

The Early Believers

Grades
1-2

SHARE

ACTS 4:32-35

What's happening in this story?

This text gives us a peek into the earliest days of the Christian church. The first believers to follow Jesus were Jewish. But Acts gives us glimpses of what happened when Gentiles joined the fold. Early Christians gathered in homes, in common rooms, by the river, etc. They prayed. They worshipped. They learned the stories of God's acts recounted in the Hebrew Scriptures—what we now call the Old Testament—and the stories of Jesus. And they shared—to such an extent that no one was in need.

What does this story mean for kids?

This story describes a pretty radical community: They share *everything*; nobody is in need. It might sound a little threatening to kids—share *everything*? But we can point out places where this is already the case, and where we are all better for it: the board games we share and enjoy as a family, and the park and playground shared by our whole community.

Why this theme?

Sharing is hard, but kids innately know that it is a part of God's plan for us. We share not because it's the right thing to do (even though it is!), but because we have been given so much by God that it spills over into other people's lives.

AGE LEVEL TIP

First and second graders are beginning to make the connection between what they read in the Bible and what happens in their own lives. Whenever possible, help kids identify concrete connections between the two. This is part of faith development!



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Markers
- Scissors

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Puzzle (48-100 pieces)
- T-shirts (2 large)
- Coins (2)
- Play food (2 pieces)
- Yarn
- Stickers

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Give kids a puzzle with large pieces to work on as a class. Tell kids to take turns putting one piece in at a time. Each person must be allowed to participate because this is a class project.

Sharing the puzzle pieces makes our class strong.

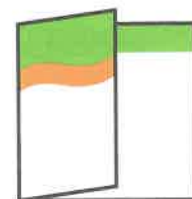
Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

Today our Bible story is about sharing with each other. How do you feel when you share? The early believers in the church learned from Jesus and the disciples to share with others. Early believers were the very first people to follow Jesus. Where did you learn to share? Once early believers shared the story of Jesus, their things, and their time, some of the people they were sharing with also became Christians. How do you share your things and your time? I wonder how sharing makes the church stronger.

Pray together: **Jesus, help us to learn how sharing is an important part of following you. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and markers.

These pictures are from the Bible story we will read today. What do you think is happening in the pictures? Allow kids to respond. Did you know the Bible tells stories about sharing? Have kids draw what they think each person is sharing in the picture. Why is sharing important? Allow kids to respond. Sharing with others makes the church strong. Collect their leaflets until Respond.



Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

It's free time in Sunday school, but Otto has his own ideas. Let's see how Otto's plan works out.

View Episode 11, "Play Partitions," on the Year Gold Spring PreK–Grade 2 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- What was Otto trying to do?
- Did Otto's plan work? Why or why not?
- How would you feel if you were in Otto's class?
- Is sharing always easy? Why or why not?
- Name something that someone shared with you.



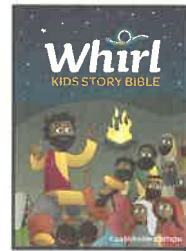
Open your Whirl Kids Story Bibles.

Let's find our story today! Help kids find "The Early Believers" on page 354. Before you read, invite kids to look for a person sharing sandals and a person sharing bread.

Read the story and Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **Who taught the first church families to share?**
- **Who did the believers share with?**
- **Name some things the believers shared.**
- **What do people in our church family share?**
- **Who do you share with?**



Gather near the Wall Chart to place today's sticker.

Point out the Testament (New), Bible section (Acts), and character image (Early Believers). **Today's Bible story was about sharing to build a strong church.**

Let's add a sticker to remind us of how the early church was built through sharing (tools, food, and blankets). Point to the corresponding images of the tools, food, and blankets on pages 354 and 357 in the Whirl Kids Story Bible.



Play together!

Divide the kids into two teams for a relay race. Set a T-shirt, coin, and piece of play food in front of the first person in each line. **The early believers shared everything they had, including clothes, money, and food. Let's have a sharing race!** To play the game, the first kid in each team puts on the T-shirt and picks up the coin and food. Player runs across the room and back to the next player on the team, singing or saying, "Jesus loves me" along the way. The first player then shares the shirt, coin, and food with the next player in line, who repeats the action. The first team that finishes shares a high five with the other team. **Jesus said to share everything!**

BIBLE BIT

The need to share was a familiar one for people in the early church. Political unrest and famine caused an economic downturn, leaving many unemployed.

WATCH IT AGAIN

Not only did Otto's plan make the rest of the kids unhappy, but it also wasn't very fair. What did the kid with glasses and the new girl get?

OUR CHURCH

In today's Respond activity, kids will identify three things the class can share with another class. Choose one and do it together.

RESPOND 10

Pass out leaflets and markers.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

- 1. How can believers help others? The early believers shared what they had. That's where sharing starts.**
2. Ask kids to think of something they could share with a friend, and write or draw it in the center circle, 1.
3. Have kids move to ring 2 and write or draw two things, one in each section of this ring, that they could share with the class.
- 4. What does our class have that we could share with another class?** Help kids brainstorm talents, such as helping hands or a song they could share, as well as objects. Then have kids write or draw one thing in each segment of ring 3.
5. Work together to think of items the class has shared or will share with the rest of the church. Decorations, stories, music, handshakes—have each kid choose four things to add to ring 4.
- 6. Food, clothes, recycled cans . . . What are five things we can share with our community?** Kids write or draw them in each section of ring 5.
7. Talk together about how your church supports missions. (Examples: collecting soap or Bibles, making prepacked meals, sponsoring radio programs.) Have kids write or draw six things in ring 6.
- 8. How does sharing with others make the church strong?**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

We started the day by guessing what the early believers shared. We practiced sharing in a relay race. We thought about things we could share with others and wrote or drew them on our leaflets. Who taught the believers to share? Allow kids to respond.

Pass out leaflet panels, stickers, and markers.

Kids write the name of their church in the rectangle and decorate the pennant. Punch holes through the blue dots, and attach all pennants to a single length of yarn. Hang the pennants on a church bulletin board as part of a display about sharing with others through the food shelf or other mission projects.

Send kids out with a blessing.

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.