



ACTS

Of All the Apostles

You Will Be

My Witnesses:

Running the Race

Lesson 23



Antioch

Acts 11:19-26

Supplemental Scripture

Hebrews 12:1-3

NOTE: Familiarize yourself with this story. Study the supplemental Scripture and make notes on, but do NOT read from, these pages. To reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

Memory Verse

The name of the Lord is
like a strong tower.
Godly people run to it
and are safe.
Proverbs 18:10 (NIRV)

When you are running well and winning races, how well do you take direction from a coach? Do you begin to think you know all there is to know about running the race you have been training for? Or do you trust the coach you have chosen to know what is best for you, to know the little changes that need to be made to make you, and your team, the best you can be? Let's continue in the book of Acts and see how the believers are running the race they joined when they trusted Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Lesson Goals

Understand that some of the believers in Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch were only sharing the Good News with fellow Jews

Think back to our lesson about the death of Stephen. You will remember that after his death the church went through a time of persecution. The believers were scattered from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria. Some even "traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch." (Acts 11:19 NIRV) As they went, they shared the good news about Jesus Christ. There was a problem, though. They were only sharing the good news with fellow Jews. Then some of the believers who lived on the island of Cyprus, and other believers from the African city of Cyrene went to Antioch. These believers started sharing the good news with the Greeks, too. "God was pleased with what they were doing and put his stamp of approval on it—quite a number of the Greeks believed and turned to the Master." (Acts 11:21 MSG)

Understand that believers came from Cyprus and Cyrene to Antioch to share the Good News with the Greeks

News reached the believers in Jerusalem and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. Antioch was the chief city of Syria. It was even the third most important city in the Roman Empire after Rome and Alexandria.¹ Several years had passed since Barnabas had helped Saul when he was in Jerusalem. Now Barnabas would help the believers in Antioch. When he got there, he saw all that God had done and he was happy about it. Then Barnabas, also known as the son of encouragement, encouraged the believers, new and old, to stay true to God with all their hearts. Barnabas didn't want them to get tired of following God. "Barnabas was a good man. He was full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." (Acts 11:24 NIRV) A lot of people came to know the Lord.

Understand that the believers were called Christians for the first time in Antioch

Application

How about you? Do you bear the name “Christian?” I’m not asking if that’s the name your parents gave you. Are you a believer in the Lord, Jesus Christ? Do you remember last week’s memory verse? “Anyone who believes in Christ is a new creation. The old is gone! The new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV) Please don’t leave here today until you know for sure that you belong to Christ.

And for those of you who already bear the name “Christian,” do you act like your name-sake? Are you imitating Christ?

Are you telling others about the good news of Jesus? Are you telling the good news to people who are different from you? If they have decided to follow Christ, to become a Christian, are you teaching them like Barnabas and Saul taught the believers in Antioch?

Then, Barnabas went to Tarsus. What do you remember about Tarsus? That is where Saul went as he fled for his life from Jerusalem. Saul had been in Tarsus for quite a while. Barnabas traveled to Tarsus to look for Saul. Barnabas found Saul, who agreed to travel Antioch with him. They stayed in Antioch for a whole year! You see, Barnabas didn’t want to leave these new believers alone to fend for themselves. Barnabas realized the importance of teaching them how to grow. During the year that they were there, Barnabas and Saul met with the believers, the church. There were a lot of them.

It was there in Antioch that the believers were called Christians for the first time. This wasn’t a name they chose for themselves because it was meant as a jeer and used with disrespect and hate, because they acted like that Man they had followed, the one they called Jesus, the Christ.² Up until now they had called themselves and each other believers, brothers, the faithful, etc.³ But what better name, no matter how its use came to be! What an honor to carry the name of the One you have chosen to follow. And when we carry our Savior’s name, how can we do anything but imitate Him and become like Him? Our call is to think and speak and act like Christ, the Promised One sent from God who gave His life for us.

Review

1. Where were the believers scattered after Stephen’s death? (Judea, Samaria, even as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch)
2. Who shared the good news with the Greeks? (believers from Cyprus and Cyrene)
3. Who helped the believers grow in their faith? (Barnabas and Saul)
4. What happened first in Antioch? (believers were called Christians)

¹ Henry, Matthew. "Commentary on Acts 11." . Blue Letter Bible. 1 Mar 1996. 2009. 28 May 2009. < http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=4&contentID=1699&commInfo=5&topic=Acts&ar=Act_11_1 >

² Smith, William, Dr. "Entry for 'Christian'." "Smith's Bible Dictionary." 1901.

³ "christian." *Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary*. 29 May. 2009. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.classic.reference.com/browse/christian>>.

Next Week
Peter’s Arrest
Acts 12:1-19

Preschool Lesson

Think back to our lesson about when Stephen died. After that, the church went through a hard time. The believers were scattered from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria. Some even “traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch.” (Acts 11:19 NIRV) As they went, they shared the good news about Jesus Christ. There was a problem, though. They were only sharing the good news with Jews, people just like them. Then some of the believers who lived on the island of Cyprus, and other believers from the African city of Cyrene went to Antioch. These believers started sharing the good news with the Greeks, too. “God was pleased with what they were doing and put his stamp of approval on it—quite a number of the Greeks believed and turned to the Master.” (Acts 11:21 MSG)

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It was there in Antioch that the believers were called Christians for the first time. They were called “Christians” because they acted like that One they had followed, the One they called Jesus, the Christ. What an honor to carry the name of the One you have chosen to follow. And when we carry our Savior’s name, how can we do anything but act like Him and become like Him? We should think and speak and act like Christ, the Promised One sent from God who gave His life for us.

Activities

Memory Verse Activity - Play “Four Square.” Pretend that the four square playing area is a tower. Discuss the need to run to God, whose name describes His character.

Sing “They’ll Know We Are Christians By Our Love,” “We’ve a Story to Tell to the Nations,” “The Mission,” etc.

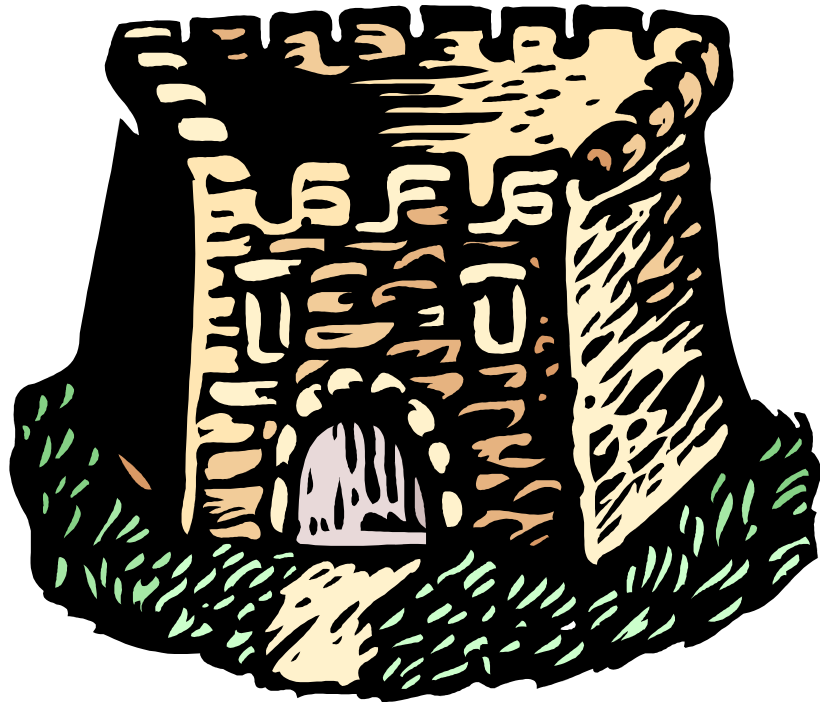
Provide a map for your students that includes Antioch, Cyprus, Cyrene and Jerusalem. Talk about the distance people traveled, before automobiles, to tell others about Christ. Think about the places in your own town where your students can share the Good News. Remember to think of sharing with people who are not necessarily like you.

Talk about the Icthus, the fish made in the sand by early believers. Talk about how each letter, I-C-TH-U-S, stood for something special about Jesus, Jesus-Christ-God’s-Son-Savior, respectively.

Make an anagram with the “Christian,” describing the characteristics a Christian should have.

Make “Fish in the Sand” sandwich spread for toast or crackers. Combine peanut butter with brown sugar and cinnamon. Make an Icthus (fish) in the “sand” with your finger.

As you continue memorizing Hebrews 12:1-3, discuss each thought in detail. For example, say you were using The Message. Hebrews 11:1 begins, “Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way . . .” Talk a bit about Old Testament pioneers, but focus on those we have been talking about, like Barnabas, Saul, the early Christians. “. . . who blazed the way . . .” Talk about all that they did that had never been done before. Continue discussing the verses this way to give a broader understanding of the race we are running.



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is like a strong tower.
Godly people run to it
and are safe.

Psalm 18:10



Racing Riddles

C

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Word Search

g b c g e e c e o h p y a g s
e b a r a e y e n o a t i m i
t b e e r a p u f g a p c e m
c i s e s l r h s n s h i e o
j m a k a y u e e a r o s k n
s i r s h a s a i i e e a a e
i t e n c r a a s s v n d n l
m a a p o l e t d o e i s d b
o t t t i l i t c n i c e w a
n e e l t a i i n d l i v a s
p n e l n v a u t a e a e l e
j e w s a b a n r a b r i t y
e r d a w d s b a r t f h a e
w y t s e d d r e o c h e c n
r c s y l o h a i c t i b a o

Phoenicia

Cyprus

Antioch

Cyrene

Jews

Greeks

Barnabas

Saul

one year

Christians

believers

imitate

Word Search

g b c g e e c e o h p y a g s
 e b a r a e y e n o a t i m i
 t b e e r a p u f g a p c e m
 c i s e s l r h s n s h i e o
 j m a k a y u e e a r o s k n
 s i r s h a s a i i e e a a e
 i t e n c r a a s s v n d n l
 m a a p o l e t d o e i s d b
 o t t t i l i t c n i c e w a
 n e e l t a i i n d l i v a s
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 e r d a w d s b a r t f h a e
 w y t s e d d r e o c h e c n
 r c s y l o h a i c t i b a o

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