

Acts 8:1-8

August 10, 2025



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?
- What Scripture has been shaping you recently?
- Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?
- What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?
- What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?
- What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?
- What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Share the Sign

Setup

- Invite students to sit in a circle. If you have more than twenty students, form two circles.
- Each student picks a unique (appropriate) hand gesture to be their personal "sign" and demonstrates it for the group.
- Choose one student to be "it."

Starting the Game

- The student who is "It" stands in the center of the circle and closes his or her eyes.
- The rest of the group silently selects one player (Player One) whose sign will be passed around during the round.

- Once the group agrees on Player One, the student who is “It” opens his or her eyes, and the game begins.

How to Play: Passing the Sign

- Player One makes eye contact with another student and performs that person’s hand sign.
- The student receiving the sign performs Player One’s hand sign and then their own, making eye contact with another student, to continue the chain.
- The sign keeps getting passed around the circle in this way.

The Role of the Guesser

- The student who is “It” watches the group carefully, trying to figure out Player One’s original sign.
- If they correctly identify the sign, they swap places with the student holding the sign at that moment.

Restarting the Game

- The student who was caught becomes the new “It,” and the game resets with the group choosing a new Player One.

Teaching Moment

In our game, we shared hand gestures with the people around us, but in our passage today, we’ll read about the early church sharing something much more important with the people around them: the gospel.

DISCUSSION

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 8:1-3.

What happened to the believers after Stephen was martyred?

How might the believers have been tempted to respond? How would you have been tempted to respond?

What positive outcome do we learn about in these verses?

How do you see God working in this passage?

When was a time you experienced spiritual growth following a time of difficulty? How did the experience of difficulty contribute to that season of growth?

GOING DEEPER

How do passages like the one we've studied today apply to our lives in 2025?

Where are you facing difficulty now? How might God use this for His purposes in your life and the world?

APPLICATION

What does this passage teach us about God?

What can we learn from the church's reaction to persecution here?

What does this teach us about standing firm in our faith?

PRAYER

Thank God for the example of bold believers like the ones we've studied today. Pray over any difficulty anyone in your group is currently experiencing. Ask for His help as you seek to stand firm in your faith in every season and circumstance.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead as we continue the series on Acts next week.

August 17, 2025 --- Acts 8:9-25

COMMENTARY

Acts 8:1-8

8:1 Events surrounding Stephen's testimony and murder led to severe persecution of the church in Jerusalem. All believers except the apostles were scattered to nearby regions. Hence the persecution helped spread the gospel to surrounding areas such as Judea and Samaria. The facts that the apostles were not the focus of the persecution and that it came about after Stephen's death suggest that the persecution focused primarily on Hellenistic Jewish Christians, although the entire church was affected.

8:2 In the midst of such persecution, it took great courage to bury and mourn over Stephen.

8:3 Paul, or Saul, seems to have become lead persecutor. His reputation as a destructive force in Jerusalem (ravaging the church), and possibly elsewhere, seems to have preceded him to Damascus (9:13).

8:4-5 Among those who scattered with the heightened persecution was Philip, who went to a city in Samaria. This territory near Judea was made up of those who had not left under the Assyrian exile and had intermarried with non-Jews. Jews generally looked down on Samaria; ministry here was a significant step for the church, for it indicated that old biases had no place in Christianity. For bias against the Samaritans among Jesus's own disciples, see Luke 9:51-55. For the antagonism between Jews and Samaritans, see Lk 10:29-37; John 4:9.

8:6-8 The signs that accompanied Philip's message about Jesus, including the casting out of unclean spirits and the healing of many who were paralyzed and lame, ensured that the crowds were all paying attention. God was vouching for Philip's preaching.