



St Helen's
Bishopsgate

Bible time booklet | 5-11's

Acts

The king is building his
kingdom

St Helen's Children's Ministry



The King is building his Kingdom

Acts was written by a man named Luke, Dr Luke in fact. He wrote his first book, Luke, to help Christians be totally sure that through Jesus, God has come to save his people.

Acts, Luke's second book, follows on from his first. Acts is all about King Jesus *continuing* his work of saving people. He is saving people to belong to his kingdom. At the beginning of Acts, Jesus gave his disciples the job of spreading his good news of salvation to the world. Then Jesus went back to his Father in heaven where he is now ruling as King. But that doesn't mean that Jesus is far away. That doesn't mean he left his disciples to get on with it by themselves. No, quite the opposite! All the way through Acts we see King Jesus is continuing his work of growing his kingdom as he spreads his word. Even when people hate Jesus and his gospel, even when they try kill his disciples or stop them speaking. Even when it looks like mission impossible we see that actually, this is mission unstoppable!

Why do we need to read Acts?

Today, we too can join in with Jesus' kingdom building work, by spreading Jesus' good news of salvation. King Jesus hasn't come back yet so there's still time for the gospel to go to all people. We don't need to worry that Jesus is far away. We can look at Acts and be totally sure that King Jesus is at work, powerfully spreading his good news of salvation. And as we read it, Luke will help us to know what the good news is and how we can join in this mission of spreading the good news to the ends of the earth.

Memory verse

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”. Acts 1v8 (NIV)

Using the material – a guide for parents

We hope these Bible times will help you:

- To know what we've been teaching in Sunday school - so you can talk to your child about it and pray for them as they hear from the book of Acts about King Jesus building his kingdom.
- To give you an opportunity to dig into the passage with your child and clarify, reinforce, or build their understanding.
- To give you an opportunity to help your child further think through how they are responding to what they are hearing in God's word.

We hope that this will enable us to better partner with you as you continue to bring up your children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Why not get into the habit of praying with your child, asking for God's help, before you start the study. Then cover as much of the study as you feel able to with the age and attention span of your child.

You could go through the study over a meal time or at bedtime. You could also do the study over a whole week, doing a question each day.

Here are some ideas:

- For smaller children, you might choose to read the story recap, think about the first 'look' question and then pray.
- Slightly older children might be able to look at one of the 'think' questions too, and the oldest may manage to cover all the questions.
- If you have older children, who want to go further than the study, you could read the rest of the passage and any other bits we miss out with them and perhaps think together what it adds to our understanding of the big idea.

King Jesus is at work building his Kingdom.

What do you think Jesus is doing right now? Is he up in heaven with his feet up? Is he watching TV? No! The book of Acts starts by telling us that Jesus is alive and at work in heaven. (Acts 1:1-3) One day he's going to come back, but before then he has a very important mission to complete.

In Acts chapter 1, the disciples are confused about what Jesus is going to do next. They think that Jesus is going to make God's Old Testament people, Israel, an important kingdom again. Jesus' masterplan is much bigger than that! Jesus is going to grow his kingdom to include people from every country, even to the ends of the earth! Jesus told his disciples his kingdom would grow as they spoke about what they'd seen and heard Jesus do. They would do this with the help of the Holy Spirit giving them power. They would speak about him in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Jesus is still growing his kingdom across the world today as people speak about him with the Holy Spirit's help!



Read

Pray and read Acts 1:6-8



Look

Look at verse 6... What do the disciples think Jesus' masterplan should be?

Look at verse 8... What is Jesus' masterplan?



Think

Hm... How is Jesus' masterplan much bigger than the disciples thought?

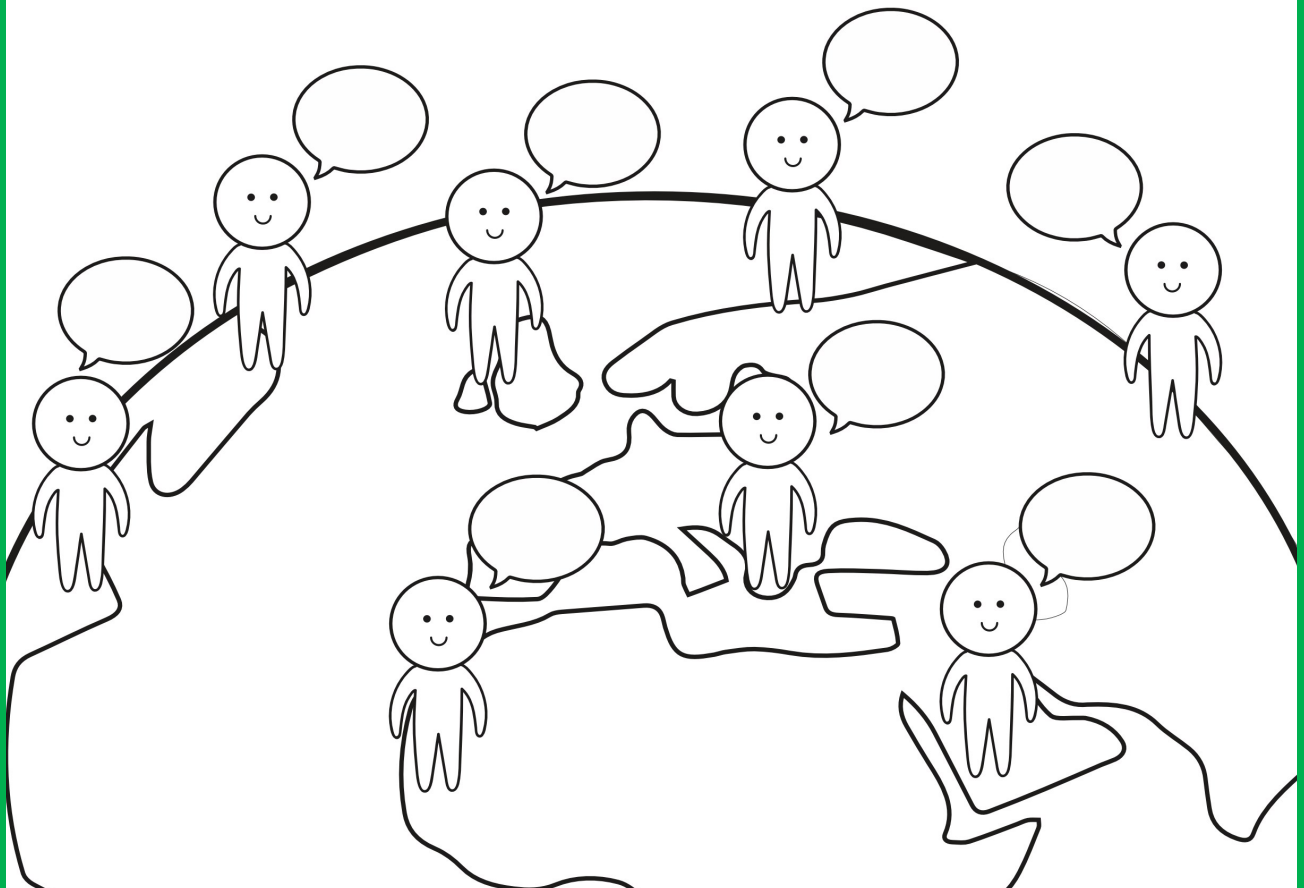
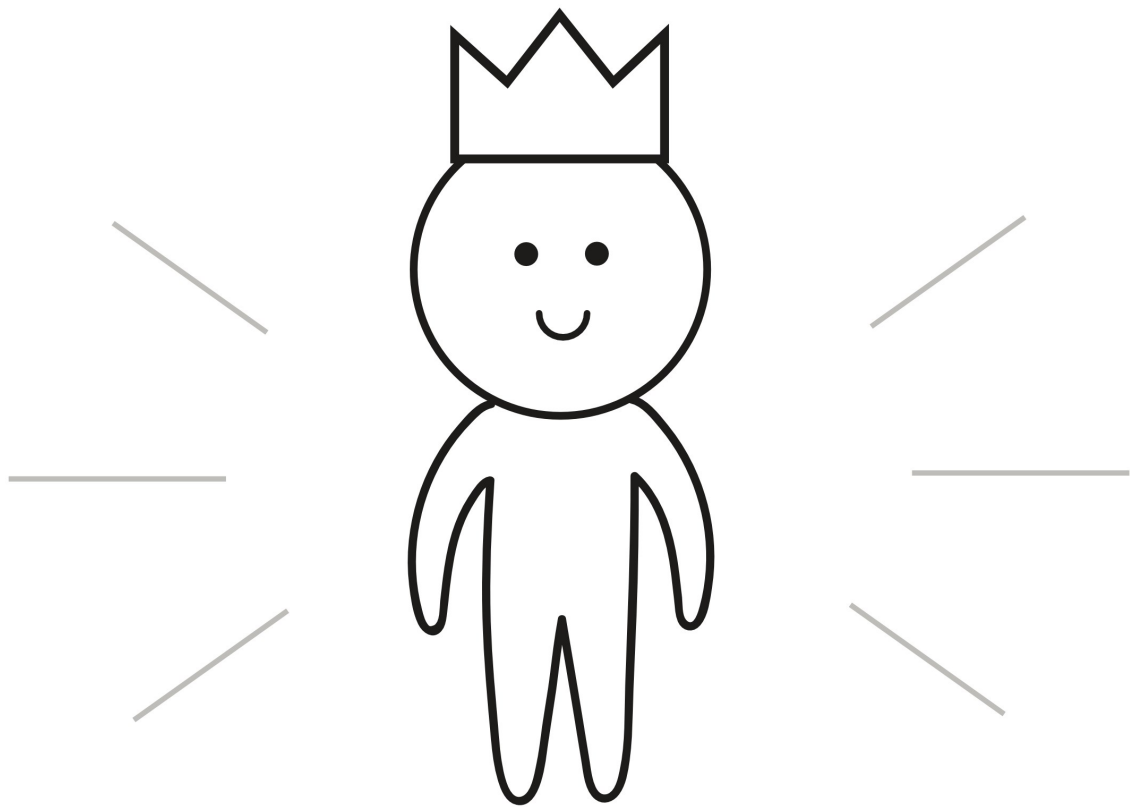
Hmm... How do you think Jesus is still doing his masterplan today?

Hmmm... How do you think we can be part of Jesus' masterplan?



Pray

Let's **pray** that more people join Jesus' kingdom as the good news of Jesus keeps spreading across the world.



King Jesus began his work by giving his Spirit.

There are many important times in history that we learn about in school; Roman times, Viking Times, Tudor Times. I wonder which is your favourite? The most exciting time in history began in Acts chapter 2 at Pentecost and is still going on today. We live in Spirit – times! This is the time Jesus is carrying out his masterplan to build his kingdom by giving us his Holy Spirit.

Jesus began his masterplan just like he said he would. He gave his disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gave them power to be witnesses to Jesus in Jerusalem. They spoke about Jesus in languages they had never even learned! 3000 people in Jerusalem believed their message and joined Jesus' kingdom that day. From that day onward, Jesus has kept giving people the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has kept helping people to tell the good news. Jesus has kept helping people to believe the message and be brought into his kingdom. We can be sure Jesus is carrying out his masterplan because he gave us his Spirit at Pentecost.



Read

Pray and read Acts 2:4-6, 37-39



Look

Look... What happens to the disciples when Jesus sends the Holy Spirit?

Look closer... What happens to Jerusalem when Jesus sends the Holy Spirit?



Think

Hm... How do we see Jesus' masterplan happening in Jerusalem?

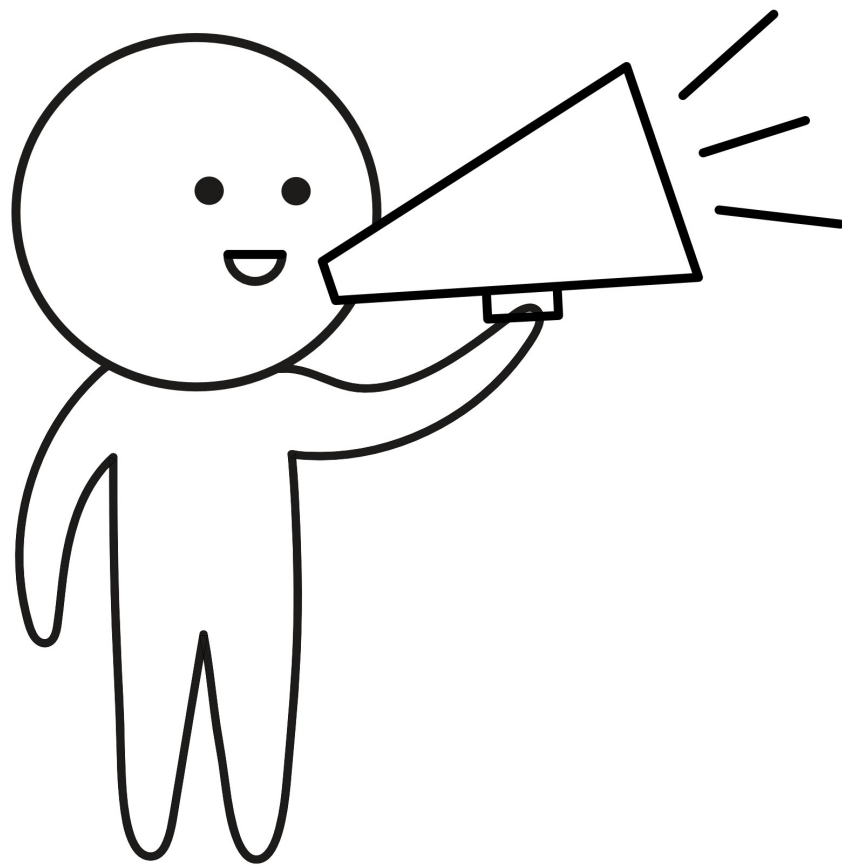
Hmm... Why do you think it's exciting to live in Spirit times?

Hmmm... What do you think we should do if we live in Spirit-times?



Pray

Let's **give thanks** to God that we live in Spirit-Times.



King Jesus' work is unstoppable.

King Jesus has started building his kingdom in Jerusalem. Yay! The apostles are doing Jesus' work. Not everyone is happy about that though. The Jewish leaders tell Peter and John to stop talking about Jesus. But Peter and John won't stop! They keep doing miracles and speaking about Jesus.

The Jewish leaders really hate this so they put Peter and John in prison. They think that will stop them, but prison can't stop King Jesus! He sends an angel to unlock the prison doors. Peter and John walk right back to the temple and carry on speaking about Jesus.

The Jewish leaders really, really hate this. They beat them up but let them go. That still didn't stop Peter and John. Day after day they went back to the temple to speak about Jesus.

Nothing can stop King Jesus' work, He is more powerful than the Jewish leaders. He's more powerful than any ruler on earth. He will make sure the good news keeps spreading and his kingdom keeps growing, no matter what people do to try and stop it.



Read

Pray and read Acts 5:17-21a



Look

Look... Can you spot how the Jewish leaders try and stop Jesus' plan?

Look closer... What does God do to keep the good news spreading?



Think

Hm... Why do the apostles keep speaking about Jesus even though it gets them in trouble?

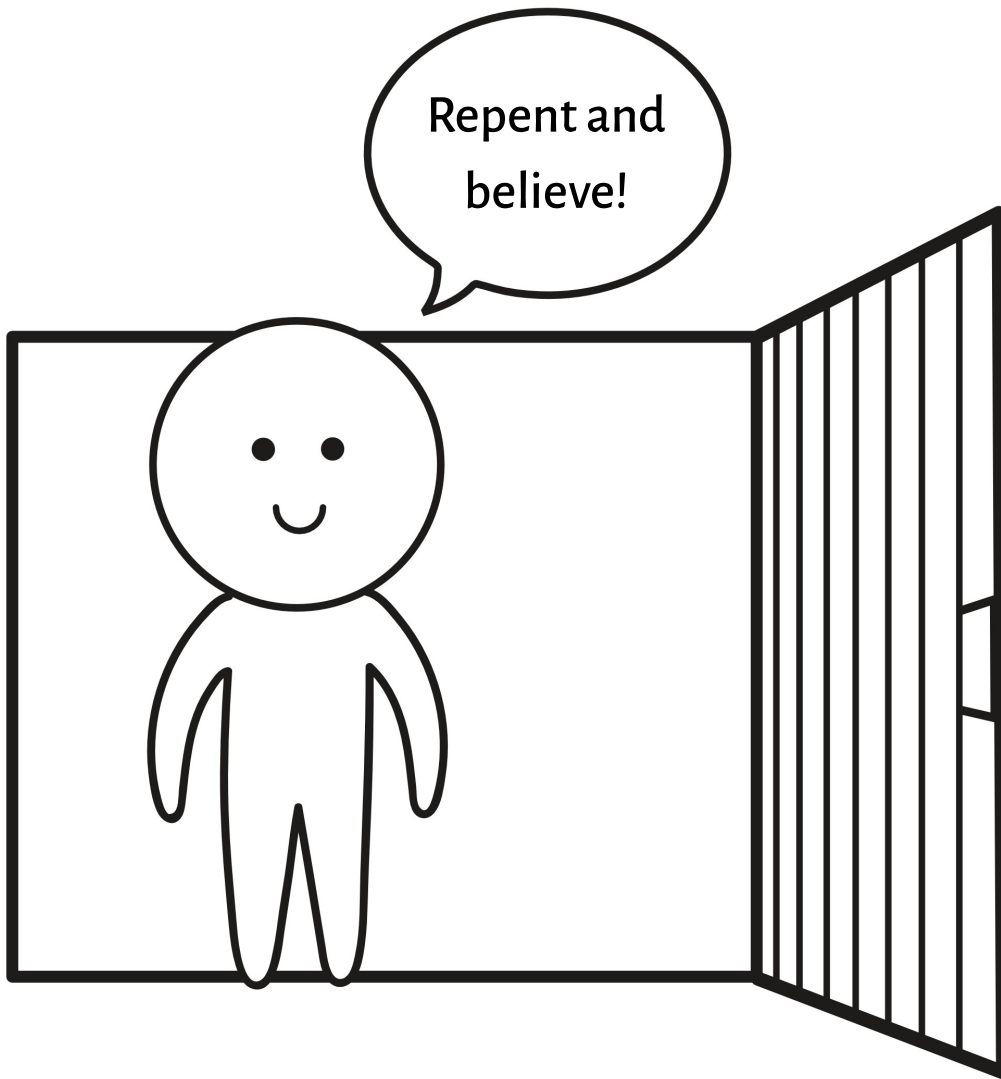
Hmm... How do people try and stop Jesus' plan today?

Hmmm... Why do we need to remember that Jesus' plan can't be stopped?



Pray

Let's **praise** God that nothing can stop the good news of Jesus spreading..



Repent and
believe!

King Jesus is at work even through suffering.

Have you ever had a time when it felt like everything was going wrong? Today, it seems like Jesus' plan is going terribly, painfully wrong. The Jewish leaders are still very angry about the good news spreading in Jerusalem. A man called Stephen has been speaking about Jesus and doing miracles, so the rulers arrest him. But Stephen speaks to them very boldly. He tells the Jewish leaders they are working against God, because they killed Jesus. This makes the rulers really angry. They take Stephen outside the city and throw stones at him until he dies. Then they turn on all the Christians and many are forced to leave Jerusalem. It seems like Jesus' plan is going wrong!

Sometimes it is really hard for people who speak about Jesus. We suffer like King Jesus had to suffer. But King Jesus is at work building his kingdom even through suffering. God's plan was not failing because everywhere the Christians went, they kept speaking about Jesus. His kingdom kept growing.



Read

Pray and read Acts 7:51-52 (the end of Stephen's speech) and 8:1 and 4



Look

Look at verse 52... What does Stephen say the rulers did to Jesus, the Righteous One?

Look closer... In 8 verse 1, what happened to Stephen and then, afterwards, to the other Christians?



Think

Hm... Why does it look like God is not in charge when Christians are treated badly?

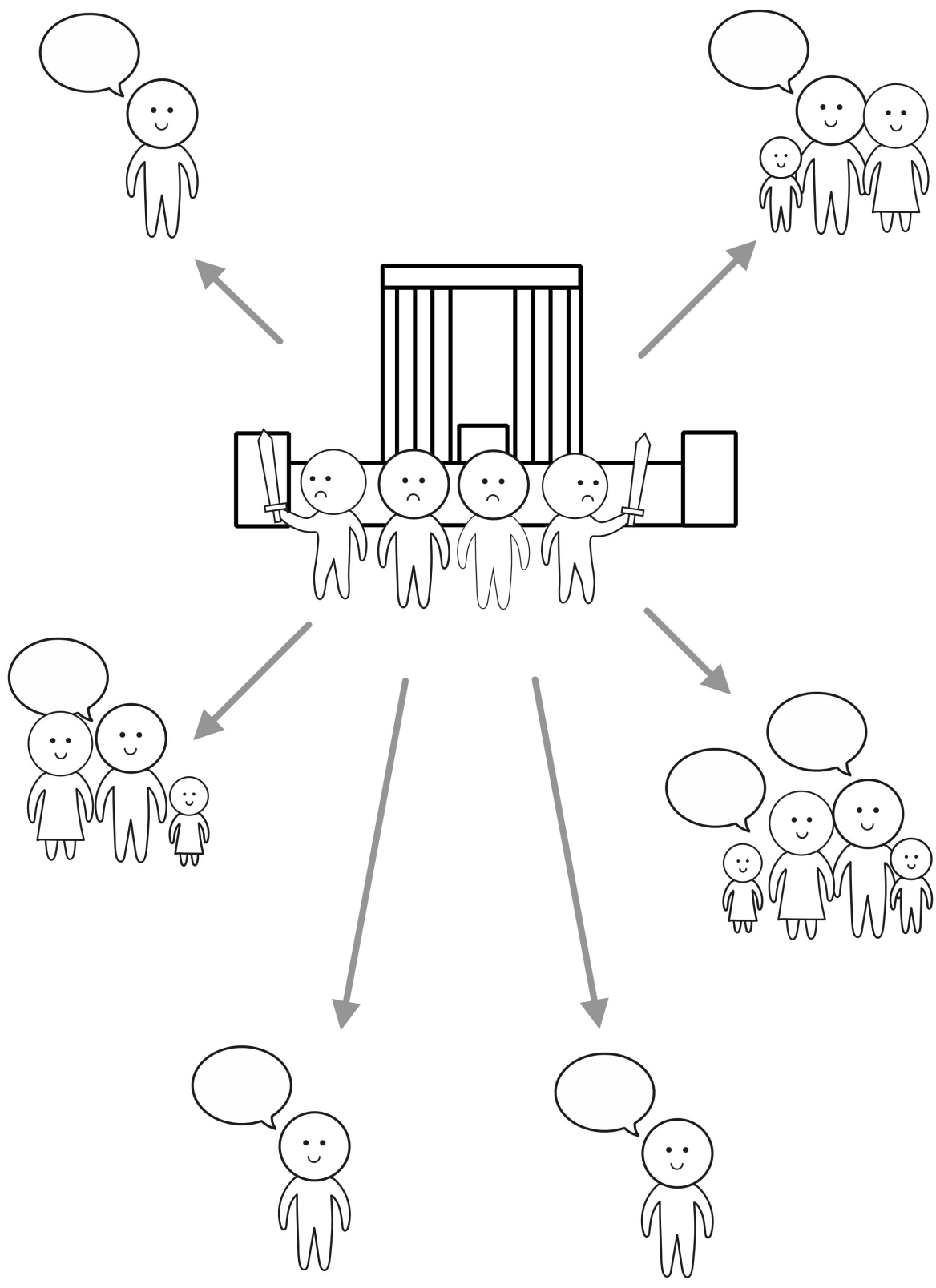
Hmm... How did God's good news keep spreading, even after Stephen's death?

Hmmm... How can this story help Christians who are treated badly, to trust God?



Pray

Let's **pray** for Christians around the world who are suffering today.



King Jesus rebuilds his kingdom in Judea and Samaria.

A long time ago God's people Israel lived in the land of Israel.. Sadly, they turned away from God and the land was broken in two; Judea and Samaria. Most of Judea and Samaria didn't want to live as God's people any more.

In our passage today we see that God hasn't given up on Judea and Samaria. The good news spreads there through a disciple named Philip. First, Philip went to Samaria, where they worshipped a magician named Simon Philip spoke about Jesus and they repented and believed in Jesus, even Simon! Then Philip went to Judea and met an important man from Ethiopia who was riding in his chariot. He didn't understand the Old Testament he was reading. Philip explained that it was talking about Jesus. The man believed and was baptised.

King Jesus is bringing Judea and Samaria back to God. If God hasn't given up on his plan for Judea and Samaria we can know he won't give up on his plan for the whole world.



Read

Pray and read Acts 8:9-13



Look

Look at verse 9-11...what were the Samaritans like before they heard the good news?

Look closer...what did they do after Philip spoke to them?



Think

Hm... Why might the reaction of the Samaritans be surprising to Philip?

Hmm... How does this help us to see how powerful Jesus is?

Hmmm... How does it help us to know God didn't give up on Judea and Samaria?

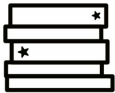
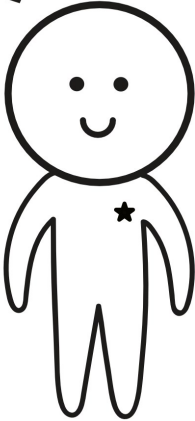


Pray

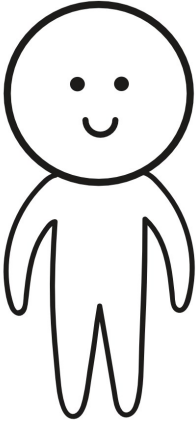
Let's **thank God** that he doesn't give up on his plans for his people

Samaria

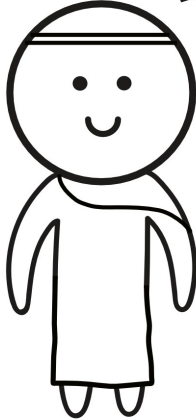
I believe!



Repent and believe!



I believe!



Judea

King Jesus is at work transforming his enemies.

So far in Acts, the gospel has spread around Jerusalem and then gone to Judea and Samaria. The good news was continuing to spread but there were many people violently trying to stop this happening. One man in particular, named Saul, hated Jesus and was doing everything he could to silence Jesus' people. So how would the gospel go to the ends of the earth? And who would take it there?

There is a big surprise in our passage today. King Jesus chose a very surprising person to take the good news to the Gentiles. Jesus chose Saul—the man who hated him and was trying to stop Jesus' people spreading his gospel! Jesus met Saul on the road to Damascus and changed him from his enemy into someone who loved him.

King Jesus is so powerful and his gospel is unstoppable. He changed someone who was trying to stop the gospel from spreading, into someone who would spread the gospel to many, many people! (We know Saul as the apostle Paul.)



Read

Pray and read Acts 9:3-5 and 13-15



Look

Look at verse 13... What has Saul been doing to Jesus' people?

Look closer... Look at verse 15. What did Jesus say Saul was going to do?



Think

Hm... How did Saul go from being someone who hated Jesus to someone who loved him?

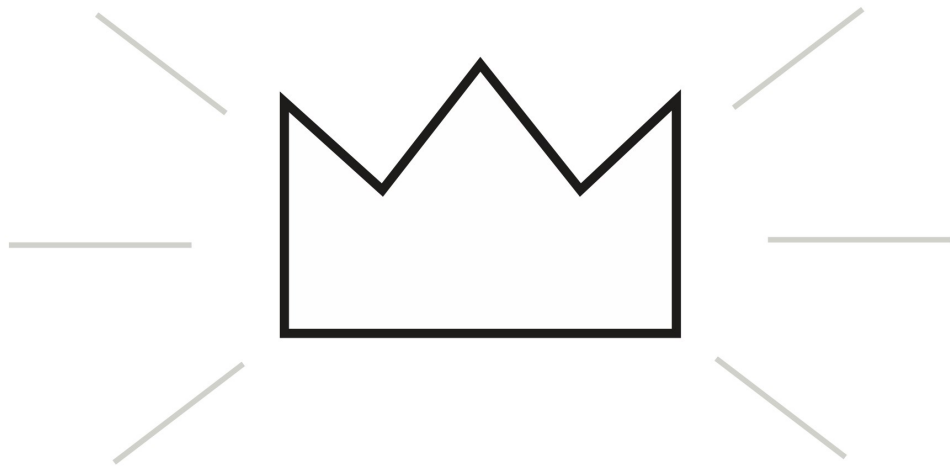
Hmm... Why did Jesus change Saul from being his enemy to be his servant? How will this help Jesus' gospel spread?

Hmmm... How powerful does this show that Jesus is?

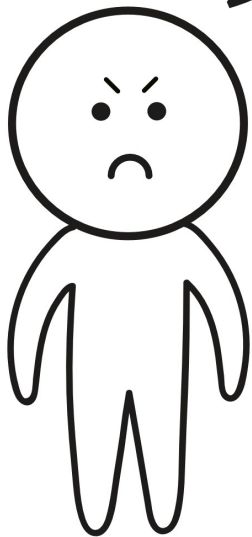


Pray

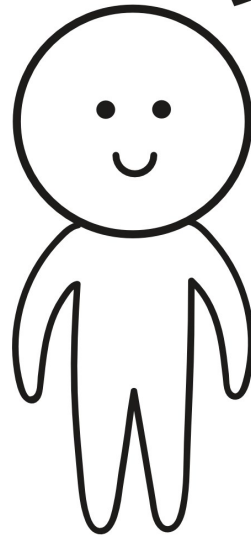
Let's **praise** God for how powerful King Jesus is!



I hate
Jesus!



I love
Jesus!



King Jesus is at work growing his kingdom to the ends of the earth.

The Jews were God's Old Testament people and Gentiles are people who are not Jews. They were totally separate. They ate different food. They didn't go into each other's houses. The Jewish people thought that God's kingdom was just for them. So far in Acts the good news about Jesus had mostly been told to Jewish people. All this was about to change.

God arranged for Cornelius, a Gentile Roman soldier, to meet Peter, a Jewish disciple of Jesus. Before they could meet together God had to show Peter that the good news about Jesus is for Jews and Gentiles. God gave him an unusual dream (three times) and he sent messengers to take Peter to Cornelius. When Peter arrived at Cornelius' house he finally realised what God wanted him to do. Peter told Cornelius about Jesus. Cornelius heard the good news, he believed and was saved.

It doesn't matter where you are from. You could be British or Chinese or Indian. God wants his good news to go to all people so everyone can come into his kingdom and be saved!



Read

Pray and read Acts 10:33-36



Look

Look at verse 34... What did God want Peter to understand about what he's like?

Look at verse 35... What does Peter realise about who God will forgive if they come to him?



Think

Hm... What does this mean about who God wants to be saved?

Hmm... Why does Peter need to understand this?

Hmmm... Why is it a great thing that God doesn't have favourites?



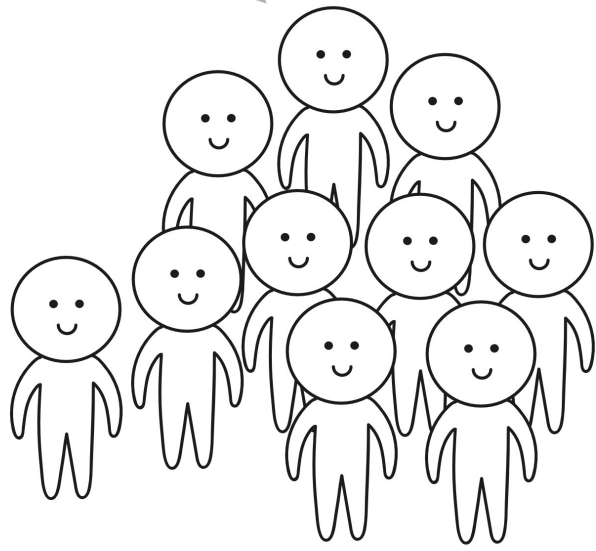
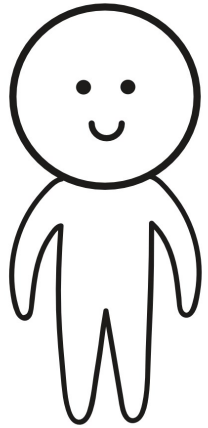
Pray

Let's **thank** God that Gentile also can be saved because he doesn't show favouritism.



Jews

Repent and believe!



Gentiles

King Jesus is at work making a whole new family for God.

What are some of your family traits? In the Old Testament God's family were the Israelites or Jews. They had special rules about eating and they worshipped God in Jerusalem. Now that more and more Gentiles were believing in Jesus, God's family was changing!

Many Gentiles had believed in Jesus, outside the promised land in a big city called Antioch. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to check them out. He found that they were truly part of God's family and praised God. In Antioch God's family started to have a new name. They were called 'Christians' because they followed Christ Jesus. God's family now worship God anywhere not just in Jerusalem. God's family love one another. The church in Antioch showed this by sending food to the Christians in Jerusalem when there was no food for them to eat.

This is what God's family is like now. Anyone who believes the good news about Jesus is a Christian and part of God's family. Being Christian is what matters most. It matters more than where we come from or what we look like or how old we are or anything else.



Read

Pray and read Acts 11:19-23, 26b.



Look

Look at verse 19-21... What is new about the church in Antioch? (Greeks are another word for non-jews/Gentiles)

Look at v21... How does Barnabas know the church in Antioch are also part of God's family?



Think

Hm... What makes someone a Christian? Is this the same for Jews and Gentiles?

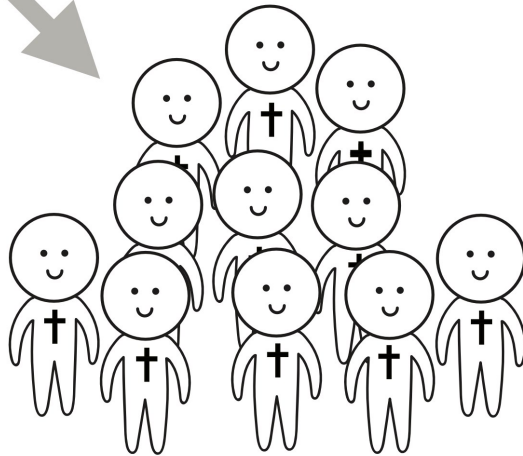
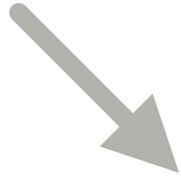
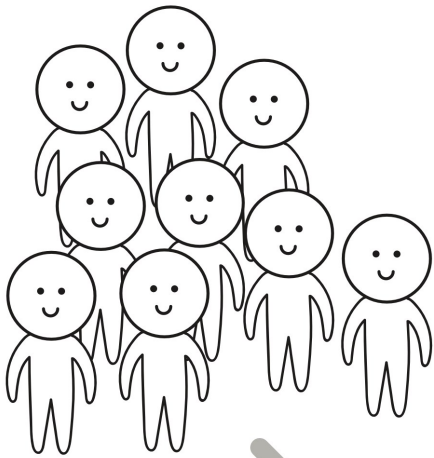
Hmm... Why is it great that God is making a new family of people who love Jesus?

Hmmm... Why does being a Christian matter more than where someone is from?



Pray

Let's **thank** God for making Christians into one family who all love Jesus.



King Jesus is at work even when the good news is rejected.

What's the best present you have received? You would never put that present in the bin, would you? The good news about Jesus is the best gift ever, so the Christians in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas on a journey to bring the gift of the gospel to more people.

Wherever they went Paul and Barnabas told the Jews the good news first. They had been waiting for this gift a long time.

Some Jews accepted the gift, but many Jews put it in the reject bin and tried to stop others accepting it! In another town called Antioch, the whole city was excited to hear the good news, but the Jews followed Paul around trying to stop people believing in Jesus. Paul wasn't worried though. God said this would happen. If the Jews don't want the gift, he will take it to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were very happy!

We don't need to worry that many Jews put the gift of the good news in the reject bin! It doesn't mean the good news is not the best gift ever. Now we get to enjoy being part of Jesus' kingdom, because we have heard the good news.



Read

Pray and read Acts 13:44-48



Look

Look... How do the Jews feel about the good news of Jesus?

Look at verses 46-47 ... Does that stop Paul? What does Paul do next?



Think

Hm... Why is this story good news for us?

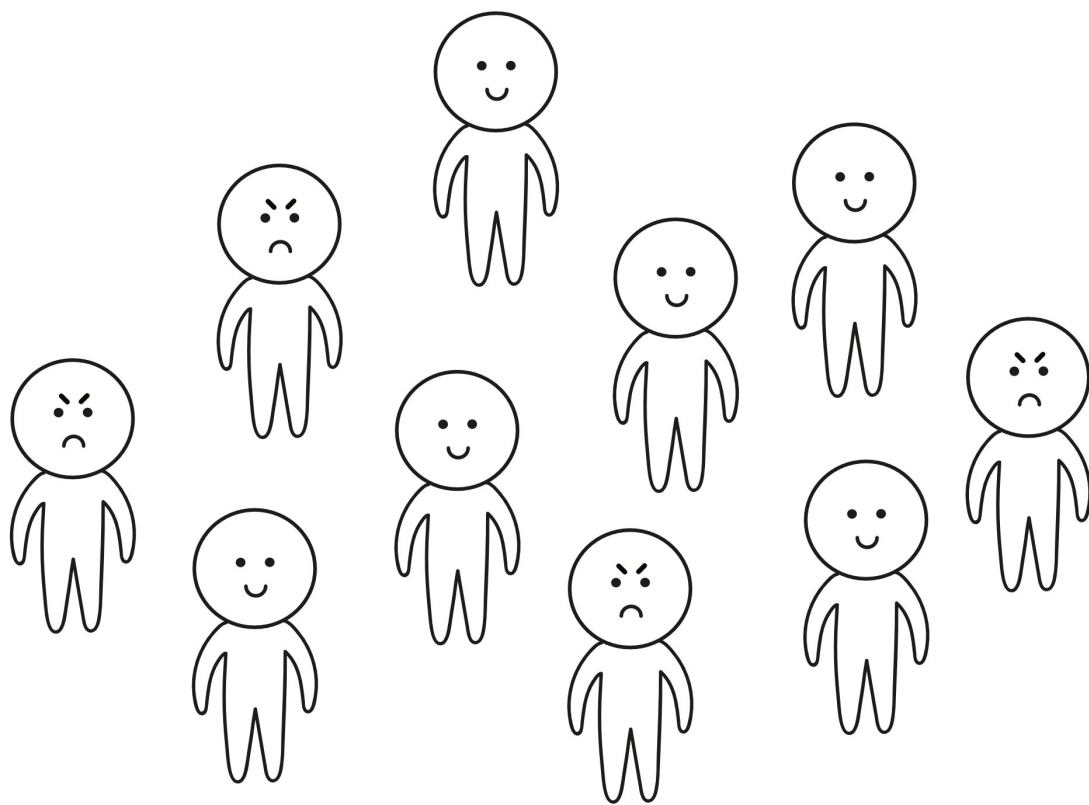
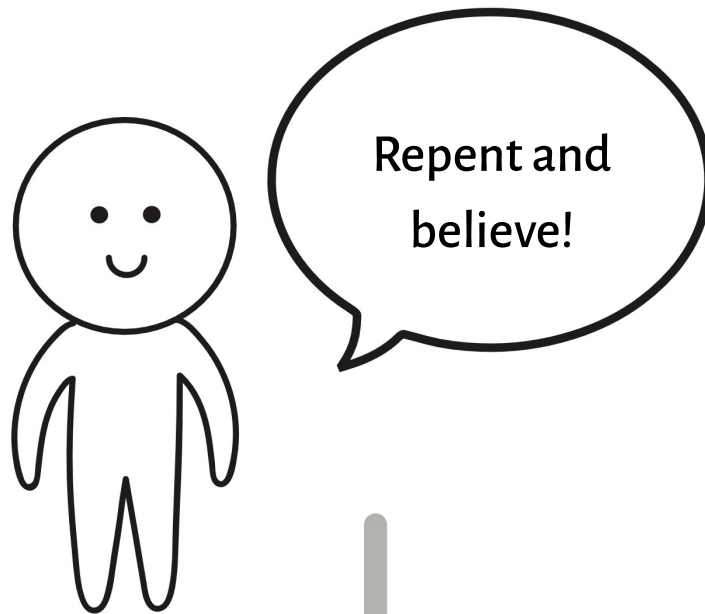
Hmm... How do we see that God isn't surprised by the Jews rejecting the gospel?

Hmmm... Why is it good for us to know that people will reject the good news about Jesus?



Pray

Let's **ask** God to help us trust that the gospel is the best gift even when it's rejected by others.



King Jesus is at work saving people from darkness.

On Paul's second big gospel adventure, Jesus sends Paul and his friend Silas further away. He sends them to places where people are living in total darkness. They don't walk around with blindfolds on. They are spiritually in the dark. They don't know the true God, so they worship idols and the Roman Emperor.

In a Roman town called Philippi, Paul and Silas are thrown in prison for speaking about Jesus. God saves Paul and Silas from prison with an earthquake. When the jailer finds out, he knows he will be in big trouble. Paul and Silas save him from his bosses by not running away. The jailer now knows he needs to be saved by Paul's God. Paul and Silas tell him the good news of Jesus and he is saved. He is part of Jesus' kingdom.

All around us people are living in the dark. They worship other made up gods or no God at all. We might think they could never be part of Jesus' kingdom, but Jesus saves people from darkness. He did it in Philippi and he's still doing it today.



Read

Pray and read Acts 16:29-33



Look

Look at verse 30...What does the jailer understand after all that he's seen and heard in Philippi?

Look closer...What does the jailer need to do to be saved?



Think

Hm... Why is the jailer's question surprising?

Hmm... What kinds of people do we think are far away from Jesus today?

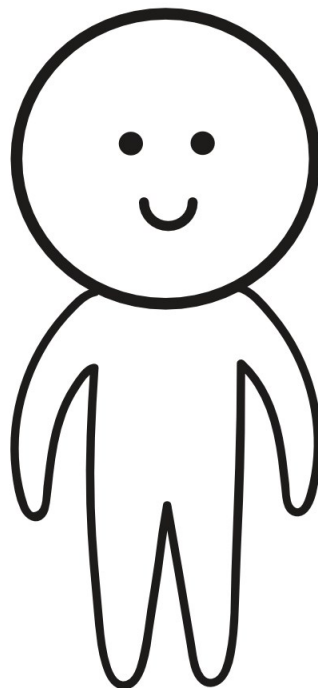
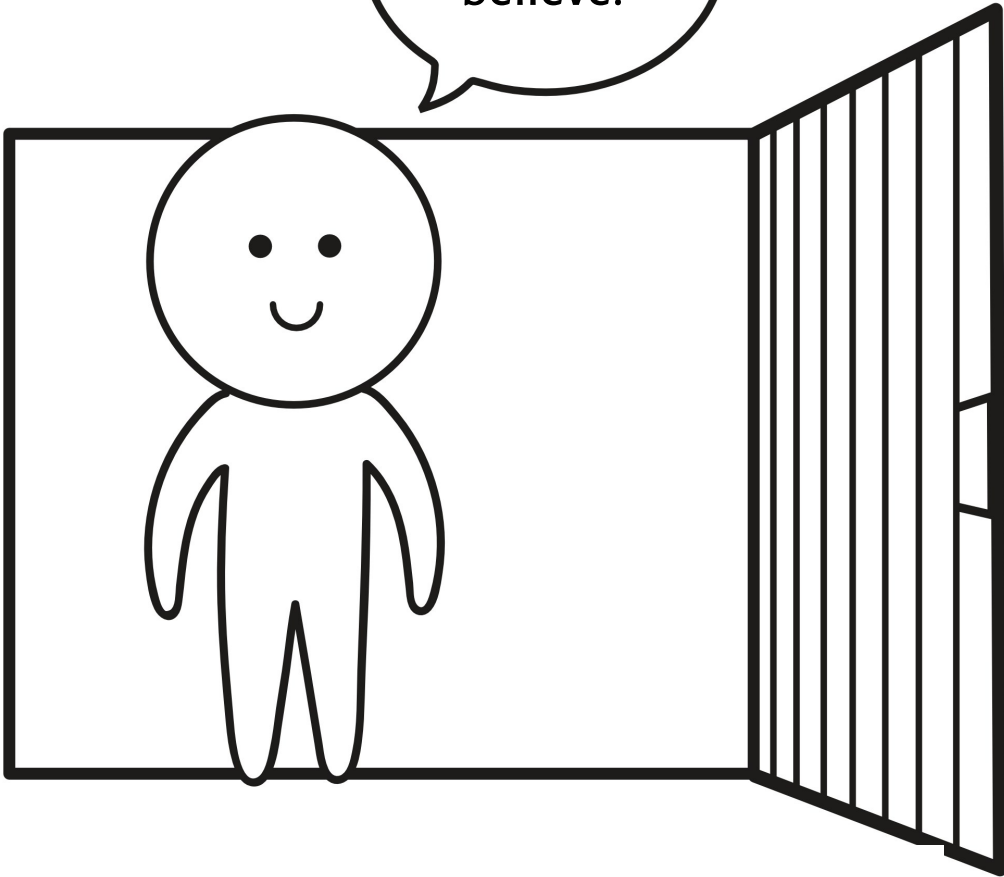
Hmmm... How does this passage help us when we think they could never know Jesus?



Pray

Let's **ask** God to save people we know who are in the dark.

Repent and
believe!



King Jesus is at work keeping people safe with his word.

What do your parents do to try and keep you safe? Perhaps they make you wear a bike helmet or hold your hand when you cross the road? Paul has started lots of churches wherever he has travelled. He knows that he now has to travel to Rome to complete the mission Jesus gave him. He probably won't see any of these churches again and he wants them to be safe after he's gone. So, Paul sets out on one final tour to make the churches strong and tell them how to stay safe.

When he passes by Ephesus, he gathers the elders of the church together on the beach. He tells them to watch out, because wolves are coming. Not actual wolves, but people who tell lies about Jesus to try and lead them astray. They don't need to be scared though, because God will keep them safe with the good news of Jesus in the Bible.

We face the same danger, but when we read the Bible together at home or at church, it's keeping us safe. When people teach us the Bible, they're trying to keep us safe, so we need to listen up!



Read

Pray and read Acts 20:29-32



Look

Look at v29-30...what is the danger the church will face when Paul is gone?

Look at v31-32...How are the church going to stay safe?



Think

Hm... Why do you think people telling lies about Jesus is so dangerous?

Hmm... How does listening to the good news of Jesus in the Bible keep us safe?

Hmmm... Could we listen to the Bible better? Why do we find it difficult sometimes?



Pray

Let's **ask** God to help us keep listening to the good news about Jesus.



King Jesus is at work on God's most important building project.

Paul is about to take the gospel to Rome, the most important city in the world. First, Paul wants to make one final trip to Jerusalem, where the book of Acts began. The Jews in Jerusalem are not happy to see Paul though. When they see him in the temple they think he is ruining it. They start a riot in the streets and try to kill him. Roman soldiers chain him up and carry him away to stop the crowds hurting him.

These are supposed to be God's people. Why are they so angry? The Jews think that God's most important building project is the temple. Paul knows that God's most important building project is his kingdom. His kingdom grows as people hear the good news and believe. Jesus appears to Paul at night to encourage him. He tells Paul he will get to Rome in the end.

We want to work on God's most important building project, his kingdom. Other people may think differently, and may even get angry at us, but with Jesus' help we keep going!



Read

Pray and read Acts 21:27-28, 23:11



Look

Look ... Why are the Jews so angry?

Look at 23:11... Is Jesus angry with Paul? Why not?



Think

Hm... What have the Jews not understood about God's plan?

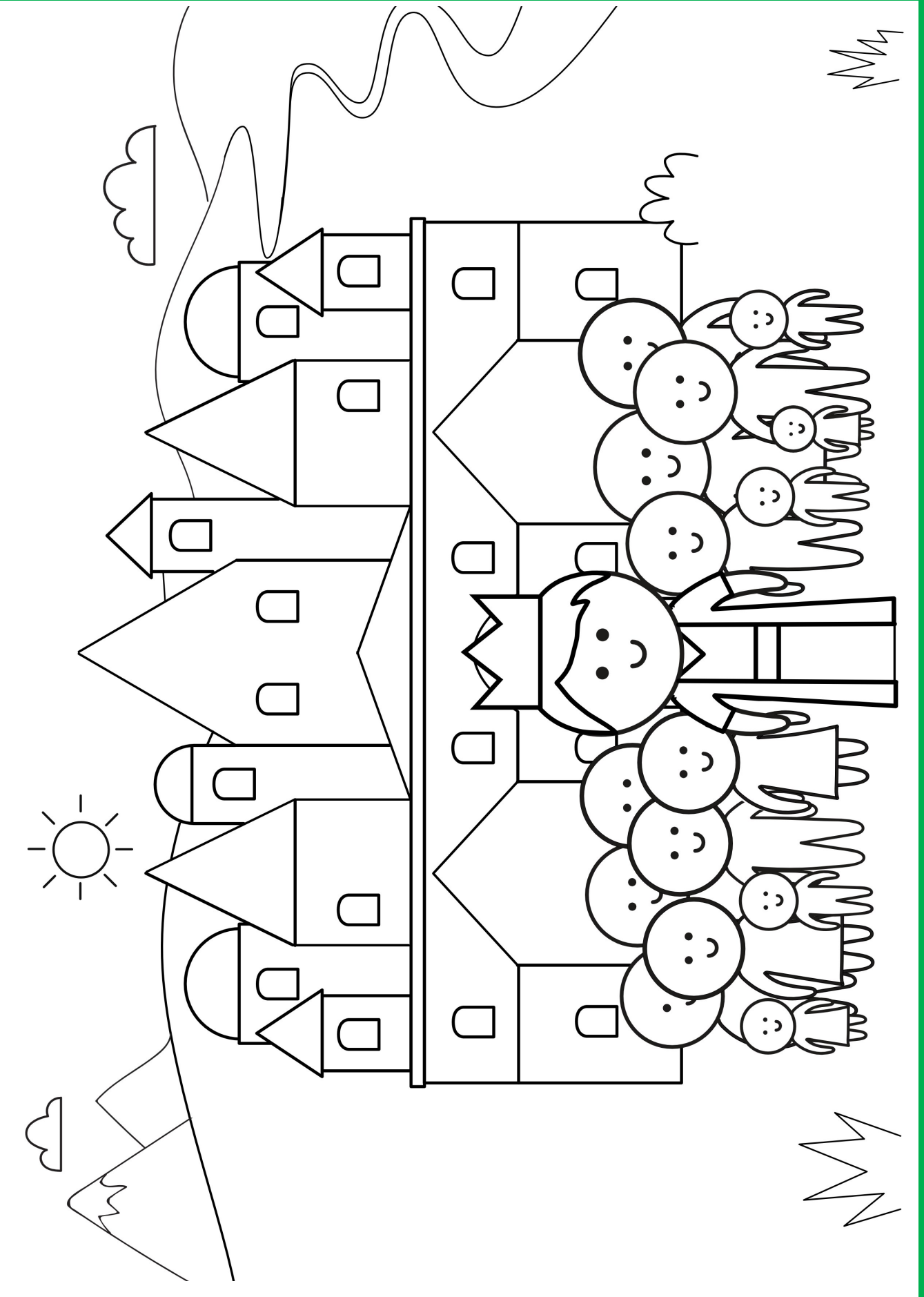
Hmm... How do we know Paul is on the right track?

Hmmm... How does this help when people are angry with us for speaking about Jesus?.



Pray

Let's **pray** we always remember building Jesus kingdom is most important, no matter what others say.



King Jesus is at work calling kings into his kingdom.

Paul is in prison in Jerusalem, but Jesus said Paul would take the good news to Kings, and that's exactly what he does next.

When the Romans find out the Jews have made a plot to kill Paul, they move him from Jerusalem to have a trial before Governor Felix. Paul has to defend himself, but he uses the opportunity to speak about Jesus to Felix. He stays in prison two more years. One day King Agrippa comes to visit the new Governor and wants to see Paul. He is a very important man. Paul uses the opportunity to tell King Agrippa about Jesus too, just like Jesus said.

We might think that Kings are too important to hear the good news, but even kings have a King! Jesus is king over all kings. His kingdom is greater than any kingdom on earth. No matter how important someone is they still need to join Jesus' kingdom and be saved. If we're Christians we can be sure we're part of the greatest kingdom there is.



Read

Pray and read Acts 26:27-29



Look

Look at v28-29...What is Paul trying to do?

Look at v30...What kinds of people does Paul want to become Christians?



Think

Hm... Why might it be surprising that Paul talks to the king in this way?

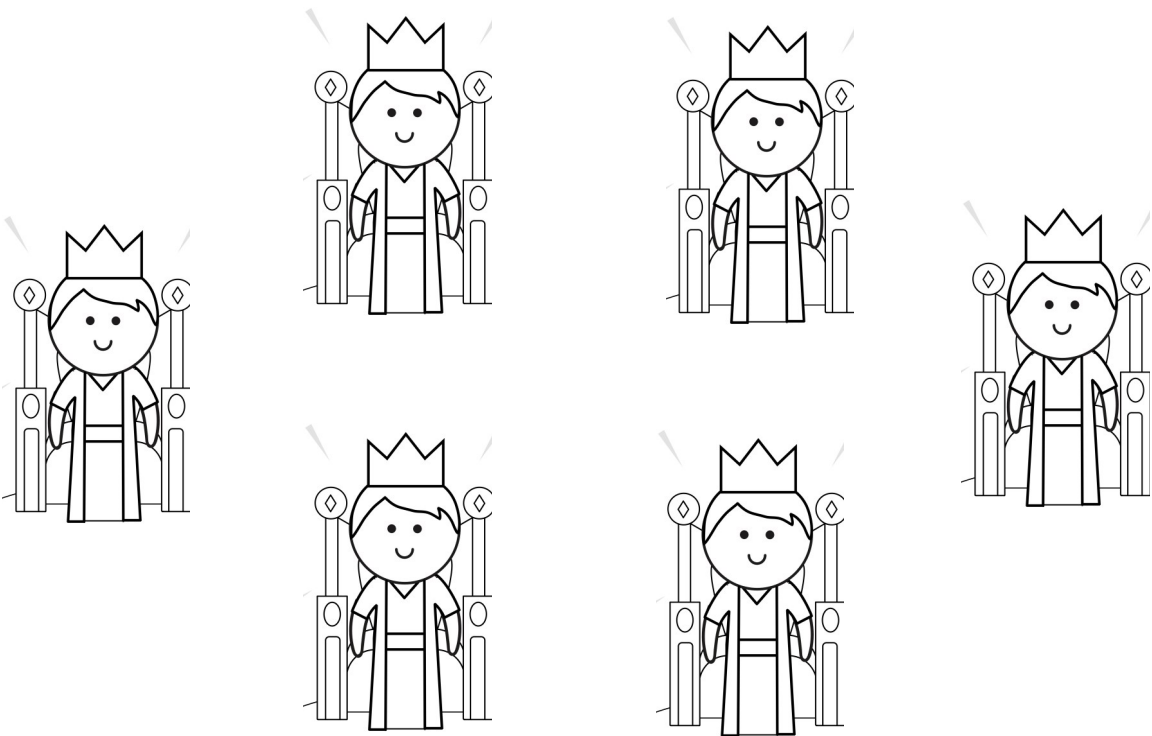
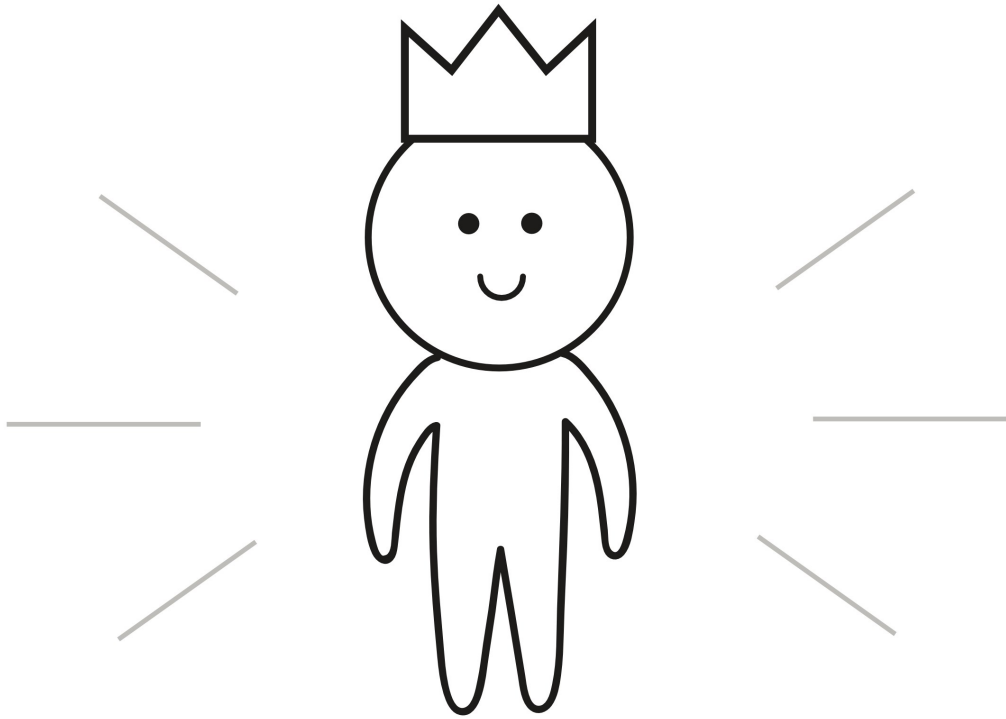
Hmm... Why is it the right thing for Paul to do?

Hmmm... How does this help us love King Jesus and his kingdom more?



Pray

Let's **praise** God that Jesus is the king above all kings



King Jesus is still at work saving the world from death.

Paul is boarding a ship to take him to his final destination, Rome. The gospel is reaching the ends of the earth! Surely, God will make this final journey plain sailing? No!

The wind gets worse and worse, until a hurricane slams down onto the ship. They can't control the ship anymore. Everyone is certain they will die. But, God tells Paul that everyone who sticks with him will live. Sure enough after many days they wash up on Malta. The ship is broken to pieces but all the people live!

Paul eventually makes it to Rome. He speaks about Jesus to anyone who will come and hear. That might not sound like an exciting ending to the book of Acts, but the dramatic journey was a picture showing us that as Paul speaks about Jesus, people are being saved from death, just like on the boat. People are still being saved from death in every corner of the world. The book of Acts continues today as Jesus saves people from death in every country where his people speak the good news.



Read

Pray and read Acts 27:20-24



Look

Look at v20...What do the people on the boat think is going to happen next?

Look at v22-24...What is God going to do ?



Think

Hm... How are people all over the world in the same danger as the people on the boat?

Hmm... Where can they find hope of being saved?

Hmmm... How does that make us want to join the story of Acts and help the gospel go to the world?



Pray

Let's **thank** God that he is still saving people around the world from death today



All Bible references are from the
Holy Bible, New International Version® Anglicized, NIV®
Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.®
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.