

Adventures with GOD!

THE FIRST PERSECUTION (C.2.SPRING.3)

Biblical Reference	Various texts in Acts (Acts 5:17-42, Acts 7:51-60, Acts 7:59-8:4)
Key Verse	Acts 5:29
Key Concept	As a child of God I am called to fulfill the great commission that Jesus gave his disciples.
Educational Objectives	At the end of the class today, the children will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make a list of the difficulties the first Christians faced as they were trying to carry out the great commission. 2. Draw a picture to illustrate where the disciples went to carry out the great commission. 3. Mention some of the difficulties we might face when we share the good news of Jesus with others.

Life Application

The commission that Jesus gave his disciples was not an option. It was a command that he gave them, which he expected them to act on. Sometimes sharing Jesus with others is not easy, there are things that get in the way, and sometimes we are even made fun of or persecuted for our beliefs. It is in these times that we are reminded that the Holy Spirit is present to give us courage. That is how it was for the first Christians and that is how it is for us today.

Possible Activities and Class Plan

Activity	Materials	Time
My GROW Adventure	GROW Adventure w/God materials	5 minutes
Opening Prayer	Candle	1 minute
Bible Reading	Bible	5 minutes
Craft	Markers, scissors, glue	10 minutes
Bible exploration	Bible, work sheets, map, pencils, illustration	15 minutes
Bible verse	Paper, markers, scissors, glue	5 minutes
Mural		10 minutes
Game		10 minutes
My GROW Adventure	Review	5 minutes
Closing Prayer	Candle	1 minute



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INSTRUCTIONS

My GROW Adventure with God Weekly Review: As children enter take time to have them reflect on their adventure with God booklets and either discuss or use art materials to express their journey during the past week. You may wish to add any art work, written poems, prayers or songs to a GROW wall in the room. You can find my GROW Adventure with God materials on the Covchurch.org website in the same place as the Adventures with God sessions.

Opening Prayer: Gather children around a candle. Light the candle and explain that we are entering into a special time with God. Encourage the children to hold their hands out in front of them palms up as a sign they are ready to receive what God has for them today.

Prayer Example: Lord God, thank you for making us, for loving us, for forgiving us, and guiding us. We know you are here with us right now. As we enter into your word, the Bible, help us draw close to you, to understand and to listen to what you have to say to us. Amen (For safety sake, you may wish to extinguish the candle after the prayer)

Bible Reading: Explain that as we read the Bible we do that first to spend time with God. Children can remain with hands out stretched palms up to receive the word as it's being read. Alternatively they can be invited to draw what they hear. Read Acts 5:17-33 twice and ask children to respond.

Question examples: What did you notice in this passage? How does it make you feel? Was there anything you would ask God about that you didn't understand or was confusing? Is God saying anything to you though the story?

Craft: In the following pages you will find the instructions for the craft. You can either use the example given, or have them draw their own fish and decorate it. As they work on it, talk about the fact that the fish was a symbol that the early Christians used to identify themselves. The Greek work for fish, "ichthus" formed an acrostic that was used to say Jesus Christ, son of God, Savior." Everytime the early believers saw this symbol in the window or on the door of a house, they knew that someone in that house was a believer too.

Bible exploration: For this time of Bible exploration, divide the group up into 3 smaller groups. Each group will work on one part of the story for today. After each group has done their investigating they will share with the other groups. This week they will study about some of the difficulties the first Christians had as they shared the good news of Jesus with others. You will find the information/worksheets in the following pages.

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- * Story I: Apostles put in prison
- * Story II: Stephen's death
- * Story II: Saul persecutes the church

The fact remains that even when they faced trials and persecutions, the apostles and other disciples continued to preach the good news about Jesus. They were faithful to the mission that Jesus had given them. This is what God hopes for us as well. AS disciples of Jesus Christ, we too are on a mission from God. What will it take for us to be faithful? Talk about the things that get in the way of us sharing the good news about Jesus with others? What helps us overcome these things?

Bible verse: Make copies of enough fishes, according to the number of children in your class. Give one fish to each child to write the verse on. Ask them what the fish symbolized for the first Christians?

Mural: Each week continue to add a new scene to the mural. Pick something from the stories today to depict in a picture .Or use some of the illustrations provided. On the map you've made continue to write the name of the cities in Judea where the disciples shared the good news of Jesus.

Game: In the following pages you will find instructions for a game that you can use to review. Cut out the circle and the arrow. Use card stock if possible to make them sturdier, or laminate them. Using a fastener, connect the arrow to the circle. Each child will have a chance to spin the arrow and answer a question (according to which question it lands on). On each number there are two questions. The child only answers one of the questions. If another child lands on that same number he or she will answer the second question. If the child does not know the answer they will lose a turn.

Today's GROW Adventure with God Review:

G: God's Word: What is the story? (Give children an opportunity to express their understanding of the story)

R: Relationships: Is there anything in today's Bible story that shows us how we should or shouldn't share God's love with others? (Remind children that sometimes God uses the stories of the bible to show us how we shouldn't act toward God or others and give them a chance to consider how we might show God's love instead)

O: Outward Action: Is there anything in the Bible story that shows us how we should help or serve God or others? (Explore concrete ways the children could live this out in the coming week)

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W: Worship: Is there anything in the Bible story that shows us how we should accept God's love for us and others? **Ask:** How do you feel about God? How would you like to respond to God? What would you like to say to God?

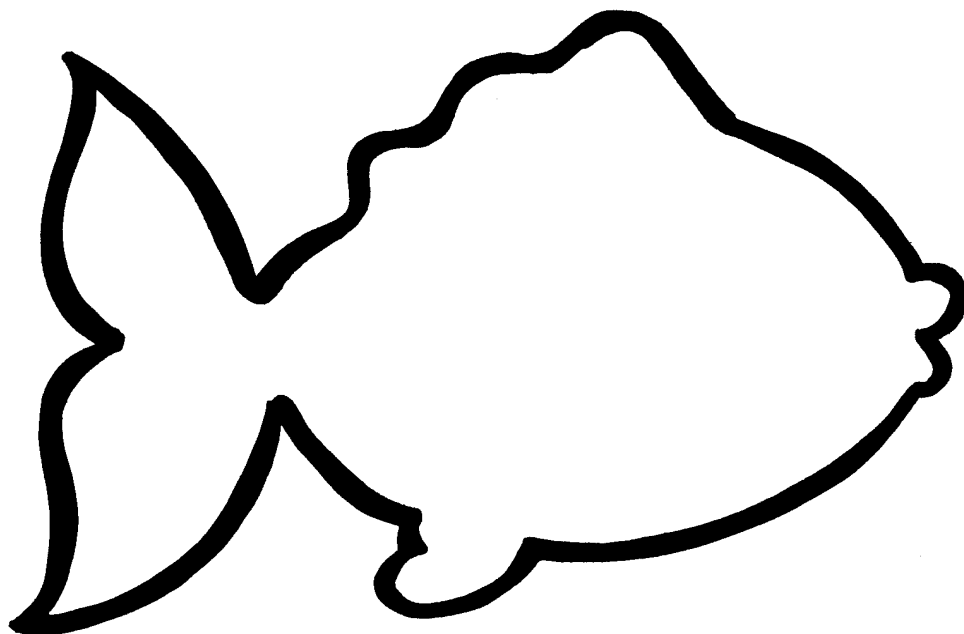
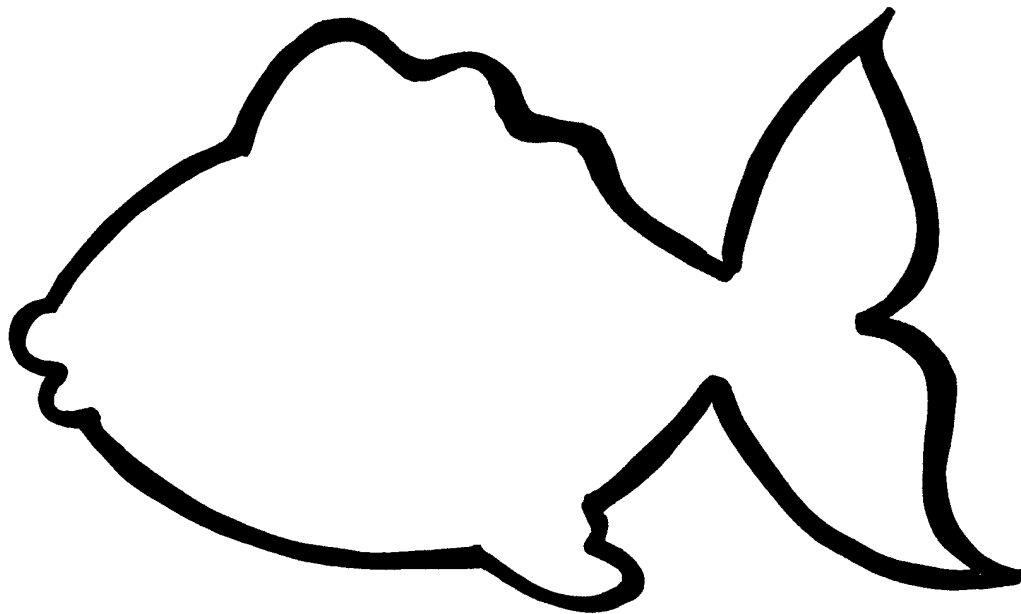
Closing Prayer: Gather children around the candle again. As you light the candle explain that the flame is something that is present in the light and the darkness. In the same way, it reminds us that God is always with us. Is there anything anyone wishes to say to God? After children have responded, close the prayer time.

Prayer Example: Lord God, we thank you that you are always with us, and always love us. It's good to be with you. Thank you for what we have learned today. Thank you for being with us and for teaching us through the Bible. Help us to remember what you have taught us today and to live it out when we leave. Amen



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CRAFT
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WORKSHEET I

THE DISCIPLES ARE PUT IN PRISON (ACTS 5:17-42)

- 1. Why were Peter and John put in prison?**
- 2. What miracle took place?**
- 3. What did Peter and John do after they left the prison?**
- 4. What did the priests do when they found out they were out of the prison?**
- 5. What did the disciples answer when they asked them why they kept preaching even when they were told not to?**
- 6. What did Gamaliel say?**
- 7. After this experience how did the disciples respond?**



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WORKSHEET 2

DEATH OF STEPHEN (ACTS 7:51-60)

- 1. Who was Stephen?**
- 2. What did the high priests do to him?**
- 3. What did they accuse Stephen of?**
- 4. What was the focus of Stephen's message?**
- 5. What did Stephen see when he looked up into heaven?**
- 6. What did Stephen say when they were stoning him?**



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WORKSHEET 3

SAUL PERSECUTES THE CHURCH (ACTS 7:59- 8:4)

1 What was the name of the person who witnessed Stephen's death?

2. Who was Saul?

3. What did Saul do?

4. What happened to the Christians as a result of Saul's persecution? Where did they go?

5. Who stayed in Jerusalem?

6. What did Saul do to the Christians he found?

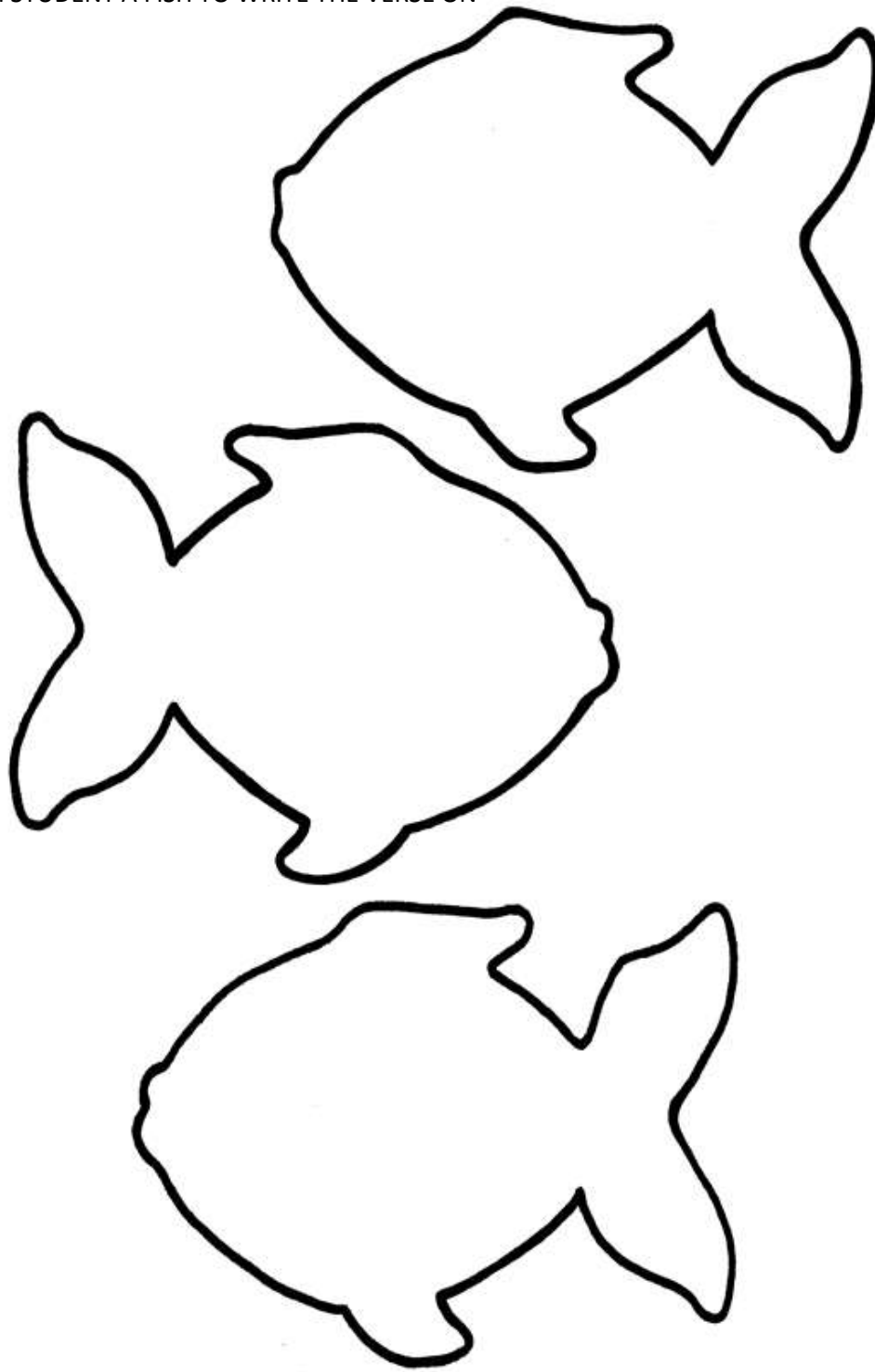
7. Why do you think Saul was so cruel to the Christians?



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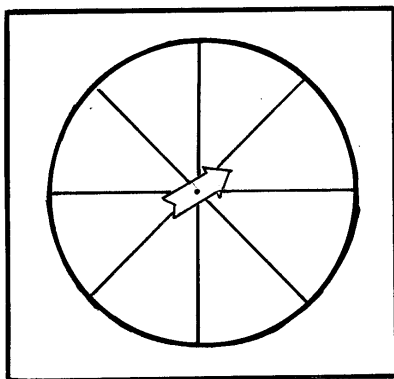
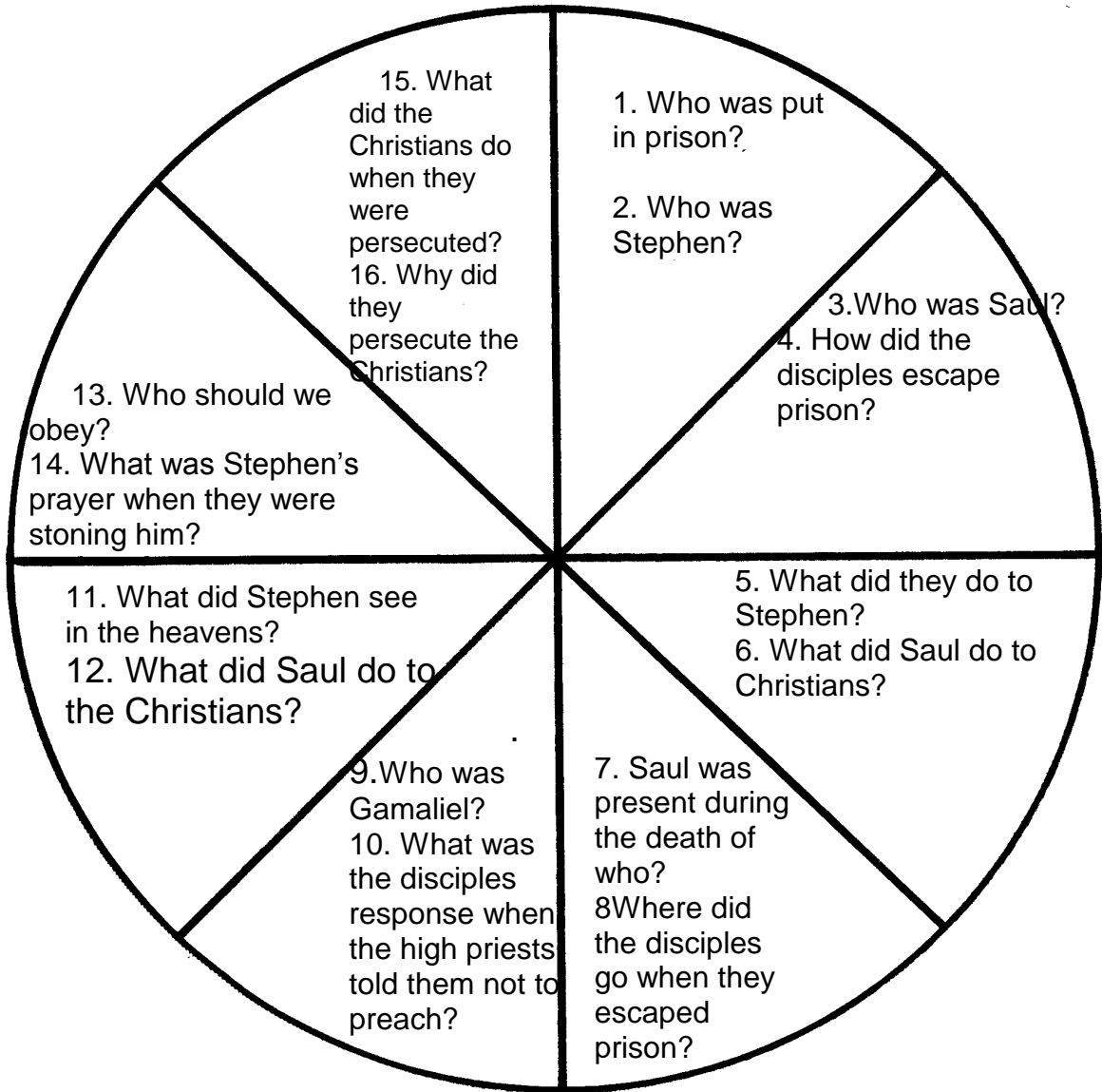
BIBLE VERSE

GIVE EACH STUDENT A FISH TO WRITE THE VERSE ON



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GAME (REVIEW)



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