

# ACTS 1:8

## Session 4: “There’s a Whole Lotta People”

### Getting Started

**Learning Goal:** Students will understand the importance of preparation in order to gain insight regarding how to share the gospel with various people groups.

**What You Need to Know:** When you’re planning an important project, preparation is key. In order to fulfill Jesus’ commission, we should study areas of need and determine what tools are essential.

**Key/Memory Verses:** Acts 13:2-3

**Supporting Verses:**

- Acts 4:32-37
- Acts 9:1-31
- Acts 13:1-5
- Acts 18:1-4

### Supply List

- Bibles (one per student)
- Duffel bags or school backpacks (one for each small group)
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Tape
- Inexpensive grooming supplies (such as combs, small soaps, or travel-size toothpaste, shampoo, or deodorant)
- Memory verses (Acts 13:2-3) written on poster board
- Missionary (if one is available; consider anyone who has served in local, national, or international missions on a short- or long-term basis) Option: Enlist a student who has gone on a mission trip to share about his or her experience.
- Copy of Learner Worksheet 3-B (for review)
- Copies of Learner Worksheets 4-A and 4-B for all students
- For alternate challenge activity: A small notebook for each student to be used as a journal each session

### Prepare Ahead

- ▶ Ask a missionary to share his or her testimony or ask a student to share his or her experience from a mission trip.
- ▶ Gather duffel bags or backpacks.
- ▶ Gather grooming supplies.
- ▶ Purchase grooming supplies for awards.

### INTERNET RESOURCES

Acts 1:8 Challenge – [www.ActsOne8.com](http://www.ActsOne8.com)

International Mission Board – [www.imb.org](http://www.imb.org)

North American Mission Board – [www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net)

Southern Baptist Convention – [www.sbc.net](http://www.sbc.net)



# Leader Background Study

Someone who likes numbers (*you know who you are*) estimates there were 200-300 million people in the world when Jesus issued His Great Commission to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, which in large part consisted of the Roman Empire. Today, the world population is more than 6.6 billion, and it's possible to circle the globe via jet in a matter of hours, or via the Internet in a fraction of a second. With the right computer program, you can peer into literally hundreds of thousands of neighborhoods thanks to satellite technology. Some things have changed, but the mission has not.

How does one prepare for the daunting task of reaching 6.6 billion people? That's the question we'll be addressing in this session. The good news for the travel-challenged: God doesn't give an order without providing the means to follow through. That leaves one important question: When your destination is *the ends of the earth*, what do you pack?

Read the following Scripture passages: Acts 4:32-37; 9:1-31; 13:1-5; 18:1-4. Work through the questions in the **Coach** section before you check the suggested responses. Notice how the early Christians disciplined Saul. Initially, many of them weren't all that excited about the prospect of a "new" convert; after all, he had been a dangerous foe for a long time, and it took some convincing before they were persuaded that his conversion was genuine. Also, pay close attention to how Christians in the growing church supported one another.

Write out the memory verses on a poster board, an overhead cel, or in a slide presentation for display in the classroom. (If you prefer, you may write them on the board before class.)

## **C**onnect: "Pack Your Bags" (10 minutes)

**Form** small groups of students. **Distribute** duffel bags or backpacks and craft materials. **Tell** students they are to pretend they are going on a long trip; they'll be out of the country for at least six months. Each person needs to pack everything he or she will need in one duffel. Students are to use craft materials to create the items (items do not need to be made to scale). When time is up, have groups **display** their work and list their "have-to-pack" items on the board. **Have fun** comparing guys'/girls' lists. **Discuss** choices and **determine** which group is *least* prepared; award grooming supplies as consolation prizes. (You might want to have everyone vote.)

**Explain** that preparation is important when getting ready for a long trip; when it comes to missions, preparation is *essential*. **Explain** that students will be taking a look at several missionaries and examining how God prepared them for their assignments.



## Coach: "God Chooses Us" (35 minutes)

**Review** last session's Scripture memorization (Matthew 24:14) by having students recite the verse to partners within their groups.

**Ask:** What's it going to take for the good news to be proclaimed in all the world?

*Every Christian has an opportunity to share in this worldwide project by proclaiming the good news in his or her own neighborhood; the gospel has circled the globe for 2,000 years thanks to word of mouth.*

**Re-form** small groups. **Ask** for reports from Learner Worksheet 3-B; **ask** students what they listed as important items for going to school, camp, grandparent's home, friend's home, nursing home, or hospital. Just for fun, **take** an informal survey of how many students listed iPods or a video game system. **Have** groups summarize and share their findings.

**Ask:** What do you think God needs in His duffel in order to share the gospel?

*(Answers will vary; while God doesn't need anything, He does use people to accomplish His purposes.)*

**Ask:** What kind of people does God use?

*(Again, answers will vary; God uses all kinds of people but seeks those who are committed to Him, who are obedient, who have a passion for missions. But ... He also uses people whom we might consider unworthy and unsuitable!)*

**Say:** Imagine that our church is looking for a new pastor. Someone submits an application, and these are his credentials: (**Have** a student list on the board.)

1. I've been a member of an organization that believes Christians should be persecuted.
2. I stood by and nodded approvingly while a member of your church was murdered for his faith.
3. I'm not very tactful; in fact, many people find me offensive.

**Say:** Think he'll get the job? If not, then you've rejected the application of Paul (formerly known as Saul), who went on to write a big chunk of the New Testament.

**Point out** that when it comes to preparing for missionary work, God's ways are creative. **Have** students turn to Acts 9. **Assign** the following roles for oral reading:

- Narrator (reads most of the chapter, so should be a strong reader)

- The Lord (Jesus)
- Saul
- Ananias
- Crowd members (two students read in unison)

**Allow** students to scan the text before reading so they will know when to speak. Then have them read verses 1-31.

With students still in small groups so that they can discuss answers, **ask** questions such as:

- What was Saul doing at the beginning of the chapter?  
*He was persecuting Christians.*
- How did Jesus get Saul's attention?  
*A bright light and a voice.*
- What was Ananias's response when the Lord told him to find Saul?  
*Initially, he was reluctant, because he knew Saul's reputation.*
- What did Saul begin doing immediately?  
*He began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues.*
- Describe how the disciples responded to Saul.  
*At least some of them may have taken care of him while he recovered.*
- The Scripture (v. 22) says Saul grew more capable. What do you think that means?  
*He got better with practice!*
- How did Saul confound the Jews in Damascus?  
*By proving that Jesus is the Messiah.*
- How did Saul escape from the plot to kill him?  
*His disciples lowered him through the wall in a basket under cover of night.*
- Saul's life seems to have turned around very quickly; why do you think that happened?  
*(Answers will vary, but the bottom line is this: Saul met the Savior.)*

**Explain** that Saul was a baby Christian. We don't expect babies to know that they should buckle their seatbelts and put pureed broccoli in their mouths and not their ears, so we teach them. It's the same with new believers.

**Say:** Many Christians helped Saul (who was later called Paul) grow in his faith, and we're going to take a look at one of them briefly.

*Continued on Next Page...*

## C oach: “God Chooses Us” (Continued)

**Direct** students to turn to Acts 4:32-37. **Have** them read the passage and answer the following questions. **Ask** questions such as:

1. Describe the attitude of the early believers.  
*They “were of one heart and soul,” and they shared their possessions with each other.*
2. What were the apostles doing with great power?  
*They “were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.”*
3. Why were there no needy people among them?  
*“Those who owned land or houses sold them” and brought the money to the apostles, who then took care of those who had needs.*
4. What do we learn about a man named Joseph?  
*He was a Levite and a Cypriot, and the apostles named him Barnabas, which means “Son of Encouragement.” He sold a field and gave the money to the apostles.*

**Direct** groups to turn to Acts 13:1-5. Have someone read the passage aloud. Then **ask** questions such as:

1. What is the setting of this passage?  
*“The local church at Antioch.”*
2. Whose names are listed as being prophets and teachers?  
*“Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius the Cyrenian, Manaen, a close friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”*

3. What happened as church members were ministering to the Lord and fasting?  
*The Holy Spirit told them to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work He had called them to.*
4. How did the church respond?  
*They “fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, (and) sent them off.”*
5. According to verse 4, who sent them?  
*“The Holy Spirit.”*
6. What was the focus of their ministry in Salamis?  
*“They proclaimed God’s message in the Jewish synagogues.”*

**Ask** groups to discuss what the church did before sending out missionaries (*The Christians fasted, prayed, and laid on hands.*) **Point out** that missionaries don’t ordinarily serve in isolation; other believers are expected to support them financially, and with prayer, encouragement, and practical acts of service.

**Ask:** While each of us is a witness in the Acts 1:8 sense, what can we be doing (even now) to support missionaries who are serving locally or overseas?  
(*Answers will vary; list on the board and discuss.*)



## Activity: “Missionary Testimony”

If a missionary is available to speak to your group, this would be a wonderful opportunity for him or her to explain what it feels like to be “sent” to the mission field. **Ask** questions such as:

- What did church members do that encouraged you?
- How did God prepare you for service?
- What surprised you about mission service?
- What can other Christians do to help you?

**Invite** students to interact with the missionary. **Assure** them that they are free to ask about challenges and difficulties faced by people who respond to the Acts 1:8 call. How were those challenges resolved? What challenges remain? **Take** the opportunity to point out that we are all expected to be active in missions, and all of us can support one another no matter where we serve.

## Alternate Activity (Older Students): “Youth Mission Testimony”

If a missionary outside of class is not available, **IN ADVANCE** ask one or two of your students to prepare presentations on mission opportunities in which they have participated. Many high school students engage in short-term projects, either locally or in more distant locations, and it would be great for your other students to hear how their peers have been able to serve.





## Challenge: “Prepare for the Mission” (15 minutes)

**Display** the memory verses from Acts 13:2-3 and **read** in unison. **Remind** students that the “they” in the verses represents the church.

**Challenge** students to think about their roles in missions; those roles will involve supporting the work of other missionaries, and it will involve sharing personal testimonies with those who need to hear.

How will each student prepare? To prompt thinking on that subject, distribute Learner Worksheet 4-A. **Point out** that it’s relatively easy to identify things that “the church” could be doing to promote the growth of missions, and it’s good to do that; however, we need to challenge ourselves *personally* to identify things that we can do to prepare ourselves for missions. Each student should ask himself or herself questions such as:

- What are my strengths when it comes to studying the Scripture?
- What can I do to improve?
- What are my strengths when it comes to prayer?
- What can I do to improve?
- What are my strengths when it comes to supporting other Christians? (How much of a Barnabas am I?)
- What can I do to improve?
- What am I doing that is strengthening my walk with the Lord?
- What else can I do?
- What am I doing to increase my opportunities to serve the Lord through missions?
- What more can I do?

### *Journaling Option*



**Challenge** students to write in their journals their answers to the “Prepare for the Mission” activity.

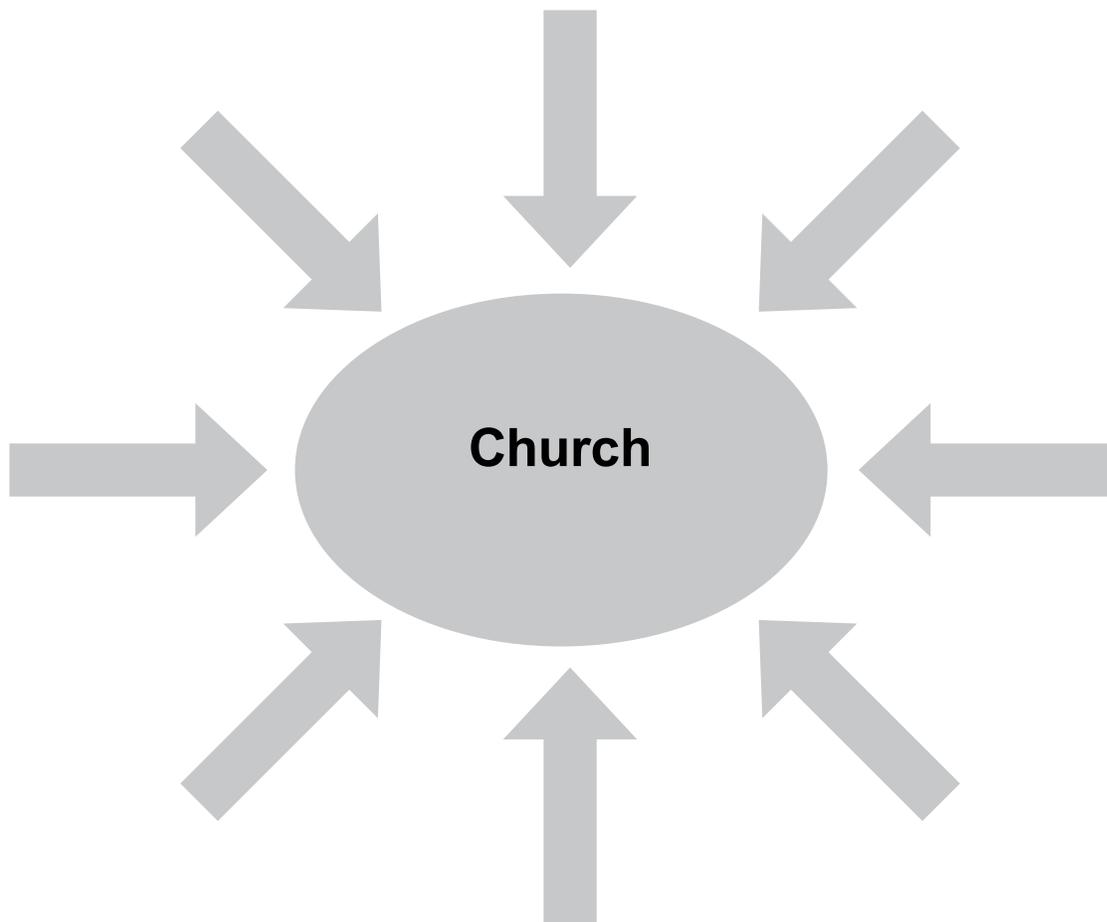
As students leave, **distribute** Learner Worksheet 4-B and **challenge** students to complete their sheets and bring them to the next session.

## Before You Plant ... Prepare the Bathtub ... er, Soil

To grow, vegetable seed needs good soil with plenty of nutrients, water, and sunlight. Does that mean you can toss some watermelon seed into the bathtub (plenty of water), switch on a high wattage bulb (*there's the light*), dump into the tub the contents of the vacuum cleaner (*soil ... and a few other things*) and a bottle of vitamins (*nutrients*), sit back, and wait for your crop? Well you can *try*, but you'll be waiting a long time. Vegetable gardens thrive under the proper conditions—and so do churches.

If you were going to plant (start) a church in a city that didn't have one, based upon what you've already learned, what would you do? In the space below, complete the web by identifying important things that need to be done (one task per arrow, but feel free to add more arrows). Remember to include prayer, fasting, and support from other Christians. Include at least four things that you can do *personally*.

### My Church Planting Plan



## Some Missionaries Go to Seminary ... and Others Make Tents

As you read the passage from Acts 18:1-4 (below), ask yourself what things God did to start a church in a city (Corinth) that didn't have one. After reading the passage, answer the questions that follow.

"After this, he left from Athens and went to Corinth, where he found a Jewish man named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul came to them, and being of the same occupation, stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and tried to persuade both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 18:1-4).

1. How did Aquila and Priscilla happen to be in Corinth? (Hint: They weren't there on vacation.)
2. How did Paul earn a living?
3. How important was it for Paul to have coworkers and friends to support him?
4. How did he spend his day off?
5. What might this passage suggest about your preparation to be a missionary? Do you need to go to college or seminary first? What will it take for you to be ready to share your faith?

Feeling overwhelmed? God never sends us on a mission without providing us with the tools we need to accomplish the job. In order to use those tools, we need to *prepare*, and we can do that through prayer, fellowship with other believers, and Bible study. (In fact, you're doing that right now!) 1 Peter 3:15 says, "set apart the Messiah as Lord in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you." As we study God's Word, we *learn*, and that also helps us prepare.

Pray that God will prepare you for every conversation you'll have with someone who needs to know about the hope that is in you. Remember that the Holy Spirit is working within you and alongside you; you're not alone.