

**TEACHER NOTECARDS LEVEL 4, QUARTER B—  
POWERFUL MESSENGERS**

Use these Teacher Notecards as a reference when teaching *Explore Scripture*. Choose the outline form or narrative form based on your teaching style and preference.\*

Print on paper or cardstock. Fold in half, then fold again along the gray line. This will create a two-sided, notecard-sized piece for you to hold in your hand.

\*The narrative form has been edited to fit on these cards. Please see the full *Explore Scripture* sections of each lesson for more interactivity, application, and content.

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Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 1: Special Gifts

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit empowers Christians to serve others with their spiritual gifts.**

**Acts 9:32-43** [outline form]

Intro: *Peter used his spiritual gifts to help two people in need.*

Ask: *Why does God give us spiritual gifts?*

1. Peter traveled about the country, encouraging the believers.
  - *Aeneas was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years* . . . . . Acts 9:33
  - *Peter healed Aeneas in Jesus' name* (picture 4B.1) . . . . . 9:34
  - *Everyone who lived in Lydda and Sharon believed in Jesus* . . . . . 9:35
2. Tabitha (Dorcas) was a believer whom others loved for her generous spirit.
  - *She was always doing good and helping the poor* . . . . . 9:36
  - *Tabitha made clothes for widows* (picture 4B.2) . . . . . 9:39
  - *She became sick and died* . . . . . 9:37

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3. Peter went to Joppa at the request of Tabitha's friends.
  - *Peter sent everyone out of the room and prayed* . . . . . 9:40
  - *Peter told Tabitha to rise, and she was suddenly alive again* . . . . . 9:40
  - *Everyone saw that Tabitha was alive* . . . . . 9:41
  - *After hearing about Tabitha, many people believed in Jesus* . . . . . 9:42

Conclusion: *The miracles Peter performed helped other people believe in Jesus. Use your spiritual gifts to help others believe, too!*

2

Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 1: Special Gifts

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit empowers Christians to serve others with their spiritual gifts.**

**Acts 9:32-43** [narrative form]

Intro: *Peter used his spiritual gifts to help two people in need.*

Ask: *Why does God give us spiritual gifts?*

Read Acts 9:32-35 (picture 4B.1). *What is a paralytic?* (Someone who is paralyzed and can't walk.) *Who did Peter say healed the man?* (Jesus Christ.) *What command did Peter give to Aeneas?* ("Get up" and take care of your mat.) *How do you think Aeneas felt when he heard those words?* Encourage responses. *What did Aeneas have to do in order to show he was healed?* (He had to obey, "get up," and walk.) *Do you think Aeneas doubted or believed that he was healed?* (He believed—he immediately "got up.") Aeneas spent eight years paralyzed in bed and now he was healed. During those eight years, many people probably heard about his paralysis. *What are some of the things these people might have said when they saw Aeneas get up and walk?* Encourage responses. Aeneas' healing was a wonderful thing. *What happened that was even greater than the healing?* (People turned to the Lord.)

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Read Acts 9:36-38 (picture 4B.2). Dorcas was a believer who used her special gifts to help the poor. *What are some of the ways that Dorcas might have helped the poor?* (Cook meals, make clothes, take care of kids, teach about Jesus, etc.) *How did the people whom Dorcas helped respond to her death?* (They were sad and sent two messengers to get Peter.) *Why do you think they wanted Peter to come?* (They had heard of the people he had healed.)

Read Acts 9:39-43. *Why do you think Peter sent everyone out of the room?* Encourage responses. *What was the first thing Peter did?* (He got down on his knees and prayed.) *What did Peter say to her? How did she respond?* (She opened her eyes and sat up.) *What did Peter do after she sat up?* (He helped her up and presented her to everyone.) Dorcas' healing was a wonderful thing that caused something even greater to happen. *What was it?* (People believed in the Lord.) God is able to take terrible situations and turn them into opportunities for Him to receive glory. Peter's spiritual gifts brought glory to God. *What are some of the spiritual gifts that Peter probably had?* Turn to Romans 12 and read verses 6-8.

Just because we have a spiritual gift doesn't mean that God automatically receives glory. Our job is to "get up" and get busy doing God's work—to use those gifts He has given us. Then God is glorified.

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Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit reveals that the Good News about Jesus is for everyone.**

**Acts 10:1-22** [outline form]

Intro: *God gave Peter a vision, sending him to a Gentile who was seeking God.*

Ask: *How does God continue to challenge our thinking?*

1. God sent a centurion named Cornelius a special vision.
  - *Cornelius gave to those in need and prayed to God (picture 4B.3) . . . Acts 10:2*
  - *God’s vision was of an angel . . . . . 10:3*
  - *God had seen Cornelius’ heart . . . . . 10:4*
  - *The angel instructed Cornelius to find Peter in Joppa . . . . . 10:5*
2. God also gave Peter a vision—He had a special lesson to teach Peter.
  - *Peter had a vision of clean and unclean animals (picture 4B.4) . . . . 10:11-12*
  - *God told Peter to eat . . . . . 10:13*
  - *Peter refused to eat unclean animals . . . . . 10:14*
  - *God makes things clean and unclean . . . . . 10:15*

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3. God used the two visions for His purposes.
  - *Cornelius’ men found Peter’s residence . . . . . 10:17-18*
  - *The Spirit told Peter to go with the men . . . . . 10:19-20*
  - *The men told Peter of Cornelius’ vision . . . . . 10:22*
  - *Peter invited the Gentile men into his home . . . . . 10:23*

Conclusion: *God spoke to two different men in order to bring them together. What might God be saying to you right now to accomplish His will?*

2

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit reveals that the Good News about Jesus is for everyone.**

**Acts 10:1-22** [narrative form]

Intro: *God gave Peter a vision, sending him to a Gentile who was seeking God.*

Ask: *How does God continue to challenge our thinking?*

During Old Testament times, God had warned the Jews not to act like Gentiles and follow their customs or ways of doing things. But as time went on, the Jews carried things to an extreme and became prejudiced. When someone is prejudiced, he or she has an attitude or opinion of someone that might not be fair or based on facts. Usually a person who is prejudiced judges another person based on skin color, age, nationality, size, abilities, physical features, or where someone lives.

Prejudice happens to all of us—even Peter had feelings of being “better” than the Gentiles. Read Acts 10:1-8 (picture 4B.3). Cornelius is described as devout and God-fearing. *What do you think that means?* (He obeyed God’s laws and worshiped God only.) *How did Cornelius react to the angel?* (He was full of fear.) *What did the angel say?* (God had received Cornelius’ prayers and gifts to the poor and wanted

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him to send for Peter.) *What action did Cornelius take?* (He sent two servants and a soldier to get Peter.)

Read Acts 10:9-22 (picture 4B.4). *What vision did Peter have?* (Peter saw a sheet come down to earth with all kinds of animals—clean and unclean.) *What did the voice say?* (“Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”) *Why didn’t Peter want to obey the voice?* (He had never eaten anything unclean.) God had given certain dietary laws about what Jews could and could not eat. What God had forbidden them from eating was called “unclean.” God wanted to protect the Jews and set them apart from other people. However, the Jews had become prejudiced against anyone who didn’t follow these practices.

The voice told Peter that God had made all animals clean and pure. *How many times did he have the same vision? Why do you think God repeated it three times?* Encourage responses. *How did God help Peter get past his prejudice?* (An angel told Peter that God had sent the men and to go with them.) *What was so unusual about Peter’s meeting with Cornelius’ messengers?* (God directed it. Jews and Gentiles were together.)

God was giving Peter a picture he would never forget—a vision of how God sees things! Peter learned that God didn’t want any barriers that would keep people from knowing Him. God loves us as we are!

2

Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 3: Gentiles for Jesus

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit fills Gentiles who believe the message about Jesus.**

**Acts 10:23-48** [outline form]

Intro: *God clarified that Jesus came to save all people.*

Ask: *Why was it important that the Holy Spirit came to the Gentiles?*

1. Peter set out to meet with Cornelius in Caesarea.
  - *Peter brought six believing brothers with him . . . . . Acts 10:23, 11:12*
  - *Cornelius had gathered friends and relatives . . . . . 10:24*
  - *Cornelius bowed to Peter, but Peter said only God deserves worship . . . . 10:25-26*
2. Peter discovered why God had brought him to Cornelius (picture 4B.5).
  - *Cornelius explained his vision. . . . . 10:30-33*
  - *Peter understood that God does not play favorites. . . . . 10:34-35*
  - *He began to tell the Good News to the Gentiles . . . . . 10:36-43*

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3. God confirmed that this important meeting was part of His plan.
  - *As Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit came to the Gentiles . . . . . 10:44*
  - *They spoke in tongues and praised God (picture 4B.6) . . . . . 10:46*
  - *Peter saw this and realized the Gentiles should be baptized. . . . . 10:47*

Conclusion: *The Holy Spirit showed Peter that Jesus' message is for Jews and Gentiles alike. Today we know that all people must hear the Good News!*

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Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 3: Gentiles for Jesus

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit fills Gentiles who believe the message about Jesus.**

**Acts 10:23-48** [narrative form]

Intro: *God clarified that Jesus came to save all people.*

Ask: *Why was it important that the Holy Spirit came to the Gentiles?*

*Why was Peter surprised when the Holy Spirit asked him to go to the home of a Gentile? (Jews and Gentiles didn't associate with each other.) Read Acts 10:23-26. In today's passage we will discover that many unusual things took place. The first strange thing was that Peter invited Gentiles to stay with him. The next surprise was when Peter went with the men to a Gentile's home. How did Cornelius react to meeting Peter? (Cornelius humbled himself and fell at Peter's feet.) How did Peter react? (Peter told Cornelius to get up.)*

Read Acts 10:27-29. In Peter's time, Jews did not go into the homes of Gentiles. *How did Peter explain his actions? (He said God told him not to call any man impure or unclean.) Peter admitted that he went without arguing. Do you think that was an easy thing for Peter to do? Let children share their answers.*

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Read Acts 10:30-43 (picture 4B.5). *Why did Cornelius invite people into his home? (He wanted them to hear what God had to say.) What astonishing thing did Peter learn about God? (He learned that God does not show favoritism.) Why was it important for Peter to tell the Gentiles about Jesus? (They probably hadn't heard about Him before, they wanted to learn, they would need to understand about Jesus to have their sins forgiven, etc.) Peter shared with Cornelius the way to receive forgiveness for his sins, and before Peter was even finished speaking, Cornelius believed all Peter had to say about Jesus.*

Read Acts 10:44-46 (picture 4B.6). *Why were the Jews astonished? (Gentiles had never before been filled with the Holy Spirit.) Do you think the Jews were happy or upset to hear the Gentiles speaking in tongues and praising God? Encourage responses. These Gentiles had received the gift of the Holy Spirit the same way the Jewish Christians had—by confessing their sins and placing their faith in Jesus.*

Read Acts 10:47-48. *Why did Peter baptize Gentiles? (The Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit.) Peter and the other Jews witnessed something that hadn't happened before. God accepted the Gentiles because they believed in Jesus to forgive their sins, and He filled them with His Holy Spirit. Peter understood that because God accepted the Gentiles, he and the Jews were to accept them also.*

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Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit charges believers to take Jesus’ message into new regions.**

**Acts 11** [outline form]

Intro: *The Church grew and changed rapidly as believers obeyed the Holy Spirit.*

Ask: *How does the Holy Spirit help the Church today?*

1. Peter reported to the leaders in Jerusalem what had happened in Caesarea (picture 4B.7).

- *Jewish believers criticized Peter . . . . . Acts 11:2-3*
- *Peter explained exactly what had happened . . . . . 11:4-15*
- *Peter concluded that God offered Jesus’ gift to all people . . . . . 11:17*
- *The Jewish leaders agreed that God offered salvation to everyone . . . . . 11:18*

2. Other believers had been telling the Good News to Gentiles in Antioch.

- *These were believers who had scattered from persecution . . . . . 11:19*
- *God was with them, and many people believed . . . . . 11:21*
- *The Church sent Barnabas to meet with the new believers . . . . . 11:22*



3. Barnabas was glad to see the Holy Spirit working in Antioch (picture 4B.8).

- *Barnabas strengthened and encouraged them . . . . . 11:23*
- *He brought Saul to Antioch, and together they taught people . . . . . 11:25-26*
- *The believers in Antioch were the first to be called Christians . . . . . 11:26*
- *A prophet brought word of a famine that would strike Judea . . . . . 11:28*
- *The Gentile believers sent food to their Jewish brothers and sisters . . . . . 11:29*

Conclusion: *God blessed the Church with many new believers—Jew and Gentile. Pray that God would continue to grow His Church in new and exciting ways!*



Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit charges believers to take Jesus’ message into new regions.**

**Acts 11** [narrative form]

Intro: *The Church grew and changed rapidly as believers obeyed the Holy Spirit.*

Ask: *How does the Holy Spirit help the Church today?*

Now that Peter had spent a few days with the new Gentile believers in Caesarea, he was ready to return to Jerusalem. Read Acts 11:1-3. *How did the believers in Jerusalem react?* (They criticized Peter.) The Jewish believers thought that Peter had done something very wrong. Peter knew that God had told him to change his attitude. Peter also knew that God hadn’t yet spoken to these men. When they criticized Peter, he took time to explain each detail of the events that led to his change.

Read Acts 11:4-18 (picture 4B.7). Peter was a powerful messenger who told the Jewish leaders and believers the message of God’s acceptance of the Gentiles. *How did the Jewish Christians respond to Peter’s explanation?* (They accepted it and praised God.) Sometimes, people form opinions without understanding all of the information. Once the Jewish leaders realized that God had wanted this change, it was



much easier for them accept it and even praise God for it. They began to see the bigger picture. God’s plans for the Church were bigger than anyone imagined.

Read Acts 11:19-24. The Greek Gentiles were finally able to hear the Good News. *Why did the Church experience so much growth?* (The Lord’s hand was in it.) We met Barnabas last quarter. Now Barnabas was encouraging the new believers in Antioch. *What do you think are some things he might have said or done to encourage them?*

Read Acts 11:25-26 (picture 4B.8). *Who did Barnabas ask to help?* (He asked Saul.) *How did Saul and Barnabas spend their time?* (They met with the Church and taught.) *What name was used to refer to the Church in Antioch?* (They were called Christians.) They were the very first people to officially be called Christians. *What does the name Christian mean?* (Christ follower, believer in Christ, follower of Christ’s teachings, Christlike, etc.)

Read Acts 11:27-30. *What did the believer named Agabus predict?* (He predicted a famine.) *How was he able to make that prediction?* (The Holy Spirit led him.) *What did the believers do when they heard their brothers and sisters in Christ were in need?* (They sent money to help.) Wow! What an amazing change had taken place in the Church.





Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 5: Mission Impossible

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit responds to the prayers of the Church.**

**Acts 12** [outline form]

Intro: *Peter learned that all things were possible with God.*

Ask: *Why did God miraculously free Peter from prison?*

1. Herod renewed efforts to persecute the Church.

- *James became the first of the twelve apostles to be martyred. . . . . Acts 12:2*
- *Wanting to please the religious leaders, Herod arrested Peter . . . . . 12:3*
- *Sixteen soldiers guarded Peter . . . . . 12:4*
- *Herod was going to try Peter after Passover . . . . . 12:4*

2. While Peter was imprisoned, the Church earnestly prayed for him.

- *The night before his trial, an angel awoke Peter (picture 4B.9) . . . . . 12:7*
- *The chains fell from Peter’s wrists, and the angel led him past the guards . . 12:7-10*
- *Peter thought it was a vision, but then realized God had saved him. . . 12:9, 11*

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3. Peter went to the believers to tell them what had happened.

- *A servant girl, Rhoda, answered Peter’s knock at the door (picture 4B.10) . . . 12:13*
- *None of the Christians believed that Peter was free. . . . . 12:15*
- *Everyone was astonished at what God had done. . . . . 12:16*

4. Herod was furious that Peter had escaped. God punished Herod for his godlessness and his pride.

- *Herod held a public audience in Caesarea . . . . . 12:19-20*
- *The people there praised Herod as a god. . . . . 12:22*
- *When Herod did not deny this, an angel of God struck him down. . . . 12:23*

Conclusion: *When Herod made one more attempt to wipe out the Church, God acted swiftly and decisively to protect His children. Praise God that we can rely on His protection when we need His help!*

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Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 5: Mission Impossible

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit responds to the prayers of the Church.**

**Acts 12** [narrative form]

Intro: *Peter learned that all things were possible with God.*

Ask: *Why did God miraculously free Peter from prison?*

Things were going great for the Church. The Jewish Christians accepted the Gentiles as their brothers and sisters in Christ. The Church was growing, but that caused King Herod to be very upset. Read Acts 12:1-4. *How many soldiers were in charge of guarding Paul?* (Four squads of four soldiers—16.) *Why was Herod persecuting the Church?* (The Church kept growing, and he wanted to stop its growth.) *Why do you think he picked out James and Peter to persecute?* (They were apostles who led the Church.)

You may be surprised at what the Christians actually did. Read Acts 12:5. *What do you think they were specifically asking God to do?* Encourage responses. Read Acts 12:6-11 (picture 4B.9). Wow, what an experience! The angel had to wake up Peter. *Why did Peter think he was having a vision?* (He couldn’t believe that he was out of jail; he had previously had a vision from God.) *Why do you think the*

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*angel left Peter?* (The angel stayed until Peter was safe; Peter was aware it wasn’t a dream now, etc.)

Read Acts 12:12-19 (picture 4B.10). Peter finally figured out he wasn’t dreaming and went to find the other Christians. This group of believers was praying, but they didn’t seem to believe that God would really answer their prayers, because they didn’t believe that Peter is at the door. *When did they finally believe?* (When Peter keeps knocking and they let him inside the home.) *What do you think the believers said to Peter?* Let the children respond. *What do you think King Herod concluded about Peter’s escape?* (He might have thought the soldiers were bribed to help Peter escape.)

Let’s find out a bit more about King Herod. Read Acts 12:20-23. The people tried to impress Herod by calling him a god. Because King Herod accepted this praise, the one true God struck him dead. *How do you think the Church reacted to this news?* Encourage responses.

Read Acts 12:24-25. Herod tried to stop the Church. We can trust that no king or anyone else can ever change God’s plan. It seems like the only “mission impossible” in today’s story was the plan to destroy the Church.

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Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 6: Missionaries

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit sets apart messengers to witness about Jesus in other regions.**

**Acts 13:1-12** [outline form]

Intro: *Barnabas and Saul left on the very first missionary journey.*

Ask: *Why does God want messengers to witness about Jesus?*

1. The Church in Antioch was growing, but God had special plans for Barnabas and Saul.

- *The Church had many prophets and teachers . . . . . Acts 13:1*
- *The Holy Spirit called Barnabas and Saul during fasting and prayer . . . 13:2*
- *The Church leaders blessed them and sent them off. . . . . 13:3*

2. The Holy Spirit directed Barnabas and Saul to the island of Cyprus (picture 4B.11).

- *They traveled the length of Cyprus, proclaiming the Good News . . . . . 13:6*
- *In Paphos, the Roman leader wanted to hear their message. . . . . 13:7*
- *A sorcerer, Elymas, opposed them and tried to block the message . . . . . 13:8*

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3. God would not allow opposition to the Gospel.

- *The Holy Spirit filled Saul, and he denounced Elymas' lies . . . . . 13:9-10*
- *Saul struck the sorcerer blind . . . . . 13:11*
- *The Roman leader believed in Jesus' power and message (picture 4B.12) . . . 13:12*

Conclusion: *God sent Saul and Barnabas into the world to proclaim the Good News. Powerful things can happen when you rely on God to accomplish His will!*

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Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 6: Missionaries

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit sets apart messengers to witness about Jesus in other regions.**

**Acts 13:1-12** [narrative form]

Intro: *Barnabas and Saul left on the very first missionary journey.*

Ask: *Why does God want messengers to witness about Jesus?*

Today we will learn about God calling two people to go on the first missions trip. *What is a missionary?* Ask a volunteer to look up the definition in a dictionary. Read Acts 13:1-3. *Where were the prophets and teachers gathered?* (They were gathered at the church in Antioch.) *How do you think Barnabas and Saul felt when they were the only ones of the group called out by the Holy Spirit?* Encourage responses. Fasting is mentioned twice in these verses. Fasting is a way to show God that you are listening to Him and getting your strength from Him, not food. You spend time focusing on and listening to God instead of eating. It isn't healthy for your growing bodies to skip meals, but you can fast from things other than food. *What is something you could fast from instead of food?* Encourage responses.

Read Acts 13:4-5 (picture 4B.11). *Who joined as their helper?* (John Mark.) *Why do*

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*you think they went first to the Jewish synagogues?* (They were Jews and they wanted to share the message with other Jews.)

Read Acts 13:6-9. *What is a sorcerer?* Ask a volunteer to look up the word in a dictionary. Saul began using the Roman form of his name instead of the Jewish form. *Why do you think he now called himself Paul?* Encourage responses.

Read Acts 13:10-11. *Why did Paul speak so boldly against the sorcerer?* (The Holy Spirit gave him boldness.) *Why do you think Paul said the man would be blind?* Refer to Acts 9:1-9 to find possible answers (God had made Saul blind, and it changed his life; so he would have to rely on others, etc.).

Read Acts 13:12 all together (picture 4B.12). *What amazing thing resulted from the sorcerer's blindness?* (The proconsul believed in God.)

I love how God turned the sorcerer's evil plan to disrupt Paul and Barnabas' teaching into something that gave God the glory. The plan didn't work, and the local leader was now a believer, wow! God does great things through the people He calls.

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## Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 7: Jealous or Joyous?

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit inspires messengers to speak to all who will listen.**

### Acts 13:13-52 [outline form]

Intro: *Paul and Barnabas encountered resistance from Jews to Jesus' message.*

Ask: *Why do some people reject the Good News?*

1. Paul (Saul) and Barnabas traveled from Cyprus to Pisidian Antioch.

- *In the synagogue, they were asked for an encouraging message . . . . Acts 13:15*
- *Paul reviewed Jewish history (picture 4B.13) . . . . 13:16-22*
- *He introduced the Jewish people to Jesus . . . . 13:22-31*
- *Paul outlined Jesus' message of forgiveness. . . . 13:38-39*

2. Paul's words amazed the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles. They wanted to hear more.

- *The people invited Paul and Barnabas to return the next Sabbath . . . . 13:42*
- *Many stayed with them to learn more . . . . 13:43*
- *The next week, a huge crowd had gathered at the synagogue . . . . 13:44*

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3. Paul and Barnabas' acclaim made the Jews jealous.

- *The Jews spoke against them . . . . 13:45*
- *Paul announced his intention to preach to the Gentiles. . . . 13:46-47*
- *Many Gentiles were glad and believed in Jesus. . . . 13:48*
- *The Jews expelled Paul and Barnabas from the city (picture 4B.14) . . . 13:50*
- *They shook the dust from their feet, and left rejoicing in the Holy Spirit . . . 13:51-52*

Conclusion: *Paul embraced his mission to bring the Good News to the Gentiles. Ask God to show you His special mission for you!*

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## Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 7: Jealous or Joyous?

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit inspires messengers to speak to all who will listen.**

### Acts 13:13-52 [narrative form]

Intro: *Paul and Barnabas encountered resistance from Jews to Jesus' message.*

Ask: *Why do some people reject the Good News?*

Today we'll follow Paul and Barnabas as they travel on to a new place to preach the Good News. Listen carefully to find out how their message affected the people. Read Acts 13:13-15. *How do you think Paul and Barnabas felt about John Mark leaving them?* Encourage responses. *Why did they go to the synagogue?* (It was the Sabbath, and they wanted to preach the Gospel.) *What kind of message did the Jewish leaders ask for?* (They wanted an encouraging message.)

Read Acts 13:16-41 (picture 4B.13). *What two groups of people heard Paul's message?* (Jews and Gentiles.) *Why do you think Paul reviewed Jewish history in his message?* (He wanted Gentiles to be aware of it and to remind the Jews of God's power and involvement in their history.) *Do you think the people were encouraged by Paul's preaching?* Let the students speculate.

Read Acts 13:42-45. *How did the people respond to Paul's message?* (They invited

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them back the next Sabbath. Many talked with them.) *What do you suppose happened to change the Jews' attitudes?* (They were jealous of the crowds who came to hear.) The jealousy in their hearts prevented them from being softened to the Gospel. Soon their hearts became so hard that they tried to prevent others from receiving eternal life.

Read Acts 13:46-49. *What was God's purpose for Paul's life?* (To be a light for the Gentiles and to spread the salvation message.) *How did the Jews' rejection help Paul accomplish God's plan?* (Paul preached primarily to Gentiles from that point onward.)

Read Acts 13:50-52 (picture 4B.14). *What was Paul and Barnabas' reaction to being rejected?* (They shook the dust from their sandals and went to Iconium.) Bible-times people walked everywhere, and their feet became very dusty. Jesus told His disciples to shake the dust off their sandals if they or their message was rejected by a city. *How did Paul and Barnabas respond to their treatment?* (They were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.) *How could they be rejected and still feel joy?* Encourage responses. God brings joy when we share the message of Jesus' forgiveness with others, regardless of how people respond.

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**Level 4B—Powerful Messengers**      *Lesson 8: Unstoppable*

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit strengthens Jesus' messengers to persevere under hardship.**

**Acts 14** [outline form]

Intro: *In Lystra, Paul and Barnabas encountered a strange and dangerous crowd.*

Ask: *How can we feel safe or secure when faced with hardship?*

1. Paul and Barnabas preached in Iconium.

- *They spoke effectively in the synagogue.* . . . . . Acts 14:1
- *Some Jews poisoned the minds of the Gentiles.* . . . . . 14:2
- *Everyone was divided about the Good News* . . . . . 14:4

2. Paul and Barnabas left Iconium and traveled to Lystra.

- *Paul healed a man who had been lame from birth.* . . . . . 14:8-10
- *The crowd tried to worship the two missionaries* (picture 4B.15) . . . 14:11-13
- *They tried to tell the crowd about God.* . . . . . 14:14-18
- *Jews from Antioch and Iconium set the people against them* . . . . . 14:19
- *The people stoned Paul, but he miraculously survived* (picture 4B.16) . . 14:19-20

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3. Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, retracing their steps.

- *They returned to the cities where they'd met with trouble.* . . . . . 14:21
- *They encouraged the believers to face hardships.* . . . . . 14:22
- *They appointed leaders to serve the churches.* . . . . . 14:23
- *In Antioch, they reported all that had happened.* . . . . . 14:27

Conclusion: *The Holy Spirit strengthened Paul and Barnabas to be Jesus' messengers. With His help, we can be unstoppable, continuing to serve God no matter what happens to us.*

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**Level 4B—Powerful Messengers**      *Lesson 8: Unstoppable*

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit strengthens Jesus' messengers to persevere under hardship.**

**Acts 14** [narrative form]

Intro: *In Lystra, Paul and Barnabas encountered a strange and dangerous crowd.*

Ask: *How can we feel safe or secure when faced with hardship?*

Today we'll see just how bad things really got for Paul and how he handled a life-threatening incident. Read Acts 14:1-7. *Where do Paul and Barnabas preach in each city?* (They go to the synagogue.) *What happened as a result of their message?* (Both Jews and Gentiles believed.) *Did all the Jews believe?* (No.) *What did the unbelieving Jews do?* (They stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the messengers.) *How did God show that He was with Paul and Barnabas?* (They did miracles.) *What caused Paul and Barnabas to leave Iconium?* (They learned of a plot to stone them.)

Read Acts 14:8-20. *What miracle happened in Lystra?* (A crippled man was healed.) *How did the crowd respond* (picture 4B.15)? (They said the gods have come down in human form; they wanted to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas.) *How did*

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*Paul and Barnabas respond to the crowd's actions?* (They tore their clothes to show they were upset.) *Who came and upset the crowd?* (Jews from the previous cities came and stirred up trouble.) *What did the crowd do this time* (picture 4B.16)? (They took Paul and stoned him.)

Religious persecution usually comes from someone who doesn't believe in God. *Did Paul and Barnabas give up and go home?* (No.) *What blessing happened in Derbe because they didn't stop preaching the Gospel?* (Many people became Christians.)

The missionaries were ready to return home to Antioch. Read Acts 14:21-28. *Why did they take the longest route possible and return to the previous cities?* (They wanted to strengthen and encourage the disciples and also appoint leaders.) *What did Paul and Barnabas do once they reached Antioch?* (They gathered the Church together and gave a report.) *What are some things they probably mentioned in their report?* Use this as a review time for the past three lessons.

The Holy Spirit strengthened Paul and Barnabas to be Jesus' messengers. With His help, they were unstoppable and did not give up serving God no matter what happened to them.

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Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit guides the Church to embrace Gentile believers.**

**Acts 15:1-35** [outline form]

Intro: *The Church sought the Holy Spirit's direction on what to require of believers.*

Ask: *Why is God's grace such a unique and amazing gift?*

1. A debate arose about how much of the Jewish law Gentile believers should be required to follow.

- *Some Jewish men were teaching that Gentiles must be circumcised . . . Acts 15:1*
- *Paul and Barnabas opposed this teaching. . . . . 15:2*
- *They went to Jerusalem to discuss the issue. . . . . 15:2*

2. When they met, the Church leaders discussed the question at length.

- *Pharisaical Jews believed the Gentiles should become Jewish . . . . . 15:5*
- *Peter argued the Gentiles were saved by grace. . . . . 15:11*
- *Paul and Barnabas told of their experiences (picture 4B.17) . . . . . 15:12*
- *James used Scripture to show that the Gentiles should be free. . . . . 15:15-19*

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3. The leaders drafted a letter to send to the Gentile believers in Antioch.

- *The letter said that the Holy Spirit had directed them. . . . . 15:28*
- *They gave the believers some basic guidelines . . . . . 15:29*
- *The Gentile Christians read it and were glad (picture 4B.18) . . . . . 15:31*

Conclusion: *As more and more people became believers, the Church searched the Scriptures and sought the Holy Spirit to understand how to best change and grow. We should follow their example when faced with big decisions!*

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Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit guides the Church to embrace Gentile believers.**

**Acts 15:1-35** [narrative form]

Intro: *The Church sought the Holy Spirit's direction on what to require of believers.*

Ask: *Why is God's grace such a unique and amazing gift?*

Paul and Barnabas finally returned from their first missions trip. Gentiles heard the Gospel message and became believers. But some Jews were upset about the acceptance of Gentiles as Christians.

Read Acts 15:1-12. Circumcision was a medical procedure performed on newborn Jewish boys. Some Jews believed they were saved because they followed Moses' rule of circumcision. These people believed the Gentiles couldn't be saved unless they became circumcised. This started a big debate. What might Paul and Barnabas have said to them? Let children speculate.

Paul and Barnabas traveled to Jerusalem to be part of the discussion (picture 4B.17). *Who gave a speech to the apostles and elders? (Peter.) Why was Peter qualified to speak about accepting Gentiles into God's family? (God had spoken to him in a vision about accepting Gentiles.) What did Peter say was the only way to be saved?*

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(Salvation is through the grace of Jesus Christ.)

People are more willing to believe that they have to work for something rather than simply accepting a free gift. The grace of God means that Jesus did the work and we get the reward. Even today people try to work their way into heaven instead of accepting what Jesus did on the cross for them.

After Paul and Barnabas shared their report, James addressed the crowd. Read Acts 15:13-21. *Who did James agree with? (James agreed with Peter.) What judgment did James give? (He said they shouldn't make it difficult for the Gentiles.) James used Scripture to show that God planned to save many Gentiles. He suggested they send an official letter to the other churches about their decision.*

Read Acts 15:22-35. *Who took the letter with Paul and Barnabas? (Judas and Silas took the letter to Antioch.) How did the letter refer to Paul and Barnabas? (It called them "dear friends.")*

*After the letter was read, what response did it receive (picture 4B.18)? (The people were glad for its encouraging message.) Why do you think the apostles added guidelines? Encourage responses. The Gentiles must have been comforted and relieved. God's gift of salvation is for all people!*

2

**Level 4B—Powerful Messengers** Lesson 10: *Branching Out*

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit directs the steps of obedient Christians.**

**Acts 15:36—16:10** [outline form]

Intro: *Paul and Barnabas split into two missionary teams.*

Ask: *Where can you go to seek God's direction?*

1. After staying a while in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas set out on a new journey.
  - *Barnabas wanted to take Mark along—Paul did not.* . . . . . Acts 15:37-38
  - *They disagreed strongly and parted company* (picture 4B.19) . . . . . 15:39
  - *Barnabas went to Cyprus, and Paul went to Syria* . . . . . 15:39-41
2. Paul and Silas strengthened the churches as they traveled, and arrived in Lystra.
  - *They met a devout young man named Timothy* . . . . . 16:1
  - *Timothy joined them and was circumcised.* . . . . . 16:3
  - *All the believers were encouraged and strengthened.* . . . . . 16:5

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3. The Holy Spirit directed the missionaries' path.
  - *The Holy Spirit kept them out of specific regions.* . . . . . 16:6-7
  - *In Troas, Paul had a vision of the Macedonians* (picture 4B.20) . . . . . 16:9
  - *Luke, the author of Acts, joined them in Troas.* . . . . . 16:10
  - *The missionaries left for Macedonia, obeying the Holy Spirit.* . . . . . 16:10

Conclusion: *As Paul waited upon the Holy Spirit to guide him, he stayed alert and waited for God's calling. God knows the "who, what, when, where, why, and how" of His will for our lives. We can trust God and need to obey as He leads us.*

2

**Level 4B—Powerful Messengers** Lesson 10: *Branching Out*

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**Acts 15:36—16:10** [narrative form]

Intro: *Paul and Barnabas split into two missionary teams.*

Ask: *Where can you go to seek God's direction?*

Now that Paul and Barnabas had remained for quite a while in Antioch, they were anxious to go back out on a missionary journey. Read Acts 15:36-41. *What did these powerful messengers want to do on their second trip?* (They want to revisit the towns and see how the believers are doing.) Paul and Barnabas wanted to see if the churches were growing and wanted to strengthen them. *Who wanted John Mark to accompany them?* (Barnabas.) *Why didn't Paul want John Mark along on the trip?* (John Mark had deserted them on their first trip—Acts 13:13.) *What decision did they make* (picture 4B.19)? (Barnabas took John Mark to Cyprus; Paul took Silas to Syria and Cilicia.)

Read Acts 16:1-5. *Who joined Paul and Silas in Lystra?* (Timothy.) *Was Timothy a Jew or a Gentile?* (Timothy's mother was a Jew, but his father was a Gentile.) *Why do you think Timothy chose to be circumcised?* Encourage responses. *What happened*

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*in the churches these men visited?* (Churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.)

Have a volunteer read Acts 16:6-10. *What might be some ways the Holy Spirit stopped them from entering the areas they wanted to visit?* (Scripture doesn't say, but it could have been being unwelcome, no place to stay, etc.) *How did the Holy Spirit change Paul's travel plans?* (Paul had a vision of a Macedonian man begging him to come (picture 4B.20).) *Why did the Holy Spirit change Paul's travel plans?* (The people of Macedonia needed to hear the Gospel.) *How did the men respond to the travel plan changes?* (They obeyed immediately because they knew God wanted them to go there.)

As Paul waited upon the Holy Spirit to guide him, he stayed alert and waited for God's calling. When the vision came, he recognized the Spirit's leading and was ready to follow. God knows the "who, what, when, where, why, and how" of His will for our lives. We can trust God and need to obey as He leads us.

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Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 11: Earthquake

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit brings great victory out of great difficulty.**

**Acts 16:11-40** [outline form]

Intro: *Paul and Silas trusted God to deliver them from difficult circumstances.*

Ask: *How can God create good results from bad situations?*

1. In Philippi, the missionaries met a helpful woman.
  - *They went to the river to find a place of prayer (there were no synagogues) . . . Acts 16:13*
  - *Lydia listened to them, believed, and was baptized (picture 4B.21) . . . 16:14-15*
  - *Lydia opened her home to Paul and his friends. . . . . 16:15*
2. Paul cast a demon out of a slave girl, which angered her owners.
  - *The girl had made money for them by predicting the future . . . . . 16:19*
  - *The men had Paul and Silas arrested and beaten . . . . . 16:23*
  - *The jailer put them in stocks. . . . . 16:24*

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3. In prison, Paul and Silas did not despair—instead they praised God!
  - *They prayed and sang hymns into the late night (picture 4B.22) . . . . . 16:25*
  - *An earthquake shook the prison and broke everyone’s chains . . . . . 16:26*
  - *The jailer believed in Jesus and was baptized. . . . . 16:33*
  - *The magistrates released Paul and Silas from prison . . . . . 16:39*

Conclusion: *God can turn even the worst situations into opportunities to tell others the Good News. Be prepared to share Jesus’ gift of love and forgiveness when God gives you the opportunity.*

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Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 11: Earthquake

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit brings great victory out of great difficulty.**

**Acts 16:11-40** [narrative form]

Intro: *Paul and Silas trusted God to deliver them from difficult circumstances.*

Ask: *How can God create good results from bad situations?*

Paul and Silas arrived in Philippi along with their teammates, Luke and Timothy. This was the first time the Gospel message had reached into the area we know as Europe.

Read Acts 16:11-15 (picture 4B.21). *What did Lydia do for a living?* (She sold purple cloth.) *How do you think she knew about God?* (Perhaps she heard a visitor buying her cloth talk about God.) *What did Lydia do after she accepted the Good News about Jesus?* (She shared it with her household and supported Paul and his friends.)

Read Acts 16:16-24. *What unusual thing could the slave girl do?* (She could predict the future.) *Why were her owners angry with Paul and Silas?* (Paul and Silas cast out the demon in her, and now she wouldn’t earn money for them.) *What happened to Paul and Silas as a result of casting out the girl’s demon?* (After charges were brought against them, they were beaten and put in jail.) *What did the jailer do to make sure*

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*they didn’t escape?* (He put them in the middle of the jail and fastened their feet in stocks.) Paul and Silas started the day preaching and were well-received. By the end of the day they had been rejected, beaten, and jailed.

Read Acts 16:25-34 (picture 4B.22). *What did Paul and Silas do while they were in jail?* (They prayed and sang praises to God.) *What happened at midnight?* (An earthquake shook the jail and opened the doors.) *Why do you think Paul and Silas didn’t escape after the earthquake?* Encourage responses. *When the jailer saw that the prisoners hadn’t escaped, what did he ask Paul and Silas?* (He asked, “What must I do to be saved?”) *And what was their answer?* (Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.) *Why was the jailer so happy?* (He and his whole family believed and were baptized.)

Read Acts 16:35-40. *How do you think the jailer felt when he told Paul and Silas they were released?* Allow children to answer. *Why didn’t Paul want to immediately leave?* (They had been treated unfairly, and he wanted to be treated fairly as they left.) *Why did they go to Lydia’s house?* (They wanted to encourage them.) *How did God get glory from their brief visit to Philippi?* Encourage responses.

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## Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 12: An Unknown God

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit encourages believers to face any kind of response to the Gospel.**

### Acts 17 [outline form]

Intro: *Paul and the other missionaries met with three different responses to the Gospel in three different cities.*

Ask: *What did Paul do to meet the people on their own terms?*

1. Paul and the others preached in Thessalonica.
  - *Paul reasoned in the synagogues, and a few people believed.* . . . . . Acts 17:2-4
  - *Some Jews became jealous and formed a mob to riot.* . . . . . 17:5
  - *The missionaries had to escape at night* . . . . . 17:10
2. Paul, Timothy, and Silas preached in Berea.
  - *The people of Berea carefully examined the Scriptures* (picture 4B.23) . . . 17:11
  - *Many Jews and Greeks believed* . . . . . 17:12
  - *Jews from Thessalonica came and caused more trouble* . . . . . 17:13

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3. Paul continued on alone to preach in Athens (picture 4B.24).
  - *Paul was invited to speak to the philosophers* . . . . . 17:19
  - *He taught them that the “unknown god” was God* . . . . . 17:23
  - *Paul explained who God was and told them about Jesus* . . . . . 17:24-31
  - *Many sneered, but a few people believed* . . . . . 17:32-34

Conclusion: *People will respond in different ways to the Good News. Paul never stopped witnessing, and neither should we. Let’s continue being powerful messengers—no matter what responses we receive from people!*

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## Level 4B—Powerful Messengers Lesson 12: An Unknown God

Big Idea: **The Holy Spirit encourages believers to face any kind of response to the Gospel.**

### Acts 17 [narrative form]

Intro: *Paul and the other missionaries met with three different responses to the Gospel in three different cities.*

Ask: *What did Paul do to meet the people on their own terms?*

Today Paul will travel to three different towns and find three different responses to the message he preached. Read Acts 17:1-9. *Why did Paul go to the Jewish synagogue?* (Going to the synagogue to preach was his custom.) *How did the audience respond?* (His message was received by some Jews, God-fearing Greeks, and prominent Greek women.) *What did the jealous Jews do?* (They formed a mob and rioted.) *What happened to Paul and Silas?* (They escaped from the city.) *What happened to Paul’s friends?* (They were charged, posted bail, and released.)

Read Acts 17:10-15. *After being run out of town, Paul and Silas could have given up or been discouraged. What did they do as soon as they entered Berea?* (They went to the Jewish synagogue.) *How did the audience respond?* (They received the

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message with eagerness and examined the Scriptures to see if Paul was correct (picture 4B.23).) *Who received Paul’s message?* (Many Jews, prominent Greek women, and Greek men.) *Who arrived to cause trouble in Berea?* (Jews from Thessalonica.) *What happened to the missionaries?* (Paul was sent away; Timothy and Silas stayed.)

Read Acts 17:16-34 (picture 4B.24). *What was the city of Athens filled with?* (Idols.) *Who were the first people Paul reasoned or debated with?* (Paul talked with Jews and God-fearing Greeks.) *Who were the next group Paul reasoned with?* (Paul talked with the philosophers.) *What did the intellectual people love to do?* (They loved to hear and debate the latest ideas.) *What inscription did Paul find on a statue?* (“To an unknown god.”) *How did Paul use the inscription as a way to witness?* (He preached about the “known God.”) *What were some truths Paul told them about God?* Allow kids to answer. *Even though many people sneered, was God’s message rejected completely?* (No, a number of people became followers and believed.)

People will respond in different ways to the Good News. Paul never stopped witnessing, and neither should we. Let’s continue being powerful messengers—no matter what responses we receive from people!

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