

THE Mission OF THE Church



FAMILY LIFE
RESOURCES



FAMILY LIFE RESOURCES

Growing Together, Rooted in Faith - Colossians 2:7

We understand the challenges of busy schedules at home, which is why we offer resources that support you and your family which are easy to use, relevant and most importantly honor God. We pray these resources for your home along with the classes and services at First Church make an eternal difference in the lives of families like yours.

Blessings,
First Church Open Bible

Colossians 2:6,7

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.



The Mission of the Church

INTRODUCTION

Acts:1 - Jesus is taken up into Heaven. He had given His disciples instructions:

"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

These Friends of Jesus waited for further instructions from the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit came with power, He enabled them to speak truth with boldness. They shared the Good News of Jesus, following the Spirit's instructions as they went out proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah - the Savior of the world.

LESSON 1

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Parent's Passage: Acts 2:1-47

Family Reading: John 14:17-26

Key Verse: Acts 1:4

...wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

I'm sure everyone reading this can remember a time when they had to wait. You might wait to fall asleep, wait for the end of the school or workday, wait for vacation, wait for the bathroom, or wait to grow up and finally understand all those things people say you'll understand someday.

Whether we like it or not, waiting is a necessary part of life. If you want something, you either wait for it, or it won't happen for you (and waiting times will vary). You can choose not to wait in a line, for example. You could leave and find something else to do, but then it will never be your turn. And I know some of you are saying that you could just come back after the line is smaller - but guess what? You're still waiting!

But take heart! You are not alone in your waiting, because we all wait. Even the disciples waited.

"I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49)

Jesus promises that He will send them what God has promised (spoiler alert: it's the Holy Spirit). But they don't meet the Holy Spirit right away. Guess what? They had to wait for Him.

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Sometimes - especially when you look back after your wait is over - those times of waiting are the times we learn the most. Waiting can grow our faith (there's more about faith in one of our other lessons this month!) For the disciples, the wait gave them time to realize how much they needed the Lord.

I don't think the disciples fully understood what they were waiting for, but they still had faith in what they had been promised:

"The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you." (John 14:17)

The days of waiting revealed for the disciples how alone they were, how unable they were to accomplish anything worthwhile without God, and how completely dependent they were on Him.

Does that sound depressing? Maybe a little - especially if you don't have the Hope of Jesus. But John 15:5 reminds us that ***"apart from the Lord, we can do nothing"*** of eternal value.

It's the same for you and me. The disciples were no different than us. They weren't superheroes, they just prayed and waited - which we should do, as well.

But don't think of praying and waiting as small, insignificant things. These are ***big, amazing things!*** If waiting helps us grow closer to the Lord, then wait! The result is so, so sweet! And when we pray, we pray to a big God who loves us enough to hear our prayers. He wants you to talk to Him. And yes, He wants you to wait so that you can hear Him, too!

FAMILY PRAYER

Spend time together as a family praying and asking the Holy Spirit to speak to you. You probably won't see tongues of fire like the disciples did, but keep waiting because you never know how He will speak!

LESSON 2

Unlikely Allies

Parent's Passage: Acts 9:1-31

Family Reading: Acts 9:4-16

Key Verse: Acts 9:31

"Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers."

The Setting:

In Acts 1, Jesus returns to heaven. In Acts 2, The Holy Spirit came and empowered the followers of Christ to carry out His mission – and the Church was born.

In Acts 4, persecution of the church begins with Peter and John being thrown into jail for preaching about Jesus. By chapter 7, Steven becomes the first martyr and the Church is scattered throughout the region.

The Characters:

Jesus - Jesus has ascended into Heaven but promised to return.

Saul - worked tirelessly to destroy the church. (Acts 8:3.)

Ananias - a faithful follower of Jesus who lived in Damascus.

Act 1:

Saul set out on a mission to hunt down followers of Jesus, with the intent to arrest them. Many fled to Damascus, so that is where Saul was headed to hunt them down.

As he neared the city, a great flash of light blinded him. He heard a voice from heaven saying, *"Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?"*

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Saul answered, ***"Who are You, Lord?"*** The answer, ***"I am Jesus. Now, get up and go into the city"***.

Saul got up from the ground, but he could not see anything. The people that were with him, who also had heard the voice of Jesus, carefully led him into the city.

Act 2:

Next, the voice of Jesus spoke to Ananias. Ananias responded, ***"Here I am Lord"***. Jesus instructed Ananias to go and find Saul, explaining that He had great plans for him. Ananias expressed his concerns regarding Saul's reputation and the harm he had done to the believers. Jesus answered, ***"I have chosen him"***.

Act 3:

Ananias obeyed the voice of the Lord Jesus and went to find Saul. He introduced himself by calling Saul his brother. He explained to Saul that Jesus had sent him. As Ananias laid his hands on Saul, his sight was restored. His response was to be baptized. He stayed with the believers in Damascus.

Act 4:

Saul's preaching became very powerful! He gave convincing proof that Jesus was the Messiah. The Jewish leaders in the city did not like his teaching and plotted to kill him. With the help of his new friends, Saul escaped safely through a hole in the city wall.

CONCLUSION

Even though Jesus had returned to heaven, this story clearly demonstrates that He alone is the head of the church. Jesus is actively calling people to himself and directing believers to carry out His plans.

A person's past or background is insignificant to Jesus. What he asks for is a believing heart and a willingness to obey.

This story is a powerful reminder for each of us to listen to the instructions of Jesus through his Word, through His Church, and during our personal time with Him in prayer.

LESSON 3

The Travels of the Apostles

Parent's Passage: Acts:10-11

Family Reading: Acts 11:19-21

Key Verse: Acts 11:21

"The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord."

As the book of Acts opens, the apostles begin spreading the Good News of Jesus. To the Jewish people. They proclaim Him as the **Messiah**.

Saul was converted, and his name is changed to Paul. He begins traveling around the Mediterranean Sea, stopping in towns to encourage groups of Christians and to speak boldly to those who have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus.

To the Gentiles, Paul introduces Jesus as the **one true God**. They start in Jerusalem, telling of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Jewish leadership rejects their message. The apostles are arrested, stoned, and driven out of town.

EXAMPLES FROM ACTS

Acts 8:4-6 & 15-17 - SAMARIA

Philip preaches. Many believe the Good News and are baptized. Then Peter and John pray for the new believers and they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:44-48 - PETER AND CORNELIUS

As Peter preaches about Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes upon all who are listening and they are all baptized.

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Acts 11:21 - BARNABAS AT ANTIOCH

The Lord's power was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

THE MESSAGE SPREADS

The apostles were led by the Holy Spirit to go and share the Good News of Jesus. Those who believed received the gift of the Holy Spirit, and were baptized. They met regularly with other believers to pray, worship and strengthen one another in faith.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Good News of Jesus spread throughout the world. It reached across Asia, Europe, and into Africa. Everywhere it spread, the Holy Spirit gave gifts to strengthen the churches. Elders and teachers were appointed, the sick were healed, prophecies were given, and believers were filled with joy as they exalted the name of the Lord.

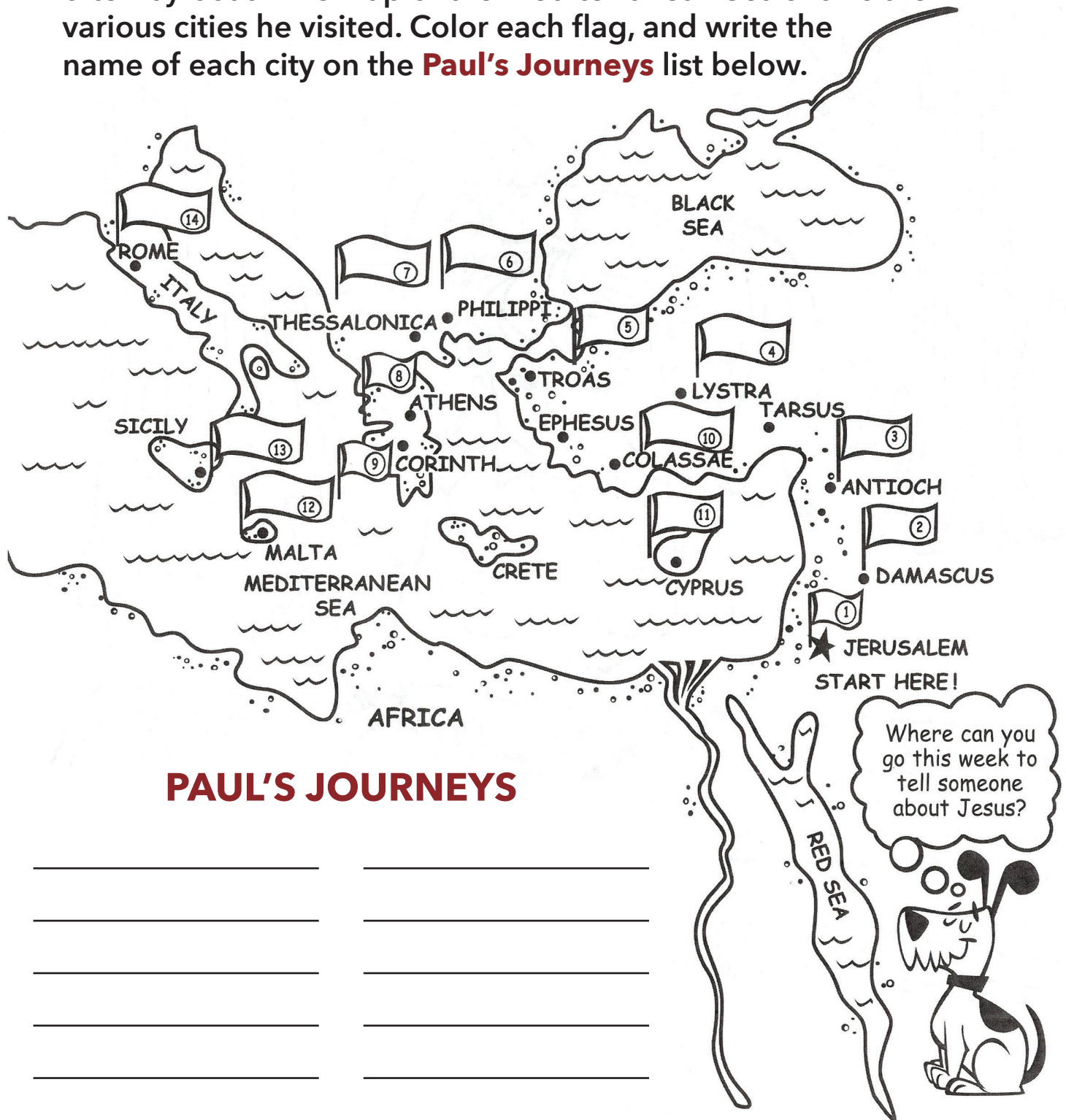
FAMILY ONLINE ACTIVITY

Gather together around a computer or tablet. Look at the Missionaries section of the Open Bible Global Missions website.
www.openbible.org/mission/global-outreach

Click on some of the [Missionaries](#) and the [Learn More](#) links and talk about how our church continues to spread the Good News of Jesus and his Kingdom by our support of these missionaries. Write down (and pray for!) some of the ministries the kids liked.

ON A MISSION FROM GOD

The Apostle Paul traveled to many places to spread the Gospel, often by boat! This map of the Mediterranean Sea shows the various cities he visited. Color each flag, and write the name of each city on the **Paul's Journeys** list below.



_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

LESSON 4

The Law and Faith

Parent's Passage: Ephesians 2
Family Reading: Galatians 2:16-21
Key Verse: Romans 3:31

***"Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all!
Rather, we uphold the law."***

Think about some rules you have to follow every day. Just to name a few: put your clean clothes away, take your dirty dish to the sink, don't throw rocks, sit quietly at your desk. And although sometimes we might not like rules, it's good to know they're there. They keep order and help us feel safe.

The Bible has its own rules, which are also called laws. Just a few examples include: ***do not lie, respect your parents, do not worship other gods.*** Just as it's good to follow our everyday rules, it is good to follow God's laws.

"For God is not a God of disorder but of peace"
(1 Corinthians 14:33)

***"... make every effort to be found spotless, blameless
and at peace with Him."*** (2 Peter 3:14)

***"You must obey my laws . . . for the person who obeys
them will live by them. I am the Lord your God."***
(Leviticus 18:4-5)

***"Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one
who loves me. . ."*** (Acts 2:21)

But what if you were visiting someone's house, and before you even said hello, they started telling you the rules. How would you feel?

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The same thing can happen with some Christians. They focus so much on the laws God has given us that they feel it's important for everyone to hear them. But for someone who is just beginning to get to know God, this can feel overwhelming and unwelcoming. After all, no one can perfectly follow all God's rules—everyone falls short at times, which means we all sin.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
(Romans 3:23)

And the Bible also teaches us:

"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." (James 2:10)

What a huge bummer, right?! We're supposed to follow the law, yet we know it is impossible to be perfect at it. How is that fair?! Why would God do that to us?!

You see, this is what someone might think IF they didn't know about another very important part of believing in God - **FAITH**. So what is faith?

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1)

And why do we need it?

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him."
(Hebrews 11:6)

"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

If we could please God by only obeying the law, there would have been no reason for Jesus to die.

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"I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"
(Galatians 2:21)

So, for someone who wants to follow Jesus, both faith and the law are required, and they both work together (Romans 3:31). And remember that visitor we talked about earlier? Just like Jesus didn't leave us with only the law, He extended His love and grace to us through the gift of faith.

FAMILY PRAYER

Pray as a family together about ways you could be welcoming to others-both at home and at church. List some ways below:

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THE APOSTLES OF JESUS



Find the names of the Apostles in the puzzle below. An Apostle is one who is sent by Jesus, so all of His Disciples were Apostles! However, there were a few others. Can you name one more?



**FIND THESE
NAMES**

**ANDREW
BARTHOLOMEW
JAMES (2)
JOHN**

**JUDAS
MATTHEW
PETER
PHILIP**

**SIMON
THADDAEUS
THOMAS**



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