

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES: Jesus Promises the Spirit**AIM:****TIME: 60 minutes****General:** 1] To introduce the Acts of the Apostles- author; main contents.

2] To show that before leaving his disciples, Jesus

a) Asked them to be his witnesses and

b) Promised them the Holy Spirit who would empower them in this task.

Personal: For each child to realise that Jesus asks him/ her to be His witnesses and that they need the Holy Spirit's power for this.**Texts used:** Acts 1:1-11.**I. STARTER:** [5 minutes]

Teacher: Children, I have to go to meet someone, and I'll be back in a few minutes. Will you do something for me while I am away? Father has asked us to make red roses out of crepe paper to put on the altar. Have you ever seen paper roses? You have to cut squares of crepe paper, curl the edges and shape them and then tie them on a stick. Lets see how many roses you can make while I have gone.

(Without giving the students a chance to ask or say anything, rush out of the class and pretend to go off...after 2 or 3 minutes return and ask:)

Why is no one doing what I asked ? I can't see any roses made ! Father will be very disappointed!

(Children will, of course complain that they had no paper or scissors and anyway they were not sure how to make the roses !)

I'm sure all of you thought your teacher had gone mad today! But don't worry; I'm not really mad. I didn't really expect you to make roses. This was just to make you realise how you would feel if you have to do something difficult and there is no one there to help you.

II. DEVELOPMENT: [40 minutes]

In today's lesson we are going to read about some people who were asked to do a difficult thing. At the same time they heard that their teacher was about to leave them.

- Can you guess who these people were? [*Jesus' disciples*]
- Who was their teacher who had to leave them? Where was he going? [*Jesus... to heaven*]
- Was He going to come back again? [*Yes...we await Jesus' second coming at the end of time.*]
- What task did He give His disciples? [*To go out and preach the Good News-to be His witnesses*]
- Up to this point the story is like what happened today in class. The disciples were unable to carry out the task they were given, but Jesus was a much better teacher than I am. He did not leave them helpless. Lets read about what He did to help them...
- Where will we find the story of what happened after Jesus went away? In which part of the Bible?

[Get the children to search in their Bibles and find out for themselves, without helping each other. After a while, if some are still struggling, tell them to turn to the Acts of the Apostles]

Will someone read a verse from Chapter 1 that tells us what help Jesus provided for His disciples. (Verses 4 & 5 or verse 8) The Holy Spirit is the One who would give them the power and guidance to be Christ's witnesses. If I had left someone who knew how to make roses and who had all the materials, I'm sure all would have been successful in your task!

So now you have opened the new book we are going to look at this term. This is a very interesting and exciting book. It is different from all the other books in the Bible.

- When you pick a storybook to read from the library shelves, what is the first thing you do?
[Check who the author is eg. Enid Blyton]
- Who is the author of Acts? ... *[If someone says Luke, ask them how we can be sure of this]*

Lets see what good detectives you are: The clue is in the first verse of the book...*(Read it)* The author has already written another book and this is the second one. He addresses the book to Theophilus, who was probably a government official. If you find the first book you will know who the author is...*(If the children turn to the gospels they will find that the Gospel of Luke is also addressed to Theophilus.)*

- Lets now look into the book and see what it contains.
[Give out activity sheets- one per student and let the students work in pairs, filling up their sheets. They need their Good News Bibles to look up the references. Go over all the answers, making sure they are correct:]

I. Jesus sends his disciples to preach his Gospel to all mankind. [Mark 16:15] He promises them the Holy Spirit to give them power to be His witnesses. [Acts 1:8]

II. The Spirit comes as promised, with the sound of a strong wind and in the form of tongues of fire. [Acts 2:2,3]

The Church is born as thousands are baptized. [Acts 2:41] All the believers are one in mind and heart and share everything they have. [Acts 4:32] Stephen, a man filled with the Spirit performs great miracles and speaks God's word with wisdom. [Acts 6:8,10.]

III. Then the Church in Jerusalem begins to suffer cruel persecution. Stephen is stoned to death. All the believers are scattered. [Acts 8:1]

But this is not the end of the story. The believers go everywhere preaching the message of Jesus. Philip goes to Samaria and preaches with great power. [Acts 8:4,5] Peter, too travels all over. [Acts 9:32] Barnabas is sent to Antioch. [Acts 11:22]

IV. One of the greatest missionaries in the story is Saul, [or Paul, as he was later called], who begins by trying to destroy the Church. [Acts 8:3]

PRAYER: [15 minutes]

[Encourage the students to quieten themselves...lead them into a prayer of fantasy as follows:]

Imagine you are standing gazing at Jesus as He is going up into heaven...

You see Jesus looking directly at you, calling your name...

He says "You must be my witness...You must give the Good News to others...I send you out today...Do not worry...I know you are weak and sinful...I will give you my Holy Spirit to strengthen you...He is the Helper and He will lead you..."

[Ask the children to reply to Jesus in their hearts...]

Sing: **Come Holy Spirit, we need You, Come Sweet Spirit, we pray,
Come with your strength and your power, Come in your own gentle way.**

YOU WILL NEED: Good News New Testaments; One handout per student
