

Message Unstoppable: Acts

Lesson 1 The Great Commission

Text Acts 1:1-11

Teaching Points The gospel is for all nations.
The Holy Spirit is promised to enable the preaching of the gospel.
Jesus is alive and will return.

Warm Up

Skit or puppets (see script on page 72).

Trudy begins telling a story, but is constantly interrupted by Toby who wants her to tell his favourite story instead. Trudy explains that she has prepared another story and has promised the boys and girls that she would tell them that particular story. Toby tries to persuade Trudy to break her promise. Trudy uses the opportunity to teach Toby a lesson about making promises.

In today's true story from the Bible we will see what happened when someone made a promise. Come back and tell me:

1. Who made the promise? [*Jesus - Acts 1:7-8*]
2. What was promised? [*The Holy Spirit - Acts 1:8*]
3. Where did the promise-maker go? [*To heaven - Acts 1:10-11*]

Bible Time

In the Acts of the Apostles Peter is seen as the leader of the band of disciples both before and after Pentecost (Acts 1:15-22; 2:14). Peter was also the first apostle to take the gospel to the Gentiles, (Philip was a deacon), after God had demonstrated in a dream that the Gentiles were no longer to be classed as unclean (Acts 10:27-29).

1:1-2 See Luke 1:1-4. It is not known who Theophilus was - possibly an educated Roman.

1:4-5 See Luke 24:46-49.
The Spirit had been promised many years before (Joel 2:28-29, Ezekiel 36:24-28), and now the Scriptures were about to be fulfilled. Jesus commands them to wait for the gift the Father had promised.

1:5 See Luke 3:16.

1:6 The disciples could be referring to an earthly kingdom and freedom from Roman oppression, or to the end of the age (see Matthew 24:3).

1:8 The coming of the Holy Spirit would give the disciples power to be Jesus' witnesses (see Isaiah 43:1-13). Thus, through the disciples, he continues Jesus' work on earth.

1:9 A cloud signified the glory of God in Exodus 40:34 and 1 Kings 8:10-11.

Synopsis

After his resurrection from the dead Jesus spends forty days with his disciples convincing them that he is truly alive. The disciples are concerned about the establishment of God's Kingdom, but Jesus tells them to wait in Jerusalem until he sends the Holy Spirit whom God has promised will come. The Holy Spirit will empower them to be witnesses for Jesus, starting in Jerusalem, but also expanding outwards to the province of Judea, neighbouring countries like Samaria and also to the farthest places on earth.

Visual aids

Pictures or flannelgraph of the characters you wish to use from the story including a hill as a background, two angels and a large cloud. Visual aids are also available on pages 85-93.

Map of the area - see page 15.

Fun Sheets

5-7s Photocopy pages 16 and 17 back to back for each child.

8-11s Photocopy pages 18 and 19 back to back for each child.

Consolidation

Game 1: Divide the children into their various small group teams. Let them sit with the group leaders in circles scattered around the play area. You will

require a wrapped parcel per group. Each parcel consists of multiple layers of wrapping paper as in the traditional “pass the parcel” game - newspaper as a wrapping is adequate. Each layer of wrapping paper contains either a points card or a “tongue of fire” cut from orange paper. The points cards have random values e.g. 10, 20, 5 and some even have negative values e.g. -10, -50 etc. Tongues of fire have a very high value relative to the other points cards e.g. 200 points. These points cards and tongues of fire are placed randomly in each layer of the parcels.

When the game commences all the parcels are in a central place. At the signal, leader calling out “power”, each team sends a representative to collect a parcel from the pile. Upon return, they unwrap a *single* layer of the parcel to reveal their points for that round. The parcels are then returned to the central point ready for the next round.

A large scorecard with concentric circles labelled from the middle, ‘Jerusalem’, ‘Judea’, ‘Samaria’ and ‘ends of the earth’ is used to show the various teams’ progress. Markers representing each team start in the middle and progress outwards to the next concentric circle in turn with every tongue of fire received.

Points per team are tallied separately, but do not allow the team to advance - only receipt of a tongue of fire advances the team. The winning team is the one who makes it to the ‘ends of the earth’ zone and has the highest points.

Game 2: Divide the playing area into four zones labelled, ‘Jerusalem’, ‘Judea’, ‘Samaria’ and ‘ends of the earth’. Divide the children into equal teams of mixed ages with no more than eight in each team. Each team must have one member in ‘Jerusalem’, four/five members in Judea and one/two members in Samaria. Each Jerusalem team member receives an envelope with ‘The Good News’ written on it and containing the memory verse written out, one word per piece of paper, “You / will / be / my / witnesses / in / Jerusalem, / and / in / all / Judea / and / Samaria, / and / to / the / ends / of / the / earth / Acts 1:8.” Make sure the memory verse papers are shuffled so that they are in random order. If possible each team’s memory verse should be on a different colour paper.

At the signal the team member in Jerusalem runs to his team in Judea where the envelope is opened. The pieces of paper are then relayed one by one to the rest of the team in Samaria. This is done by one team member at a time taking only one piece of paper at a time across to Samaria, leaving it behind with the team there and returning to Judea. Team members in Judea take turns to get the pieces of paper across and only once all the pieces have arrived safely in Samaria may all the team members move across from Judea to Samaria.

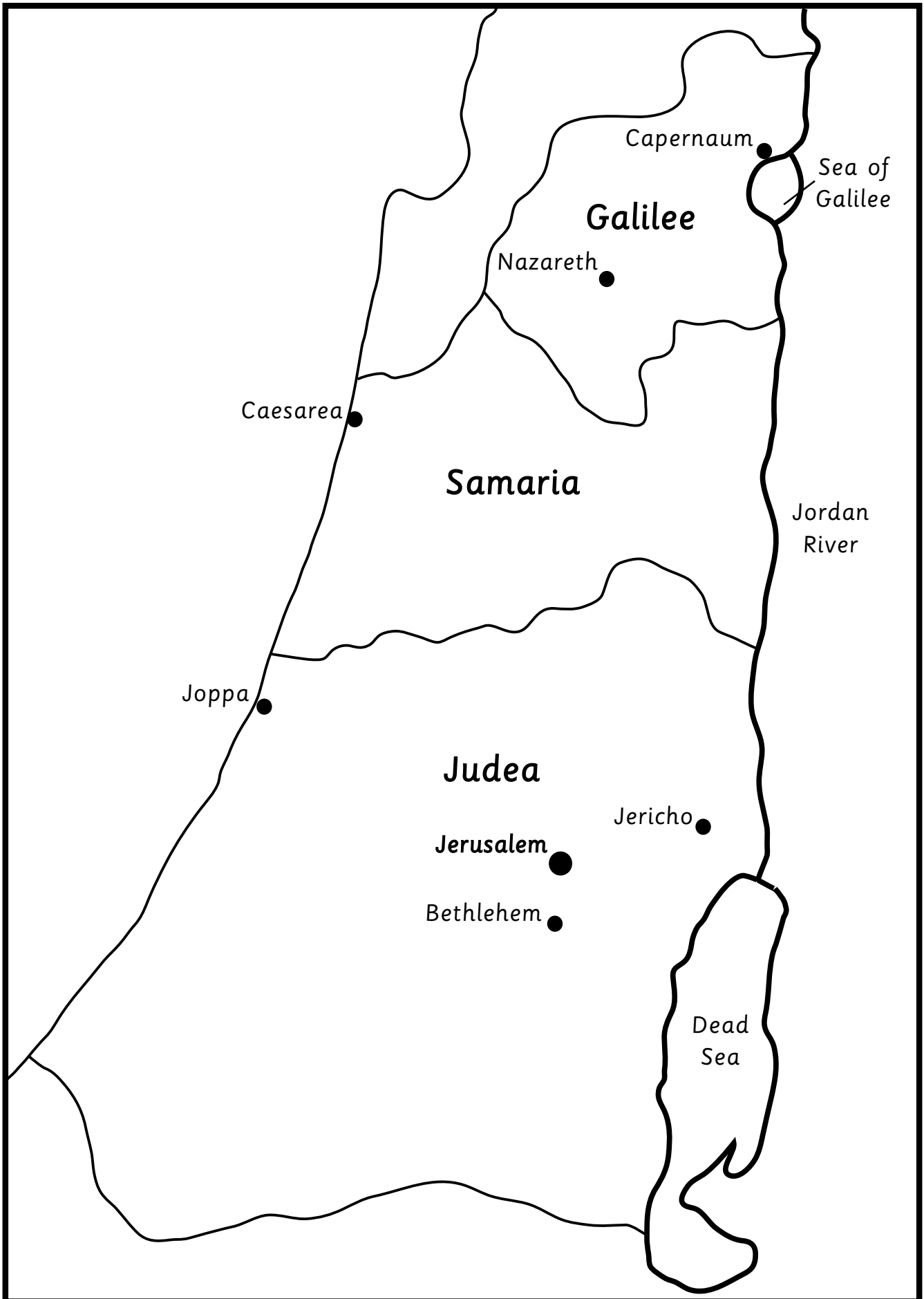
Once everyone is in Samaria the entire process is repeated to get the pieces of paper to the ‘ends of the earth’ where the verse is finally unscrambled and laid out in order. The first team to complete the task wins.

Wind Up

Remind the children of the warm up and go over the answers to the questions. Point out that just as in Game 1 when the team could only move out from Jerusalem once they had received the tongue of fire, so too the disciples could only be Jesus’ witnesses once they had received the Holy Spirit which Jesus promised he would send. Speak about the great anticipation felt as they waited for the gift to come each time and the excitement when they discovered it was a tongue of fire.

Link the way in which the message was moved from area to area in Game 2 to the way in which the good news about Jesus would spread as the disciples went further and further from Jerusalem telling people about Jesus and all that he had done by dying on the cross and rising again. Revise the memory verse.

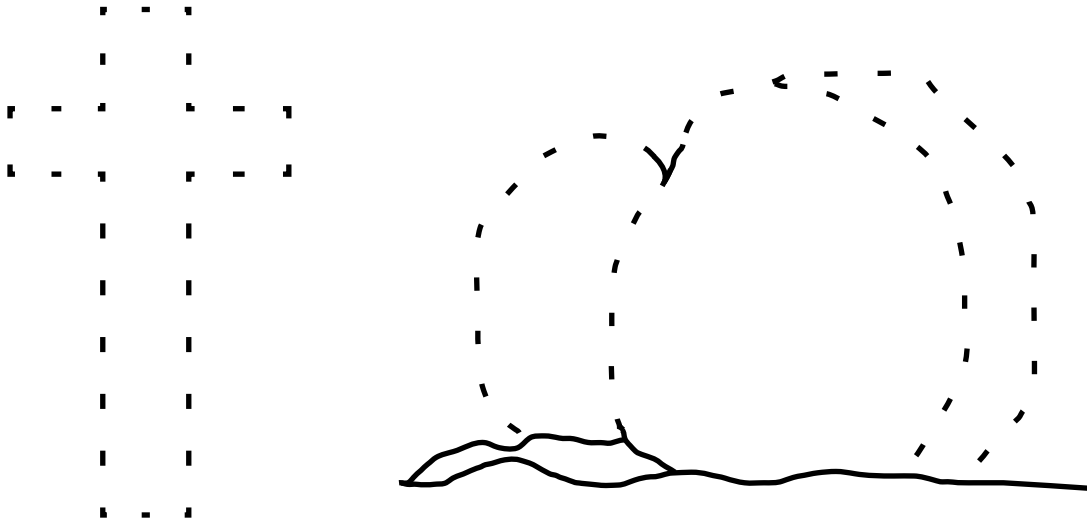
Palestine during the time of the early church



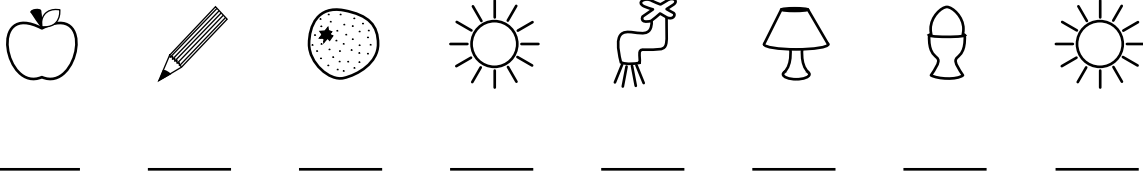
The Great Commission

Acts 1:1-11

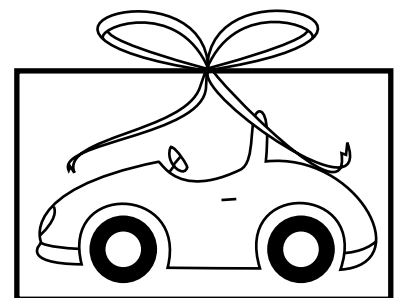
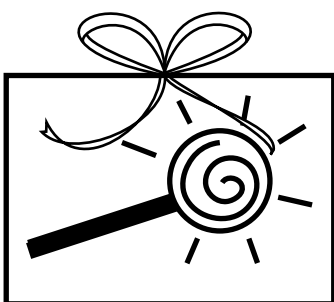
Connect the dotted shapes to see what happened to Jesus.



Jesus' disciples were sent to tell other people about him. Use the first letter of every picture to see what the disciples were now called.



What gift did Jesus promise to give to the apostles? Cross out the wrong gifts.



What will the apostles be able to do when they get the Holy Spirit?
Write down every second letter to find the answer.

r w e i a t d n y e a s n s



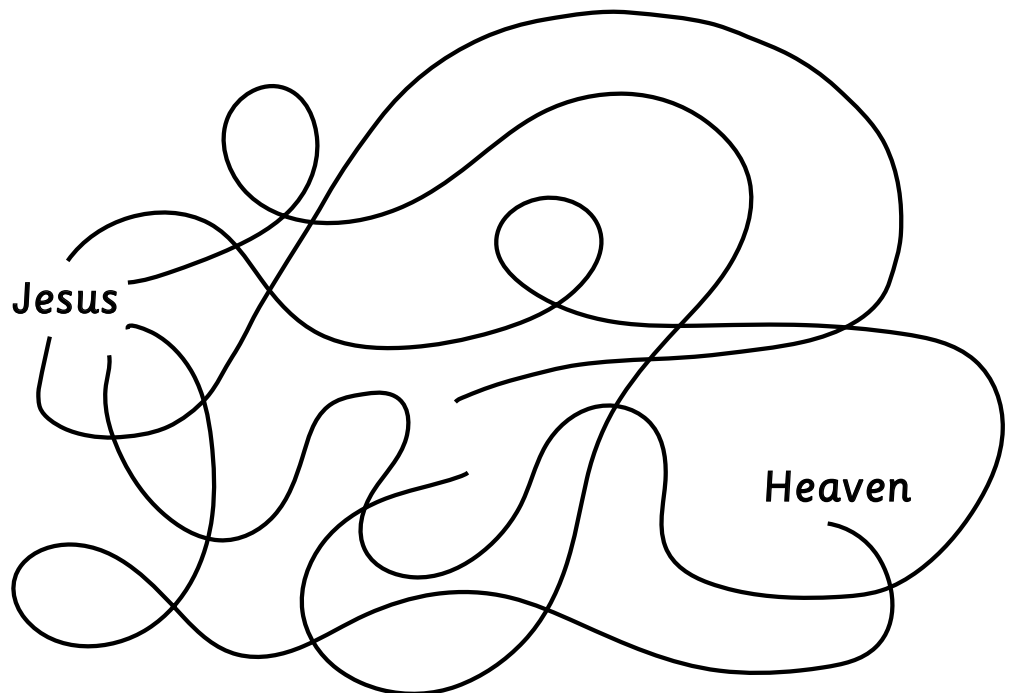
Jesus was taken up to heaven. He was hidden by a cloud.

Can you find the word 'Jesus' in the clouds?

Draw over the letters that spell his name.

The angels said that Jesus will return to earth again.

Which path connects the word 'Jesus' to the word 'Heaven'?



Cross out all the wrong words in the memory verse: Acts 1:8

You will be my **chocolates** / **witnesses** / **cars** in Jerusalem, and in all **England** / **America** / **Judea** and Samaria, and to the **beginning** / **middle** / **ends** of the **earth** / **raisins** / **milk**.