

- Contact news services that report persecution in the international press.
- Agree together on your plans to deal with persecution.

3. Plan with co-workers activities for the next worship.

Choose activities that fit your flock's current needs and local circumstances.

Explain the truth about Jesus' suffering from Mark 8:34-38.

Explain the truth about Paul's suffering. Read, tell by memory or act out some of the stories about the persecution that Paul endured.

Teach the truth about how Jesus' followers have to suffer.

- Read and discuss any questions raised by the verses listed above.
- Explain how at times the Lord graciously gives His people a season of peace — sometimes by saving our persecutors (Acts 9:1-31) or responding to our prayers for government authorities (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Have **the children** present to the adults the drama and questions that they have prepared.

Let **believers** give testimonies about how they have responded recently to persecution.

To introduce the **Lord's Supper**, read or tell the story by memory from Mark 10:32-44, about the 'cup' of death that Jesus said that He and we would have to drink. Explain that the Lord's Supper helps us to consider ourselves dead in respect to sin, by being joined spiritually to Christ in His death and resurrection.

Form **small groups** of two and three. Have them pray, confirm plans for dealing with persecution, and encourage one another.

Memorize together 2 Timothy 3:12.

Deal with Persecution the Way Paul Did

Those who teach children should read study #94 for children.

“If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” *1 Corinthians 15:32*

Prayer. “Dear Lord, please give us the same strength, wisdom, patience and grace that you gave to Paul to deal with unfair persecution.”



1. Prepare your heart with God's Word to deal with persecution.

Note. Everybody suffers unpleasant things during their lifetime. There are different kinds of suffering: we suffer **affliction** without deserving it; we suffer **punishment** because we have done wrong; we suffer **oppression** from the devil; and we suffer **persecution** from those who hate our religion.

Religious persecution is illegal in all enlightened nations. Still, it happens. When we are persecuted unjustly, we should call upon God to bless our persecutors and to give us grace to remain faithful to Jesus. Believers who understand the law should also take peaceful social action to stop persecution of all faith communities.

Read **Mark 8:27-38** to learn important truths about Jesus and His suffering.

- Find who Jesus really was. [See verses 27-30]
- Find why Jesus came to earth. [verse 31-33]
- Find what Jesus' wants his followers to do. [verses 34-38]

Find in **Acts 8:3** what Saul did to believers before he met Christ.

Find in **Acts 9:1-31** how God turned Saul from hunting believers to serving them.

- How did Saul first learn that Jesus was alive and powerful? [verses 1-8]
- What was God's purpose for Saul? [verse 15]
- What did God say would happen to Saul? [verse 16]
- How did Saul first respond to Jesus? [verses 17-19]

Find in **Acts 20**:

- Where did Saul start teaching about Jesus? [verses 20-22].
- What did they try to do to him there? [verses 23-30].

Find in **Acts 13:49-14:23** how Saul (now called Paul) suffered while doing missionary work.

- Jesus said to shake the dust off your feet when people reject you (Matt. 10:14). Against what people did Paul and Barnabas do so, when they left Antioch? [Acts 13:50-51]
- What do disciples have to go through to enter the kingdom of God? [Acts 14:22]
- Why did the apostles flee from Iconium? [Acts 14:1-6]
- Why did the people who stoned Paul drag him out of Lystra? [Acts 14:7-20]

Find in **2 Corinthians 11:23-33** in how many different ways Paul suffered.

Find in **2 Timothy 3:10-12** who should expect to be persecuted.

Find in **Acts 16:16-34** why the people of Philippi mistreated Paul and Silas.

Find in **Acts 17:12** an example of what normally happens in spite of persecution.

Find in **1 Thessalonians 1:6-7** in what way the Thessalonians imitated Paul and Jesus.

Find in **1 Thessalonians 2:14-16** in what way they also imitated the churches in Judea.

Find in **1 Thessalonians 3:2-4** what we should tell new believers about suffering persecution?

Find in **Romans 8:16-17** what we will share with Christ if we share in His suffering.

Find in **Romans 8:28** why we can have peace in our hearts when people mistreat us.

Find in **Romans 8:33-39** over what things we shall have victory because of Jesus' love.

Find in **Matthew 5:10-12** what kind of reward we will receive if we endure persecution.

Find in **John 15:18-19** why the world hates those who believe in Christ.

2. Plan with co-workers activities to do during the week.

- Pray together for God's strength to expect and respond wisely to persecution.
- Visit and pray with victims of persecution, and assure them with God's promises.
- If your flock is neglecting an important activity because they fear persecution, then pray for guidance. Remember what Paul had done, that caused persecution. (He had followed Jesus, taught His Word, healed the sick, cast out demons, lived in a godly manner, and more.).