

Lesson 10

# Boldness of the Early Church

Acts 4:1 31

Memory Verse  
We ought to obey God  
rather than men

Acts 5:29

Teacher's Objective  
At the end of the session,  
the students should  
be able to:

1. Define Boldness.
2. Locate I Corinthians 3:16 and explain what it means
3. Describe the importance of the miracle of Jesus being with and in the church
4. Express in their own words how the early church grew, despite oppositions

Materials Needed

See Teaching Activities  
for specific activities

## Teacher's Bible Study

Many passages from both the Old Testament and the New speak of God being with His people. Yet, He is also transcendent that is, His existence transcends the natural world. He is neither dependent upon nor affected by the laws that govern the universe, but is above and beyond their scope.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God says: For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place [that is, He is transcendent; His dwelling, His existence, is above and beyond the physical realm], with him also that is of contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones (Isaiah 57:15).

Notice that God, who is transcendent, is also with those of a contrite and humble spirit. Though God dwells in the transcendent realm (heaven) and is not part of the physical universe, He is capable of being with His people, who live within the natural world and are a part of it. He is with them in Spirit. Thus, the Holy Spirit is the spiritual presence and power of God at work in the natural world.

This truth is echoed throughout the New Testament. Paul asked the Corinthians, Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (I Corinthians 3:16). This simply means that God the Father dwells in His spiritual temple, the church. He is with His people in Spirit.

Time and again the New Testament speaks of God and Christ being with or in the church. Christ promised His disciples that He would be with them always. Read Matthew 28:20. He promised, Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20). Paul said that Christ in you is the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). John said, If we love one another, God dwelleth in us... Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit (I John 4:12,13).

Today's story is about the growth of God's Word in the face of opposition. A message to all, that despite what man does, God's Word, will move ahead. It is about those who believed, acknowledged God's sovereign power and asked for God's power to be manifested in great boldness for the apostolic church.

Provide copies of Activity Page for each age group, enough for all your students; white paper divided in fourths for all students; crayons, felt-tip pens, pencils; copies of the Shield of Boldness for each student; construction paper and glue.

## Presenting the Bible Story

### Acts 4:1–4

Are you confident, strong and secure in the truth that you have? When asked about what you believe in, do you answer with boldness? In the previous lessons we learned the first church started on what day? What was the name of the apostle that did the preaching? When Peter finished, how many were baptized? What was the gift they received after being baptized and having the laying on of hands?

### Acts 4:5–6

Our story today picks up where Peter and John, while in Jerusalem, healed a lame man at the gate called Beautiful. When this miracle happened, there was a lot of excitement. The man had been lame for forty years. Peter then preached to the people who were gathered.

### Acts 4:7–10

The Sadducees are a group of people that consisted of both priests and laymen. These men were especially wealthy, aristocratic landlords. They were considered refined and cultured. They did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They were not pleased with Peter and John's preaching, as what they preached disturbed the Sadducees' delicate peace. Peter and John were put in jail because it was too late in the day for a trial. Even though Peter and John were incarcerated, those who heard the Word and believed grew to five thousand.

### Acts 4:11–12

Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, gives an excellent description of the powerful men that have assembled to judge Peter and John. The Sanhedrin was the legal body of the Jews. They could be called the Supreme Court. This group consisted of seventy-one members. Most of these members were Sadducees, including the high priest. Consequently, the Sanhedrin was an aristocratic group—the upper class. Remember, they did not like Jesus and what He preached. Now they are faced with Peter and John, two very prominent men who preach about Jesus.

### Acts 4:13–14

Peter and John are asked by whose authority they did this healing. Emphasize with your students the fact that Peter was "filled with the Holy Spirit." Now for the fourth time, in the book of Acts, Peter has the opportunity to preach with boldness. Even though Jesus Christ had been successfully crucified, God raised Him from the dead. The miracle is not so much the healing of the lame man, but the miracle of Jesus Christ being "with" or "in" the church. Read what John said in I John 4:12, 13.

### Acts 4:15–17

Read Psalm 118:22. Peter has quoted this scripture. Christ was the one rejected. He represents the rejected stone. As the resurrected Lord, He is the capstone. Read John 14:6. Jesus is the only way to salvation.

The Sanhedrin Council was impressed with the boldness with which Peter and John spoke. Here we have two very ordinary men. They are not scholars nor are they from the upper class. Yet, they spoke the truth, which the council could not refute, and they did it with boldness. They had this ability due to what Jesus had promised, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, [even] the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." (John 15:16,17).

The miracle could not be denied. What could the Sanhedrin Council do? This was the first of four times, in the book of Acts, we read about followers of Jesus brought before the Sanhedrin. The other three times involved Peter and the apostles (Acts 5:27), Stephe (Acts 6:12), and Paul (Acts 22:30).

## Presenting the Bible Story

**Acts 4:18–22**

The Sanhedrin decided to threaten them instead. Here Peter and John told them that they must obey God. Reinforce memory verse here. They continued to threaten them about preaching Jesus and then let them go. They could find no way of punishing them.

**Acts 4:23–30**

Peter, John, and the other believers did not pray this prayer for deliverance or protection from danger; they prayed for the courage to face the challenge before them.

**Acts 4:31**

The Lord answered their bold prayer by shaking the place they met in and they were “filled with the Holy Spirit.”

## Teaching Activities

**Art and Activities**

### Young Children

Divide a sheet of white paper into fourths. Have your students draw four ways that they worship God. You will need crayons and felt-tip pens for this project.

Color the picture of Peter preaching to the people who gathered after the lame man was healed.

### Older Children

Make a copy of the “Shield of Boldness” for each student. Using a different color construction paper for each size, glue the smaller shield on top of the larger shield. Have your students write the memory verse inside the shield. Or you may wish to have them write the definition of “boldness”.

Work the activity pages. Discuss the topic as your students do their work.

**Explore with  
your students the  
following questions**

## Explore the Subject

1. Since God transcends this natural world, how can He be *with* or *in* His people and His church?

2. Do you see the attitude of the Sanhedrin Council in our society today? Explain. Why is it people do not want to change their ways?

**Always close  
your class  
with prayer**

## Respond and Reinforce

1. A prayer for boldness of preaching was offered before God. Write a brief paragraph on the event. Have you gone boldly before God in prayer and requested something? Did He answer you?

2. Discuss the memory verse.

## Activity Page

### Peter Preaches

Acts 4:1–31

While in Jerusalem, Peter and John came upon a lame man. This man had been lame all his life. With the help of the Holy Spirit, Peter and John healed the lame man. This miracle brought about much excitement. Peter began to preach to the people gathered about Jesus Christ. Color the picture below of Peter preaching.



## Activity Page

### In Your Own Words...

Time and again the New Testament speaks of God and Christ being “with” or “in” the church. Christ promised His disciples that He would be with them always. Below are a few of those scriptures. Look them up in your Bible, and then explain them in your own words.

Matthew 28:20

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Matthew 18:20

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Colossians 1:27

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I John 4:12,13

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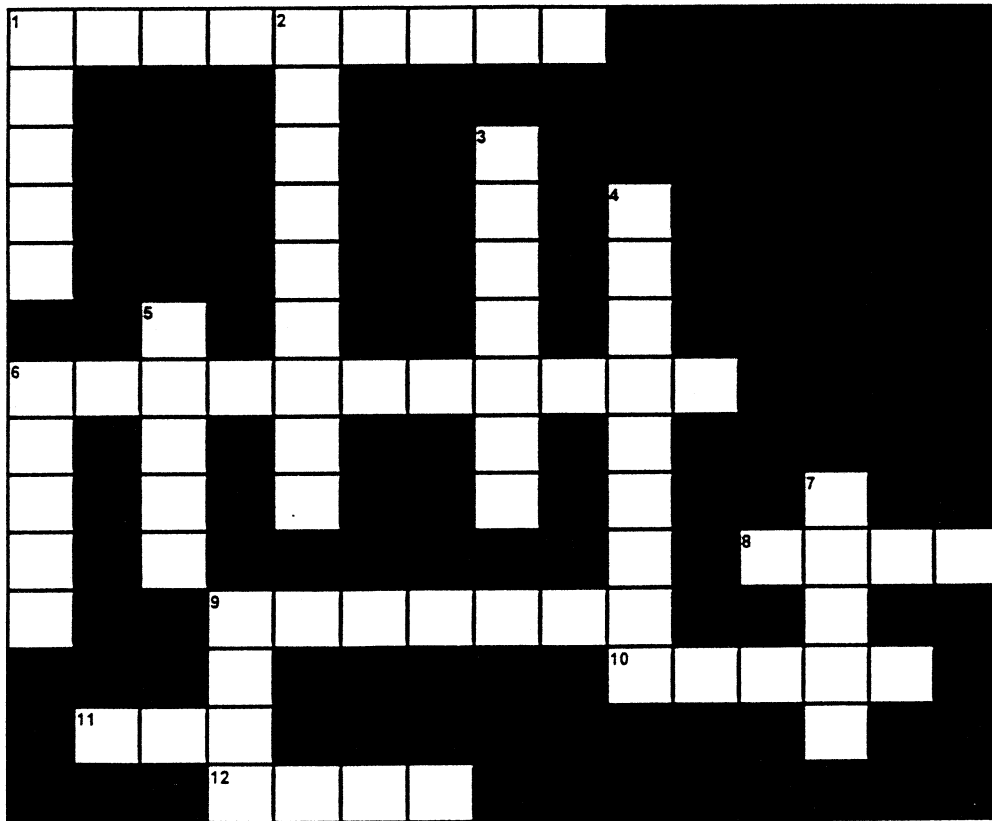
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## Activity Page

### Holy Spirit

Though God and Jesus Christ dwell in heaven, they are capable of being “with” their people. They are with us in Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the spiritual presence and power of God at work in the natural world. Use the clues at the bottom of the page to answer the questions and complete the crossword puzzle. If you have difficulty, look up the Scripture that has been provided.



#### Across

- 1 Greek word for the Holy Spirit which means helper, counselor. \_\_\_\_\_.
6. These were to be the \_\_\_\_\_ unto the Lord (Leviticus 23:17).
8. Cloven tongues of \_\_\_\_\_ sat on each of them on the day of Pentecost.
9. “When the Holy Spirit has come..you shall be \_\_\_\_\_” (Acts 1:8).
10. Another name for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of \_\_\_\_\_ (John 16:13).
11. “And when He has come, He will convict the world of \_\_\_\_\_” (John 16:8).
12. At Jesus’ baptism, “the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a \_\_\_\_\_” (Luke 3:22).

#### Down

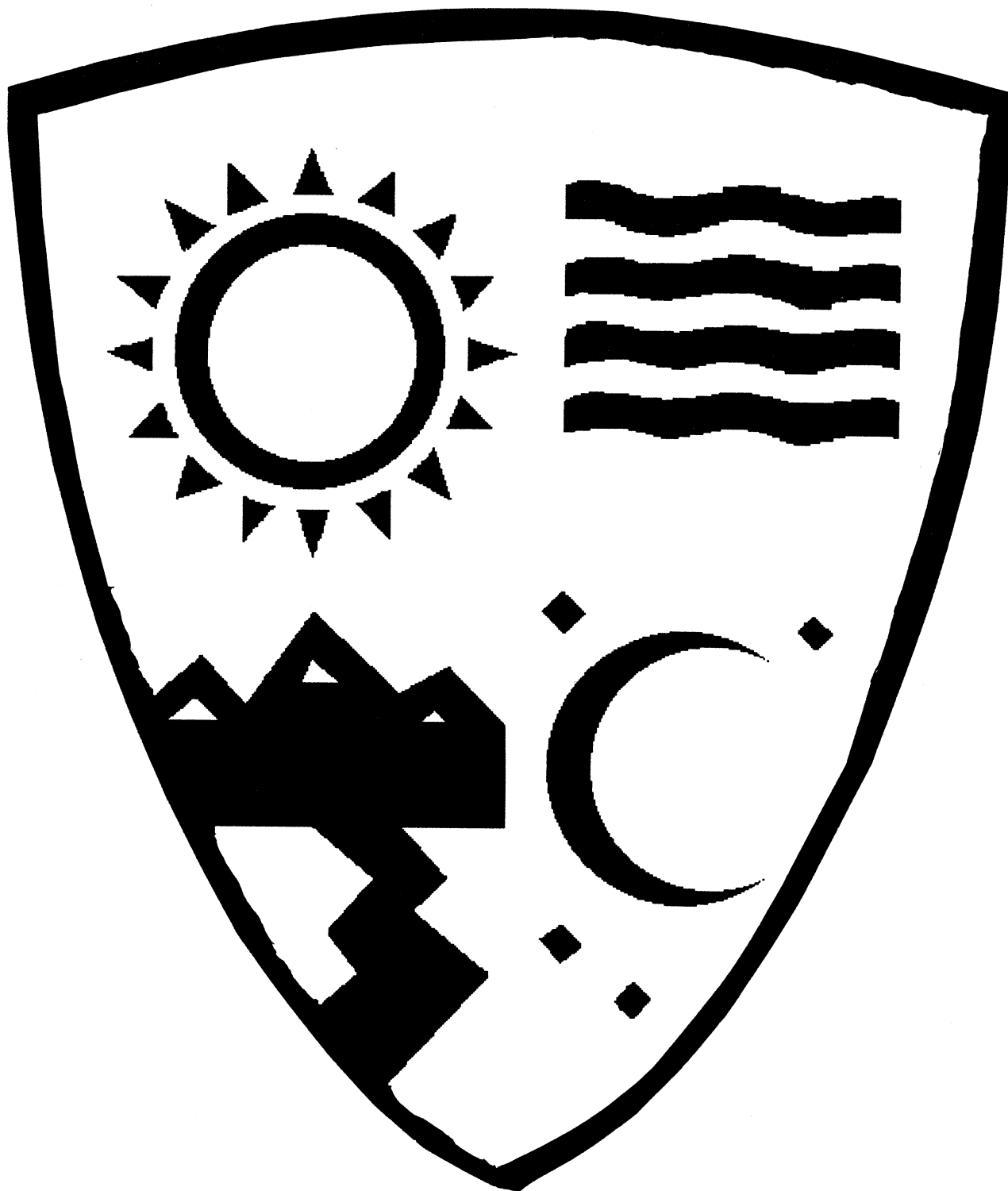
1. The Holy Spirit is the essence, \_\_\_\_\_, mind and spiritual extension of God.
2. Jesus promised when He went away that He would send the \_\_\_\_\_.(John 16:7).
3. The disciples spoke with other \_\_\_\_\_ guided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).
4. The Holy Spirit was given on the Day of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. You find the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23.
6. The prophet Joel prophesied that one day God’s Spirit would be poured out on all \_\_\_\_\_ (Joel 2:28).
7. Wisdom, knowledge, miracles etc. are all given as \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 12:8–10)
9. The sound of the Holy Spirit coming was like of a rushing, mighty \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 2:2)

## Art Activity

### Materials Needed

Copies each of shield

Construction paper in different colors



## Art Activity

### Book Marker

#### Materials

Copy of marker pattern  
Scissors  
Colored paper  
Glue  
Crayons or colored pens

**So That  
We May  
Boldly  
Say,  
The  
Lord  
is My  
Helper  
and I  
Will Not  
Fear...**

Hebrews 13:6

