

# scattered

## Youth Resource

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**Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Acts 8:4**

### Opening Activity:

Give everyone a sheet of paper (preferably larger than standard 8.5 x11 inches). Allow each person time to create a flag — with the paper and markers or crayons — for an imaginary country of their choosing. While they are coloring instruct them about the second part of the challenge: to develop five characteristics or moral guidelines that will make their country unique. (For example, everyone must eat veggies, or everyone must give their money to me.) Have the students write those five things on the back of their flag.

Once everyone is done, collect all the flags and redistribute them making sure no one gets their own. Tell them this is now the country they represent. Go around the room and have everyone show their “new flag” and read the statements written on the back.

### Reflection Questions:

- Which of the countries would you be most excited about joining?
- Which of the countries would you least like to live in?
- How did you feel when you had to represent the characteristics of your new country? (Let several people share.)
- Were there guidelines you were excited to represent? Were there characteristics you felt embarrassed or frustrated to represent?

### Transition:

Today we are going to talk about where God is calling us to go and what we are called to represent. But first we have to understand how things got started in the early church. What began with a few followers of Jesus sharing the truth of His resurrection quickly became much more.

#### Read Acts 2:41-47

- What happened to the church in just a short period of time? (*It grew rapidly. It went from a gang of people hiding out after Jesus' death to a booming mega-church.*)
- Look back at those verses. What things were they able to enjoy about their new life together?

#### Read Acts 8:1 and Acts 8:4

- What happened to their exciting new church? (*They were persecuted and forced to scatter.*)
- What does the verse say that shows us this was not going to be the end of the church? (*They preached the Word as they were scattered.*)

Fast forward a bit in history, and we see the followers of Jesus were successful in taking the message of Jesus and spreading it to countless new groups of people as a result of having to leave Jerusalem. Churches were started in many different regions of the area. Paul and others continued to travel and

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write letters to these new churches, helping them understand what Christianity was all about. One of those churches was in a city named Corinth. Paul's desire was to instill in the church the same passions and practices regarding Christ as he had. Let's take a look at 2 Corinthians 5:20-21.

- What do you think an ambassador is?
- Describe how you see them depicted in movies, books, TV, etc.

## What makes an ambassador special?

- Ambassadors are sent somewhere. They don't get to work from home.
- Ambassadors carry the message of someone else higher up. But the ambassador gets to speak and act with all the same authority as if they *were* that "higher up" person.
- Ambassadors must fly the flags of their country wherever they go. We usually see them on the front and back corners of the cars they ride in.
- Ambassadors are given a special license plate that gives them authority to park anywhere they want. (An ambassador could park their car in your driveway, and there is nothing you could do about it!)

## **Bringing it home:**

When Paul wrote to the church telling them we are all called to be ambassadors, he had already experienced what it means to be scattered and sent by God to do a job.

- What would have been the result had Paul and the others not bothered to share the good news of Jesus after being scattered from Jerusalem?
- What are some of the ways you are going to be naturally scattered from this area in the next few years of your life? (*college, jobs, families move away*)
- What are some of the ways we are scattered from each other when we aren't together at church? (*different sports teams, groups of friends, schools, clubs, interests, etc.*)

Ambassadors are meant to carry the message of someone else. Look again at the verses in 2 Corinthians 5:20-21.

- What specifically is the message stated for us to share on behalf of Christ? (*We can be reconciled to God.*)
- What do you think it means to be "reconciled"? It may help to look at a few verses prior to the ones we just read. (*Our relationship with God is made right again. There is no longer separation because of our sin.*)

The goal in every relationship is never separation, it is always reconciliation, especially when it comes to God.

- Why is that such an important message for us to carry with us in the world?

An ambassador is meant to fly the flag of the country they represent.

- What do you think it would mean for you to live your life "flying the flag of Jesus?"

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- Why do you think we sometimes fail to let ourselves be recognized by our faith in Jesus? What are we afraid of?
- Do you think in the end those fears are worth it when we compare them to the importance and the power of the message that we represent?

An ambassador gets to park wherever they need to. This speaks to our need and commitment to go to various places with the message and truth of the gospel.

- What are some of the most common “parking spaces” in your life? In other words, what are the environments that are most comfortable for you? (*E.g. my close friends, my sports team, church*)
- In our community, where are the places we could do a better job of “parking” ourselves where we are needed? (*helping the elderly, sitting with outsiders at school, engaging low income families, helping single moms, etc.*)
- What do some of these people think when all they see is Christians “parking” in the same spots over and over again?

## Closing:

Let me share this story with you from a pastor friend of mine:

“I have been on several mission trips over the years. Some places affect all of the senses more than others. We were in Guayaquil, Ecuador, while the city was undergoing a garbage strike. Along every street and roadway was a four-foot high continuous mound of garbage. The rotting piles were like ‘levies’ along the entire road as far as you could see — on both sides of the road. The piles were in the middle of the road wherever the road was divided with a median. The smell was incredible. The city was very poor. What made it worse was that we rode in the back of an open pickup truck everywhere we went. It was also convenient, however. If we ate while traveling through the city, we just threw our watermelon rinds off to the side.

“On one trip we were joined by two Ecuadorian teenage girls, squeezed in the back of the truck with us. Along the street was the congestion, the garbage, the ramshackle huts of bamboo and corrugated metal where the common people lived. We choked at the strong diesel fumes hovering at ground level, burning our eyes. Up high in the hills, above the city were shade trees and relatively nice homes. One of the girls in the truck pointed up and whispered to her friend, ‘Missionary houses.’ They giggled. Despite my limited Spanish, I understood what they said. American missionaries had a reputation — whether it was true or not — of living ‘above’ the poverty of the common people. The girl’s cutting comment made me sad. How effective can a missionary be if they are perceived as living ‘above’ the people? Being a true missionary was much more of a challenge than I thought.”

How did these missionaries miss the mark on understanding what it means to represent Christ as an ambassador everywhere we go?

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**Prayer:**

God help us to understand You are calling us to live our life with a purpose and a mission. Help us to see we represent You everywhere we are. I pray You would begin preparing us to be scattered all over this world to share the good news of Your salvation. Give us confidence and courage to do that even now in our schools, with our teams, in our households so we might carry with us the message of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.