

# Road to Rome

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## Life in the Early Church and Paul's Missionary Journey's

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**An Adventure Year for Fifth and Sixth Graders**

## Introduction

*Road to Rome* invites participants into the life of the early church and introduces them to Christians who helped spread Christianity. Key among those is, of course, Paul and his companions. Young people will learn about him and his companions, where they traveled and how they contributed to the spread of the faith throughout the region.

They will also meet Cleon, a slave boy who escapes from his master and is taken in by a Jewish family that is in the process of becoming Christian in the face of the danger that creates for them. The father tries to buy Cleon from his master, but he refuses. So Cleon and an older slave board a ship which soon sinks leaving the two slaves with the question of whether they should save their master or let him drown.

This story invites participants to reflect on our own cultures experience with slavery and the ways in which we experience difficult ethical decisions in our daily lives. They will also be invited to reflect on how Christianity is spread today and how they can be Christ-bearers in their own lives.

*Road to Rome* is a fun and interesting way for young people to learn about the early church, Paul and the Epistles. It engages them in role playing and encourages them to experience the danger and wonder of Christian life in the days when the church was in its infancy. This program is designed for fifth and sixth graders for use as a Sunday School program (would also work in a 4-6<sup>th</sup> grade class). Portions of it can also be used as a summer program in a camp or conference setting. And it is especially appropriate for sixth graders in the alternate year of the Journey to Adulthood youth ministry program.

## Acknowledgements

Portions of this program are drawn from the Mustard Seed Series by the Rev. Anita Kiere. We are especially grateful for her story of Cleon, the idea of building a diorama of Caesarea and her help in forming questions for discussion.

The story of Paul and portions of his letters are adapted from the Message Bible.

The cover photograph is by

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# WELCOME TO THE EARLY CHURCH

## PREPARATION

This program incorporate three primary activities – worshipping together as an early Christian group, exploring stories of Paul and the fictional story of the slave boy Cleon, and building a diorama of Caesarea as a way to learn about life at the time of the early church. Caesarea is a good location both because of its significant role in the Bible and because we usually focus on Jerusalem. Cornelius, the first recorded Gentile convert lived in Caesarea; Peter lived about 30 miles away. Phillip, the evangelist, lived in Caesarea. Paul passed through the city several times. Herod the Great built Caesarea on the site of a small, ancient port city between the years of 22 to 9 BC. That means that the city was fairly new, relative to other cities of the region. And it was a showcase – an amazing man-made harbor that made the city a major port city, a showy palace on a peninsula, a striking amphitheater and even a water/sewer system that brought fresh water into the city from miles away. Inhabited by Greeks and Jews and filled with immigrants and visitors from around the region who came with the sea traffic, Caesarea is an interesting city to explore and a great backdrop for learning about the early church.


### Room Set-up

Set up your classroom to resemble a dining room in a home in Ceserea. This is the most likely place where early Christians would have met – around the dining room table in the largest home of local Christians.

A church table with a tablecloth and folding chairs are fine. Try to eliminate much of the rest of the room’s décor if it is a usual Sunday School room, replacing it with things you might see in a home of the era. For example, remove pictures, posters from the Sunday School program five years ago, Bibles, hymnals, books, etc. If this room needs to be used by others during the week you may not be able to do as much as you can if its use is dedicated to this group. Adapt the room décor to your situation.

Pull the shades/drapes or cover the windows with black paper to make the room as dark as possible. The goal is to create a bit of the sense of danger early Christians experienced when they met. They could meet in homes – as friends gathered for a meal or visitation. But there was the danger that someone might identify this as a Christian gathering and in many quarters that kind of attention was dangerous.

For the first month or so (depending on how long you choose to maintain the role play), you will need enough candles on the table to provide sufficient illumination. Use pillar candles that are less likely to tip over and select holders that are wide, flat and sturdy. Also, make sure you have at least one working fire extinguisher handy and that you know how to use it.

Put a sign outside the door that says – “Please knock and wait to be admitted to this room.” If you can obtain one, put a mezuzah (pronounced muh-ZOO-zuh) on the right side of the door, in the upper third of the doorpost (i.e., approximately shoulder height). A mezuzah is a little decorative box that contains a piece of parchment with the Shema written on it – Jews Add a small fish symbol in some rather inconspicuous place – perhaps right under the mezuzah. 

Cover the lower half of the door window with black paper – leave the upper half that is at the eye level of an average adult open in accordance with “safe church” rules (i.e., leave space for an adult to be able to look into the room as they pass by). If your hallway has a light right outside the door you might find a way to unscrew the lightbulb or shelter the door window from light in some way to reduce the amount of light getting into the room. The idea is to darken the room (not making it completely dark) without going to too much trouble and with the safeguards mandated by safe church principles in place.

Post a “calendar” on the wall opposite the door that says:

### The Curious History of the Gregorian Calendar

Prior to the British Calendar Act of 1751 the official British calendar differed from that of continental Europe by eleven days—that is, September 2 in London was September 13 in Paris, Lisbon, and Berlin. The discrepancy had sprung from Britain's continued use of the Julian calendar, which had been the official calendar of Europe since its invention by Julius Caesar (after whom it was named) in 45 B.C.

Caesar's calendar, which consisted of eleven months of 30 or 31 days and a 28-day February (extended to 29 days every fourth year), was actually quite accurate: it erred from the real solar calendar by only 11½ minutes a year. After centuries, though, even a small inaccuracy like this adds up. By the sixteenth century, it had put the Julian calendar behind the solar one by 10 days.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII ordered the advancement of the calendar by 10 days and introduced a new corrective device to curb further error: century years such as 1700 or 1800 would no longer be counted as leap years, unless they were (like 1600 or 2000) divisible by 400.

If somewhat inelegant, this system is undeniably effective, and is still in official use in the United States. The Gregorian calendar year differs from the solar year by only 26 seconds—accurate enough for most mortals, since this only adds up to one day's difference every 3,323 years.

Despite the prudence of Pope Gregory's correction, many Protestant countries, including England, ignored the papal bull. Germany and the Netherlands agreed to adopt the Gregorian calendar in 1698; Russia only accepted it after the revolution of 1918, and Greece waited until 1923 to follow suit. And currently many Orthodox churches still follow the Julian calendar, which now lags 13 days behind the Gregorian.

From <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/gregorian1.html>

**Today is Sunday**  
**12 September 2010**  
**4th of Tishrei, 5771**  
**א"עשת בתשרי י"ד**

Alternatively, you can put the calendar up for the date you are meeting in the year 59 AD in Caesarea (which is when and where this course is set). In that case, your calendar would read:

**Today is Sunday**  
**12 September 58**  
**8th of Tishrei, 3819**  
**ט"יתת בתשרי י"ח**

You can find the exact information for the day you are starting your group by using the date converter on this website: <http://www.hebcal.com/converter>. The main site, [www.hebcal.com](http://www.hebcal.com) has other interesting information about holidays, etc. For example, you can select the first item: Hebcal Interactive Jewish Calendar, on the next page, pick Hebrew (not Gregorian) and it will give you the entire year's calendars. Play with the options to get the one you like best or use the one provided at the end of this lesson plan for September of 2010.

On another wall, you might post a map of the area and/or something that about Caesarea – a town promotional poster or whatever your imagination comes up with. You can find information at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caesarea> or you can Google Caesarea and select “Images” to get plenty of pictures, maps, etc. that you can print and post (while it is not legal to publish copies of most images or texts found on the internet, you can make copies for educational use). Make sure you have a map of the region posted on the wall or available to show. You can buy one or use one you find on the internet. You can check out <http://www.bible.ca/maps/>. This site has lots of great maps you can download and use with this course.

Prepare a Character Sheet for each young person using the characters at the end of this lesson. It would also be useful to provide place cards for each person that has their character's name on both sides. Each character has information about life in the times of the early church that they will be able to offer to the group during the first few sessions. The chart tells you who has what information so you will know who to call on. This also means that you need to pass out the characters in the order given (the first characters have more direct information while the later ones have information that is interesting but not essential – and is information you can offer as the leader. Read the characters ahead of time – you may choose to give certain characters to particular youth. For example, if you have a singer in your midst, give the Cantor Character to him/her.

If you have fewer youth than characters, give each participant two or three sheets and invite them to pick one character for themselves and then assign the other two to be their cousin, sibling, friend, neighbor, etc. Then they can “speak for” the other characters with that topic comes up. So, for example, when you are talking about buildings, Hannah can explain that her cousin Danial is a builder and...(add info from Daniel's sheet). That way you will still have access to the information provided on the character sheets.

If you have more youth than characters, use the WORD file to make extra characters. Take as many of the original characters as you need – except for Pricilla and Aquila which are the leader roles. If you make copies of Junia and Andronicus or Gideon and Hannah, who are the other house church hosts, omit the church host information as three couples are about enough hosts. Make duplicates of the number of pages you need. Then change the names but leave the description “as is” (read through to make sure you change the spouse names, etc.). You'll also need to add the appropriate names to the center header “Things only you and ABC know.” Here are some names that Paul mentions in Romans 16 that you can use:

- Phoebe, (Paul identifies her as a deacon of the church at Cenchreae and “a benefactor of many and of myself as well.”)
- Epænetus, the first convert in Asia
- Mary, who has worked very hard among the Roman church
- Ampliatus, “my beloved in the Lord.”
- Urbanus, “our co-worker in Christ” and my beloved Stachys.
- Apelles and those who belong to the family of Aristobulus
- Herodion “my relative” (e.g., Paul's relative – make him a cousin or uncle)
- Narcissus
- Tryphaena and Tryphosa
- Persis

- Rufus and his mother—“a mother to me also”
- Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, Philologus, Julia and Olympas
- Nereus and his sister

Acts 10 says that the congregation in Antioch was blessed with a number of prophet-preachers and teachers including:

- Barnabas
- Simon, nicknamed Niger
- Lucius the Cyrenian
- Manaen, an advisor to the ruler Herod

These names and relationships give you some ideas to weave into the character sheets. And, if you are ambitious, you can, of course, research more roles and write up your own characters. And internet search will turn up some good ideas. We could certainly use bakers, butchers and candlestick makers; sailors, scribes, teachers, doctors, etc., etc. Use our template and your imagination.

## Worship Materials

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The Worship Bulletins contain the worship service you can use with this program. However, you may also want to order a copy of the Reformed Jewish Prayer Book to share with the group, such as:

*Paths of Faith: The New Jewish Prayer Book for Synagogue and Home : For Weekdays, Shabbat, Festivals & Other Occasions* (Hardcover) [\$18] Highly recommended – this is the one used in the program’s worship services.

*Mishkan T’Filah: A Reform Siddur: Weekdays, Shabbat, Festivals, and Other Occasions of Public Worship* (English and Hebrew Edition) [\$49]

We strongly recommend that you obtain a copy of the Message Bible by Eugene Peterson. It is a contemporary paraphrase of the Bible, so it has the author’s interpretation embedded in it. However, it is a credible paraphrase and it is much more interesting to this age group than even the New Revised Standard Version (our next preference).

You may also want to order a copy of the *Pocket Bible Guide* by Linda L. Grenz. It is available from LeaderResources and you are entitled to a 10% discount if you order ten or more copies. Log into your church (account set up when you ordered *Road to Rome*) and when you check out and it will automatically deduct 10% from your order.

## Food

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Place plates with pita bread and two pitchers: one with water the other with red/purple grape juice which you will serve mixed half and half (in Jesus' day, they would have mixed it 5 or 6 parts water to 1 part wine which you can also do although it won't taste especially good!). Set out dishes of hummus, drizzled with olive oil, fruits, nuts and/or other Mediterranean or Jewish dishes. Some recipes are provided at the end of this lesson plan if you are ambitious – or just buy easy to obtain items at the grocery store. Other foods that could be on the table include: grapes, raisins, dates, figs, olives, cheese (especially ricotta, mozzarella and goat cheese), butter, honey, yogurt (sweetened with honey), yogurt cheese (with herbs or sweetened with honey), pistachios, almonds, walnuts. You will want to have these meals in place for that first two sessions, at a minimum, or for as long as you like. Some of this depends on your group, the willingness of the adults to supply food (ask parents to take turns). And it may just depend on the size of your room and whether you can recreate the “dining room worship setting” each week in addition having enough space to build the model of the city of Caesarea – which needs another table. If your space is limited, the dining room table will need to morph into the base for the city model by the fourth session.

## Caesarea Diorama

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A major project of the year is creating a diorama of the city of Caesarea. Do not try to get this done quickly – it can, in fact, take most of the year. The purpose of doing this is to engage the young people in conversation about life in the early church. Each character knows about some aspect of life in Caesarea – your job is to draw out that information by asking questions (we'll give you examples to help you get started).

There are many ways you can build a diorama. You can use plasters, paper mache, clay or other landscaping materials – or a combination of all of the above. One way to do this is to have each person build something related to his/her profession and then help the others as well. The carpenters and construction guys (and their wives) obviously build the houses; the potter and his wife can make pots, plates, etc.; the shoemaker might construction a shoe shop or the women might work together on making the tools, sleeping mats, household items, etc.

If your group reacts negatively to “couples” working together, (as is likely at this age) you might have them work in teams and in stages instead. So everyone helps with the initial layout,

sketching where the Mediterranean Sea is on one side and the pastures/fields on the other side of the city. Figure out how many houses you will build, where the marketplace is, etc. and form teams to build each section of the city. You can easily go on the internet and search of images of houses of the time. Remind the group that while Caesarea was a newer city with lots of wealthy Greek and Jewish homeowners, there were also poor people who lived at the edges and many of the early Christians were poor people attracted to Jesus's message of respect and equality for all. So they will need to build at least one big, fancy house (where this group meets each week), one middle class home (with a separate, outside rooms for livestock) and one poor family's home (single room with livestock inside). If you just do three homes, you can gather them around a single courtyard – even though that would not have happened in real life. If you have a larger group or enthusiastic youth, you can build the wealthier homes looking over the harbor, the poorer family homes at the edges right next to the city walls and the middle class homes in between.

Don't be afraid of taking a fair amount of time in planning what to do and building the diorama. Remember that the primary reason for doing this is not just to make a pretty diorama – it is to learn about how the early Christians lived and what they believed. Each character has information they need to share with the entire group. So you want to engage them in thinking about their character's life and what he or she might have done, said, felt, etc. while living in the city, talking with family and friends or coming to worship. These discussions are more important than "getting it done." You have an entire year to work on this project, so on days when the youth are talkative, you might do nothing or very little on the diorama. On days when they aren't into talking, you can focus their attention on constructing something, painting, modeling clay figures, etc.

### **Logistics of Building a Diorama**

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You'll need a sturdy foundation for your diorama. Something like ¾" plywood would be ideal. Remember that once you put on all of those building materials, it is going to be pretty heavy. So don't choose a base that's too lightweight and then find that it will bend or even break when you try to move it.

Finally – this is very important! Before you begin, compute how large your diorama will be. Take a sheet and fold it into the size you plan to make your diorama. Now have two people hold it and walk, keeping the sheet taut between you. See if you can walk the "board" from the car to the youth group room (as if you were moving the board into place at the beginning of the year) and then from the room to the parish hall or wherever you want to display it at the end of the

year (keeping it flat as if it were a completed diorama). There is nothing worse than spending a year building a wonderful diorama and then discovering that you can't get it out of the door and up the stairs to the parish hall! So follow the carpenter's motto: "measure twice, cut once." Make it as large as you possibly can (easier to build). But just make sure you can carry it to wherever you want to go. If your parish hall is available for the group to meet and is a safe place for this project to live while it is being built over several months, you might just want to set up a table there and cover the project with a sheet each week.

### ***HOME-MADE BUILDING MATERIALS***

Paper mache is messy but fairly easy to make. And it is probably the least expensive option. Create your paper mache form. For your city, assemble a collection of boxes to serve as the base – cover them with chicken wire and then cover that with paper mache. More directions are in Session Three.

Prepare your desired paper mache paste (find recipes for paper mache paste below). Tear newspaper into strips. The length of your strips may vary depending on the size of your paper mache project; however, you will want your strips to be about 1- to 2-inches wide.

Dip one piece of newspaper at a time into prepared paper mache paste. You want to newspaper strip saturated. Hold the strip over the paste bowl and run it through your fingers to squeeze off excess paste.

Stick the newspaper strip over the form you want to paper mache, and smooth it down with your fingers.

Completely cover your creation with a layer of newspaper strips. They should all be overlapping and running in different directions.

After one layer is applied, let it dry completely. This can take up to 24 hours so this is a good thing to let sit until the next Sunday.

Add a second layer of newspaper strips and let it dry completely.

Repeat this process until you get the desired effect, but you should have at least three layers of paper mache newspaper strips so you can see that this will take up several weeks.

Paint and decorate the finished house, wall, well, etc.

### *Paper Mache Paste Recipes*

The no-cook method will probably work best in a youth group room setting. To make this paper mache paste, simply mix together 1 part flour to 2 parts water plus a couple of tablespoons of salt to help prevent mold. You will want it to be the consistency of thick glue, but you also want it to be runny and not thick like paste. Add more water or flour as necessary. Mix well to remove any lumps. If your youth don't like the smell of the glue mixture you can add a few sprinkles of cinnamon to combat the odor. You should be able to store this glue in a covered bowl or jar, in the refrigerator, for a few days but probably not longer than to the next Sunday.

To make the cooked version of a paper mache paste, you need 1 part flour to 5 parts water. Start out by putting 4 parts water into a pot on the stove and bring it to a boil. While you are waiting for it to boil, mix 1 part flour to 1 part warm water. Beat this mixture briskly to remove lumps then slowly add it to the boiling water, stirring constantly. Let it boil for 2 - 3 minutes. It should be smooth and have the consistency of thick glue. If necessary, you can add more water or flour mixed with cold water in small amounts until you get the desired consistency. This version tends to keep a bit longer and stick a bit better – but not probably enough to be worth the trouble of cooking it!

A resin based paper mache paste is messier to work with (so better for youth than children) but it dries to a very hard finish which will make your finished project more durable. This paste is probably the best option for a model city you want to have around for a year. You'll need a cup of flour, ½ cup Resin Glue Powder and 4 cups of water. Put 3 cups of water in a pot and bring it to a boil. While you are waiting for it to boil, mix the 1 cup of flour and the 1/2 cup of powdered glue resin together. Slowly stir in 1 cup of very warm water. Once it is all blended together, beat this mixture briskly to remove lumps. Once your pot of water is boiling, slowly stir in the flour mixture. Mix well and let it boil for 2 - 3 minutes or until it is clear and smooth. This too will keep for a few days or a week in the refrigerator so don't mix up huge batches of it each week.

Finally, you can also just buy liquid starch and use that. That is certainly quicker and easier and it keeps forever so you just open the bottle and pour. But it will cost more, if that is a consideration.

### *Clay Recipes*

You can make your own modeling clay by mixing: 2 ½ cups flour, cup salt, 1 cup water and food coloring (optional). Store in the refrigerator wrapped in plastic wrap and in a sealed plastic bin to keep it from drying out. A cooked clay recipe: mix and cook over low heat until mixture

thickens – 1 cup salt, 1 cup flour, 1 cup water, food coloring (optional). Cool before using; store in the refrigerator.

### **READY-MADE BUILDING MATERIALS**

You can, of course, buy modeling clay. Modeling clay is a term that covers a group of malleable products used for sculpting and building. All kinds of modeling clay can be shaped and worked with modeling tools for sculpting, blending, texturing, thinning, scraping, poking, and cutting. They can also be rolled with rolling pins, molded, and worked with tools such as extruders, potato mashers, and garlic presses to create various effects. Modeling clay can be built up on its own or built onto a pre-formed armature. There are four basic types of modeling clay.

Oil-based modeling clay, sometimes called plastilina or even plasticine, several distinct properties that make it useful: unlike pottery clay and wax, oil-based modeling clay stays soft and workable; it neither hardens nor dries. Unlike pottery clay, it comes in a wide array of colors that can be used as purchased or blended. Also, unlike pottery clay, oil-based modeling clay doesn't stick to your hands. However, it cannot be fired (essential if you want to make a real pot, for example).

Polymer modeling clay is available as several products under the names of Fimo®, Sculpey®, and Premo®, for example. These different polymer modeling clays have various degrees of softness at room temperature, and they can be mixed to combine their individual properties — for example, to make a softer clay stiffer by combining it with a firmer clay. They are finished by baking in an oven at 265°–275°F (129°–135°C) for 15 minutes for each ¼ inch (6mm) of thickness. Although they are made to be paintable upon baking, polymer modeling clays are available in a wide variety of colors, which can be mixed. In addition, some special feature colors have been created, including translucent, fluorescent, metallic, and bright colors. Other featured specialty clays have a stone texture or glow in the dark (always a winner with youth – and a neat way to make a fireplace glow or create a night scene with lamps, fire, etc..

Dough modeling clay resembles the product PlayDoh®, and is often, in fact, called playdough. Playdoughs are easily made at home in both cooked and uncooked versions (see home-made recipes above), and are less expensive than some of the other types of modeling clay. They are made of such ingredients as flour, cornstarch, cream of tartar, oil, and water. They can be colored when made, for example, with food coloring, or have color added after. One of the useful features of dough modeling clay is that it reusable, though, for example, in the case of a

gingerbread house, baking is used to set and preserve the form. Flour-based products — including PlayDoh®, which clearly states that it is meant to be used and reused rather than employed to make lasting items — have a tendency to crack as they dry. However, there are some other types of air-drying modeling clay available, sometimes called “curable clay,” such as Activ-Clay® and Model Magic®, that yield better results in this respect. For a city diorama, these would be a better choice – nothing worse the spending time building something only to have it crack and crumble.

Pottery Clay or Firing Clay is used for pottery and stoneware, and is worked by hand and on a potter’s wheel. It is meant to be air-dried and then fired in a kiln so isn’t really an option for this project. However, you want to be aware that it exists so you don’t inadvertently buy this kind of clay instead of one of the more appropriate versions.

Celluclay is a specific product that is somewhere between paper mache and clay. It is a low cost, recycled paper medium that mixes easily and mold quickly. It can be sanded, sawed, nailed and water proofed. Wet Celluclay can be added to areas already dried . Unused mixed Celluclay can be stored for several days in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator. Celluclay adheres to almost any surface and can be combined with a variety of materials. Celluclay requires no special tools for working. (simple sculpting tools include plastic knife, fork, stirrer, toothpicks, cookie cutters, etc.) You control the thickness and the texture - it can mimic just about any texture known producing lightweight, durable and thoroughly economical sculpture of any dimension.

Mix Celluclay to desired working consistency and press, extrude, free form roll, drape, pinch, coil or slab build. For larger or more dimensionally daring works consider an armature of wire, wire mesh, cardboard, Styrofoam, paper or even a temporary armature like a balloon. To get a flat sheet, simply roll it between sheets of plastic with a household rolling pin. Add more water to prepared Celluclay for a superior casting pulp and pour into prepared molds for dimensional cast paper or, for example, pour it inside of the city walls to create a flat surface that you can stamp and roll to create stone courtyards, road, etc.

You can color it with chalk, pastel or crayons, paint, markers, drawing mediums and varnish. You can dye it by adding dry fabric dyes to the water when preparing the mixture. Any dry dye seems to work - the higher quality dyes yield a deeper color. Good results can be had even with the most common and economical ones available. To dye 1 LB of Celluclay - use the same amount of dye recommended by the manufacturer for 1 LB of dry fabric. Mixing tones of dyed

material yields novel faux stone effects - add a little Snow Dazzle or Candle Glitter for a stone like appearance.

You can also embed a variety of materials from dried floral materials to papers, mosaic tiles to beads, wires plain, twisted or mesh, glass squiggles, tiles, sea glass and almost anything else you can think of! Stamping on the wet surface provides an embossed look to bas relief richness – brush ink or water onto the stamp to prevent sticking.

To add a finish that is very subtly colored - sprinkle sand on to the prepared Celluclay surface , cover and roll. If the warped surfaces not to your liking, spray the dry surface with warm water, cover and iron with a hot iron...the Celluclay will relax and flatten. Thicker pieces may require repeated spraying and ironing - don't force it. To keep dust to a minimum, place the dry product and water along with anything else being included in a freezer quality zip-lock plastic bag and mix in the the closed bag - having pushed out the excess air in closing. If the Celluclay isn't "plastic" and of a good working condition - it simply needs to be kneaded and wedged more before using - this includes "waking it up" again after you have let it sit between work sessions. Remember you can store prepared Celluclay almost indefinitely in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

You can use just about anything to help create shapes – push molds, candy molds, soap molds and any shapes you find in the kitchen, hardware store or junk drawer. All work well - dust with cornstarch or baby powder to be sure the cast piece releases easily. Clay tools and clay extruding tools (Clay Gun) make great Celluclay tools. When extruding Celluclay - be sure it is extremely well mixed - and a touch thinner to make it easier to extrude. Plastic Palette knives smooth the surface easier than sanding or rubbing with steel wool once dry. However, Celluclay can be smoothed to an almost polished surface once dry.<sup>1</sup>

## ***OTHER MATERIALS***

Your diorama will need a variety of other materials, depending on what your group decides to do. We encourage you to ask the youth to find and bring in some of the "extras" – bits of cloth and leather to make clothes and shoes, stones, twigs, a variety of tools to carve or decorate the clay, etc. You will probably need to supply the paint, brushes, sponges, etc. but they might even

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from directions provided by Activa Products

have some of those at home. Ask after the second session and start a “supplies box” where they can put things they bring. The more you involve them, the more it becomes their diorama instead of yours!

Read through the “Supplies” section of each lesson plan to see what you will need for each lesson. The items you need to order ahead of time include:

- Additional copies of the *Cleon Makes His Choice* – ten copies were included with your order; if you need more, they are available from LeaderResources ([www.LeaderResources.org/cleon](http://www.LeaderResources.org/cleon)). You are entitled to a 10% discount if you order five or more copies. Log into your church (account set up when you ordered *Road to Rome*) and when you check out and it will automatically deduct 10% from your order.
- Newsprint, markers, tape (masking or blue painter’s tape), acrylic or poster paint and brushes (for diorama project) lighter watercolor paints and brushes (for map project)
- Food, drink and dining setups – candles, tablecloths, eating utensils for whatever you’re serving, etc. See RECIPES below. We strongly encourage you to ask the parents to take responsibility for preparing and bringing the food items – it’s a good way to involve them and takes that task off of the leader’s list of “To Do’s.”
- Room décor – ways to block light from windows and anything else your imagination and resources allow you to help create the feeling of a home in Caesarea. Rugs, wall hangings, baskets, pottery bowls and jugs would all be appropriate. Look for things that are handmade or rustic in feel.
- A keyboard, guitar or other musical instrument (with player) who can help support the Psalm chants.
- *Paths of Faith: The New Jewish Prayer Book for Synagogue and Home : For Weekdays, Shabbat, Festivals & Other Occasions*
- *Cleon Makes His Choice* available at [www.LeaderResources.org](http://www.LeaderResources.org).
- Optional but recommended: *Deluxe Then and Now Bible Maps* from Rose Publishing or a comparable book of maps of the region and time. This version has plastic overlays with current countries which is helpful but not necessary.



# RECIPES

## House Bread (El Khobz)

*This is a Middle Eastern flatbread that is easy to make. El Khobz basically means the “house bread” sort of like the “house wine.” If you do this bread weekly, you might offer it for use at the Eucharist.*

### Ingredients

- 1 cup semolina flour
- 2 cups unbleached white flour
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. sesame seeds
- 1 package active dry yeast
- 1 tsp. granulated sugar
- ¼ cup warm water
- 2¾ cups water
- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 Tbsp. semolina flour for the countertop

### Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease a large round metal pan (approx 12" across & 1.5" deep) or a cookie sheet. Mix yeast, sugar, and water in a cup or glass dish and set in a warm place until the yeast is bubbly.

Mix the flours, salt, and sesame seeds in a large bowl. Add the water, yeast mixture and oil slowly in batches, stirring as you add liquids. When it begins to pull together, remove from the bowl and knead the dough for 8-10 minutes. The dough should be smooth and elastic. Cover with a moist, hot towel and let rest for 5 minutes.

Spread some semolina flour on the countertop. If you are using the cookie sheet method, cut the dough in half and make each half into a smooth ball. Place the two balls on the cookie sheet or put the single ball into the round pan. Cover with moist, hot towels and let stand another 5 minutes. Then flatten the dough balls into a round disk about 5" in diameter. If you are using the round pan, flatten the dough until it covers the bottom of the pan. Cover with a moist, hot towel and let rise in a warm place until doubled in size (about an hour).

Use a sharp knife make an X on the top and bake 15 minutes. Then lower the heat to 325°F and bake another 25–35 minutes or until it is browned and sounds hollow when you tap the bottom. Remove from the oven and let cool. Cut just before serving.

Yield: 1 large round loaf or two smaller round loafs

## Challah

### Ingredients

1¼ cups warm water  
1 packet of active dry yeast  
½ cup honey  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
2 eggs  
1½ teaspoons salt  
4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

### Directions

In a large bowl, sprinkle yeast over barely warm water and let sit until bubbly. Then beat in honey, oil, 1 egg, one egg yolk (reserve the white for the egg wash), and salt. Add the flour one cup at a time, beating after each addition, graduating to kneading with hands as dough thickens. Knead until smooth and elastic and no longer sticky, adding flour as needed. Cover with a damp clean cloth and let rise for 1 hour or until dough has doubled in bulk.

Punch down the dough and turn out onto floured board. Divide in half and knead each half for five minutes or so, adding flour as needed to keep from getting sticky. Divide each half into thirds and roll into long snake about 1½ inches in diameter. Pinch the ends of the three snakes together firmly and braid from middle. Either leave as braid or form into a round braided loaf by bringing ends together, curving braid into a circle, pinch ends together. Grease two baking trays and place finished braid on each. Cover with towel and let rise about one hour.

Preheat oven to 375 °F. While the oven is heating, beat the egg white with a few drops of water and brush a generous amount over each braid. You can also use a whole egg if you like a more yellow appearance – or omit this step entirely. The function of the egg is to make the top shiny which some people prefer. Bake at 375 °F for about 25-35 minutes. Check after about 20 minutes and if it is getting too brown, cover with foil. Bread should have a nice hollow sound when thumped on the bottom. Cool on a rack for at least one hour before slicing.

You can add raisins or dried cranberries to the egg/milk mixture when making the dough. If you prefer a savory challah, you can add herbs, chopped onions or garlic when making the dough. You can also sprinkle it with cinnamon sugar or poppy seeds (sweet) or large granular salt or herb salts (savory) before baking.

Yield: 10–12 servings

## “Camel's” Milk

*Camel's milk has a very strong taste and, of course, isn't readily available in America! This recipe uses cow's milk instead (although you can also use goat milk). It is served warm or very cold.*

### Ingredients

6 cups milk  
1 tsp. saffron  
2–3 tsp. sugar  
½ tsp. cardamom or nutmeg

### Directions

Pour milk and sugar into a pot and bring to a boil at low heat. Add the saffron and cardamom or nutmeg and boil for 2–3 minutes. Add more sugar if you prefer a sweeter drink. Serve in warmed mugs or refrigerate for several hours.

### Substitutions

You could use goat's milk if it is available. While it is not as strong as camel's milk, it will have a slightly different flavor so will create a closer approximation to the experience of drinking real camel's milk. Saffron is expensive so you may want to substitute red and yellow food coloring – you want a reddish/orangish shade, not pink.

Yield: 8–12 servings

# LESSON PLANS

## SESSION ONE

# Encountering the Early Church

### SUPPLIES

- Food and drink of your choice
- Candles, tablecloth
- Calendar page, worship bulletin and character sheet for each participant

### Getting Started

On the first week, set out plates of pita bread and any other food you choose to serve in the center of the table along with a pitcher of grape juice and one of water next to one of the teachers. The teachers assemble ahead of time inside the room, the lights are off and the candles are lit. Position one teacher at the far end of the room and the second teacher next to the door. Wait. As the young people arrive and, you hope, knock on the door, have the teacher close to the door call out “Who is it?” and as each young person answers, open the door a crack or fold back the paper on the window so you can confirm the person’s identity. Then open the door and hurriedly pull the young person into the room, immediately closing the door behind them. Greet the new arrival with relief and joy and invite them to sit and enjoy the refreshments. Remember, you need to look like an ordinary gathering of friends, just in case someone should take offence at a gathering of Christians.

Distribute the characters (samples at the end of this lesson) to each young person as they enter and invite them to read about their character while you wait for the rest of the group to arrive. You might want play some Jewish music during this gathering time if you have CDs or connection to the internet.

### Worship

Distribute the Worship Service lead the group through the opening worship. Begin by explaining that you will be using the language that is now used in the Reformed Jewish service in America. Conservative and Orthodox Jews pray in Hebrew but since we don’t know Hebrew, we are using

the service used by Reformed Jews. Also, tell them that this first week you will just say the words, but later the group will learn how to chant some of the words to hear what that is like.

Lead the worship service using the first bulletin (the three bulletins only vary by the section marked by “For the Body” or “For the Soul” or “For the Torah.”) The bulletins appear to be “backwards” from our usual mode because Hebrew is read right to left instead of left to right. So this is what a bulletin with both Hebrew and English translations would look like. Also, kids will think it is neat!

Invite the group to enjoy the food you provided. Pour them a half class of grape juice with a half glass of water. If you want to make it a bit more authentic in texture, blend in a handful of blueberries to give it a more “pulpy” feel. As you are pouring it, ask if they know why you are mixing it with water. If no one volunteers, explain that in many parts of the world the water wasn’t pure enough to drink by itself. So people mixed it with a bit of wine which acted as a disinfectant. Point out that the alcohol content would be greatly diluted but was enough to kill bacteria. Explain that this would have been a fairly normal meal – bread, wine and then some other savory items (cheese, olives, nuts) and/or sweet items such as raisins, dates, etc.

## Discussion

---

Explain what this year will be about using the Introduction above. Tell them that today they will learn about how the early Christians met in community. Next week they will learn more about how they worshipped. And tell them a bit about the model of the city that you will build.

Explain that it is the year 58 AD. Point to the calendar and explain that the Jewish year is different from the Gregorian year that we use. Pass out the printed calendar at the end of the lesson and invite them to look at it. Jews used different names for the months and days of the week...and others in the region used still other calendars and names. Explain that Jews worship on their Sabbath Day which is from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday.

Ask:

- If this is 58 AD, how long has it been since Jesus died and rose again? [about 25 years – so this is in the very early stages of the transition from Judaism to Christianity as a separate religion or faith group.]
- What has happened since then – who can remember what we know about the early days when the disciples preached in Jerusalem? Encourage them to recall the Pentecost

experience and anything else they can remember hearing about the Christian community in the early days.

- What must it have been like in those early days? Read Act 2: 38-47 – encourage the group to talk about the wonder, excitement, energy that is reflected in this passage.
  - Peter said, "Change your life. Turn to God and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, so your sins are forgiven. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is targeted to you and your children, but also to all who are far away—whomever, in fact, our Master God invites." He went on in this vein for a long time, urging them over and over, "Get out while you can; get out of this sick and stupid culture!" That day about three thousand took him at his word, were baptized and were signed up. They committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles, the life together, the common meal, and the prayers. Everyone around was in awe—all those wonders and signs done through the apostles! And all the believers lived in a wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person's need was met. They followed a daily discipline of worship in the Temple followed by meals at home, every meal a celebration, exuberant and joyful, as they praised God. People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added those who were saved. (from the Message Bible)
- How did the story of Jesus reach people in other nearby cities like Caesarea?
- Who were the early converts? [predominately Jews with some God-fearing Greeks and other immigrants in the region; often these people were already attracted to Judaism]

Explain that early Christians tended to practice both Judaism and Christianity at the same time – in fact, many of them believed this was simply the fulfillment of the Jewish promise of a Messiah, so they felt they were still Jews and their meetings would use the ordinary weekday Jewish prayers mixed with stories about Jesus. You will do add stories about Jesu in subsequent weeks – this week you can just skip the Reflection Section or, if you have *Paths of Faith*, read the reflection found on the bottom of page 26

Ask:

- Why did Christians begin to be persecuted? What were they doing “wrong?”
- Who persecuted them? [both Jews and Romans]

Use the following from [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com) to guide your discussion:

*Dissent began almost immediately with the teachings of Stephen at Jerusalem (unorthodox by contemporaneous Jewish standards), and never ceased entirely while the city remained. A year after the crucifixion of Jesus, Stephen was stoned for his alleged transgression of unorthodoxy, with Saul (who later converted and was renamed Paul) heartily agreeing.*

*In A.D. 41, when Agrippa I, who already possessed the territory of Antipas and Phillip, obtained the power of procurator in Judea, hence re-forming the Kingdom of Herod, he was reportedly eager to endear himself to his Jewish subjects and continued the persecution in which James the lesser lost his life, Peter narrowly escaped and the rest of the apostles took flight.*

*After Agrippa's death, the Roman procuratorship resumed and those leaders maintained a neutral peace, until the procurator Festus died and the high priest Annas II took advantage of the power vacuum to attack the Church and executed James the greater, then leader of Jerusalem's Christians. The New Testament states that Paul was himself imprisoned on several occasions by Roman authorities, stoned by Pharisees and left for dead on one occasion, and was eventually taken as a prisoner to Rome. Peter and other early Christians were also imprisoned, beaten and harassed. A Jewish revolt, spurred by the Roman killing of 3,000 Jews, led to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the end of sacrificial Judaism, and the disempowering of the Jewish persecutors; the Christian community, meanwhile, having fled to safety in the already pacified region of Pella. The early persecution by the Jews is estimated to have a death toll of about 2,000. The Jewish persecutions were trivial when compared with the brutal and widespread persecution by the Romans.*

Ask:

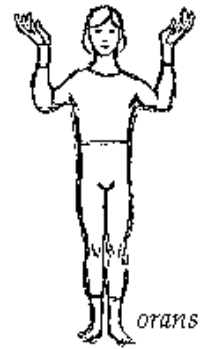
- How do you imagine the persecutions affected the lives of the first Christians?
- Christians originally met in the dining rooms of Jewish homes – much like we are here in this room. They had to be careful about who saw them gathering and what they said to others about these gatherings. Can you imagine what it must of have been like to be a Christian – excited about your new faith and wanting to learn more but afraid of being “caught” by those who disagreed with you? What do you think life was like for them?
- What happened to those who were caught? [e.g., Stephen was stoned to death.]

- Point out that the cost was high (life and death) and the dangers were real. Why do you think people continued to meet to worship together?
- Given the dangers, why did new people convert to Christianity?

Distribute the character sheets and encourage each person read about their character so they can be that character in the next session. Make sure you have an extra copy of each character sheet and that you know which participant has which character – you can't count on the youth bringing those sheets back next week!

## Closing

Invite the group to stand and raise their hands in the orans position (that's what the priest usually does during the Eucharistic prayer – hands at just above the shoulder and about a foot out from the shoulder with the palms facing your head). Explain that this is the Jewish prayer posture that the early Christians would have used in prayer. Invite them to pray the closing prayer found at the end of Worship Service in unison.



NOTE: For the third session, you need to recruit two men from the parish to interrupt your session. Read the directions at the end of Session Two and schedule a quick dry run for after next weeks session. Keep all of this secret from the group – you want to maintain the element of surprise.

## « September 2010 »

change view: [ [event list](#) | [calendar grid](#) ]

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 29th of Elul, 5770 כ"ט באלול תש"ע <a href="#">Erev Rosh Hashana</a> <a href="#">ערב ראש השנה</a>	2 1st of Tishrei, 5771 א' בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Rosh Hashana 5771</a> <a href="#">ראש השנה 5771</a>	3 2nd of Tishrei, 5771 ב' בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Rosh Hashana II</a> <a href="#">ראש השנה יום ב'</a>	4 3rd of Tishrei, 5771 ג' בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Parashat Ha'Azinu</a> <a href="#">פגישת האזינו</a> <a href="#">Shabbat Shuva</a> <a href="#">שבת שובה</a>
5	6 5th of Tishrei, 5771 ה' בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Tzom Gedaliah</a> <a href="#">צום גדליה</a>	7 6th of Tishrei, 5771 ו' בתשרי תשע"א	8 29th of Elul, 5770 כ"ט באלול תש"ע <a href="#">Erev Rosh Hashana</a> <a href="#">ערב ראש השנה</a>	9 1st of Tishrei, 5771 א' בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Rosh Hashana 5771</a> <a href="#">ראש השנה 5771</a>	10 2nd of Tishrei, 5771 ב' בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Rosh Hashana II</a> <a href="#">ראש השנה יום ב'</a>	11 3rd of Tishrei, 5771 ג' בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Parashat Ha'Azinu</a> <a href="#">פגישת האזינו</a> <a href="#">Shabbat Shuva</a> <a href="#">שבת שובה</a>
12 4th of Tishrei, 5771 ד' בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Tzom Gedaliah</a> <a href="#">צום גדליה</a>	13 5th of Tishrei, 5771 ה' בתשרי תשע"א	14 6th of Tishrei, 5771 ו' בתשרי תשע"א	15 7th of Tishrei, 5771 ז' בתשרי תשע"א	16 8th of Tishrei, 5771 ח' בתשרי תשע"א	17 9th of Tishrei, 5771 ט' בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Erev Yom Kippur</a> <a href="#">ערב יום כיפור</a>	18 10th of Tishrei, 5771 י' בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Yom Kippur</a> <a href="#">יום כיפור</a>
19 11th of Tishrei, 5771 י"א בתשרי תשע"א	20 12th of Tishrei, 5771 י"ב בתשרי תשע"א	21 13th of Tishrei, 5771 י"ג בתשרי תשע"א	22 14th of Tishrei, 5771 י"ד בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Erev Sukkot</a> <a href="#">ערב סוכות</a>	23 15th of Tishrei, 5771 ט"ו בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Sukkot I</a> <a href="#">סוכות יום א'</a>	24 16th of Tishrei, 5771 ט"ז בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Sukkot II</a> <a href="#">סוכות יום ב'</a>	25 17th of Tishrei, 5771 י"ז בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Sukkot III (CH"M)</a> <a href="#">סוכות יום ג' (חל המועד)</a>
26 18th of Tishrei, 5771 י"ח בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Sukkot IV (CH"M)</a> <a href="#">סוכות יום ד' (חל המועד)</a>	27 19th of Tishrei, 5771 י"ט בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Sukkot V (CH"M)</a> <a href="#">סוכות יום ה' (חל המועד)</a>	28 20th of Tishrei, 5771 כ' בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Sukkot VI (CH"M)</a> <a href="#">סוכות יום ו' (חל המועד)</a>	29 21st of Tishrei, 5771 כ"א בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Sukkot VII (Hoshana Raba)</a> <a href="#">סוכות יום ז' (הושעא רבה)</a>	30 22nd of Tishrei, 5771 כ"ב בתשרי תשע"א <a href="#">Shmini Atzeret</a> <a href="#">שמיני עצרת</a>		

## CHARACTERS

*Distribute one sheet to each young person at the end of the first session.  
Make sure you keep a copy of each character sheet  
and the name of the person who has that character  
because you will need it when the youth  
forget to bring their sheets back the next week!*



## Jacob

Your name is Jacob (pronounced JAY-cob). You are 33 years old and have been a Jew all of your life. You are married to Rachel and have five children. You are a potter – you make pots, pitchers, cups, oil lamps and other clay vessels that you sell in the marketplace.

You heard about Jesus on a trip to Jerusalem that you and your wife took to dedicate your youngest son at the temple. Your wife’s cousin and her husband were Christian Jews and when you stayed with them, they told you the story of Jesus and their belief that he was the Messiah. You and your wife returned to Caesarea four months ago and found this group of Christians. You have been worshipping with them ever since.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Lighting was provided by small oil lamps like the ones you make. They used olive-oil to burn and were filled from a goatskin oil container. Most people, however, went to bed at sunset and got up at dawn, so the lamps were not used every day. Honest people didn’t work after dark, which is where the phrase “works of darkness” came from. (Luke 22:53; Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:11-14)

The main room in a Galilean home was usually used for eating, storing food, and socializing when the weather was inappropriate for being outdoors in the courtyard. Wealthy people reclined as they ate; poorer people sat on the floor or benches. People like you had beds made of wooden frames with rope stretched over them with a mat that was laid on each bed. Often more than one family member slept in the same bed. Poorer people usually slept on mats placed on the floor. People could take their mats with them when they traveled sort of like our modern day sleeping bags.

Food was served on pottery plates or bowls. Provisions such as grain, wine, and oil were stored in large jars in cool places. Other foods were hung from the ceiling. Life for first-century Jews depended upon raising food and protecting it from spoilage, rodents, or insects, so the people needed to store it well. Your pots help keep food secure as well as giving people a way to serve it for dinner.

## Rebecca

Your name is Rebecca (pronounced Ruh BECK ah). You are a Jewish woman, 24 years old with five children. You are married to Jacob who is a potter. You sell his pottery in the marketplace each day, taking your youngest children with you and the others when they aren't in school. You also manage the household, cook, clean, etc. You left your family when you married Jacob at 15 years of age. Your father knew Jacob's father because they grew up in the same village so they agreed that you would marry Jacob when you were both still young. So, as was the custom, you were officially "betrothed" to each other when you reached the age of 12 and married three years later.

You and Isaac heard about Jesus on a trip to Jerusalem that you took to dedicate your youngest son at the temple. Your cousin and her husband were Christian Jews in Jerusalem and when you stayed with them, they told you the story of Jesus and their belief that he was the Messiah. You returned to Caesarea four months ago and found this group of Christians. You have been worshipping with them ever since and both of you are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. While you know it is dangerous to be a Christian, you are at peace and have a quiet sense of joy.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Your family is in the merchant class so you have a home with a large open room, fireplace to cook on one side and a small outside room for your livestock. The woman's daily life included food preparation –milking the animals, grinding grains, baking bread, and making cheese. Most people ate two meals: a light and a more substantial dinner which would include cheese, wine, vegetables and fruits, and eggs. Chicken or fish were available to many people; beef and lamb only served on special occasions. Jewish law prohibited eating pork and crustaceans. Most foods were boiled or stewed in a big pot and seasoned with salt, onions, garlic, cumin, coriander, mint, dill, and mustard. Food was sweetened with wild honey or syrups from dates or grapes. Food was generally served in a common bowl and eaten by dipping in with the fingers. Jewish laws regarding clean and unclean required that different pottery be used for different types of food – so that meat and dairy did not mix, for example. (Matt. 23:25; 26:23.)

## Martha

Your name is Martha. You are married to Isaac. Together you tend a small plot of land behind your house where you plant grains for bread and plant vegetables. It grows just enough food to barely feed the five of you. You have two goats that stay inside the house with the family at night. It gets pretty smelly on a hot summer night and with everyone sleeping on mats on the floor, you never know if the goats will end up stepping on one of the girls and hurting them.

You milk the goats each day and feed the milk to the girls, make cheese and if you can manage to eke out a bit of extra cheese, you sell it to earn a few coins. Other times you barter vegetables or grain for olive oil from your neighbor down the street. Life is hard and the two of you never know if you will have enough to feed your children and yourselves.

You and Isaac were married five years ago at a traditional Jewish ceremony when you were 14 and he was 25. You have three surviving daughters – a four year old, a two year old and the baby. Your first daughter was stillborn. You are anxious about not having yet given Isaac the son he so much wants to carry on his name. While you have plenty of time, your last birth was hard and you are afraid that you may not be able to have more children.

You are at this meeting because your husband wanted you to come. You are not entirely convinced that this Jesus is the Messiah or if this is all wrong. You worry that Yahweh may punish you for coming to this meeting by withholding a son – but you also have great hope that if Jesus IS the Messiah, he may grant you your devote desire to have a son.

### Things only you and your husband know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Many homes had a storeroom contained the all-important farming tools and supplies that most families needed in order to provide their own food: wooden plow, sickle, brooms, winnowing fork, a sieve for grain, rope made from plant fibers, an animal skin used as a churn for butter or cheese, etc. Your family is poor so you just have the one room. These items would be hung on the walls or from the rafters above. Not many families in Caesarea made their living by farming and tending trees as Caesarea was a commercial area on the Mediterranean Sea so most made their living by trade.

## Isaac

Your name is Isaac (pronounced EYE sick). You are a 30 year old Jewish man married to Martha. You have three daughters (4, 2 and 2 months). You are very concerned about the fact that you still have no boy and Martha almost died with the last birth, so you are not sure she can bear another child, much less give you a son. You are poor, just barely able to eke out enough food to feed your family by tending a field of grains for bread, a cluster of olive, fig and walnut trees, a small vegetable garden and two goats. You want a son, but you also do not want to lose Martha. You heard about Jesus from a friend of yours and believe he may be the one to give you a son and bring you some relief from the crushing poverty that plagues you. You are drawn to his teachings of good news for the poor. You hope your wife will adopt this new religion with you and that it may bring you new hope and new life.

### Things only you and your wife know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Many homes had a storeroom contained the all-important farming tools and supplies that most families needed in order to provide their own food: wooden plow, sickle, brooms, winnowing fork, a sieve for grain, rope made from plant fibers, an animal skin used as a churn for butter or cheese, etc. Your family is poor so you just have the one room. These items would be hung on the walls or from the rafters above. The goats live inside with you – something that gets pretty smelly on hot summer nights and can be uncomfortable. You sleep on the floor on mats with the children sleeping between the two of you so the goats don't accidentally step on them!

Your field grows barley – the poor man's grain for bread. Your garden grows the common vegetables: lentils, coarse beans, and cucumbers, onions, leeks, and garlic. The basic fruits eaten in that time were figs, dates, grapes, pomegranates, and sycamore figs. And olive trees for olive oil. Your field has a cluster of olive, fig and walnut trees. As a poor family, you only ate meat on festival days – if you could afford it then.

## Peter

Your name is Peter. You are a 19 year old Jewish shepherd, working for a wealthy landowner outside of Caesarea. You tend the sheep and help him harvest the fields in the fall. In the hot summer, you move the sheep to mountain pastures – which takes you away from home for a few months at a time. In the winter, the sheep are housed in the valley nearby so you can go home every other night when you aren't on "overnight" duty.

Your wife, Marion, lives in a small shack at the edge of town with your two young boys, your parents and two younger sisters. You were betrothed to her when she was 12 and married when she was 13 and you were 16. Your father was a shepherd who also works for the same landowner. You and Marion live near your parents so your mother can help Marion with the children when you are gone. Life is hard – shepherds are at the bottom of the social ladder and they earn very little. Marion and your mother do the best they can to raise vegetables, do laundry for the landowners wife, weave cloth to sell and do anything else they can do to help make ends meet. You and Marion are attracted to Christianity for many reasons – not the least of which is that this is the only place where both of you are welcomed and respected instead of shunned. Before you felt like outcasts but now the community that meets in this house make you feel like you are a worthy child of God. Your parents are devout Jews and you are worried that they may find out about your new faith.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

A shepherd's life was not easy. Shepherds spent most of their time outside watching over the herd, no matter what the weather. They often slept near their flock to protect it from robbers or wild animals. The shepherd's tools and weapons were a rod, a staff, and a sling. Each night, the shepherds would gather their flocks into places called "sheepfolds." These could be stone walls made by the shepherds or natural enclosures, such as a cave. Shepherds used their rod to help count their animals each evening when they brought them into the fold and again in the morning when they left for the pastures. The only benefit to being a shepherd is that the landowner allowed you to milk a sheep to feed your children during the months when you lived nearby and he let you take bits of wool for your wife to weave.

## Marion

Your name is Marion. You are 16, married to Peter, a shepherd who tends the sheep of a wealthy landowner. You had your first son when you were 14, your second at 15 and you suspect that you are pregnant again. This is a matter of concern to you because a shepherd's life is hard and you are very poor. You can ill afford to feed another mouth. Peter is gone for long months in the summer when he takes the sheep to the highlands. You live with his parents and two younger sisters. All of the women and girls do the best you can to raise vegetables, do laundry for the landowner's wife, weave cloth to sell and do anything else you can do to help make ends meet. Your husband's family is your only real company as most people don't want to befriend a shepherd's family. You are some of the poorest families in town and are considered dirty and lowly.

You and Peter are attracted to Christianity for many reasons – not the least of which is that this is the only place where both of you are welcomed and respected instead of shunned. Before you felt like outcasts but now the community that meets in this house make you feel like you are a worthy child of God. Your husband's parents are devout Jews and you are worried that they may find out about your new faith.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Fathers had total control over girls, whom they could offer to be engaged to someone at age 12 (which is when you were engaged or "betrothed"). Most couples marry a year later, as you did. Peter was 16 at the time and you were 13. Your father could have sold you to an older Jewish man to serve as a slave for seven years to raise money for your birth family so you are grateful that he arranged this marriage instead – even though it is a hard life and you are lonely. You live in a small, one room house with your husband, two young children, your husband's parents and two sisters – and in the wintertime you add three sheep and five chickens! There is hardly space to spread out all of the sleeping mats at night.

## Aaron

Your name is Aaron (pronounced AIR on). You grew up in Caesarea in a traditional Jewish home with your parents and six siblings. Your father was a shoemaker also known as a tanner or cobbler. You and your older brother joined the family business when each of you married. You married your cousin Sarah last year when you were 23 and she was 16. Your father bought the house next door to his for the two of you to share with your older brother and his wife. It has two rooms so the two of you have the smaller one and share the fireplace for cooking in the larger room. All of you live and work together in the open courtyard in front of the houses which, along with several other houses are clustered around an open space that serves as playground for the children and work room for the adults. You learned about Christianity from your parents who were introduced to this house church by a customer. You and your family are leaders in this church – but Sarah isn't really convinced yet.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

"Tanners" often made shoes as well as preparing leather for sale as wine skins, water bags, purses, etc. Under Jewish law they were ceremonially unclean because they dealt with dead things. Some cobblers, like your father, avoided this ritual uncleanliness by buying their shoe leather from the tanner – but this meant that you made less money. Most shoes of the day are what we would call sandals. There were many variations of the common sandal. The sole might be made of the tough hide of a camel's neck. Sometimes several thicknesses of hide were sewn together. Sometimes the sole was wood, cane, or the bark of the palm tree and was fastened to the leather straps with tacks.

One type of woman's sandal had two straps: one strap passed between the big toe and the second toe, and the other went around the heel and over the instep. This shoe could be easily slipped off when coming indoors. Shoes generally were never allowed inside a home because of their low status in apparel (made of unclean substances) and because they were dirty. Children went barefoot – only wealthy families had sandals for their children.

## Sarah

Your name is Sarah (pronounced SAIR ah). You married Aaron last year when you were 16 and he was 23. He is your cousin so you've known him all of your life. Aaron's father is a shoemaker (also known as a tanner or cobbler). He and his older brother joined the family business when they got married. His father bought the house next door to the family home for the two of you to share with your older brother and his wife. It has two rooms so the two of you have the smaller one and share the fireplace for cooking in the larger room. All of you live and work together in the open courtyard in front of the houses which, along with several other houses are clustered around an open space that serves as playground for the children and work room for the adults. You learned about Christianity from Aaron's parents who were introduced to this house church by a customer. Aaron's parents are leaders in this church – but you were raised in a devout Jewish home and you aren't really convinced yet. You are also worried about what your family will say or do if they hear that you are involved in this new faith.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

In its simplest form, the sandal was a sole of wood or hard leather fastened with straps of leather (thongs). In Assyria, sandals also covered the heel and the side of the foot. All classes of people wore sandals—even the poor. Going without sandals was a mark of extreme poverty or a sign of mourning. Generally only children went barefoot.

Jews did not wear their sandals indoors; they removed them upon entering the house, and the feet were washed. Removing the sandals was also a sign of reverence; Moses was told to do it when God spoke to him from the burning bush.

The Jews considered it a very lowly task to carry or to unloose another person's sandals. When John the Baptist spoke of the coming of Christ, he said, "He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose" (John 1:27).

## Amos

Your name is Amos (pronounced AY moss). You are a 46 year old Jewish farmer with a good sized farm outside of the city. As the eldest son, you inherited your farm from your father when he died. You married a village girl named Esther when you were 20. It was an arranged marriage – your parents shared the farming and village life with her parents and thought she would be a good helper and mother. The two of you have surviving seven children; four other children died. Five of your children have married and left home. You moved to Casarea several years ago when you began to be older and your children needed to find work in the city. Your eldest son will inherit the farm so he and his family live with you in Caesarea along with Esther and the youngest girl. You are an old man, an elder in the village where you, your son and his boy stay during the farming season.

You learned about Jesus from a neighboring farmer. You brought your family into this group and they have all been blessed by this new faith. You are attracted to the message of love and the teachings of Jesus – they are simple and make sense to you. Your family has found great joy in this new faith. You see it simply as a deeper and fuller way to practice the ancient faith of your fathers. You follow all of the Jewish festivals and traditions and just want to follow the teachings of the rabbi Jesus.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

The most important crops that farmers raised were grains, such as wheat and barley, which were used for making bread. Israelite farmers knew how to clear the land and used crop rotation and natural ways of fertilizing the land to produce good crops. The land was rocky and the growing season short but there was enough rain to raise crops without irrigation (a major cost and labor savings). Farmers also grew fruits, including melons, figs, dates, grapes; legumes such as peas and lentils and nuts, such as walnuts. They also raised olives which were eaten whole but mainly pressed to produce olive oil.

## Esther

Your name is Esther (pronounced EHS ter). You are the wife of Amos, a 43 year old Jewish farmer. It was an arranged marriage. The two of you have surviving seven children; four other children died. Five of your children have married and left home. Your family moved to Casearea several years ago when you and Amos began to be older and your children found jobs in the city. Your eldest son will inherit the farm so he and his family live with you along with Amos and your youngest girl who helps you with the household work. You are an older woman so you need her help. She also organizes the nieces and nephews who come from their houses to help with the farm, in the house and in the marketplace where they sell grain and fruits from the fields. Amos, your son and his boy return to your native village during the seeding and harvest seasons and take turns tending the fields in between times. Amos learned about Jesus from a neighboring farmer. He brought your family into this group and your family has found great joy in this new faith. You see it simply as a deeper and fuller way to practice the ancient faith of your fathers. You follow all of the Jewish festivals and traditions and just want to follow the teachings of the rabbi Jesus.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

There were two festivals in the Jewish faith that highlighted the importance of farming: Shavout and Sukkot. Shavuot (SHAH vuoht) is an agricultural celebration that occurs seven weeks after Passover, which puts it at the time of the late spring harvest. The grain harvest lasted seven weeks and was a season of gladness. It is also called the Festival of Weeks or Pentecost – the latter because it occurs 50 days after Passover. [The modern association of this festival with the day God gave the Torah and Ten Commandments to the Jewish people was not known in the time of Jesus.]

The Festival of Sukkot (Sue COAT) lasts for seven days and is sometimes called The Feast of Tabernacles. The word "Sukkot" means "booths," which refers to the temporary dwellings that Jews build and live in or at least eat their meals in during this holiday. Sukkot has a dual significance: historical and agricultural. The holiday commemorates the forty-year period during which the children of Israel were wandering in the desert, living in temporary shelters. It also celebrates the last harvest festival before the onset of the winter rains in the land of Israel. It falls five days after Yom Kippur, usually in mid-autumn.

## Daniel

Your name is Daniel. You are 17 year Jewish man – you live with your parents along with your three siblings. Your two older sisters have married and left the household. You are the second son and along with your two brothers, you work with your father who is a carpenter and builds houses. The four of you work along side your uncle and his two sons. Together your family has built many of the houses in this village.

You learned about Jesus when you and your cousin were going to buy supplies and were drawn into a group of young men who were listening to Peter and James preaching about Jesus. You were converted and have been eagerly spreading the word ever since. Your fathers are humoring you, seeing this is a youthful phase, but some of your brothers and cousins have become interested in this new faith and have started attending services with you.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Most houses were simple constructions like a cube and usually consisted of just one (or sometimes two) rooms. The roof on homes of the poorer folk was made of rushes woven together. Middle and upper class homes had flat roofs – a stone stairways on the outside allowed people to use these roofs for extra seating on cool days and sleeping on hot nights. Upper class homes might also have a second story with a wooden ladder on the inside leading up to it. Second story enclosed rooms were rare (and expensive) which is why, when Jesus arranged his Last Supper in an upper room, it was easy for the disciples to find that house as there wouldn't have been vary many in town.

Windows and doorways were small. Doorways had wooden doors in them that could be locked with primitive wooden locks. Windows were just open rectangular holes with no glass as glass was extremely expensive.

Houses were arranged around a central shared courtyard where neighbors performed daily chores (cooking, laundry, etc.) in each other's company. This also provided a safe place for children to study or play when they weren't helping with household chores.

## Ezekiel

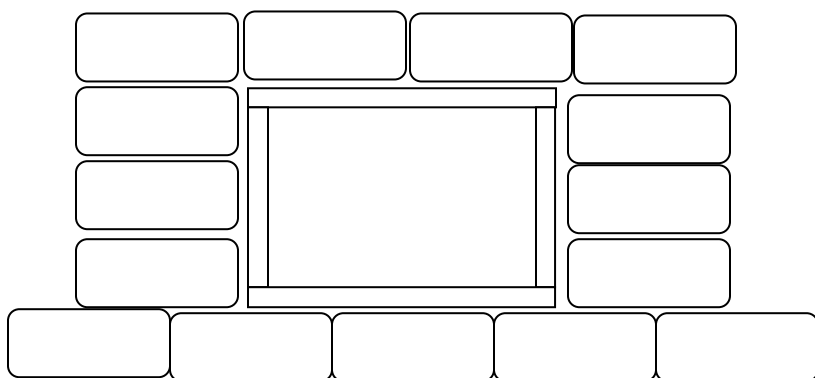
Your name is Ezekiel. You are 20 and live with your parents along with your four younger siblings. You are Daniel's cousin. Along with your next oldest brother, you work with your father who builds houses. The three of you work along side your uncle and his three sons. Together your family has built many of the houses in this village. Your dad specializes in buiding doors so when you walk through Caesarea, you see many of the doors he made – and some that you'd made since you started working with him.

You learned about Jesus when you and your cousin Daniel were drawn into a group of young men who were listening to Peter and James, who were home visiting their mother, preaching and teaching about Jesus. You were converted and the two of you have been eagerly spreading the word ever since. Your fathers are humoring you, seeing this is a youthful phase, but some of your brothers and cousins have become interested in this new faith and have started attending services with you.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

The windows and doorways in houses were small. Doorways had wooden doors in them that could be locked with primitive wooden locks. Windows were just open rectangular holes with no glass as glass was extremely expensive. You made a window by inserting wood pieces between bricks:



## Ezra

Your name is Ezra (pronounced EHZ rah). You are the 19 years old, the younger brother of Ezekiel. You live with your parents along with your four siblings. You are the second son and along with your older brother, you work with your father who builds houses. The three of you work along side your uncle and his three sons. Together your family has built many of the houses in this village. You learned about Jesus when your brother and your cousin were drawn into a group of young men listening to Peter and James teaching about Jesus. They were converted and have been eagerly spreading the word ever since. Your fathers are humoring them, seeing this is a youthful phase, but some of your brothers and cousins, including you have become interested in this new faith and have started attending services with them. There is endless discussion and some debate amongst the family as you work together and grow together in this new faith experience.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Houses were built of clay bricks and/or stone supported by wooden beams. Caesarea had lots of black basalt stones that were the right size and shape for house building so they were often used instead of clay brick. It was just about as much trouble to make bricks as to haul stones, so some of it depended on personal preference and whether you had a sturdy cart and donkeys to pull it so you could gather stones from around the town. If you built a house out of stone, you had to gather lots of little ones to stuff between the bigger stones and get them to fit correctly.

Caesarea had a big harbor with a man-made peninsula that Herod the Great built for his palace. It was very grand – a show piece in the region. He also built a huge amphitheater, a temple for the worship of Roman gods and lots of fine government buildings. While poor homes were one story and a single room, middle class homes had an outside room for animals and wealthier people had two stories with a rooftop terrace reached by way of a flight of stairs on the side of the house. Herod's grand palace and official homes were large with two stories and multiple rooms arranged around a central courtyard. They were adorned with carved wooden doors; gold and silver decorations, beautiful wall hangings, etc.

## Cornelius

Your name is Cornelius (pronounced Core NEE lee us). You are a 30 year old Roman citizen (known as a Gentile in Judism) who works as centurion in Caesar's army. Immediately after Peter's vision of various animals lowered from heaven in a white sheet, messengers arrived, summoning Peter to your house in Caesarea, a two-day journey up the coast. There Peter first preached the gospel to Gentiles. You and your entire household (wife, children, servants and slaves) believed in Jesus and received the gift of the Holy Spirit, validating the fact that salvation was for all people (Acts 10:24-48). All of you were baptized and you have been a leader in the Christian community in Caesarea ever since. Your entire household attends worship services with this group. You have freed your slave, hired him as a servant in your household and now relate to your servants as fellow workers rather than treating them as lowly servants.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Jews and Gentiles did not get along very well in Caesarea – in 66 AD, just a few years after this meeting, there was a major Jewish uprising here as the fought against their Roman oppressors. Ordinarily you and the Jewish members of this group would hate each other. Jewish law would forbid them from eating and drinking with you and social custom would have prevented your from associating with most of these people who were poor and/or social outcasts. So your relationship with these people is highly unusual.

Caesarea had a fairly large Roman garrison which is where you are assigned. The Roman army was broken down into different groups to have a clear chain of command during battle.

1 Contubernium		8 men
10 Contubernia	1 Century	80 Men
2 Centuries	1 Maniple	160 Men
6 Centuries	1 Cohort	480 Men
10 Cohorts +120 Horsemen	1 Legion	5240 Men

Ten *conturbenium* made up a century (eighty men on average) which was commanded by a centurion. Soldiers moved on foot but centurions rode on horseback and they could beat their soldiers, carrying a 2-3 foot long staff for this purpose (which was one way you could recognize a centurion). Centurions were moved from legion to legion and province to province.

## Felix

Your name is Felix (pronounced FEE licks). You are 17 years old and were a slave in Cornelius's household. Cornelius is a centurian (soldier who commands about 80 men). He received you as a bounty of war when his troops conquered your ruler. You were 9 at the time and have served as Cornelius's person attendant. You had no idea what happened to your family or how long you would be a slave. About few years ago, Cornelius was converted to Christianity and you, along with the other members of his family, were baptized Christians. To your amazement, Cornelius immediately freed you and invited you to take your position as a paid servant. He even gave you money to return to your homeland to see if any relatives had survived the war. When you found that only a few distant family members were alive, you decided to return to Cornelius's household where you have lived ever since.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Roman slavery is sort of like our contract employment. Slaves did all kinds of work including educated, high skilled labor such as being a scribe or accountant. Sometimes people sold themselves into slavery in order to pay off debts and sometimes slaves saved up money to buy their own freedom. Some masters were cruel and some were kind. There were slave rebellions when slaves sought better working conditions and there were situations where slaves were very loyal to their masters.

The law required masters to provide their slaves with food, clothing, and shelter. There were legal penalties for mistreating slaves (perhaps not enforced much). If a master had financial difficulties, he had to sell or free the slaves; and if he freed the slaves, he was legally responsible to make sure that they could make a living. A slave who had spent his whole life tutoring people in philosophy might need to be trained in a trade, for example. Slaves lived in the house with the family. But if the master died, the family remained in the house, but the slaves had to go.

In some cases, if a slave was a good business manager and was trusted by his master, he could be adopted as a son because, under the legal system, sons inherently possessed the power of attorney of their fathers and could conduct business on their behalf. Adopting a capable slave was a quick way of acquiring a good and loyal business manager – especially if you didn't have a son or a capable son. This was not an uncommon event.

## Junia

Your name is Junia (pronounced JOO nee uh). You were raised in a Roman family as a slave. The Apostle Paul is a relative of the Roman family and because he has known you since you were a child, he calls you his cousin.

You were freed when you were 22 and given in marriage to Andronicus, an older Greek man. You think your master owed him money so he essentially sold you, but Andronicus has always treated you as his wife. You have no idea who your parents or family were and the Roman family who raised you never said anything other than that you came to live with them as a baby. They gave you the name Junia after Juno, a Roman goddess because, they said, you had been dedicated to Juno. None of this mattered to you when you and Andronicus met Jesus and became disciples and passionate evangelists for this new faith. You and Andronicus travel from village to village preaching and teaching about Jesus. You often meet with some of the apostles when you are in the same town or meet each other on the road. You feel alive and free – and life has meaning and purpose now. You and your husband host this house church when you are in town and along with Pricilla and Aquila, you are the primary leaders of this congregation.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Juno is the patroness of marriage, and many people believe that the most favorable time to marry is June, the month named after the goddess.

Junia is the only woman in the Bible who may be identified as an “apostle.” Paul says: “Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me: they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.” (Romans 16:7) There is considerable debate as to whether Junia and Andronicus are apostles (“prominent among the apostles”) or if it is better translated as “known to the apostles.” In any case, it is clear that Paul thinks highly of this couple and that they would have been leaders in this house church and in the region.

## Andronicus

Your name is Andronicus (pronounced an DRON eh kus). You are a Greek merchant who buys and sells building supplies. You've done very well over the years and married Junia after your first wife died and you found yourself lonely and doing nothing but work. Being in the building business meant that you were able to build a generous sized home with a courtyard that isn't shared with any other families. Because there are always lots of buyers, sellers and servants carrying messengers coming and going all week long, the gathering of this Christian community doesn't attract much attention. This makes your home the ideal place for this house church. You and Junia are happy to host the weekly worship service which meets in your dining room when it isn't gathering at the home of Pricilla and Aquila, who join you and your wife as the primary leaders of this community.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Caesar Augustus gave the city to Herod the Great who rebuilt it from a small, old outpost into a new city in 10 B.C. and names it after Caesar. No natural ports existed along Israel's coast. During bad weather, this could be a dangerous sector on the major shipping route from Alexandria to Phoenicia, Syria, and eventually to Athens and Rome. To provide a safe haven, Herod created an artificial harbor, constructing large breakwaters. Caesarea became the chief port of Palestine, the administrative centre of the Roman procurators of the province of Judea, and the headquarters of the Roman legions. Herod built a magnificent harbor using materials that would allow the concrete to harden underwater. The forty-acre harbor would accommodate 300 ships.

Herod also built a theater with a seating capacity of 3500 and a palace for himself. The palace was on promontory jutting out into the waters of Caesarea. The pool in the center was nearly Olympic in size, and was filled with fresh water; a statue once stood in the center. The lack of fresh water at Herod's new city required a lengthy aqueduct to bring water from springs at the base of Mt. Carmel nearly ten miles away. In order that the water would flow by the pull of gravity, the aqueduct was built on arches and the gradient was carefully measured.

During the first century A.D. most of its inhabitants were Syrian Greeks, but many wealthy Jews lived there as well.

## Gideon

Your name is Gideon (pronounced gihd EE ehn). You are a wealthy Jewish man who owns a construction business. When Herod the Great built Caesarea as an entirely new city, you and your family moved to take advantage of this great business opportunity. It paid off – your father, you and your two brothers, your uncles and cousins have all “struck it rich” by building houses for the wealthy Romans and Jews moving to town. You live in the best section of town and have a grand house befitting your station in life.

You married Hannah, a cousin of yours, when you were both young. You have two sons and a daughter – they are all married and no longer live at home. You grew up in Bethsaida with Peter and Andrew who lived just down the street from you. You heard about Jesus from them while he was still alive. Originally you thought they were crazy to leave the home and follow this rabbi, but gradually you began to find what they were saying attractive and you began to invite them to stay with you when they were in the region. You met Jesus on one of those visits when he stayed in your home for the night. After his death, you were converted in a powerful experience of the Spirit. You and Hannah sometimes host this Christian community at your home when Junia and Andronicus or Pricilla and Aquila are out of town.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

The city of Caesarea encompassed 165 acres. It had a theater, an amphitheater, a hippodrome, palaces, public buildings, storerooms, residential areas, and a sewer system – all of them shiny and new and many of them built by your family. The enormous scale of this project is revealed in the dimensions of some of the structures. The hippodrome, seating somewhere between 12-35,000 people (it was expanded at one point and then cut back later and estimates vary). It was 1500 feet long and 250 feet wide and was used for chariot races and other sports. The theater was three hundred feet in diameter and could accommodate 4,000 people. Some of the stones used to build the harbor’s breakwater were fifty feet long, eighteen feet wide, and nine feet thick. A seven-mile aqueduct brought water to the city from Mount Carmel.

## Hannah

Your name is Hannah (pronounced H AHN nah). You are married to a wealthy Jew who owns a construction business. When Herod the Great built Caesarea as an entirely new city, he and his all “struck it rich” by building houses for the wealthy Romans and Jews moving to town. You live in the best section of town and have a grand house befitting your station in life.

You married Gideon, a cousin of yours, when you were both young. You have two sons and a daughter – they are all married and no longer live at home. You and Gideon both grew up in Bethsaida with Peter and Andrew who lived just down the street from you. Gideon heard about Jesus from them while he was still alive. Originally he thought they were crazy to leave the home and follow this rabbi, but gradually he began to find what they were saying attractive and began to invite them to stay with you when they were in the region. You met Jesus on one of those visits and found yourself captivated by him. After his death, Gideon was converted in a powerful experience of the Spirit. You and Gideon sometimes host this Christian community at your home when Junia and Andronicus or Pricilla and Aquila are out of town.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Pontius Pilate, prefect (governor) of Judea, lived in the governor’s residence in Caesarea. An inscription on a stone found recently in the theater reads: "Pontius Pilate, the Prefect of Judea, has dedicated to the people of Caesarea a temple in honor of Tiberius." The theater is located in the very south of the city. It faces the sea and has thousands of seats resting on a semi-circular structure of vaults. The semi-circular floor of the orchestra, first paved in painted plaster, was later paved with marble.

One vital thing that Caesarea lacked was fresh water, being on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea far from any springs or rivers. To solve this problem, a pair of aqueducts was built to the southern side of Mount Carmel to bring water into the city. The seven-mile long twin aqueducts were part of an extensive sewer and water system developed in Caesarea. The aqueducts were enlarged as the city grew and their precise engineering included arches and tunnels and used gravity to move the water into Caesarea's pools and fountains through a network of pipes. As a wealthy family, your house would have had access to the water and sewer system which made life much easier!

## Lazarus

Your name is Lazarus (pronounced LAZ are us). You are a harborman who is part of the vast harbor system Herod the Great built. You are 23, joined the merchant you now work for five years ago and have loaded and unloaded ships more times than you can count. You are tough and a hard worker. The job is intense and doesn't leave much time for social life. But once you got involved in Christianity, you make a real effort to come to this Sunday worship service. It is the one bright spot in your life and it gives you hope for the future. Someday you hope that you will make enough money to find a job that isn't as difficult or demanding.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Caesarea's natural harbor tended to silt up, and its currents were treacherous to navigate. To avoid these problems, Herod the Great had an artificial harbor constructed over a period of twelve years (21-33 BC) and named it Sebastos, after Caesar Augustus. Herod's harbor consisted of an inner and outer harbor made up of breakwaters. These breakwaters were made from hydraulic concrete, and they formed concrete islands that, when connected, were 150-200 ft wide and could hold barrel-topped warehouses and provide mooring space for ships. The southern breakwater formed an arc into the sea for 1,800 ft. and the northern breakwater formed a straight dock wall for 750 ft. The resulting harbor was 40 acres, and among harbors in the eastern Mediterranean is considered second finest only to the great harbor of Alexandria in Egypt. The Caesarea harbor was as large as Athens' port and was close enough to Rome that the trip was a mere ten days. A lighthouse was placed on the end of the southern breakwater, marking the entrance, and its fires burned at all times; sandbars were marked by six impressive bronze statues. The incredible and complex construction of Caesarea's harbor is considered by many scholars to be one of the most amazing accomplishments of the ancient world. You feel privileged to work in this environment as harbor work is hard enough and often has difficult working conditions. You, however, work in the best harbor around – it is fairly new and has luxuries like a water and sewer system.

## Dorcas or Tabitha

Your Greek name is Dorcas (pronounced DOOR cus); your Hebrew name is Tabitha (pronounced TAB ith thah). You are the widow of a moderately wealthy Jewish cloth merchant and are known for your sewing ability. Together you and your former husband built a good business selling clothes. After his death many years ago, you continued sewing, engaging other women to help you and hiring several men to manage buying and moving the cloth, keeping the market stall stocked, etc. You used to live in Jerusalem, which is where you met Jesus when he was still alive. You were one of the women who supported him and his disciples by providing food and other essentials. You fell ill and died shortly after the crucifixion of Jesus – Peter came, prayed and God revived you. After that, you moved to Caesarea along with a small group of women believers to spread the word about Jesus and help set up this church. You still maintain your business – largely because you can employ other widows and women without husbands and thus rescue them from a life of poverty. But mainly you use the market stall and your relationships with the women in the city to tell them about Jesus, to pray with them and bring them the gift of healing you so bountifully received.

### Things only you know

These are things that you can share with the group when you talk about life in the early church and homes in Israel at the time of Paul.

Jews wore an inner garment (lightweight), an outer garment (heavy and warm), a girdle, and sandals. The inner garment was a close-fitting shirt made of wool, linen, or cotton and extended to the wrists and ankles. The girdle was a belt or band of cloth, cord, or leather with a fastener. It was tied around the waist of the inner or outer. The girdle prevented the long, flowing robes from interfering with daily work and movements. The outer garment, called the coat, robe, or mantle, was a square or oblong strip of cloth, 80 to 120 in. wide. It was wrapped around the body as a protective covering, with two corners of the material being in front; it was drawn in close to the body by a girdle. Sometimes the girdle was decorated with rich and beautiful ornaments of metal, precious stones, or embroidery. A woman's outer garment was longer, with enough border and fringe to cover her feet and for her to tuck it up over the girdle to serve as an apron, which both protected the garment during work and could be used to carry things. The poor man used this outer garment as his bedding. The rich often had a finely woven linen outer garment, and the poor a coarsely woven garment of goat's hair.

## SESSION TWO

# Worship in the Early Church

### SUPPLIES

- Food and drink of your choice
- Candles, tablecloth, utensils as needed
- Worship bulletins for each participant
- Character sheet for participants who forgot/lost theirs

### Getting Started

Continue the drama of sneaking youth into the room, keeping the lights off, candles lit, etc. If at all possible, include some of the different foods today so you can talk about what people ate in Caesarea. As the youth gather, invite them to try some of the foods. When all have gathered, tell the group that today will focus on how people worshipped in the early church.

Ask:

- How do you imagine the early Christians worshipped? What clues can we find in the Bible? You may want to have them look up the following passages:

*So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.* Acts 2:41-42

*Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home\* and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.* Act 2:46-47

*One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon.* Acts 3:1

If you ordered a copy of the Jewish prayerbook (Siddur; pronounced SID er), now is the time to pull it out and let the group look at what's in it. Pull out a Book of Common Prayer and invite them to compare the Morning Prayer service and the Eucharist to what they see in the Jewish book. What is similar and what is different.

Explain that the *Shema* (pronounced sheh MAH) is perhaps the most important sentence in the Hebrew Bible (which we may call the Old Testament, although more and more churches now refer to it as the Hebrew Bible). The Shema is an affirmation of Judaism and a declaration of faith in one God. A Jew is obligated to say Shema in the morning and at night and is repeated throughout the prayer services.

The Shema may be said while standing or sitting (Reformed and Conservative Jews usually stand while Orthodox Jews generally sit as one does when studying the Torah – the Hebrew Bible). In the day of Jesus, Jews stood to show the Shema's importance and to demonstrate that saying Shema is an act of testifying in God (testimony in a Jewish court is always given while standing).

Ask: What does this remind you of – what do we do in our worship service? [This is, most likely, the origins of our standing for the reading of the Gospel.]

The Shema is:

Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad  
Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One

The literal word meanings are roughly as follows:

- Shema — listen, or hear & do (according to the Targum, accept)
- Yisrael — Israel, in the sense of the people or congregation of Israel
- Adonai — often translated as "Lord", it is read in place of YHWH
- Eloheinu — our God, the word "El" or "Eloh" signifying God (see also: Elohim), and the plural possessive determiner suffix "-nu" or "-enu" signifying "our"
- Echad — the Hebrew word for the number 1, which has the dual meaning "one" and "alone"

This first sentence is the one that is repeated in worship and personal prayer – and is the first one taught to children. But the full Shema includes the full text of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Numbers 15:37-41. Adult memorize the full text. Look up and read these passages. Discuss how they embody the essence of Judaism – monotheism and the covenant with God that is reflected in the Ten Commandments.

It is very important to Jews that each word in the Shema be pronounced clearly and correctly – which is why it is said aloud. While we don't know Hebrew, it is worth learning this special first sentence. Practice pronouncing the words together:

- Shema — shuh MAH
- Yisrael — ees reye L (reye as in eye and L as in saying the letter "L")
- Adonai — add doe NIGH
- Eloheinu — aye low HAY new
- Echad — ayeCH hod (the CH is guttural at the back of the throat)

In worship, the Shema was often chanted (traditionally three times) – and chanting (or singing) is the best way to learn another language. So take some time to practice the Shema chant using the handout

at the end of this session. You can find various versions on the internet – while the following chant is set to musical notes we are used to, chanting is not exactly the same as singing. If you can get access to the internet it is worth listening to some of the files there:

<http://www.the-temple.org/images/prayers/Shema%20V%27ahavta/Shema-%20chanted.mp3>

(this one follows the notation below)

<http://www.shemayisrael.com/tape/Yemenite.mp3>

(this one sounds like it is by an older rabbi and is more 'free form')



Sh' ma Yis-ra - el, A-do - nai El - o - hei - nu A-do - nai e - chod.  
Hear O, Israel. The Lord is our God! The Lord is One. (or The Lord alone.)

## Worship

Distribute the Worship Bulletin lead the group through the worship, chanting the Shema you just practiced. Before you begin, explain that you will stop at one point and talk about Jesus – which is what the early Christians most likely did. In other words, they did the normal Jewish prayers plus sharing news about Jesus. Encourage the young people to talk out of the roles they've been given, sharing bits of themselves if they like. But remind them that there are many more weeks when they can talk about their character so they shouldn't feel obligated to say much or even anything about their character today. They can share their character bit by bit – and they might study up on their person or role and add to what they have on their sheet.

Ask who would like to read the lesson and who will lead the Shema and the prayers. After you have decided who will do which roles, begin the service.

## Discussion

After worship, invite the group to reflect on the experience.

Ask:

- What was familiar?
- What was new or different?

- What did you especially like? Was there anything that felt uncomfortable to you – especially as a Christian?

Explain that at this point in history there were very few written documents such as the Gospels. A few people wrote down accounts of what they remembered or heard but these were generally personal writings, letters, etc. There were no printed books that contained the Gospels and the Epistles hadn't even been written yet. The Gospel of Mark, the earliest written Gospel, was compiled around 70 – a dozen years from today. But there were older documents floating around that the writers of the Gospels had access to and may have used as the basis of their Gospels.

Take time to look through the Jewish prayerbook(s) if you obtained them. And/or ask if anyone knows how Jewish worship today differs from ours. See if anyone has attended a bar mitzvah or a bat mitzvah and, if so, invite them to describe what happened.

Ask:

- What is the main thing we do in worship – what is the “highlight” of our service? [Eucharist – giving thanks, receiving/becoming the Body of Christ]
- What is the main thing Jews do in worship? [Pray – saying prayers is the most important part of Jewish worship.]

Prayers, often with instructions and commentary, are found in the siddur, the traditional Jewish prayer book. Jews are expected to pray three times every day using specific prayers that they memorize – and more on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. While you can pray alone, attending synagogue to pray with a minyan (quorum of 10 adult males) is considered ideal.

Ask:

- There are three branches of Judaism in America. Do you know what they are? [Orthodox, Conservative and Reform or Progressive]
- What is the difference between them?
- What are some of the Jewish laws, customs and traditions?

Use the following to help the group learn more about Judaism. Ask questions to see if they know any of this or to invite comments and reflections. Wherever possible, ask them to compare what the Jewish faith practices to what we do – what is similar, what is different?

Orthodox Jews carefully observe all of the laws and traditions. They use only Hebrew in worship services (and their services tend to be long). They marry only Jews and do no work AT ALL on the Sabbath (including driving, cooking, turning on/off lights). They avoid pork or eating meat and dairy together or even have them touch the same dishes – in fact, they will have two separate kitchens to make sure they can follow all of the dietary rules properly and will only eat food that has been approved by a specially trained rabbi. All worship leaders and community leaders are men – women hold only very traditional roles. Children are generally home-schooled or attend a Jewish school. Men wear black suits and hats and never cut their sideburns giving them long hair at the side of their faces. Women wear long dresses and long sleeves and married women cover their hair.

Conservative observe the laws but not necessarily all of the traditions – they generally drive, cook, turn on/off lights on the Sabbath but they will not eat pork and generally avoid eating meat and dairy products at the same time and while they often have separate dishes they may or may not have separate kitchens. They might have women cantors but not women rabbis. They might dress somewhat conservatively but in ordinary clothes.

### ***DIFFERENCES IN RELIGION***

American differences in Judaism reflect some of the differences present in the time of Jesus and in Caesarea. Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Sicarii and the Zealots were some of the groups in Judaism. Many every day Jews would be considered Conservative. But even in the Bible there are some challenges that would be considered Progressive. The most significant story is that of Peter who sees clean and unclean animals intermingled and the subsequent baptism of Cornelius, a Gentile. Neither conservative nor orthodox Jews of the time would have approved of this “innovation.”

Christianity, of course, has its own different groups – we call them denominations. And even within denominations there are very conservative (orthodox) members who hold fast to the rules and traditions of the past, conservatives who prefer to keep things pretty much “as is” and progressives who are comfortable changing rules and traditions. This is true for any religion. From the outside these differences seem fairly minimal (we see all Jews as Jews and they see all of us as “Christian”). The differences between the faiths seems greater. But from within the faith, the differences between the orthodox and the progressives seems huge. Episcopalians are no different – we too have orthodox (many of them have left to form various branches of “Anglican” churches), conservatives and progressives. But we are all Christians.

Reformed Jews are the most progressive. They are more likely to marry Gentiles and might eat meat and dairy together but many will not have two sets of dishes or kitchens. They have female rabbis and women hold similar roles in the synagogue and home as they do in our church. Their dress is the same as ours, etc.

Many Jews sway their body back and forth during prayer. This practice (in Yiddish referred to as shokeling – SHUK ling) is not mandatory, but the more conservative the Jew, the more likely it is that they will always do this. Proper concentration is considered essential for prayer, and there are certain prayers, like the Shema, that are invalid if recited without the required awareness and intention.

Parts of the worship services are recited standing – if you visit a synagogue, you would be expected to stand with them. Jews bow at certain points in the services but visitors are not expected to bow. Orthodox and Conservative, and some Reformed Jews put on a Tallit (prayer shawl) – something a visitor would not do.

In most synagogues or temples, it is a sign of respect for all males to wear a head covering, usually a dress hat or yarmulke (kippa) – they are usually provided near the front door.

Conservative and Orthodox synagogues *require* all male attendees to cover their heads, whether they are Jewish or Gentile. Most Reform (or Progressive) temples do not require either Jews or Gentiles to cover their heads but many Reform Jews now choose to wear a kippa.

Jews use different names for their houses of worship, which are very similar to ours – places where people worship, study and gather as a community. Orthodox Jews call it a “shul” which is Yiddish for school and emphasizes the learning aspect of the community (but many contemporary people don’t know what it means). Conservative Jews call their house of worship a “synagogue” which means “house of assembly.” And Reformed/Progressive Jews call theirs a

### **Jesus wasn't a Christian Jesus was a Jew**

Many Christians are surprised when they realize that Jesus was a Jew, not a Christian. He didn't see himself starting a new religion. He was just being a good Jewish rabbi, a teacher. He encouraged people to see the Jewish faith in a new way – to let go of some of the battles between different groups within Judaism and return to the basics of the faith: Love God and love one another. Christianity developed slowly as a separate religion as Gentiles joined the faith. True Jews could not accept Gentiles as full members of the faith. So the Jewish Christians gradually became just Christians.

*Read the title on this box to the group and invite comments. Provide the additional information as needed.*

“temple” because they consider all of their meeting places to be equivalent to, or a replacement for, The Temple – a practice which offends some traditional Jews, because they feel it trivializes the importance of The Temple (which was in Jerusalem, destroyed in 70 CE). When in doubt, the word "synagogue" is the best bet, because everyone knows what it means, and no one is likely to be offended by it!

Like us, Jews call the place where the worship services are held the “sanctuary.” The front of the sanctuary in the United States is generally designed so that it faces towards Jerusalem – the direction that Jews are supposed to face when reciting certain prayers. Episcopal churches generally (but not always) face East – where the sun rises and where we anticipate that we will see the Son rise again.

Probably the most important feature of the sanctuary is the Ark (no relation to Noah's Ark); in Hebrew it is called the Aron Kodesh (pronounced ah-RAWN KAW-desh or AWR-ohn KOH-desh) or “holy cabinet;” it is a cabinet or recession in the wall that holds the Torah scrolls. The Ark has doors and an inner curtain that echos the curtain in the Sanctuary in The Temple. During certain prayers, the doors and/or curtain of the Ark may be opened or closed – something that is done by a member of the congregation, and is considered an honor. All congregants stand when the Ark is open – much like we stand for the reading of the Gospel.

In front of and slightly above the Ark, is a lamp that symbolizes the commandment to keep a light burning in the Tabernacle outside of the curtain surrounding the Ark of the Covenant. (Ex. 27:20-21). It is similar to the “Presence Light” that we keep outside of the Ambry or Tabernacle that holds the reserved sacrament. A menorah is also likely to be present, symbolizing the menorah in the Temple. [However, the menorah in the synagogue will generally have six or eight branches instead of the Temple menorah's seven, because exact duplication of the Temple's ritual items is improper. The menorah most of us know has nine candles – eight for the eight days of Hanukkah and one taller one as the lighter candle.] In the center or front of the room is a lectern (bimah) that holds the Torah scrolls when they are read and is also sometimes used as a podium for leading services.

Orthodox synagogues have a separate section where the women and girls sit. This may be on an upper balcony or in the back or side of the room. It is separated from the men's section by a wall or curtain. Men are not permitted to pray in the presence of women, because they are supposed to have their minds on their prayers, not on pretty women! Conservative Jews often sit mixed and Reformed Jews will generally sit together as families much as we do.

## Closing

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Ask the group to help put away the food – establish norms for how you will clean up and depart each week and start practicing those norms today.

Remind the group to review their character(s) before the next meeting because you will ask them to be “in character” when they arrive. Encourage them to take some time this week to see what they can find about their character’s job or role in Judean society at the time.

Close by chanting the Shema three times. Remember to use the orans position for prayer. Then dismiss the group with the words: “Go in peace and the God of peace go with you.” AMEN. (The other leader needs to model this response each week until the group picks up on it.)

### NOTE:

For the next session, you need to recruit two men from the parish who will interrupt your meeting to check to see if there are any illegal meetings of that radical sect occurring. Pick men who preferably are big, burly and able to look rather tough...but who also know how to adapt to whatever the reaction is. Make copies of the next session for them and read it over with them ahead of time – it would be best to do a quick dry run today.

## Shema

Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad  
Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One

The literal word meanings are roughly as follows:

*Shema* — listen, or hear & do (according to the Targum, accept)

*Yisrael* — Israel, in the sense of the people or congregation of Israel

*Adonai* — often translated as "Lord", it is read in place of YHWH

*Eloheinu* — our God, the word "El" or "Eloh" signifying God (see also: Elohim), and the plural possessive determiner suffix "-nu" or "-enu" signifying "our"

*Echad* — the Hebrew word for the number 1, which has the dual meaning "one" and "alone"

### Pronunciation

Shema — shuh MAH

Yisrael — ees reye L (reye as in eye and L as in saying the letter "L")

Adonai — add doe NIGH

Eloheinu — aye low HAY new

Echad — ayeCH hod (the CH is guttural at the back of the throat)

### Chant



Sh' ma Yis-ra - el, A-do - nai El - o - hei - nu A-do - nai e - chod.  
Hear O, Israel. The Lord is our God! The Lord is One. (or The Lord alone.)

## SESSION THREE

### Life in Caesarea

#### SUPPLIES

- Food and drink of your choice
- Candles, tablecloth
- Worship bulletin
- Character sheets for those who forgot/lost them
- 3x5 cards with "May God protect my going out and coming in, now and forever." for each participant – see *Getting Started* below
- Nametags or table stands with each character's name on it
- **Two adult male volunteers from your congregation (see NOTE at end of Session Two)**
- Map that includes Rome, Jerusalem and Caesarea – you may also want a regional map
- Your diorama base board
- Lots of boxes of various sizes
- Packing or duct tape
- Chicken wire (smaller holes) or moderately heavy wire screen (not plastic)
- An electric wood stapler or the kind of staples you hammer into wood and a hammer

#### Getting Started

Start the session as you did the two previous weeks. As they arrive, remind participants that they need to be "in character." Greet them by their character's name (use nametags or table cards – a symbol or word that is their role would also help).

Take a few minutes to explain the mezuzah and fish symbol on the doorway. A mezuzah is on the right side of a doorpost at or above eye level – to remind Jews to remember and reach towards God. The mezuzah is hung in a slanting position (30°) with the top pointing towards the inside of the home or room. The general explanation for the slant is that there was a disagreement among rabbis as to whether it should be hung vertically or horizontally, which was resolved by placing it diagonally. [A very Anglican "middle-way" compromise!]

As with any Jewish ritual activity, there is a short prayer that should be said when affixing the mezuzah: "Blessed are you, Lord, our God, king of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to affix a mezuzah."

It is a general Jewish custom to kiss holy objects as a gesture of reverence, and this extends to the mezuzah. Commonly, a Jew entering her home or synagogue will touch the mezuzah with the fingertips and kiss the fingertips that touched it. This is often accompanied by the prayer, "May God protect my going out and coming in, now and forever." Encourage youth to learn this prayer and use it when coming in to the classroom. Ask what they imagine the early Jewish Christians might have done with this ritual – e.g., they might have just added "in Jesus' name I pray." Encourage each of them to make a choice about what prayer they will say to themselves next week. But remind them to do the Jewish ritual lest anyone passing by see them forget and therefore suspect they might not be Jews or true God-fearing Gentiles...but might be one of those renegade Christians.

Invite each person to introduce themselves and say just a bit about who they are. Begin with the leaders. Share some, but not all of the following information. Keep it short and keep some for later on.

You are Priscilla and Aquila and this is your home. You are the honored and much-loved friends and missionary partners of the Apostle Paul. Paul was generous in his recognition and acknowledgment of his indebtedness to you. You have been called the most famous couple in the Christian Bible since you are mentioned seven times and are always named as a couple. Of those seven times, five times Priscilla's name is mentioned first which is unusual and indicates her strong role as a leader. You are tentmakers by trade. This church meets in your dining room when you are in town. It is a middle-class house. When you are traveling, the community gathers in the home of Junia and Andronicus or Hannah and Gideon who also have large homes.

Acts 18:2-3 There he (Paul) met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.

Acts 18:18 Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila.

Acts 18:19 They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila.

Acts 18:26 He (Apollos) began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

Romans 16:3-4 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

1 Corinthians 16:19 The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house.

2 Timothy 4:19 Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.

Invite them to eat and start introducing themselves and say a bit about who they are (shorter if you have a large group; longer if you are a very small group). About 15-20 minutes into the session, your two men volunteers should pound VERY loudly on the door. Priscilla should then quickly tell everyone to get rid of anything Christian or even suspicious. Tell them to sit on their character and worship papers to hide them. Do whatever you can to create a sense of urgency. Then say: "Remember, we're just friends, visiting and having a meal. Not a word about Jesus!" Meanwhile, Aquila goes to the door and asks, "Whose there?"

Men: "John and Benjamin (or whatever names you give them). We're from the temple. OPEN UP IMMEDIATELY.

Aquila opens the door and the men rush in, scowling, scrutinizing each person, looking around the room, looking under things, etc. One of them picks a character (select someone who is likely to be OK with this) and confronts him: "I don't recognize you....who are you and where did you come from?" The other guys challenges: "What are you doing here?" Aquila replies: "These are our family and friends – we're just having a bit of lunch. Would you like to join us?" The intruders glare and him: "No thanks. You sure nothing else is going on?" Aquila: "No, just a friendly neighborhood gathering." Men: "OK, we're just making sure there aren't any of those Jesus freaks around here!" Aquila doesn't reply (doesn't want to deny or affirm it) and just ushers them out of the door and closes it.

Everyone takes a sigh of relief. Priscilla asks:

- Is everyone OK? What were you thinking and feeling when the men came in?

- Do you think we are safe here?
- What should we do?

Let the group discuss options for awhile. See if Junia or Andronicus suggest that you meet at their house next week. If not, nudge the conversation in that direction. What you want to do is get the group to realize that it was dangerous to meet as Christians and that the group had to take evasive action. Talk also about how you will come and go – how you will act so you don't draw attention to yourselves. Discuss strategies.

Tell them about one of the ways the early Christians could signal to each other without others knowing what they were doing. Ask if they remember what symbol was used by the early church (fish). Ask if they know why the fish symbol had significance. The fish was a common meal in Galilee and is often mentioned in the Gospels. But many Christians believe it is an acrostic using the first letters of a series of words which spells Ichthus, the Greek word for fish. Those words are: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior" [Iesous (Jesus) CHristos (Christ) THEou (God) Uiou (Son) Soter (Savior)]. However it came to be, it turned out to be an easy way to identify who was a Christian. It was easy to inscribe it somewhere discretely. And if you met someone on the street and wanted to find out if he/she was a Christian, you could draw a crescent in the sand with your toe – which could be the first half of the fish. If the other person completed the fish symbol, you knew they were Christian. If they ignored it, it was simple an idle doodle in the sand. Invite the group to remember and use that symbol – young people this age often like secret signs so this can be one. Ask when and where they think they might use this given who their character is. When you come to a natural conclusion to this conversation, return to the introductions, picking up wherever you left off before you were interrupted. Make sure everyone has had a chance to introduce themselves.



## Worship

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Lead the worship service – invite the youth to take roles (remind them to stay in character). Make sure that you take time in the middle of the service to talk about Jesus – invite one or two of the youth to share a witness based on their character. Ask: Who among us can tell us how you met Jesus or can tell us a story about Jesus?

## Discussion and Activity

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At the end of the worship service, stop to check in with people. Explain that you are going to start on your diorama planning today (unless you've run out of time, in which case move this to next week). But first ask the young people to reflect on this morning's experience. Ask:

- As we return to being ourselves instead of our characters, I'd like to ask you to say just one or two words that summarize how you felt about today's experience. Go around the circle quickly.
- Great, thanks. Now, can you tell me one new thing you learned today? Invite responses; thank participants or affirm them when they respond.

Briefly summarize: "So we learned some interesting things today – A, B, C, D and E. I also learned F and G. And now we're going to learn about building a diorama. Have any of you done this before?" If so, invite them to tell the group what they did and encourage others to talk about any model building they've done. What you want to do is assess what experience and skill level you have in the group. If they did dioramas in school, they may well know more about how to do this than you do! In which case, enlist their help.

### **Getting Started**

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Start by gathering information about Caesarea. Remind them that some of them have information on their character sheets. Look at your map(s). Identify where Caesarea is. Ask:

- When was it built and by whom?
- It was on the water...what do we know about the harbor?
- Where was Herod's palace? What was it like?
- What else was in the city?

(Ezra, Andronicus, Gideon, Hannah and Lazarus all have information to answer these questions)

Develop a plan. Cover your board with paper and draw where you will put the various elements: Harbor at one end with the peninsula for Herod's palace, city in the middle, hill for sheepherding on the opposite end.

You'll need a set of at least two boxes for the "city" part of the diorama. Put them side-by-side so there is adequate support in the middle to hold the weight. If your diorama is large, you can just keep adding boxes (e.g., shoe boxes would work well if you are doing a big one). You'll need a long box, about half the height of the city box, to serve as the base of the peninsula that sticks out into the harbor and houses the palace. Then you'll need a larger box or two for the hill on the other end of the diorama. Tape the boxes together and tape or staple them securely to your base.

Cover the boxes with chicken wire or wire screening. If you use screening, choose the kind that is real wire, not plastic, and that is stiff enough to bend, fold, tuck and still hold its shape. The chicken wire/screening provides the base for your paper mache. Mold it over the low box in the harbor to make a peninsula with a flat top (for the palace). Then create a gentle incline up to the main city, maybe with a terrace or two along the way. Keep most of your city on a fairly flat surface although you can go up and down a bit on different sized boxes – the city wasn't built on a totally flat plane. Build a small hill outside the city walls so your shepherd and farmers have some place for fields and sheep.

Stop whenever you come to the end of your time and pick up this activity next week.

## Closing

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Ask the group to help put away the food – establish norms for how you will clean up and depart each week and start practicing those norms today.

Remind the group to review their character(s) before the next meeting because you will ask them to be “in character” again when they arrive. Encourage them to review their character's his/her job or role. Remind them that they have information that they will need to share with the group if you are to be able to build the diorama correctly.

Thank the young people for coming and being part of today's session. Tell them that next week you will continue to work on your diorama and talk about the shift from Judaism to Christianity. Our group, gathered here today, is comprised of Jews and a few God-fearing Gentiles. How did they become Christians? That's the focus of next week's session.

Close by chanting the Shema three times. Remember to use the orans position for prayer. Then dismiss the group with the words: “Go in peace and the God of peace go with you.” AMEN. (The other leader needs to model this response each week until the group picks up on it.)

Note: You may choose to add a prayer or reflection from the Jewish Prayer book. For example, you could read any of the daily reflections found on page 59-60 or one of the prayers or reflections found on pages 341-357...or any other prayer or reflection that appeals to you.