

# The Church Grows

Early Church and Missions  
Lesson 2

## Lesson Objectives

- The children will tell the story of the growth of the church in the book of Acts.
- The children will state that God wants all people to know Jesus.
- The children will state that God wants them to know Jesus.

## Lesson Text

Acts 2:42-47, 4:4, 5:14

## Scripture Memory Verse

[God] wants everyone to be saved.  
*1 Timothy 2:4 (NIRV)*

## Lesson Plan

Greeting and Registration

Preclass Activity: Sum It Up

Welcome and Singing

Centers:

Bible Story: Great Numbers

Craft: Miracle Grow

Scripture Memory: God Wants Everyone

NOTE: Allow time for a snack.



# The Church Grows

## Sum It Up

The children will preview today's lesson by making a wheel that shows how the early church grew.

### Materials

For each child:

- 2 white paper plates, 9"
- 1 brass fastener
- glue stick
- colored pencils or crayons

For the teacher:

- utility knife
- scissors
- ruler
- marker

Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for each child

### Preparation

1. Cut out the pictures from the copies of Reproducible Page A.
  2. Prepare one of the two plates for each child as follows:
    - A. Make a small hole in the center point of the plate.
    - B. Draw a 1" circle around the center point.
    - C. Measure and draw a 2½" line along the parameter of the plate's circle and a 1" line around the parameter of the center point circle. Connect the lines making a wedge, see Figure A, and then cut out the wedge with a utility knife.
    - D. Write the words "God added to their number daily!" around the plate's circle.
- NOTE: Set aside the other plate for use during the activity.
3. Make a sample to show the children.

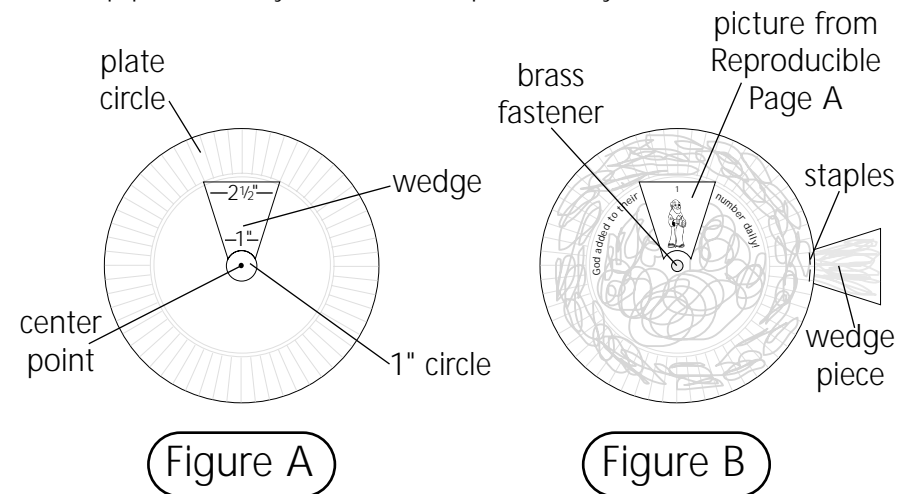
### Instructions

1. Greet the children as they arrive. Tell them that in today's lesson they are going to learn about how the church in the book of Acts grew more and more. Explain that they will make a special wheel to help them see what this growth looked like. Show them your sample plate.

2. Distribute the uncut paper plates, the picture circles, crayons, and glue sticks. Have the children glue their pictures to the back of their plates and then color their pictures.
3. As the children are coloring, poke a small hole through the center of their pictures where indicated and through their plates.
4. Distribute the paper plates you prepared and the brass fasteners. Have each child place the cut plate on top of the picture plate. Have them attach the plates using their brass fasteners.
5. Demonstrate how to spin the plate around to show how God uses each disciple to add more disciples to his church. See Figure B.

### Teacher Tips

- Once you have made a plate with a wedge cut out, use this as a stencil to trace and cut out the wedges and poke the center holes in the other plates.
- Save the wedges, and then have the children staple them to the top plate so they can turn their plates easily.



# B The Church Grows

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## Great Numbers

The children will tell the story of the growth of the church in the book of Acts.

### Materials

For each child:

- thin markers
- highlighters in 3 different colors (optional)

For the teacher:

- 32 jumbo craft sticks
- miniature stickers of people (optional)

Reproducible Pages:

- Page B, 1 copy for each child

### Preparation

1. Draw or place a sticker of a face on each craft stick.
2. Complete the activity on your copy of Reproducible Page B.
3. Practice presenting this Bible Story with the props and with a lot of energy.

### Introducing the Bible Story

Open your Bible to the book of Acts. Tell the children that this week's Bible Story comes from the New Testament book of Acts and follows the story from last week about Pentecost.

- *Who remembers what happened on Pentecost?* (Take responses. Answers should include: God showed his power in many ways; the apostles spoke in different languages to teach many people about Jesus; about 3,000 people were baptized.)
- *What do you think happened to the 3,000 people after they were baptized?* (Answers will vary.) Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn what happened to the church after those 3,000 were baptized.

### Warm-Up Exercise

Read the following questions and statements to the children. Do not spend too much time on this, but use it to help orient the children for today's Bible Story.

- *What is your favorite number?*
- *Why is it your favorite number?*
- *My favorite number is \_\_\_\_\_. I think it is a great number! It is my favorite because \_\_\_\_\_.*

*When we talk about "great numbers" in the Bible, we are not talking about our favorite numbers. When we talk about "great numbers" in the Bible, we are talking about really large numbers. For example: There were great numbers of people at the baseball game last night. Or, There were a great number of children who came to see the circus.*

- *Did you know that there was a book in the Bible called Numbers? Do you know where it is in the Bible?* (Old Testament, after Leviticus)
- *Did you know that God cares about numbers? God cares about numbers of PEOPLE! God loves great numbers of people—everyone in the whole world! That's over 6 billion people! God is great and he has a great love for all people. Today, you are going to hear about great numbers of people who were saved in the early church.*

### Presenting the Bible Story

Distribute the copies of Reproducible Page B, highlighters and markers. Tell the children that each of the verses on their page contains the word "number." Read each verse aloud as the children follow along. Each time they find the word "number" have them circle or highlight it on their paper.

Now tell the children to go back and find the verses in which it says "large numbers" (Acts 6:7, 14:21, 17:4) and circle or highlight the word "large" in a different color.

Tell them to go back and find the verses in which it says "great numbers" (Acts 11:21, 11:24, 14:1) and circle or highlight the word "great" in a different color.

- *Based on these verses, how would you describe the church that we read about in the book of Acts?* (Take responses.) Make sure that the children understand that the church was a large group that was always growing and adding more and more people.

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# The Church Grows

Show the children the craft sticks you prepared. Explain that they will try to imagine how the numbers of disciples in the early church grew so quickly. Distribute the craft sticks to the children, keeping one for yourself. Put yours down, saying: *Imagine that I am the only disciple in our city of \_\_\_\_\_.* As a disciple, I want to tell people about Jesus and make disciples, so I am going to talk to my friend (say a child's name in the class and take her stick). After he/she is baptized, we have two disciples in the church. Place the stick next to yours.

*Now that we have two disciples, we can both go and make disciples. I am going to tell my other friend (say a child and take her stick) and help her become a disciple, and \_\_\_\_\_ is going to tell his/her friend \_\_\_\_\_ and help them become a disciple. Now we are four!*

Continue using the children's sticks to complete this example. *Let's see what happens if all four of us go and make disciples. Then we will be eight! And look what happens if all eight of us go and make disciples! Then we will be sixteen. And look what happens if all sixteen of us make a disciple. We will be thirty-two.*

## Mind Bender

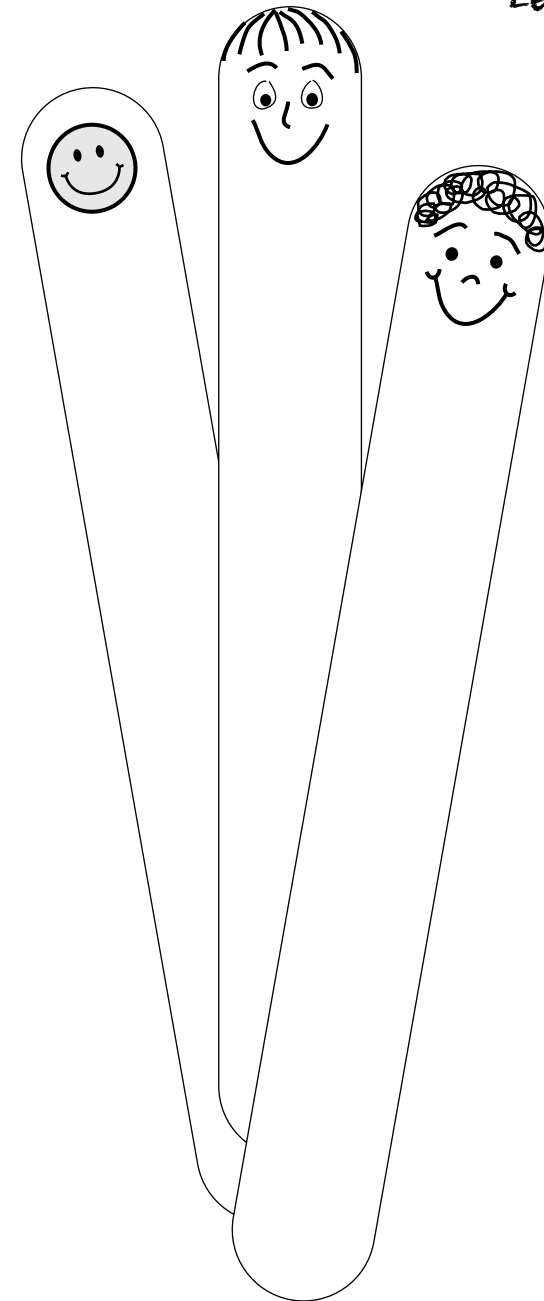
Conclude this demonstration by saying that they began with only one person (or craft stick). Imagine if they had started with three thousand—just like on Pentecost—and doubled them five times! How many would that have been? (96,000)

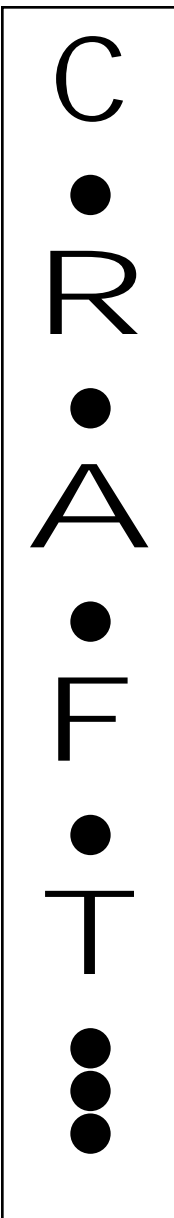
## Share and Tell

Ask the children how it makes them feel to know that God has enough love for every single person in the world. Ask them how it makes them feel to know that God wants great numbers of people to be saved and go to heaven. Tell the children that this is why disciples are always inviting new people to come to church. Ask them who they want to tell about this week's Bible Story. Close with a prayer praising God for his great love for great numbers of people.

## Teacher Tips

- Bring in a calculator to dramatize the multiplication process.





# The Church Grows

## Miracle Grow

The children will make a craft to remind them that God's church grows.

### Materials

For each child:

- crayons
- glue stick
- 1 piece of light blue construction paper, 9" x 12"

For the teacher:

- marker
- scissors
- utility knife
- brown construction paper, 9" x 12", 1 piece for every 4 children
- colored tissue paper

Reproducible Pages:

- Page C, 1 copy for each child

### Preparation

1. Cut out the sunflower pictures from the copies of Reproducible Page C. Using the utility knife, cut out the curved slits as indicated on each picture, see Figure A.
2. For each child, draw and cut a 5½" x 4½" flowerpot from the brown construction paper. See Figure B.
3. Cut the tissue paper into a variety of small squares and rectangles, no larger than one inch pieces. Cut approximately eight pieces for each child.
4. Make a sample of the craft to show the children.

### Instructions

1. Show the children your sample craft. *In our Bible Story today, we are learning about how God's church grows and grows. God makes his church grow by using his followers to spread the word about Jesus. Does anyone know why God wants his church to grow? Because he wants all people to know about Jesus so that they can be saved. This craft shows how God's church can start out small like this flower, but God can make it grow and grow.* Pull the flower up as you say this.

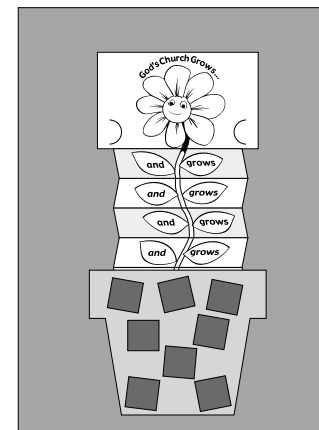
2. Distribute the sunflower pictures and crayons to the children. Have the children color their pictures. Help them to fold their pictures along the dashed lines accordion style. See Figure C.
3. Distribute the glue sticks, construction paper and the flower pots. Have the children glue the flower pot to the construction paper over the bottom fold of the picture. See Figure D.
4. Have the children glue the tissue paper pieces to the flowerpot.
5. Demonstrate how the picture folds up and fits behind the tabs, and then how to remove it and make the flower grow.

### Conclusion

Close with a prayer for the children to tell people about Jesus so that they can help the church grow.

### Teacher Tips

- Fold the brown construction paper in quarters to cut four flower pots at once.



# The Church Grows

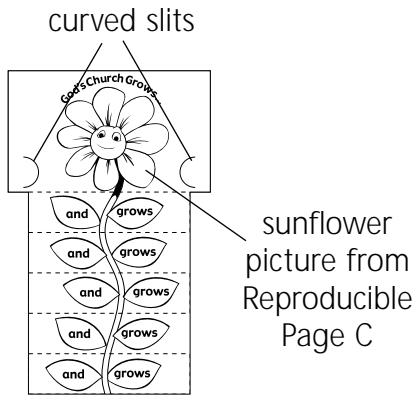


Figure A

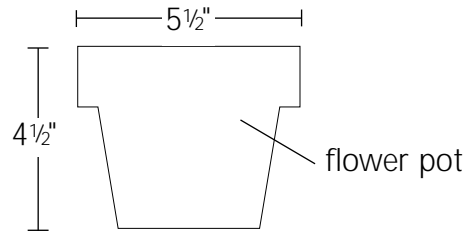


Figure B

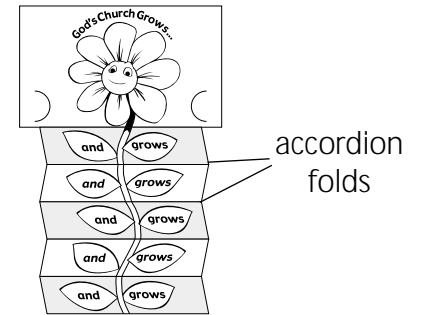


Figure C

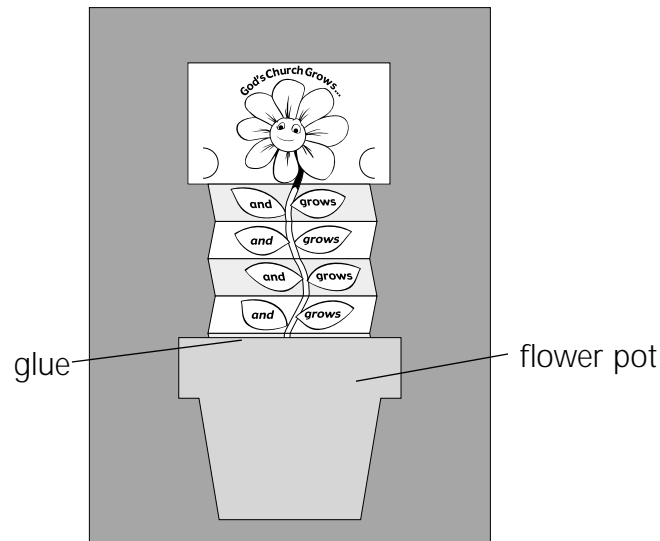
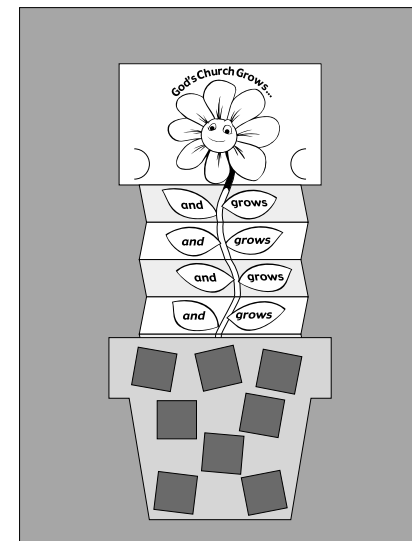


Figure D



SCRIPTURE MEMORY

# The Church Grows

## God Wants Everyone

The children will memorize today's Scripture Memory Verse through this fun "response" activity.

### Scripture Memory Verse

[God] wants everyone to be saved.  
1 Timothy 2:4 (NIRV)

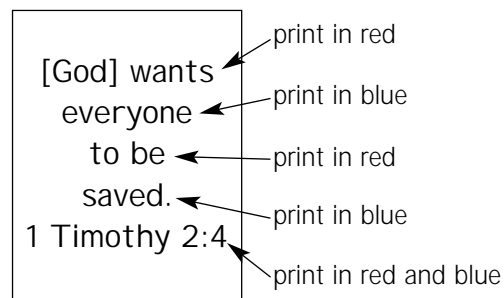
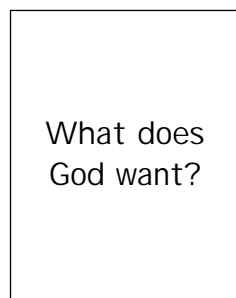
### Materials

For the teacher:

- 1 piece of poster board, 22" x 28"
- 1 thick black marker
- 1 thick red marker
- 1 thick blue marker

### Preparation

1. On one side of the poster board, use the black marker to neatly print in large letters: "What does God want?"
2. On the other side of the poster board, use the red and blue markers to neatly print this week's Scripture Memory Verse according to the chart below:



### Instructions

1. Introduce today's activity: *In your Bible Story today, you are learning about how the early church grew in large numbers. The disciples made many more disciples and the Bible says that the Lord helped great numbers of people to be saved. God is a great God with a great love for all people. Jesus proved his great love when he died on the cross for us. Jesus died on the*

*cross so that great numbers of people could have their sins forgiven and be saved. In our Scripture Memory Verse, you are going to learn that God wants all people to be saved.*

2. Show the children the Scripture Memory Verse on the back of this Lesson Card. Say it to them as they follow along. Ask the children to say it together with you three more times.
3. Divide the children into two teams. Assign each group a color—blue or red. Explain that they will take turns saying the verse back and forth to each other in their teams. Tell them that you are going to ask them a question, and then they will answer the question with the verse.
4. Show the children the question on the poster board. Then show them the verse that you prepared on the other side.
5. Hold up the question and ask the children: *What does God want?* Have the children answer by saying the words together in their team's color. Have all the children say the Scripture Reference together.
6. Each time, have the teams say the verse slowly and then gradually get faster. Do this five times.
7. Have the children switch teams. Tell the red team that they are now the blue team, and vice versa. Have the children read the verse in the correct team color five more times. (This may confuse them at first, but encourage them and have fun.)
8. Finally, put the poster down, and ask the children to answer all together from memory: *What does God want?* Ask for volunteers to say the verse from memory.

### Conclusion

*How do you feel when you get something you want? What are some things that you want? What is something that God wants? How do you think God feels when he gets what he wants—someone who is saved? Encourage the children to think that one day they can become disciples and make God happy by making other disciples. Close with a prayer for many people to be saved.*

### Teacher Tips

- If you don't have red and blue markers, use two different colors.



# The Church Grows

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[God] wants everyone  
to be saved.

1 Timothy 2:4 (NIRV)





## Lesson Objectives

- The children will tell the story of the growth of the church in the book of Acts.
- The children will state that God wants all people to know Jesus.
- The children will state that God wants them to know Jesus.

## Lesson Text

Acts 2:42-47, 4:4, 5:14

## Scripture Memory Verse

[God] wants everyone to be saved.

1 Timothy 2:4 (NIRV)

## Lesson Plan

Greeting and Registration

Preclass Activity: More and More

Welcome and Singing

Centers:

Life Application: God's Favorite Number

Game: Two by Two

Bible Skills: What's Your Number?

NOTE: Allow time for a snack.



## More and More

The children will review this week's Bible Story as they make a banner.

### Materials

For each child:

- pencil
- marker
- glue stick

For the teacher:

- scissors
- 1 piece of banner paper, 8'
- magazines with pictures of people

### Preparation

1. Across the length of the banner, neatly print: "God wants all people to be saved."
2. Cut out pictures of different people's faces. Do as many as possible, and at least enough for each child to have a few.

3. Neatly print the following references on the banner, being careful to leave enough room for the children to write out the scriptures underneath: Acts 2:47, Acts 4:4, Acts 5:14, Acts 6:7, Acts 11:21, Acts 11:24, Acts 14:1, Acts 14:21, Acts 16:5, Acts 17:12.

### Instructions

1. Greet the children as they arrive. Remind them that they are learning about the growth of the early church.
2. Direct them to the banner and distribute pencils, markers, glue sticks and the pictures you prepared. Have the children look up the references in their Bibles and write out the scripture(s) in the spaces beneath.

3. When all the scriptures have been written out, have the children glue or draw pictures of different faces all around the banner.
4. Have the children sign the banner and hang it where everyone can see it.

### Teacher Tips

- For large classes, do several smaller banners and divide the references between them.

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N**God's Favorite Number**

The children will review this week's Bible Story as they think about all the people that God wants to be saved.

**Materials**

For each child:

- pencil

For the teacher:

- a large number (between 100-500) of small, smooth objects e.g., dried beans, beads, coins
- a container large enough to hold the small objects
- tray with sides

Reproducible Pages:

- Page D, 1 copy for the teacher

**Preparation**

1. Practice leading this activity.
2. Read Acts 2:42-47, 4:4, 5:14 to review the main events of this week's Bible Story.

**Reviewing the Bible Story**

Open your Bible to Acts 2. Remind the children that this week's Bible Story comes from the New Testament book of Acts. Ask the children what they remember from this week's Bible Story about the early church.

*The Bible says that the disciples continued to preach and teach about Jesus to everyone and the church grew more and more every day. There were large numbers of new disciples coming into the church all the time! God helped the disciples through his Holy Spirit so that many men and women could learn about Jesus and be saved. God has a great love for all people and he wants great numbers of people to know him and be saved!*

**Life Application—God's Favorite Number**

Show the children the container of small objects that you prepared. Tell them that you are going to read some verses from the Bible (from your copy of Reproducible Page D) that describe how the church in the Bible grew. Each time that you say "number" the children will say what kind of number, e.g. large, great, 5,000, etc.

Then choose one child to reach in and take a handful of objects and place them on the tray.

Do this until each child has had a chance to take at least one handful out of the container. Point out that there are not as many objects as there were people in the early church, because there would be over 10,000! Explain that this is to help them see that God loves it when large numbers of people learn about Jesus and are saved.

Now have each child take one object from the tray. Ask the children what they think God's favorite number is. (Answers will vary. The point is to help them see that God wants lots of people to be saved.) Tell the children that just as God wants large numbers of people to know Jesus, he also wants each one of them to know Jesus too. Hold up one small object. *Do you see this one? God loves each and every person with a great love. God loves each of you as much as he loves everyone in the whole world. God loves me and he wants me to know Jesus.* Tell the children to hold up their object and say, "God loves me and he wants me to know Jesus." Invite them to take turns saying this individually or with a partner. If your budget permits, invite the children to keep their object as a reminder that God loves them very much.

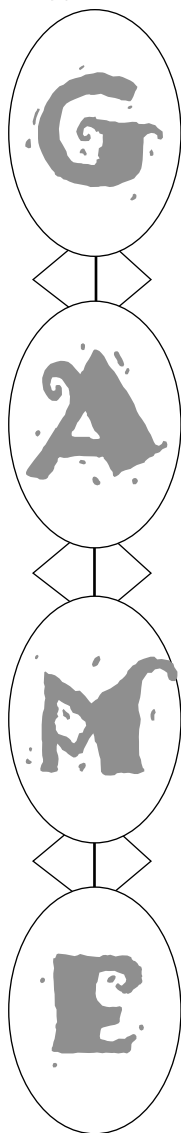
**Conclusion**

Ask the children how it makes them feel to know that God loves each one of them and wants them to know all about Jesus. Encourage the children to remember that God loves them as they go to school and to think about God's great love. Close with a prayer thanking God for sending Jesus to show us his great love.

**Teacher Tips**

- The small objects for this activity should be inexpensive. Avoid using candy, stones or any sharp objects. If your budget does not permit the children to keep their objects, then think of a small reminder to give them of this lesson.
- Do not force a child to say something if he is not comfortable.





## Two by Two

The children will review key ideas from this week's Bible Story as they play this relay.

### Materials

*For the teacher:*

- 1 blue tablecloth or sheet
- 2 paper or plastic plates
- 2 paper or plastic cups
- 1 mat or carpet square
- 1 Bible
- 1 piece of poster board, 22" x 28"
- 1 black marker

### Preparation

1. On the poster board, neatly print in large letters: "Go Make Disciples!"
2. Arrange the items for today's activity in the order shown on the back of this Lesson Card.
3. Practice leading this activity.

### Instructions

1. Introduce today's activity: *This week you learned about the first church in the book of Acts. The first disciples that were baptized on the day of Pentecost were very excited about being a part of God's church. They spent time together in their homes and ate together. They studied God's word as much as they could. They spent time praying to God and helping many people to know Jesus and be baptized. God made the church grow bigger and bigger because he loves everyone and wants everyone to be saved.*
2. Show the children the items that you prepared. Explain that each item represents something that the disciples did in the early church: blue cloth for baptism; plates and cups for time that the disciples spent eating together; a mat for prayer; Bible for studying God's word; and Jesus' message to go make disciples.

3. Have each child find a partner and line up. Ask a child to help you demonstrate today's game in the following way:
  - Go to the blue cloth. Hold your noses and bend down as if being baptized. Tell the children that they will pretend to be baptized in this area.
  - Go to the plates and cups and pretend to eat and fellowship with your friend.
  - Go to the mat and get on your knees together and pray to God for many people to become disciples.
  - Go to the Bible and pretend to read and study together.
  - Go to the poster and say together: "Go Make Disciples!" Then walk quickly to the next pair of children in line, and lead them by the hand to the blue cloth. Have the next pair go through each activity. You and your partner will go to end of the line and sit down.
4. When all the children have completed this activity, have them find a new partner and line up again. This time, the first pair will go through the line, and then bring the second pair to the blue cloth and stay with them. All four children will go through the line together. Get the next pair of children and bring them to the blue cloth. Have all six go through the activities together. Do this until the entire group goes through the line of activities together. NOTE: For large groups, this can be a lot of fun, but may get out of hand. Monitor the class carefully.

### Conclusion

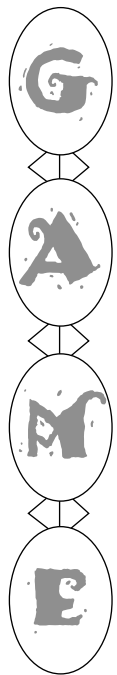
Ask the children what their favorite part of this activity was and why. Encourage them that God wants his church to do the same things today that they did in the book of Acts. Close with a prayer for God's church to grow more and more every day.

### Teacher Tips

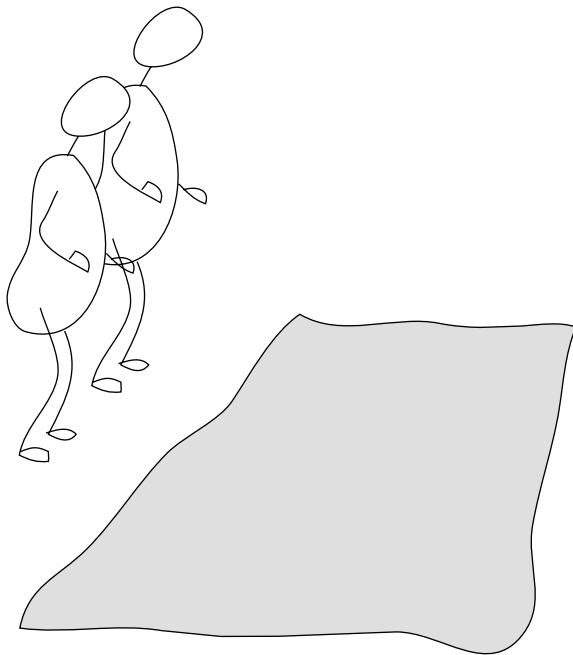
- Adjust this activity to best suit your schedule and class size. If you have centers with fewer than five children, you may want to have the entire class do this together instead of in small groups.



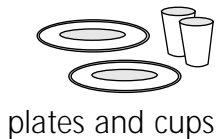
# The Church Grows



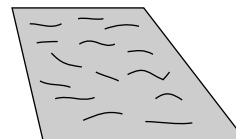
## Two by Two Relay



blue tablecloth



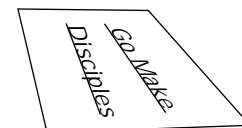
plates and cups



mat

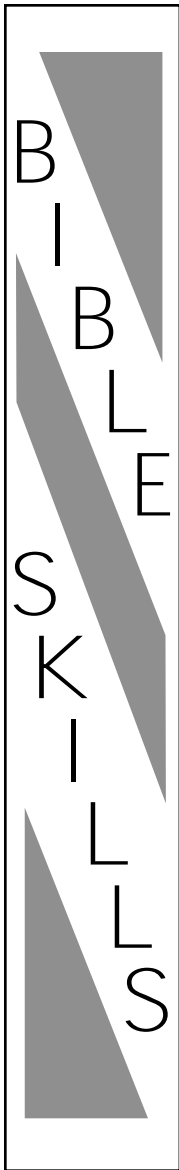


Bible



poster





## What's Your Number?

The children will look up verses from the book of Acts that describe the growth of the early church.

### Materials

For each child:

- pencil

Reproducible Pages:

- Page E, 1 copy for each child

### Preparation

Complete the activity on your copy of Reproducible Page E.

### Instructions

1. Introduce today's activity: *In your Bible Story this week, you learned about how the church in the book of Acts grew by large numbers every day. God was working together with the disciples to bring many people into his kingdom. God showed his great love for all people by helping many people to be saved. The book of Acts is full of verses that describe the exciting and rapid growth of the church. In your activity today, you will look up some of these verses.*
2. Distribute the copies of Reproducible Page E and pencils. Tell the children that each of the verses on their pages is missing a word that describes the growth of the church. Explain that they will look up each verse to find the missing words. Point out that the answers are scattered at the bottom of their pages. Have them cross out each answer as they find it.
3. Do the first one together as a group. Have the children work with a partner to finish the rest of the blanks. Check the answers all together when everyone is finished.

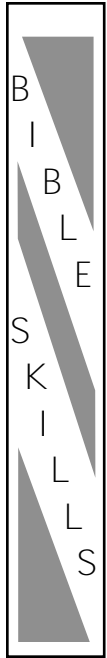
### Conclusion

Ask the children how many people are in their family—including cousins, uncles and aunts. Ask them if they are from a large family. Explain that God's church is like a big family and God loves to have lots of people in is family. Close with a prayer for God's church "family" to grow every day where you live.

### Teacher Tips

- This activity uses the NIV translation. Have some extra Bibles on hand for children who may not have this translation.





# The Church Grows

## What's Your Number?

Answer Key

### Acts 4:4

But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

### Acts 5:14

Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

### Acts 6:7

So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

### Acts 11:21

The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

### Acts 11:24

He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

### Acts 14:1

At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.

### Acts 14:21

They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples.

### Acts 17:4

Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

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~~large~~

~~great~~

~~large~~

~~more and more~~

~~large~~

~~five thousand~~

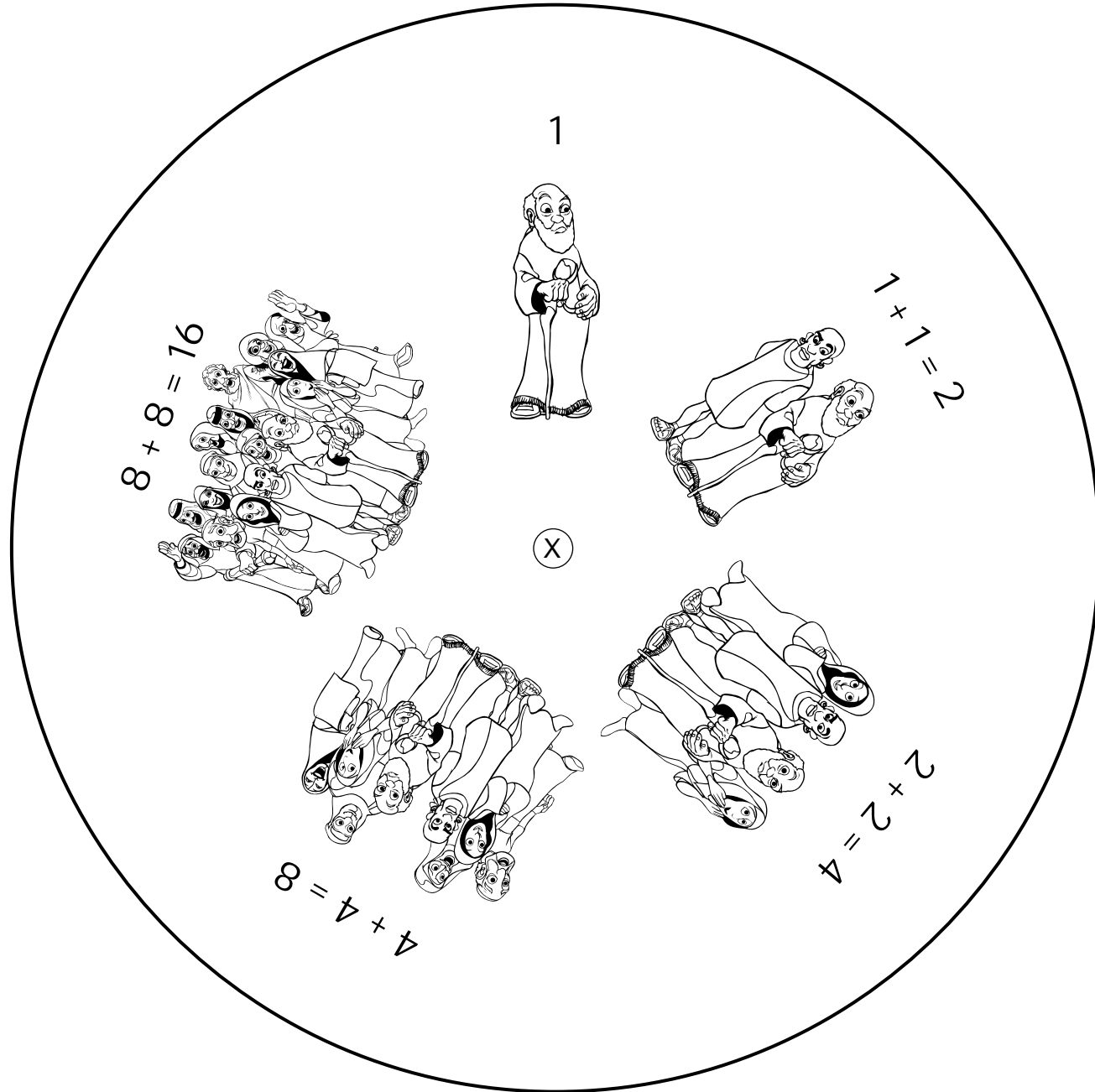
~~great~~



Core/Preclass  
1 copy for each child

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**Core/Bible Story**  
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- Acts 2:47** And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.
- Acts 4:4** But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.
- Acts 5:14** Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.
- Acts 6:7** So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.
- Acts 9:31** Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.
- Acts 11:21** The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.
- Acts 11:24** He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.
- Acts 14:1** At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.
- Acts 14:21** They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples.
- Acts 16:5** So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.
- Acts 17:4** Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.
- Acts 17:12** Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.
- Acts 17:34** A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

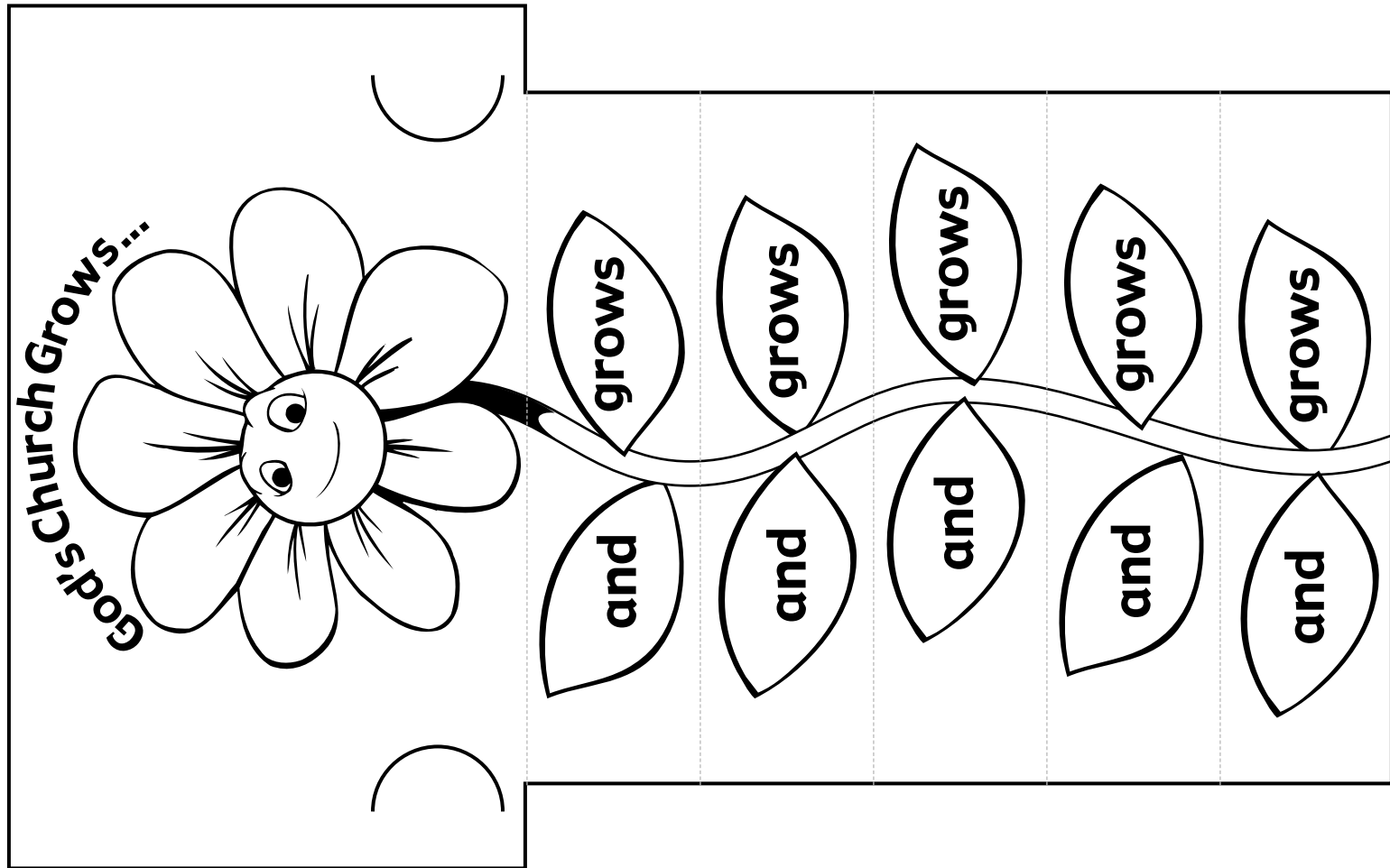
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## Supplement/Life Application

1 copy for the teacher

# God's Favorite Number

(Emphasis has been added to the following verses.)

### Acts 4:4

But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about FIVE THOUSAND.

### Acts 5:14

Nevertheless, MORE AND MORE men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

### Acts 6:7

So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a LARGE number of priests became obedient to the faith.

### Acts 11:21

The Lord's hand was with them, and a GREAT number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

### Acts 11:24

He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a GREAT number of people were brought to the Lord.

### Acts 14:1

At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a GREAT number of Jews and Gentiles believed.

### Acts 14:21

They preached the good news in that city and won a LARGE number of disciples.

### Acts 17:4

Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a LARGE number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

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What's Your Number? Name \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 4:4

But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about \_\_\_\_\_.

Acts 11:24

He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a \_\_\_\_\_ number of people were brought to the Lord.

Acts 5:14

Nevertheless, \_\_\_\_\_ men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

Acts 14:1

At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a \_\_\_\_\_ number of Jews and Gentiles believed.

Acts 6:7

So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a \_\_\_\_\_ number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Acts 14:21

They preached the good news in that city and won a \_\_\_\_\_ number of disciples.

Acts 11:21

The Lord's hand was with them, and a \_\_\_\_\_ number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

Acts 17:4

Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a \_\_\_\_\_ number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

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