

Getting Started

Learning Goal: Children will know that God sends missionaries to the ends of the earth through the power of the Holy Spirit, while at the same time He calls people to minister in other places.

What You Need to Know: This session looks at God’s twofold plan for reaching the lost at the ends of the earth. God’s plan calls for simultaneous ministry to local, state, and national missions while also reaching out to lost people around the world. God’s plan for reaching the ends of the earth is both intentional and incidental. God’s plan can be seen by the movement of the Holy Spirit in the early church. This session focuses on the intentional calling out of missionaries to reach people groups around the world.

Memory Verses: Acts 13:2-3

Supporting Verses:

- Acts 2:4
- Acts 2:45
- Acts 4:8-10
- Acts 6:4
- Matthew 6:20
- John 4:23-24

Prepare Ahead

- ▶ **Write** the memory verse on a piece of construction paper and **place** it in the treasure chest with your Bible.
- ▶ **Write** the memory verses on the poster board. Leave out some words and **replace** each word with an X. (Leave out enough words so that each child present will have a word to provide.)
- ▶ **Write** the missing words on 3-inch x 5-inch cards or sticky notes. (Activity Option 1)
- ▶ **Copy** the Ends of the Earth Fact Sheet and **cut apart** the pieces. **Place** them inside the treasure chest. (Activity Option 2)
- ▶ **Write** these verses on the white board: John 4:23-24.
- ▶ **Prepare** two Bibles with bookmarks and sticky notes marking Acts 2:45 and Matthew 6:20.
- ▶ **Gather** jewel-tone pushpins or small colorful stick-on jewels.
- ▶ **Download** Cooperative Program video vignette, *2gether Is Better*, from www.ActsOne8.com.
- ▶ **Gather** craft sticks (or thread and rope) for alternate activity.
- ▶ Before children arrive for class:
 - **Post** the map and brown paper (for treasure clues) on the wall.
 - **Hide** under the children’s chairs the 3-inch x 5-inch cards or sticky notes with the missing words.
 - **Write** these verses on the white board: Acts 2:4; Acts 4:8-10; Acts 6:3; Acts 13:2-3.
 - **Decorate** with other treasure-themed items (if desired).

Supply List

- To be used for every session:
 - White board and marker (or chalkboard and chalk)
 - Large poster to list each session’s treasure clue/memory verse
 - Treasure clue folders/notebooks
 - Treasure chest
 - A Bible for each child who will attend
- Beach ball
- Electric fan
- Poster board
- 3-inch x 5-inch cards or sticky notes (for Activity Option 1)
- Tape
- Jewel-tone pushpins (or small, colorful, stick-on jewels)
- World map
- Crayons and/or markers
- Treasure-themed decorations (if desired)
- Ends of the Earth Fact Sheet (provided with this lesson)
- Coins (money of all different denominations)
- *2gether Is Better* (Cooperative Program video vignette)
- Several flat, smooth craft sticks (similar to those used for frozen treats) or a piece of thread and a rope for alternate activity.

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

Leader Background Study



Acts 2 reveals the method by which God made His Acts 1:8 challenge a possible task. When the Holy Spirit swept into the upper room and fell upon the disciples of Christ, God gave the power source that would send His message to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. Clearly as the Holy Spirit moved through the disciples that day, God revealed that He could overcome barriers such as language, culture, and geography.

The plan for reaching the ends of the earth as revealed by the action of the Holy Spirit is a strategic one. The early believers must have felt as if the task of reaching all the world with the good news was impossible. Christians today feel much the same way. However, after looking at how the Holy Spirit moved in and among early believers to spread the gospel, we know that today as in the days of the early church God has a plan that will accomplish His purposes. The early church began to ask important questions about their mission.

- Who needs the good news?
- Where do they live?
- Who will go to them?
- Who will help and support?
- What unique barriers exist?
- How will we bridge the barriers?
- How can new disciples and new churches join us in the mission?

These strategic questions helped the early church begin to work under the leadership of the Holy Spirit to simultaneously reach Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. Throughout Acts we see different churches, groups, and individuals go to specific groups to whom they were expected to minister. God called Jewish people from all over the known world to repentance in their own language on Pentecost. Those believers, returning to their homelands, began to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth.

However, the Holy Spirit once again revealed the strategic planning of the Heavenly Father by initiating specific action to send the message of Jesus to the ends of the earth. Acts 13-14 recounts how God spoke to leaders at the local church in Antioch while they were busy ministering. The Holy Spirit clearly called out Barnabas and Saul (Paul) for a specific intentional task. The church responded to this leading by praying and blessing these men and then sending them out to follow the Lord's leading on their first missionary journey.

How excited and anxious these men of God must have been as they set out into the world at large to share with Jews, and later Gentiles, the truth about the Messiah. The Scriptures show how Paul and Barnabas crossed barriers of race, religion, and language to enter into other cultures with the gospel.

Today we have many places to go to reach the ends of the earth. Yet the same strategic plan exists. God is calling out missionaries to cross cultural and ethnic boundaries with the truth of God's salvation plan. Together we can go, give, and pray to reach the ends of the earth.



Connect: “Beach Ball Madness” (15 minutes)

As children arrive, **distribute** the treasure clue notebooks that you have been using. **Allow time** for any new children to decorate notebooks to look like treasure maps. **Remind** children of last session’s treasure verse. **Ask** if anyone said the verse to his or her parents. **Check** how well students have memorized the verse by asking all those who can to write it on the next page of their treasure clue folders. **Allow** children who know the verse to help others. **Refer** boys and girls to the wall map if they need help with spelling.

After everyone has arrived, **begin** the session by showing children a beach ball. **Ask** for a volunteer. **Tell** this child that he is going to try to blow the beach ball to the other side of the room. The child cannot touch the ball with any part of his body. **Allow** students to try to complete this challenge. **Discuss** how hard blowing the beach ball is.

Next, **enlist** another volunteer to blow against the first one. **Help** children notice that on their own they really can’t get anywhere. Anytime they go forward, the other person pushes the ball back.

Now **bring out** the electric fan. **Turn it on** blowing in the direction of the first volunteer. **Ask** the second volunteer to continue to try to blow in the other direction.

Say: Sometimes we feel as if we are trying to do God’s work alone ... like one person blowing the ball. But the Bible says that God gives us power to do His work. That power is called the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was described like a mighty rushing wind when the first Christians in the Bible saw the Holy Spirit at work. With the power of the electric fan, the ball moved to the other side of the room. With God’s power, nothing can keep the news about Jesus from traveling all the way to the other end of the world!



Coach: “The Holy Spirit in Motion” (30 minutes)

Ask children to join you around the treasure map and near the white board.

Say: We are going to add to our treasure map again. Our memory verses tell us about one way the Holy Spirit helped people in the Bible begin to obey God’s commands. However, the Holy Spirit did many things. Let’s take a look in the Bible to see some of the things the Holy Spirit did.

Get your Bible from the treasure chest. **Look up** the first verse (Acts 2:4) in the list on the white board and **read** it to the group.

Ask: What did the Holy Spirit do in this verse?
Helped the disciples speak in other languages.

Say: Let’s think of a hand motion to do to help us remember what the Holy Spirit did.

Guide children to make a motion, maybe something coming from their lips or their throat, to remember the Holy Spirit gave the gift of languages to the disciples.

Look up the second set of verses (Acts 4:8-10) and **repeat** the first process, **asking** children what the Holy Spirit allowed Peter and John to do. **Guide** children to answer both healing and preaching. **Ask** children to think of more motions. After each new motion is learned, **review** the previous ones to remind boys and girls of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Look up and read the third verse (Acts 6:3). **Explain** that the Holy Spirit gave seven special men wisdom for helping the church. **Ask** children to make up motions for wisdom and helping.

Say: The last set of verses is our memory verse. We are all going to read the verses together.

Help children use their Bibles to look up Acts 13:2-3. **Show** boys and girls the copy of the verses from the treasure chest. **Attach** it to the treasure map for this session. **Ask** children what the Holy Spirit did in these verses. **Guide** children to understand that the Holy Spirit called out Barnabas and Saul to go as missionaries far from home. **Ask** children to make up a final motion to remind them of these verses about the Holy Spirit.

Activity Option 1: “X Marks the Spot”

Say: In today’s memory verses, Paul and Barnabas were picked by the Holy Spirit to be God’s special treasure hunters. Their call was almost as if they received a treasure map straight from God. The Holy Spirit promised to show them exactly where to go to find the treasures of new people God wanted to come to know Him. Imagine that you received a treasure map in the mail. What would you do?
Start to figure out what the map leads to, try to find the treasure.

Say: When you see a treasure map, sometimes you find an X to mark the spot where the treasure is buried. We are going to play a game where X marks the spot for words to help us memorize our Bible verses.

Display the poster board with missing words on it. **Ask** children to look under their seats to find the missing words. **Help** children use their Bibles to replace the Xs with the missing words from the verses. If time allows, do the same activity in reverse. **Guide** the children to pick one word to remove and repeat the verse, inserting the correct word where each X belongs.



Activity Option 2: “Collecting Treasure”

Say: Paul and Barnabas were called and sent out to be missionaries to people far from their home. They were going to the ends of the earth—part of Jesus’ Acts 1:8 challenge. God still calls people to go to the ends of the earth. These missionaries work hard to reach people who do not know about Jesus. The places that missionaries go today are just as far away from their homes as Paul and Barnabas went from theirs. Let’s learn more about the places where missionaries are called to go today.

Ask children to pull one of the fact cards from the treasure chest. **Read** it aloud for all the children to hear. **Show** children

the world map and the “jewels” (pushpins or stick-ons). **Let** volunteers help point out the countries where these treasures are.

Say: God values these people who do not know about Him just like jewels in a treasure chest. God calls missionaries to tell these people about Jesus. We are going to place a jewel in each country we learn about to remind us how much God wants to collect these treasures into His family.

Repeat this process until all fact cards are used.

Challenge: “Working Together” (15 minutes)

Say: We have just studied how God sent the Holy Spirit to show the first Christians how to carry out His mission. The Holy Spirit showed Christians that God was able to do amazing things such as help them speak other languages, heal the sick, and guide them to make wise decisions. We also learned that the Holy Spirit called and sent missionaries to faraway places to teach about Jesus. God’s plan for all Christians is to help do this work even if we never go to a country far away. Let’s do an activity to help us see how we can respond to this part of Jesus’ Acts 1:8 challenge.



Video Option: “Cooperative Program Missions”

Show children *Together Is Better*, the Cooperative Program video vignette.

After the video, explain that Baptists cooperate by giving their money at church. Part of their offerings go into the Cooperative Program and through missions offerings to help missionaries reach the ends of the earth.

Activity: “Treasure to Give”

Select two older volunteers to read from the marked Bible passages at Acts 2:45 and Matthew 6:20. **Ask** one volunteer to read the Acts passage first.

Say: We have seen how busy the Holy Spirit was in the early church. This verse tells us another thing He did. The Holy Spirit asked the people to take what they had and share it together so that all of them could help tell more people about Jesus.

Ask the second volunteer to read Matthew 6:20.

Say: In this verse, Jesus said for us to put our treasures in heaven. We know what God treasures is more people to worship Him and know Him. He wants us to treasure those people, too. We should share our money to help more people know about Jesus.

Give each child a 3-inch x 5-inch card.

Say: Write or draw on this card one thing that you treasure. Think of how you could give away something you treasure in order to help someone know about Jesus. Then pray and ask God to help you give so that people can know more about Him.

Guide children to put their cards into the treasure chest at the conclusion of the activity.

Collect treasure map notebooks to use in the next session. **Distribute** *Parent Letters* and **encourage** the children to work on memorizing this session’s verse. Each child should bring back the bottom of the parent letter signed if the child says the verse to his parents.

<p>1.2 billion people in China do not know about Jesus.</p>	<p>Most people living in one of the world's largest cities, Beijing, China, do not know about Jesus.</p>	<p>Most people in Indonesia are Muslim and do not believe in Jesus.</p>	<p>Only four people groups on Sumatra, Indonesia, have a church in which to worship.</p>
<p>80 million Bengali Hindus live in the countries of India and Bangladesh. Hindus do not believe in God.</p>	<p>More than half of the people in the world, especially those in Africa, do not have any written language so they cannot read a Bible to learn about God.</p>	<p>Some people from Algeria, Libya, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso in Africa do not stay in homes. They travel around looking for food and work so they are hard for missionaries to visit and tell about Jesus.</p>	<p>Many Muslim people who have never heard about Jesus now live in places like Spain and France where missionaries can tell them about Jesus.</p>

Dear Parent,

In this session, your child has learned how the Holy Spirit gives Christians the ability to carry out God's command to reach the world. Your child also learned how God calls people to go as missionaries to the ends of the earth and how He calls other Christians to support these missionaries by giving their money and other possessions to help people know about Jesus.

We hope you will help your family focus on how the Holy Spirit might be leading you to get involved in sending or taking God's message of salvation to the ends of the earth. Southern Baptists send thousands of missionaries to reach lost people in places like China, Indonesia, India, and Africa. These places are the ends of the earth today. Just like Paul and Barnabas were called out, you or one of your family members may be called to serve God in just this way. Please encourage your child to listen to God's leading.

We also hope your family will look at making sacrifices in the same way that the early church did in order to reach the lost. Our church gives in cooperation with other Baptist churches to make reaching the Acts 1:8 Challenge possible. The Cooperative Program is an extraordinary tool in God's hands to allow missionaries and mission efforts to serve around the world because of the obedience of individuals and churches here in the United States.

Please help your child practice repeating the Bible verses below until he has memorized them. Knowing these verses helps us as we continue building our treasure map to learn what God wants us to do and how He is doing His work when His followers obey. If your child can say the verses by himself, then sign below and return the paper to class for the next session.

Thank you again for supporting your child as we learn to be God's treasure hunters. Help your child keep his eyes open for ways the Holy Spirit is at work in today's world.

In Christ,
Acts 1:8 Leaders

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"As they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work that I have called them to.' Then, after they had fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them off" (Acts 13:2-3, HCSB).

Parent Signature