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)
In each shape write a type of persecution that could happen in the named place. Choose one persecution and write how God might use it as an opportunity to spread the gospel.

Name ___________________________
Who Am I?

Read each statement. Decide which person in the Bible lesson (Saul, Stephen, or Philip) could have said it. Put the number of the statement in the correct speech bubble. Three statements could have been said by two of the men.

Unscramble the letters at the bottom of the page to answer the two questions.

1. I was a deacon. I helped the apostles in their work.
2. I approved of Stephen’s death.
3. I was killed by stoning.
4. I brought joy to a Samaritan city.
5. I tried to force Christians to blaspheme.
6. I preached the Word and did miraculous signs.
7. I watched over outer clothes of those who stoned Stephen.
8. I was filled with the Holy Spirit.
9. I fled Jerusalem and went to Samaria.
10. I tried to destroy the church.
11. I dragged Christians off to prison.
12. I was accused of blasphemy.
13. I saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

When will persecutions like Saul’s destroy the church?

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____!

v r e e N

Even when persecution happens, what will still happen?

God will cause his _____ _____ _____ _____ to be _____ _____ _____ _____.

p s e l g o e d s r p a
Go ye, go ye into the world and make disciples of all the nations. Go ye, go ye into the world, and

I will be with you there! I will be with you there! I am the vine; you are the branches, ever the fruit to bear.

I am the light, you, the reflection every where.

Text, Tune, Setting: © 1979 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved. Used with permission.
Charlie and Hannah discussed their battle plans. “I say we wait for them to come at us,” Charlie suggested. “We’ve got this huge pile of snowballs already made. While one of us fights them off, the other one can run to their fort and smash it.”

Hannah disagreed. “I think we should call them out for a snowball fight and then try to steal their fort. Let’s not smash it. Let’s call it ours so we have two!”

While they were still talking, they heard shouts. “It’s an attack!” Charlie called. He and Hannah hurled their ready-made snowballs as hard as they could until John and Allyson retreated into their fort.

“That was close,” Hannah said.

“Yeah, but we better get ready for another attack.”

We might use a snowball fight as a picture of Satan’s persecutions of the church. But he doesn’t throw snowballs. He throws every trick and every trouble he can think up. His goal is to destroy the church so that all believers will turn away from Christ to him.

It’s a tough battle, but we don’t fight it alone. In today’s lesson we’ll answer this question:

**What does God do when Satan persecutes the church?**
Acts 12, selected verses

1. It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 
2. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 
3. When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. 
4. So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. 
5. The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. 
6. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists. 
7. Then the angel said to him, “Put on your clothes and sandals.” And Peter did so. 
8. Then they passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. 
9. Then Peter came to himself and said, “Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod’s clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating.” 
10. On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. 
11. They shouted, “This is the voice of a god, not of a man.” 
12. Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. 
13. But the word of God continued to increase and spread.

1. Who decided to persecute the church? 
2. What did he do to James, the brother of John? 
3. What did he do to Peter? 
4. Who is the leader of all those enemies of the church who persecute Christians? 
___________ is the leader of all who persecute the church. 
5. What did the other believers do while Peter was in prison? 
6. How did God answer the believers’ prayers? 
7. What were some of the miracles involved in that rescue? 
8. Although Satan persecuted the church, what happened to the gospel? 
9. The rescue of Peter is one example of how God takes care of his believers. Although Satan may persecute the church, what will God do? 
   God will __________________ his church. 
10. How did Herod later demonstrate again that he was an enemy of God and of the church? 
11. How did God punish him? 
12. Although the enemies of the church may seem to prevail at times, what will God do? 
   God will _______________ the enemies of the church.
What does God do when Satan persecutes the church?

God __________________ the church and punishes the ______________ of the church.

Words to Treasure
Matthew 16:18

*On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

Table Talk

- How are Christians persecuted in some countries?
- How have you been persecuted for your faith? How did you respond?
- In what way does persecution sometimes result in a stronger church?
- Agree/disagree: God always rescues persecuted Christians.
- Some enemies of the church get away with their sins in this life. When will they be punished?

This Week’s Family ✔ List

**Sunday:** Thank the Lord of the church that we live in a country where we can worship without fear of persecution.

**Monday:** Read 2 Timothy 4:18. What will Jesus do for all believers who are persecuted?

**Tuesday:** Pray for all persecuted Christians throughout the world. Ask Jesus to preserve them in the faith and to end the persecution, if it is his will.

**Wednesday:** Recite the Seventh Petition of the Lord’s Prayer with its explanation. How does this petition comfort persecuted Christians?

**Thursday:** Read Luke 6:22,23. Why should we rejoice when we are persecuted?

**Friday:** Read 1 Peter 5:8. How does Peter describe Satan? Who is stronger than Satan?

**Saturday:** Sing hymn 200, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” Identify those lines that speak of persecution and God’s protection from it.
2 do gether

• Sing favorite hymns that remind us of God’s power and his love for his church.

• Make a card or write a letter to an imaginary Christian who is being persecuted. Comfort and strengthen this person with appropriate words and Bible passages.

• Draw a cross and a crown to symbolize the victory God gives Christians through Christ. On the cross write Jesus’ name. On the crown write the names of Christians you know who speak boldly about Jesus, no matter what the cost.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, Lord of the church, please give us strength to withstand persecution. May your Word continue to spread and your church continue to stand, as you have promised. Amen.

Answers:  1. King Herod (Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great who ruled when Jesus was born); 2. beheaded him; 3. put him into prison;  4. Satan;  5. prayed earnestly;  6. God sent an angel to rescue Peter before he was to go to trial.  7. An angel appeared; the chains fell off Peter’s wrists; the two soldiers next to Peter did not wake up; Peter passed the other guards without being detected; and the city gate opened by itself.  8. It continued to spread and increase.  9. preserve (protect);  10. When the people called him a god, he did not stop them and give praise to the true God.  11. Herod was eaten by worms (in his intestines) and died.  12. punish

What does God do when Satan persecutes the church? preserves, enemies