



ACTS 15 COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

Scripture: Acts 15:1-11

Open: Greet, Praises, Requests, Pray

Main Takeaway: The church decided that the Gentiles didn't need to follow Jewish law to be saved because salvation comes by grace.

Supplies: Two plastic cups per child, one piece of construction paper per child, a bag of 613 pennies, and coins for each child.

Ask:

Who remembers what we talked about last week? (Paul's missionary journeys and the false teachers who came against him at Iconium.)

Today, we're going to talk about a problem that the early church faced- there were tons of gentiles coming to faith in Jesus through the work of Paul and Barnabas. But there was a problem- Jews and gentiles rarely got along. Jews considered gentiles unclean and they expected salvation to be for Jews alone. But Jesus doesn't show favoritism and now ALL can be saved through belief in him as Lord. But the Jews weren't so sure about this in the beginning. What about the law? What about circumcision? That used to be the outward sign that people were people of God.

Do an Activity

Have the kids build a bridge using two cups and a piece of paper. They can fold or bend it however they want; it just has to span the cups.

Once their bridges are built, explain that this paper is going to represent people. Now the teacher will read various laws from the Old Testament that the Jewish people were expected to follow. For each law, the kids must place a penny on their bridge. Keep listing laws until all the bridges collapse.

Explain:

It doesn't matter how good you are, eventually the weight of the law is unbearable. We now know that it was meant to point us to our need for a Savior, but the Jews, until Jesus, spent much of their time focused on obeying the law- something they could never do perfectly.

Read: Acts 15:1-11

Explain:

You see, we cannot uphold the law on our own. Thankfully, because of Jesus, we don't have to. He fulfilled the law and the prophets. He lived a perfect life and died the death that we deserved so that we might be saved. This isn't just a gift for the Jews; it is a gift for every person. This gift is free. We cannot earn it by following the law or a set of rules, we can simply accept this free gift that comes from the grace of God.

Note- If kids ask what circumcision is, explain simply that it was an outward sign that the Jewish people belonged to God. If they want further information, have them ask their parents.

Do an Activity

Now place a 2x4 or other piece of wood on the cups. Explain that this is the same material as paper, but this is strong. This represents Jesus. He was fully God and fully man. He lived a perfect life and fulfilled the law in every way (place the 613 pennies on the wood). But he could bear it. He could bear the weight of the law and the weight of our sin.

Explain:

Because he died on the cross and rose again, we can come to him and be forgiven of our sins and live eternally in heaven with him. If anyone feels the weight of not being perfect and of the sins they know they have committed, you can ask Jesus for forgiveness for your sins right now. You can tell him the wrong that you've done and that you're sorry for. Then, you can ask Him to help you follow Him and live your life as his servant, obeying his Word- not to be saved, but to be more like Him who saved you.

Memorize Acts 15:11

Close in Prayer