

The Acts of the Apostles:

Guidelines for Ministry

Those who teach children should read study #39 for children.



Prayer: “Lord, give to us the power of the Holy Spirit that you promised in Acts 1:8, to witness for Jesus.”

1. Prepare Your Heart and Mind with God’s Word.

Luke, who also wrote one of the four Gospels, recorded in the *Book of Acts* how the church began in Jerusalem and spread through the Roman Empire among Jews and Gentiles, into Asia, Africa and Europe.

Read Acts 1. Find in verses 1-8 the source of our power to extend God’s kingdom.

Find in Acts 1:8 four places where believers are to proclaim Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

- 1) **Jerusalem** corresponds to the community where we live. What is your “Jerusalem?”
- 2) **Judea** refers to people nearby of the same culture. Where is your ‘Judea?’
- 3) **Samaria** means people of a culture similar to your, nearby. Who are your “Samaritans?”
- 4) **The ends of the earth** include a neglected, distant people that God wants you to reach.

Find in Acts 1:14 what the apostles were doing while waiting for the Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised.

Read Acts 2. Find things that happened after the Holy Spirit filled the waiting disciples. Did the Holy Spirit fill them simply for an exciting experience or to help them to witness?

other pretends to eat the bread and drink. [*Let the people guess.*]

6) **Prayer.** The two helpers take a posture of prayer, silently. [*Let the people guess.*]

7) **Giving.** One helper acts like he is giving something to the other, who acts like he is very thankful, but without words. [*Let the people guess.*]

Explain what the Apostles did. Choose one or more of the events you read in Acts, and tell or act out the story for your congregation. It is more powerful if both adults and children help dramatize it. Then ask what the believers learned from it. Ask what they plan to do as a result.

To introduce the Lord’s Supper, read Acts 20:7. Explain that the believers met to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, on Saturday evening which, with Sunday morning, was the first day of the week, the day of Jesus’ resurrection.

Pray and help one another in **groups of two or three.** Confirm the plans to witness and encourage one another.

Explain that your helpers will demonstrate without words these seven things the new believers did following Pentecost, to obey Jesus. Ask the believers to guess what the things are.

1) **Repentance.** Prepare two helpers to portray repentance without speaking.

- On one side of the room, the first one sneers like Satan and motions with his hands to the other to come to him.
- The other walks slowly toward him, looking around him as though he was afraid of being seen. When almost there he stops, puts his hands on his heart and briefly takes the posture of prayer. Then he turns around and walks back the other way.
- Ask the people to guess what was acted out. Repentance means we have a change of heart, turn around and go a different direction, away from sin, not toward it.

2) **Baptism.** One helper goes through the motions of baptizing the other. [*Let the people guess.*]

3) **Learning and teaching God's Word.** One holds an open Bible upright to let everyone see as he points to words on the page as though explaining it to another person. [*Let the people guess.*]

4) **Fellowship** (loving one another). One helper embraces another of the same sex, or does what would show Christian love to another person in your culture. [*Let the people guess.*]

5) **Breaking bread** (the Lord's Supper). One helper acts as though giving bread to the other, then an imaginary cup. The

- **Find in Acts 2:24-32**, the main emphasis of Peter's powerful message, besides Jesus' death.
- **Find in Acts 2:37-47**, seven activities that the believers put into practice, at once, in obedience to Jesus' commands.

Find in the other chapters of Acts:

Ch. 3: What we can expect God to do when we call on him in Jesus' name.

Ch. 4: What we can do when hostile authorities threaten us.

Ch. 5: What God did to people who lied to Him.

Ch. 6: What the congregation did to take care of needy people.

Ch. 7: How Stephen reviewed Israel's history, angering the leaders and what did they do to him.

Ch. 8: How Philip began God's work in Samaria, and why Simon offered money to the apostles.

Ch. 9: How God enabled the Christian's worst human enemy to repent.

Ch. 10–11: How God convinced believing Jews that Gentiles also received His Holy Spirit.

Ch. 12: What king Herod did to James, and how Peter escaped from Herod.

Ch. 13–14: Who sent Paul to far lands, who went with him, and how they organized believers.

- Ch. 15: How God helped Jews to accept Gentile believers that did not keep the old Jewish law.
- Ch. 16: How the first church started in Europe, at Philippi, and what Paul promised to his jailer.
- Ch. 17: Different ways in which the Jews received Paul's message.
- Ch. 18: How Paul supported himself in Corinth, and what his employers did for Apollos.
- Ch. 19–20: Several events in Ephesus, what caused the riot, and what Paul warned about 'wolves.'
- Ch. 21–28: Why Paul was jailed in Jerusalem, his trials and what occurred on the way to Rome

2. Plan What Your Flock Will Do Next Week, to Follow the Apostles' Example

- Plan for the believers to go witness for Christ to people who do not know Him.
- Plan to help them do this with prayer and in the power of the Holy Spirit, as the apostles did.
- Make long-range plans for work in your 'Judea,' 'Samaria' and 'Jerusalem.'

3. Plan with Co-workers the Upcoming Worship Time

Choose activities that fit current needs and local customs.

Prepare to Witness. During worship, you will prepare the believers to witness for Jesus with power. Ask them to listen for two things in Acts 1:8 while you or a helper read it:

- First, from whom do we receive power to tell others about the risen Christ?
- Second, in what four places were the apostles to go and witness with the power of the Holy Spirit?
- After reading, let the people answer the two questions and talk about them, if they can.

Ask what places correspond for us to the four places where the apostles witnessed for Jesus? [*Answers are in Part 1, above.*] Then pray for people in your "Judea" or "Samaria" who do not know Jesus.

Let the children present the drama, poem and questions that they have prepared.

Memorize together Acts 1:8.

Explain the plans you made with co-workers to visit people during the week to tell them about our Lord Jesus. Arrange well for this work. Let the believers talk about whom they will visit.

Prepare to help new disciples to obey the basic commands of Jesus. Ask the believers to listen for the things that the 3,000 new believers did in Jerusalem to obey Jesus' commands, before you or a helper reads Acts 2:37-47.