

INTERNET RESOURCES

Acts 1:8 Challenge – www.ActsOne8.com

International Mission Board – www.imb.org

North American Mission Board – www.namb.net

Southern Baptist Convention – www.sbc.net

Getting Started

Learning Goal: Children will understand that their lifestyle affects the way people look at them as Christians.

What You Need to Know: The way we live in our Jerusalem affects our witness because people know us, so we need to be careful to live a missionary lifestyle.

Key/Memory Verse: Acts 2:42

Supporting Verses:

- John 20:21
- Luke 4:22

Prepare Ahead

- ▶ **Post** the map of the city on the wall.

Supply List

- Map of the city
- Three star stickers for each child
- Flip chart
- Markers
- Bible for each child
- Electric lamp
- Paper for each child
- Pen or pencil for each child
- For alternate challenge activity:
Several small journal notebooks for any children who left theirs at home



Leader Background Study



Jesus' Acts 1:8 challenge to be witnesses for Him in our own Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth can be daunting. However, in many ways witnessing in those places is easier than taking up the challenge in our Jerusalem. In our Jerusalem, we know people well—sometimes too well. We hesitate to risk a friendship by saying anything that might offend. Our Jerusalem is where people know us. They know how we live, what we say and do, and what we value. They know who our parents are and what position they have in the community. Even when Jesus went to His hometown in Nazareth and spoke in the synagogue, people “were amazed by the gracious words that came from His mouth, yet they said, ‘Isn't this Joseph's son?’ ” (Luke 4:22).

One important aspect of accepting Jesus' Acts 1:8 challenge in our Jerusalem is learning to live a missionary lifestyle. An on-mission Christian's lifestyle impacts every aspect of a person's life. It means living in response to God's call; making tough priorities for budgets, time, and relationships; and deciding to go without when it is something we don't need. In short, it means taking action to put our beliefs into practice. If we do not demonstrate a missionary lifestyle, it hurts not only our walk with the Lord, but also the believability of our words when we tell others that we are Christians.

In this session, children will look at the example of the early church: “They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers” (Acts 2:42). First, they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. Their attitude toward the teaching was key to how they received what was taught, making it a part of their lives.

The early church members devoted themselves to the apostles' fellowship. They found their friends among other believers. This practice does not mean they had no friends or communication with others. But their attitude about their fellowship with other believers was important to developing their character. They also were devoted to the things the church did as a group and to praying. All of these activities or choices lay a solid foundation for a Christian lifestyle that leads to evangelism.

Connect: “Simon Says” (10 minutes)

As children arrive, **engage** them in a game of Simon Says. You be the leader and **call out** commands such as, “Simon says touch your head with your right hand”; “Simon says turn around two times and then stand on one foot”; and so forth. Each child needs to do what you say whenever you preface it with “Simon says.” If you do not say “Simon says” and they do the action, they are out.



Coach: “Places I Go, People I See” (40 minutes)

Call attention to the map of the city on the wall. **Give** each child three star stickers. **Direct** each child to place a sticker on the map where his house, school, and favorite place to “hang out” are located.

Ask: Describe some of the people you see at each of these places besides home. (*Answers vary*)

Use probing questions to lead children to go beyond the basic physical appearance of people they are describing. Such questions may include: How did they stand? How did they look at other people?

Ask: Based on what you know only by the appearance of the people you described, do you think you would be able to tell which ones you might be able to become friends with—people with whom you would have things in common?
Yes.

Ask: Why would you say that?

Answers vary, but may include things like a sports logo on the apparel children recognize or the way they wear their hair.

Ask: Based on what you know by the appearance of the people you described, do you think you would be able to tell which ones would have more money than others?
Yes.

Ask: How did you come to that conclusion?

Answers vary, but may include the kind of clothes or even the way they stood.

Say: We often gather clues about a person’s values or priorities in life from their appearance. That is how people often judge others—by their appearance and their actions. Those judgments may or may not be correct.

Invite children to say last session’s memory verse. “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you’ ” (John 20:21).

Ask: Where did God the Father send Jesus first?

To His hometown, where everyone knew Him.

Read Luke 4:22. “They were all speaking well of Him and were amazed by the gracious words that came from His mouth, yet they said, ‘Isn’t this Joseph’s son?’”

Say: Those who heard Jesus in His hometown made a judgment about Him based not only on what He did, but on the reputation His parents had in that town.

Ask: Do you think other people judge you based on who your parents or friends are? (*Answers vary, but use all answers to guide children to understand that parents and friends are, indeed, important players in people’s decisions about them.*)

Ask: If God the Father sent Jesus to His hometown first, and Jesus said, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you,” where does that mean you are to go first?

Our own city.

Direct children to say Acts 1:8 together.

Say: Jerusalem was home to the Jews who first heard this challenge. That is where they lived, worked, and “hung out.” Just as you described people you saw at any of the places you go, people in Jerusalem saw the disciples and probably made judgments about how they lived their lives.

Ask: Do you think it would be easier to go to the ends of the earth, where you have to learn about an entirely new culture, or to go to the people who know you?
(*Answers vary.*)

Ask: Why?

Going to another country is easier because you don’t have to worry about what others think of you. Or, staying in your own city is easier because you don’t have to learn as much or spend as much money to go.

Say: The Acts 1:8 Challenge to be witnesses for Christ in our own Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth can be huge. However, in many ways, witnessing in Judea and Samaria is easier than taking up the challenge in our own Jerusalem. Our Jerusalem is where people know us. They know how we live, what we say and do, and what we value. They know who our parents are and what position they have in the community. If we are not acting as Christians should act, they won’t take us seriously when we tell them they need to become Christians.

Give each student a Bible and **direct** children to read this session’s memory verse, Acts 2:42, together: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers.”

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C oach: “Places I Go, People I See” (Continued)

Ask: What does it mean that they “devoted themselves” to these things?

They spent a lot of time doing these actions; they cared about doing these things; they wanted to do them.

Ask: We know what devoting yourself to prayer means, but what does it mean to devote yourself to the other things in this verse? What does it mean to devote yourself to “the breaking of bread”?

The disciples often held the Lord’s Supper remembrance, Communion, when they got together.

Ask: What does devoting yourself to fellowship mean?

You want to get together with other Christians; you find your strongest friendships with other Christians.

Say: The early church members devoted themselves to the apostles’ fellowship. They found their friends among other believers. This does not mean they had no friends or communication with others.

Ask: What does it mean that they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching?

They spent a lot of time listening to what the apostles were teaching; they were eager to learn.

Ask: What would it look like for you to do the things in this verse?

We would want to do these things; we would be eager to come to church, to have our closest friends be other Christians, to want to learn in church.

Ask: In particular, what would it look like for you to “devote yourself to the apostles’ teachings” today?

Go to Bible studies, attend this Acts 1:8 study, listen carefully to the preaching in worship services, and pay attention to the teaching of all church leaders.

Ask: Do any of you think you do these actions?

(No answer is needed.)

Say: When you do these things, they will help you keep the right priorities in your life.

Ask: Can someone tell us what a priority is?

What you think is most important, what comes first in your life.

Say: As Christians we must continually keep our priorities right. Often other people will want us to do something. If we want people to like us, we will do whatever they ask, even if it is something that is against what we believe or against our priorities. It is as if we are playing the game “Simon Says,” and

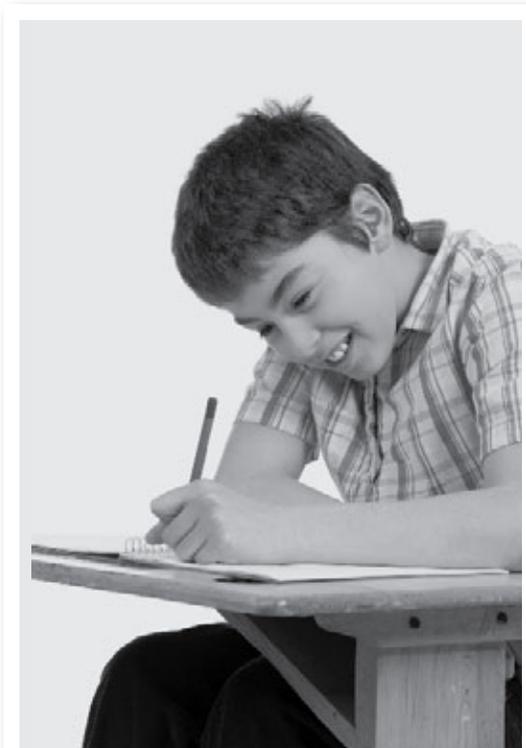
Simon is the person we want to impress. Instead, we need to know what God says, and do what God commands and expects no matter what anyone else says or thinks.

Ask: What are some priorities you have in your own lives?

(God, family, friends, school, church; answers vary. Record these priorities on the flip chart.)

Ask: What are some decisions you may have to make if you keep these priorities in mind? *(Answers vary, but may include things like not cheat on a test, not go someplace their parents don’t want them to go but their friends do, or refuse to do something they know is wrong.)*

Say: We cannot live a lifestyle that is against our priorities and values and still expect to be able to tell others who know us about Jesus. We must live a Christian lifestyle if we expect to carry out Jesus’ Acts 1:8 challenge.



Activity: “Role-play Difficult Decisions”

Direct children to read the decisions they suggested they may have to face that are on the flip chart. **Form** groups of two or three and **direct** each group to prepare a skit in which one of them is faced with making a decision based on their priorities or values as a Christian. The other one or two in the group will play the part of their friends who are encouraging them to do something wrong. In the skit they would portray what they would say or do to remain true to their convictions. **Allow** time for each group to practice. Then teams perform their skits for the rest of the group.



Key/Memory Verse Activity: “Devotion Around the Clock”

Invite children to say Acts 2:42 with you: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers.” **Give** each child a piece of paper and pencil or marker. **Direct** children to draw pictures of themselves in the middle of the paper and then draw a circle around themselves. At the top of the circle, the 12 o’clock position, they draw something that represents teaching. This drawing can be as simple as a Bible. On the 3 o’clock position, boys and girls draw two or more figures to represent fellowship. On the 6 o’clock position, children draw bread or a cup and wafers to represent the Lord’s Supper. Then on the 9 o’clock position students draw folded hands in prayer. **Explain** that the circle is what surrounds their lives; these are the things they are devoted to and they help protect children from everything outside the circle. **Lead** the children in using the picture as cues to say the verse together. **Repeat** the verse several times.



Challenge: “Participate and Prioritize” (10 minutes)

Invite children to sit in a circle with the lamp in the middle of the circle.

Ask: Why do we have the lamp in the middle of this circle?
To remind us that we need to plug into God’s power, as Acts 1:8 tells us.

Direct children to repeat Acts 1:8 together.

Goal Check—Ask: What did you learn today?
Our lifestyle affects the way people look at us as Christians and affects whether they believe us when we tell them about God.



Challenge Activity: “Maintaining Priorities”

Say the memory verse, Acts 2:42, together. **Challenge** children to be involved in all activities the church has for people their age so they can learn from the church leaders how to live a missionary lifestyle and to do so with the right attitude. **Challenge** children to discuss with their parents the values and priorities their families have. **Acknowledge** that many times at this stage of their lives they may not agree with all the values and priorities of the church leaders or their parents, but they need to consider prayerfully all they learn so they can make their priorities God’s priorities.

Journaling Option



Direct children to get out their journals. **Direct** them to write this session’s memory verse in the journals as you dictate it to them. **Challenge** children to be involved in all activities the church has for people their age so they can learn from the church leaders how to live a missionary lifestyle. Each time there is such an activity this session, **direct** boys and girls to write the activity in their journal and write why they were or were not involved.

Challenge children to record everyday, tough decisions they had to make about what to say or do and why they made the decision they did. **Challenge** children to consider carefully what Jesus would like them to do in every aspect of their lives.

Distribute the *Parent Letters* and tell children to be sure to give them to parents immediately after class.

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Dear Parents,

Jesus' Acts 1:8 challenge to be witnesses for Him in our own Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth can be daunting. However, in many ways, witnessing in Judea and Samaria is easier than taking up the challenge in our own Jerusalem. In Jerusalem we know people well, and people know us. They know how we live, what we say and do, and what we value. One important aspect of accepting the Acts 1:8 Challenge in our Jerusalem is learning to live a "missionary lifestyle."

In this session, children looked at the example of the early church: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers" (Acts 2:42). The children were challenged to be involved in all activities the church has for people their age so they can learn from the church leaders how to live a missionary lifestyle.

Children also were assigned homework: They are to discuss your family's values and priorities with you. These priorities can include everything from the way children dress to the way they treat others. Boys and girls were reminded that many times they may not agree with values and priorities of the church leaders or their parents. Yet they were challenged to consider prayerfully all they learn in order to set priorities that match God's priorities.

In Christ,
Acts 1:8 Leaders