

Early Believers

Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference
Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-37

Lectionary Sunday/
Church Season
Easter 4

Lesson Focus
God's people share.



Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Arrival Time Kids make paper chains and do an Activity Page.	Activity Pages 	Markers, pencils, strips of colorful paper, stapler
Circle Time Kids greet each other with a class cheer, hear about the lectionary season, and unscramble story words.	Leaflet	Whiteboard, dry-erase markers
Prayer Time Kids say each other's names in a prayer.	None	None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Early Believers Storytelling Leader or kid reads aloud from the Spark Story Bible and kids tell a modern version of the story.	Spark Story Bibles	None
Let's Share! Kids sing the Bible story to a familiar tune.	Leaflets, Lesson Stickers	None
I Can Share Kids draw a picture of something they have shared.	Leaflets	Markers or pencils

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
What Happens When We Share? Kids connect the dots to discover the answer to a question.	Leaflets	Pencils
Missionaries Kids learn about missionaries and learn greetings in other languages.	Leaflets	None
Giving to the Pantry Kids play a rhythm game.	None	None

Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Good-bye Time Kids select what they will do at home this week, say the lesson focus statement, and do a good-bye action rhyme.	Leaflets	Pencils, scissors
Prayer Time Kids pray an action prayer.	Family Pages 	None



Looking for additional Spark content to further engage kids? Visit wearesparkhouse.org/kids/SHOSS to learn more about these options for purchase.

- The Director's CD-Rom contains Activity Pages, Coloring Pages, Family Pages, Large Group Openings, and two additional in-class activities for each lesson.
- A Spark Online annual subscription gives you access to all content contained in the Director's CD-Rom and the Spark Leader Guides, plus administrative tools and other extras.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Time

Set out copies of the Activity Page for this lesson and pencils on a table. Place markers, paper, and stapler in a separate area for kids to create a paper chain.

It's good to see all of you today! We're going to get to work right away. Choose a strip of paper, and write your name on it. Decorate your strip by adding designs and little pictures. When the first kid finishes, staple the ends of the strip together to make a loop. Create a paper chain by looping and stapling the other kids' strips to the class chain. Invite kids to continue making strips. **After you finish your first strip, make more strips, drawing one thing you could share on each strip. Some ideas are: pizza, soccer ball, cookies, clothes, money, games, and a hug.** Continue adding their paper loops to make a class chain. Be sure you and other leaders add a loop to the chain, too. **Wow! Look at the beautiful, long chain that we made. When we share, we can make something great. Our Bible story today is all about sharing, and, when God's people of long ago shared, they made something amazing!** Display the paper chain in your class area.

Invite kids to do the Activity Page. When all kids have arrived, invite them to join you in a circle or small group.

Spark Resources

Activity Pages



Supplies

Pencils

Markers

2-inch × 9-inch (5 cm × 23 cm) strips of colorful paper

Stapler

Circle Time

Let's all stand in a circle and put one hand in the middle, so our hands stack on top of each other. Place your hand in first to demonstrate. After everyone has a hand in the circle, shout together, **God loves everyone! God knows our names! Now, we'll each shout our own name out loud and lift up our hand starting with the person whose hand is on top.** Kids take turns saying their names, in the order their hands are stacked from top to bottom. After all names are said, tell everyone, **Raise both of your hands high and shout, "Praise God!"**

If the kids in your class tried the Faith on the Go! activities from last week's leaflet, be sure to invite kids to share what they did. Ask everyone how they showed love to someone or helped another person during the last week.

Hold up the leaflet and point to the lectionary symbol under the lesson title. We're still in the season of Easter, and the color for this whole season is what? (white) This is the fourth Sunday of Easter. During the church season of Easter, we celebrate that Jesus was raised from the dead. We want to share this happy news with everyone. And that's one thing we're going to learn about today: sharing!

Write the following words on the board, scrambling them slightly: "POOR" and "SHARE." **Let's work together to unscramble these words! What do you think**

Spark Resources

Leaflet

Supplies

Whiteboard

Dry-erase markers

they should say? Let kids respond. Be ready to help them out if they are having trouble unscrambling the words. **What do the words *poor* and *share* have in common?** Let kids respond. **Today's Bible story is Early Believers. It's about the first Christians who shared with one another, especially with the poor. Let's say a prayer, and then we'll hear and read the whole story together.**

Prayer Time

Earlier today we made a paper chain. Now we're going to make a people chain. Let's all join hands to pray. When we come to the part of the prayer about sharing, we'll go around the circle and, one at a time, gently squeeze the kid's hand next to you and say that kid's name. Repeat each line after me.

**Dear God,
Thank you for our church
Filled with loving people
Who share with one another.
Today, help us to share with [Name].**

At this point, begin the hand squeeze by gently squeezing the hand of the kid on your left and naming the kid. Continue around the circle until the squeeze returns to you.

**It's good to know, God,
That when we all work together,
We have lots of love to share.
Amen.**

Spark Resources
None

Supplies
None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

Early Believers Storytelling

The first Christians weren't very different from you and me. It was hard for them to share sometimes. Yet they knew that God wanted them to be generous. Generous means "happily giving to others." Let's read the story Early Believers in our Spark Story Bibles. It's from the book of Acts in the New Testament.

Pass out the Spark Story Bibles and invite everyone to find Early Believers on pages 504-505. Wait until all kids have found the story, assisting those who may need help. Encourage kids to follow along as you read or ask for a volunteer to read aloud.

What are some of the things that the early Christians shared? (*food, clothes, money, homes*) **Let's tell this story as if it were happening today. I'll start, and we'll go around the room with each person adding a few words to it. Ready? Once upon a time, there was a class of first and second graders. They believed in Jesus. These kids were GREAT at sharing with others. Some of the things that they shared were . . .** Invite the kid to your right to continue the story. Encourage

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies
None

kids to name things they can share, such as toys, pets, and snacks. Go around the circle, until everyone has contributed something. Then, finish the story. **Other people saw how kind and thoughtful these kids were, and they wanted to know more. So the FABULOUS first and second graders told them all about Jesus and the early believers! The End.**

Have a brief conversation about the story. Ask the kids these questions:

1. **When the early Christians shared, no one was what?** (*poor, hungry, needy*)
2. **What happened when other people saw how kind the Christians were?** (*The other people wanted to be as happy as the first believers. They wanted to share everything with each other and talk about Jesus.*)
3. **How do you feel when someone shares with you?** Affirm all responses. **How do you feel when you share with someone?** Affirm all responses.

Let's Share!

If kids are not already seated at a table, move to one for this activity. Give each kid a leaflet. **Look at the Bible story picture on the first page of your leaflets. We can see the picture of the early Christians who are sharing, but we can't see what they are sharing. What do you think they are sharing?** Affirm responses. Hand out large stickers to kids. Give kids time to place their stickers. **What are they sharing?** (*food*) **Look at the early Christians' faces. How do they feel?** (*happy*) **When we're happy, it makes us want to sing! And giving to others makes us happy, too. Today we're going to learn a new song, but the tune is one that you might have heard before.** Hum a bit of the tune "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" to make sure that kids are familiar with it. **Let's sing the song together! The words are printed right on this page of the leaflet.**

God's people share with others every day.

God's people share and care for others in every way.

God's people share with others every day.

God's people share, care, love, and pray!

Lead the kids through the song once. **Now, we'll add a bit of rhythm. Follow me, and clap along while we sing.** Lead the song again, this time with clapping. **When you get home today, practice singing this song for your family or friends!**

Let's look at the bottom of this page and read about where we can find this story in the Bible. Today's Bible story, Early Believers, is from the book of Acts. Acts is the 5th book in the New Testament. It comes between the Gospels and the Letters. Luke is the author of the book of Acts, the same person who wrote the Gospel of Luke.

Give kids the three word stickers. **Now look at the bottom of the third page in your leaflet. It has the same words that we just read, but it's missing some important words. Use the word stickers to fill in the blanks. Which word do you think goes where?** (*Luke, author, same*) After attaching the stickers, read the statements together.

Spark Resources

Leaflets
Lesson Stickers

Supplies

None

If you are interested in teaching your kids a Bible Memory Verse from this story, use this one. Teach it to them by inviting them to echo what you say, one phrase at a time.

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart . . . everything they owned was held in common. Acts 4:32

I Can Share

Invite kids to open to the second page of their leaflets. **We've been talking a lot about sharing today. Is it easy or hard to share your things with others?** Let kids respond. Invite a volunteer to read the sentences at the top of the page. Assist with words as needed. **Think of something that you shared with someone else. Was it a favorite toy, a snack, a sweatshirt? In the circle between the two hands, draw something that you shared with another person.**

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Markers or pencils

As kids draw, ask, **Did someone ask you to share? Did you offer to share? Why?** Tell the kids about a time that you shared something that was special to you.

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

What Happens When We Share?

Let's look at the third page of the leaflet. Whom did the first believers talk about? (Jesus) In the middle of this puzzle is a shape that reminds us of Jesus. What do you see in the middle? (cross) Use a pencil to connect the red dots around the cross. Give kids time to do it. **What shape did you make around the cross? (building, house, church)**

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils

This puzzle is to help us discover the answer to a question: What happens when Christians share? To get another step closer, connect the green dots. Give kids time to do it. **What happened to your church shape? (It got bigger.) The church grew because the early believers shared something to eat. What did they share? (food) Yes! And we can share food, too!**

Now connect the blue dots. Give kids time to do it. **Do you see a pattern in our puzzle yet? (The church shape is growing.) The church also grew because the early believers shared something to wear. What did they share? (clothes) Yes! And we can share clothes, too!**

Now connect the yellow dots. Give kids time to do it. **The church also grew because the early Christians shared something so people could buy things they needed. What did they share? (money) Yes! And we can share money, too!**

Now connect the orange dots. Give kids time to do it. **The early Christians also shared safe places for people to stay and worship. They shared their homes. We**

can invite people to our church and homes. Then we are sharing places to stay and worship, too!

What were all the things the early Christians shared? (*Jesus, food, clothes, money, homes*) **What did they become together when they did this?** (*the church*) **What happened to the church shape in the puzzle each time we colored dots with different colors?** (*It kept growing.*)

When Christians share today, what happens? (*The church grows and grows.*) **Let's write the word grows in the blanks to help us remember.** Pause. **Now let's read it all together: What happens when Christians share? The church grows and grows!**

Missionaries

Turn to the back page of your leaflets. Many early believers were great at sharing. When people saw how happy the first believers were, sharing all they had and talking about Jesus, they believed, too. Today people travel around the world to share and talk about Jesus. These people are called missionaries. Missionaries learn new languages so they can tell people about Jesus in their own languages. They bring Jesus' peace and love to others all around the world.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

Let's pretend we are missionaries traveling to China, Germany, India, and Botswana, Africa. We'll learn how to say, "Peace be with you," in some of the languages from these countries.

Begin with the Chinese greeting. Practice it several times, then have kids extend this Chinese greeting to each other. Repeat this for the greetings in German, Hindi, and Setswana.

If you went to another country where people had never heard about Jesus, what would you tell them? What would you share? Invite responses and share yours, too.

Giving to the Pantry

Invite kids to sit in a circle. **The early believers shared their food, clothes, money, and homes. We're believers, too. We believe in Jesus just like they did. One way we can share is by giving food to a food pantry. A food pantry is a place where they keep food that people donate. It's almost like a grocery store, except the food is free. Workers at the food pantry give food to people who don't have enough money to buy food.**

Spark Resources
None

Supplies
None

We're going to play a game called "Giving to the Pantry." First, we'll get the rhythm going. Pat your lap twice, clap your hands together twice, snap on one hand, snap on the other hand. Continue like this until all the kids are in rhythm with you. Keep a slow but steady pace so all kids can easily follow along. If some kids can't snap, have them pretend. **Now, I'm going to add some words. Don't**

stop the rhythm! We'll go around the circle, with each person repeating the same sentence but filling in a different food. Ready? Let's try it.

The food pantry (pat-pat)
needs some (clap-clap)
ce-real. (snap-snap)

The food pantry (pat-pat)
needs some (clap-clap)
su-gar. (snap-snap)

The food pantry (pat-pat)
needs some (clap-clap)
[kid's idea] (snap-snap)

Go around the circle as many times as you can, trying not to break the rhythm.

Wow! We had a lot of ideas! Maybe we can bring some of those things to a food pantry this week.

Send (5 minutes)

Good-bye Time

Thank you for coming to class today! We learned about the early believers in the Christian church and how they shared with others. By sharing our faith with our family and friends, we can help them know God a little bit better. God's people share! Whom do you want to share with this week?

Direct attention to the back of the Faith on the Go! slip on the bottom of the back page of the leaflet, and have the kids fill in the blanks with the name of someone they want to give this slip to, their own name, and today's date. Encourage them to mark one or more of the ideas or add their own. Have kids cut the slip off on the line, ready to give to someone else.

After class, give this slip to someone you want to do the activity with. It's like a coupon for time with you. Next week, we can tell each other what we did to share God's love and remember our Bible story!

It's time for our Go Out! circle. Give kids time to stand with you in a circle. Today we heard: God's people share. Let's say it together: God's people share. Let's go out with God's love! Say this rhyme together while doing the motions:

**Put both hands in,
Put both hands out,
Put hands up high,
And shake them all about.
Spin around once,
Spin again and shout:
Go, God! Go, us! Let's go out!**

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils
Scissors

Prayer Time

Let's make a people chain again. Stand in a circle, and all join hands. This time you're not going to say a word. Whenever you hear the word *share*, send a high five around the circle.

Dear Jesus,

**Please help us to SHARE
Your love and your care.**

**Remind us to SHARE
With people everywhere.**

**Help us find ways to SHARE
Every day!**

Amen.

Be sure to send the leaflets and Family Pages home with kids.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None