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# The Early Church , Sharing Everything

*Scripture: Acts 2:42–47, 4:32–37*

**Theme: The church is a family that loves and serves together**

*Jr High (Ages 12-14)*

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Free curriculum for small and rural churches

## Lesson Overview

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This lesson explores how the early church lived as a family of faith, sharing everything out of love and generosity, just like Jesus taught. We'll learn how their choice to share changed their world and how it still inspires us today, especially when we trust in Jesus' sacrifice for us. Optional reflection: children can draw a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

## Bible Story

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Right after Jesus ascended to heaven, His disciples gathered together in Jerusalem with great joy. They spent their time together praying, learning, and sharing everything they had with one another. This wasn't just kindness, they lived differently because they knew Jesus had loved them and paid for their freedom through His death on the cross. No one was left out, and everyone felt welcome because they trusted Him.

The early church was like a big family where everyone had what they needed. They sold some of their possessions to make sure no one went without food, shelter, or help. When a new believer joined, they didn't take anything from others, everyone shared equally. This wasn't just about giving; it was about showing how much they loved each other, just like Jesus loved them. They knew that because of Him, they could live in a way that mattered.

One day, some Jewish leaders asked, 'How can this be?' They didn't understand why these people were so generous. The apostle Peter answered, 'We didn't do this because we have money to give, we did it because Jesus changed our hearts. He gave us everything, including His life, so we could belong to Him forever. Now we share because we love Him and want to live for others!' Their story shows that when we trust Jesus, we start living differently, full of love and willing to give.

The early church faced challenges, but their generosity kept them strong. They knew that God cared about them and wanted them to share His love with others. Their decision to give wasn't about pride, it was about trusting God and trusting each other. Just like them, we can choose to live as a family that loves and serves, remembering that Jesus' sacrifice makes us able to do even more for others.

## Key Verse

**Acts 2:44, 45 , 'All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.'**

When the early church 'had everything in common,' they weren't hoarding money or possessions, they shared because they knew Jesus' love was bigger than their stuff. Their choice showed that when we trust Him, we stop keeping things for ourselves and start giving out of gratitude and love, just like He did for us.

## Activities

### Activity 1: Community Jar Sharing

A fun way to practice generosity! Students will brainstorm ways they can 'share everything' like the early church, then draw or write what they'd give if they had extra resources (money, time, skills).

**Supplies needed:**

- Large clear jar or bowl
- Markers/crayons
- Paper and pencil
- Small items to place in the jar (optional: printed pictures of gifts like food, clothes, etc.)

1. Divide students into small groups of 3, 4. Ask each group to think of one thing they could 'share', like food, time, or even a skill, and draw it on paper.
2. Have each group place their drawings in the jar. Then, as a class, discuss: What would we share if we had extra? Why is it important to share, even when we don't have much?
3. Read Acts 2:44, 45 together and connect it to their drawings. Challenge them: How can we share like the early church this week? Maybe by helping a neighbor, donating unused items, or just being kind to someone who might feel left out.

### Activity 2: Persecution Prayer Cards

Students create prayer cards for North Korean Christians, focusing on the missions connection. They'll write what they'd pray for (e.g., 'God, protect them as they share Your love').

**Supplies needed:**

- Index cards or blank paper
- Markers/crayons
- Pencils

1. Explain that North Korean Christians share everything, even food, to help others, but they risk their lives for the Gospel. Ask: What would you pray for them? How can we pray for them together?
2. Have students write or draw their prayers on cards (e.g., 'God, keep them safe; help them share Your love'). Then, fold the cards and put them in a box or jar to pray over later.
3. Share: We can pray for the North Korean church just like they pray for us! Let's ask God to help them share His love in a world that doesn't trust them.

## Discussion Questions

- What's one thing you've ever shared with a friend or family member? How did it make you feel?

- The early church sold things to share with others. If you had to sell one thing you own to help someone else, what would you give up? Why?
- Why do you think some people struggle to share their stuff? What could change their heart to give like the early church?
- How does it feel to know that Jesus gave everything, including His life, for us? What does that teach us about how we should live?
- What are some things our culture says we need that the early church would have considered unnecessary?

## Prayer Focus

*Pray for the North Korean church, asking God to help them share the Gospel and everything they have with courage. Ask Him to grow your own heart to trust Him and share His love with others, even when it's hard.*

### >> Missions Spotlight

North Korea ranks #1 on the World Watch List for persecution of Christians. An estimated 50,000-70,000 believers are in labor camps. Underground churches share everything -- food, shelter, and Scripture -- at the risk of death. In Iran, Christianity is growing faster than almost anywhere in the world, but converts from Islam face imprisonment and execution. Pray for boldness and protection for these brothers and sisters who live out Acts 2 under threat of death.

### -> To the Cross

The early church shared everything because they knew Jesus' sacrifice made them free. When we trust Him, we stop hoarding and start giving out of gratitude, just like He gave His life for us! Their love for one another shows that when we follow Jesus, we become a family that cares for others, even when no one is watching.