

Early Believers Share

Grades
3-4

SHARING • EASTER 2 • YEAR B

ACTS 4:32-35



What is happening in this story?

The book of Acts tells the story of what happened after Easter: Jesus ascended to heaven, the Holy Spirit came to the disciples, and the apostles were sent out all over the world healing and preaching. In Acts 4, we learn how the larger group of believers was enjoying life together. They shared everything, and no one claimed private ownership of anything. Nobody was in need. All were cared for.

Why does this story matter for kids?

Kids are learning how to share, so they know it is important and they know it is sometimes hard to do. When first read, this story seems to present a pretty radical community. However, sharing public property, books, toys, and car rides are all things kids can relate to. Some kids know what it is to live in want, while some kids live not knowing what is enough. These few verses address both perspectives. We share by God's grace. In God's vision for our world, everyone has enough and no one is in need.

What is the lectionary connection?

These few verses in Acts are read in conjunction with the Gospel of John's account of the Holy Spirit's arrival, when the risen Jesus comes to the disciples in a locked room. He breathes the Spirit upon them and the implication is that they are sent out, fortified in spirit. In Acts, we see the followers of Jesus already fortified—they're doing the work! The Holy Spirit shapes and fortifies relationships for the explicit purpose of getting the story out into the world.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Third and fourth graders are beginning to have a broader understanding of sharing than simply dividing up cookies on a plate. Encourage them to see the bigger picture of sharing, going beyond dividing *things* to sharing their gifts.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Markers
- Pencils

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Bowl of pennies (50)
- Bowl of water
- Food coloring (yellow)
- Bleach
- Eyedropper
- Sticky notes (2 x 2 in.)

WHIRL SUPPLIES • WHIRL NRSV BIBLES • DVD • WALL CHART • LEAFLETS

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Place a bowl of 50 pennies on a table. Divide them equally for the first arrivals. As each kid comes, kids restart the equal distribution process and divide what they have equally.

Invite kids to look at the Wall Chart.

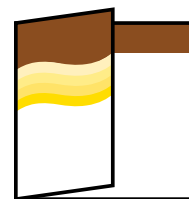
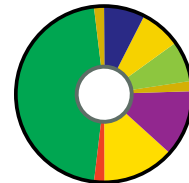
Point out today's date, church season, color, and icon. Give kids sticky notes. Ask them to draw a butterfly, then stack the notes on top of one another on the Wall Chart.

Why is a butterfly an Easter symbol?

Gather around a bowl of water. **At Easter God made all things new. We begin to see surprising ways our lives change.** Add three to four drops of yellow food coloring. Kids dip a finger into the water and touch their foreheads.

Pass out leaflets and pencils.

These three interlocking circles represent the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Ask kids if they've seen this symbol in your church. **Let's use these circles to share our Easter experiences, celebrating the risen Christ.** Invite kids to write or draw where they were, who they were with, and what they saw on Easter Sunday.



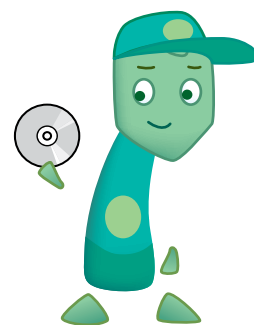
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

Are there times when you just really want to do things your own way? What's it like when you have to think about what other people need first?

View Episode 8, "The Carpool," on the Whirl Year B Spring Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **What is it that Gabe really wants?**
- **What would you have wished for Gabe?**
- **Gabe remembers what riding in the car used to be like. He remembers it as perfectly calm, when everything was right. Do you really think it was that way, or did Gabe have things that annoyed him back then too?**
- **At the end, what does Burt thank Gabe for?**
- **Is it better to share with others and feel annoyed inside, or not share with others and feel okay about it? Why?**



Pass out Whirl NRSV Bibles and help kids find Acts 4:32-35.

Do the Easter 2 Preview Activity together on page 1279 and compare responses.

It's difficult to think what it was like for Jesus' followers after his death and resurrection. The people were trying to make sense of it all and decide how they could continue to live and worship together. Above all, they wondered what would happen next—much of the early church believed that the world would end soon.



Read Acts 4:32-35 in this creative way together: Ask for volunteers to read aloud verse by verse. Pause between each verse, inviting kids to share words or phrases that refer to sharing. (For example, "one heart and soul" in verse 32 or "distributed" in verse 35.)

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- What does it mean that the early believers were of "one heart and soul"?
- When everyone shared all they had, do you think some people were jealous?
- *Testimony* is a big word. It means they told the story of how God shared love in their lives. What are some ways we share testimony about God's sharing love in our lives?
- Today, we have private possessions and we own our own stuff. Are there still ways we can share with others? How?
- What can we share with others that isn't "stuff"?

BIBLE BIT

Scholars of early church history know that, before the time of the institutional church, believers gathered in people's houses, sometimes secretly.

WATCH IT AGAIN

When Gabe starts to complain, pause the video and ask kids to suggest another way he could see the situation.

OUR CHURCH

Visit a local food shelf or housing authority to see what is required to share resources people cannot live without.

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out markers.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. Who has helped to plant a garden? What do we get from gardens?
2. Today we are planting a different type of garden. We will plant *seeds of sharing* in an Easter garden. Then we'll think about the people and places where our gifts and talents can be shared.
3. Take a few minutes to help kids think of the "seeds" (gifts or talents) they have to share with others. **Inside the seeds, write or draw gifts or talents you have to share. Help each other name six.**
4. Talk about people or places with whom kids can share their gifts and talents. **In the writing space beside each seed, write names or places where the "fruit" of that seed can be enjoyed.**
5. Walk around the room and share your garden plots with each other.
6. Why do you think Jesus talked about growing things to describe new life?
7. How is practicing patience a form of sharing? Can you think of similar gifts and talents to share?

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

What would the world be like if no one would share? Why do you think God wants us to share with others? Why is it so difficult to share sometimes? Take time to hear kids' responses.

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out Whirl NRSV Bibles and pencils.

Look at important places in the early Christian church on page 1498 in the Whirl Bible. Inside the blue band, write one of the places you would like to travel someday. Tell the person beside you why you chose that place.

Send kids out.

Gather around the water bowl. **At Easter, God made all things new. See the surprising ways our lives are changed.** Add 4 to 5 drops of bleach (or replace with a bowl of clear water).

Pray together: **God, you shared your Son, Jesus, with us. Because we live in him, by our baptism, Jesus shares his resurrection life with us too. Thanks, God!**

Thank kids for sharing their time in learning this lesson. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.