



PROVIDENTIAL HISTORY LESSON PLANS

The study of history leads us
to a better acquaintance with God.
History teaches us that God extends
His protecting Hand over all His children,
and that all are called into being
to fulfill some wise purpose.

~ G. G. HEBBE, 1848 ~

Book of Acts I

Time: 45 minutes

Reading: Acts Reading I

Principle: God placed eternity in the heart of

man that we can know Him.

Scripture: God has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

TEACHER

Vocabulary:

eternity (n.) The timeless, unending existence of God.

providence (n.) The continual care and guidance God provides His creatures for His plan and promises.

sovereign (adj.) Supreme in power; possessing supreme dominion.

time (n.) A continuum that is measured in terms of events which succeed one another from past through present to future.
2) A historical period.

witness (n.) A person who sees an event and tells another what happened.

witness (v.) 1) To see or know by personal experience. 2) To testify or give evidence about an individual or event.



Unit Background:

1. This providential history unit is about the birth of Christianity and how God used the apostles of Jesus to spread the Gospel message beginning in Jerusalem, then Judea and Samaria (the ancient land of Israel), and then throughout the Roman Empire. It is a powerful story of God's eternal plan and purpose for mankind, both Jew and Gentile.
2. In order to prepare to teach this unit, a knowledge of Jewish and Christian life in the Roman Empire is needed. Please download and study the first two chapters (or more) from the following public domain book online: *The Early Church* by George Hodges:
http://www.mainlesson.com/display.php?author=hodges&book=church&story=_contents
3. Read the New Testament book of *The Acts of the Apostles* before teaching this unit. Make a record of the individuals God used to spread the Gospel. List the cities and countries where they travel and locate them on your map of the Roman Empire. Also, record the specific scriptural references to the word "witness" in The Acts.
4. For this lesson, study the Book of Acts I Reading, "In the Fullness of Time."

STUDENT

Key Word:

eternity (n.) The place where God dwells outside of time.

Reason Questions:

1. Define the word "history."
2. Who is the central figure in history? Explain why.
3. Do you have a place in history?
4. Define "eternity."
5. Do you have a place in eternity?
6. As we reviewed God's story today, what is the theme of His Story?



Notebook Record:

1. Make a divider for your binder and label "Book of Acts."
2. Write your name on the Book of Acts title page and color the illustration with your coloring pencils.
3. File your title page in your binder behind your Book of Acts divider.



Singing:

"Go Tell It on the Mountain"
(Words on the next page.)



Preparation:

1. Read and reflect upon Reading I. Study the teacher vocabulary words, principle and the background materials.
2. Locate resources: Wall map of the world that shows the Roman Empire, Timeline of Promise wall cards (found with the Resources) displayed on the wall, Acts Reading I, Bible, student vocabulary card, and copies of the Book of Acts title page.



Teaching Plan:

1. Pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, pour out your Holy Spirit and illumine our minds that we may see your Hand of Providence in the early history of Christianity. Thank you for the faith of those who have gone before us. Grant us courage and zeal to be your witnesses in our generation, just as the apostles were in their generation. Use us to spread your Gospel Story for your glory. Amen.*
2. Distribute binders to the children.
3. Pin the student vocabulary card on the Treasure Chest bulletin board and define the word for the children.
Connect the vocabulary word to the new principle. Teach the principle and remind the children to listen for this principle during the reading.
4. Distribute the Acts title pages to the children. Have them write their name on the page and color the illustration with their colored pencils while you're reading.
5. Read the Acts I Reading, "In the Fullness of Time."
6. Ask the Reason Questions and have children respond orally.
7. Teach the song, "Go Tell It on the Mountain." This is an African-American spiritual dating back to 1865. Teach the first verse. You can find the melody on this web site:
http://www.links2love.com/christmas_songs_tell_mountain.htm
8. Conclude with a short prayer and blessing for the children.

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Verse One:

O, when I was a seeker
I sought both night and day,
I asked the Lord to help me,
And He showed me the way.

Chorus:

Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is Lord.

Verse Two:

He called me as His witness
Through head and heart and hand.
So now I share the Gospel
With all throughout the land.

Chorus:

Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is King.

In the Fullness of Time

The Reading for Book of Acts Lesson 1

For God has allowed us to know the secret of His plan and it is this: He purposed long ago in His sovereign will that all human history should be consummated in Christ.

— *Ephesians 1:9,10 (Phillips)*

Two thousand years ago Jesus of Nazareth was crucified on a cross in a tiny region of the great Roman Empire. Only a small number of people took notice, and then He was buried in a borrowed tomb. Today, believers in the resurrected Christ number in the millions on every continent. How is it that faith in Jesus Christ turned the “world upside down”?¹

“Book of Acts,” the third AMO providential history study, will answer this question. The theme of the study centers on Jesus’ Great Commission to His disciples to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” and “be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

Let’s begin by reviewing the definition of the word “history.” How many of you remember our definition of history? History is Christ, His Story. It is the record of God’s relationship to man from creation onward. It tells us the reasons we are here and our purpose as individuals and nations. God is the author of His Story and it is the greatest Story ever told!

All history is God’s history.

History is first and foremost about God and His divine plan for man, which He wrote and completed before the foundation of the world.² As the creator of the universe and all there is in it, God is the Author of His Story. His Story is a love story because it tells of God’s eternal gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, for all who believe. Through God’s sacrifice of His Son, we learn how much God loves us.³ Therefore, we exalt Jesus Christ as the focal point of all history!⁴ In this study, we will see how Jesus interacts with His apostles, even though He is no longer with them physically.

God chose to reveal Himself through individuals and events on earth.

Eternal God chose to reveal Himself through His Word and His actions with individuals and nations throughout time. God’s great promises and His providence coupled with the response of

¹ Acts 17:6

² Hebrews 4:3b: “. . . His works were finished from the foundation of the world.”

³ John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . .”

⁴ Ephesians 1:9: “God made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him” [Christ].

individuals and nations are the substance of the events of history. In this unit we will follow God's promises and providence in the lives of Jesus' apostles, the eyewitnesses and the participants in the birth and growth of Christianity.

We also learned that each one of us has a place in history, because God has a calling and a plan for each of our lives in Christ Jesus. This means we are accountable to God for our response to the "good news." In this study we will reflect upon how each of us can be a witness for Christ in our families, schools, and communities.

History is a witness.

What is a witness? A "witness" is one who sees an event and reports what happened. It's someone who was personally present at an event as an eyewitness and is willing to testify to others what he saw and heard.

In order for history to be a witness, individuals have to record the dates, the geographic setting, the names of the individuals, and the details of the event. The Bible is a history book full of many accounts of God's relationship with Israel, His chosen people. It also contains many letters of the New Testament apostles. These all witness to God's purpose. Through the eye of history, we are able to learn many lessons that make us wiser and more discerning. As we study providential history, may we see with the eyes of the past. Let us look for God's hand in the events and lives of individuals. And may we give permission to these ancient lessons to speak to us today here in _____ (Insert the name of your community and nation).

The study of history deals with time.

What is time? Time has a beginning and an ending. It is linear—it has a past, a present, and a future. (Point to the timeline on your classroom wall.) In the Bible, we have learned that Genesis is a book about beginnings. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"—this is the past. The Bible also records that Jesus told His disciples "I will come again"⁵—this is the future. As the Author of history, God knew the end of history from the beginning because He lives in eternity. As human beings, we must live within the boundaries of time and can only know the past and the present.

Events in history must be studied in relation to other events that occur both before and after. We can only know about events in the past if someone has taken time to write them down and preserve the record.

⁵ John 14:3

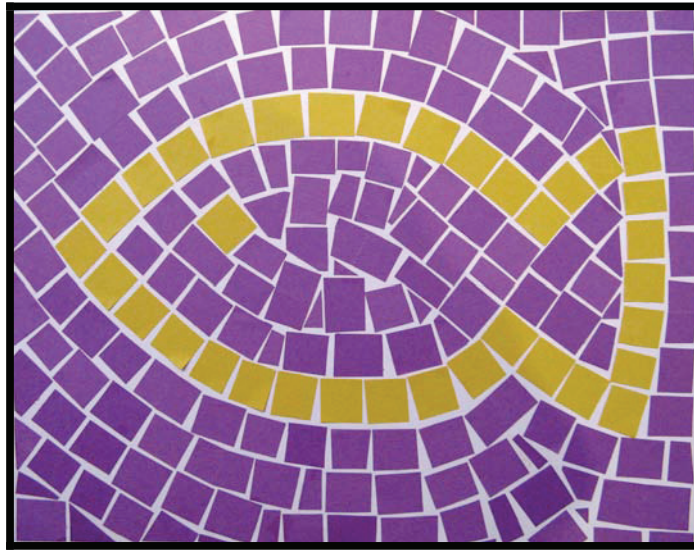
The Book of Acts



*Jesus said, "You shall receive power
when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;
and you shall be My witnesses . . ." – Acts 1:8*

Mosaic Placemat

A project inspired by the beautiful Greek and Roman mosaic floors and walls.



A fish was used by early Christians as a sign of their faith in Jesus Christ.

History of Mosaics:

Mosaic art began in ancient Mesopotamia with the Sumerians, who decorated a temple with broken pieces of seashells and onyx in the fourth millennium B.C. In Greece, there are ancient remains of mosaic floors made of pieces of rubble and natural pebbles. In Macedonia a fourth century B.C. king's residence has elaborate mosaic floors inspired by the ancient myths. They are remarkable for their workmanship.

Mosaics spread from Greece to Italy and developed there during the Roman Empire, especially in Pompeii and Rome. Wealthy Romans decorated the floors and walls of their houses, temples, and baths. After the death of Jesus Christ, Christians decorated many floors and walls using natural stones, colored glass, and marble. Mosaic art reached its highest level of quality in Ravenna, Italy during the Byzantine Era.

Our Project:

Children make a mosaic placemat to use at their Agape Meal celebration.

Supplies:

- construction paper in two contrasting colors
- 1 sheet of white paper (15 by 12 inches) for each child
- pencils
- scissors
- rubber cement glue

Instructions for Class:

1. Create a sample placemat.
2. With a pencil, have children draw a fish pattern on their white sheet of paper.
3. Have children cut their tiles into squares (1 inch) from two colors of paper.
4. Select one color tile and glue onto the fish pattern, leaving white space between tiles to look like grout.
5. With contrasting tiles fill the remainder of the white paper. Some of the tiles will need to be cut to fit.