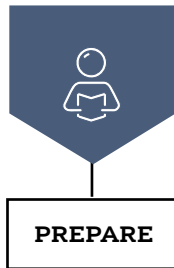
be earned by circumcision nor by keeping the law, like these believers declared to the church.

Peter and James brought up a great point: We should not make it harder for people to turn to God. Instead of adding prerequisites to a person's faith, we should pave the way of their understanding by sharing God's commands for our lives. Our obedience is not what saves us; rather, it helps us keep our eyes on the Savior who has made salvation possible.

As you prepare to teach this Bible story to kids, try to demystify the truth of the gospel: God made a way for us to be saved through faith in Jesus. We cannot earn this salvation. Rather, our good works are evidence of our faith as the Holy Spirit empowers us to obey Christ's commands.

TERMS TO KNOW

Jerusalem Council: meeting to determine the terms on which Gentile converts to Christianity would be received into the church



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ “How Are We Saved?” activity page

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ various items such as balls, books, bags, apples, etc.; 1 per kid



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ “The Church Met Together” video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ “Unit 34, Session 1” questions from kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ “Send Chicago” mission video
- ☐ map of the United States

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ “His Glory Among the Nations (Psalm 96:3)” song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ balloons



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set
- ☐ world map



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ “Pizza” printable, 1 per kid

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ “Works or Faith?” activity page



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “Do you have a close friend that you like to do things with? What do you do with your friends?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “How Are We Saved?” on the activity page.

SAY “In today’s story, we will learn that the church met together to see if faith in Jesus alone is enough for a person to be saved from his sins.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: TRUE OR FALSE



Invite kids to think about how someone is saved from his or her sins. Then lead kids to determine if the statements you say aloud about faith are true or false. Tell kids that if the statement is true, they should stand firm. Tell kids if the statement is false, they should run in place. Read the following statements or create your own:

- There are many ways to be saved. (false)
- We can only be saved if we obey God perfectly. (false)
- We cannot earn salvation. (true)
- Faith in Jesus is all we need to be saved. (true)
- The gospel is only for certain people. (false)

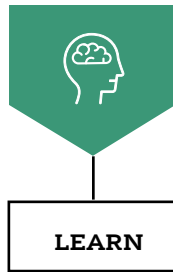
SAY “Sometimes there can be confusion on what is needed for someone to be saved from their sins. The early church was even confused. Today, we will learn that there is only one way to be saved from our sins.”

☐ OPTION 2: CAN YOU HOLD IT ALL?

Assign each kid a number. Distribute an item to each kid such as a ball, book, bag, apple, etc. For smaller groups, consider giving each kid multiple items. Instruct kids to walk about the room as you play music. Stop the music and shout a number. The kids must give all of their items to the kid whose number was called. Challenge him to hold all of the items. The goal is that the kid will struggle to hold all the items and will be overwhelmed by the weight and number of items. Repeat as time allows, seeing who can hold the most number of items.

SAY “It was challenging to hold all of those items. Imagine having to carry around the items at all times. We would grow weary and tired. That’s how it is when we try to obey God to earn our salvation. We simply can’t do it. In our story, we will learn the good news of how Jesus has made the way for anyone to be free of his or her burden of sin through faith in Him.”





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Good morning! My name is [your name]. I am so thankful we can learn from the Bible together. The Bible gives us good news, and today we will hear some good news about how to be saved. Did you bring your Bible with you? Let’s take out our Bible as we get ready to hear our Bible story. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.]

Today, we will read a story from the New Testament in the book of Acts. Acts is the fifth book in the New Testament and helps us learn how the early church grew throughout the world. In our story, we will learn how the early church met together to talk about if faith in Jesus is enough for a person to be saved. ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

SAY “ Today, we begin a new unit about the mission of the church. The mission of the church is the mission of Christians all around the world. What do you think our mission is? [Allow responses.] Our big picture question is, **What is our mission as Christians?** The answer we’ll learn is, **Our mission is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

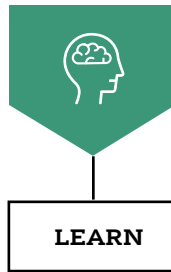
This mission was given by Jesus. (Matthew 28:19-20) Jesus told His disciples, ‘Go and make disciples of all nations...’ When we become a Christian, we desire to tell others the good news and lead them to trust in Jesus. In our story today, we see how Paul and Barnabas were living out that mission by sharing the gospel with others and making disciples. They also helped the church remember that faith in Jesus is all we need to be saved. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ After Jesus died, He sent His apostles into the world to share the gospel with others. His twelve apostles told many people the good news and churches were started. The apostles were on mission to make disciples through the power of the Holy Spirit. Even when Jesus’ followers were threatened for doing so, they continued to share the gospel.

Does anyone remember the name of the man who used to arrest and harm Christians? [Allow responses.] A man named Saul was someone who hurt Christians. But one day, Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus and changed Saul from the inside out. Saul became a Christian who God called to become a missionary. Saul, also known as Paul, told Jews and Gentiles about how they could be saved by faith in Jesus. Today, we will learn how Paul and Jesus’ followers discussed if faith in Jesus is enough for a person to be saved. ”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Acts 15. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Church Met Together.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE CHURCH MET TOGETHER

“Paul and Barnabas had been sharing the gospel with many people—including Gentiles. But some people in the church began to teach that the Gentiles could not be saved unless they first followed some of the same rules the Jews followed.”

Paul and Barnabas disagreed, and the church leaders decided to meet in Jerusalem to talk about whether or not the Gentiles needed to obey the law of Moses. After a long discussion, Peter stood up and said to the group, “Brothers and sisters, God chose me to tell the good news to the Gentiles. They heard the good news, and they believed. God accepted them and gave them the Holy Spirit, just as He did for us.”

“Why are you trying to make them earn salvation? We know that we cannot obey God’s laws perfectly. No, we believe that the Jews and Gentiles are saved in the same way—by the grace of the Lord Jesus.”

Everyone in the group was quiet as Paul and Barnabas told them about all the things God had done through them when they were with the Gentiles. Then another apostle, James, spoke up. He pointed out that the words of the prophets showed that God wanted to save both Jews and Gentiles.

“I think we should not cause trouble for the Gentiles who have trusted in Jesus. Instead, let’s write them a letter telling them the things they should not do,” said James.

So the church leaders wrote a letter to the Gentile believers explaining some things they should not do now that they were believers.

The leaders chose Judas—who also went by the name Barsabbas (bahr SAB uhs)—and Silas to go to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas to deliver the letter. The believers in Antioch were encouraged by the letter. Judas and Silas stayed with them for a while, and then they went home. Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch where they taught believers and told other people the good news about Jesus.

Christ Connection: The church leaders met in Jerusalem to answer a tough question: Can a person be saved by faith alone or is something more needed? The early church agreed that because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, He alone is all we need to be saved. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Act it out: Choose volunteers to play the roles of Paul, Barnabas, Peter, James, Judas and Silas as you tell the story.

Active listening: As you tell the story, ask kids to listen for keywords: believe, good news, saved, and grace. Invite kids to give a thumbs up when they hear these words.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ The good news of Jesus was reaching Jewish and Gentile people. But there was a problem—the Gentiles didn’t grow up with the same laws the Jews followed. Jewish people had been taught to follow the law God gave Moses, while the Gentiles did not. What did some of the Jewish Christians think the Gentiles should do? Look at Acts 15:5. **[Choose a volunteer to read aloud Acts 15:5.]** They believed that Gentiles needed to follow the laws and that this would show they were saved.

The early church decided to meet together to talk about what Jesus said was needed for a person to be saved. Peter stood up and reminded the people that no one can obey the law perfectly. Only Jesus perfectly obeyed God and never sinned. What did Peter say was the sign the Gentiles had been saved? Look at Acts 15:8-11. **[Choose a volunteer to read aloud Acts 15:8-11.]** Peter told the church that the Gentiles were saved by faith. After they trusted in Jesus, they received the Holy Spirit as a sign of their faith. Every person who trusts in Jesus receives the Holy Spirit as a seal of his or her salvation. (Eph. 1:13)

Paul, Barnabas, and James also agreed with Peter. James quoted from the Old Testament. What did James say was God’s plan for the Gentiles? Look at Acts 15:17. **[Choose a volunteer to read aloud Acts 15:17.]** God had always planned for the Gentiles to know Him. Salvation is for both Jews and Gentiles. And faith in Jesus alone saves people from their sins.

Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas went to the Gentiles in Antioch and gave them a letter that helped teach them what they should not do now that they were Christians. How we live does not save us, rather how we live shows that we have been saved. Faith in Jesus alone saves. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ The church leaders met in Jerusalem to answer a tough question: Can a person be saved by faith alone or is something more needed? The early church agreed that because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, He alone is all we need to be saved. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 34, Session 1” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. If Jesus has the power to forgive our sins, why did He need to die on the cross to forgive our sins?
2. We do not need to work for our salvation. Why is trusting in Jesus’ death and resurrection enough?



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “Chicago is known as the Windy City, and it is famous for its baseball teams, basketball team, football team, and other sports such as hockey and soccer. It is also famous for deep-dish pizza, and its Chicago-style hot dog. Even with all its fame, less than 10 percent of the Chicago population is connected to a church. While there are 271 Southern Baptist churches in the Chicago metro area, more churches are needed to reach the 10 million people living there.”

Play the mission video. Point out that Chicago is the third largest city in the United States. **[Point to Chicago on a map of the United States.]** Describe some of the unique architecture or buildings of Chicago such as being home to the 12th tallest building in the world that is 1,450 feet and 110 stories tall. Share how the city also has many parks, beaches, museums and theaters, and famous shopping in a place called the Magnificent Mile. Emphasize that Chicago does not have easy access to churches for people to learn about Jesus. Pray that more churches will be started in Chicago. Pray for the missionaries telling people about Jesus in the Windy City.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session, write each word of the key passage and the reference on individual balloons with a permanent marker. Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 96:3 together.

SAY “All glory and praise belongs to God. Christians should declare His glory and His goodness to everyone we meet.”

Direct the kids to form a circle. Give each kid a balloon and on the count of three, direct kids to hit their balloon to the person across from them. Once each kid has a different balloon, instruct the kids to form a line in order of the key passage. Repeat as time allows.

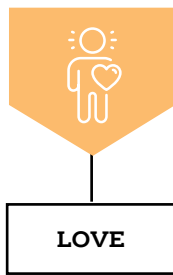
Lead kids to sing “His Glory Among the Nations (Psalm 96:3).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “God, thank You that through faith in Jesus we can be saved from our sin. We recognize we could never earn the forgiveness our sins need. Please help us remember Your grace so that we can live for Your glory. Amen.”





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Acts 15. Remind kids that Acts is the fifth book in the New Testament. Tell kids that the book of Acts was written by Luke, a friend of Paul. Discuss how Acts is considered to be a division of church history because it describes how the early church began and spread into the world. Remind kids that in the book of Acts we see that **our mission is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Consider comparing the New Testament Israel Map to a modern-day map to help kids understand where these stories took place. (Tip: Locate the areas in and around modern-day Jerusalem [H4].) Choose a volunteer to read aloud Acts 15:8-11.

SAY “Following rules or the law doesn’t save us. Only faith in Jesus saves us from our sins. Even when God gave the Jews His law, it was never meant to be a way for them to earn their way to God. Instead, the law revealed sin and showed their need of a Savior.

God sent Jesus to save both Jews and Gentiles. Anyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven of his or her sin and sealed with the Holy Spirit. Through God’s Spirit we are changed to live in a way that honors God and desires to share Jesus with others.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “Peter said Jews and Gentiles were saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 15:11) What is grace?”

Tell kids that grace is undeserved love given to people by God. Explain that God loves us, forgives us, and saves us because of what Jesus did. Tell kids that grace means we can never earn our salvation.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Eph. 1:7.)

SAY “Have you ever tried to earn forgiveness or God’s love?”

Answers will vary. Encourage kids to remember that we can sometimes feel like we need to earn God’s love when we sin. Tell kids that God showed His love to us when He gave His only Son to die for our sin. Remind kids that God’s grace covers past, present, and future sins.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 5:8.)

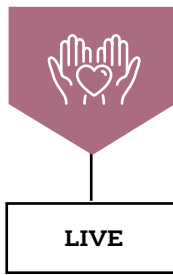
SAY “Why is Jesus’ death and resurrection enough to save us?”

Explain that only Jesus lived a perfect life which made Him the perfect, spotless sacrifice for our sin. Discuss how Jesus’ blood completely washes away our sin forever and that His resurrection defeated death.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Gal. 2:16.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ **OPTION 1: MAKE PIZZA**



Before the session, print the “Pizza” printable on cardstock for each kid. Distribute a “Pizza” printable to each kid as well as scissors and glue. Lead kids to cut out their pizza slice and the different toppings of their choice. Direct kids to glue the toppings to their pizza. On the back of the pizza, invite kids to write ways they can pray for the people of Chicago such as asking God to plant more churches for people to hear about Jesus.

SAY “ Chicago is known for its deep-dish pizza. But we can pray that the people of Chicago would be known for loving Jesus. The people of Chicago need to hear the good news about Jesus. Remember to pray for the people of Chicago to know Jesus and trust in Him. ”

☐ **OPTION 2: ONLY GRACE**



Form kids into five to seven groups. Write the following Bible verses on a dry erase board: Titus 2:11-14; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:16-17; Romans 3:23-24; Romans 5:1-2; Romans 11:6; Titus 3:5-7. Give each group a Bible, pencil, and paper. Assign each group one of the verses and instruct them to read the verse together and write what they think it means in their own words. Ask for a volunteer in each group to share what they wrote for each verse.

SAY “ God is so gracious. None of us deserves His grace and we cannot earn it. But through His love for us, God shows us grace through faith in Jesus. Faith in Jesus is all we need to be saved. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God that faith alone in Jesus saves us from our sin. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Works or Faith?” on the activity page.



JOURNAL PAGE

1. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
2. What does this story teach me about myself?
3. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
4. Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
5. How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FOLD



Unit 34 • Session 1

THE CHURCH MET TOGETHER

Acts 15

**WHAT IS OUR MISSION AS CHRISTIANS?
OUR MISSION IS TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS BY THE POWER
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Paul and Barnabas had been sharing the gospel with many people—including Gentiles. But some people in the church began to teach that the Gentiles could not be saved unless they first followed some of the same rules the Jews followed.

The church leaders decided to meet in Jerusalem to talk about whether or not the Gentiles needed to obey the law of Moses. Peter stood up and said to the group, “Brothers and sisters, God chose me to tell the good news to the Gentiles. They heard the good news, and they believed. God accepted them and gave them the Holy Spirit, just as He did for us.

“Why are you trying to make them earn salvation? We know that we cannot obey God’s laws perfectly. No, we believe that the Jews and Gentiles are saved in the same way—by the grace of the Lord Jesus.”

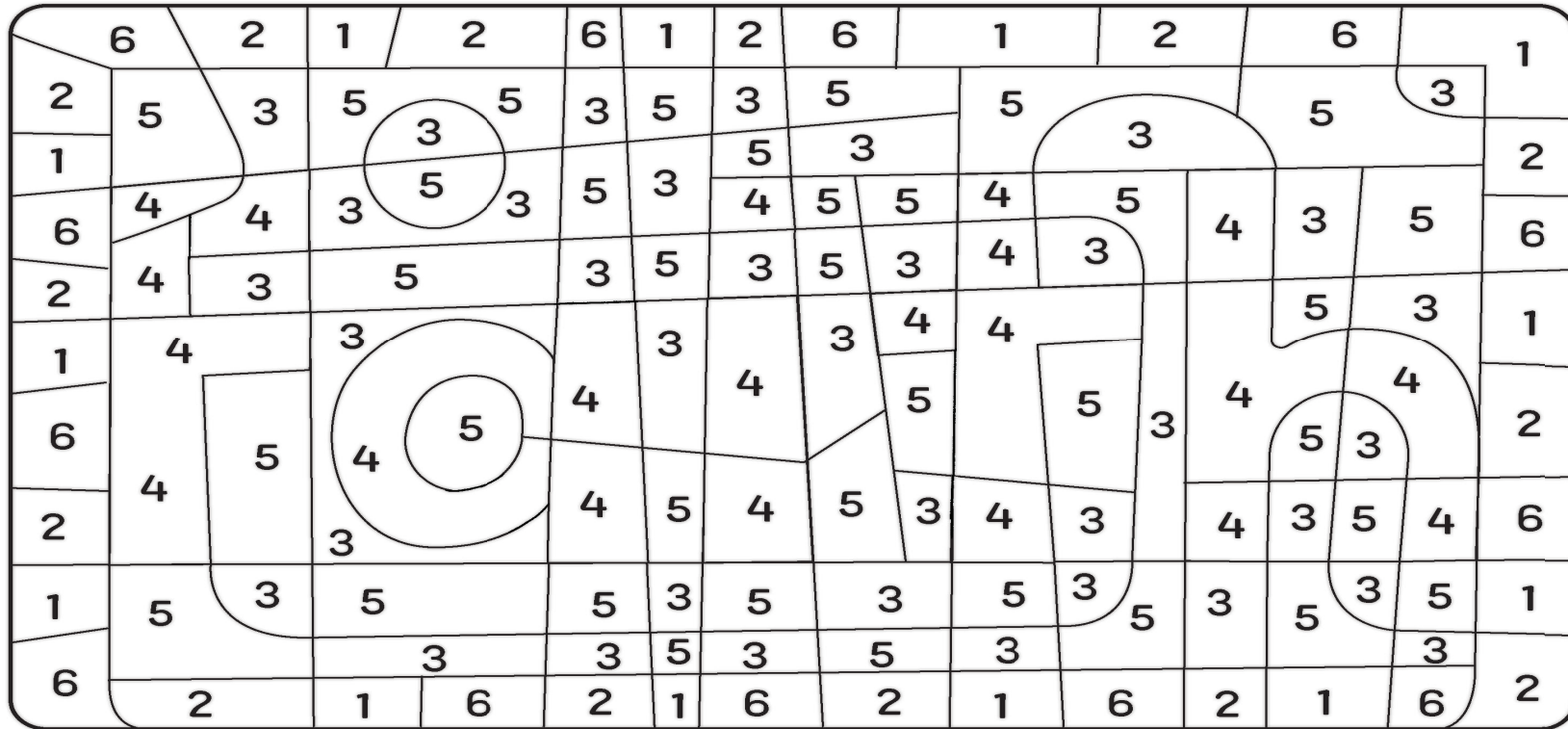
James, spoke up. He pointed out that the words of the prophets showed that God wanted to save both Jews and Gentiles.

The church leaders wrote a letter to the Gentile believers explaining some things they should not do now that they were believers.

The leaders chose Judas and Silas to go to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas to deliver the letter. Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch where they taught believers and told other people the good news about Jesus.

Christ Connection: The church leaders met in Jerusalem to answer a tough question: Can a person be saved by faith alone or is something more needed? The early church agreed that because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, He alone is all we need to be saved.

How Are We Saved? | Use the key to color in the picture to find the missing word in the sentence below.



We are saved by _____ in Jesus.

Works or Faith? | Paul and the early church leaders agreed that faith in Jesus is all we need to be saved. Look up each Bible verse and match it to its correct description.

A. Ephesians 2:8-9

B. Romans 3:20

C. Galatians 2:16

D. 2 Timothy 1:9

1. God saved us and called us, not according to our works, but according to the grace of Jesus.
2. Man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ.
3. We are saved by grace through faith, not as a result of works.
4. The Law does not justify. Through the Law comes knowledge of sin.

NAME:



the **GOSPEL** PROJECT

The Church Met Together

BIBLE STORY SUMMARY:

- Some people in the church said Gentiles could not be saved unless they first followed some of the same rules Jews followed.
- The church leaders decided to meet in Jerusalem to talk about whether or not the Gentiles needed to obey the law of Moses.
- Peter, James, and others said that Jews and Gentiles are saved in the same way—by faith in the Lord Jesus.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

The church leaders met in Jerusalem to answer a tough question: Can a person be saved by faith alone or is something more needed? The early church agreed that because of Jesus' death and resurrection, He alone is all we need to be saved.

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 96:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is our mission as Christians? Our mission is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.