

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 1.1: THE PROMISE OF POWER

Scripture: Acts 1:1-11

SUMMARY:

The disciples had three years with Jesus. They followed Him and learned from the Master Himself. Jesus would leave them to be with the Father. He would leave to prepare a place for those who believe in Him. This left the disciples to carry out the mission that Jesus placed in front of them. This ordinary group of people would

literally change the face of the world with the gospel. However, a mission this important wouldn't rest on their shoulders alone. Jesus said that the Comforter would come and they wouldn't accomplish this mission alone after He left them. The Holy Spirit would arrive, and with Him the power that the disciples would draw from in order to reach the world.

KEY VERSE:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Acts 1:8

KEY THOUGHT:

When God gives His disciples a mission, He promises to provide all of the power needed to accomplish it.

KEY WORD:

POWER | the ability to do something or act in a particular way to accomplish a specific purpose

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- How did the Holy Spirit help the disciples with the mission of sharing the gospel with others?
- How confident are you with sharing your faith with others?
- What do you need God's power to help you with?
- How is serving God in our own power different than serving with the power of the Holy Spirit?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 1.2: THE SPIRIT ARRIVES

Scripture: Acts 2:1-13

SUMMARY:

And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting (Acts 2:2). Then tongues of fire rested on each of them and they all spoke in different languages. This astounded the people near them. As many Jews from all over the Roman world were in Jerusalem for the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), they heard their own

languages being spoken by people who would have known only three: Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. These were not those languages. They were foreign languages. The Holy Spirit's arrival brought about a diverse power of speech that would take the gospel to the entire world.

KEY VERSE:

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2:4

KEY THOUGHT:

God makes promises, but *how* He keeps those promises is often surprising and sometimes even confusing to us.

KEY WORD:

PENTECOST | the Greek name for the Feast of Weeks, a prominent feast in the calendar of ancient Israel. It later became the day remembered by Christians as the beginning of the Church.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- If you had been there with the other Christians for the arrival of the Holy Spirit, do you think it would have been scary? Why or why not?
- Do you think any of them were embarrassed by what was happening? Why or why not?
- How does the power of the Holy Spirit help Christians today to do what God asks of us?
- Can you think of a time when you felt empowered by the Holy Spirit to do something God wanted you to do?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 1.3: POWERFUL AND DANGEROUS

Scripture: Acts 2:14-41

SUMMARY:

Peter's powerful and dangerous sermon marks the beginning of the Church. Many would respond in faith to this sermon and the Church would grow exponentially. The Church we serve in is the powerful and preferred instrument of God to reach this lost world. However, even as it is powerful, it's also perceived as dangerous by a world that is still an enemy of God. Jesus Christ came to redeem

mankind. However, that doesn't mean that all who hear the good news will consider it to be good news. For there is only one Church, one kingdom, and one Savior — and that means all of us will either bow in submission to Jesus or lead an assault on His righteousness until the end has come.

KEY VERSE:

For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.

Acts 2:39

KEY THOUGHT:

All through the book of Acts, powerful and dangerous are parts of what church meant to the earliest Christians.

KEY WORD:

SERMON | One of the methods God uses to proclaim the dangerous and joyful message of Jesus to all who will listen to the truth

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- How do you think it would feel to hear someone say you were responsible for killing the Son of God?
- Why was it important for Peter to show people that the Old Testament prophecies came true in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?
- Why do you think so many people who heard Peter's sermon believed in Jesus?
- Peter called his generation crooked or corrupt. Is every generation crooked or corrupt? What do you think it means to be saved from a crooked or corrupt generation?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 1.4: CHURCH LIFE: DEVOTED TO THE WORD

Scripture: Acts 2:42

SUMMARY:

The early church placed a high priority on the apostles' teaching. The apostles' teaching was a unique teaching that was established by God and communicated to the apostles for them to communicate to the world. This teaching included many subjects, and according to the sermons found in the book of Acts, it included teachings on: Jesus as Messiah, Jesus as the Son of David, Jesus

as the Savior and Judge of mankind, salvation through personal faith in Jesus Christ. This lesson will address the concept that the early church was devoted to the apostles' teaching and such devotion was fueled by a commitment to fulfill the Great Commission by instructing new believers on the teachings of Christ.

KEY VERSE:

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Acts 2:42

KEY THOUGHT:

One of the key parts of a strong church is that the people have devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching.

KEY WORD:

DEVOTED | To be concentrated on or committed to a particular purpose, pursuit, or cause

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- What would you say you're devoted to?
- Why do you think it mattered that the people were devoted to the apostles' teaching? Who were the apostles and what made them so important?
- Do we as a family show that we are devoted to knowing God's Word? How could we do better at that?
- Do you have a plan to be devoted to studying God's Word this week or month or year? How would it help to have a plan?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 1.5: CHURCH LIFE: EAT & PRAY

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47

SUMMARY:

This week's lesson continued looking at what the early church devoted itself to. In addition to the apostles' teaching, they were devoted to eating together and praying together. These meals would take place in regular homes or in areas surrounding the temple. Eating together probably included the celebration of the Lord's Supper, as well as the opportunity to serve each other and fellowship

across normal social dividing lines. Praying together also was a way to demonstrate and strengthen their faith as a community connected to God through faith in Christ. Throughout the book of Acts, Luke gave examples of the Church and its leadership praying on a regular basis. The practice was significant and is still a mark of Christ's Church today.

KEY VERSES:

And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:46-47

KEY THOUGHT:

A vital part of church life is fellowship, especially eating and praying together.

KEY WORD:

FELLOWSHIP | The gathering of Christians who share a faith in Christ, a desire to be more like Him, and a mission to tell the world about Him

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Do you wish the people in our church spent more or less time eating together, praying together, and just being together?
- Why does it matter that we celebrate Communion or the Lord's Supper?
- Can you think of a time our church prayed together for something and God answered in an amazing way?
- How do you feel about praying out loud with other people at church or with us at home?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 1.6: CHURCH LIFE: AWESOME SIGNS

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47

SUMMARY:

In the early church, the demonstration of signs was a part of church life. The apostles performed signs and wonders, and these signs confirmed their ministry was from God. These signs were performed for the healing and restoration of life as well as a demonstration of divine power. They functioned as the apostles' calling card. The response from the Jerusalem community was one of awe

and reverence — and that was exactly the right reaction. These wonders showed that God was with the apostles and that their teaching could be trusted because it was coming directly from the Source of Life.

KEY VERSE:

And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

Acts 2:43

KEY THOUGHT:

The awe-inspiring signs and wonders that God uses throughout the book of Acts are intended to point people to the gospel.

KEY WORD:

SIGN | An object, image, or event used to communicate meaning, ideas, or truth to those who are paying attention

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- How do you think you would respond if you saw someone miraculously healed or a demon cast out? Would you be more likely to believe that person was from God?
- What was the point of the awesome signs and wonders we see happening in the book of Acts?
- What are some powerful things you've seen God's Holy Spirit do through the Christians in our church?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 1.7: CHURCH LIFE: WHAT'S MINE IS YOURS

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47, Acts 4:32-5:11

SUMMARY:

The people in the early church were devoted to the idea of sharing what they had. This wasn't just giving a bag of clothes or a meal. This was giving possessions and cash of great value so that not a single person among them went without. This was abandoning the material possessions of this world so they could fully embrace this new life that they had found in Jesus. This behavior and practice was

modeled after and in the same spirit of Jesus' death on the cross for our salvation. It's not surprising some hesitated to share all they had, but when one couple lied about doing so it was surprising how quickly God killed them — a stern warning to the church never to be deceptive with each other or, especially, with God.

KEY VERSE:

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.

Acts 4:32

KEY THOUGHT:

The early Christians thought of each other as family and gave generously to make sure all of their family's needs were met.

KEY WORD:

GENEROSITY | The habit of giving money, time, talent, or effort to help someone in need without expecting anything back from them in return

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- What do you think about the way the early church shared all of their possessions with each other? Why don't we share with each other like that as much?
- In our church, do you think wealthy people and poorer people mix well together? Why or why not?
- How does our church work together to meet each others' needs for food, shelter, clothing, and health care? What else could we do?
- Why do you think Ananias and Sapphira lied about giving all of their money instead of just part of it?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

UNIT 1 REVIEW - INCEPTION

SUMMARY:

In the first unit of Trek 3, we covered the birth (or inception) of the Church of Jesus Christ, the Church that continues to this day. Our study began with Jesus' promise to send power and comfort in the Holy Spirit and His commission to His disciples to be His witnesses around the world. Then we watched in awe as the Spirit arrived – loudly and with great miracles – and thousands upon

thousands of people trusted in Christ and were added to the Church. Finally, we observed how the early church engaged in life together, devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching, to prayer, to eating, to spending time together, and to sharing all of their material possessions in common to ensure that all needs were met.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- What do you think is the most important thing for us to understand about the early church?
- In your own words, what would you say is the mission of the Church today?
- How would being more closely connected to each other as believers make the Church better at fulfilling our mission?
- Do you think the leaders and people in our church operate more in their own power or in the power of God's Holy Spirit? Why?
- Who is someone in our church who really seems to live in the power of the Holy Spirit? What would you say is the evidence of that?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 2.1: CONTAGIOUS

Scripture: Acts 2:46-47, Acts 5:12-16

SUMMARY:

We're tempted to get discouraged when we hold up the snapshots of the early church in these passages and compare them to our own experience of church in any given moment. We can do something about that with this week's lesson though. For one thing, we can confront those negative feelings with the truth. The same Holy Spirit power at work in those early Christians is at work

in us, is moving and acting in our believing kids. Even in the most dysfunctional Christian family, spiritual life is happening and our love for each other can still draw people to Christ. Nothing is more contagious than the love, joy, and power of God on display in the lives of a family of faithful Christians.

KEY VERSES:

None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.

Acts 5:13-14

KEY THOUGHT:

As God's power changes people's lives, the world around them can't help but notice and be drawn to Him.

KEY WORDS:

HIGH ESTEEM/HIGH REGARD | Respect or a favorable opinion

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is one key thought that you have learned tonight?
- Why do you think the other people of Jerusalem respected those first Christians and held them in high esteem?
- How do you think people in our community tend to feel about the people in our church?
- What are we doing for our community that might give people a reason to respect Christians?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 2.2: RIGHTEOUS REBELLION

Scripture: Acts 5:17-42

SUMMARY:

In most other circumstances, the very Jewish-Christian apostles would have seen it as their place to submit to the orders of the Jewish religious leaders. But Jesus had taught them exactly when and how to rebel, not in all things, but in those situations when the command contradicted God's own words to them – His command that they were to be His witnesses. And so the disciples

disobeyed the words of the chief priest and obeyed the voice of an angel of the Lord. It's a righteous (and risky) rebellion that we hope our courageous middle-schoolers will be drawn to, especially as their culture pressures them to conform to the world.

KEY VERSE:

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

Acts 5:29

KEY THOUGHT:

God calls all of us to willingly submit to our human authorities – right up to the point that they tell us to disobey God.

KEY WORD:

REBELLION | An act of open resistance to someone in authority

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- If God tells us to obey those in authority over us, why was it right for the apostles to rebel against the Jewish religious leaders?
- Have you ever had an experience – or can you imagine one – in which it was or would be right for you to rebel against someone in authority over you? Tell me about it.
- What do you think it might cost you to rebel against living a life the world calls normal?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 2.3: MORE DISCIPLES, MORE SERVANTS

Scripture: Acts 6:1-7

SUMMARY:

The early church had some growing pains. As more and more were added to its number, the apostles could not possibly keep up with it all. Eventually, details started getting missed – important details. People were not getting fed. It became clear that more servants were needed who could lead or, to flip it around, more leaders who would serve. And they had to be men of character,

walking in the Spirit, living wisely. The Church still needs servants and leaders like that. Your church needs your child and others to become servants and leaders like that. Let's enjoy the opportunity this week to point them in that direction.

KEY VERSE:

Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

Acts 6:3

KEY THOUGHT:

God designed us uniquely to serve one another in loving community.

KEY WORDS:

GOOD REPUTE | Known in the community as a person who lives with integrity, kindness, and wisdom

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Is conflict between Christians always a bad thing? Can you think of examples from the Bible or everyday life where conflict led to good problem solving?
- Why do you think it was such a big deal to the apostles that the men who would serve tables have such good reputations?
- Which leaders in our church do you think of as having good reputations, living wisely, and walking in the Spirit?
- Do you tend to think of yourself as a servant who may one day help the church as a leader? Why or why not?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 2.4: SETTING THE STORY STRAIGHT

Scripture: Acts 6:8-7:53

SUMMARY:

Stephen was treated very unjustly by the Jewish religious leaders. He was serving God, and God was showing real power through Stephen. Instead of recognizing what God was doing, though, the religious leaders arrested Stephen, lied about him, and put him on the spot. Most of us would have been hurt, angry, afraid. We would have hired a lawyer, maybe. In this week's lesson, we read

about what Stephen did instead. He told everyone a bigger story, one they already knew, to make the point that God was still doing what God has always done and He is doing it right now – in this moment – no matter what anyone else says or does.

KEY VERSES:

“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ... And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

Acts 7:51-53

KEY THOUGHT:

Our personal stories, no matter how good or bad, only make sense when we understand how they fit into God's grand narrative.

KEY WORD:

NARRATIVE | A spoken or written account of connected events or experiences; a story

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Stephen was chosen by the church to serve tables, but ended up doing great wonders among the people. Why do you think that happened?
- Why do you think Stephen did not defend himself or even just shut up? Why did he tell the story he did?
- Have you ever been accused of something you didn't do? How did you respond?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 2.5: WILLING TO RUN, WILLING TO DIE

Scripture: Acts 7:54-8:3

SUMMARY:

This week's lesson about the stoning to death of Stephen with the surprise appearance of Saul (later Paul) overseeing it is a compelling scene. It shows us two men with such conviction that they were willing to – in turns – die and kill for their faith. Deep down, we all long to care about something so deeply we would be willing to sacrifice our lives for it. One point of connection we

want to help our students make is that being willing to die for Christ begins with being willing to live for Him, being willing to make sacrifices for Him now. This story compelled many Christians to live for Christ by giving up their homes and running for their lives instead of pretending not to know Him.

KEY VERSE:

And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts 8:1

KEY THOUGHT:

Being truly willing to die for your faith means you hold it more valuable than your own life.

KEY WORD:

SCATTER | To cause things or people to separate from a single place and go in different directions, arriving in different places

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Why do you think Stephen was able to have that kind of peace and courage at the moment of his death?
- What would you describe yourself as being willing to die for?
- Why do you think it's easier to say we're willing to die for Christ than it is to actually live for Him in our everyday lives?
- What sacrifices do you think we need to make while we're alive to show that Christ is worth dying for, if it ever comes to that?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 2.6: FREE POWER

Scripture: Acts 8:9-25

SUMMARY:

In this week's lesson, we met a man called Simon who either had access to real supernatural power (that was likely demonic) or who was a talented illusionist. He amazed everyone. But then the power of God – the real God – showed up through Philip and Peter and John. The Holy Spirit revealed to Simon and his neighbors what real, life-changing power looked like. And they believed.

But then Simon wanted to turn God's grace and power into a transaction – my cash for God's glory in me, as in "I'll pay you to make me significant." Peter's response was harsh. Let's take the opportunity to help our students get what Simon did not understand: God's gift of grace is free and can never be purchased – and His power is meant to bring glory to Him.

KEY VERSE:

But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!"

Acts 8:20

KEY THOUGHT:

God's grace and power are never for sale; they are always free to those who trust in Jesus.

KEY WORD:

MAGIC | The illusion of power to seemingly influence the course of events by using mysterious or supernatural forces

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Why do you think Simon was so eager to have the power he saw in Peter and the others?
- In your own words, what did Simon do wrong in offering to pay for that power? Why was Peter so harsh with him?
- What power has God given to you through the Holy Spirit? How are you using it?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 2.7: PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN

Scripture: Acts 8:26-40

SUMMARY:

In this week's lesson, God executed another wild miracle for the purpose of spreading the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus – but this time to just one person. The Ethiopian man was a seeker. He believed in and worshiped the God of the Jews. He wanted to know God better; he wanted to understand Scripture. The gospel of Jesus was literally the message he was longing to hear,

though he didn't know it yet. So God sent him Philip. We and our students need the reminder that God is active in the world, moving willing men and women to bring the gospel to those willing to believe at exactly the right time, right place.

KEY VERSES:

Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep He was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opens not His mouth. In His humiliation justice was denied Him. Who can describe His generation? For His life is taken away from the earth."

Acts 8:32-33

KEY THOUGHT:

God is willing to go to great lengths to create the perfect moment for just one person to hear the message of Jesus and believe.

KEY WORD:

CANDACE | It's possible that all of the women who served as queen of the Ethiopians were called Candace, as the rulers of Egypt were called Pharaoh. The Candace would have ruled an African Nubian kingdom south of Egypt that had stood for over 700 years at this point.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- God sent an angel to tell Philip exactly where to go. Do you ever wish God would do that for you? Why or why not?
- Do you know or have you heard of anyone who has read the Bible and really tried to understand it even though they didn't know Jesus yet? Why do you think someone would want to do that?
- Whom did God use to help you to understand the gospel so you could believe in Jesus? Do you think God sent that person to you to do that? Why or why not?
- Whom have you told about Jesus? Whom could you tell? Why would you?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

UNIT 2 REVIEW - CONTAGION

SUMMARY:

In the second unit of Trek 3, we watched as the brand-new Church of Jesus Christ caught fire and began to spread away from Jerusalem and into the rest of the world. That expansion was spurred by both attraction and persecution. People saw what those in the Church had – glad and grateful hearts, generosity, connectedness, power, confidence in eternal life – and they wanted

in. But the Jewish leaders hated the Christians, threatening and beating the apostles and then killing Stephen. The Christians ran, taking the amazing power of God and the amazing story of His grace through faith in Jesus with them farther and wider, beginning to fulfill Jesus' statement that they would be His witnesses everywhere.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- What is attractive about what we as Christians have in Christ? What might attract those who know us to want to know Him?
- Whom do you know, if anyone, who has ever rebelled righteously out of obedience to God?
- How did God use persecution to spread the message of the gospel? Why do you think the Church tends to grow when Christians are persecuted?
- What is the genealogy of your faith? How far back can you trace how faith was passed down to you?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 3.1: FROM VILLAIN TO HERO

Scripture: Acts 9:1-19

SUMMARY:

Saul had already killed to stop the message of the gospel from spreading, and he was on a mission to hunt down more Christians when Christ stepped in to violently change Saul's heart. Saul needed God's gift of grace, but he didn't know it yet. We want our students to notice again the lengths to which God is willing to go to accomplish His plan of delivering the good news of Jesus. God

used both blindness and visions to convince Saul of God's love and mercy, along with a prearranged meeting with a surprised servant named Ananias. Let's help our students to see that God will not be stopped, that His plans always succeed, even when they're the last thing we would expect to happen.

KEY VERSES:

For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:9-10a

KEY THOUGHT:

God, by His grace, can radically transform anyone's life, even a person who acts like His enemy.

KEY WORD:

PERSECUTION | Cruel or unfair treatment, specifically because of who you are or what you believe

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- In your own words, why was Saul so mad – *breathing threats and murder* – at the Christians?
- How hard would it have been for you to trust that Saul had really changed (and wasn't just laying a trap) if you had been a Christian in the early church?
- Have you ever been surprised to find out someone had become a Christian? If so, who, and why was it surprising?
- Who is someone that is not a Christian that we could ask God to bring to faith in Christ?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 3.2: CHANGE YOU CAN TRUST?

Scripture: Acts 9:19-31

SUMMARY:

The immediate and drastic change in Saul's life after his conversion to faith in Christ was either evidence that God's grace and power are undeniable or, as the Christian community feared, a truly crafty attempt to bring them all down. Time would be the test. Let's use the opportunity of Saul's conversion to reassure our students that the power of Christ to transform people through the Holy

Spirit is real and active today – but that it also takes time for that transformation to progress and that it won't be complete until we are with the One who is changing us.

KEY VERSES:

To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:22-24

KEY THOUGHT:

Trusting in Jesus will dramatically impact the way you engage with the world around you.

KEY WORD:

TRANSFORMATION | A complete and total change, usually for the good

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- What did the early Christians risk by believing the change in Saul was real?
- Is there anyone in your life you have been hesitant to believe is capable of being changed by the power of God? What is the risk of believing that?
- Do you ever wonder if God is actually changing you, making you more like Christ? If so, why?
- What is the evidence that Christ is alive and active in your life, changing you from the inside out?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 3.3: EVEN THE GENTILES

Scripture: Acts 10:1-11:18

SUMMARY:

Peter was a religious guy. As a good Jewish boy, he had never eaten anything that broke Israel's dietary laws or eaten with anyone the Jews were not allowed to associate with. To a certain extent, Peter likely thought those behaviors were what made him acceptable to God. But when God told him to let go of those rules, to start eating unclean foods and eating with unclean people, Peter had a revelation. He realized that his vision wasn't just

about the food. It was about the grace of God being made available to every person through faith alone in Jesus. God has granted every person the offer of salvation by grace through faith – not because we're good at keeping a specific set of rules, but because He is good at loving and forgiving us based on the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

KEY VERSES:

So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him."

Acts 10:34-35

KEY THOUGHT:

The good news of Jesus Christ is freely offered to everyone.

KEY WORD:

GENTILE | A person who is not Jewish

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Why do you think it was so hard for Peter to come around to the idea of eating the animals he saw in his vision?
- What is the difference between God's Law for the Jewish people in the Old Testament and His instructions to Christians in the New Testament?
- If you were one of the Gentiles – those traditionally kept outside the Law and away from God – at Cornelius' house, how would you have reacted to the news that God's love and salvation was for everyone?
- How would you define the word *grace*?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 3.4: SURPRISED BY YES

Scripture: Acts 12:1-25

SUMMARY:

This week's lesson starts with the murder of one of Jesus' closest friends and ends with the death of a king – but the most surprising part comes in the middle. Peter's friends had enough faith to pray to an invisible God to save Peter, but they didn't have enough faith (at first) to believe that invisible God would actually do what they asked. Our hope is that this lesson will provoke us and our students to pray, to ask God for the things that matter

most to us. We desperately need personal examples of times when God said "yes" to our own prayers to build our confidence in Him. That only comes through asking, waiting, and noticing how He answers.

KEY VERSE:

You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

2 Corinthians 1:11

KEY THOUGHT:

A community of praying believers stands as a powerful and vital support for those facing hardship.

KEY WORD:

PRAYER | Communication with our loving, heavenly Father

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Have you ever prayed for Christians in prison for their faith? How could we find out about some of them, and how should we pray for them?
- Why is it so easy to think of prayer as a chore and so hard to believe that God might actually say "yes" to our requests?
- Have you ever been surprised when God said "yes" to one of your prayers? If so, what was it?
- If God might say "no" to our request, why does it still make sense to ask Him? What are we really trusting Him to do?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 3.5: HEADING OUT

Scripture: Acts 13

SUMMARY:

In this lesson, we see a shift in the efforts of this new church from the inside out. The chapter in Acts we covered this week is packed with exciting stories that are themselves filled with deep truths about the power and value of the gospel, about the risk of carrying it out and about the consequences for those who believe and those who reject it. Our goal is to help our students hear and

understand the stories and catch the big idea that the gospel is meant to be told to those outside the church. Telling others about Jesus is a powerful, significant mission.

KEY VERSE:

For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

1 Corinthians 1:17

KEY THOUGHT:

The church does not exist to simply take care of itself; it has to get out and spread the gospel in obedience to Jesus' instructions.

KEY WORD:

MISSIONARY | Someone sent out to tell others the good news of God's forgiveness through faith in Jesus

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Do you think it would be exciting to serve as a missionary? Why or why not?
- How would you respond if someone rejected you or your message of the gospel?
- Do you think God would ever ask you to do something risky, something that might get your hurt, killed, or humiliated? Why or why not?
- Why does it matter that missionaries give reports to churches that support them – and that we listen to those reports?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 3.6: CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?

Scripture: Acts 15:1-16:5

SUMMARY:

Last week we began to see Paul and his partners go on the road sharing the gospel. As new believers joined the Church from different backgrounds and cultures, disagreements started to pop up. God used an honest disagreement between Paul and Barnabas to turn one missionary journey into two. Let's help our students find the big idea in these surprising stories – that encountering

struggles or conflict is painful and hard, but God always wants us to learn and grow from those experiences as we seek Him for guidance.

KEY VERSE:

So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

Romans 14:19

KEY THOUGHT:

While conflict is a regular part of our broken world, it is always an opportunity for us to learn and grow as Christians.

KEY WORD:

CONFLICT | A strong disagreement between persons, ideas, or interests based on something important

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Does it surprise you that God used a conflict between two Christian leaders to send the gospel in two different directions? Why are honest disagreements between Christians sometimes a good thing?
- Do you think you would have wanted to sign up to go with Paul as an apprentice missionary, as Timothy did? Why or why not?
- Why is it so hard to adjust our way of doing things to accommodate new friends into our group of believers?
- Imagine if our family decided to become full-time missionaries. How would you feel about that?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 3.7: THE UNKNOWN GOD

Scripture: Acts 17

SUMMARY:

Does the message of the gospel ever change? No, of course not. But what we cover in this week's lesson is that our approach to presenting the gospel might change, depending on whom we're giving the message to. In Athens, Paul presented the good news about Jesus differently when talking to secular philosophical Gentiles instead of religious Jewish people. Paul invested the time and

energy to figure out what his audience most needed to hear, what questions they most needed answered, to understand and believe in Jesus. That's a skill – an act of love and wisdom, really – that we want to begin to help our students appreciate as they look for ways to tell friends, neighbors, family members, and strangers the good news about Jesus.

KEY VERSES:

And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him.

Acts 17:26-27a

KEY THOUGHT:

How we communicate the gospel to different cultures is crucial to their understanding of the truth of God's story.

KEY WORD:

CULTURE | The collection of attitudes, beliefs, and practices that distinguishes one group of people from another

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Why were the people of Athens so willing to hear what Paul had to say about Christ?
- How many people do you think get excited to learn about Christianity as the next new thing in their life only to get bored and move on? Why do you think that happens?
- Why do you think Paul told the people of Athens Christ will return as judge? Would it be more or less loving to leave that truth out?
- In your world, what group of people would you say are most like the people of Athens, with lots of academic and philosophic knowledge but without believing in much specifically? What is an approach a missionary could take to try to reach people like that with the gospel?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

UNIT 3 REVIEW - TRANSFORMATION

SUMMARY:

In the third unit of Trek, we have seen a dramatic transformation in the life of Paul. One moment, he's hunting down Christians and the next he's the first round draft pick by God to take the gospel to the Gentiles. But this transformation did not come with a bulletproof life. None of the early church fathers had an easy road to travel. Their transformations were also marked by periods of

suffering, hardship, and even death for their deep-rooted beliefs. No matter how hard the mission, Paul, Peter, and others continued to be faithful. They were committed to their calling to take the gospel to the world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- After Saul trusted in Christ, how much did his personality change? Did he become timid and fearful or even more bold and urgent? Why?
- Why did Peter hesitate to hang out with Gentiles? Why were the Gentiles so eager to hear what Peter had to say about Jesus?
- Were Paul and Barnabas freelance missionaries? Who sent them out and why does it matter?
- What would be the challenge of living as a Christian on a liberal college campus (where people can be like the Athenians in some ways)? What opportunities would there be for a Christian?
- How does Paul and Barnabas' story of conflict and resolution impact the way you interact with those within the church who see things differently than you?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 4.1: A LITTLE HELP

Scripture: Acts 18

SUMMARY:

Again this week, our lesson focuses on Paul yet again delivering the gospel message in a very different culture. This time, he was alone in a party town, but not for long. God often uses our circumstances to put us in the right time and place to connect us to great friends.

Let's help our students to notice this week that Paul is constantly finding and making new friends who support his ministry efforts. Paul knew that he couldn't do this alone any more than we can. As believers, we all need a support network of people who are encouraging and challenging us to live out our callings from God.

KEY VERSES:

And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are My people."

Acts 18:9-10

KEY THOUGHT:

God brings believers together to support and encourage one another to live out their callings.

KEY WORD:

TRADE | A skilled job, usually related to manual labor and requiring special training

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- How difficult is it for you to hold firm to your faith in Jesus when it seems everything in our culture rejects Him? What encourages you to stand firm?
- How would you encourage your friends from God's Word to stand firm and continue in ministry in the midst of opposition?
- Who needs your encouragement today to stand firm in Christ?
- What do you think God is asking of you today to represent Him to the world around you?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 4.2: CLINGING ONLY TO TRUTH

Scripture: Acts 19

SUMMARY:

Religion remains one of the dominant forces in the world, though it has become less important in Western nations in modern times. Many, many people still organize their daily lives around the rules and rituals of their religious belief. But as we see in this week's lesson, Christianity — true Christianity — is a threat to most organized religions. Those who are in Christ don't need to follow a path to

connect with God; they are already connected in Christ. They can afford to shed the identity of their religion, because they receive the identity of Christ. And we find a greater, deeper connection with other Christians than we could ever find in a communal religion.

KEY VERSES:

For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God

Ephesians 2:18-19

KEY THOUGHT:

Christians follow Jesus and turn away from all other gods and religions.

KEY WORD:

RELIGION | belief in and reverence for a supernatural power or powers regarded as creator and governor of the universe, usually involving regular spiritual practices

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- What do you think people who don't know Jesus think of Him? How is that the same or different than who you know Him to be?
- How often do you appeal to Jesus using His name for help when you need Him?
- How do we know what is taking priority in our lives? Is it the money or time you spend on it?
- Why do people get so passionate about fighting for or against God?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 4.3: ONE MORE THING

Scripture: Acts 20:17-38

SUMMARY:

In this week's passage, Paul is saying goodbye to his closest and dearest friends. Adding to the emotional pain for Paul and his friends was the fact that he knew he was never going to see them in this life again, that he was heading to the likely end of his life. This knowledge gave his words to them a sense of urgency. His friends would carry on in their Christian life without him, and

they needed to know some essential things. Our students need to know them too. Let's help them grasp how to live out their faith on their own as they grow more and more independent.

KEY VERSE:

But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 20:24

KEY THOUGHT:

Every great leader knows that they must train and equip other leaders to carry on the mission after they're gone.

KEY WORD:

SHRINK | To give less than your full attention or effort to something, usually something that is unpleasant or painful

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Has living out your faith ever cost you something (other than money)?
- Have you ever been tempted to deny your faith? What would you have gained/lost if you denied your faith?
- Who has encouraged you the most in your faith?
- What is the best advice you've ever received about keeping your faith?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 4.4: FINAL REPORT

Scripture: Acts 21:22-22:29

SUMMARY:

This week we are looking at one of the most defining characteristics of Paul, his character and integrity. Paul was so determined to be faithful to God and transparent to the elders of the church who supported him on his mission that he felt compelled to report back immediately when he had the chance. Not only did he give a complete report, but he also submitted to their advice so that no

one could accuse him of acting on his own agenda. Paul's accountability helped him to maintain trust with the believers who backed him. This week let's not miss the chance to challenge our students to develop the skill and habit of accountability.

KEY VERSES:

After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified God.

Acts 21:19-20a

KEY THOUGHT:

Like Paul, we all need to be accountable for our actions to the people around us.

KEY WORD:

ACCOUNTABILITY | The obligation or willingness to account for and accept responsibility for one's actions to someone else.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Who challenges you to grow and stay the course if or when they see you making poor decisions?
- Who (besides parents) do you turn to when you need advice or help?
- Are there any areas in your life in which you are struggling to make good decisions? Explain.
- How have we or your friends or mentors helped you make good decisions in the past?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 4.5: FAMILY TIES

Scripture: Acts 22:30-24:27

SUMMARY:

We are starting to see a pattern in Paul's ministry. 1. Paul preaches the gospel, 2. The people get angry and either have him arrested or just try to kill him on the spot, 3. One way or another, Paul escapes only to have the same thing happen in the next town. In this week's lesson, we see how God has set up protection around Paul in a whole new way; through his family. Instead of using an angel or

his fellow believers, Paul gets help from an unexpected yet trusted source. Some of our students may be entering a season where they have a hard time seeing their family as a big asset, but God meant for them to have a loving and supportive family that encourages and challenges their faith.

KEY VERSES:

Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Matthew 7:9-11

KEY THOUGHT:

God intended our families to support and protect us.

KEY WORD:

FAMILY | A group of people related to each other by birth, adoption, or marriage

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Do you feel like our family helps you grow and face challenges that following Christ can present?
- How can we, as a family, support or encourage you better?
- How would you change how our family communicates with each other about struggles we are facing?
- You have encouraged me/our family by... Thank your child for the contributions they bring to your family.
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 4.6: NEVER ALONE

Scripture: Acts 24:27-26:32

SUMMARY:

Up until now, we have been studying who has been with Paul on his journeys. But now, we see him alone and in prison. And yet in the midst of this, Paul knew that he would never be alone. All throughout Paul's life as a missionary, God had promised to be with him. So how does Paul maintain hope in such hard and potentially lonely times? He reminds himself and others of all of the

amazing things God has done in his life. This week, encourage your students to remember in those difficult moments that God is with them. Challenge them to reflect on all of the amazing things that God has done in their life.

KEY VERSES:

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

Hebrews 13:5-6

KEY THOUGHT:

Even when we have no one physically present, we are never truly alone since God is with us.

KEY WORD:

TESTIMONY | A statement of truth or fact, usually in a legal or religious context

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Do you feel like God is close to you these days? Why or why not?
- At what point in your life did you feel God closest to you?
- What encourages you if or when you feel alone?
- What are some of the wonderful things God has done in your life?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

LESSON 4.7: FRIENDS THAT WON'T QUIT

Scripture: Acts 27-28

SUMMARY:

And so we come to the end! This week, notice a significant shift in the way Luke is writing these last couple of chapters. Luke switches from "he" to "we." Paul's close friend was with him through many of his dangerous and scary adventures and he would not give up on Paul. This is something we all need and, when found, is a good gift from God. The opportunity this week is to communicate

to our students that they are not alone. God has placed many people in their path to provide safety, support, encouragement, and joy as they serve our loving and faithful God. As they seek to glorify Him, encourage them to remember the people God has placed around them and offer the friendship and support they would hope to receive.

KEY VERSE:

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Proverbs 18:24

KEY THOUGHT:

God desires us to have and be friends that stick together through thick and thin.

KEY WORD:

ROME: The capital of the Roman Empire, ruled by the Caesars. Due to missionary efforts like Paul's, it would eventually become the central city of the Christian faith for several hundred years.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Tell me about your friendship with _____ (student's best friend). How do you encourage one another?
- Are you being the best friend that you could be to your friends?
- What is the mission God has called you to?
- As you think back on this year, what is the most significant or inspiring thing you learned?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?

PARENT GUIDE

UNIT 4 REVIEW - CONNECTION

SUMMARY:

What an extraordinary life the apostle Paul lived. His connections in ministry were a vital part of his ministry even to the very end. No one in all of humanity was created to do life or ministry alone. God desires for His Church to be connected to the very end. Over the past seven weeks we've experienced through Scripture a wrap-up of the life of Paul and his incredible journey.

As you wrap up this unit and year of studying Acts, challenge students to spend some time reflecting on the past seven weeks and also the last four units. Challenge them to ask the Holy Spirit to stir some questions in their hearts and minds about God's desires and will for their lives. Spend some time to conclude this lesson and book in focused and committed prayer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the one key thought that you learned tonight?
- Who are your Christian friends that help you most to stand strong in Christ? Do you also help them to stand strong in Him?
- How could God help you through an extremely difficult season or event? How could God use you to help others through an extremely difficult season or event?
- If someone was writing about your life as the next chapter in the life of the Church, how do you hope they might describe God using you in the next few years?
- What should you do with the lesson you learned tonight? What should we do?