I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.

John 8:12
(NIV 1984)
Fill in the blanks in the following sentences. The last blanks of each sentence can be filled in using the numbered letters from the previous terms in each group.

1. On his way to _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ to persecute Christians, a _____ _____ _____ from 2 1 3 4 heaven flashed around _____ _____ _____ .

2. Saul fell to the _____ _____ _____ _____ and heard a _____ _____ _____ call out to him, “Saul, Saul, 11 3 7 10 9 6 2 why do you _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ me? I am Jesus, whom you are 1 4 5 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

3. _____ _____ was blind and did not eat or _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ for three _____ _____ 4 1 2 3 4

4. The _____ who restored Saul’s _____ _____, baptized him, and told him he was called to 1 2 5 be _____ _____ _____ _____ was _____ _____ _____ .

5. _____ _____ astounded the _____ _____ by proving that _____ _____ _____ is the Christ. 3 4 1 2 5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

6. When the _____ planned to _____ _____ Saul, he escaped in a _____ _____ _____ lowered over the 1 3 4 2 1 2 3 4 5

7. When the _____ _____ _____ _____ in Jerusalem were _____ _____ _____ of Saul, the 6 3 8 5 2 7 4 1 _____ who _____ _____ _____ him to the apostles was _____ _____ _____ .

8. Just as he chose _____ _____ to preach to the Gentiles, so _____ _____ has also chosen us to be his 6 1 2 missionaries who _____ _____ _____ the _____ _____ _____ to all nations.
Gifts to Share the Gospel

The power of the gospel changes people. We no longer use our gifts only for ourselves; we also use them to spread the gospel to others.

Look at each description below. Identify how that person could use his or her individual gifts to spread God’s Word, now or in the future.

1. Ian is outgoing. He loves talking to people. He feels comfortable speaking in front of large groups.

2. Bethany started taking piano lessons in second grade. She enjoys learning new songs and practices often.

3. Malachi is a quiet person. He loves reading and writing. His friends always appreciate the way he encourages them.

4. Tucker has a special gift for learning new languages. His favorite class is Spanish. He often writes to his pen pal in Mexico.

5. Naomi is always the first to help when someone is injured. She stays calm, even in difficult situations.

6. Evan has a wonderful singing voice. He sings in the choir at his school and has already gotten to sing a solo.

7. Kendra has always been good at saving money. When she earns money for doing her chores, she doesn’t waste it but saves it for something important.

8. Titus has always been good at taking care of younger kids. He reads to other children and thinks of games for them to play.

Pair up with a partner. Each of you should identify a gift that you think the other person has. Together, try to think of ways those gifts could be used to spread the gospel. Write down your ideas.
It all starts with Jesus. He’s the Rock on which we build. He was born to be our Savior. He obeyed his Father’s will. Jesus died to save us. He took every sin away. And on Easter Sunday morning, he arose at break of day.

Help me, Jesus, it’s my

Refrain

Verse
It All Starts With Jesus, cont.

turn to build for you.

Help me use my gifts in

all I say and do.

Fill me, Jesus, with your

true and saving Word.

Use my voice and hands and

feet to serve you, Lord.

rose at break of day.

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Who Needs to Hear the Gospel?

Acts 11:1-18

A little girl appeared out of nowhere and crashed into Nate. She said something Nate didn’t understand, although it sounded apologetic. Then she ran away. “Did you see that?” Nate asked. “Let’s get out of here. I don’t even know why we’re in this neighborhood.”

His friend Curt had already explained three times why they were there, but he tried again. “Our youth group is going all over the city, advertising our special Easter service, and this is the neighborhood that was assigned to us.” He stopped walking and looked at Nate. “What’s the problem, anyway?”

“You know what it is,” Nate said. “These people probably have their own churches. Why invite them to ours?”

“These people, as you call them, are just like us,” Curt said, hanging another door hanger. “They need to hear the gospel too.”

How would you describe Nate’s problem? The early Jewish believers had a similar problem. Our lesson today will explore that problem as we answer the question,

Who needs to hear the gospel?
Acts 11:1-18

The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened: “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air. Then I heard a voice telling me, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’

“I replied, ‘Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’

“The voice spoke from heaven a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’ This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

“Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. He [Cornelius] told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.’

“As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?”

When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.”

1. Why did the Jews in Jerusalem criticize Peter?
2. Peter then explained what had happened to him. What had he seen and heard in his vision?
3. Why was this such a shock to Peter?
4. In the Old Testament, God had commanded the Jews not to eat certain animals. What did God now say about the “unclean animals”?
5. Who came to Peter’s house immediately after this vision?
6. What did God the Holy Spirit urge Peter to do?

God told Peter to go to the house of a ______________.

7. Why had Cornelius sent for Peter?
8. In verse 15, Peter says, “As I began to speak . . .” What did Peter speak to them?
9. In the simplest terms, what does “the Holy Spirit came on” these Gentiles mean?

Peter preached the gospel to the Gentiles, and they ______________.
10. What did the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem realize?

The Jewish Christians realized that God wants _________ people to be saved.

Who needs to hear the gospel?

God wants _________ people to hear the gospel and be saved.

**Words to Treasure**

1 Timothy 2:3,4

*God our Savior . . . wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

**Table Talk**

- How might God lead you to someone who needs the gospel? How can you keep your eyes open for such opportunities?
- Are there people in your community to whom you and your church have not taken the gospel? How can you begin?
- What do you think you would enjoy about being a pastor or teacher?
- There are many different kinds of people in the world—different races, nationalities, genders, social statuses. But in what ways are all people alike?
- Someone at church says, “Foreign missions aren’t as important as my own congregation. I like to keep my money at home.” How would you respond?

**This Week’s Family ✔ List**

**Sunday:** Thank God for bringing you to faith through the gospel and for strengthening you by it in regular worship services.

**Monday:** Ask Jesus to send more called workers into his kingdom so that the gospel may spread more and more.

**Tuesday:** Skim your local paper and find an article or picture that shows someone who needs the gospel. How might you spread the gospel to that person?
Wednesday: Read the story of Jonah. Even in the Old Testament, what did God show that he wanted for all people, Jews and Gentiles?

Thursday: Read or recite Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15. What words show that God wants all people to be saved?

Friday: Sing hymn 576, “Spread, Oh, Spread the Mighty Word.”

Saturday: Discuss having each family member give a little money over and above his or her regular church offering tomorrow. Ask God to use your money to help bring the gospel to all people of the world.

2 together

- Find a globe or map of the world and point out the countries in which you know our synod is doing mission work. If you don’t know of any, ask your pastor or someone else who does know.
- Draw a map of the world, color or paint it, and then write the words of 1 Timothy 2:3,4 on it.
- Choose a foreign mission as a family prayer project. Pray for the missionaries and the people of that country every day.
- Read aloud what Peter spoke to Cornelius in Acts 10:34-43.

Prayer

Show us opportunities to spread your Word, Lord Jesus, and then give us the desire and courage to do so. May your Word be spread around the world so that, according to your will, all people may come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved. Amen.

Answers: 1. He had eaten with uncircumcised people, that is, Gentiles. God’s Old Testament law had forbidden this. (The Jewish Christians at first thought that Gentiles had to become Jews before becoming Christian.) 2. He had seen a large sheet filled with all kinds of animals, reptiles, and birds. A voice—Jesus’ voice—had told him to kill and eat these animals. 3. According to Old Testament law, some of these animals were unclean. Peter didn’t want to disobey God’s law, which said not to eat them. 4. Do not call anything impure that God has made clean. God was saying that the Old Testament law was no longer in effect. 5. three men from Caesarea (specifically from the house of the Gentile Cornelius); 6. Gentile; 7. An angel had appeared and told Cornelius to send for Peter, because Peter had a message that would save Cornelius and his household. (Note that although he was not circumcised, Cornelius practiced the Jewish faith and was waiting for the Messiah. Peter could now tell him that the Messiah had come.) 8. Peter spoke the gospel of Jesus Christ—how Jesus had lived, died, and risen again to save sinners. 9. believed; 10. all

Who needs to hear the gospel? all