

Early Church

Lesson 6



Scripture: Acts–Revelation










Bible Memory: John 3:16, 17

Focus: ♥ God offers salvation to all people.

Heart to Heart Teacher Devotion

God chose to work through the early church, and He still chooses to work through the church today—including your ministry with preteens. What an amazing opportunity you have to share with the preteens in your class and with others the salvation that God offers. Take time today to thank God for your salvation and for the joy and purpose it brings to your life.

Lesson 6 at a Glance

<p>1 FOCUS IN Use one or more of these activities to help students <i>learn about the Early Church era.</i></p>	<p> Quick Step Who Am I?</p> <p> Option Toss It!</p>	<p>HeartShaper Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resources</i> sheets 1–4, <i>Resources</i> CD Who Am I? printable file • <i>Resources</i> sheets 1–4 	<p>Other Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whiteboard, dry-erase marker • 25 balloons, permanent marker, roll paper
<p>2 EXPLORE HIS WORD Use these activities to help students <i>explain how God used the early church to offer His salvation to everyone.</i></p>	<p> Bible Exploration Acts–Revelation</p> <p> Bible Memory John 3:16, 17</p> <p> Optional Bible Skill Builder</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Activities</i> for lesson 6, <i>Resources</i> sheets 1–4 • <i>Resources</i> sheet 6 • <i>Resources</i> CD Optional Bible Skills 6 printable file 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bibles, pencils • Bibles • various Bible translations and paraphrases, paper, pencils
<p>3 MAKE IT REAL Use one of these activities to help students <i>explore how God uses the church today to offer His salvation to everyone.</i></p>	<p> Quick Step How Might God Use You?</p> <p> Option The Church Today</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Activities</i> for lesson 6 • <i>Resources</i> CD The Church Today printable file 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none • scissors
<p>4 LIVE IT OUT Use one of these activities to help students <i>choose to accept God's gift of salvation.</i></p>	<p> Quick Step God's Gift of Salvation</p> <p> Option A Gift from God</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Activities</i> for lesson 6 • <i>Resources</i> CD A Gift from God printable file 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small items (see activity), Bibles • scissors, gift bags, small treats, Bibles

Focus In (10-15 minutes)

- 1** Use one or more of these activities to help students **learn about the Early Church era.**

Welcome

- Welcome each student warmly by name.
- Early arrivers will enjoy doing one or more of the additional activities described on the unit page.

Quick Step Who Am I?

SAY: **From the beginning, God had a plan.** Draw students' attention to the last two Bible time lines. **These time lines represent the era of the Early Church. This era is when God began offering salvation to all people.** Have volunteers read the text under each icon. Tell preteens that these are major events that happened and important people who lived during this time period.

Divide the class into two teams. Tell preteens that they're going to play a game of Who Am I? You will read a statement about someone who lived during the Early Church era. They decide who it is and give an answer. If correct, they get 20 points. Keep score on the board. If not correct, the other team gets another hint and can give an answer. If correct, they get 15 points. If not correct, the first team gets another hint and can give an answer. If correct, they get 10 points. When done playing, SAY: **All these people lived in the Early Church era when God began offering salvation to all people.**

Option Toss It!

Before class, label each inflated, tied balloon with the same text that's under each of the icons on the Early Church time lines. Using large letters, title each paper "Teachings," "Miracles," "Events," or "Conversions."

SAY: **From the beginning, God had a plan.** Draw students' attention to the last two Bible time lines. **These time lines represent the era of the Early Church, when God began offering salvation to all people.** Have volunteers read the text under each icon. Tell preteens that these are major events that happened and important people who lived during this time period.

Place the prepared papers on the floor, and have preteens stand several feet from them. Place the balloons on the floor. SAY: **These balloons have the same text on them as the text that's under the icons on the Bible time lines. On the count of 3, grab a balloon and read what's written on it. It either describes a teaching, a miracle, an event, or a conversion. When you've decided what's described on your balloon, toss the balloon onto that paper. When I count to 3 again, grab another balloon and do the same. We'll keep going until all the balloons are on the right papers. 1, 2, 3!** After all the balloons have been tossed, if some are not on the right paper, toss them out and have preteens try again. **These teachings, miracles, events, and conversions happened during the Early Church era when God began offering salvation to all people.**

Focus

- ♥ God offers salvation to all people.

Materials

Resources sheets 1-4, *Resources* CD Who Am I? printable file, whiteboard, dry-erase marker



Materials

25 balloons, permanent marker, 4 lengths of roll paper, *Resources* sheets 1-4



For kids who struggle with impulse control, model how to play, and give some guidelines, such as: take one balloon at a time, keep hands to self, etc.

Focus

♥ God offers salvation to all people.

Explore His Word (25 minutes)

2 Use these activities to help students **explain how God used the early church to offer His salvation to everyone.**

Bible Background for the Teacher

In Jerusalem on Pentecost (AD 30), the apostles received the promised Holy Spirit. Peter preached, and 3,000 believers were baptized. The church was established, and Peter and the other apostles continued to testify of Jesus, performing many miracles. Stephen, one of seven men chosen to serve widows, was stoned to death; and the growing church was scattered by persecution. Philip, another of the seven, made converts in Samaria and baptized an Ethiopian official (Acts 8).

From his vision and meeting with Cornelius, Peter learned that non-Jewish people, Gentiles, were also to be saved (chap. 10). The last mention of Peter is at the Jerusalem Council, about AD 50. Paul is first mentioned (as Saul) at Stephen's death. Paul's conversion occurred that same year (about AD 35). Three years later, Paul returned to Damascus, went to Jerusalem for a short time, then moved on to Tarsus for about five years. Barnabas brought Paul to Antioch for a year, and they delivered famine relief from Antioch to Jerusalem (11:25-30).

Paul and Barnabas were sent out on a missionary tour by the church at Antioch. They appointed elders in the churches and returned to Antioch for about a year. The church continued to grow as Paul went on second and third missionary trips. Paul preached and performed miracles during these trips and also spent time writing and encouraging the new believers in Jesus. Much of the last part of Paul's life was spent before courts and under house arrest. It appears that Paul was released from a Roman prison in about AD 62, but then returned to prison and was executed in about AD 67. To combat persecution and false doctrine at the close of the first century, the aging apostle John wrote 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John. Exiled to the island of Patmos in about AD 96, John testified to the revelation of hope and reaffirmed the glorious second coming of Christ.

Materials

Activities for lesson 6,
Bibles, pencils,
Resources sheets 1-4



Teaching Tip

Help preteens who don't like to act find ways to be involved, such as finding or making props or making sound effects.

Bible Exploration Acts-Revelation

SAY: The church's job is to tell the world that ♥ God offers salvation to all people through Jesus. The book of Acts tells how the early church spread the good news of salvation through Jesus. Other books in the New Testament are letters written to believers by Paul and other leaders. These books were written to encourage and give instructions about living for God and offering His salvation to others.

Distribute the leaflets and ask preteens to turn to the activity Salvation Is Offered. Divide the class into groups of two or three preteens. Assign each pair or group one or more of the statements to read, along with the Scriptures listed. They should work together to decide whether the statement is true or false. If it's false, students should be ready to say how they would change it to make it true.

Call preteens' attention to the last two Bible time lines. **SAY: Jesus' church began on the Day of Pentecost. The Early Church era gives us the pattern for telling the good news about Jesus. God worked through the people and events of the Early Church era to tell God's message of salvation through Jesus.** Ask the students with statements 1-9 to read them and say whether they're true or false. If a statement is false, they should say how they would change it to make it true. (Answers: 1=T; 2=F, taught about Jesus; 3=F, Peter; 4=T; 5=T; 6=F, Paul and Silas, Paul; 7=F,

Eutyclus, Paul; 8=T; 9=T.) Draw preteens' attention to the section How God Used the Early Church to Offer His Salvation to Everyone. Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group one of the statements and Scripture passages to read. After reading the Scriptures, each group is to decide how to act out what they've read. When groups are done, have them act out their situations. After each group is done, ask these questions:

ASK: **Is this like anything that we Christians do today to offer God's salvation to others? What?**

Is this something our church family already does? How?

Is this something that you and/or your family already do?

When all the skits are done, SAY: **♥ God offers salvation to all people. Paul found out that salvation wasn't just for the Jewish people, but for the Gentiles as well. It's still true today. No matter what ethnic background people are or where people live, ♥ God offers salvation to all people. What an awesome opportunity we have as Christians to spread God's message of salvation.** Draw students' attention to the last section of the last Bible time line. **You'll notice that the time line describes events that have not yet taken place. One day Jesus will return. After that comes either judgment or redemption. Those who have chosen not to follow Jesus will be judged. Those who have chosen to follow Jesus will be redeemed, and we'll live in Heaven where we will give God eternal praise.**

Bible Memory John 3:16, 17

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

Continue to display the John 3:16, 17 poster on a wall or bulletin board. Ask students to turn in their Bibles to John 3:16, 17, and have a volunteer read the verses aloud. Draw students' attention to sheet 6. SAY: **Think of someone you love. Say these verses to yourself, substituting that person's name for "the world" (occurs three times) and "whoever."** Pause as preteens do this. **Do the same thing again, but substitute the name of someone you only know a little bit.** Pause as preteens do this. **Do the same thing again, but substitute the name of someone you don't get along with very well.** Pause as preteens do this.

ASK: **Did God love wealthy people enough to send Jesus?** Accept responses.

Did God love homeless people enough to send Jesus? people who are from this country? people who are from another country? people who are like you? people who are not like you at all?

SAY: **♥ God offers salvation to all people. No matter who you are, God offers you salvation.** Ask students to say the Bible Memory together.

Materials

Resources sheet 6,
Bibles



Note

The Bible Memory in the *King James Version* is included on the *Resources* CD.

Teaching Tip

You might want to model how to do this before preteens try it.

Optional Bible Skill Builder

Print and use the
Resources CD Optional Bible
Skills 6 printable file



Focus

♥ God offers salvation to all people.

Make It Real (10–15 minutes)

3 Use one of these activities to help students **explore how God uses the church today to offer His salvation to everyone.**

Materials

Activities for lesson 6



Possible Answers

1st situation: talk naturally about Jesus, make sure that what you say and do reflects Jesus, invite your friend and his family to a church service or event, do good things for your friend and his family

2nd situation: give some of your own money to help, your family or class could take on a project to help them, organize a project to help them that all the kids' classes or the entire church family could do

Materials

Resources CD The Church
Today printable file,
scissors



Tech Tip

Record the preteens acting; then let them watch themselves in action!

Quick Step How Might God Use You?

Have preteens stand and form a circle. Tell them to put their hands in the center. Then they should grab other hands at random. SAY: **Now the fun begins! Work together to get yourselves untangled without dropping the hands of those you're holding onto.** Let preteens have fun working on this for a few minutes. Then ask them to sit down.

ASK: **In what ways did you work together to get untangled?** (suggested ways to get untangled, tried different ways of getting untangled)

SAY: **Much like how you worked together, God uses the church today to work together to offer His salvation to everyone. Let's see if we can figure out a few ways that God does this.** Have students look in their leaflets at the activity How Might God Use You? Read the instructions, and then have a volunteer read the first situation aloud. Tell preteens to think about how to answer the question. Suggest that they might get some ideas from the activity How God Used the Early Church to Offer His Salvation to Everyone. After a few minutes, have volunteers share what they came up with. Do the same with the second situation. Then have preteens look again in their leaflets at the activity How God Used the Early Church to Offer His Salvation to Everyone. **We could cross out "the Early Church" and put our congregation's name there. These are all things we can and should be doing today. ♥ God offers salvation to all people, but He uses us to spread the good news.**

Option The Church Today



Before class, cut apart the cards on the printable file.

SAY: **Similar to how God used the early church, God uses the church today to work together to offer His salvation to everyone. Let's see if we can figure out a few ways that God does this.** Divide the class into two groups. Give each group a card. Tell preteens that they are to work in their groups to act out the situation on their cards. Encourage everyone in the groups to participate: either planning what to do, finding props, being part of a group that doesn't speak, or having speaking parts. When groups are ready, have Group 1 present its skit.

ASK: **How did God use a few friends to offer His salvation to others?**
(The friends started a Bible study and invited friends who didn't know Jesus.)

Then have the other group present its skits. Ask the same type of question after each skit. Then have the groups act out situations 3 and 4. SAY: **Teaching, preaching, and baptizing. Going and telling about Jesus. Sending out those who will go and tell about Jesus. Doing good things and helping those in need. These are all things we can and should be doing today. ♥ God offers salvation to all people, but He uses us to spread the good news.**

Live It Out (10 minutes)

- 4** Use one of these activities to help students **choose to accept God's gift of salvation.**

Focus

♥ God offers salvation to all people.

Quick Step God's Gift of Salvation

SAY: **I hope you'll accept my gift.** Give each preteen something with not much monetary value that you have readily available, such as paper clips, pencils, markers, and so forth. **That wasn't much of a gift. Here, I hope you'll accept my gift.** Give something small again, such as pennies. **That wasn't much of a gift either. What if I gave each of you \$50,000? Would you accept it?** Accept responses. **Well, I know of a gift much more valuable than \$50,000!** Ask preteens to turn in their Bibles to Ephesians 2:8, 9. Have a volunteer read the verses aloud. **Salvation is a gift from God. And ♥ God offers salvation to all people—including you!**

ASK: **Salvation and eternal life in Heaven—that's the greatest gift ever!**

Have you accepted God's gift? Encourage kids not to answer out loud but to think about it. If they have not yet done this, encourage them to talk to their parents or other trusted adults about it, including yourself.

Have preteens turn in their leaflets to the activity God's Gift of Salvation. Read the instructions. Have volunteers read aloud how the Scriptures say we accept God's gift of salvation. Encourage any questions about that. Challenge preteens to look up and read the Scriptures during the week. Close with a time of prayer. Invite preteens to pray for themselves and each other as they consider how they'll respond to God's gift of salvation.

Option A Gift from God

Before class, cut apart the strips on the printable file. Place a set in each gift bag. Also include a treat, such as candy or something you know your students would like.

ASK: **Would you accept a gift from me? Why or why not?** Accept responses, then give each preteen a gift bag. As they look in their bags and eat their treats, ask:

Would you all accept a gift from God? Why or why not?

Ask preteens to turn in their Bibles to Ephesians 2:8, 9. Have a volunteer read the verses aloud. **Salvation is a gift from God. And ♥ God offers salvation to all people—including you! Salvation and eternal life in Heaven—that's the greatest gift ever!**

ASK: **Have you accepted God's gift?** Encourage kids to think about it. If they have not yet done this, encourage them to talk to their parents or other trusted adults about it, including yourself.

Ask preteens to pull out the strips of paper from their bags, and have volunteers read aloud how the Scriptures say we accept God's gift of salvation. Then have preteens put the papers back into their bags. Challenge them to look up the Scriptures during the week. Close with a time of prayer.

Materials

small items (paper clips, pencils, markers, pennies, etc.), Bibles, *Activities* for lesson 6




Teaching Tip

See the *Resources* CD Leading Young Hearts to the Lord printable file for help in discussing with preteens accepting God's gift of salvation.

Materials

copies of *Resources* CD A Gift from God printable file (1 per student), scissors, gift bags (or paper lunch bags, 1 per student), small treats, Bibles



 Be aware that sometimes talk of salvation can cause anxiety for preteens with special needs.

Live Wire

Distribute *Live Wire* to students before they leave. They will enjoy the articles, puzzles, and other features included in this fun student magazine.

Be sure parents know about the *Faith & Family* pages available online to print and use with their children at home. Go to www.heartshaper.com.

