

The Early Believers

PreK-
K

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

This lesson is about the church as a community. Young kids are a vital part of a strong church family, even if it doesn't seem that way to them. Encourage kids to see how sharing helps make their Sunday school class strong, and how they can contribute to the strength of the larger congregation.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Crayons

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Classroom toys (blocks, balls, dolls, trains)
- Music source
- Wide ribbons (2 ft. long, 1 per kid)

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Today our lesson is about the first churches and how they shared everything. Invite kids to choose toys to play with. Encourage cooperative play with sharing rather than individual play.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

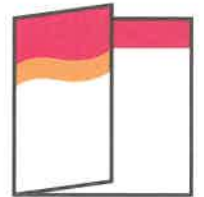
Who loves to share their toys or books? Who loves to share food with others? Our story today is about sharing. The new believers learned from Jesus to share with each other and the world. Jesus taught that by sharing, we make the church stronger. Find a toy to share and roll or pass it across the floor to someone else as you say, "Sharing makes the church stronger!" Be sure each kid gets to receive and share a toy. Who can think of other ways to share with friends, family, and the world?

Pray together: **Jesus, help us to be super sharers of everything we have with everyone we know! Amen.**

Pass out leaflets.

Your leaflet has a word on it today. Do you know what it says? **Share!** Have kids trace the letters with their fingers one at a time for practice. Next, do a cheer.

Say, "Gimme an S!" Kids trace and shout, "S!" Next, "Gimme an H!" Kids shout, "H!" Continue until they have traced and shouted each letter. Then say, "What's that spell?" Kids shout, "Share!" Collect their leaflets until Respond.



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

In the video today, the kids try to divide up all the Sunday school toys. I wonder if this is a good idea.

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

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- What does Otto do so that no one has to share toys anymore?
- What do you think of his idea?
- How does Otto's plan work out for the kids in the video?
- Is it better to share or not share? Why?
- What do you have a hard time sharing sometimes?



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 the building tools, bread, and clothes.



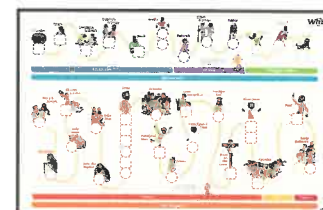
Read the story and Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **What did the first church families learn about Jesus?**
- **How does sharing with each other show love?**
- **What things did the first Christians share with each other?**
- **What do you share with others in your church family?**
- **How does sharing make you feel?**

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

Point out the Testament (New) and character image (Early Believers). **Today's Bible story was about believers and what they learned about building the church. Let's add a sticker to remind us of what they shared** (sandals, bread, tools). Point to the corresponding images of the believers on page 355 and what they shared on pages 354 and 357 in the Whirl Kids Story Bible.



Play together!

Place pieces of ribbon in a pile on the floor, one less than the number of kids playing, and have a device for playing music ready. Have kids stand in a circle around the pile of ribbon. **We're going to practice how good it is to share. As the music plays, walk in a circle around the ribbons. When the music stops, find a ribbon. There aren't enough for each of you to have one, so you'll have to share. Let's play the game!** Start the music. When the music stops, kids should find a ribbon. If necessary, help kids make sure everyone is holding part of a ribbon. Play again, removing one ribbon each time, until everyone has to share one ribbon. **Jesus taught us to share everything. What's fun about everyone sharing the same ribbon?** Play the music again and encourage kids to dance while all holding on to one ribbon.

BIBLE BIT

The early church was a mix of Jews and Gentiles who gathered in homes, common areas, and even by rivers to learn about Jesus, worship, and share life. They were becoming family!

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, pay attention to how each toy was less fun to play with alone, rather than with a friend. Which toys require at least two people sharing to play?

OUR CHURCH

Have a longtime member of your congregation share the history of your church. What can they share with the kids about your church's early days?

RESPOND 10

Pass out leaflets and crayons.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. **Let's play the game I Spy with our leaflet! There are hidden pictures in this house for you to find. Some of the items are things we share today. Some are things that people in Bible times would have shared. When you find an item, imagine how you could share it with a friend.** Kids may circle items when they find them.
2. **Let's start in the living room. Can you find the scroll to read, the fire to keep you warm, and the crayons? Which would be best to share? How could you share it?**
3. **How about a snack in the kitchen? Can you find some grapes, a loaf of bread, and a cupcake? Which one would you like to eat? How could you share it?**
4. **Let's play in the bedroom! Look for the oil lamp, the blocks, and the stack of blankets. What could you and a friend build together with the blocks?**
5. **It's a beautiful day to play outside. Can you find the sand toys, the tricycle, and the fish? If you only had one bucket, how could you share it with a friend?**
6. **It can be hard to share sometimes. How is playing together better when you share?**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Today we learned that sharing is good, not just because it's kind, but because it makes the church stronger! How does sharing make our Sunday school class strong? Take time to hear kids' responses.

Pass out leaflet panels and crayons.

Which would be easier to share: an ice cream cone or a pizza? Invite kids to circle the one that would be easier to share and then draw a picture of a person they would like to share it with. Do the same with the play dough and paint set.

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.