

dwell<sup>®</sup>



Dear Family,

After Pentecost the early church grew in numbers, but they also faced lots of challenges. And the Holy Spirit continued to work in amazing ways.


During the next six weeks our group will be living into some of those exciting stories from Acts. I hope you take time at home also to marvel at these stories with your child, to wonder what they mean for your lives, to live into them together. Your set of God's Big Story cards will help you do that together.

This is what our schedule looks like:


Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Ananias and Sapphira 

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Stephen's Story 

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Simon the Sorcerer 

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Tabitha 

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Peter's Vision 

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Peter's Rescue 

During these six weeks, we'll also be memorizing Acts 1:8 together. You may want to make that a challenge for your whole family! Consider purchasing a copy of the *DwellSongs* Year 1 CD at [www.dwellcurriculum.org](http://www.dwellcurriculum.org). It contains a great rap version of Acts 1:8 called "You Will Receive Power." Or download that song at [www.dwellcurriculum.org](http://www.dwellcurriculum.org).

P.S. Check out the great tips about growing faith at home on [www.NurtureKidsFaith.org](http://www.NurtureKidsFaith.org).



## Memory Challenge

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

—Acts 1:8, NIV

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Marvel

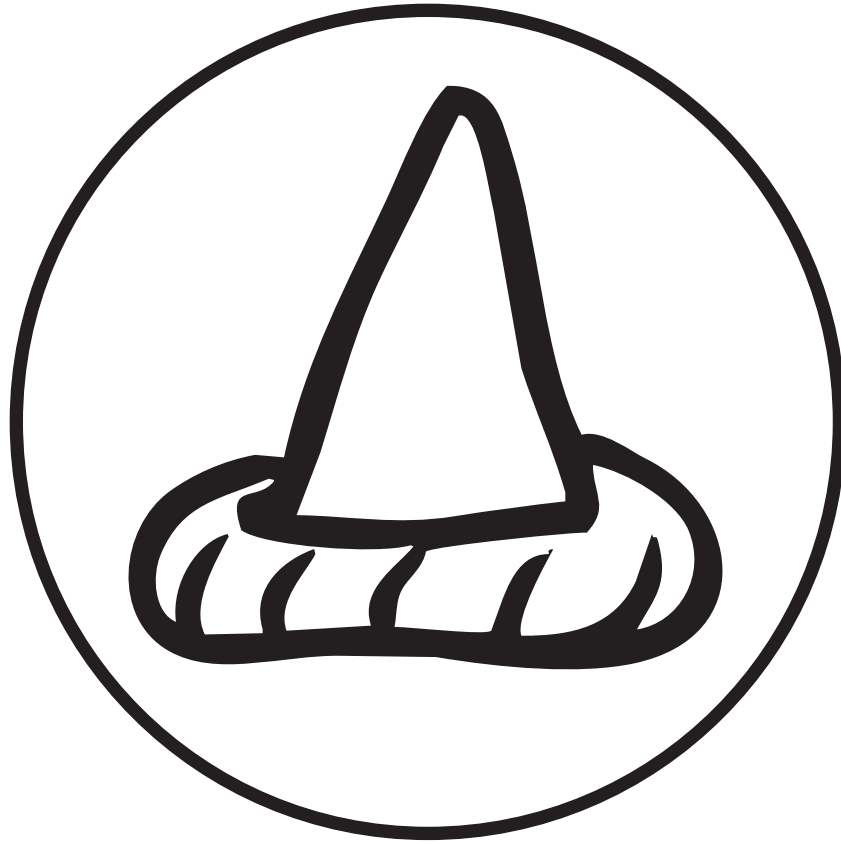
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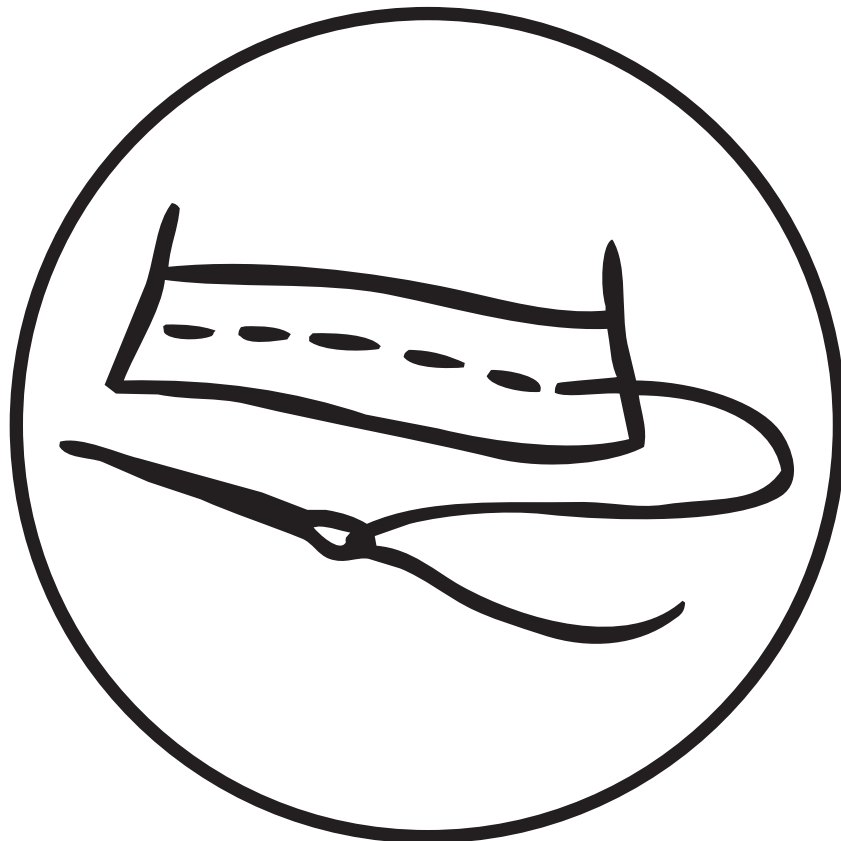
Marvel  
Year 1, Unit 4, Session 1



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Year 1, Unit 4, Session 2

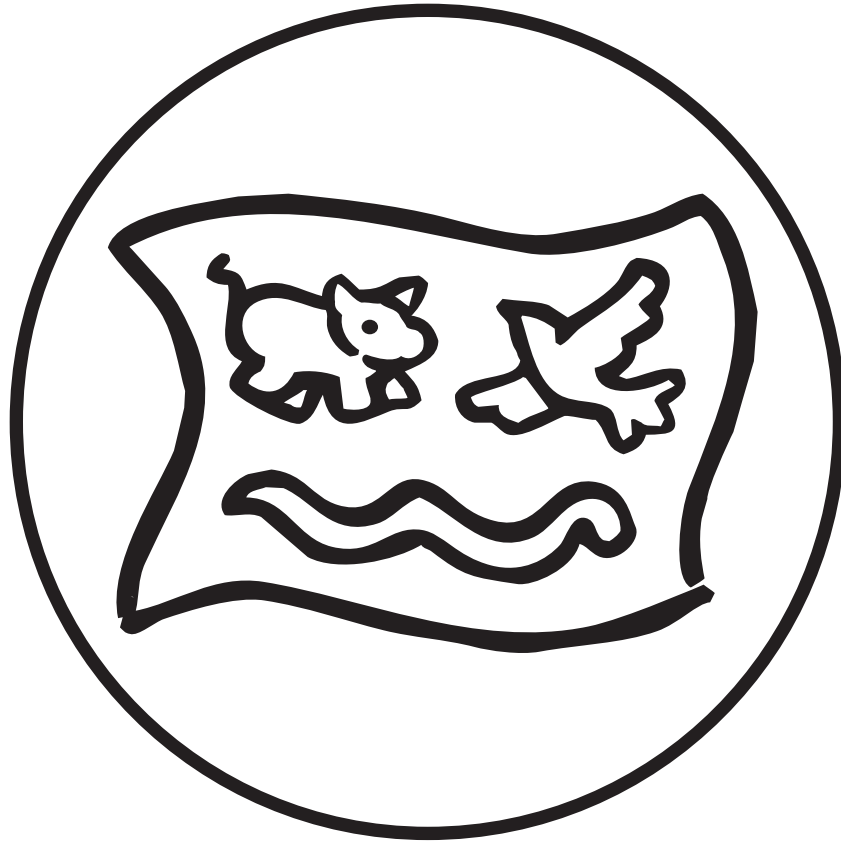


Marvel  
Year 1, Unit 4, Session 3



Marvel  
Year 1, Unit 4, Session 4





Marvel  
Year 1, Unit 4, Session 5



Marvel  
Year 1, Unit 4, Session 6

# Ananias and Sapphira

## A Readers' Theater Based on *The Message*, Acts 4:36-5:16

**Narrator 1:** Joseph, called by the apostles “Barnabas” (which means “Son of Comfort or Encouragement”), a Levite born in Cyprus, sold a field that he owned, brought the money, and made an offering of it to the apostles.

**Narrator 2:** But a man named Ananias—his wife, Sapphira, conniving in this with him—sold a piece of land, secretly kept part of the price for himself, and then brought the rest to the apostles and made an offering of it.

**Peter:** Ananias, how did Satan get you to lie to the Holy Spirit and secretly keep back part of the price of the field?

**Ananias:** B-b-but . . .

**Peter:** Before you sold it, it was all yours, and after you sold it, the money was yours to do with as you wished. So what got into you to pull a trick like this? You didn't lie to men but to God.

**Narrator 3:** Ananias, when he heard those words, fell down dead.

**Narrator 1:** That put the fear of God into everyone who heard of it.

**Narrator 2:** The younger men went right to work and wrapped him up, then carried him out and buried him.

**Narrator 3:** Not more than three hours later, Anaias's wife, knowing nothing of what had happened, came in.

**Peter:** Tell me, were you given this price for your field?

**Sapphira:** Yes, that price.

**Peter:** What's going on here that you connived to conspire against the Spirit of the Master? The men who buried your husband are at the door, and you're next.

**Narrator 1:** No sooner were the words out of his mouth than she also fell down dead.

**Narrator 2:** When the young men returned, they found her body. They carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

**Narrator 3:** By this time the whole church and, in fact, everyone who heard of these things had a healthy respect for God.

**Narrator 1:** They knew God was not to be trifled with.

**Narrator 2:** Through the work of the apostles, many God-signs were set up among the people, many wonderful things done.

**Narrator 3:** They all met regularly and in remarkable harmony on the Temple porch named after Solomon.

**Narrator 1:** But even though people admired them a lot, outsiders were wary about joining them.

**Narrator 2:** On the other hand, those who put their trust in the Master were added right and left, men and women both. They even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on stretchers and bedrolls, hoping they would be touched by Peter's shadow when he walked by.

**Narrator 3:** They came from the villages surrounding Jerusalem, throngs of them, bringing the sick and bedeviled. And they all were healed.



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>I've been sick for three days. I'm sure I'm way behind in my school assignments.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>My friend doesn't have as many rules in his house as I have in mine. Why can't my parents let up a little?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>My mom always gets up early and makes breakfast. Sometimes I eat it pretty fast, but I never go to school hungry.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>My grandmother is in the hospital. The doctor said she might not be able to return home.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>My team lost again. We played our best and worked as a team, but the other team scored more than we did.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>I have an idea of how to raise money for a project. But I've never done anything like that before.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>I don't have as much money to give as my friend. So I'll just wait until I get richer.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>My family is moving. I miss all my friends already. What if I don't make new friends?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>I'm adopted. I don't look or act like any one else in my family.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>My friend invited me along with his family to go out to eat. It was so much fun.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>I have a big test coming up this week in school. I'm really scared about it.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>I actually like reading my Bible, but I'm afraid to admit it.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>We need a big repair in our house. That means my dad will be busy every Saturday for a month.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>My sister always comes home with good grades. I think my parents like her better than they like me.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Call for Encouragement</b></p> <p>I only have one friend at school. I'd kind of like to be more popular.</p>

<b>A Call for Encouragement</b>	<b>A Call for Encouragement</b>	<b>A Call for Encouragement</b>
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# Meet Stephen

Based on Acts 6; 7:51-8:4

Please use the following only as an outline for telling your own “first person” story. Do your best to get into your role as Stephen. It’s OK to glance occasionally at these notes (you’ll want to put them on a clipboard or glue them to colored paper, if you carry them with you), but you’ll want to be as spontaneous as possible. Questions and wondering statements are in bold for easy reference.

Enter the room dressed as Stephen and carrying a loaf of unsliced bread.

Ask, **Are any of you hungry? Would you like a piece of this fresh-baked bread?**

Introduce yourself as Stephen, telling the group that it’s your job to make sure no one goes hungry. Then break off pieces of bread for each child who would like some.

**I wonder if there are people in your town or city who don’t get enough to eat every day?**

Mention how important it is to share food with hungry people, especially those whom we want to tell about Jesus.

Explain that you worked with the apostles in the days when the Christian church was brand new.

The believers in those days were not yet called Christians—they were called “followers of the Way.”

You were one of seven men chosen to help distribute food so that Peter and the other apostles could spend their time praying and teaching. Tell the group you have a title that’s the same as the people in this church who help those in need.

**I wonder if you know the name of my role.** (*Deacon*)

Tell about the crowds that flocked to Jerusalem for Pentecost, a religious celebration for the Jews, and how you and the leaders of your synagogue were among them. Pentecost was a great time to be in Jerusalem. Everyone celebrated the spring harvest and the baking of that first loaf of bread.

**I wonder what foods you like to eat at a street festival or celebration.**

Explain that this Pentecost was different than any other. Something so amazing happened that you stayed in Jerusalem instead of going home.

**I wonder what you remember about the story of the first Pentecost.**

Tell about your impression of the sound of the mighty and violent wind, the tongues of fire that appeared on the heads of the apostles, and the apostles speaking and teaching in every language.

Say that the Holy Spirit filled you. You received the power to love and care about others. No longer did you just care about filling your stomach with good bread; you wanted everyone else to have plenty of bread too.

Continue to tell how things began happening when you brought bread to people. If they were sick, you were able to heal them in the name of Jesus. If they wanted to know more about Jesus, you told them, and they believed.

Soon the news of what you were doing reached the religious leaders.

**Because they were involved in Jesus’ death, how do you think they reacted to me telling the crowds about Jesus’ love and power?**

Emphasize the anger—they were as angry as hornets knocked out of a nest. Explain that you upset the religious leaders when you gave Jesus all the glory and credit for your miracles.

Explain how the religious leaders got all the people angry at you. Then they came and hauled you off to court to be tried. In court they accused you of doing bad things you never did—teaching against God, the temple, and the laws of Moses.

It was a very bad time for you. But while they were accusing you, your face began to shine. (*Ask someone to read Acts 6:15.*)

Tell how you explained the Scriptures, from the time of Moses, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You told the crowd about a Savior coming—and that Savior was Jesus.

Then you did something that was very hard to do: you told the people that they had murdered Jesus, the promised Messiah.

Can you guess how the religious leaders reacted to that?

Tell how they were furious and gnashed their teeth at you.

### **Do you think I was afraid?**

Explain that you looked up into heaven (*Demonstrate*). Then you saw heaven open, the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

When you told the angry people what you saw, they yelled at the top of their voices, rushed at you, and dragged you outside the city.

There they collected stones, large and small.

They took off their coats and gave them to a young man named Saul to guard. Saul thought you were evil and deserved to die. The Holy Spirit had not yet convinced Saul that Jesus was the Christ.

Stones began flying through the air, striking you in the head and all over your body. It hurt terribly. But even while this was happening to you, you managed to pray, asking Jesus to receive your spirit. Because the Holy Spirit filled your heart, you were even able to pray that God would forgive those who were stoning you!

After that you died and went to heaven to be with Jesus. Saul still didn't understand that your death brought you to heaven to be with Jesus.

### **I wonder if you know what Saul did after I died.**

Tell how Saul began working harder than ever to destroy the church. He went from house to house, looking and asking for followers of the Way. When he found them, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

### **Do you think Saul would be able to get rid of the new church that started at Pentecost? Why did just the opposite happen?**

Lead the children to think about the Holy Spirit being in control. The believers left Jerusalem and spread out all over the country. Wherever they went they told the news about Jesus. More and more people believed, so the church grew.

### **I wonder what happens when Satan tries to stop the church by hurting and persecuting believers.**

Explain that sometimes people are killed because they believe, but God is always there, giving strength and providing new opportunities for the church to grow.

Say goodbye to the children and tell them to stay strong in the Lord. Tell them that you hope someday they'll meet the real Stephen in heaven.

## Video Team 1: Acts 6:1-7

Your job is to show Stephen, a man of faith and filled with the Holy Spirit, serving in the distribution of food.

As you plan your video segment, think about some of these questions:

- What gifts of the Holy Spirit help Stephen to serve others?
  - How and why did the other Christians choose him?
  - What expressions will your Stephen actor have on his face as he serves others?
  - How will the widows and the poor respond to Stephen?
  - What might the apostles be able to do now that Stephen has taken over this important work?
- 

## Video Team 2: Acts 6:8-15

Your job is to show what happened when the religious leaders saw what Stephen was doing among the people.

As you plan your video segment, think about some of these questions:

- How do they interrupt Stephen?
  - What could they not do?
  - Then what did they try?
  - What do those who are watching see in Stephen's face?
- 

## Video Team 3: Acts 7:2, 9-10, 35-36, 45-47, 51-55

Your job is to name some of the important people that Stephen named—God's servants in the past who were not respected.

As you plan your video segment, think about some of these questions:

- What do you know about each of these "heroes" Stephen describes? If some of you know the stories well, tell them to the others and decide how you will picture them in your video.
  - Tell what each of these people were able to do with God's help.
  - Include in your video what Stephen said happened to those who spoke about the coming of Jesus.
  - What did Stephen say the religious leaders had done to Jesus?
- 

## Video Team 4: Acts 7:54-8:4

Your job is to tell the final drama of the story.

As you plan your video segment, think about some of these questions:

- How angry did the leaders get? How will you show that anger?
  - How did Stephen react? How will you show that in your video?
  - What did the leaders do when trying to end it all?
  - What was Stephen's attitude toward the fierce forces against him? What does Stephen say that reminds you of Jesus' words on the cross?
  - How do you want to end your video of Stephen?
-

# That's Impossible!

Choose one of the following two experiments—or another trick you're familiar with—to amaze your group. Be sure to practice it ahead of time!

## Egg in a Bottle?

### What you'll need:

- Peeled hard-boiled egg (medium)
- Bottle with opening slightly smaller than the diameter of the egg—a juice bottle works well
- Paper and lighter (or ice water water)

### How to do it:

1. Peel the label off your bottle.
2. Place the egg in the mouth of the bottle. It should be a little bit bigger in diameter than the opening.



3. Ask the group if they think you can get the egg into the bottle—without breaking it!
4. Choose one of the following approaches:
  - Light a piece of paper on fire and drop it in the bottle. Set the egg on top of the bottle (small side pointed down) When the flame goes out, the egg will drop into the bottle.
  - Set the egg in the bottle and put the bottle in ice water. As the air in the bottle chills, the egg will drop in.
5. Invite the group to be amazed at your “magic.”

—from [www.layhands.com](http://www.layhands.com)



# Linked Paper Clips

## What you'll need:

- dollar bill
- two paper clips

## How to do it:



1. Fold a dollar bill one third of the way, and then attach a paper clip to it.
2. Fold the other side in and clip it too.
3. Slowly pull the edges of the dollar bill apart.
4. When the dollar bill is fully straightened out, the paper clips will fly up into the air linked together.

—from [www.layhands.com](http://www.layhands.com)

# Simon the Sorcerer

Based on Acts 8:4-25

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jerusalem,*

I'm writing to let you know I'm safe. So far I've escaped persecution from those against the followers of Jesus. I travelled night and day to get away. Now I'm in Samaria. Most likely the persecutors won't show up here because they don't like Samaritans—at all.

God has given me words and the courage to speak about Jesus to everyone I meet. It's totally from the power of the Holy Spirit! I've been able to heal people who couldn't walk or even stand. I do everything in the name of Jesus. Many get it that Jesus' name has the power to heal and to forgive sins. The people in Samaria want Jesus in their life. They believe that the gospel is true because of the miracles.

There's also a magician in this town named Simon. He has practiced black magic and tricks for many years. The people have always thought of him as some kind of god. And he has thought of himself the same way. They call him "The Great Power." For years they have followed him, amazed at his magic.

But now, I'm happy to say, the work of Jesus has made Simon's tricks look like exactly what they are—tricks! People no longer follow Simon. Jesus is now their hero and Lord. When they see how the name of Jesus heals all their sicknesses, they believe in Jesus.

Because they believe, I have baptized many. Simon came and said he believed too! He couldn't deny what he saw. I'm not sure what to think about Simon, though. He follows me around like a puppy. I'm not sure about his motives.

Thank you for your prayers. Please, advise me on how the people can grow into full knowledge through the Holy Spirit.

Your fellow servant in Christ,

*Philip*

*Dear Fellow Believers in Jerusalem,*

Greetings! John and I have arrived safely in Samaria. We found everything just as Philip said—he is preaching the good news of Jesus and healing many. New believers are lining up to be baptized.

John and I rejoiced with those newly baptized. What excitement! No one could stop talking about the good news. We laid our hands on those who had not yet received the Holy Spirit. As we prayed, the Holy Spirit filled them. It reminded us of Pentecost all over again!

It's amazing that the Spirit is being poured out on others besides the Jews. No wonder Jesus told us to go out to all ends of the earth. It's incredible!

Simon the sorcerer, whom Philip mentioned in his letter, is becoming a nuisance. He follows us around almost like a spy.

This morning Simon pulled out a bag of gold and said, "Give me the power that you have. I want to lay my hands on people and give them the Holy Spirit." As he said it, the greed flashed in his eyes. It's too bad that he sees what we are doing as a new way to make money. It's a sign that he hasn't given his life completely over to God.

So I told him: "You and your money will both be destroyed if you try to buy God's Spirit. Ask God to forgive you for coming up with such a thought. It shows that your heart is wrong, chained to your old sins."

It scared him enough that he wanted us to pray for him. He doesn't want anything bad to happen. But he also needs to pray himself and ask God for forgiveness. It is our prayer for everyone that they will see God's light and ask for forgiveness from sin and pride so that a new heart through the Holy Spirit can live in them.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ,

*Peter*

## **Team 1: Who's Simon?**

- Read Acts 8:9-11.
- Create a drama of things Simon might have done to amaze people. You'll need to use your imagination.
- Your drama should include both Simon and people in the crowd who followed him.
- Be ready to answer questions about what you do, see, and hear.

## **Team 2: Who's Philip?**

- Read Acts 8:4-13.
- Plan a drama that shows the group what happened in Samaria when Philip arrived. You don't need to include verses 9-11 in your drama; another group will do that! Include Philip, Simon, and the people of Samaria in your drama.
- Be ready to answer questions about what you do, see, and hear.

## **Team 3: Who's the Holy Spirit?**

- Read Acts 8:14-25.
- Plan a drama that shows what happened when Peter and John got to Samaria.
- Include, Peter, John, Simon, and the people of Samaria.
- Be ready to answer questions about what you see, hear, and do.

# Tabitha Acts 9:36-43

1. On the Mediterranean seacoast there is a town called Joppa. At one time it was a very important city for the people of Israel. It was the seaport that, long ago, King Solomon used when he brought in cedar beams for the temple.

There were lots of Jews in Joppa who were followers of Jesus Christ. Many of them were widowed or poor and in need.

However, there was someone special among the believers. Her name was Tabitha. She made it her work to care for others in the church, including the widows. Her serving gifts made a big difference to people who had so little.

2. One day Tabitha became sick. Her illness could not be cured and she died.

The sad widows did the only thing they could do. They tenderly washed her body and placed her in an upper room. People came to that room to cry and say goodbye.

While this was going on, some of the disciples mentioned that Peter was nearby in Lydda. They thought it would be wonderful to have him come to Joppa. He could pray with the people and maybe even do something more. So two men were sent to find Peter and bring him back with them.

3. Joppa is ten miles away from Lydda where Peter was staying. That's a long way to run or even ride on a horse. And then they still had to find the house where Peter was staying. Was this all worth it?

The two travelers found Peter. They insisted that he come at once. Peter didn't have any excuses. He did exactly as they asked, and off they went back to Joppa.

4. When they arrived at the house where Tabitha's body lay, crying and sadness filled the room. The widows showed Peter the robes and other clothing that Tabitha had made for them. There was no doubt that a very special person had died. And that she was greatly missed. Peter didn't hesitate. He sent the crying women out of the room.

Peter got down on his knees and prayed.

5. Peter turned toward the dead woman.

Peter said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes. When she saw Peter, she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to stand up.

6. The other believers and the women who loved Tabitha so much didn't know what Peter was doing in the upper room. Was he as sad as they were? Was he praying? If so, what could he be saying to God?

Then Peter came out. Tabitha was walking right beside him. "Here she is! She's alive!"  
The news spread all over Joppa, and because of it more people came to believe in Jesus.



# Peter's Vision

## Visionaries

Here's your challenge. Create a poster/picture of what you think Peter's vision looked like.

Prepare to tell the group

- what animals you included on your poster—and why.
- what you think the vision meant—both for Peter and for us.
- why you think Peter needed to see the vision three times before he “got it.”
- about times when we find it hard to listen to what God wants us to do.

## Interpreters

Here's your challenge. Create a picture of what God's family should look like today (who's at the table?).

Prepare to tell the group

- who you included in the family or around the table—and why.
- why this might be an important story for the church today to hear.
- how we can make all of our churches more welcoming places.

# Peter's Vision

Acts 10:1-11:21

**Acts 10:1-6**

**Acts 10:7-8**

**Acts 10:9**

**Acts 10:11-12**

**Acts 10:19-23**

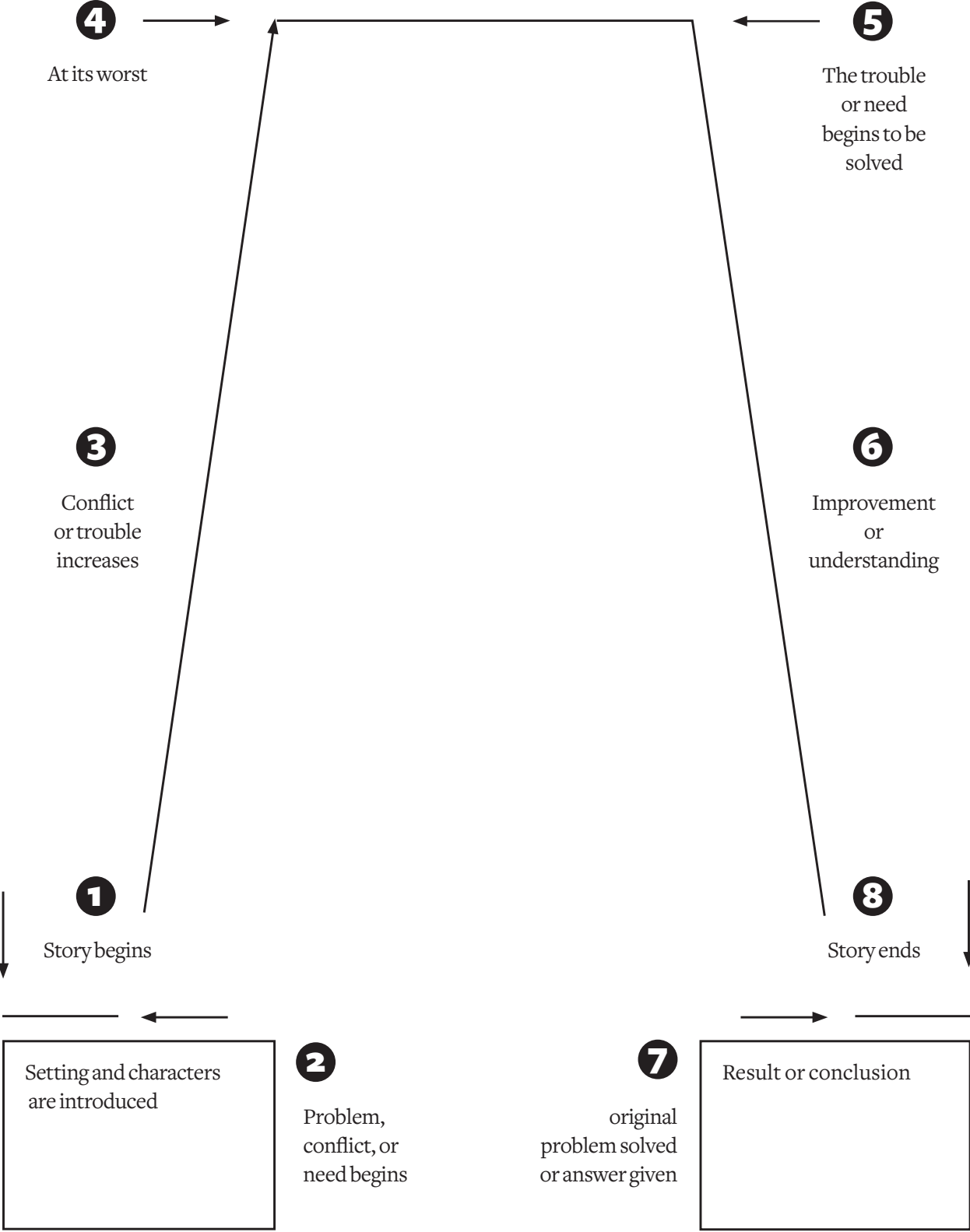
**Acts 10:23-26**

**Acts 10:34-46**

**Acts 11:1-18**

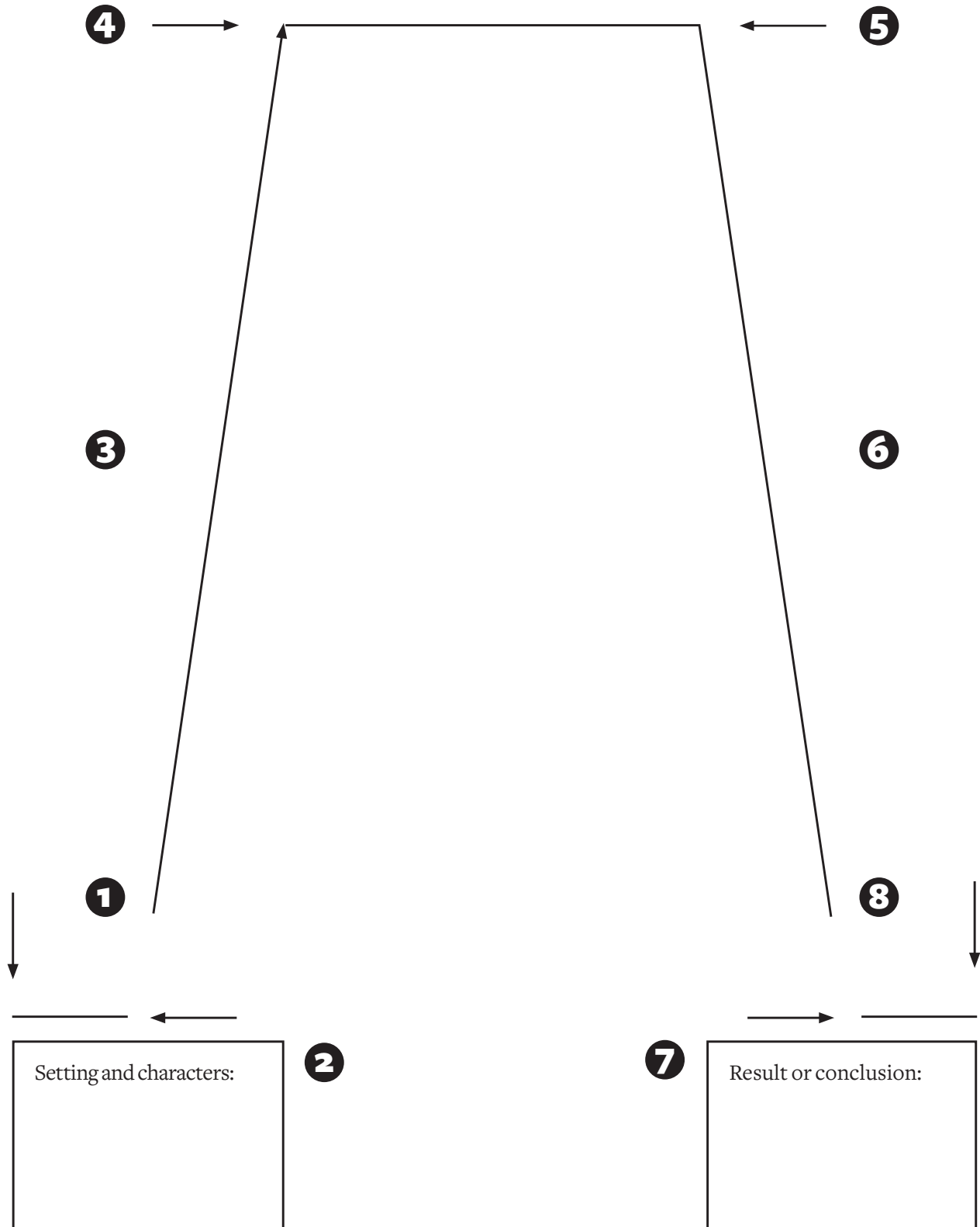
# Peter's Rescue

Acts 12:1-19



# Peter's Rescue

Acts 12:1-19







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**Year 1**

**Unit 1** Marvel . . . at God's Love

**Unit 2** Marvel . . . at God's Mercy

**Unit 3** Marvel . . . at the Holy Spirit's Power

**Unit 4** Marvel . . . at the Holy Spirit's Work

**Unit 5** Marvel . . . at God's New Beginnings

**Unit 6** Marvel . . . at God's Protection

**Year 2**

**Unit 1** Marvel . . . at God's Faithfulness

**Unit 2** Marvel . . . at God's Wisdom and Strength

**Unit 3** Marvel . . . at God's Message

**Unit 4** Marvel . . . at God's Staying Power

**Unit 5** Marvel . . . at God's Persistence

**Unit 6** Marvel . . . at God's Plan

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