

YOUTH INSTRUCTION CLASS

LESSON II: THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH – I

Review

What did Jesus tell His disciples to do in Matthew 28:19?

The book of *Acts* tells how the first missionaries spread the word about Jesus and His resurrection from the dead.

The Spread of Christianity

- What is the message about Jesus that all the world needs to know?
- What does it mean to "believe in Jesus?"
- How does God create faith in our hearts?
- Show the spread of Christianity using this map.



The Apostles

In the early days after Jesus' ascension (about 30-60 AD), Christ used His apostles to spread the gospel.

An *apostle* was a believer in Jesus who was specially sent by Him to preach and teach. To be an *apostle*, you had to:

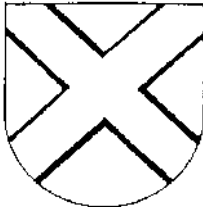
1. Have seen Jesus face to face and been with Him
2. Have been called by Jesus to spread the word concerning Him

Activity

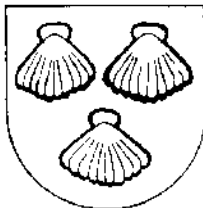
Most of the apostles have symbols that Christians have used to remember them or illustrate their ministries. Fill in the names of the original twelve next to their symbols. You can find lists of the apostles in **Matthew 10:2-4**, **Mark 3:16-19**, and **Luke 6:14-16**.



The symbol of the keys recalls the words of Jesus to this apostle in Matthew 16:19a: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." He was crucified in Rome under Nero. An ancient historian records that he was crucified upside down.



Church tradition says that this apostle was crucified on a cross of this shape. Some believe that he founded the Christian church in Russia.



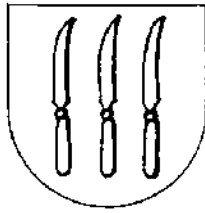
The apostle is represented by the shell, signifying His zeal and missionary spirit.



His symbol is a poisoned cup, because some early writers tell of a time when this apostle was poisoned yet did not die.



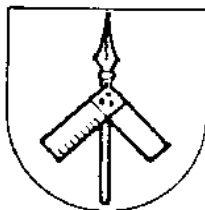
Read John 6:7 and you will see why this apostle's symbol includes loaves of bread.



Christian tradition says that this apostle was killed by being skinned alive. Thus, his symbol is three knives. This apostle is also known by the name _____ .



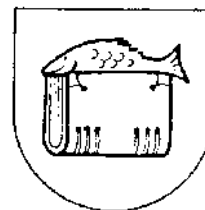
This apostle is represented by three money bags because he was a tax collector before Jesus called him. He was also known as _____. According to tradition, his ministry took him to Ethiopia.



There is evidence that this apostle did his mission work in India. His symbol includes a carpenter's square because it is said that while in India he built a church with his own hands.



This apostle is represented by a saw because it is believed that this apostle was executed by being cut in half. His ministry was in and around Jerusalem.



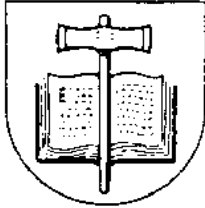
The symbol of the fish on the Bible reminds us that this apostle was a "fisher of men."



This apostle's symbol is a ship, signifying the long journeys that a missionary would often take to preach the gospel. He is also known as _____ .

This apostle is not usually represented by a Christian symbol. He betrayed Jesus and then killed himself. When a symbol is used for him, it is often a hangman's noose.

THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH APOSTLES



This apostle was a replacement after one was lost. Read Acts 1:23-26. His symbol is the double-edged sword because it is said that he was beheaded.



This man once persecuted the Christians, but Jesus called him to be an apostle later on. He was not one of the original 12 (13), but he was just as much an apostle as the others. He wrote down many of the books of the New Testament.

Assignment

- **Bible Study 1:** Learn what special gifts Jesus gave his apostles (Matthew 10:1, Mark 16:17-18). What did the apostles have to give to people that was more important than even these gifts?
- **Bible Study 2:** Choose one of the apostles and see what the Bible has to say about him. See if you can answer any or all of the following questions:
 - 1) Does the Bible mention when he was called, or were there any special circumstances surrounding his call as an apostle?
 - 2) Does the Bible mention any miracles he performed?
 - 3) Were there any special events that this apostle was a part of?
 - 4) List anything else that you find interesting about this apostle.