

S-TAT

Storying & Church Formation
Training for Trainers

What Others Say about S-T4T

“Storying T4T offers an innovative, effective way to witness and to tell the stories of the Bible. This breakthrough strategy gives an opportunity for two thirds of the world’s population that is functionally illiterate. It’s time to return to the method Jesus used to communicate the Truth. This manual will help you be effective and productive in Kingdom service.”

Avery Willis, Executive Director,
International Orality Network

“The International Mission Board has done an amazing job of preparing trainers to effectively teach others how to present the Gospel through story telling. Their very practical approach begins with storying through the Gospel message and proceeding with additional stories that reflect assurance of salvation and first steps in passing the story on to others. Their emphasis on “every learner becoming a trainer” and the re-telling of the stories learned helps put the training into immediate action. I recommend it highly.”

Paul Eshleman, VP, Global Coverage,
Campus Crusade for Christ

“*Storying Training for Trainers* is the best-developed resource of its kind. It integrates the advantages of Bible storying with leadership training processes refined in multiple church planting movements. The model offers both structure and flexibility within that structure. The booklet’s unique two-page format simplifies the task of preparing a Bible story for telling because the authors have placed insights into key biblical terms, worldview issues, and finer points of storycrafting across the page from the biblical passage. *Storying Training for Trainers* links two of the most significant trends in missions today in an innovative, user-friendly fashion.”

Grant Lovejoy, Ph.D., *Director of Orality Strategies*,
International Mission Board

“I am excited with this training resource that enables every lay person to tell Bible stories to listeners. Each story keeps in sight two critical elements: the worldview of the listener, and the desire to see churches established. With this easy, memorable, and reproducible tool, everyone can tell!”

Samuel E. Chiang, Global Coordinator,
International Orality Network

“The S-T4T training far exceeded our expectations. Not only did our national missionaries embrace this new oral strategy, but they became excited about it, and began to use it right away. One said, “We cannot take Bibles to our people, it would be dangerous and ineffective, but we can take God’s stories without problems and they will listen to them.” The thing I love most about this training is that it is not rocket science. Anyone can do this. I also love the fact that this is not kid’s stuff. The discussions get deep and you can’t help but learn something significant.”

Steve Sims, Director of Oral Communication Strategies,
e3 Partners Ministry

“I am indeed happy to hear of the South Asia S-T4T team’s effort in bringing this manual on Bible storying. Oral storying method is applicable in the context of both the non-literate as well as literate communities of the world today. The world of non-literates revolves around orality so much that they find it hard to comprehend the written language even if it is read to them by a literate. With the advent of information technology, the world of literates is also moving closer to an oral culture now. The linear reading (a textual approach) is slowly giving way to a non-linear reading (a hypertextual approach) and the effects of a secondary orality is rapidly permeating the media world today. As we move from a print-oriented culture to a more oral and visual one, training manuals of this nature are immensely valuable for Christian communicators. I strongly recommend every one involved in the task of communicating the Scripture message to obtain a copy of this manual for study and use.”

Dr. Julian Sundersingh, Media Consultant,
United Bible Societies - Asia Pacific

“In 2007 we began utilizing this training content in several regions of Asia and we’re now adding this training approach in Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe in 2008. I’m increasingly convinced that the use of S-T4T dramatically accelerates our training of indigenous teams plus gives us a model which helps take the ‘mystery’ out of storying methodology for our field leadership. During all of our recent training modules, we’re pleased with the level of interaction and discussion that develops directly from the training set of stories, especially related to theological issues, Biblical key terms, translation process, story crafting, CPM principles, etc. S-T4T gives me great confidence in our training content and we’re deeply indebted to our South Asia IMB colleagues for their diligent work on this during the past few years. S-T4T helps us accelerate toward providing oral Bibles to every people group still awaiting Scripture in their mother tongue.”

Ron Green, Director of Oral Strategies,
Campus Crusade for Christ International

“The non-literate people around the world have been posing a great challenge for the world evangelization. These people are considered as oral societies and therefore they need to be reached with the gospel by oral methods. ‘Storytelling’ has been found the most effective method in oral communication. However, church planters have to be trained in storytelling method. In this context the ‘Storying Training for Trainers’ (S-T4T) manual would be an excellent material as it focuses on training the church planters in storytelling strategy. I highly recommend this book to all those who are serious in reaching the unreached people among the oral learners.”

S. D. Ponraj, BORN Network, Bihar, India

S-TAT

*Intentional evangelism utilizing
stories from God's Word
resulting in multiplying house churches*

Storying & Church Formation Training for Trainers

Church Planting and Discipleship for Oral Learners

Preface

Over the past two decades God has drawn millions of lost souls into his kingdom through the phenomenon of Church Planting Movements. These amazing outbreaks of new churches and believers have occurred in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas.

No Church Planting Movement has been more explosive or grown more rapidly than one that began in China in 2001, and has now seen more than a million newly baptized believers and tens of thousands of new churches. This movement taught us a new methodology called *T4T* or *Training for Trainers*. *T4T* is by far the best practice in the world today for getting to a Church Planting Movement.

If there is one weakness in *T4T*, it is the fact that it is primarily a literate model, which works well when a Bible translation exists and those who have it can read. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the world's remaining unreached people groups are nonliterate with no Scripture in their heart language. Even if the Bible were given to them, they could not read it.

Over the past two decades, pioneering missionaries have grappled with the challenge of reaching the hundreds of millions who comprise the world's nonreading *oral majority* with both the Good News and the Bible in an oral, storying format. While the *orality movement* in Christian missions has made tremendous strides, it has largely fallen short of its goal of rapid and exponential multiplication of new oral believers and churches—*until now*.

With the creation of *S-T4T* (*Storying Training for Trainers*) Stephen Stringer and his team have wedded the best in oral storying methods with *T4T*, the best in Church Planting Movement methodologies. The early results are very exciting! In South Asia we are seeing immediate positive response from nonliterate and oral preference peoples. More importantly, we are seeing them take what they learn and pass it on to produce both new believers and new churches.

Storying T4T offers the hope of making the Gospel available to the world's nonliterate millions and equipping them to multiply new faith communities throughout their own people groups.

May God bless you as you read, learn and use this valuable new Gospel tool! And may God bless *S-T4T* as a means to cover the earth with the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea!

Dr. David Garrison
Author of *Church Planting Movements*

Acknowledgements

Recognition is given to those whose persistent work and contributions made this manual possible: Tricia Stringer, Steve Evans, Kerry Corliss, Dexter Corliss, Carolyn Lozuk, Mark Lozuk, Annette Hall and Tony W.

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Stephen Stringer
General Editor

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Contents

Storying Training for Trainers	8	Church Formation Training (CFT)	71
The S-T4T Strategy	10	Church Formation Training Notes	72
S-T4T and Five Parts of a CPM Plan	13	Promise of God's Spirit*	74
S-T4T Training Strategy	14	God's Spirit* CFT	76
S-T4T Process	17	Peter's Sermon	78
Foreword	22	Peter and the Crippled Beggar	80
Creation to Church	26	Peter Before the Religious Leaders*	82
Creation	28	The Lying Couple	84
Disobedience	30	The Twelve* Are Rescued from Jail	86
Abraham	32	Seven Men Chosen to Serve	88
David King	34	Stephen is Arrested & Stoned	90
David & Bathsheba	36	African CFT	92
Nathan's Story	38	Paul Meets Jesus	94
Promise	40	Ananias Obeys God	96
Birth	42	Peter and Cornelius	98
Jesus' Baptism*	44	Peter Meets Cornelius	100
Possessed Man	46	The Antioch Church*	102
Assurance	48	God Frees Peter from Jail	104
Sight	50	Paul & Barnabas Mistaken for Gods	106
Triumphal Entry	52	Paul's Vision*	108
Last Supper	54	The Philippian Jailer CFT	110
Arrest and Trial	56	Paul in Athens	112
Execution	58	Return CFT	114
Alive!	60	Glossary	116
God's Spirit*	62	Bibliography	123
African	64	Appendix: Indigenous Worship for House Churches	124
Philippian Jailer	66		
Return	68		

Storying Training for Trainers

In his book, *This Holy Seed*¹, Robin Daniel describes the astounding rise and equally spectacular fall of the early church in North Africa. The church in North Africa experienced an overwhelming movement of people coming to Christ after having experienced great persecution. The church grew to great numbers and enjoyed a period of peace and growth. Yet, when the church was confronted by the Vandal raiders and the forces of Islam, it crumbled. Today the remnants of the church can be found only in the ruins of ancient “mega-church buildings” scattered throughout the region. Daniel ascribes the fall of the church to two basic reasons: (1) The church did not have access to Scripture that the common people could understand, and (2) the church had become an institution rather than the church being the vibrant reproducing body of like-minded believers in which it found its roots.

He describes the pitiful state of the church just before its fall:

Gone were the days when the majority of Christians knew what they believed, and why.... They were appallingly ignorant, and few were even aware of it. “We’re not worried,” they said with blithe nonchalance, “because we follow our Overseer!”

“That doesn’t make any sense,” replied Augustine, “for there are Overseers even among the heretics.” But the Christians had grown accustomed to depend on gifted men rather than on God. They were spectators at the church, not participants—attenders rather than disciples.

What S-T4T Is

It is a response to the cries of Augustine for each believer to be responsible for knowing biblical truth. From the beginning, Storying T4T equips believers to share their faith effectively, disciple others, and train others to do the same. It is an intentional church-planting strategy founded on stories from God’s Word. It makes his Word available to all people in a way they can understand, respond to and reproduce.

S-T4T merges two best practices in the fields of church planting and cross-cultural communication. Together these form a highly transferable model of training trainers to share God’s Word effectively, make disciples and implement a reproducing church-planting movement strategy.

T4T (Training for Trainers) is a proven CPM strategy that is founded on an obedience-based training paradigm of church-planting trainers training church-planting trainers. It was developed by John Chen to facilitate reproducing church planting in a city in China.²

¹ Robin Daniel, *This Holy Seed* (Chester, England: Tamarisk Books, 2005), p.168.

² “John Chen” is the pseudonymous name given to the originator of Training for Trainers (T4T) by David

Since its initial use in China, T4T has been adapted and used throughout the world.

Storying to communicate God's Word to oral communicators has opened evangelism and discipleship to the vast majority of the world who are nonreaders! Imagine the effect of communicating the Gospel to the majority of the earth's population in a way they can actually understand and respond to. Better yet, what a greater joy it will be to equip this majority of nonreaders, who often have felt overlooked or incapable of serving in ministry, to effectively plant churches!

What S-T4T Is not

Storying T4T is not a silver bullet. We believe S-T4T is a promising innovation in missions and church planting. We do not suppose that S-T4T is the only method God will use to bring entire people groups to relationship with himself. God has been working for millennia to redeem the world through the saving power of Jesus Christ. He has used his people, his Word, and his Spirit. We pray that God will use S-T4T for his glory!

S-T4T is not a training event. It is a systematic approach to evangelism and life-on-life discipleship that results in reproducing churches. It is not a series of lessons to be taught. It is a program in which believers meet regularly for fellowship, worship, accountability, and discipleship. The discipleship portion of the S-T4T strategy covers the foundations of Christian life and discipleship found in the original T4T discipleship material, including 1) assurance of salvation; 2) prayer; 3) devotional life; 4) church; 5) the character and nature of God; and 6) widespread Gospel proclamation. These themes are integrated carefully and intentionally into the S-T4T strategy and core story set.

S-T4T is not chronological Bible storying. S-T4T uses a chronological approach to teaching the discipleship and church-planting lessons of T4T through Bible stories, but the evangelism strategy starts with personal testimonies, "hook" stories and a Gospel presentation using a brief biblical panorama that leads to a call for decision. Bible storying is the vehicle by which the T4T church-planting strategy conveys truth.

Conclusion

So, as S-T4T combines oral communication with the principles of T4T, the intentionality of reproductive church planting in T4T becomes accessible to the world of those who do not communicate via literate means. The worldview-sensitive communication of God's Word through storying is infused with the intentionality and accountability of T4T. Now T4T practitioners have the tools they need to communicate to oral learners, and Bible storying practitioners have the tools to see stories used to plant reproducing churches.

Garrison in *Church Planting Movements, How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Midlothian: WIGTake Resources, 2004), pp. 286-291 and pp. 307-314. To access the book see www.churchplantingmovements.com.

The S-T4T Strategy

*Intentional evangelism resulting in multiplying house churches
utilizing stories from the Word of God...*

As the two walked through the foothills of the Himalayas, the young man—a local believer—asked his companion, “Why are you here?” His question opened the door for the visiting teacher to talk about the importance of helping people share their faith in cultures where few people learn through reading and writing. “I’m like one of those people,” the young man said. “I’m illiterate, and I always thought that I couldn’t do much for God because of that.” The two began to discuss how the young man could indeed have an impact on people following Jesus and starting new house churches in the area, even if he couldn’t read or write. Continuing their hike, they walked by a small village and heard a man yell from his fields, “Come join us for tea,” and point to a small house nearby. “I would like that,” the teacher told the eager learner beside him, who loudly responded yes to the farmer. They soon found themselves sitting in a pleasant garden in front of the man’s house. The man, a few of his family members and the two guests sipped the hot sweetened tea of that region as they talked about the local legends of the hills and mountains towering above them. “That reminds me of a story,” the visiting teacher eventually said, anxious to not only share the Good News with his hosts, but to model what he had been describing to his new disciple. The teacher then shared a brief story about his life and how he found personal significance through God’s love for him. When he finished, he asked if he could share another story, this one from the Word of God. The family heartily agreed, and when the teacher finished, one of those listening said, “That’s a true story.” The two guests then prayed with the family and made arrangements to share more stories during the coming weeks. As the teacher and his disciple walked away, the young man said, “It’s that easy, isn’t it?” “Yes,” replied the teacher, “it’s that easy.”¹

While Storying Training for Trainers (S-T4T) is a simple, effective and reproducible evangelism, discipleship and church-planting strategy utilizing the power of stories, its “DNA” is quite comprehensive and complex. S-T4T is a strategy for training believers to share their faith, start house churches through the telling of both personal stories and Bible stories, and to train others to do the same. Its focus is on evangelism, church planting and discipleship, and it provides God’s Word to oral communicators in ways that they can remember it, reproduce it and use it to lead reproducing house churches. S-T4T incorporates intentionality, accountability and immediacy, meaning that from the very beginning those involved are doing it rather than just learning about it, and they are accountable for what they do or do not do.

¹ This story is based on a true event in South Asia.

There are several components to an S-T4T church planting strategy. The first component is an evangelism strategy. The basic premise of S-T4T evangelism is to listen to another's story, share your story, then tell God's story. The first of God's stories told is one about how Jesus changed the life of a man living in torment. Jesus then told him to go home and share with others (including his family and friends) the story of how God changed his life. Next a brief Bible panorama is shared—God's story from creation to church. This is basically a Gospel presentation, with an invitation to accept Christ given at the end. Finally, a discipleship set of twenty-plus Bible stories, carrying a redemptive theme that speaks to the receptor worldview, is shared over a period of time. We have provided you with a “core” story set that has the theme of restored relationship with God. This story set also conveys the basics of discipleship found in T4T. S-T4T represents a win-win strategy, since it always strives to leave the door open for further conversation (see chart, page 12).

The second component of an S-T4T church planting strategy is a core discipleship set of twenty-plus Bible stories, carrying a redemptive theme that speaks to the receptor worldview, and is shared over a period of time in a house church setting. (See S-T4T Training section for discussion on house church.) We have provided you with helps to develop a “core” story set for your audience. The example story set that has been provided for you develops the biblical theme of restored relationship with God. This story set also conveys the basics of discipleship found in T4T. The basic core discipleship set grows a new group in their understanding of how to be disciples, and provides the framework essential to future teaching through subsequent biblical story sets.

The third component of an S-T4T church planting strategy is a church formation training set. In this set, new believers story through the book of Acts in their house churches/fellowships in order to experience church formation through the eyes of the New Testament church. An example CFT (Church Formation Training) set has been provided for you.

Subsequent components of an S-T4T church planting strategy could include further stories from the book of Acts, stories from the epistles, or even special interest stories relating to women, specific topics, leadership training, etc. Example story sets continue to be made available through www.st4t.org.

As mentioned in the Storying Training for Trainers section, S-T4T combines two best practices—Bible storying, with its oral communication principles, and T4T, a proven evangelism, discipleship and church-planting strategy. This hybrid approach is put within the framework of the five parts of a Church Planting Movement strategy plan, simply referred to as a CPM Plan. These five parts are: entry, sharing Jesus, making disciples, forming church and multiplying leaders. Various elements of S-T4T fit into each of these five categories. Entry answers the question: What are you going to do to make contact, to engage, and to gain permission to go further? Sharing Jesus is just that—a Gospel presentation. The remaining three are self-explanatory (see chart, next page).

In brief, Bible storying is the sharing of biblical truths through telling Bible stories. In the S-T4T approach, we embrace a chronological approach to Bible storying. As these stories are presented, oral communication principles are kept in mind, such as utilizing narrative as communication, reproducibility, mnemonic devices, oral thought processes and decision-making, story development and crafting, etc.

The basic premises of the original T4T are quite simple, though its missiology is comprehensive: Learn your testimony; determine five people with whom you will share your testimony; do it; ask for a decision; report back whether you did it or not and what the response was; lead those who accepted Christ in how to share their testimony and with whom; then take the new believers through six follow-up or immediate discipleship lessons, teaching them to teach the same lessons

to their new believers. As one person put it, T4T answers four questions: 1) What do I say? 2) To whom do I say it? 3) What makes you think I will do it? and 4) What do I do if they say yes?

S-T4T uses the same evangelism and discipleship approaches as the original T4T, all within the framework of the CPM Plan. The intentionality is there, as well as the accountability. The idea is to listen intentionally to someone's story, looking for an opportunity to share your story or testimony, then seek permission to tell another story from the Bible – one about the transforming power of Jesus. (This is the entry level of the CPM Plan, with a transition to Gospel presentation level.) If permission is gained, a presentation of the Creation to Church story is shared, finishing with an invitation to accept Christ. If the response is positive, the new believer is coached to begin immediately sharing his or her story, Possessed Man and Creation to Church with a specific list of people. He or she also is brought into a discipleship storying group, utilizing the S-T4T core story set that you have developed. (This is the discipleship phase of a CPM Plan, which also contains elements of church formation and leader development.) After this, other S-T4T story sets are utilized, such as the Church Formation set, Epistles set, Old Testament Prophets set and Teachings of Jesus set, meeting the church formation and leader multiplication steps of a CPM plan. If the response to the Gospel presentation is negative, ask if the individual would be willing to set a time for him or her (along with friends and family) to listen to the individual stories of the S-T4T core story set.

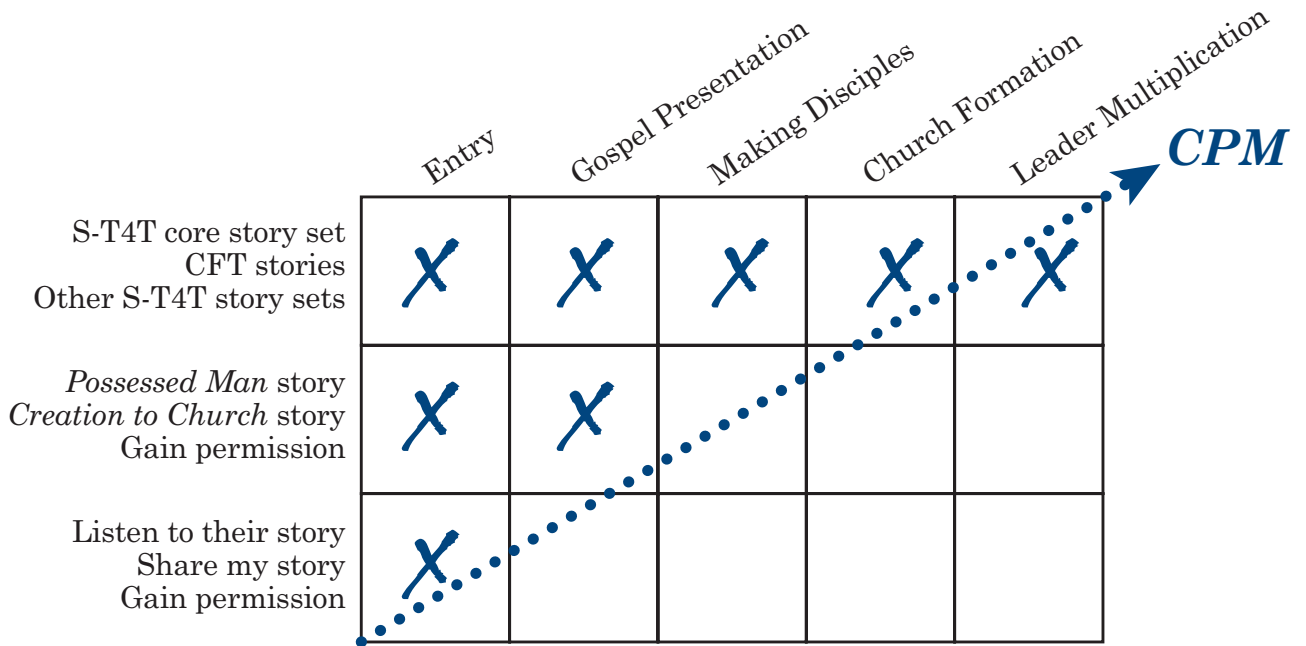
Each story in the S-T4T core story set is addressed in various ways: 1) story crafting issues; 2) worldview issues; 3) T4T principles; 4) thematic threads (Intra-story Cohesion) and 5) key biblical terms (Words/Phrases to Consider). In addition to processing each story fully through a series of discovery questions (see Curriculum section for discovery questions), those involved in S-T4T are asked three specific questions after each and every story: 1) How are you going to remember this story? 2) Specifically, to whom are you going to tell this story? 3) What in this story is there to obey? Immediate obedience is key to the S-T4T process.

To aid in understanding S-T4T, we have included two charts. A graphic representation of the S-T4T process can be found on page 17, and a visual of the integration of S-T4T and the five parts of a CPM plan can be found on page 13.

S-T4T

and

Five Parts of a CPM Plan



S-T4T Training Strategy

As we have stated previously, S-T4T is a comprehensive strategy that combines elements of storying and T4T. As you read along, you will find storycrafting hints as well as elements of the T4T discipleship model within the S-T4T core story set. However, one of the most important elements in S-T4T cannot be found in the story set itself. It is found in how the trainings are conducted.

The S-T4T three-day evangelism training (found below) should be used as a filter to find those obedient people who will continue to practice what they have learned and train others. Once you have found these faithful, meet with them weekly to train them to lead house churches using the S-T4T model. They should then continue to start groups with whom they are meeting weekly to train in what they have just learned. The members of their groups should then turn around and start their own groups who are meeting weekly to learn how to train others. The training participants should *not* reproduce the three-day training itself, but instead train others by mentoring them on a weekly basis, using the stories and skills they have learned in the three-day training. Once you have found gifted trainers who have multiple groups that are reproducing, then they may become intermediate-level trainers who are also holding three-day events to filter for obedient trainers. However, simply reproducing training events without meeting regularly on an ongoing basis can result in effective evangelism, but will not result in generational church reproduction. Generational church reproduction will only come from this weekly or biweekly mentoring into obedience and casting of vision.

Curriculum for three-day S-T4T Evangelism Training

T4T is an obedience-based training, meaning that participants do not simply learn the concepts and walk away. They learn concepts, put them into practice immediately and then are held accountable for doing so. S-T4T embraces this training model and attempts to infuse reproducibility and oral-preference learning styles into the training.

In order to illustrate this better, we have included an example curriculum for the three day training. You may wish to adjust this curriculum for your own context. However, please consider concepts of reproducibility and oral communication in your trainings. In other words, you should never train in a way that the people you are training cannot reproduce. You should limit the rate of information flow so that the participants can learn and do. It is better for participants to learn one story that they can retell well than for them to learn 20 stories they will not be able to reproduce. Your training should remain as concrete and sequential as possible. Most people cannot reproduce abstract training concepts that do not fit together in a cohesive manner. This is certainly true of oral preference learners.

DAY 1:

Introduction

Explain that each participant is to be a trainer. You should think in terms of training the people they will be training. In turn, they should be thinking about training those whom their trainees will train. Having them think about this will help the participants to keep their training and training styles reproducible for those whom they are training. You will want to keep this ethos of “trainers training trainers” before the participants throughout the training.

Explain the oral participatory style of the training. Request that participants allow themselves to experience the stories and learn them orally; therefore, no note taking until the designated analytical processing times. (These do not occur in these first three days.)

Explain the idea of obedience-based training and the fact that the participants will be asked to go out and tell stories.

Devotional Time

Tell your story and the *Possessed Man* story together.

Retell the *Possessed Man* story and lead the group in learning it. You should emphasize that the most important step in the storying session is to get participants to retell the story. In order to adequately process the truths of the story, the hearer first must truly know the story. You should encourage the training participants to use creative ways of getting the group to retell the stories. Model this for the group by using drama, song, hand gestures, miming, etc., to help them retell the *Possessed Man* story. Process the story devotionally using the following seven questions:

- What did you like in this story?
- What confused you or bothered you in this story?
- What did you learn about God?
- What did you learn about man?
- What should you obey from this story?
- How will you remember this story?
[Note: The best answer to this question is to tell the story.]
- To whom will you tell this story?

There is nothing magical about these seven questions. You may find that they do not work in your context. You should discover the processing questions that DO work and use them. The important thing is that the same questions be used for each story, that they be reproducible and that they cover three basic categories: 1) What does the story say? 2) What does the story teach? 3) How should we apply the truths of the story?

S-T4T Process

LISTEN! The most underemphasized aspect of evangelization is listening to the people with whom you are sharing. As you share your own story, you should first listen in order to develop relationships and connect with people. When you know what people are seeking in their lives, you can better connect them to Jesus.

POSSESSED MAN STORY After you tell your own story, you should tell the *Possessed Man* story. Ask each participant to tell the group how his or her life was different before believing in Jesus. Ask them what the life of the demon-possessed man was like before meeting Jesus. Next, ask them how Jesus changed the life of the demon-possessed man. Lastly, ask each participant how his or her life was changed.

Help the group see that their lives were changed miraculously just like the demon-possessed man's life was changed. They should be able to relate their own testimony with the testimony of the demon-possessed man.

If the group seems to need it, give more instruction on telling your own story, but always have them practice telling their own story in conjunction with the *Possessed Man* story. Have the group separate into pairs to practice telling these stories to each other.

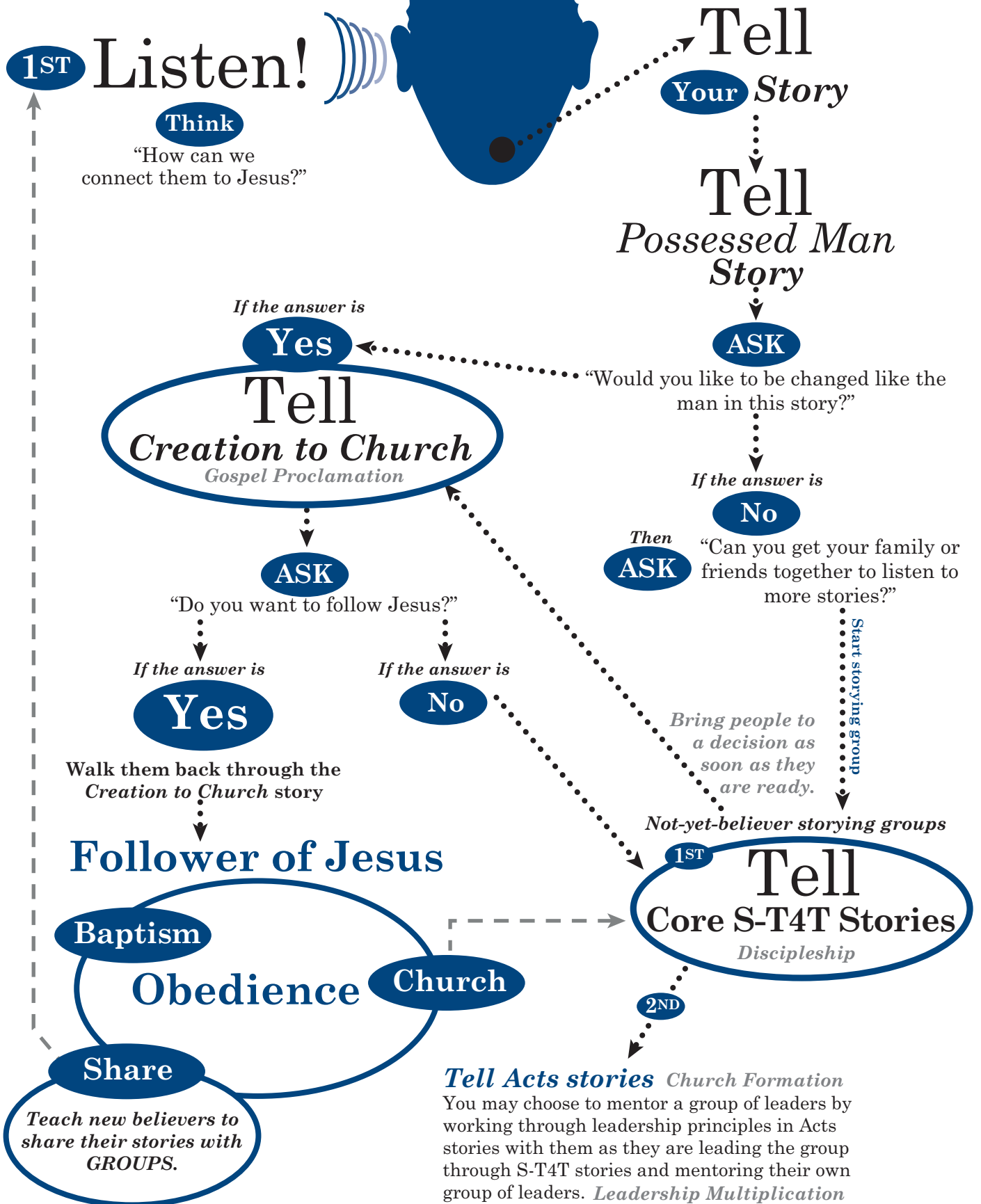
Get back together and try to get a few people to tell their two stories in the group—then you will know how well the group really knows the story. You may need to retell the *Possessed Man* story at the end.

Go and Tell [afternoon]

Remind the participants that the man was told by Jesus to go and tell. The man obeyed immediately. If he had not gone and told, he would have disobeyed. Ask the participants, "Whom did he tell?" Discuss the effectiveness of Jesus' strategy. (You may want to point out that the next time we see Jesus coming back to this man's home area, so many people come to hear him that he has to feed the four thousand!)

Have the participants go out into the community to tell their story and the *Possessed Man* story. They should go out in pairs, but both people should share with someone. Everyone should say the name of one person they're going to tell that day. It cannot be their own children, and it needs to be a nonbeliever. Explain to the participants that you will begin the next day with a celebration time in which each person will be asked what God did when they were obedient to go out and share. This aspect of accountability is the cornerstone of the S-T4T strategy. We must take the spiritual authority that God has given us as their trainers/mentors to hold other people accountable to share the stories. Jesus told his followers in Matt 28:20 to teach people to obey the things he had commanded them to do. In the *Possessed Man* story, Jesus said to go and share. We can confidently teach others to be obedient to the words of Jesus and hold them accountable to go and share. Again, let them know you are training those they are going to be training. If they will not go out and share, they cannot expect the people they train to go out and share.

S-T4T



You will also want to develop a group of storycrafters who can continue to craft stories for long-term discipleship and leadership multiplication to facilitate a self-feeding, self-correcting movement.

DAY 2:

Celebration/Accountability Time

Ask each person what God did when they shared. Celebrate with them. Some people find it helpful to count how many people heard the stories during that time. Praise God for the people who heard and for the people who made decisions. Pray for them that God would continue to work in their lives. If possible, arrange for follow-up with the people who heard.

Seventy-five percent of the participants must have shared before you go on with the training. You should explain that the very nature of the training requires that they go out and tell the stories. If you have less than 75% of participants sharing, then you should send them back out for a couple of hours to share before going on with the training. You should remind them this is an obedience-based training. As such, each session is dependent upon the participants not only mastering the material presented in the previous session, but also being obedient to do what was presented in the previous session.

Remind participants of the process—LISTEN, YOUR STORY, *POSSESSED MAN* STORY

Creation to Church Story

Creation to Church is a panorama, so to speak, of the redemptive story of God's Word. This story is critical in the S-T4T process.

Tell the story twice. After you have done this, break down the story into scenes and walk the group through the story.

Break into smaller groups in which they practice retelling the story.

Bring the group back together and tell *Creation to Church* a third time. Talk through the truths that are taught in the story, i.e. truths about God, man, sin, salvation, God's Spirit and church. Ask for volunteers to tell the *Creation to Church* story to the group.

Role-play: Get someone to be the lost person, then you walk through the ENTIRE PROCESS again in role-play. At the end of the *Creation to Church* story, ask the "lost person" to make a decision. If he/she says yes, teach the group how to walk someone back through the *Creation to Church* story to guide someone to make a decision. If he/she says no, say that you have more stories. Ask the person to bring family and friends to hear more stories whether he/she says yes or no. We continually want to emphasize getting groups of people together for the stories.

Story Song [afternoon]

Break up the group into small groups and have each group create a song from the *Creation to Church* story. The purpose of this exercise is not to teach the groups how to compose songs; it is a creative way of getting the participants to tell and retell the story. They should do this exercise orally, so each person in the group should take a turn telling the story while they are composing the song, ideally at intermittent intervals during the song composition process.

Go and Tell

Have the participants go back out to tell their story, the *Possessed Man* story, and the *Creation to Church* story, all in order to lead someone to Christ. Ideally, the participants will return to the people with whom they had shared the stories the day before. They should try to follow the steps

in the process (from Listen to *Creation to Church*). If someone is not able to follow the entire process, then he/she should try at least to tell the *Creation to Church* story.

Remind the participants that they should ask, “Do you want your life to be changed?” after the *Possessed Man* story. If the person says no, they should not continue on to the *Creation to Church* story. The person is likely to shut them off and stop listening. It is better to return to the larger core story set at this point. If someone says no, then the participant should ask if they would like to gather their friends or family to listen to more stories and then go on to the core story set.

DAY 3:

Accountability

Give the group an opportunity to work on and then share their *Creation to Church* songs. Have volunteers tell the *Creation to Church* story. The trainer should also retell it.

Emphasize how to lead someone back through the story to make a decision to follow Christ. Once someone makes a decision to follow Christ, he/she needs to take three steps of obedience: (1) be baptized; (2) join or form a house story group or church where they will story through the core S-T4T discipleship stories; and (3) learn immediately to tell their story and the *Possessed Man* story.

Break down the group into smaller groups. Each group should role-play telling all three stories to a nonbeliever, culminating in leading that person to Christ.

Go and Tell

Send the participants back out to tell the three stories, with an emphasis on accuracy in the telling of the stories.

On-going S-T4T Training

As stated above, after the three-day evangelism training, groups should be meeting regularly on a weekly or bi-weekly basis in a house church setting. The house church setting itself is the training. The very structure of this house church “training” is the engine that drives reproducibility. S-T4T follows the general guidelines in John Chen’s T4T of organizing the house church session into “thirds”:

1. The first third of your time together should be spent in pastoral care/accountability, review of the previous session’s story, and worship.
2. The second third should be spent in telling the new story, everyone retelling the new story, and discussing the story using the seven questions. (These activities are discussed in depth in the three-day curriculum above.)
3. The last two of the seven questions lead the group into the last third of the session, which consists of vision casting, practice, and prayer. Vision casting involves getting the group to think through how they can reproduce what they have learned, ask themselves whether they are training others and if the people they’re training are training others, and continuing to ask them the question of “what’s it going to take” to reach their people group. Practice involves the

participants actually practicing what they would do to lead their own groups' sessions. They should get into pairs and actually talk through how they will conduct the three "thirds" of their own groups, so that each member of the group is equipped to lead their own group. The group should then pray together for each individual's needs and to send each other out.

These three thirds are the engine that drives reproduction and church planting. The reproducible story-based content is the fuel that drives the engine. If the two are not working together in harmony, the strategy may result in some good evangelism, but will sputter and fail as a reproducing church planting strategy.

Story Crafting

This section gives you a few helps for crafting your own stories, although it is not comprehensive. The best way to learn to craft stories is to experience an S-T4T training.

If you are going to craft a good story, you have some homework to do first! You need to read the full biblical passage at least three times from at least three different versions (for a total of nine read-throughs). Then, identify words or concepts that you know are difficult concepts in another language or culture. Ask yourself which worldview mismatches arise from the passage. There may also be cultural gaps that require background information necessary for understanding the passage. Once you have identified these areas of research, you should research the passage in scholarly commentaries, dictionaries, and other exegetical helps.

Once you have done your research, you need to decide how to express the difficult words and concepts in every-day language. You must also decide what background information is important to understand the story. In other words, discover the information that was readily understood by the original audience, but that is not available to your audience, and then decide if and how you need to make that information explicit in your story.

Think through the story, breaking it into scenes (be aware of which scene is the climax). Breaking the story into scenes provides an "oral outline." You can use this "oral outline" to develop a short summary of the story in your mind. Tell this summary to yourself several times until it is clear and flows easily. This summary is the thread upon which the interesting details of the story hang. The summary is NOT the story you will tell. It is only the foundation of the story that allows you to remember the details of the story with ease. Those details make the story more interesting, and actually more tell-able. Learn the story scene by scene now, including these interesting details. Don't forget to clearly identify the climax using whatever story telling devices (pauses, louder or softer tones, etc.) you need. Picture it in your mind as you tell it to yourself, or to someone else for practice. You'll probably need to tell this story out loud at least three times before being ready to tell it to a group.

Foreword

Within the following pages you will find our suggested list of biblical stories for a core discipleship story set for use with the S-T4T church-planting and discipleship program. This story set is a panorama covering God's redemptive plan from the moment of creation to the Second Coming of Jesus. This particular story set revolves around a specific redemptive theme of restored relationship. In other words, this is one epic story about how man broke his perfect relationship with God, how God's plan was to restore that relationship through his Son, Jesus, and how we can have a restored relationship with God through faith in Jesus. As you gain more experience and insight storying in a particular culture and worldview, you may want to add stories or weave in other redemptive themes to convey most effectively God's redemptive plan for that people group. Again, the story set we present here should just be a springboard for you as you craft biblical stories to speak to your particular people and worldview. Some stories may not work for every worldview. In that case, you should substitute stories that convey the same truths in a worldview-sensitive manner.

For each story, we have copied portions of the NLT (New Living Translation) Bible translation. We have noted which NLT edition we used (either the 1996 or 2004), along with the references, before each story. We made some decisions about which portions of the biblical text should be included in order to facilitate your crafting of the story. For example, we have not included all portions of the creation story from the first two chapters of Genesis so that you may see more easily the flow of the story line.

NOTE: THESE STORIES ARE NOT ALREADY CRAFTED.

You should craft each of these stories to speak to the worldview, language and storytelling style of your particular audience. These lists of Scripture references are not to be translated word for word. They are meant simply to be a guide for you as you craft meaningful stories.

We also have included notes about worldview, intra-story cohesion, storycrafting, biblical words and T4T principles that we hope will be of help to you as you craft these stories.

The notes and references we have provided you are by no means exhaustive. Our desire is that they will serve as a springboard for you as you dive into communicating God's Word through story.

FORMATTING NOTES:

Within the Scripture references, you will note ellipses (...). These represent portions of Scripture we have not included here, as there often are details that are not conducive to a storytelling format.

You will note also the use of *italics* within the Scripture references. These represent wording that may be difficult to translate and which we have adjusted for you. These adjustments have been checked for exegetical accuracy using commentaries and helps provided for Bible translators, most notably the *Translator's Notes Series* (published by SIL) and the *Translators Handbook Series* (published by United Bible Society).

An asterisk* after a word indicates that there is a discussion of that word found in the Glossary. We have placed the asterisk only the first time the word appears in each story.

Words/Phrases to Consider

In this section we discuss words, phrases or concepts that may be difficult to communicate in another language and culture. You will want to take care that the appropriate MEANING is conveyed when crafting your story.

Story Crafting

This section gives you tips on how to craft the story to make it a well-told story that communicates the MEANING of the biblical text.

Intra-Story Cohesion

This section reminds you to be consistent in your wording, terminology and thematic content throughout your story set.

Worldview

Many worldview issues will be discussed in Words/Phrases to Consider and Story Crafting. This section will cover those issues that have not been addressed. A dissertation could be written on all the potential worldview issues found in these stories. We have chosen only to highlight some of the more problematic issues.

T4T PRINCIPLES

A list of the T4T principles found in each story is provided for you.

S-TAT
Core Story Set

Creation to Church

*The following is one possible Creation to Church story. It should take you anywhere from 6-8 minutes to tell. If you cannot tell the story in less than 8 minutes, try to take some parts out of the story. The portions of the story that are in **bold print** should not be taken out of the story. We feel these are essential elements in leading someone to make a decision for Christ. When you are at a point where the person with whom you are sharing wants to make a decision to be a follower of Jesus, walk him/her back through the story, asking him/her to remember or even retell the portions that we have highlighted for you in bold print.*

At the very beginning of time, **God** was there, and there was nothing else...only God. He spoke, and when he did, he **created the universe and everything in it**. Then he decided to make a special creation—man. So, **God created man and woman**. He had a perfect relationship with them. He walked with them, talked with them, and took care of them—until one day, the **man and woman disobeyed God, and they broke their relationship with God. They were separated from God.**

The man and woman had children. Their children had children, and their children had children, until all the earth was filled with people. But, just like the first man and woman, they continued to be separated from God. However, God never forgot his special creation. One day, he spoke to a man named Abraham, and he told Abraham, “I am going to give you many descendants. I am going to make a huge people group out of them. They will be a people group just for me. And, I will bless the whole world through you and your descendants.” And, even though Abraham was a very old man, he believed God. **God considered Abraham to have a right/good relationship with him because of his belief.**

God kept his promise to Abraham, and Abraham did have a son, and his son had sons, until God had indeed made a huge people group out of Abraham’s descendants. Sometimes they followed God, but most of the time they were disobedient, just like the first man and woman. So, **God would send spokesmen to the people to show them how they could have a right/good relationship with him.** One of these spokesmen was named Isaiah. Isaiah brought Abraham’s descendants a message of hope about a Promised Savior. He said, “We have all gone away from God and his ways. **We sin.** But God says, **I am sending you a Savior who will take all of your sins on himself.** He will be whipped and beaten. **He will die because of your sins.** But, I will give him life again. And, **because of him, you can have a right/good relationship with me.**”

From that time on, they waited expectantly for this Promised Savior...and they waited...and they waited....

God did keep his promise to Abraham's descendants. **He sent this Promised Savior, Jesus,** God's very own Son. Jesus proved that he was indeed the Savior by performing many miracles and by healing people, and, just like in the story I told you earlier, even demons recognized his authority.

Not everyone recognized who Jesus was, but many people did follow him. Jesus taught his followers. One day he told them, **"If you follow me, I give you eternal life. You belong to me. No one can take you away from me. God and I are the same."**

Those who did not believe in Jesus became very angry that he said that he and God were the same. So, they convinced the government to have him executed. And, just as God had said, **Jesus was whipped. He was beaten. And, he died. But, just as God had said, Jesus was given life again!**

Afterward, Jesus showed himself to his followers, and he proved beyond a shadow of doubt that he had come back from the dead. For forty days, he taught his followers. He told them, "I will leave you soon, but when I do, I will send God's Spirit to you. And when you receive God's Spirit, you will receive power—power to tell everyone about me. So, go into the whole world and tell people about me. **Teach them to obey what I taught you. And, when they believe in me, baptize them.** Have them undergo this symbolic washing in water **to show that they have become my followers. They have turned from their sins and turned to God through believing in me.**"

One day, Jesus did leave them. He went up into the clouds right in front of their eyes. As they were watching all of this, two angels appeared and asked them why they were looking up into the sky. **"Jesus will come back one day the same way he left,"** they said.

From that moment on, the followers of Jesus waited expectantly for him to return. And **they went everywhere telling people about Jesus.** And when people believed in Jesus, they were baptized. They underwent a symbolic washing in water to show that **they had turned from their sins and turned to God through belief in Jesus.**

This is what followers of Jesus do to this day. They tell everyone about Jesus. When people believe in him, they are baptized—symbolically washed in water—to **show that they have turned from their sins and turned to God through believing in Jesus.** Followers of Jesus then gather together. They meet together to worship God, learn about Jesus and take care of one another's needs.

And this is what I do. I tell people about Jesus.

Creation

Genesis 1-2

Based on NLT (1996)

Genesis 1:1-27

In the beginning *there was God*. He spoke and when he did, he created the whole world and everything in it. God made light and water. He made the dry ground and all kinds of plants and trees. God made the sun, the moon, and the stars. He made all kinds of fish, birds, and animals. And then, God created people...He patterned them after himself....

Genesis 2:7-9, (15)

...God formed a man's body from the *soil* of the ground and breathed into *him* and he began to live. Then God...placed the man...*in a garden of fruit trees*. And God planted all kinds of trees in the garden. They were beautiful trees that produced delicious fruit. At the center of the garden he placed *two trees*—the tree which gave life and the tree which gave the understanding of good and evil.

Genesis 2:16-17

But God told the man, Adam, "You may...eat any fruit in the garden except fruit from the tree which gives the understanding of good and evil. If you eat *this tree's* fruit, you will ...die."

Genesis 2:18, 21-25

And God said, "*Man shouldn't* be alone..." So God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. He took one of Adam's ribs...and made a woman from the rib and brought her to Adam. "At last!" Adam exclaimed. "She *has* flesh and bones like me!" ...Adam and his wife, Eve, were ...naked, but neither of them was ashamed.

Genesis 1:28, 31

God blessed* them and told them, "Multiply and ... Be masters over the fish and birds and all the animals." Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was excellent in every way. God had created the world and everything in it in six days.

Genesis 2:2-3

The next day, the seventh day, God stopped working. God set apart one day of the week for himself because he had finished creating the world.

Words/Phrases to Consider

'patterned them after himself'

This should be translated in such a way that it doesn't necessarily mean that man looks like God. One suggestion for translating this is like the TEV (Today's English Version): 'They will be like [God] and resemble [God].'

'flesh and bones like me'

This phrase refers to Adam exclaiming in joy that finally he had found someone like himself. It is a less literal rendering of the Hebraic idiom, 'flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone.'

Blessed*

Someone or something is 'blessed' when God is pleased with him, and does something favorable for him. In the *Creation* story, the specific blessing given has to do with God giving mankind the ability to reproduce and multiply.

'excellent in every way'

When God saw that his creation was 'excellent in every way,' this implies that it was pleasing to God—he judged it suitable and fitting for its purpose.

Story Crafting

Many oral peoples find it difficult to remember the 'list' of the seven days of creation in Gen 1. Gen 1 is a hymn, but Gen 2 is a more narrative account of the creation story. We have chosen to summarize Gen 1 and take most of the story from the Gen 2 account, as people seem to be able to remember the story better when told this way.

We left out the names of the rivers in Gen 2 for ease of retelling; however, if mentioning the rivers is significant for the people with whom you work, you should include them.

We chose to reword Gen 2:3 in order to make it easier to understand and less complicated to translate. For example, instead of saying that God made the seventh day 'holy,' we described the day as being 'set apart.'

Because some people thought that God slept when we say he 'rested,' we said 'stopped working' instead.

Worldview

Be sure that the word for 'naked' used here is appropriate. For some cultures, it is more appropriate to say, 'They didn't have on clothes.'

Some people want to make the actual day of the week God rested explicit in their story to justify the day their particular religion uses. If it is possible, try to avoid identifying the 'seventh day' with a particular day of the week.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

God is Creator; relational; has the power to bless

Church

God sets aside a 'special' day, holy and blessed, dedicated to Him; lays the foundation for church

Prayer

God communicates with man; man and God talking with one another

Disobedience

Genesis 3

Based on NLT (1996)

Genesis 3:1-5

Now the *snake* was the *most cunning* of all the *animals* God had made. *Satan** entered into the *snake*. ...he asked *Eve*, “Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?” “Of course we may eat it,” *Eve* told him. “It’s only the fruit from the tree *which gives the understanding of good and evil* that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it or even touch it, or we will die.” “You won’t die!” the *snake* hissed. “God knows that...when you eat *this fruit* you will become just like *him*, knowing everything, both good and evil.”

Genesis 3:6-7

Eve was convinced. The fruit looked so fresh and delicious, and it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. *Adam* ate it, too. At that moment, *something inside them changed*, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they *put...leaves together...to cover their nakedness*.

Genesis 3:8-13

Toward evening *Adam and Eve* heard *God* walking about in the garden, so they hid themselves among the trees. *God* called to *Adam*, “Where are you?” *Adam* replied, “I heard you, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.” “Who told you that you were naked?” *God* asked. “Have you eaten the fruit I commanded you not to eat?”

Genesis 3:8-13 (continued)

“Yes,” *Adam* admitted, “but it was the woman you gave me who brought me the fruit, and I ate it.” Then *God* asked *Eve*, “How could you do such a thing?” “The *snake* tricked me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.”

Genesis 3:14-15

So *God* said to the *snake*, “Because you have done this, you will be punished. ...You will *crawl* in the dust as long as you live.... From now on...your *descendants* and the *descendants of the woman* will be enemies. *You will bite his heel, but he will crush your head.*”

Genesis 3:16a

Then *God* said to *Eve*, “You will *give birth* to children with intense pain and suffering.”

Genesis 3:17-19a

And *God* said to *Adam*, “Because you...ate the fruit I told you not to eat, I have placed a curse* on the ground. All your life you will struggle to *live* from it. It will grow thorns and thistles...you will sweat to produce food, until *you die.*”

Genesis 3:22-24

Then *God* said, “Now people...*know* everything, both good and evil. What if they eat the fruit from the tree *that gives life*? Then they will live forever!” So *God* sent *Adam and Eve* out of the garden and prevented them from returning to the tree *that gave life*.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Curse*

This word in the text actually means punishment or judgment and means that something unpleasant is going to happen to that person. Although many languages have a way to pronounce a curse on someone or something, be sure that the word you choose does not have any magical connotations.

'descendants'

Different languages have different words for 'descendants.' Some say 'children,' 'generations' or 'members of the family;' but ensure that whatever word is used can mean descendants far into the future, and not just the immediate children and grandchildren. This word in the text is a collective noun with a plural sense, and because of the many different interpretations of this passage, we've chosen to take the least controversial interpretation, i.e. we haven't explicitly stated, 'One of her descendants will crush your head.'

Satan*

This name refers to the spiritual being, whom God created and who is the leader of the evil spiritual beings who decided to rebel against God. You may need to qualify the name 'Satan' with 'leader of the evil spirits' if 'Satan' is unknown to your audience.

Story Crafting

We gave the 'tree which gives the understanding of good and evil' a name which shows action so that the audience will understand a little more of what the purpose of the tree really was.

We chose to simplify the punishments/curses in order to make the story easier to retell.

We left out the idea of woman desiring man and man dominating woman because it is difficult for many hearers to understand and an exegetically complicated section to introduce so early in the story set.

Since we've already named Eve for ease of storytelling, we left out Gen 3:20 in the story. We've simplified the casting out of Adam and Eve by leaving out the phrase, 'The people have become as we are,' because the main point is that people know both good and evil (Translators Handbook). We also have taken out the reference to the angel and the sword which prevented them from reentering the garden because this can be problematic to translate.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same words for 'good and evil' and 'naked' that you used in the *Creation* story.

'Woman' was changed in this story to 'Eve' since she was named in the previous story; this is to help provide cohesion between the two stories.

Worldview

Some people may worship snakes, so it's important that the snake look like the 'bad guy' in this story. In the same way, some cultures value trickiness/craftiness. In order to avoid making the serpent the protagonist in the story, you will want to make sure that the snake is bad.

Some people groups have heard this story but don't believe that this story really happened because there is an animal talking; they consider this more of a fable or folktale. Almost all Bible scholars agree that the snake is Satan, based on references such as Rev 12:9, 20:2; 2 Cor 11:3. If needed for full understanding, you may add an explanation in the story that the snake is Satan.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

All-knowing; separated from evil and sin; opposes sin and evil; just; one who punishes sin or disobedience; relational

Assurance of Salvation

Foundation laid by creating enmity between man and Satan, with man to be victorious

Devotional Life

Foundation laid by man walking and talking with God. and God walking and talking with man

Prayer

Illustrates God and man communicating with one another

Abraham

Genesis 12:1-7; 15:1-6

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

Adam and Eve's disobedience separated them from God. Yet God did not forget his special creation. God wanted relationship* with people. Many years passed. Eventually God chose one man from whom to raise a people that would be his. This is the story of Abraham.*

Genesis 12:1-3

God said to Abraham, "Leave your native country, your relatives...and go to the land that I will show you. I will make a huge people from your descendants. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ...All the families on earth will be blessed through you."*

Genesis 12:4-6

So Abraham left as God had instructed.... Abraham was seventy-five years old when he left his homeland. He took his wife, Sarah ... and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people he had taken into his household...and headed for the land that God would show him. When they arrived there, Abraham traveled through the land...when he eventually stopped ...he set up camp beside a great tree....

Genesis 12:7

*Then God appeared to Abraham and said, "I will give this land to your descendants." And Abraham worshiped*God, who had appeared to him.*

Genesis 15:1-3

Some time later God spoke to Abraham in a vision and said to him, "Do not be afraid...I will protect you, and you will receive a great reward."*

But Abraham replied, "O God, what good are all your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since you've given me no children...a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir."

Genesis 15:4-5

Then God said to him, "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir." Then God took Abraham outside and said to him, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!"

Genesis 15:6

And Abraham believed God, and God considered him to be in right relationship* with him because of his trust.*

Words/Phrases to Consider

Sin/Disobedience*

Sin refers to an act of disobedience to God. Be sure that the word you use here isn't confused with doing religious acts (especially Christianity) so that it doesn't convey meaning to the average person anymore. If necessary, you can use 'disobedience,' as we did in the story set.

Relationship*

Some languages may not have one term for 'relationship,' or the term has unwanted connotations. Some languages express the idea in terms of action. TEV translates Gen 15:6 as 'Abram put his trust in the LORD, and because of this the LORD was pleased with him and accepted him.'

Worship*

In this case, 'worship' probably refers to both Abraham's sacrifice (his action) and his calling God by his personal name (prayer). (See note in Glossary for a more complete discussion of the term 'worship.')

Vision*

see glossary

Believe/Trust*

This describes Abraham's response to God's promise. It probably implies more than mental agreement, but putting his faith/confidence in God.

Righteousness/Right Relationship*

(See Glossary.)

Story Crafting

God had not changed Abram's name to Abraham yet, but for the sake of simplicity we chose to use 'Abraham.' If later you feel that Abram's name change

is important to the story set and include that story, you would want to change his name back to 'Abram' in this story.

We purposely have left out the name of Canaan and other locations mentioned so that the story would be easier to remember and retell.

We have replaced all references to 'Lord' in the Old Testament stories with 'God' because 'Lord' in English is a word used mostly in church or religious meetings and may not be understood by the average nonchurched person. Most instances of the word 'Lord' in the Old Testament refer to 'Jehovah (I AM),' the specific name that the Israelites were given for God through Moses. Use whatever word for God here that you are using in this story set.

We chose to substitute, in Gen 12:7, 'worshiped God' for 'built an altar' to state in a simpler way what actually happened. Including 'built an altar' would require discussion and explanation that would detract from communicating the main goal of this story.

Abraham's age was left in this story because we've found that audiences think it is interesting, and that it highlights how special God's promise and subsequent fulfillment of the promise of descendants was to Abraham.

The verses chosen for this story reflect our goals in telling it. Our goals in this story were to set up God's promise to Abraham that he would make him into a great nation (a promise which he subsequently kept) and that through this nation all people would be blessed. We also wanted to highlight why God counted Abraham in a right relationship with him.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same word for 'descendants' that you used in the *Disobedience* story and the same word for 'blessed' that you used in the *Creation* story.

Worldview

Abraham is a significant figure in both the biblical and Muslim worldviews. If you are working among Muslims, including Abraham in your story set provides a bridge between the biblical culture and their culture.

Be sure that you do not somehow imply that Abraham worshiped the tree in this story. Trees are worshiped in some cultures.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

Makes promises; blesses; relational; will create a people for himself; leads, guides and directs; reveals himself and his will; is worthy of being worshiped; has the power to bless; protects and rewards; speaks to people; cares about his people; calls out individuals for his purposes

Church

God will establish his people—laying foundation for church; worship

Devotional Life

Based on relationship and trust; walking and talking with God

Prayer

A good example of communication between God and man—relevant and personal; lays the foundation for prayer

David King

1 Samuel 16:1-13; 2 Samuel 5:4; 7:1-28

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition

God did keep his promise to Abraham, and his descendants became a huge people group. God raised up many leaders for his people. One of these leaders was a man named David. This is how he became king.

1 Samuel 16:1-5

One day, God said to Samuel, his spokesman, "...go to Bethlehem. Find a certain man...who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my new king. ...Invite him to worship* me, and I will show you which of his sons to anoint* for me." So the spokesman did as God instructed him. ... and invited them....*

1 Samuel 16:6-7

When they arrived, God's spokesman took one look at the first son and thought, "Surely this is the one God wants as king!" But God said to him, "...I have rejected him. I do not make decisions the way you do! People judge by outward appearance, but God looks at a person's thoughts and intentions."

1 Samuel 16:10-13

...All seven of the sons were presented to God's spokesman. But the spokesman said... "God has not chosen any of these." Then he asked, "Are these all the sons you have?"

1 Samuel 16:10-13 (continued)

"There is still the youngest," the father replied. "But he's out in the fields watching the sheep." When this son was brought in, God told his spokesman, "This is the one I choose."

So as David stood there among his brothers, the spokesman anointed his head with oil. And the Spirit of God came on David....*

2 Samuel 5:4; 7:1-16

Many years passed and David did become the new king. God had brought peace to his land One day, David summoned Nathan, another of God's spokesmen. ...God told Nathan to say to David, "...I chose you to lead my people...when you were just a shepherd boy, tending your sheep out in the pasture. ...I have destroyed all your enemies. Now I will make you famous throughout the earth! ...I will build a house for you—a dynasty of kings! ...One of your descendants will rule and.... If he sins, I will use other nations to punish him. But my love is unfailing.... Your...kingdom will continue for all time...."*

2 Samuel 7:18-25, 28

When David heard this message from God, he praised God. He believed God, saying, "O God, do as you have promised.... For you are God.... Your words are truth...."*

Words/Phrases to Consider

Spokesman*

Choose a term for prophet that adequately describes the prophet's function. A prophet: receives a call from God; takes God's message to men because he has been given it by God himself; has as his only priority bringing the Word of God to men. We chose 'spokesman' because, in English, it can convey these three meanings but doesn't carry the unwanted connotation of a fortune-teller. If you use a religious term, be sure that the average hearer will understand it.

Anoint*

Anointing in the Old Testament signified an act of God in which someone received divine favor or appointment to a special place, service or function in the purpose of God (especially for kingship). It often is associated with God's Spirit being given. In this case, the act was done by a man appointed by God to do it. He filled his horn (a ram's horn) with oil and poured the oil on David's head. If the people in your area have a similar ceremony (with an appropriate word to go along with it) to appoint someone to a special task, you could use the phrase 'anointed his head (with oil).' If they don't, you could say something like, 'He poured oil on his head to appoint him/show him as the next king.'

Spirit of God*

You can translate this term directly as 'God's Spirit.' The specific meaning here is that David was possessed suddenly and fully by God's Spirit. In other words, God 'qualified him to be governor of his people, by infusing such graces as wisdom, prudence, counsel, courage, liberality, and magnanimity' (Adam Clarke's commentary). The Hebrew *ruach* [spirit] can have the physical meanings 'wind' or 'breath.' It can also mean 'power' or 'authority' that God gives to someone to do extraordinary things. (For a more complete treatment of 'God's Spirit,' please see the Glossary.)

Sin*

Sin refers to an act of disobedience to God. Be sure that the word you use here does not mean that someone has failed to perform a religious act (i.e. alms, ritual prayer, following religious dietary rules, etc.). If necessary, you can use 'disobedience.'

Story Crafting

We left out some names for ease of remembering and retelling, but if you find that it is too difficult to say 'God's spokesman' throughout this story, you may include Samuel's name.

We simplified the reason for Samuel going to Bethlehem as 'to worship' in order for the story to be easier to remember and retell, and to avoid detracting from the main plotline.

We simplified the section of the story in which all seven of the sons were presented to Samuel. If it is helpful to include this portion as a storytelling device, i.e. your audience really likes repetition and hearing that each son, in turn, was rejected, then you can include that section in your story.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words for 'belief' and 'descendants' that you have been using.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

Keeps his promises; worthy of worship; reveals himself and his will; talks to people; knows the thoughts and intentions of people; makes decisions differently than man; his Spirit comes upon people; calls out individuals for his purposes; his love is unfailing

Church

Household of worship; idea of God's eternal kingdom

Assurance of Salvation

God's kingdom is eternal

Devotional Life

Walking and talking with God; worship in the home

David & Bathsheba

2 Samuel 11:1-27

Based on NLT (1996)

2 Samuel 11:1

One time, in the spring, the time of year when kings go to war, David sent...*his* army to fight. ... But David stayed behind....

2 Samuel 11:2-5

Late one afternoon David got out of bed after taking a nap and went for a stroll on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a *beautiful woman* taking a bath. He sent someone to find out who she was, and he was told, "She is Bathsheba, the...wife of *one of your most trusted soldiers*." Then David sent for her; and when she came to the palace, he slept with her.... Then she returned home. Later, when Bathsheba discovered that she was pregnant, she sent a message to *David* to let him know, and there was no doubt that the baby was his.

2 Samuel 11:6-13

So David sent word to *the commander of his army*, to send her husband home. When he arrived, David asked *Bathsheba's husband* how ...the war was going. Then he told *him* to go home and relax.... But he didn't go home. He stayed that night at the palace entrance with some of the king's other servants. When David heard what *he* had done, he...asked *him*, "...Why didn't you go home last night after being away for so long?" He replied, "*The army is sleeping out in the fields*. How could I go home and relax?..." So David told him to stay another night.... David invited him to dinner and got him drunk. But even then he couldn't get *the soldier* to go home to his wife. Again he slept at the palace entrance.

2 Samuel 11:14-17

So the next morning David wrote a letter to *the commander of his army* and gave it to *Bathsheba's husband* to deliver. The letter told *the commander*, "Place this soldier on the front lines where the battle is fiercest. Then pull back so that he will be killed." So, *the commander* did as he was told. And *Bathsheba's husband* was killed along with several other...soldiers.

2 Samuel 11:18, 22-25

Then *the commander of the army* sent a messenger with a battle report to David. He told him that *Bathsheba's husband* had been killed along with others..."Well, tell *the commander* not to be discouraged," David said. "People are killed in battle! Fight harder next time...!"

2 Samuel 11:26-27

When Bathsheba heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. When the period of mourning was over, David...brought her to the palace, and she became one of his wives. Later she gave birth to a son. But God was very displeased with what David had done.

Story Crafting

We took out the name of Uriah the Hittite for ease of storytelling. Uriah was one of David's mighty men known as The Thirty, so we chose to refer to him as one of David's most trusted soldiers. David's sin corrupts even the relationship he had with Uriah.

We chose not to refer to the ark of the covenant when Uriah responds to David because it is an unknown concept that would require a great deal of explanation that could confuse the audience.

'and there was no doubt that the baby was his'

This is added to the story, based on the text's explanation: 'She had just completed the purification rites after having her menstrual period.' The text includes this information to prove that the baby must have been David's—it wasn't her husband's baby.

Worldview

This story seems to be particularly problematic in some Muslim cultures because it portrays David, a respected 'prophet,' sinning. At times the audience will no longer listen to the stories because of this. This story was chosen to show David's restored relationship with God through his repentance. Others have chosen to replace *David & Bathsheba* and *Nathan's Story* with stories from the life of Joseph or stories from the book of Job to show broken and restored relationship in a more worldview-sensitive manner. Those who choose to do this realize they cannot avoid negative reactions to biblical stories, but they choose to build as many 'bridges' in the early stages of the story set as possible so that their audience will have an opportunity to hear and respond to the redemptive work of Jesus later in the story set.

'spring'

Not all cultures have seasons, nor would they equate spring with the time kings go off to war. You may want to rephrase this to say something like, 'It was the time of year when kings normally went off to war...'

'he slept with her'

Many languages have euphemisms for sexual relationships. Use a term appropriate and not offensive for your audience.

'period of mourning'

Some cultures may or may not have this period: if not, you could just say 'after that;' if so, you could use the name for the culture's period of mourning if it's comparable to this.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and Nature of God

Displeased with sin

Nathan's Story

2 Samuel 12:1-25

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition

Because God was displeased with what David had done...

2 Samuel 12:1-4

He sent his spokesman Nathan to tell David this story: "There were two men in a certain town. One was rich, and one was poor. The rich man owned many sheep and cattle. The poor man owned nothing but a little lamb.... He raised and took care of it as if it was one of his own children.... One day a guest arrived at the home of the rich man. But instead of killing one of his own lambs, he took the poor man's lamb and killed it and served it to his guest."*

2 Samuel 12:5-6

David was furious.... He said, "Any man who would do such a thing deserves to die! He must repay four lambs to the poor man for the one he stole...."

2 Samuel 12:7-12

Then Nathan said to David, "You are that man! *God...says, 'I anointed* you king.... I gave you an entire kingdom. And if that had not been enough, I would have given you much, much more. Why, then, have you disobeyed me and done this horrible thing? You murdered a man and stole his wife. Because you have treated God with contempt, from this time on, violence will always be in your family.... What you did secretly will happen to you in the open.'*"

2 Samuel 12:13-14

Then David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned* against *God.*" Nathan replied, "Yes, but *God* has forgiven* you, and you won't die for this sin. But *because of what you have done*, your child will die."

2 Samuel 12:15-18

After Nathan returned to his home, *God* made Bathsheba's baby *very sick*. David begged *God* to *heal* the child.... *but seven days later* the baby died....

2 Samuel 12:24-25

...David comforted Bathsheba...and *then* slept with her. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon.... *And God* loved him.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Forgive*

Some languages do not have an adequate word for 'forgive.' If that is the case, understanding what 'forgiveness' means is imperative to translating it correctly.

Forgiveness involves two people, one of whom has done something wrong to the other and offended him. The one who was offended sets aside his rights and does not punish the other as he deserves. If the other accepts the forgiveness, the relationship between the two is restored and the guilt is removed.

Story Crafting

'disobeyed me'

Some people find it difficult to address the concept of disobedience to God when the actions of disobedience have not been addressed in a Moses story in which the Law has been given. If you find that you need to make clearer what the acts of disobedience against God were in this story, you could make it explicit by saying something like 'because you have disobeyed me by murdering and committing adultery.'

We have left out certain details about what David did during the time the baby was sick (praying and fasting) to tighten the main plotline of the story and to avoid detracting from our goals in telling this story.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words for 'spokesman,' 'anoint,' and 'sin,' as you did for the *David King* story.

Worldview

Some cultures don't think God forgave David because he still allowed the baby to die. Some people are confused that God would allow an innocent baby to die for David's sin, rather than David being punished himself. It should be clear in your story that God did indeed forgive David.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

Displeased with sin; uses his spokesmen to confront sin; uses stories; provides; does not like disobedience; punished sin; forgives sin; keep promises

Prayer

Though not in this story, this incidence led to David's prayer of repentance found in Psalm 51

Promise

Isaiah 53

Based on NLT (1996) and NIV

Transition

The kings of Abraham's descendants continued to disobey God and led the people to disobey God, yet God continued to send spokesmen to reveal himself to his people. One of these spokesmen was named Isaiah. This is the message of hope that Isaiah brought to the people. A Savior* would come to free them, in more ways than one.*

Isaiah 53:2-3

God's Promised Savior will grow up in his presence like a tender green shoot, sprouting from a root in dry...ground. There will be nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance.... We will turn our backs on him and look the other way.... He will be despised, and we won't care.*

Isaiah 53:4-5

...we will think his troubles are a punishment from God for his own sins! But he will be... crushed for our sins. He will be beaten that we might have peace ...whipped, and we will be healed!*

Isaiah 53:6

All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's path to follow our own. Yet God will lay on him the guilt and sins of us all.

Isaiah 53:7

He will be...treated harshly, yet ... never say a word. He will be led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he will not open his mouth.

Isaiah 53:11 (partly from NIV)

After *his* suffering...he will see...life *again*, and he will be satisfied. And because of what he has experienced, *the Promised Savior* will make it possible for many to be counted as *having right relationship** with God, for he will bear all their sins.

Isaiah 53:12

I [*God*] will give him the honors of one who is mighty and great, because he exposed himself to death....

Example Crafted Story

(transcribed from a told story)

After King David, God's people continued to sin and disobey God. But God did not forget his people. And he sent a spokesman,* Isaiah, to give them a message of hope. He told them:*

God is going to send us a Savior.* Some will hate him and treat him badly. He'll suffer. He's going to carry our burdens and our sorrow.... He will be whipped and beaten to bring us peace.

We're kind of like sheep. You know how sheep are. They wander off the path and stray away, and we wander off of God's path. We sin and disobey God. But, God is putting all of our sins onto the Savior.

In fact, he's like a lamb that is being led to the butcher. He's not going to say anything. And he'll be punished and killed for our sins. But, the amazing thing is that he'll see life again.

And because of this many people will have restored relationship* with God.

That is the message that Isaiah gave to the people, and from that time on the people waited expectantly for the Promised Savior to come.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Righteousness/Right Relationship*

The Old Testament idea of righteousness is based on relationship between God and man, or between man and man. 'Righteousness' refers to holiness. The CEV (Contemporary English Version) translates this concept in Is 53:11 in the following way:

...he will take the punishment for the sins of others, so that many of them will no longer be guilty.

In other words, 'righteousness' takes away guilt.

Savior/Promised Savior* (See Glossary.)

Story Crafting

Commentaries agree that this passage is referring to a future event. Prophetic past tense is used often in translations, but refers to a future event. We've changed the tense of the verbs to future to reflect more accurately the meaning and to simplify the story for our audience.

'Promised Savior'

We have chosen to use 'Promised Savior' instead of 'servant' here to make our term for Jesus' redemptive role consistent throughout the story set. (See Simeon's speech in the *Birth* story.) Commentaries agree that this 'servant' refers to the 'Messiah to come,' so you may use whatever term speaks most clearly to your people group; but it is best to keep this term consistent throughout this core story set. (See also Glossary entry for 'Savior.')

'led like a lamb to the slaughter'

Some people tell us that this line is confusing, having come directly after the description of people being like sheep. If it seems confusing, you can take out this line and say, 'He will be led to die,' or you can remove the analogy of us being like sheep who have wandered off the path. You could just say, 'We have wandered off of God's path—we have sinned.'

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words you have been using throughout the story set for 'descendants,' 'disobey/disobedience,' 'sin,' 'relationship,' and 'spokesman.'

Choose the same term to refer to God's people/the Israelites/Jews throughout the story set. We have chosen to use the term 'Abraham's descendants' throughout the story set. Many people/language groups might equate terms like 'Israel' and 'Israelites' with the modern-day country, which is not very popular in much of the world. 'Descendants of Abraham' is actually a more meaningful rendering of this term, reminds the audience of Abraham's story, and highlights the theme of relationship in this story set.

Worldview

Some cultures are extremely offended by references to violence. While we can't change the fact that Jesus was killed in a cruel way and should never play that down, we can keep cultural preferences in mind as we choose which word pictures to use in a story. A sheep being led to the slaughter may be so offensive in some cultures that the audience immediately stops listening.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

Punishes disobedience; reveals himself; uses his spokesmen; promises a Savior; restores relationship and forgives; provides hope, a means of salvation and peace; takes away sin; conquers death

Assurance of salvation

God has a plan for us to be saved from our sins and experience a relationship with him through the Promised Savior

Birth

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:21-34, 39-40

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition

After many years, God did finally send this Promised Savior. This is his story...*

Matthew 1:18

*This is how Jesus...was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of God's Spirit.**

Matthew 1:19-21

Joseph, her fiancé...did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

As he considered this, he fell asleep, and an angel from God appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, descendant of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to go ahead with your marriage to Mary. ...the child inside her was conceived by God's Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.*"*

Matthew 1:24-25

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel ...commanded and took Mary as his wife, but he did not have sexual relations with her.

Transition

A few months later, a son was born to Mary in Bethlehem.

Luke 2:21-22; 25, 28

Eight days after his birth...he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel... Several weeks after that...his parents took him to Jerusalem, the special city where they worshiped God, to present him to God in their place of worship*. When they got there they met an old man who had been waiting for the Promised Savior to come and save his people. When he saw Jesus, he took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,*

Luke 2:30-32

"I have seen the Savior you have given to all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations..."*

Luke 2:33-34

Joseph and Mary were amazed at what was being said about Jesus. Then the old man blessed them, and he said to Mary, "This child will be rejected by many...and it will be their undoing. But he will be the greatest joy to many others."*

Luke 2:39-40

...Jesus' parents...returned home... There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom...and God's favor was on him.*

Words/Phrases to Consider

Angel*

If you have a Bible translation, your best option would be to use the word in the translation, unless no one outside the church understands it. If you do not have a Bible translation, your challenge is to find a word that conveys accurately the meaning of the original. An 'angel' is a supernatural, spiritual being who is a messenger from God. Angels appear to humans in human form, they are inferior to Jesus, and they often come with a specific message or to do a specific task. If there is no word in the language for 'angel' that a nonbeliever would understand, you could translate this as 'messenger of/from God,' 'envoy of God,' or perhaps 'ambassador of God.' Be aware, though, that 'prophet' also conveys those meanings. You might have to add 'spirit (messenger from God)' to this description.

place of worship*

We've chosen to use 'place of worship' in place of 'temple.'

Save

If your audience needs it, you may need to say specifically from what God will save them, i.e. punishment for sin.

Wisdom*

The biblical concept of wisdom includes the ideas of 'thinking things that are true and doing things that are good.' Only God can cause someone to be wise. In fact, it is implied in the New Testament that when someone has wisdom, he has insight into the will of God.

Story Crafting

'through the power of God's Spirit'

Other ways to say this could be 'God's Spirit caused her to be pregnant,' or 'the power of God's Spirit made this happen.' However you say this, be sure that sexual intercourse between God's Spirit and Mary is NOT implied.

'angel from God'

In the New Testament stories, the word 'Lord,' when it refers to God, has been changed to 'God' for the same reasons that we changed the word 'Lord' in the Old Testament stories

'city where they worshiped God'

'Jerusalem' will reoccur in the story set several times, so we've decided to introduce that place name. We have included this explanation of what was so special about the city.

We chose this version of the birth story because both the angel's words to Joseph ('he will save his people from their sins') and the dedication of Jesus in the temple show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Isaiah prophecy from the *Promise* story.

We simplified the dedication section of the story so that we would not have to explain the sacrificial system of the temple in this story set. We did not include the names of Jesus' hometown and area for simplification of remembering and retelling.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words for 'God's Spirit' as you did in the *David King* story. Use the same words for 'Promised Savior,' 'bless,' 'Savior,' 'sin,' and 'descendant' that you have been using throughout the story set.

"Joseph, descendant of David"

It is important to mention that Joseph is a descendant of David, as we see Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promise to David that his descendants would rule forever.

We mentioned Jesus being born in Bethlehem as another connection as him being a descendant of David.

Worldview

The use here of the word 'virgin' means 'before they lived together as man and wife.' It also implies 'before they had sexual relations.' Use whatever description in your language implies clearly that Mary had not been with a man but that is appropriate for even mixed audiences to hear and say.

It is important to know how a culture sees engagement to help you craft this story in order to make sense of Joseph's dilemma. If you were crafting for an audience like America, then you might need to add some cultural gap information to make the point of just how binding this engagement is.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Nature and character of God

Keeps his promises; his Spirit is active; speaks and reveals his will; assures his children; speaks in dreams; uses spokesmen; sends a Savior

Church

Going to temple; worship; consecrating children

Devotion

Worship

Jesus' Baptism*

Luke 3:1-3, 10-22; Matthew 3:7-9, 13-15*

From NLT (1996)

**Matthew 3:13-15 from NLT (2004)*

Transition

Jesus grew to be a young man. God sent a spokesman ahead of him to prepare the way for the people to receive the Promised Savior,* Jesus.*

Luke 3:1-2

After some time, a message from God came to a man named John...who was living out in the wilderness.

Luke 3:3

Then John went from place to place...telling people that they should be baptized to show that they had turned from their sins* and turned to God to be forgiven.**

Matthew 3:7-9

Some religious leaders came to hear John, and he said, "You...snakes! Who warned you to flee from God's coming wrath? Prove by the way you live that you have...turned to God. Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are the descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing. God can change these stones here into descendants of Abraham."*

Luke 3:10-14

Then the crowd asked, "What should we do?" John replied, "If you have two coats, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry."

Even corrupt tax collectors came to be baptized and asked, "Teacher, what should we do?" "Show your honesty," he replied. "Make sure you collect no more taxes than the...government requires you to."

Luke 3:10-14 (continued)

"What should we do?" asked some soldiers. John replied, "Don't extort money, and don't accuse people of things you know they didn't do. And be content with your pay."

Luke 3:15-16

Everyone was expecting the Promised Savior to come soon, and they were eager to know if John was him. John answered their questions by saying, "I baptize with water; but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I am not even worthy to be his slave. He will baptize you with God's Spirit and with fire."*

Luke 3:21

One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus himself came....

Matthew 3:13-15

...to be baptized by John even though Jesus had never sinned. But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?"

But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him.

Luke 3:21-22

Afterwards, as he was praying, the heavens opened, and God's Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "You are my...Son, I love you and I am very pleased with you."*

Words/Phrases to Consider

Baptism*

This word needs to be considered carefully before attempting to translate. If you have a Bible translation, you may choose to use what the translation uses. If the translation uses the borrowed term, but no one understands it, you might want to consider explaining the term. (English also uses a borrowed term, *baptize*). If you are working with long-term believers, you need to see with what term they feel most comfortable. If you need to find a new term, a careful study of the meaning of the concept of 'baptism' is needed. (See Glossary for a full discussion.)

Heaven/Voice from Heaven*

Heaven could be translated as 'the sky' or 'the place where God lives.'

'A voice from heaven' is readily accepted as being God's voice itself. It is acceptable to use 'God's voice.'

(See note in Glossary for a more complete discussion of the term 'heaven'.)

'turned from their sins* and turned to God to be forgiven*'

This is the NLT's way of saying 'repentance.' It is a good picture of what actually happens when we repent, and we encourage an explanation of this kind instead of using one term for 'repent.'

Religious leaders*

Matt 3:7 actually identifies these men as Pharisees and Sadducees, and we chose to introduce these key players in Jesus' life. They return later in the story set. Both Pharisees and Sadducees were Jewish religious parties at that time. Many scribes and priests were members of one of these sects. If possible, it is best

to keep these sect names generic, i.e. 'religious leaders.' If you use a term for 'religious leaders' used in a major religion here, be sure that those names don't refer ONLY to a member of that specific religion.

Story Crafting

'descendants of Abraham'

Please note that 'descendants of Abraham' is the meaning of the NLT text 'children of Abraham.' This phrase used here also strengthens the intra-story cohesion of using 'descendants of Abraham' for 'God's people/Israelites' throughout the story set.

'with fire'

This phrase is included in the Matthew and Luke accounts, but not in the Mark account. Commentators have differing opinions as to what 'with fire' refers, but most seem to focus on the judgment aspect of it. If using a literal rendering of 'with fire' is too confusing for your audience, you could 1) choose to follow the Mark account and not include that phrase; 2) state that the Savior 'will judge the world,' instead of using the phrase 'with fire.' This would be accurate in that it would include the ideas presented in Luke 3:17, as well.

'even though Jesus had never sinned'

We included this phrase to avoid confusion by the audience that Jesus had come because he had sinned. This line is exegetically supported by 2 Cor 5:21.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words that you have been using throughout the story set for 'spokesman,' 'sin,' 'Promised Savior,' 'forgive(n),' 'descendants of Abraham' and 'God's Spirit.'

Worldview

Keep in mind that in many cultures and religions, people ceremonially wash often to remove sins. You may need to specify that this is a once for all ceremony.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God sends his Spirit; uses spokesmen; acknowledges Jesus as his Son; keeps his promises; forgives sin; judges sin; speaks and reveals his intentions and will

Church

Baptism; God's people more than Abraham's descendants

Devotional life

Example of Jesus praying

Sharing the Gospel

John told people to be baptized, turn from sin, turn to God

Prayer

As Jesus was praying, the Spirit of God descended on Him in the form of a dove

Possessed Man

Mark 5:1-20

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition (Based upon Mark 1:14-21)

*The news about Jesus had spread far and wide, and many people came to see him for themselves. And, some people chose to follow Jesus. Jesus himself called out twelve men that he taught and with whom he traveled. They became his closest followers.**

Mark 5:1

Jesus and His closest followers came by boat to the other side of the lake.

Mark 5:2-5

Just as Jesus was climbing from the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit* ran out from a cemetery to meet him. ...Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to control him. All day long and throughout the night, he would wander among the tombs and in the hills, screaming and hitting himself with stones.

Mark 5:6-8

When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him. He ran to meet Jesus and fell down before him. He gave a terrible scream, shrieking, “Why are you bothering me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? For God’s sake, don’t torture me!” For Jesus had already said to the *evil spirit*, “Come out of the man, you evil spirit.”

Mark 5:9-13

Then Jesus asked, “What is your name?” And the *evil spirit* replied, “*Many*, because there are many of us here inside this man.” Then the *evil spirits* begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place. There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. “Send us into those pigs,” the *evil spirits* begged. Jesus gave them permission. So the *evil spirits* came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of two thousand pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake, where they drowned.

Mark 5:14-17

The *men guarding the pigs* fled to the nearby city and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. Everyone rushed out to see for themselves. A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, but they were frightened when they saw the man who had been *possessed by the evil spirits*, for he was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane. Those who had seen what happened to the man and to the pigs told everyone about it, and the crowd began pleading with Jesus to go away and leave them alone.

Mark 5:18-20

When Jesus got back into the boat, the man who had been *possessed by the evil spirits* begged to go, too. But Jesus said, “No, go home to your friends, and tell them what wonderful things *God* has done for you and how merciful he has been.” So the man started off to visit the Ten Towns of that region and began to tell everyone about the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Closest Followers*

'Closest followers' refers to the twelve disciples of Jesus. We have chosen to use this phrase instead of 'disciples,' as 'disciples' may be a word not easily recognized or translated. If the language has an understood term for the devoted followers of a guru, you may use that term here. A later story will introduce 'followers.' You may want to differentiate between 'followers' and 'closest followers.'

Evil Spirits*

'Evil spirits' refer to spiritual beings who serve Satan as his agents, being under his authority. These spiritual beings have power to oppress a human being and even have control over him. Try to choose a word that refers to an independent spirit being that is evil and opposed to God. If there is one, you can also use a neutral word for an independent spirit being and add a qualification like 'spirit from Satan,' or 'bad/evil spirit.' Be aware that extra explanation might be necessary during the discussion time.

Tomb

If the term 'tomb' is difficult for your audience, it can be described as a 'hole or cave in which to place dead people.'

Son of the Most High God

The singular form 'Son of God' is a title expressing the idea of intimate relationship between God and another person, as between a father and his son.

The term 'Most High God' was a Jewish title for God. Be sure that the literal translation of this word 'high' does not just refer to physical size. Acceptable alternate ways of translating the term include 'greatest,' 'only' or 'most powerful' God.

Story Crafting

'Many'

The NLT chooses to change 'Legion' to 'Many' to simplify the English story. Be careful that your audience does not think that the evil spirits have 'many names.'

'evil spirits'

We used 'evil spirits' throughout this story rather than 'demons' in order to simplify the terms used.

Worldview

Possessed

In some cultures demon possession is a good thing and is sought actively. If this is true in the culture in which you work, you will need to make sure the audience understands that the evil spirit was harmful to the man and Jesus saved the man.

Pigs

There is a Muslim people group in North Africa that cannot believe that anyone would want to guard or herd pigs. If you are working in a Muslim people group, you might want to consider using a generic term for 'animal' or explaining in the story that in this culture pigs were valuable livestock.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

Even evil spirits acknowledge God, and Jesus as Son of the Most High God; God/Jesus has power over evil spirits; God/Jesus does great things

Sharing the Gospel

Jesus said to go and tell the great things God had done. The man obeyed immediately and shared his testimony with those around him, and there is evidence that he bore fruit because the text indicates that people were amazed at what they heard

Assurance

John 10:14-39

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

Jesus continued to teach the people. Some people believed him, but others did not. One day, Jesus was speaking to those who did not believe he was the Promised Savior....*

John 10:14-18

“I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, *the people who believe in me*, and they know me. ...The Father loves me because I *voluntarily die/give my life for my sheep*. No one can take my life from me. I *give* it voluntarily. *I can give it* when I want to and also...take it ...again...”

John 10:22-24

Again...Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of an important religious festival. He was walking in their place of worship. The people surrounded him and asked, “How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Promised Savior, tell us plainly.”*

John 10:25-27

Jesus replied, “I have already told you, and you don’t believe me. ...you don’t believe me because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to me; I know them, and they follow me.”

John 10:28-30

“I give them eternal life,* and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.”

John 10:31-39

...the people picked up stones to kill him. ... *saying*. ...“You, a mere man, claim to be God.” Jesus *answered*, “...why do you *say I show disrespect to God* when I say, ‘I am the Son of God’? ...But if I do *my Father’s work*, believe in the evidence of the miraculous works I have done, even if you don’t believe me....” Once again they tried to arrest him, but he got away and left them.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Eternal Life*

'Eternal life' in the New Testament has two aspects: life that never ends; a quality of life beginning when someone allows God to rule his life.

Some options for conveying the two-fold meaning of this phrase include: 'real life that never ends;' 'new life that never ends.'

Or...

If your language does not have a noun for 'life,' you can render this term 'really live unendingly because of him' or 'he will cause such people to never come to the end of real living.'

Father

If your audience would not understand that 'Father' refers to God, you may want to say 'God' or 'God, the Father.'

Story Crafting

'voluntarily die/give my life'

If you find that this part of the story is too confusing to the audience at this point, you can choose not to include it. It is not necessary to the main idea of this story in this story set.

'I am the good shepherd'

Be sure that the analogy of 'I am the good shepherd' works for your audience. Sometimes metaphors are not understandable, and you might have to translate this as, 'I am like a good shepherd.'

'an important religious festival'

To avoid overloading the story with details and culture-specific references, we chose not to name the religious festival that was occurring at the time. It is not significant to the main plot-line of the story.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Be sure to use the same terms you have been using throughout the story set for the 'religious leaders,' 'place of worship,' 'Promised Savior,' and 'Son of God.'

Be sure that you have already introduced 'Jerusalem' in the *Birth* story, so that the audience will understand that this is the name of a city, and that it is where the descendants of Abraham worshiped God.

Worldview

Be sure that shepherds are not considered dirty or that Jesus being called one is not offensive to your audience.

'Eternal life' may not be a desirable thing in some cultures. (See note under Words/Phrases to Consider for ideas of ways to render this concept.)

'the people picked up stones to kill him'

It may not be clear in your culture or people group that Jesus' comment equating himself with God was considered serious blasphemy by the Jews and was punishable by death from stoning. If this is the case, you may want to make it explicit in your story.

'Son of God'

If you are working in a Muslim people group that might be offended by the term 'son,' if it means only 'biological birth son' in their language, you can try to find a term for 'son' that does not necessarily mean 'biological birth son.'

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God loves Jesus; powerful; is one with Jesus; gives followers to Jesus; Jesus is Son of God

Assurance of salvation

Jesus said, "No one can snatch them out of my hand."

Devotional life

Jesus' followers listen to him and follow him

Sight

Luke 18:15-17, 31-42

Based on NLT (1996)

Luke 18:15-17

One day some parents brought their little children to Jesus so he could touch them and bless* them, but *Jesus' closest followers** told them not to bother him. Then Jesus called for the children and said to *his followers,** "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! ... anyone who doesn't have their kind of *belief** will never *experience a relationship** with God."

Luke 18:31-34

Gathering *his twelve closest followers* around him, Jesus told them, "As you know, we are going to Jerusalem. And when we get there, all the predictions of the ancient *spokesmen** concerning *me* will come true. *I* will be handed over to *soldiers* to be mocked, treated shamefully, and spit upon. They will whip *me* and kill *me*, but on the third day *I* will rise again."

But they didn't understand a thing he said. ...

Luke 18:35-39

As they approached *a nearby town*, a blind beggar was sitting beside the road. When he heard the noise of a crowd going past, he asked what was happening. They told him that Jesus ...was going by. So he began shouting, "Jesus, *descendant* of David, have mercy on me!" The crowds ahead of Jesus tried to hush the man, but he only shouted louder, "*Descendant* of David, have mercy on me!"

Luke 18:40-42

When Jesus heard him, he stopped and ordered that the man be brought to him. Then Jesus asked the man, "What do you want me to do for you?"

"...I want to see!"

And Jesus said, "All right, you can see! Your *belief* has healed you." Instantly the man could see, and he followed Jesus, praising God. And all who saw it praised God, too.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Followers*

You have been introduced already to ‘closest followers.’ Again, if the language has an understood term for the devoted followers of a guru, you may use that term here. You also may want to differentiate ‘followers’ and ‘closest followers,’ as ‘closest followers’ refers to Jesus’ twelve disciples, those with whom he was in closer relationship.

Belief*

If there are two terms in the language, as in English, ‘faith’ and ‘belief,’ and one has a more religious connotation, you might consider using the term with less religious connotation. For example, here we have used the term ‘belief’ rather than ‘faith.’

Story Crafting

We have included Luke 18:31-34 to again emphasize the fulfillment of prophecy in Jesus’ death.

‘relationship with God’*

The ‘Kingdom of God’ refers to the activity of God’s ruling, but it especially refers to the relationship between God and his people. Because we have not set up a ‘kingdom’ or ‘kingship’ theme in the story, we have decided not to use the specific term ‘Kingdom of God’ here because it might be confusing to the audience. We have decided instead to focus on the theme of this story set—God’s relationship with man. Telling the scene of Jesus with the children gives the opportunity to highlight the relationship theme.

‘descendant of David’

We have included ‘descendant of David’ in this story to highlight the promise in the David stories of a Messiah/Promised Savior coming from David’s line. When the blind man cries out, ‘Descendant of David,’ he is recognizing Jesus as the Messiah/the Promised Savior, and so you may also want to make explicit that the man recognized Jesus as the Promised Savior, if you think it is needed for full understanding. We have used ‘descendant’ instead of ‘son’ so that it’s clear that Jesus is not the direct son of David.

(See note under Words/Phrases to Consider in *Disobedience* story for a more complete discussion of the term ‘descendant.’)

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same terms that you have been using throughout the story set for ‘bless,’ ‘closest followers,’ ‘relationship,’ ‘spokesman’ and ‘descendant (of David).’

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

Wants man to have a childlike faith

Devotional life

Following Jesus, praising God

Sharing the Gospel

Changed life is a testimony

Triumphal Entry

Luke 19:28-44, 47-48

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

From there, Jesus and his closest followers continued their journey toward the city of Jerusalem.*

Luke 19:29-31

As they came near Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of his closest followers ahead. “Go into that village over there,” he told them. “As you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks, ‘Why are you untying that young donkey?’ just say, ‘The Teacher needs it.’”

Luke 19:32-35

So they went and found the young donkey, just as Jesus had said. And sure enough, as they were untying it, the owners asked them, “Why are you untying that young donkey?”

And his closest followers simply replied, “The Teacher needs it.” So they brought the young donkey to Jesus and threw their coats over it for him to ride on.

Luke 19:36-37

As he rode along, the crowds spread out their coats on the road ahead of him. When he reached the place where the road started... all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen.*

Luke 19:38

“Blessings on the Savior* who comes in the name of God! There is peace in heaven*... Praise God!”*

Luke 19:39-40

But some of the religious leaders among the crowd said, “Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!”*

He replied, “If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!”

Luke 19:41

But as Jesus came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep.

Luke 19:42-44

“How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late...peace is hidden from you. ...Your enemies will crush you...because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you!”

Luke 19:47-48

After that, he taught daily in the place of worship, but the religious leaders...began planning how to kill him. But they could think of nothing, because all the people hung on every word he said.*

Words/Phrases to Consider

Blessings*

This term refers to the fact that Jesus is blessed by God. (See note in Glossary for a more complete discussion of the term 'bless'.)

miracle*

This word refers to powerful deeds or happenings that evoke awe or something that points to a truth beyond itself.

'who comes in the name of God'

Be sure the meaning of the wording you use for the phrase 'in the name of God' refers to Jesus' position and authority.

Story Crafting

'The Teacher needs it.'

In the New Testament stories, we've changed the word 'Lord,' when it refers to Jesus, either to 'Jesus,' 'Master' or 'Teacher,' depending on the context of the biblical text and translators' acceptable renderings of that specific use of 'Lord.' The word 'Lord' in English is used mostly in church or religious settings and isn't understood fully by the general nonchurched audience. When 'Lord' refers to Jesus, it is mostly used as a title of respect given to a master or a teacher. If you have a word in your language that means 'master' or 'teacher,' you may be able to use that where the biblical text uses 'Lord' for Jesus. In subsequent occurrences of 'Lord' referring to Jesus in this story set, we've added some notes to explain the word choice in the specific story.

'peace in heaven'**

This phrase refers to a peaceful relationship between God and people. 'Heaven' was used in place of God. You could say something like, 'Let there be peace with God/peace between God and man' here.

We included this story to again highlight the role that the religious leaders played in Jesus' death.

After Jesus begins to weep, he (rhetorically) addresses the people of Jerusalem. This may be difficult to convey in another language.

'the time of God's coming to you'

We chose this wording from NIV over the wording from the NLT here.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words that you have been using throughout the story set for 'closest followers,' 'followers,' 'blessings,' 'Savior,' 'heaven,' 'religious leaders' and 'place of worship.'

Because we have not introduced the 'kingship' theme in this story set, we've chosen to use 'Savior who comes in the name of God' rather than 'king.' The 'King who comes in the name of God' clearly refers to the Messiah, or the Savior to come. Using the term 'Savior' here keeps the title for Jesus consistent throughout the story set. Later stories can introduce the 'kingship' theme.

Worldview

'the crowds spread out their coats on the road ahead of him'

This was a sign of reverence or respect, showing that the people did not mind having a ruler trample on their own things. If this is not understood readily by your audience, you can add a phrase such as, 'out of respect for Jesus.'

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

Jesus comes in the name of God

Devotional life

People hung on every word Jesus said

Last Supper

Luke 22:1-20; John 13:3-17; Matthew 26:30

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition

Jesus and his closest followers arrived in Jerusalem. It was nearing the time of an important religious festival, and many people were in the city.*

Luke 22:3-6

Then...Judas...one of *Jesus'* twelve closest followers...went over to the *religious leaders** ... to discuss the best way to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted...and...promised him a reward. So *Judas* began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus so they could arrest him quietly when the crowds weren't around.

Luke 22:14-15

...Jesus and *his* twelve closest followers, including *Judas*, sat down together at the table to celebrate the meal for the religious festival. Jesus said, "I have looked forward...to eating this...meal with you before my suffering begins."

John 13:3-5, 12-17

Jesus knew that *God* had given him authority over everything.... So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash *his closest followers'* feet and to wipe them with the towel he had around him.

John 13:3-5, 12-17 (continued)

After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Master,'* and you are right, because it is true. And since I, *your Master* and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do for each other what I have done for you. *It's true* that a servant is not greater than the master. ...You know these things—now do them!"

Luke 22:19-20

Jesus also took a loaf of bread...thanked God for it...and gave it to *his closest followers* to eat. He said, "This bread represents my body, given for you. Do this in order to remember me." After supper he took a cup of wine and said, "This wine is a symbol of God's new promise to save you—an agreement sealed with the blood I will shed for you.

Matthew 26:30

Then they sang a song of praise and went out to an olive grove on a hill just outside of the city.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Master*

The original 'Lord' has the connotation here of 'master,' 'supreme head,' or 'owner.' At a surface level, this is a title for a respected man, such as 'sir.' Any of these is an acceptable rendering.

'a servant is not greater than the master'

The meaning here is that Jesus' followers cannot consider themselves too important to act as servants, because Jesus himself became a servant. They also cannot expect better treatment from the world than Jesus received.

Bread

Your audience may not understand the term 'bread.' You may substitute another 'generic' word for bread such as 'roti.'

Represents/Symbol

Translators' helps agree that Jesus was referring to the bread and wine as symbols or representations of his body and blood. Jesus used similar figures of speech when he made statements such as, "I am the door" and "I am the bread of life."

Covenant/Promise

The word 'covenant' refers to a promise given by a stronger person to a weaker person.

Song of praise/Hymn

This was most likely a song sung as part of the Passover meal known as the *Hallel*, song of praise to God. A common way of translating this term is 'song of thanks' or 'song of praise to God.'

Story Crafting

'save'

If your audience does not understand from what God is saving us, you might need to make the new promise more explicit by saying something like, 'to save you from your sins,' 'to forgive your sins,' etc.

'an agreement sealed with the blood I will shed for you'

Your audience may or may not be familiar with promises/covenants sealed in blood. If they are not, you may change this phrase to something like 'an agreement made possible by my death/by my allowing people to kill me.'

We have included the scene of Jesus washing his disciples' feet because it seems very important in Asian cultures to highlight the idea of servant leadership, which is demonstrated well in many cultures by the word picture of washing feet. Many people have told us in testing that this is the most important part of the story.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words that you have been using throughout the story set for 'closest followers,' 'religious leaders' and 'save.'

Worldview

In cultures where the mention of wine would be highly offensive or cause people to disrespect Jesus, you might try just saying 'cup' or 'cup of liquid.'

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

He has provided a new covenant or promise; has a plan

Church

Servanthood/service; Lord's Supper instituted; worship

Prayer

Jesus thanked God for the elements of the Last Supper

Arrest and Trial

Luke 22:39; 23:13-21

Matthew 26:36, 45-67; 27:1-2, 11-14, 24-26
Based on NLT (1996)

Luke 22:39; Matthew 26:36

Then, accompanied by *his closest followers*,* Jesus said, “Sit here while I go on ahead to pray.”

Matthew 26:45-56

A little later, he returned to *his closest followers* and said, “...Look, the time has come. ... my betrayer is here!” And...Judas, one of *his twelve closest followers*, arrived with a mob that was armed with swords and clubs. ...*They* grabbed Jesus and arrested him. ...*and all his closest followers* deserted him and fled.

Matthew 26:57-67

They led Jesus to the home of...the *head religious leader*,* where the teachers of religious law and other leaders had gathered. ...Inside, *they* were trying to find witnesses who would lie about Jesus, so they could put him to death....

Then the *head religious leader* stood up and said to Jesus, “Well, aren’t you going to answer these charges?...” But Jesus remained silent. Then the *head religious leader* said to him, “I demand in the name of the living God that you tell us whether you are the *Promised Savior*,* the Son of God.” Jesus replied, “Yes, it is as you say....” Then the *head religious leader* tore his clothing to show his horror, shouting, “...Why do we need other witnesses? You have all heard *him dishonor God with his words*. ...” Then they *began to spit* in Jesus’ face and *beat* him with their fists.

Matthew 27:1-2

Early in the morning, the *religious leaders* met again to discuss how to persuade the...government to sentence Jesus to death. Then they bound him and took him to...the...governor.

Matthew 27:11-14

Now Jesus was standing before...the...governor. “Are you *these people’s King*?” the governor asked him. Jesus replied, “Yes, it is as you say.”

But when the *religious leaders* made their accusations against him, Jesus remained silent. “Don’t you hear their many charges against you?” *the governor* demanded. But Jesus said nothing, much to the governor’s great surprise.

Luke 23:13-18, 20-21

Then *the governor* called together the *religious leaders*, along with the people, and he announced his verdict. “You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. I have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and find him innocent. ...Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. So I will have him *whipped*, but then I will release him.” Then a mighty roar rose from the crowd, and with one voice they shouted, “Kill him...!” *The governor* argued with them, because he wanted to release Jesus. But they shouted, “*Kill him! Kill him!*”

Matthew 27:24-26

The governor saw that he wasn’t getting anywhere and that a riot was developing. So he sent for a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this man. The responsibility is yours!”

And all the people yelled back, “We will take responsibility for his death—we and our children!”

So *the governor*...ordered Jesus *whipped* with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the ...soldiers to *execute* him.

Story Crafting

Much of the dialog chosen for this story was based on the prophecy from Is 53. 'Jesus remained silent,' Jesus being 'whipped,' and Jesus being given an unjust trial are all fulfillments of the prophecy.

The governor asks Jesus 'Are you *these people's King?*' We have not developed a strong kingship theme in this story set, but we have included God's promise to David that his dynasty would continue forever.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words that you have been using throughout the story set for 'closest followers,' 'religious leaders,' 'Promised Savior,' 'Son of God,' and 'place where we worship God.'

'Then they began to spit in Jesus' face and beat him with their fists'

Jesus told his disciples in the *Sight* story that this would happen. Make sure to include this in your story to provide cohesion between stories.

Worldview

In some cultures, the head religious leader's question about Jesus being the Son of God and his strong response to Jesus' affirmation that he was 'the Messiah, the Son of God' is completely appropriate. This title could be misunderstood to mean biological offspring of God. This story set does not adequately develop the concept of Jesus as Son of God, so it may be advisable for you to use the Luke account of the trial here where the head religious leader simply asks Jesus if he is the Messiah ('Promised Savior') (Lk 22:67).

Jewish religious leaders did not have the authority to execute a death penalty, so they had to persuade the Roman governor to do it. If it is confusing to your audience why they went to the governor, you may want to make this explicit in your story.

The Isaiah prophecy mentions that the Promised Savior would be silent, so we have kept Jesus' silence here. There are some cultures in which silence is an admission of guilt; therefore, you would somehow need to make it explicit in the text that Jesus was not guilty.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God's word/promises fulfilled;
Jesus says he is the Savior and Son of God

Prayer

Jesus went off alone and had a time of intense prayer in this story

Execution

Luke 23:32-56

Based on NLT (2004)

Luke 23:32-33

Jesus and two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed.... They were taken to a place called The Skull. There they drove nails through his hands and his feet and nailed him to a cross, two planks of wood. And he was raised up—on his right a criminal...on his left a criminal.

Luke 23:35

The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,” they said, “let him save himself if he is really God’s Promised Savior*.”

Luke 23:39-43

One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Promised Savior, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!”

But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come back with power to rule.”

And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.*”

Luke 23:44-46

By this time it was...noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o’clock. The light from the sun was gone. ...Then Jesus shouted, “Father, I entrust my spirit* into your hands!” And with those words he died.

Luke 23:50-53

...there was a good religious leader*...who did not agree with what the others had done. ...He went to the governor and asked for Jesus’ body. ...he took the body down from the cross (the planks of wood) and wrapped it in a long sheet of linen cloth and laid it in a new tomb that had been carved out of rock.

Luke 23:54-56

This was done late on Friday afternoon.... As his body was taken away, the women who had been his followers* followed and saw the tomb where his body was placed. A huge stone was placed in front of the entrance of the tomb. Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to prepare his body for burial according to their custom. But by the time they were finished their religious day of rest had begun, so they were required by their religious laws to wait until after the day of rest was over before they could go back to the tomb.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Paradise*

'Paradise' refers to the place where the righteous dead go. It can be translated or described in several ways:

- 1) 'the very good place called paradise'
- 2) 'place of well-being'
- 3) 'place of happiness/of happy people'

Some religious groups already have a term for 'paradise,' but it carries a different meaning than the biblical term.

Father

Again, if your audience does not understand that 'Father' refers to 'God,' you may want to say 'God' or 'God, the Father' here.

Spirit*

'Spirit' here refers to the 'soul,' or 'life,' and it is the center of the inner life of man—his feelings and emotions.

Story Crafting

This story shows someone's response to Jesus, because this criminal accepted Jesus as God's Promised Savior/Messiah. The kingdom concept has not been developed fully in this story set, but the fact that Jesus will someday rule as king is implied in both the *David King* and *Promise* stories.

'back with power to rule'

This is an acceptable rendering of 'come into your kingdom.'

We chose the Luke account of the *Execution* story since it best highlights the fulfillments of the prophecies in this story set.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same terms you have been using throughout the story set for 'save,' 'Promised Savior,' 'Father,' 'religious leader,' 'tomb' and 'followers.'

Worldview

You may determine that your audience does not understand 'cross' and that you have to describe it as something like 'planks of wood' or 'a cross made of two planks of wood.'

Some cultures do not believe women should see a dead body. They may feel that the women's actions here are either inappropriate or foreign. In that case, you may choose to say 'some of Jesus' followers.'

'according to their custom'

We included this phrase in the account of the women going to the tomb because many cultures do not prepare dead bodies for burial in this manner.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God
God is Father

Assurance of salvation

Jesus said, 'I assure you...you will be with me...'

Prayer

Jesus talked to the Father during the time of his execution



Alive!

Luke 24:1-7, 36-47; Matthew 28:19-20;

Acts 1:8-11

Based on NLT (2004)

Luke 24:1-4

...very early on Sunday morning (*after Jesus' death*) the women went to the tomb to *prepare Jesus' body (according to their custom)*. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. So they went in, but they didn't find *his* body. ...two men *dressed in dazzling robes suddenly appeared to them*.

Luke 24:5-7

The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking *in a tomb* for someone who is alive? He isn't here! He *has* risen from the dead! Remember what he told you...that *He* must be betrayed...and be *executed*, and that he would rise again on the third day."

Luke 24:36-37

Later when the followers were gathered, they were talking about these things. Suddenly, Jesus himself was standing there among them. "Peace be with you," he said. But the whole group was...frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost!*

Luke 24:38-39

"Why *do you doubt?*" he asked. ...*"Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies..."*

Luke 24:41-43

Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of...fish, and he ate it...

Luke 24:44-47

Then *Jesus explained to them that all this took place to fulfill God's plan, that he, "the Promised Savior* would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. This is the Good News you must take to all peoples."*

Matthew 28:19-20

"Therefore, go and make *followers* of all *people groups, baptize* them.... *And, teach these new followers* to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always...."

Transition

Sometime later Jesus was with his followers on a hill just outside of Jerusalem.

Acts 1:8

He told them, "...you will receive power when God's Spirit comes.... And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—right here...and to all parts of the earth."*

Acts 1:9-11

After *he said* this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. As they strained *their eyes* to see him...two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. "Men..." they said, "why are you standing here staring *at the sky?* Jesus has been taken from you into heaven,* but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"

Words/Phrases to Consider

Ghost

Jesus' followers thought that they were seeing the spirit of someone who had died.

Heaven*

Here, 'heaven' refers to the place where God lives.

Peoples

We chose to render the term often translated as nations (*ta ethne*) as 'peoples' because we feel it is more accurate and resonates with non-western peoples who do not tend to think along geopolitical lines.

Story Crafting

Be sure that your audience understands clearly that Jesus was dead, but is now alive.

'God's Spirit'

We are using 'God's Spirit' here instead of 'Holy Spirit.'
(See Glossary for 'God's Spirit.')

You may find that it is more readily understood to state explicitly that the men dressed in white are angels. This has exegetical backing (Lk 24:23), and it may avoid confusion that some have had where wearing white is the traditional dress of mourners.

You may want to make explicit that the reason Jesus asked for something to eat was to prove that he was not a ghost.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Be sure that you use the same words you have been using throughout the story set for 'tomb,' 'closest followers,' 'followers,' 'Promised Savior,' 'forgive(ness),' 'sin,' 'God's Spirit' and 'heaven.'

When Jesus tells his followers to look at his hands and feet, he is referring them to the nails that nailed him to the cross.

'all this took place to fulfill God's plan'

It is important to include the fact that Jesus said this in order to refer the hearer back to the prophecies that they've heard already in the story set.

Worldview

At that time, it was believed that the bodiless spirits of the deceased could appear as ghosts. Jesus proves to the disciples that he is not a ghost by showing them he has a body. You want to make sure that it is understood that the disciples were wrong in thinking that Jesus was a ghost. He was a living, resurrected person.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God sends his Spirit; power comes from God

Devotional life

Jesus causes one to understand Scripture

Sharing the Gospel

Take the message to the nations; be witnesses; get power from God

God's Spirit*

Acts 2:1-47

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition

The followers of Jesus stayed in the city to await the promised Spirit,* just as Jesus had instructed.*

Acts 2:1

On the day of an important religious festival, seven weeks after Jesus was raised from the dead, those who followed Jesus were meeting together in one place.

Acts 2:2-4

Suddenly, there was a sound...like the roaring of a mighty windstorm...and it filled the house where they were meeting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with God's Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as God's Spirit gave them this ability.

Acts 2:5-13

There were people in the city from all over the world for the festival. They came and heard his followers speaking. They said, "These are local people, and yet we hear them speaking the languages of the lands where we were born! ...about the wonderful things God has done!" They stood there amazed and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other. But others in the crowd were mocking. "They're drunk, that's all!" they said.

Acts 2:14-16, 22-24, 33-36

Then Peter stepped forward with the...other closest followers* and shouted to the crowd.... "Some of you are saying these people are drunk. It isn't true! It's much too early for that. People don't get drunk by nine o'clock in the morning. No, what you see this morning was predicted centuries ago....

Acts 2:14-16, 22-24, 33-36 (continued)

"...listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus...by doing wonderful miracles, wonders, and signs* through him, as you well know. But...you... murdered him. However, God...raised him back to life again....

"Now he sits *at the place* of highest honor in heaven,* at God's right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him *God's Spirit* to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today. ...So let it be clearly known...that God has made this Jesus whom you *murdered* to be both *Master** and *Promised Savior!*"

Acts 2:37-47

Peter's words convicted them deeply, and they said to him and to the *others*, "Brothers, what should we do?" Peter replied, "Each of you must turn from your sins* and turn to God, and be baptized* in the name of Jesus, *the Promised Savior*, for the forgiveness* of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of *God's Spirit*. This promise is to you and to your children, and even to *those who are not Abraham's descendants.*"

Then Peter continued *speaking* for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners. ...Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church*—about three thousand in all. They joined with the other believers* and devoted themselves to *Jesus' closest followers'* teaching and fellowship*, sharing *the meal Jesus had told them to remember him by (Lord's Supper)** and in prayer. ...and *those who had been Jesus' closest followers* performed many miraculous signs and wonders....

...And each day *God* added to their group those who were being saved.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Miracles, wonders, and signs*

These words refer to powerful deeds: a happening that evokes awe; something that points to a truth beyond itself.

Basically, all three words refer to similar things. Perhaps all three words were used to show that Jesus did many miracles of different types.

Church*

If the word 'church' in the language conveys something different than the New Testament definition, you might choose to explain the term in a phrase instead of using the word 'church.' In the New Testament, the word never actually refers to a building, but to a group of people who believe in Jesus. In the New Testament, 'church' may refer either to a group of believers who live in one place, or to the wider community of believers in Jesus.

Believers*

This term refers to those who believe in Jesus and follow him. It is first used after the giving of God's Spirit at Pentecost.

Fellowship*

Fellowship is a close association among believers which includes them meeting regularly with other believers, and may refer to public worship services. It implies that the believers had a communal spirit by sharing what they had with each other.

Story Crafting

Much of Peter's sermon has not been included because we have found that it is difficult for people to remember all of it in this story. We have left in the parts of the sermon that relate directly to previous stories or to the story line. We also wanted to ensure that we highlighted Peter's response to the people when they asked him, 'What should we do?'

'not Abraham's descendants'

The NLT says that 'this promise is to you and to your children, and even to the Gentiles.' We have rendered that as '*not Abraham's descendants*' because the term 'Gentiles' has not been introduced in the story set.

'the meal Jesus had told them to remember him by' (Lord's Supper*)

This reference to eating together probably included both simply fellowshiping, i.e. eating together, and sharing in the Lord's Supper, i.e. the meal that Jesus asked them to share in remembrance of him.

Think about how you explained this in the *Last Supper* story, and try to explain this in a way that will relate back to that story. For example, you could say something like: 'devoted themselves to Jesus' followers' teaching and fellowship, and eating and drinking together to remember what Jesus had done for them, just as Jesus told them to do.'

OR 'and remembering what Jesus had done for them, eating and drinking together.'

This means that you need to have made a point to say, in the *Last Supper* story, that Jesus told them to eat and drink in order to remember him.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Be sure that you use the same words you have been using throughout the story set for 'followers,' 'Spirit/God's Spirit,' 'closest followers,' 'Father,' 'heaven,' 'Master,' 'Promised Savior,' 'sins,' 'baptize,' 'forgive(ness),' 'Abraham's descendants' and 'saved.'

T4T PRINCIPLES

Character and nature of God

God is Spirit; God has a plan; God endorses Jesus, who is the Master and Promised Savior

Church

Believers gathered together in one place; were Spirit-filled; were baptized; devoted themselves to teaching and fellowship; shared in the Lord's Supper and prayer; performed signs and wonders; numbers increased

Devotional life

Spirit-filled; devoted to teaching and prayer

Devotional life

New believers devoted themselves to prayer

African

Acts 8:26-39

Based on the NLT (2004)

Transition

Before Jesus went to heaven,* he had promised his followers* that they would have power to share about him throughout the world. Those who believed in Jesus went everywhere telling people the wonderful news about Jesus. One of these followers of Jesus was named Philip...

Acts 8:26-27

...an angel* from God said to him, “Go south down the desert road that begins at Jerusalem....” So he started out....

Acts 8:27-28

...and he met the treasurer of an African nation...returning to his homeland. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the spokesman* Isaiah.

Acts 8:29-32

God’s Spirit* said to Philip, “Go over and walk along beside the carriage.” Philip ran over and heard the man reading...so he asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” The man replied, “How can I, when there is no one to instruct me?” And he begged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him. *This is what he was reading...*

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter. And as a lamb is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.”

Acts 8:34-35

The African man asked Philip, “Tell me, was the spokesman talking about himself or someone else?” So beginning with this message from God’s spokesman, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus.

Acts 8:36-40

As they rode along, they came to some water, and the African man said, “Look! There’s some water! Why can’t I be baptized?*” “You can,” Philip answered, “if you truly believe.” And the African man replied, “I believe that Jesus...is the Son of God!”

The African man ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

When they came up out of the water, God’s Spirit took Philip away to another town... *Afterwards, the African man...* went on his way rejoicing...

Words/Phrases to Consider

Carriage

A carriage could also be referred to as a 'wagon' or some vehicle pulled by horses or oxen. Someone was probably leading the wagon, and there was probably room for at least one other person to sit, since the Ethiopian asked Philip to sit with him.

Story Crafting

We chose this story because of its beautiful connection to the Isaiah 53 story and its model of a response to Jesus followed by immediate obedience of baptism.

We have chosen to simplify the term 'Ethiopian eunuch' to 'African' for ease of remembering and retelling, and because many of the hearers of the stories will not have heard of the country of Ethiopia.

We have chosen to include v. 37 "You can," Philip answered, "if you believe with all your heart." And the eunuch replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," even though it is not in the earliest manuscripts. It does include information the other verses in the text seem to imply. So, you may choose to leave this portion out of the story, or you may choose to treat this verse as implicit information, in which case you may want to render that part of the story as, 'Philip told the African he could be baptized if he truly believed. The man said that he did believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so....'

Worldview

Acts 8:32

If your audience is not familiar with sheep or the butchering and shearing of them, you may need to make these statements more general, such as: 'He was killed just like an animal, and he didn't say a word.'

Intra-Story Cohesion

Be sure that you use the same words you have been using throughout the story set for 'followers,' 'angel,' 'spokesman,' 'God's Spirit,' 'baptize' and 'Son of God.'

T4T PRINCIPLES

Church

Baptism; role of Scripture

Sharing the Gospel

Those who believed went everywhere sharing the Good News; led by the Spirit

Philippian Jailer

Acts 16:12-40; 17:1

Based on NLT (2004)

Transition

Jesus' followers continued to travel throughout the world telling people the Good News about Jesus. Two of these followers, Paul and Silas, went from city to city sharing the Good News.*

Acts 16:12-15

On one of these trips Paul and Silas went to the city of Philippi. ...On the day of worship they went a little way outside the city to a river bank, where they thought people would be meeting for prayer, and they sat down to speak with some women who had gathered there. One of them was Lydia...a merchant of expensive... cloth, who worshiped God. As she listened to them, God opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying. She was baptized* along with other members of her household, and she asked them to be her guests. "If you agree that I am a true believer* in Jesus," she said, "come and stay at my home." And...they agreed.*

Acts 16:16-17

One day as Paul and Silas were going down to the place of prayer, they met a slave girl who was possessed by an evil spirit.* She was a fortune-teller who earned a lot of money for her masters. She followed Paul...shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved."*

Acts 16:18

This went on day after day until Paul got so tired of it that he turned and said to the evil spirit within her, "I command you in the name of Jesus ...to come out of her." And instantly it left her.

Acts 16:19-21

Her masters' hopes of wealth were now shattered, so they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the marketplace. "The whole city is in an uproar

because of these men!" they shouted to the city officials. "They are teaching the people to do things that are against our customs."

Acts 16:22-24

A mob quickly formed.... Paul and Silas were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn't escape. So the jailer put them into the inner dungeon and chained them.

Acts 16:25-28

Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing...to God, and the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off! The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. But Paul shouted to him, "Stop! Don't kill yourself! We are all here!"

Acts 16:29-30

The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Acts 16:31-34

They replied, "Believe in...Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household." And they shared the Good News about Jesus with him and with all who lived in his household. ...Then he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized. The jailer fed them at his house and they rejoiced because they all believed in God.*

Acts 16:35, 40; 17:1

The next morning the city officials released Paul and Silas. When Paul and Silas left the prison, they returned to the home of Lydia. There they met with the believers and encouraged them once more. Then they left to go to another town.

Words/Phrases to Consider

'opened her heart'

This is an English figure of speech that may not be understood in all languages. This phrase means that God made her willing/able to understand and accept/believe what was being said by Paul about Jesus.

'household'

Referring to Lydia in v. 15, this word might include everyone who lived in Lydia's household, including servants. (She may not have had a family, since she is identified as the head of her household.) In talking about the jailer in v. 31, this word probably refers to his family.

possessed*

This term refers to being totally controlled by something. When referring to evil spirits, you may simply say that the evil spirit was "in" the person.

'in the name of Jesus'

This phrase, translated literally, may not carry the full intended meaning. You may choose to say something along the lines of

- 1) 'by the name/authority of Jesus'
- 2) 'by the authority that Jesus has given me'
- 3) 'by the power which is in the name of Jesus'

'Believe* in ... Jesus'

You might choose to make this phrase clearer by using a statement such as 'believe that Jesus will save you (from God punishing you for your sins).'

'Most High God'

This refers to the position of God, that is, 'the highest God' (indirectly a reference to 'the God in heaven') or 'the God who is higher than all other gods,' that is to say, 'the most important God.' Here the reference would certainly seem to be to 'God who is greater than all others.'

Story Crafting

The jailer would have to suffer the punishment of the prisoners that he allowed to escape. Evidently some of these prisoners were to receive capital punishment, so the jailer preferred to commit suicide. It may not be evident to your audience why the jailer was going to commit suicide. In this case, you might choose to make this information explicit

'Sirs'

This is a polite term of address for men. Use whatever term is most appropriate in your language.

'household'

The term 'household' in reference to the jailer probably refers to his family.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words that you have been using throughout the story set for 'followers,' 'baptize,' 'evil spirit,' 'Most High God' and 'saved.'

Worldview

Lydia was following culturally-appropriate norms of hospitality by inviting Paul and Silas to her house. Be sure to avoid any appearance of impropriety on the part of Lydia, Paul and Silas.

T4T PRINCIPLES

Church

Met in homes; baptism; encouraged and strengthened believers

Devotional life

Prayer and singing

Sharing the Gospel

Look for where God is at work; Spirit gives power to share

Assurance of salvation

Believe and you will be saved

Prayer

Paul and Silas prayed during times of persecution—here, while they were in prison

Return

**Acts 17:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10;
2:17-18; 3:2-8; 4:16-18**

Based on the NLT (1996)

Acts 17:1-5

...Paul and Silas *then continued to travel throughout the area near Philippi. One day they came to the city of Thessalonica. There, Paul told many people, who were descendants of Abraham, about Jesus. He said, "This Jesus I'm telling you about is the Promised Savior*." Many of them believed*, but others were jealous, so they gathered some worthless fellows from the streets to form a mob and start a riot. They attacked the home of a follower* of Jesus, searching for Paul and Silas so they could drag them out to the crowd.*

Acts 17:6-7

Not finding them there, they dragged out... some of the other believers* instead and took them before the city *authorities*. "Paul and Silas have *caused trouble all over the world...* and now they are here disturbing our city," they shouted. "*One of these men here has allowed Paul and Silas to stay in his home...*"

Acts 17:8-10

Although the city was thrown into turmoil by these reports. ...the city authorities finally released. ...these believers....

For their protection, that very night the believers sent Paul and Silas away....

1 Thessalonians 2:17-18; 3:2, 6-8; 1:1

But Paul never forgot about the believers in Thessalonica. In fact, he tried again and again to visit them, but he wasn't able. So Paul sent a friend named Timothy to encourage the believers in Thessalonica. When Timothy returned to Paul and gave a report, Paul was overjoyed to learn that these believers were continuing to follow Jesus in spite of persecution. So, he decided to write a letter to the believers in Thessalonica....a letter from himself, Silas and Timothy. He said...

1 Thessalonians 1:2

"We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly."

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7, 9-10

"...you received the message *about Jesus* with joy from *God's Spirit** in spite of the severe suffering it brought you. ...As a result, you... became an example to all the *believers in the area*. ...*these believers speak of* how you turned away from idols to serve the true and living God. And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven*—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead...."

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

"*And when Jesus comes back, he himself will come down from heaven with a loud shout.... First, all the believers who have died will rise.... Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be taken up in the clouds to meet Jesus in the air... We will be with him forever. So...encourage each other with these words.*"

Story Crafting

In order to avoid a misunderstanding of the motive behind the believers sending Paul and Silas away, we have included the phrase 'for their own protection.'

Much of the end of the story has been summarized in order to make it easier for the audience to remember and put into the context of a story.

This story is an example of how a teaching from the Epistles may be presented in a story form. This story links the teaching from 1 Thessalonians with a corresponding narrative from the Book of Acts.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words that you have been using throughout the story set for 'descendants of Abraham,' 'Promised Savior,' 'followers,' 'God's Spirit,' 'God's Son' and 'heaven.'

T4T PRINCIPLES

Devotional life

Look forward to the Second Coming

Church

Persecution and suffering of believers; word of encouragement to believers

Sharing the Gospel

Jesus' followers tell many people

Prayer

Paul prays for the believers

OFT

*Intentional evangelism utilizing
stories from God's Word
resulting in multiplying house churches*

Church Formation Training

Church Planting and Discipleship for Oral Learners

Church Formation Training Notes

The following section is a set of stories from the book of Acts designed as a church formation/ church planting movement training. You'll notice that there is an overlap of a few stories from the S-T4T example core set. Those stories would have been covered in an initial discipleship story set. Now they are a part of a more comprehensive story set focused on church formation. Your group will have been experiencing church formation as you have been modeling it for them during the discipleship core set. They may not have as yet identified themselves as a church. This story set is designed for them to experience and discover what a reproducing church is.

In so much as this set is designed for the group to discover truths of church formation, the discussion after each story should focus on church formation. A form of the seven questions introduced in the initial S-T4T core story set should be used here. Remember, we are trying to keep every aspect of these trainings as reproducible as possible. Therefore, we want to keep the questions very similar, so they will be easy to remember. However, your discussion coming from the questions needs to guide the group in discovering and experiencing church formation. We propose a form of the following seven questions, which are very similar to the original seven questions, but with less of an inward focus and more of a focus on the "group," and how the "group" becomes a reproducing "church."

1. What did you like in this story?
2. What confused you or bothered you in this story?
3. What did you learn about God?
4. What did you learn about man?
5. What did you learn about church?
(The list of church formation elements provided in each story will help you guide the discussion.)
6. How do we put that into practice, and how will we do that next week?
7. To whom will you tell this story?

**NOTE: THESE STORIES
ARE NOT ALREADY CRAFTED.**

You should craft each of these stories to speak to the worldview, language and storytelling style of your particular audience. These lists of Scripture references are not to be translated word for word. They are meant simply to be a guide for you as you craft meaningful stories.

We also have included notes about worldview, intra-story cohesion, storycrafting, biblical words and church formation elements that we hope will be of help to you as you craft these stories.

The notes and references we have provided you are by no means exhaustive. Our desire is that they will serve as a springboard for you as you dive into communicating God's Word through story.

FORMATTING NOTES:

Within the Scripture references, you will note ellipses (...). These represent portions of Scripture we have not included here, as there often are details that are not conducive to a storytelling format.

You will note also the use of *italics* within the Scripture references. These represent wording that may be difficult to translate and which we have adjusted for you. These adjustments have been checked for exegetical accuracy using commentaries and helps provided for Bible translators, most notably the *Translator's Notes Series* (published by SIL) and the *Translators Handbook Series* (published by United Bible Society).

Each story contains a section entitled 'Church Formation Elements to Discuss.' These are the key elements which are necessary for the listeners to understand from the story.

An asterisk* after a word indicates that there is a discussion of that word found in the Glossary. We have placed the asterisk only the first time the word appears in each story.

Words/Phrases to Consider

In this section we discuss words, phrases or concepts that may be difficult to communicate in another language and culture. You will want to take care that the appropriate MEANING is conveyed when crafting your story.

Intra-Story Cohesion

This section reminds you to be consistent in your wording, terminology and thematic content throughout your story set.

Worldview

Many worldview issues will be discussed in Words/Phrases to Consider and Story Crafting. This section will cover those issues that have not been addressed. A dissertation could be written on all the potential worldview issues found in these stories. We have chosen only to highlight some of the more problematic issues.

Story Crafting

This section gives you tips on how to craft the story to make it a well-told story that communicates the MEANING of the biblical text.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

This section highlights the church formation and CPM principles found in each story. You will want to make sure the group has covered these topics in the discussion time.

Promise of God's Spirit*

Acts 1:3-5, 8-14

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition (for use as a transition from the initial S-T4T story set, which ends with the return of Jesus into these Acts stories, if they are being shared back-to-back with a group)

You have heard the stories about how God has worked in the world to bring us into a right relationship with him. You have even heard some about how he sent his Spirit* to guide us and bring us together as believers*. Now, we are going to hear more about how God's Spirit worked to form the first church* and how we can follow that pattern for our worship* together even today.*

Acts 1:3-5

During the forty days after *he was killed (and raised from the dead)*, Jesus appeared to his closest followers*...and proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive....

Once as he was eating a meal with them, he told them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father (God) sends you what he promised. ...In just a few days you will receive God's Spirit."

Acts 1:8

"...When *God's Spirit* has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout *the surrounding countryside*, in *the next city*, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:9-11

It was not long after *Jesus* said this that he was taken up into *heaven** while they were watching, and he disappeared into a cloud. As they were straining their eyes to see him, two white-robed men suddenly stood there among them. They said, "...Why are you standing here staring at the sky? Jesus has been taken away from you into heaven. And someday, just as you saw him go, he will return!"

Acts 1:12-14

Jesus' closest followers...walked...back to Jerusalem. Then they went to the...house where they were staying.... *There*, they all met together continually for prayer, along with *Jesus' mother*, several other women, and *Jesus' brothers*.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the Glossary for information on the following terms:

Relationship*

God's Spirit*

Believers*

Church*

Worship*

Closest Followers/The Twelve*

Heaven*

'Father'

You may need to make it clear that 'Father' refers to God, as in 'God my Father,' or just 'God.'

Story Crafting

Transition

The first part of this story is similar to the last part of the *Alive* story in the initial S-T4T story set. This is used simply as a transition into the book of Acts.

'right relationship'

If your audience has heard the initial S-T4T story set where 'right relationship' with God was emphasized, it would be important to reference that in the transition into this story set, as we have done here.

'(and raised from the dead)'

This phrase is not found in Acts 1:1 but brings in information from other stories in order to help the hearer fully understand the setting and story.

'closest followers/the Twelve'

We have changed 'apostle' to 'closest followers' and 'the Twelve' in order to remove unfamiliar churchy terms. We use these terms interchangeably throughout the story set.

Jerusalem

If your listeners do not know Jerusalem, you may include information such as, 'a major Jewish city' or 'the place where the Jews worshiped' or 'the capital city of Israel.' This would have been known to the original audience.

'to the ends of the earth'

In order to avoid too many place names (foreign names to most listeners and difficult to remember), you may use description. This phrase may be expressed 'to as far as there is land,' 'far, far away' or 'to other countries.'

'taken up into heaven'

It is stated explicitly in the Luke account that Jesus was taken 'into heaven,' and 'sky' in this verse does refer to heaven. Keep in mind some languages have one word for 'heaven' and 'sky;' others have two separate words. Be sure your audience does not think Jesus now lives in a cloud somewhere. Also, it should be clear it was God who had taken Jesus into heaven.

'two white-robed men'

It is clear that the 'two white-robed men' were angels who, in this case, looked like men. If your audience does not understand that, you may want to make the fact explicit that they were angels.

The reference to John's baptism is removed from this story because not all of the hearers may be familiar with the previous stories. In addition, we want to focus on the receiving of God's Spirit which is about to happen.

In order to simplify the ending, you may say, 'Jesus' closest followers, together with the women, Mary the mother of

Jesus, and his brothers, joined together in a group to pray frequently.'

Intra-Story Cohesion

Jerusalem

If you use the city name Jerusalem or a description of what it was, be sure to use the same name or description throughout the story set. Jerusalem is referenced in *Peter before the Religious Leaders*, *Seven Men Chosen to Serve*, *Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned*, *African*, *Paul Meets Jesus*, *Ananias Obeys God*, *Peter Meets Cornelius*, *The Antioch Church*, *God Frees Peter from Jail* and *Paul & Barnabas Mistaken for Gods*.

'he disappeared into a cloud'

Be sure to include that Jesus disappeared into the clouds. This will become a point of cohesion in later stories that describe Jesus' return.

Worldview

'two white-robed men'

Some cultures may associate something different with men dressed in white, so you may want to make it explicit here that these were angels. For example, some Hindus associate the color white with death.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Extraordinary prayer

Obedience

Home meetings

Gospel for all peoples

God's Spirit*

CFT Version

Acts 1:15-26; 2:1-12

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition (Based on Acts 1)

The followers of Jesus stayed in the city to await the promised Spirit*, just as Jesus had instructed.*

Acts 1:15-16

While they were waiting, on a day when about 120 followers were present, Peter stood up and said: “Brothers, it was necessary for the Scriptures to be fulfilled concerning Jesus’ closest follower*, who guided the religious leaders* to have Jesus arrested. This was predicted long ago by God’s Spirit....*

Acts 1:20-22

Peter continued, “It is written in Scripture that someone else should take his place of leadership. So now we must choose another man.... It must be someone who has been with us all the time that we were with...Jesus—from the time he was baptized...until the day he was taken from us to be with God....”*

Acts 1:24, 26

Then they all prayed for the right man to be chosen. ...Matthias was chosen and became one of the Twelve, the group of Jesus’ closest followers who had now become the leaders of those who followed Jesus.*

Acts 2:1

Later, on the day of an important religious festival, seven weeks after Jesus was raised from the dead, his followers were meeting together in one place.

Acts 2:2-4

Suddenly, there was a sound...like the roaring of a mighty windstorm...and it filled the house where they were meeting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and sat on each of them. And everyone present was filled with God’s Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as God’s Spirit gave them this ability.

Acts 2:5-12

There were people in the city, descendants of Abraham from all over the world, for the festival. They came and heard Jesus’ closest followers speaking. They said, “These are local people, and yet we hear them speaking the languages of the lands where we were born...about the wonderful things God has done!” They stood there amazed and confused. “What can this mean?” they asked each other.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Followers*

We have referred to Jesus' followers as 'followers' until Pentecost, at which time we have changed to 'believers' to emphasize the importance of faith when someone chooses to follow Jesus.

Scripture*

This word refers to the Jewish holy writings, most often what we now consider the entire Old Testament. These writings were considered to have authority. You may use any generic term in your language for a set of holy writings which have authority. If you must qualify which holy writings, you could say something like, 'the holy writings of the descendants of Abraham.'

Religious Leaders*

Both Pharisees and Sadducees were Jewish religious parties at that time. Many scribes and priests were members of one of these sects. If possible, it is best to keep these sect names as generic as possible, e.g. 'religious leaders.' If you use a term for 'religious leaders' used in a major religion where you are, be sure that the term does not refer ONLY to a member of that specific religion.

Baptize*

If you have a Bible translation in your people group's language, you may choose to use what the translation uses. If the translation uses the borrowed term (as we also borrow the term from the Greek *baptizo*), but no one understands it, you might want to consider explaining the term. Some ideas for translating this term include:

- 1) 'to wash someone in water to make him ceremonially clean;'
- 2) 'to wash someone with water as part of their initiation into the religious community;'

3) 'bath,' with a qualification such as 'bath of enlightenment' (Tamil) or 'bath of dedication;'

4) using the word for a custom in the culture that refers to ceremonial washing to make something ritually clean.

Please see the Glossary for a fuller explanation.

'filled with God's Spirit'

'Filled with' refers to God's Spirit taking control of someone.

Alternate expression: 'everyone present was controlled by God's Spirit.' This phrase, or a similar phrase, e.g. 'full of God's Spirit,' will appear also in *Peter before the Religious Leaders*, *Seven Men Chosen to Serve*, *Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned*, *Ananias Obeys God*, *Peter Meets Cornelius* and *The Antioch Church*.

Story Crafting

'important religious festival'

This is another instance in which we have simplified a term in the story for a non-Jewish audience. Here, 'important religious festival' is substituted for 'Pentecost.' 'Religious festival' will occur again in *God Frees Peter from Jail*.

'descendants of Abraham'

Again, we have simplified terms that only a Jewish audience would understand. For example, we substituted 'descendants of Abraham' for 'the Jewish people' ('descendants of Abraham' was introduced in the initial S-T4T story set). This phrase, used in place of 'Jews' or 'the Jewish people,' is helpful for two reasons: One, it points the listener to a story he already knows (*Abraham*), thus providing cohesion throughout the megastory in the listener's mind, which is vital to an oral communicator's

understanding of the overall story. Two, it avoids any negative connotations that references to Israel or the Jewish people might have in certain cultures. However, if naming the country or people would be helpful to your audience, feel free to use 'Jewish people' or the name of God's nation, Israel. This term will appear in *Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned*, *Paul Meets Jesus*, *The Antioch Church* and *Return*.

We did not include the casting of lots to choose Judas' replacement because we felt it may be confusing. However, some people have found it a helpful teaching point to show that, before they received God's Spirit, the Twelve had to cast lots to determine God's will. Afterward, we see no other instance of believers casting lots; they simply prayed.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you used in the previous story for **God's Spirit** and **closest followers/the Twelve**.

Worldview

'Brothers'

This may be understood as blood brothers in some cultures, so make sure that whatever word you use here refers to close friends or associates. This term will reoccur in *Peter's Sermon* and *The Antioch Church* ('brothers and sisters'). Be consistent with the term you use in each of these instances.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Scriptural authority
Extraordinary prayer

Peter's Sermon

Acts 2:14-16, 22-24, 33-47

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition (Based on Acts 2:7-13)

Although the crowd was amazed that the believers were speaking in the languages of the lands where they were born, others mocked them and said, "They're drunk!"*

Acts 2:14-17, 22-24, 33, 36-37

Then Peter (*one of the closest followers**) stepped forward with the eleven other *closest followers* and shouted to the crowd, "...Some of you are saying these people are drunk. It isn't true! It's much too early for that. People don't get drunk by nine o'clock in the morning. No, what you see this morning was *told by God's spokesmen** centuries ago, *that God would pour out his Spirit on all people.*

...Listen! God *proved that he sent Jesus...* by doing wonderful miracles, wonders, and signs* through him, as you well know. But you... murdered him. However, God...raised him back to life again.... Now he sits *at the place of highest honor in heaven**, at God's right hand. And *God*, as he had promised, gave him *God's Spirit** to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today. So let it be clearly known...that God has made this Jesus whom you *killed* to be both *Master** and *Promised Savior*!*"

Peter's words convicted them deeply, and they said to him and to the *others*, "Brothers, what should we do?"

Acts 2:38-39, 41-42

Peter replied, "Each of you must turn from your sins* and turn to God, and be baptized* in the name of Jesus *the Promised Savior/ Promised One* for the forgiveness* of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of *God's Spirit*. This promise is to you and to your children, and even to *those who are not descendants of Abraham....*"

Those who believed* what Peter said were baptized and added to the church*—about three thousand in all. They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to *Jesus' closest followers'* teaching and fellowship*...

Acts 2:44-47

And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything they had.... They worshiped* together...met in homes *to share the meal Jesus had told them to remember him by (Lord's Supper)**...all the while praising God.... And each day *God* added to their group those who were being saved.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the Glossary for information on the following terms:

Spokesman*

Miracles, Wonders, and Signs*

Master*

Savior/Promised Savior*

Sins*

Forgiveness*

Believe*

Fellowship*

‘name of Jesus’

In the ‘name of Jesus’ is a way of speaking about the power and authority of Jesus himself, rather than just his name. Alternate expressions are ‘by the power of,’ ‘by the authority of,’ or ‘because Jesus has given me the power,’ or perhaps ‘because Jesus has the power.’ In some languages this phrase should be more specifically qualified so that it reads, ‘because Jesus has the power to heal you,...’ This phrase appears in *Peter and the Crippled Beggar*, *Peter before the Religious Leaders*, *The Twelve Are Rescued from Jail*, *Ananias Obeys God* and *The Philippian Jailer*.

‘saved’

Because your audience should understand this is a spiritual, not a physical salvation, you may need to be more explicit about from what God will save them, i.e. punishment for sin. ‘Saved’ is also in *Peter and the Crippled Beggar*, *Peter Before the Religious Leaders*, *Peter and Cornelius* and *The Philippian Jailer*.

Story Crafting

Much of Peter’s sermon has been omitted because we have found it is difficult for people to remember all of it. We have included the parts of the sermon that relate directly to previous stories or to the story line. We also wanted to

ensure that we highlighted Peter’s response to the people when they asked him, ‘...what should we do?’

‘God proved that he sent Jesus...’

This is the way that the CEV renders, ‘God publicly endorsed Jesus...’

‘pour out upon us’

If this idiom is not understood, you may say something like, ‘...gave him God’s Spirit to give to us.’

‘Master’

We have changed ‘Lord’ to ‘Master’ because ‘Master’ conveys better the meaning of the churchy word ‘Lord.’ Throughout the story set, ‘Lord’ is rephrased as ‘Master,’ ‘Jesus’ or ‘God,’ depending on the original text.

‘turn from...turn to...’

If this idiom is not understood in the target language, you may choose to say something like ‘stop disobeying God and start following God.’ This phrase reoccurs in *Peter and the Crippled Beggar*, *The Twelve Are Rescued from Jail*, *Steven is Arrested and Stoned*, *Peter Meets Cornelius*, *Paul & Barnabas Mistaken for Gods*, *Paul in Athens*, and *Return*.

‘those who are not descendants of Abraham’

‘Gentiles’ is a term not familiar to many, so we are using ‘those who are not descendants of Abraham’ to refer to those outside the Jewish population. The use of ‘descendants of Abraham’ is explained in *God’s Spirit*. The phrase ‘those who are not descendants of Abraham’ will appear again in *Peter and Cornelius*, *Peter Meets Cornelius* and *The Antioch Church*.

‘praising God’

If the term for ‘praising God’ in your target language is not

understood by the general community, you could substitute, ‘they talked about how great God is.’ This will reoccur in *Peter and the Crippled Beggar* and *Peter Meets Cornelius*.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Continue using the same words or phrases you have been using in this story set for **believers**, **closest followers/the Twelve**, **heaven**, **God’s Spirit**, **baptize**, **church** and **worship**.

Use the same term for **brothers** you used in *God’s Spirit*. Be sure the term you choose refers to close friends and not blood relatives.

‘the meal Jesus had told them to remember him by’ (Lord’s Supper*)

Use similar wording to your description in the initial S-T4T set, and see the Glossary for a full discussion of **Lord’s Supper***.

Worldview

‘God’s right hand’

Some cultures may not understand that ‘God’s right hand’ refers to a place of honor. You may choose simply to omit this phrase from the story if it is confusing. This phrase will appear also in *Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned*.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Rapid reproduction

Bold response to persecution

Rapid spread of the gospel

Healthy churches

Meeting in houses

Worship

Lord’s Supper

Baptism

Peter and the Crippled Beggar

Acts 3:1-19; 4:1-4
Based on NLT (1996)

Transition (Based on Acts 2:43-47)

Each day, more and more people became followers of Jesus..., and God continued to perform miracles through his followers to show who Jesus was....*

Acts 3:1-3

Peter and *another of Jesus' closest followers** went to the *place of worship** one afternoon to pray. As they approached the *place*, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside *the entrance of the place of worship...* so he could beg from the people going *inside*. When he saw Peter and *his companion...* he asked them for some money.

Acts 3:5-8

The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting a gift. But Peter said, "I don't have any money for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus...get up and walk!" Then Peter took the lame man by the...hand and helped him up. ...The *man...* was healed.... He jumped up...and began... walking, leaping, and praising God....

Acts 3:10

When *all the people* realized he was the lame beggar...they were absolutely astounded (*that he had been healed!*)

Acts 3:11-12, 16, 19

...*The man* was holding tightly to Peter and *his companion....* And Peter saw his opportunity and addressed the crowd *that had gathered.* ... He said, "What is so *surprising* about this? And why look at us as though we had made this man walk *because we have special powers or because we are so good before God? No, belief* in Jesus' name* has healed this man.... Now turn from your sins* and turn to God...."

Acts 4:1-4

While Peter and *his companion* were speaking to the people, the *religious leaders** came over to them. They were very disturbed that *they were teaching about Jesus.* *These leaders* arrested them and...*put them in jail....* But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so that the number of believers* totaled about five thousand men....

Words/Phrases to Consider

Place of Worship*

If the word for 'temple' in your language refers only to a specific religion's place of worship or is not a common word, you may choose to change the word to something more general, e.g. 'place of worship.'

Religious Leaders*

Keep this term consistent throughout the stories. Even though in this passage the term is referring to the priests, the temple guards and the religious group that controlled the temple, the phrase 'religious leaders' is generic enough to include this group of people, as well as the Pharisees and Saducees referred to in *God's Spirit*. Please see the Glossary for further details.

Story Crafting

Peter

We chose to include Peter's name in this story because he appears several times in the story set. Since John appears only twice, we've left out his name for ease of retelling.

'(that he had been healed)'

You may add this portion in parentheses if you need to show cause for their amazement.

'we are so good before God'

'Godliness' may be a term unfamiliar to your audience. We have used 'we are so good before God' to express this concept in terms an oral communicator can better understand. Another way to express this concept is: 'because we worship God so well.'

Peter's message from Acts 3:12-26 is full of truths you may want to include in a story; however, the message does not move like a narrative and will be much more difficult to retell. You may choose to emphasize a different portion of Peter's message, but it must be kept brief if you want your audience to remember and retell the story.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **saved, miracles, closest followers/the Twelve, name of Jesus, praising God, belief/believe, Jesus' name, turn from...turn to..., sins and believers.**

You will want to be consistent in this story with the terms you chose in *Peter's Sermon* for **praising God and turn from... turn to....**

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Abundant evangelism

Extraordinary prayer

Bold response to persecution

Rapid spread of the gospel

Rapid reproduction

Peter before the Religious Leaders*

Acts 4:5-33

Based on NLT (1996)

Acts 4:5, 7-8, 10, 12

The day after the religious leaders* arrested Peter and his companion, they met in Jerusalem. They brought them in and demanded, "By what power, or in whose name, have you healed this man?" Then Peter, filled with God's Spirit*, said to them, "...This man was healed in the name and power of Jesus.... In all the world there is no one else whom God has given who can save us."

Acts 4:13-15

The religious leaders were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and his companion... they saw that they were ordinary men who had had no special training. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus. But since the man who had been healed was standing right there among them, the religious leaders had nothing to say. So they sent Peter and his companion away and talked among themselves.

Acts 4:18-21

So they called them back in and told them never again to speak...in the name of Jesus. But they replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard." The religious leaders then threatened them further, but they finally let them go because they didn't...want to start a riot....

Acts 4:23-24, 29-33

As soon as they were freed, Peter and his companion found the other believers* and told them what the religious leaders had said. Then all the believers...prayed together: "O...God, Creator of...everything...hear their threats, and give us great boldness in speaking your message. ...May miracles*...be done through the name/power of...Jesus." After this prayer, the building where they were meeting shook, and they were all filled with God's Spirit. And they spoke God's message with boldness. All the believers were united together...they shared everything they had. ...God's great favor was upon them all.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Religious Leaders*

In this passage, 'religious leaders' is referring to rulers, elders and teachers of the council. 'Religious leaders' is generic enough to include these men, as well as all the others that have been included in these stories as 'religious leaders,' so we encourage you to use the same general term that you have been using to this point in the story set.

'filled with God's Spirit'

As previously noted in *God's Spirit*, 'filled with' refers to God's Spirit taking control of someone. Alternate expressions which could be used in this story are 'God's Spirit enabled Peter to answer' and 'God's Spirit filled Peter's heart and therefore he answered them.'

'name and power of Jesus'

This phrase, like the phrase 'name of Jesus,' refers to Jesus' personality and power. You may say simply, 'by the power of Jesus.' When the religious leaders ask Peter not to speak in Jesus name again, you can say simply, 'You must under no circumstances speak or teach about Jesus.' When the religious leaders asked them, 'By what power, or in whose name, have you healed this man?' you could say something like, 'How did you do this?' or 'Who made you strong enough to do this?' or 'Who gave you authority to do this?'

Story Crafting

'Peter and his companion'

We chose not to include John's name in this story because he appears only in this story and *Peter and the Crippled Beggar*, therefore making the story easier to retell.

'In all the world there is no one else whom God has given who can save us.'

This is the TEV (Today's English Version) rendering of this verse. You also may say, 'No one else in all the world besides Jesus can save us.' As noted previously, you may need to specify from what Jesus saves people, i.e. punishment for their sins.

'were united'

We chose to simplify the phrase 'were of one heart and mind' to 'were united' as a way of saying that the believers related to each other completely harmoniously. That is, they thought similarly, and what they desired was also similar. The words 'heart and mind' together are a way of referring to the whole inner being of a person. Your language may have phrases related to the heart that might express the same meaning as 'one in heart and mind.' This phrase appears also in *The Lying Couple*.

'God's great favor was upon them all.'

Alternate expressions would be: 'God was exceedingly good to them all' or 'God blessed them all very much.' Most scholars think these words refer to God blessing all of the believers. That is, God was generously providing whatever the believers needed to live and to serve him. You would need to explore the meaning of 'blessed' with your story crafter. Please see the Glossary for 'bless.'

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **Jerusalem**, **God's Spirit**, **save**, **name of Jesus**, **believers** and **miracles**.

However you should choose to say that Peter was **filled with God's Spirit**, you should be consistent here and in other stories, i.e. *God's Spirit*, *Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned*, *Ananias Obeys God* and *Peter Meets Cornelius*. It is an important point of cohesion and a foundational principle of this story set to show that the believers were now being given the power through God's Spirit that Jesus promised.

If you have found that you need to expound upon from what people are being saved, be sure you are consistently using this in each reference to **save/saved/saving**.

Express **name of Jesus** as you did in the two previous stories.

Speaking your message

The word 'preach' used in the original text means that he strongly urged or warned them. Because the word 'preach' in English is a religious word, we have chosen to use the more generic word 'speak.' You may choose to use a word that also includes the connotation of warning or urging. Throughout this story set, we have changed the word 'preach' to a word with less religious connotation. Most of the time, we have replaced 'preach' with 'speak' or 'tell' (which often is actually a more literal translation); but where we have used a different word, we have noted why.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Lay leadership
Boldness in persecution
Abundant prayer
Healthy churches

The Lying Couple

Acts 4:32, 36-37; 5:1-11

Based on NLT (1996)

Acts 4:32, 36-37; 5:1-2

All the believers* were *united*, and they felt that what they owned was not their own; they shared everything they had. For instance, there was *a man named Barnabas*.... He sold a field he owned and brought the money to *Jesus' closest followers** to give to those in need.

Also, there was...*another man*...who, with his wife...sold some property. He brought part of the money to *Jesus' closest followers*, but he claimed it was the full amount. His wife had agreed to this deception.

Acts 5:3-4

Then Peter said *to the man*, "...Why has Satan* filled your heart? You lied to *God's Spirit**, and you kept some of the money for yourself. The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was yours to give away. How could you do a thing like this? You weren't lying to us, but to God."

Acts 5:5-6

As soon as *the man* heard these words, he fell to the floor and died. Everyone who heard about it was terrified. Then some young men wrapped him in a sheet and took him out and buried him.

Acts 5:7-8

About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Was this the price you and your husband received for your land?"

"Yes," she replied, "that was the price."

Acts 5:9

And Peter said, "How could the two of you even think of doing a thing like this—conspiring together to test *God's Spirit*? Just outside that door are the young men who buried your husband, and they will carry you out, too."

Acts 5:10-11

Instantly, she fell to the floor and died. When the young men came in and saw that she was dead, they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear gripped the entire church* and all others who heard what had happened.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Satan*

This name refers to the spiritual being, whom God created, who is the leader of the evil spiritual beings who decided to rebel against God. You may need to qualify the name 'Satan' with 'leader of the evil spirits*' if 'Satan' is unknown to your audience.

Story Crafting

Ananias and Sapphira

You may include the names of Ananias and Sapphira, but it is not necessary. The actions of Barnabas are included to show contrast to the actions of Ananias and Sapphira.

'Satan* filled your heart'

This means that 'Satan had control.' You could say something like, 'Why have you allowed Satan to control you?'

'lied to God's Spirit*'

Saying that the husband 'lied to God's Spirit*' means that he had committed a grave sin. He tried to deceive the believers into thinking he was a generous man, but the believers had such an appreciation for the authority of the Spirit among them that they felt that he had lied to the Spirit, as well.

'test God's Spirit'

To 'test God's Spirit' means that Ananias and Sapphira were trying to determine if God would allow them to get away with this deceit, and if he would punish them for it. Therefore, an alternate expression of this phrase could be: 'try to get away with this before God.'

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **believers, closest followers/the Twelve, God's Spirit** and **church**.

You may want to consider the term(s) you used in the last story when saying the believers '**were united**.'

Barnabas has been named because he will appear in later stories in Acts.

Worldview

'and buried him'

This phrase may be problematic for listeners who cremate and are not familiar with burying the dead. You may omit the phrase, if you choose. (See also vs. 5:9-10. In v. 9, you could substitute the word 'took' for 'buried'.)

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Healthy churches

Integrity among believers

The power of God's Spirit

The Twelve* Are Rescued from Jail

Acts 5:12-42

Based on NLT (1996)

Acts 5:12, 14, 17-18

Meanwhile, *Jesus' closest followers**, the *Twelve**, were performing many *miracles** ...among the people. ...The *believers** were meeting regularly.... And more and more people believed*.... The *religious leaders* were extremely jealous*. They arrested the *Twelve* and put them in jail.

Acts 5:19-21

But an *angel** of *God* came at night, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then the *angel* told them, "Go to the *place of worship** and give the people this message of life!" So the *Twelve* entered the *place of worship* about daybreak and immediately began teaching....

Acts 5:21-25

...*The religious leaders met together....* Then they sent for the *Twelve* to be brought for trial. But when the...guards went to the jail, the men were gone. So they returned...and reported, "The jail was locked, with the guards standing outside, but when we opened the gates, no one was there!" When...the *religious leaders* heard this, they were *confused....* Then someone arrived with the news that the men they had jailed were...in the *place of worship*, teaching the people.

Acts 5:26-33

The *religious leaders had the Twelve arrested again...and brought to their meeting*. "Didn't we tell you never again to teach in this man's

(*Jesus'*) name?" the *head religious leader* demanded.... But Peter...replied, "We must obey God rather than *man*. ...God...raised Jesus from the dead after you killed him.... Then God put him in the place of honor... as...*Savior**. He did this to give...people...an opportunity to turn from their *sins** and turn to God so their sins would be forgiven*. We are witnesses of these things and so is *God's Spirit**, who is given by God to those who obey him." At this, the *religious leaders were furious* and decided to kill them.

Acts 5:34, 38-40

But one *respected member of the religious council saw things differently....* He stood up and ordered that the *Twelve* be sent outside the *meeting....* "So my advice is, leave these men alone," he said. "If they are teaching and doing these things merely on their own, it will soon *end*. But if it is of God, you will not be able to stop them...." The *group* accepted his advice. They called in the *Twelve* and had them *beaten*. Then they ordered them never again to speak in the name of Jesus, and they let them go.

Acts 5:41-42

The *Twelve* left the *religious leaders* rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Jesus. And every day, in the *place of worship* and in their homes, they continued to teach and *proclaim* this message: "The *Promised One/Savior* you are looking for is Jesus."

Words/Phrases to Consider

Angel*

Please see the Glossary for details.

'message of life'

These words refer to telling people how God could cause them to live eternally. Of course, that would include telling them about Jesus because they needed to trust in him in order to live eternally. You may amplify this portion to give meaning or, during the discussion time, ask: 'What do you think the "message of life" was that the followers were teaching about?'

Savior*

Some languages do not have a word for 'savior' that conveys the appropriate meaning. 'One who rescues people from the punishment of sin' is one way to translate this. Please see the Glossary for further information.

'witnesses'

You may amplify this portion of the story to explain what a 'witness' is, i.e. 'We are telling you what we know has happened because we have seen these things ourselves.'

Promised One/Savior*

This word can be used interchangeably with 'Savior' but is best used in place of 'Messiah' or 'Christ,' as it is used in this instance. Please see the Glossary for further information.

Story Crafting

'respected member of the religious council'

Gamaliel is not named here, although his position is stated: 'respected member of the religious council.'

Both Peter's and Gamaliel's speeches are shortened to aid retelling and emphasize the main points of the story.

'worthy to suffer dishonor'

An alternate expression could be: 'considered them good enough to suffer.'

'They continued to teach and proclaim this message'

The NLT states, 'they continued to teach and preach the message,' but because the word 'preach' in English is a religious word with negative connotations, we have chosen to use a word that resembles closely what the original word in the text means. The point is that the men are both teaching (which implies a deeper, more involved communication) and proclaiming the Good News. If you want to simplify the story, however, you could just say that the men were 'proclaiming the message...'

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **closest followers/the Twelve, miracles, believers, belief/believe, religious leaders, place of worship, sins, forgiven, God's Spirit and Promised One/Savior**.

Describe the phrases **in this man's (Jesus') name and name of Jesus** in the same way you have described it in other stories.

Continue to work with your story crafter in translating idiomatic phrases, such as **turn from... turn to....** This phrase first appeared in *Peter's Sermon* and appears numerous times in the story set.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Boldness in persecution

Abundant evangelism

Signs and wonders

Seven Men Chosen to Serve

Acts 6:1-7

Based on NLT (1996)

Acts 6:1-2

...The believers* (*in Jesus*) rapidly multiplied. *But*, there were rumblings of discontent. *The believers* who spoke *the Greek language* complained against those who spoke *the Hebrew language*. *They said* that their widows were being *overlooked* in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve* called a meeting of all the believers.

Acts 6:2-4

“We *Twelve* should spend our time *speaking* the message from God about Jesus, not *running* a food program,” they said. “Now look around among yourselves...and *choose* seven men who are well respected and are full of *God’s Spirit** and *wisdom**. We will put them in charge of this business. Then we can spend our time in prayer and...*telling* the message from God about Jesus.”

Acts 6:5-6

This idea pleased the whole group...they chose...Stephen. *Stephen believed** great things about God and was filled with God’s Spirit. *They also chose* Philip, and five other men, (*most of whom spoke Greek*). These seven were presented to *the Twelve*, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on (*the heads of each of*) them.

Acts 6:7

God’s message was *spoken* in ever-widening circles. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the *religious leaders** believed also.

Words/Phrases to Consider

'full of God's Spirit and wisdom'

As noted previously 'full of,' or 'filled with,' refers to the control of someone or something over a person. Another way to phrase the statement in this story could be: 'whom the Spirit of God controls completely and who are very wise.'

Wisdom*

The biblical concept of wisdom includes the ideas of 'thinking things that are true and doing things that are good.' Only God can cause someone to be wise. In fact, it is implied in the New Testament that when someone has wisdom, he has insight into the will of God.

'laid their hands on...them'

The act of laying on of hands (on a person's head) came from the Jewish community. It symbolized not only the giving of responsibility, but, what is more important, the imparting of strength and the community's blessing. To clarify, you may add 'on the heads of each' to show where the hands were placed. That action indicated that the Twelve were appointing the men to do this work and that God would enable them to do it. If 'laying on of hands' is too confusing for your audience, you might consider using a phrase which shows that they were officially 'sent out,' 'dedicated,' or 'appointed' by the leaders for this specific task.

Story Crafting

'...The believers...rapidly multiplied.'

'More and more people believed in Jesus' would be one way to simplify this phrase.

'rumblings of discontent'

Always look for ways to simplify idiomatic phrases. Here you could say, 'All was not well... people were complaining.'

Message from God

'Word of God' is a figure of speech that might not be understood if translated literally into another language, so we have simplified the phrase and kept its meaning by saying 'message from God.'

'believed great things about God'

Instead of using a 'Christian' phrase like 'full of faith' to describe Stephen, we have reworded it to describe in simple terms what 'faith' is: believing great things about God.

Stephen and Philip

In order to make this story easier to retell, the list of men who were selected is omitted. Stephen and Philip are named because they will appear again in later stories: Stephen in Acts 7 and Philip in Acts 8 and 21.

'(most of whom spoke Greek)'

This is implied information, based on the names of the men chosen, that would have been known to a reader of that day.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **believers, closest followers/the Twelve, God's Spirit, belief/believe, Jerusalem and religious leaders.**

Express **filled with God's Spirit** in the same way that you did in *Peter before the Religious Leaders*.

In Acts 6:7, use the same word for **spoken** that you used in *Peter's Sermon* and *Peter before the Religious Leaders*.

Worldview

'Greek language...Hebrew language'

Some listeners think that Jesus and people of the early church all spoke English! This is one place to show that Christianity is not just an American import!

'laid their hands on...them'

If laying hands on someone's head is offensive in the culture, you may simply describe the purpose for this action or use a term in the language that conveys the concept of the purpose for this ritual.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Local lay leadership

Recognizable structure

Rapid spread of the gospel

Stephen is Arrested and Stoned

Acts 6:8-13; 7:1-60; 8:1-4

Based on NLT (1996)

Acts 6:8-12

Stephen (*one of the seven men appointed to serve the church**) was full of God's...power, and was performing amazing miracles*... among the people. ...One day some *religious men*...started to debate with him....*But*, none of them was able to stand against the wisdom* and God's Spirit* by which Stephen spoke. So they persuaded *others* to lie about Stephen, saying, "We heard him *dishonor our religious law*, and even God." Naturally, this *upset*... the *religious leaders**. So, they arrested Stephen....

Acts 6:12-13; 7:1-52

Before the religious leaders, some lying witnesses accused Stephen of speaking against the place of worship and against their religious law.*

Then the *head religious leader* asked Stephen, "Are these accusations true?" *Stephen, given a chance to speak, went on to recount all that had happened to the descendants of Abraham through the years and how God had led them, protected them, and blessed* them. But he also told how God's people had turned away from God to worship* idols. Then he said to the people, "You stubborn people! ...Must you forever resist God's Spirit? ...Your ancestors did, and so do you! Name one spokesman* your ancestors didn't persecute! They even killed the ones who predicted the coming of the...Promised One/Savior*, Jesus whom you betrayed and murdered."*

Acts 7:54-56

The *religious leaders* were infuriated by Stephen's accusation, and they shook their fists in rage. But Stephen, full of God's Spirit, gazed steadily *toward heaven** and...*said*, "Look, I see...*Jesus* standing in the place of honor at God's right hand!"

Acts 7:57-60

Then *the religious leaders* put their hands over their ears...*they drowned* out his voice with their shouts, and they rushed at him. They dragged him out of the city and began to *throw stones* at him. ...As they stoned him, Stephen prayed, "...*Jesus, please welcome me to be with you.*" And he fell on his knees, shouting, "*Jesus, don't charge them with this sin*!*" And with that, he died.

Acts 8:1, 3

...A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem...all the believers* except *the Twelve** fled into the *surrounding regions*. *Paul, one of the official witnesses giving his approval at the killing of Stephen, began going everywhere to destroy the church.* He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into jail.

Acts 8:4

But the believers who had fled Jerusalem went everywhere *telling* the Good News about Jesus.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Bless*

We use the term 'bless' when God helps, does good to or favors someone or something.

'resist God's Spirit'

The phrase 'resist the Holy Spirit' may be rendered also as, 'refused to listen to God's Spirit' or 'would not obey God's Spirit.' The Jewish teachers of religion believed that God's Spirit spoke through Moses and the other prophets. That is why Stephen told his listeners that they were actively opposing God by continually disobeying what God's Spirit had revealed to them through the Scriptures.

Story Crafting

'(one of the seven men appointed to serve the church)'

This phrase is added for transition and to identify Stephen.

'dishonor our religious law'

When the people said Stephen was blaspheming Moses, they were referring to Stephen not following their religious law--Stephen 'dishonored [the] religious law.' We have expressed that in this story for our listeners who may not know Moses. 'Blasphemy' refers to dishonoring or insulting God or something sacred, so we have simplified the term in this story.

Acts 7:2-50

Stephen's story of the Old Testament in this passage is incredible but very difficult for retelling. For this story, we have summarized it in italics.

'...I see...Jesus standing in the place of honor...'

'I see the heavens opened' may be too confusing for your audience. You may choose to say simply, '...I see... Jesus standing in the place of honor...'
We have used 'Jesus' here in place of 'Son of man' because your listeners probably have not been introduced to that title for Jesus.

'throw stones at'

'Stoned' refers to people throwing rocks at someone with the goal of killing them. We have rendered this 'throw stones at' for ease in understanding. You may need to explain this in the story if this is not done in your culture. It will reoccur in *Paul Meets Jesus* and *Paul & Barnabas Mistaken for Gods*.

'...Jesus, please welcome me to be with you.'

'Receive my spirit' also may be a confusing phrase. This is an acceptable alternate expression.

'Jesus, don't charge them with this sin!'

CEV phrases this as, 'Lord, don't blame them for what they have done.'

'...A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem...'

Remember to be aware of English idioms that may not translate, e.g. 'wave of' and 'sweeping over.'

Paul

Paul is known as both Paul and Saul in the book of Acts. You may choose to call him Paul throughout your Acts stories, as we did, to avoid confusion, or you may choose to introduce him as, 'Saul, also known as Paul.'

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **church, miracles, wisdom, God's Spirit, religious leaders, witness, place of worship, worship, spokesman, Promised One/Savior, full of (filled with) God's Spirit, heaven, sin, Jerusalem, believers** and **closest followers/the Twelve**.

Refer to previous stories to note how you translated **descendants of Abraham** and **turned from**. Be consistent with the terms you have chosen.

Express the idea of Jesus' place of honor at God's right hand in the same way that you did in the *God's Spirit* story.

Make sure to mention that Paul was there as a witness. This makes Paul's conversion story even more compelling.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Boldness in persecution

Abundant evangelism

Importance of knowing God's Word



African

CFT Version

Acts 8:26-39

Based on the NLT (1996)

Transition (Based on Acts 8:1-25)

After Stephen was killed, those who believed* in Jesus went everywhere telling people the wonderful news about Jesus. God's Spirit* gave some of these believers* specific instructions about where to go. One of these believers was named Philip....

Acts 8:26

...An angel* from God said to him, "Go south down the desert road that begins at Jerusalem...."

Acts 8:27-28

So he did, and he met the treasurer of an African nation...who was now returning to his homeland after worshiping* in Jerusalem. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the spokesman* Isaiah.

Acts 8:29-32

God's Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and walk along beside the carriage." Philip ran over and heard the man reading...so he asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

The man replied, "How can I, when there is no one to instruct me?" And he begged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him. *This is what he was reading:*

"He was led *like* a sheep to the slaughter. And as a lamb is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth."

Acts 8:34-35

The African man asked Philip, "Was the spokesman talking about himself or someone else?" So Philip began with this same message from God's spokesman and then used many other spokesmen and messages to tell him the Good News about Jesus.

Acts 8:36-40

As they rode along, they came to some water, and the African man said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized*?" "You can," Philip answered, "if you *truly* believe...." And the African man replied, "I believe that Jesus...is the Son of God!"

The African man ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, God's Spirit took Philip away to another town...Afterwards, the African man...went on his way rejoicing.

Words/Phrases to Consider

'carriage'

A carriage also could be referred to as a 'wagon' or some vehicle pulled by horses or oxen. Someone probably was leading the wagon, and probably there was room for at least one other person to sit since the African man asked Philip to sit with him.

'Son of God'

The phrase 'Son of God' refers to the special relationship between God and Jesus. It needs to be understood that he was not the result of a physical union of God with woman.

Story Crafting

This story was chosen because of its beautiful connection to the Isaiah 53 story and its model of a response to Jesus followed by immediate obedience of baptism. (See *Promise* in the initial S-T4T story set.)

'African'

We have chosen to simplify the term 'Ethiopian eunuch' to 'African' for ease of remembering and retelling, and because many of the hearers of these stories will not have heard of the country of Ethiopia. If the audience recognizes Ethiopia as a present-day country, you can include the country name; if not, you could substitute 'a country in Africa' or 'another country.'

'[Philip told] him the Good News about Jesus'

You may want to ask during the discussion time, 'What do you think was the Good News about Jesus that Philip shared?'

"'You can," Philip answered, "if you truly believe..." And the African man replied, "I believe that Jesus...is the Son of God!""

We have chosen to include v. 37 from the NLT 2004 even though it is not in the earliest manuscripts: "You can," Philip answered, "if you believe with all your heart." And the eunuch replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." It does include information the other verses in the text seem to imply. You may choose to leave this portion out of the story, or you may chose to treat this verse as implicit information, in which case you may want to render this part of the story as: 'Philip told the African he could be baptized if he truly believed. The man said that he did believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so....'

Worldview

Acts 8:32

If your audience is not familiar with sheep or the butchering and shearing of them, you may need to make these statements more general, such as: 'He was killed just like an animal, and he didn't say a word.'

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **belief/believe, God's Spirit, believers, angel, Jerusalem, worship(ing), spokesman and baptize(d)**.

This story works best when the audience has heard the Isaiah 53 story (*Promise*) from the initial S-T4T story set so that they understand the reference to Isaiah. If your audience has not heard the Isaiah 53 story, you may want to avoid the name 'Isaiah' and omit the exact quotation from Isaiah so you do not confuse your audience.

We have included Acts 8:37 to connect with the other stories which emphasize the need for belief in Jesus in order to become his follower.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Abundant gospel sowing

Scriptural authority

Immediate baptism

The guidance of God's Spirit

Paul Meets Jesus

Acts 9:1-15

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition (Based on Acts 8:1, 3)

While believers* in Jesus were going everywhere speaking about him, Paul (the religious leader* who was a witness at Stephen's stoning) was also traveling everywhere trying to destroy the church*.

Acts 9:1-2

...He was uttering threats...and was eager to destroy the believers.... He headed for another city in order to...arrest believers there and... bring them...back to Jerusalem in chains.

Acts 9:3-6

As he was nearing the city...a bright light from heaven* suddenly beamed down upon him! He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Paul! Paul! Why are you persecuting me?"

"Who are you...?" Paul asked.

And the voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you are to do."

Acts 9:7-9

The men with Paul stood speechless with surprise, for they heard the sound of someone's voice, but they saw no one! As Paul picked himself up off the ground, he found that he was blind. So his companions led him by the hand to the city. He remained there blind for three days....

Acts 9:10-12

Now there was a believer in the city named Ananias. Jesus spoke to him in a vision*, calling, "Ananias!" "Yes, Master*!" he replied.

Jesus said, "Go over to...a certain house. When you arrive, ask for Paul.... He is praying to me right now. I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hands on him so that he can see again."

Acts 9:13, 15

"But Master," exclaimed Ananias, "I've heard about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem!"

But Jesus said, "Go and do what I say. For I have chosen Paul to take my message to foreigners and to kings, as well as to the descendants of Abraham."

Words/Phrases to Consider

'persecuting'

'Persecute' means 'to cause harm to,' 'to cause to suffer' or 'to be cruel to.'

Vision*

'Vision' refers to a supernatural experience in which a divine revelation is given to a person while awake; 'dream' is what God causes a person to see while asleep. If your language has only one word for 'vision' and 'dream,' you may want to specify whether the person was awake or asleep when he received the message from God.

'foreigners and kings'

This phrase comes from the CEV. 'Foreigners' is an easy way to describe 'Gentiles.' You also may use 'not descendants of Abraham.'

Story Crafting

It helps a story to flow if you can connect it to what already has happened with the characters up to this point; thus, for this story from chapter 9, verses from chapter 8 were added. This was further amplified since Paul was mentioned so briefly in the previous story.

Lord

In this story, all references to 'Lord' refer to Jesus, so we have used Jesus' name in most instances. You also may choose to substitute 'Master' for some of the references to 'Lord,' as we did.

'Why are you persecuting me?'

This is a rhetorical question that has the following implied meaning: 'It is as though you are persecuting me by persecuting my followers.' If your language

needs the clarification, you may need to give the implied meaning.

'Who are you...?'

This was said with the Greek word usually translated 'Lord.' Paul realized that he was addressing deity, so be sure that this question is stated in a polite way in your target language.

'vision of a man named Ananias'

If it is awkward to talk about this vision in third person, you may say, 'vision of you, Ananias...'

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **believers, religious leader, witness, church, Jerusalem** and **heaven**.

In *Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned*, we introduced **Paul**. We have chosen not to begin using the name Saul and later change it to Paul, as this could be confusing for oral communicators. Whatever you choose to do, you will need to be consistent throughout the story set.

Use the same term for **stoning** that you used in *Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned*.

In *Peter's Sermon* you were introduced to the term **Master**. You will want to use the same term here that you chose in *Peter's Sermon*.

Continue to use the same term you have been using throughout the story set for **descendants of Abraham**.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Obedience

God's plan for the church

Dreams and visions

Man of peace

Ananias Obeys God

Acts 9:17-31

Based on NLT (1996)

Acts 9:17-18

So (*just as God told him*) Ananias went and found *Paul*. He laid his hands on him and said, "...Brother *Paul*...Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you may get your sight back and be filled with *God's Spirit*." Instantly something like scales fell from *Paul's* eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized*.

Acts 9:19-21

...*Paul* stayed with the believers* in *the city* for a few days. ...Immediately he began *speaking* about Jesus...saying, "He is indeed the Son of God!" All who heard him were amazed. "Isn't this the same man who persecuted *the believers*... in Jerusalem?" they asked....

Acts 9:22-25

Paul's speaking became more and more powerful...*Paul insisted that Jesus was indeed the Promised Savior**. After a while the *religious leaders** decided to kill him. But *Paul* was told... that they were watching for him day and night at the city gate so they could murder him. So during the night, some of the other believers let him down in a large basket through an opening in the city wall.

Acts 9:26-27

When *Paul* arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to meet with the believers, but they were all afraid of him. They thought he was only pretending to be a believer! Then Barnabas brought him to *the Twelve** and told them how *Paul* had seen *Jesus* on the way to *the other city*. Barnabas also told them what *Jesus* had said to *Paul* and how he boldly *spoke* in the name of *Jesus* in *that city*.

Acts 9:28-30

Then *the Twelve* accepted *Paul*, and after that he was constantly with them in Jerusalem, *speaking* boldly in the name of *Jesus*. *Some men he debated with*...plotted to murder him. So, when the believers heard about it...they...sent him away to his hometown....

Acts 9:31

The church* then had peace throughout *the region*, and it grew in strength and numbers....

Words/Phrases to Consider

'scales'

This describes something like fish scales or flakes of skin. You could say, 'Instantly...he regained his sight.'

'spoke in the name of Jesus'

If this phrase is difficult for your hearers, you may phrase it like the CEV: 'told everyone about Jesus.'

Story Crafting

'(just as God told him)'

This phrase connects to the previous story.

Barnabas

Barnabas is mentioned abruptly in this story. You may need to use some sort of appositional reference to help the audience, e.g. 'Barnabas, who had donated his field to the church in an earlier story...' (see *The Lying Couple*).

Brother is a courteous way to address Paul, and it means that Ananias saw him as a fellow-believer in Jesus. Use a culturally appropriate courteous form of address for fellow believers or fellow members of a group.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **God's Spirit, baptize, believers, persecute, Jerusalem, Promised One/Savior, religious leaders, closest followers/the Twelve, preach/teach** and **church**.

Express **filled with God's Spirit** and in the **name of Jesus** in the same way that you have been expressing these in the previous stories.

In *African* we introduced the phrase **Son of God**. Use the same phrase here, being careful to use words that make it clear this phrase refers to the special relationship between God and Jesus.

Continue to use the same words you have been using throughout the story set for **speaking** and **spoke**.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Abundant evangelism

Boldness in persecution

Intentional planting of multiplying churches

Peter and Cornelius

Acts 10:1-23; 11:14

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition (Based on Acts 9)

While God was preparing Paul to bring the Good News about Jesus to those who were not the descendants of Abraham, he was also preparing these 'foreigners' to believe* in Jesus and receive His Spirit*.

Acts 10:1-6

...There was an...army officer named Cornelius, who was not one of the descendants of Abraham. But nevertheless he was a...man who tried to please God and...regularly prayed to him. One afternoon...he had a vision* in which he saw an angel* of God coming toward him. "Cornelius!" the angel said.

Cornelius stared at him in terror. "What is it, sir?" he asked the angel.

And the angel replied, "God has heard your prayers and seen your gifts to the poor! Now send some men...to find a man named...Peter. He is staying...in another city in a house near the shore. Ask him to come and visit you."

Acts 10:7-8

As soon as the angel was gone, Cornelius called some personal attendants. He told them what had happened and sent them off to find Peter.

Acts 10:9-16

The next day as Cornelius's messengers were nearing the city, Peter went up to the flat roof to pray. It was about noon, and he was hungry.

But while lunch was being prepared, he had a vision. He saw the sky open, and something like a large sheet was let down by its four corners. In the sheet were all sorts of animals, reptiles, and birds (all animals that were forbidden by his religious laws). Then a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat them."

"Never, Master*," Peter declared. "I have never in all my life eaten anything forbidden by our religious laws."

God said, "If God says something is acceptable, don't say it isn't." The same vision was repeated three times. Then the sheet was pulled up again to heaven*.

Acts 10:17, 19-22

Peter was very confused. What could the vision mean? Just then the men sent by Cornelius found Peter's house and stood outside at the gate. Meanwhile, as Peter was wondering about the vision, the Spirit of God said to him, "Three men have come looking for you. Go down and go with them without hesitation. All is well, for I have sent them." So Peter met them and asked why they had come.

They said, "We were sent by Cornelius...to invite you to his house to give him a message about how to be saved" (Acts 11:14).

Acts 10:23

...The next day Peter and some other believers* traveled with them to the city where Cornelius lived.

Words/Phrases to Consider

'He saw the sky open'

In Greek, and also other languages, there is one word that may refer either to 'heaven,' God's special dwelling place or to the 'sky.' Either meaning fits here. If the national language Bible translation uses the word 'sky,' you could say that Peter saw an opening in the clouds or in the sky.

Story Crafting

'who was not one of the descendants of Abraham'

Because Rome has not been introduced in this story set, we have described Cornelius as a man 'who was not one of the descendants of Abraham' in order to set him apart as someone who was not originally a member of 'God's people.' Without that, Peter's vision does not make sense to the audience.

'tried to please God and... regularly prayed to him.'

Because 'devout' and 'God-fearing' may not translate easily, we have simplified these phrases.

'sir'

This word does not refer to deity, although Cornelius does recognize that this messenger comes from God. You may use a polite term of address in your language or leave this out completely.

Peter

We have simplified Simon Peter's name to 'Peter' to prevent confusion.

In this story Peter is staying with a tanner or leather worker, a man considered unclean because of his profession. Depending on your audience, you may want to include this in your story to show inclusion of all people in His plan (Acts 10:6).

'(all animals that were forbidden by his religious laws)'

This is stated in v. 14 but may be added here to explain the significance of the vision.

'Go down and go with them without hesitation. All is well, for I have sent them.'

Be sure to put phrases like this in more natural English, e.g. 'Hurry down and go with them. Don't worry, I sent them' (CEV).

'to give him a message about how to be saved'

This is included in the story because it can be implied from Acts 11:14 and adds clarity to the reason that Cornelius sent for Peter and the reason that Peter went to see him.

We have avoided using too many place names in this story in order to make it easier to remember.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **believe, Spirit/ God's Spirit, vision, angel, heaven, save(d)** and **believers**.

Continue to use the same term you have been using to describe Gentiles, i.e. **not descendants of Abraham**.

Use the same term for **Master** that you used in *Peter's Sermon* and *Paul Meets Jesus*.

If you have found that you need to expound upon from what people are being saved, be sure you are consistently using this in each reference to **save/saved/ saving**.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Man of peace

Home cell churches

Rapid reproduction

Visions/dreams

The work of God's Spirit

The gospel for ALL people

Peter Meets Cornelius

Acts 10:24-48; 11:1-4, 18

Based on NLT (1996)

Acts 10:24-27

Peter, Cornelius' men, and the believers accompanying the group arrived at the house of Cornelius the following day. Cornelius was waiting for him and had called together his relatives and close friends to meet Peter.*

As Peter entered his home, Cornelius fell to the floor before him in worship*. But Peter pulled him up and said, "Stand up! I'm a human being like you!" So Cornelius got up, and they talked together and went inside where the others were....

Acts 10:28-33

Peter told them, "You know it is against *my religious laws* for me to come into a...home of someone not of Abraham's descendants like this. But God has shown me that I should never think of anyone as impure. So I came as soon as I was sent for. Now tell me why you sent for me."

Cornelius replied, "Four days ago I was praying in my house.... Suddenly, a man in dazzling clothes was standing in front of me. He told me, 'Cornelius, your prayers have been heard....' *As he instructed* I sent for you at once.... Now here we are, waiting...to hear the message *God* has given you."

Acts 10:34-43, 44, 46-48

Then Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God doesn't show partiality. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right." *Peter went on to tell them the Good News of Jesus, how all who believe* in Jesus would have their sins* forgiven*.*

Even as Peter was saying these things, *God's Spirit* filled those* who...heard the message. *...They praised God...and were baptized* (to show they had turned from their sins and turned to God through their belief* in Jesus).*

Afterward Cornelius asked *Peter* to stay with them for several days.

Acts 11:1-4, 18

Soon the news reached *the Twelve** and other believers...that *those not from Abraham's descendants* had received the message from God. But when Peter arrived back in Jerusalem, some of the...believers criticized him. "You entered the home of *someone who is not of Abraham's descendants* and even ate with them!" they said. Then Peter told them exactly what had happened.

When the others heard *Peter's explanation*, all their objections were answered and they began praising God. They said, "God has...given to *everyone* the privilege of turning from sin and receiving eternal life*."

Words/Phrases to Consider

'impure'

You also can translate this as 'not acceptable to God' if your culture does not have a concept of ritual impurity.

'fear him'

Some translations say 'worship him.'

'message from God'

The original 'Word of God' refers to God's message and can be translated as such if 'Word of God' is not a common figure of speech in your language.

Eternal Life*

'Eternal life' in the New Testament has two aspects: life that never ends and a quality of life beginning when someone allows God to rule his life. Some options for conveying the two-fold meaning of this phrase include 'real life that never ends' and 'new life that never ends.' Or, if your language does not have a noun for 'life,' 1) 'really live unendingly because of him' or 2) 'he will cause such people to never come to the end of real living.'

Story Crafting

'a man in dazzling clothes'

This refers to an angel. You can make that explicit here if necessary.

Within many of the Acts narratives are non-narrative messages. Peter actually gives many messages in Acts. These portions can be difficult to retell in a story. In this case, Acts 10:36-43, the message was summarized in one line.

'(to show they had turned from their sins and turned to God through their belief in Jesus)'

We have chosen to include that Cornelius and his family were baptized 'to show they had turned from their sins and turned to God through their belief in Jesus' so that we can reinforce the reason for baptism.

In crafting a story, you have to make decisions about use of repetition. In this passage, Acts 11:5-17, the vision is repeated, but this story was crafted without repeating the vision.

'the Twelve'

Although Peter is not with 'the Twelve' when the term is used in this story, therefore making it only 'eleven' closest followers of Jesus, we can use the term 'the Twelve' as a kind of title if it is not confusing to the audience. If it is confusing to the audience, then you can choose to use another title, such as, 'closest followers of Jesus' or whatever name you have been using for this group of people. Whatever term you choose to use, it is best to be consistent throughout the story set so that you avoid confusion with your listeners.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **believers, worship, belief/believe, sins, forgiven, God's Spirit, praised, baptized, turned from...turned to..., closest followers/the Twelve and Jerusalem.**

Continue to use the terms **descendants of Abraham** and **not of the descendants of Abraham** consistently throughout the story set. You will want to be consistent with the terms you used in the initial S-T4T story set. You may choose to use whatever terms you like that set these two groups apart.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Man of peace

Remaining in community/culture

Dreams/visions

The Antioch Church*

Acts 11:19-30

Based on NLT (1996)

Acts 11:19-21

Meanwhile, the believers* who had fled from Jerusalem during the persecution after Stephen's death *were traveling...far and wide....* They *spoke about Jesus*, but only to the *descendants of Abraham*. However, some of the believers who went to a *place called Antioch... also told those who were not descendants of Abraham there about...Jesus. God's power was upon them*, and large numbers of these *people believed* the message about Jesus*.

Acts 11:22-24

When the church* at Jerusalem heard what had happened, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw this proof of God's favor (*on the believers at Antioch*), he was filled with joy, and he encouraged the believers to stay true to *Jesus*. Barnabas was a good man, full of *God's Spirit** and strong in *belief*. And large numbers of people *became believers in Jesus*.

Acts 11:25-26

Then Barnabas went...to find *Paul*. When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. Both of them stayed there with the church for a full year, teaching great numbers of people. (It was here at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.)

Acts 11:27-30

During this time, some *spokesmen** traveled from Jerusalem to Antioch. As *God's Spirit directed*, one of them...*predicted...*that a great famine was coming upon the entire Roman *Empire....* So the believers in Antioch decided to send relief to the brothers and sisters in *and around Jerusalem*, everyone giving as much as they could.

...Then, Barnabas and Paul took their gifts to...the church in Jerusalem.

Words/Phrases to Consider

'God's power'

This means that God was helping them very much and showing his strength through his help to them.

'proof of God's favor'

This is equivalent to 'God had been good to the people' or 'God had blessed the people.' Please see the Glossary for 'bless.'

'Christian'

In many societies today, this word carries much baggage and actually does not carry the same meaning that it did in Acts. In Acts, this term denoted a true believer and follower of Jesus, not just a cultural follower or someone 'born into' a Christian family.

Story Crafting

There are many place names that are left out of this story for ease of retelling and remembering.

Some people have found the order of Acts 11:22-24 confusing and difficult to retell. It is fine to reorder these sentences in such a way that the story flows more naturally. For example, you could say something like, 'They sent Barnabas to Antioch. Barnabas was a good man, full of God's Spirit, and strong in belief. When he arrived and saw...'

'(on the believers at Antioch)'

Phrases like this may be added for clarity. We know from the previous verses to whom God was showing favor.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **believers, Jerusalem, persecution, belief/believe, church, God's Spirit and spokesman.**

Continue to use the same word that you have been using throughout the story set for **spoke.**

Continue to be consistent in your use of terms to describe **descendants of Abraham and not descendants of Abraham.**

In *God's Spirit*, you were introduced to the term 'brother' in reference to close friends. Use the same or similar term here for **brothers and sisters.**

Worldview

'brothers and sisters'

These terms may be understood as blood relatives in some cultures, so as you did in *God's Spirit*, make sure that whatever words you use here refer to close friends.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Healthy churches

Giving of offerings

Leadership/mentoring

Gospel for everyone

Abundant gospel sowing

God Frees Peter from Jail

Acts 12:1-17

Based on NLT (1996)

Acts 12:1-5

About that time (*in Jerusalem*) the king began to persecute some believers* in the church*. He had *one of the Twelve**...killed with a sword. When the king saw how much this pleased the religious leaders*, he arrested Peter during a religious festival and put him in prison.... The king wanted to put Peter on public trial after the festival was over. ...While Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him.

Acts 12:6-8

The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, chained between two soldiers.... Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel*...stood before Peter. The angel...awakened him and said, "Quick! Get up!" And the chains fell off his wrists. Then the angel told him, "Get dressed...and follow me"....

Acts 12:9-11

So Peter left the cell, following the angel. ... Peter thought *all of this...was not* really happening. They passed *all the guards* and came to the iron gate to the street...*the gate*

swung open...all by itself. As they...started walking down the street...the angel suddenly disappeared.

Then, Peter finally realized what had happened. "It's really true!" he said to himself. "God has sent his angel and saved me...!"

Acts 12:12-15

...Then Peter went to a house where many believers were gathered praying. He knocked at the door...and a servant girl...came to open it. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that, instead of opening the door, she ran back inside and told everyone, "Peter is standing at the door!"

"You're out of your mind," they said....

Acts 12:16-17

Meanwhile, Peter continued knocking. When they finally went...and opened the door, they were amazed. Peter...told them what had happened and how God had led him out of jail. "Tell the others what happened," he said. And then he went to another place.

Story Crafting

'You're out of your mind'

This is an idiom that literally means 'you're crazy' and may need to be translated differently if a literal translation into the language does not make sense to the hearer.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **Jerusalem, persecute, believers, church, closest followers/the Twelve, religious leaders, religious festival and angel.**

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Extraordinary prayer

Boldness in persecution

Paul & Barnabas Mistaken for Gods

Acts 14:8-23

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition (Based on Acts 13)

After Peter was freed from jail, the Good News continued to spread, and many people became believers*. Barnabas and Paul... finished their task to bring famine support to Jerusalem, and they returned to Antioch... One day as the leaders of the Antioch church* were worshipping* God and fasting*, God's Spirit* said, "Appoint Barnabas and Paul for the special work I have for them." So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way. Paul and Barnabas traveled throughout the area we now call Turkey, telling people the Good News about Jesus. Many people became believers, but there were many 'troublemakers' who were jealous of Paul. They tried to turn the people against Paul and his message.

Acts 14:8-10

While they were in a town called Lystra, Paul and Barnabas met a man with crippled feet. He had been that way from birth, so he had never walked. He was sitting and listening as Paul was speaking... Looking straight at him, Paul... realized he had belief* to be healed. So Paul called to him in a loud voice, "Stand up!" And the man jumped to his feet and started walking.

Acts 14:11-13

When the... crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in their local dialect, "These men are gods in human form!" ...The crowd brought bulls and wreaths of flowers, and they prepared to offer sacrifices to them....

Acts 14:14-15, 18

But when Barnabas and Paul understood what was happening, they tore their clothing in dismay and ran out among the people, shouting, "Friends, why are you doing this? We are... human beings—just like you! We have come to bring you the Good News that you should turn from these worthless things and turn to the living God, who made the sky and the earth, the sea, and everything in them... But even with these words, Paul and Barnabas could scarcely restrain the people from sacrificing to them.

Acts 14:19-20

Then some troublemakers arrived from some other places Paul and Barnabas had visited and convinced the crowds to kill Paul by throwing stones at him... then they dragged him out of the city, thinking he was dead. But as the believers gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he left with Barnabas for the next city.

Acts 14:21-23

After proclaiming the Good News in the next city... Paul and Barnabas returned to the cities they had visited. There, they strengthened the believers. They encouraged them to continue in their belief, reminding them that we must suffer many hardships before God will rule over us forever. Paul and Barnabas also appointed leaders in every church... With prayer and fasting, they entrusted the leaders to the care of Jesus, in whom they had believed*.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Fasting*

Fasting refers to going without food in order to worship God or as part of one's worship to God. Although many religions practice this, you may find that the word refers only to fasting for a particular god or in a particular religion. If that is the case, you may need to explain the concept in the story rather than use a specific term.

'gods'

If there is a different term that refers only to the one true God, do not use that term here. Use a term that refers to lesser gods.

Story Crafting

Transition

This story's transition includes Paul and Barnabas' commissioning from the Antioch church. The commissioning story by itself is very short. You may make it a separate story if you would like.

'tore their clothing in dismay'

If the idea of tearing clothing is distracting to the audience because it is not done in their culture to show dismay, you could just say, 'they were dismayed and ran out.'

'worthless things'

These refer to the false gods and idols that the people were worshiping. 'Worthless' refers to the fact that these things are not helpful to them. You may need to make this phrase more specific and say something like, 'turn away from the things you are now worshiping which don't help you at all.'

'proclaiming'

We have chosen to use the word 'proclaiming' in place of 'preaching' in the last paragraph of the story because it more closely resembles what the original word in the text means.

'we must suffer many hardships before God will rule over us forever'

This statement refers to the fact that often believers will be persecuted in this world. However, be sure that your audience does not think that it is necessary that we suffer in order for us to enter God's kingdom.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **believers, Jerusalem, church, worship(ing), God's Spirit, belief/believe** and **turn from... turn to...**

Use the same word you have been using throughout the story set for **speaking** in order to avoid using churchy or religious terms such as 'preaching.'

Use the same term for **throwing stones** or 'stoning' that you used in *Paul Meets Jesus* and *Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned*.

Worldview

'prepared to offer sacrifices to them'

The idea of sacrifice might be problematic in your language or culture. If people are offended at the idea of killing an animal for these men, or if they do not really understand that killing an animal was a form of worship, you can change this phrase to 'prepared to worship them like a god.'

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Worship

Healthy churches

Boldness in the face of persecution

Abundant gospel sowing

Prayer/fasting

Identifiable leadership

Paul's Vision*

Acts 14:26-28; 15:36-41; 16:5-15

Based on NLT (1996)

Transition (Based on Acts 14)

Paul and others continued to travel and tell about Jesus through the power of God's Spirit.*

Acts 14:26-28

Finally, they returned...to Antioch...where their journey had begun and where they had been *entrusted* to...God for the work they had now completed. *When they arrived* in Antioch, they called the church* together and reported about their trip, telling all that God had done.... And they stayed there with the believers* in Antioch for a long time.

Acts 15:36-40

After some time Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's return to each city where we previously *spoke the Good News about Jesus* and see how the new believers are getting along." Barnabas agreed....*however, Barnabas and Paul disagreed strongly over who should join them on the trip.* Their disagreement over this was so sharp that they separated.... Paul chose Silas, and the believers sent them off, entrusting them to *God's care*.

Acts 15:41; 16:5

So, *Paul and Silas traveled from city to city, teaching the people in the churches.* ...The churches were strengthened in their *belief** and grew daily in numbers.

Acts 16:6-7

...Then God's Spirit...told them not to go into... Asia at that time. They tried to go another direction, but again God's Spirit who was sent by Jesus did not let them go.

Acts 16:9-12

That night Paul had a vision*. He saw a man... pleading with him. *The man said, "Come over here and help us."* So *Paul and Silas left...at once...They concluded* that God was calling *them to proclaim* the Good News there.

Paul and Silas traveled until they reached Philippi, a major city...they stayed there several days.

Acts 16:13-15

On the *day of worship* they went a little way outside the city to a riverbank, where *they thought* some people met to pray...*There they found* some women who had come together. One of them was *a woman named Lydia...She was a merchant...and worshiper** of God. As she listened...*God caused her to be receptive,* and she accepted what Paul was saying. *Lydia was baptized** along with other members of her household.... "If you consider me a believer (NIV)," she said, "come and stay at my home." *Paul and Silas accepted.*

Words/Phrases to Consider

'God's Spirit who was sent by Jesus'

The original wording of the verse is 'the Spirit of Jesus.' It is thought that perhaps Paul and Silas had a special revelation from Jesus or from a prophecy expressed specifically 'in the name of Jesus.' Translator's helps say that it is an acceptable rendering to say, 'God's Spirit who was sent by Jesus.'

'day of worship'

This is used in place of 'Sabbath,' as 'Sabbath' is not a term familiar to many.

'household'

Referring to Lydia in v. 15, this word might include everyone who lived in Lydia's household, including servants. (She may not have had a family since she is identified as the head of her household.)

Story Crafting

'Good News about Jesus'

We added 'about Jesus' to be sure that the audience understands what 'good news' the men are sharing.

'God's care'

Because the term 'grace' may not be understood by non-believers, we have changed it to 'God's care,' which is one acceptable rendering of the term 'grace' in this context.

Acts 16:9-12

This passage has been changed from first person to third person for easier telling.

'God caused her to be receptive'

The term 'opened her heart' is idiomatic and may not be readily understood in the target language. This phrase can replace that.

'baptized'

In this story, the text does not give as detailed an explanation of baptism as we have seen in previous stories. Therefore, you may choose to amplify the reason they were baptized to reinforce the summarized passage and the teachings you have had already on baptism. You could say something like, 'They were baptized to show that they had turned from their sins and believed in Jesus....'

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **God's Spirit, believers, church, belief, vision, worship(er)** and **baptize**.

Use the same words you have used in previous stories for **speaking** and **proclaim**.

Worldview

Some cultures may see Lydia's invitation to Paul and Silas as inappropriate. If so, you will want to word this in the story in such a way that shows Lydia was performing within her cultural norms of hospitality.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Rapid reproduction

Churches planting churches

Man of peace

Interpersonal relationships between church planters

The Philippian Jailer

CFT Version

Acts 16:16-35, 40; 17:1

Based on NLT (2004)

Acts 16:16-17

One day as *Paul and Silas* were going down to the place of prayer, *they met a slave girl who was possessed* by an evil spirit**. She was a fortune-teller who earned a lot of money for her masters. She followed...*Paul and Silas* shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved."

Acts 16:18

This went on day after day until Paul got so *tired of it* that he turned and spoke to the *evil spirit* within her. "I command you in the name of Jesus...to come out of her," he said. And instantly it left her.

Acts 16:19-21

Her masters' hopes of wealth were now shattered, so they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the marketplace. "The whole city is in an uproar because of these *men!*" they shouted. "They are teaching the people to do things that are against *our* customs."

Acts 16:22-24

A mob quickly formed.... *Paul and Silas* were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn't escape. So *the jailer*...put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks.

Acts 16:25-28

Around midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing...to God, and the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, there was a great earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off! The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. But Paul shouted to him, "*Stop! Don't kill yourself! We are all here!*"

Acts 16:29-30

...The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down *trembling* before Paul and Silas. *Then* he brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Acts 16:31-34

They replied, "Believe* *in*...Jesus and you will be saved, along with *everyone in your household*." Then they *told the message about Jesus* to him and all who lived in his household. That same hour the jailer washed their wounds, and he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized*. *The jailer fed them at his house and they all* rejoiced because they all believed in God.

Acts 16:35, 40; 17:1

The next morning the city officials *released Paul and Silas*. *When Paul and Silas left the prison, they returned to the home of Lydia*... *There they met with the group of believers* that met at Lydia's house* and encouraged them once more.... *Then they left to go to another city*.

Words/Phrases to Consider

Possessed*

In some cultures, spirit possession is a good thing and is sought actively. If this is true in the culture in which you work, you will need to make sure the audience understands that this was an evil spirit.

Evil Spirit*

Please see the Glossary for a full discussion.

'Most High God'

This refers to the position of God, that is, 'the highest God' (indirectly a reference to 'the God in heaven') or 'the God who is higher than all other gods,' that is to say, 'the most important God.' Here the reference would certainly seem to be to 'God who is greater than all others.'

'stocks'

If your culture does not have an understanding of 'stocks,' you may substitute 'chains' or say that they were locked up so they could not escape.

Story Crafting

This passage includes information about Paul and his Roman citizenship. It's interesting, but can make the story too lengthy. You may include it if the theme will be touched on again in later stories (Paul in Rome, etc.).

'Sirs'

This is a polite term of address for men. Use whatever term is most appropriate in your language.

'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'

The jailer asked how he could be saved, probably both for physical escape and moral and spiritual change. If your language's word for 'saved' implies both physical and spiritual salvation, it's even better. If the word could imply only physical salvation, you can amplify how to be saved to something like, '...to be saved so that God will not punish me for my sins.'

'baptized'

You may amplify the reason they were baptized to reinforce the summarized passage and the teachings you have already had on baptism.

'household'

The term 'household' in reference to the jailer probably refers to his family.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **saved, believe, baptize** and **believers**.

Be sure to use the same terminology for **name of Jesus** as you have in previous stories.

If you have found that you need to expound upon from what people are being saved, be sure you are consistently using this in each reference to **save/saved/saving**.

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Rapid reproduction

Family based conversion

Man of peace

Signs and wonders

Paul in Athens

Acts 17:15-34

Based on NLT (1996)

Acts 17:(15) 16-17

One time, while Paul was waiting for *some other believers** (Silas and Timothy) in a city named Athens, he was deeply troubled by all the idols he saw everywhere in the city. *He spoke daily with the people there in the places of worship* and the city square.*

Acts 17:18

...When he told them about Jesus and his *coming back to life after being killed*, they said, “...*What strange ideas.*” ...“He’s pushing some foreign religion.”

Acts 17:19-21

Then they took him to the *special meeting place in the city where they discussed new ideas.* ...*They said*, “You are saying some rather startling things, and we want to know what it’s all about.” (*For the people of Athens spent a lot of time discussing the latest ideas.*)

Acts 17:22-23

So Paul...addressed them... “Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious, for as I was walking along I saw your many altars. And one of them had this inscription on it—‘To an Unknown God.’ You have been worshipping* him without knowing who he is, and now I wish to tell you about him.

Acts 17:24-25, 27-31

“He is the God who made the world and everything in it. ...He doesn’t live in man-made *places of worship*, and human hands can’t serve his needs.... He himself gives life...and... satisfies every need there is. His purpose in all of this was that the nations should seek after God...though he is not far from any one of us. ...As one of your...poets says, ‘We are his offspring.’

“And since this is true, we shouldn’t think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone. *We were ignorant before*, but now *God* commands everyone everywhere to turn away from idols and turn to him. *God will judge the world by Jesus*, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead.”

Acts 17:32-34

When they heard...*about Jesus being raised from the dead*, some laughed, but others said, “We want to hear more about this later.”

...*And* some joined him and became believers....

Words/Phrases to Consider

'city square'

This literally means 'marketplace' and can be translated as such if it avoids confusion.

'altars'

These altars refer to pagan altars which are shrines or places where offerings are put for fetishes. When you find a word for this, you should have the audience describe what it looks like and what people do here in order to test that you have found the correct word.

Story Crafting

'coming back to life after being killed'

Since the term 'resurrection' has not been introduced to your audience, we have simplified the term for better understanding.

'special meeting place in the city where they discussed new ideas'

The Areopagus was the meeting place for the council of philosophers who met to discuss and judge the latest lectures that were being given in Athens. We have taken out the foreign name 'Areopagus' and replaced it with 'special meeting place in the city where they discussed new ideas.' If your people group has a similar meeting place or system, then you may use the word they use to describe this.

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **believers, place of worship, worship** and **turn from...turn to...**

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Use of redemptive analogies

Cross-cultural witness

God is the one true God

Return

CFT Version

**Acts 17:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10;
2:17-18; 3:2-8; 4:16-18; 5:27**

Based on the NLT (1996)

Acts 17:1-5

Before Paul went to Athens, he and Silas were traveling throughout the area near Philippi. One day they came to the city of Thessalonica. There, Paul told many people, who were descendants of Abraham, about Jesus. He said, "This Jesus I'm telling you about is the Promised Savior." Many people believed* his words.... But the descendants of Abraham were jealous, so they gathered some worthless fellows from the streets to form a mob and start a riot. They attacked the home of a believer* in Jesus, searching for Paul and Silas so they could drag them out to the crowd.*

Acts 17:6-7

Not finding them there, they dragged out... some of the other believers instead and took them before the city authorities. "Paul and Silas have caused trouble all over the world... and now they are here disturbing our city," they shouted. "One of these men here has allowed Paul and Silas to stay in his home."

Acts 17:8-10

Although the city was thrown into turmoil by these reports...the city authorities finally released...these believers....

For their protection, that very night the believers sent Paul and Silas away....

1 Thessalonians 2:17-18; 3:2, 6-8; 1:1

But Paul never forgot about the believers in Thessalonica. In fact, he tried again and again to visit them, but he wasn't able. So later, Paul sent a friend named Timothy to

encourage the believers in Thessalonica. When Timothy returned to Paul and gave a report, Paul was overjoyed to learn that these believers were continuing to follow Jesus in spite of persecution. So, he decided to write a letter to the believers in Thessalonica....a letter from himself, Silas and Timothy. He said....

1 Thessalonians 1:2

"We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly."

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7, 9-10

"...You received the message about Jesus with joy from God's Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you.... As a result, you... became an example to all the believers in the area. These believers speak of...how you turned away from idols to serve the true and living God. And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven*—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead...."*

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 5:27

"And when Jesus comes back, he himself will come down from heaven with a loud shout.... First, all the believers who have died will rise.... Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be taken up in the clouds to meet Jesus in the air. We will be with him forever. So...encourage each other with these words. ...And read this letter to all the other believers...."

Story Crafting

This story is an example of how a 'teaching' from the Epistles may be presented in a story form. This story links the teaching from 1 Thessalonians with a corresponding narrative from the book of Acts.

Much of the end of the story has been summarized in order to make it easier for the audience to remember and retell in story form.

'taken up in the clouds'

Be sure that the audience does not think that we will be living in the clouds. We simply will be meeting Jesus in the air as he comes down from heaven, and after that we will no longer be separated from him, i.e. 'We will be with him forever.' In other parts of the Bible, including in *Promise of God's Spirit*, the imagery of clouds is used when the Messiah ('Promised Savior') comes back; however, we do not want to confuse the audience with this imagery if it conveys the wrong idea.

In order to avoid a misunderstanding of the motive behind the believers sending Paul and Silas away, we have included the phrase 'for their own protection.'

Intra-Story Cohesion

Use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **Promised Savior, belief/believe, believer, God's Spirit, turned (away) from... and heaven.**

Continue to use the same words or phrases you have been using throughout the story set for **descendants of Abraham.**

CHURCH FORMATION ELEMENTS TO DISCUSS

Boldness in the face of persecution

Leaders encouraging/mentoring other leaders

Worship of the one true God

Glossary

Key Words to Consider as You Tell the S-T4T and CFT Stories

These key words open up insights and understanding into Scripture. If they paint a wrong impression in the hearer's mind, they may color a person's entire understanding of the Good News. This glossary is by no means comprehensive, but it attempts to define the meaning of some key words in the biblical sense, in hopes of helping you as you consider the best ways to translate them. In many cases we've included suggestions on how you could translate the word or describe it in a meaningful way to your audience. After each entry is a list of stories in this manual in which the key word is found.

Angel

If you have a Bible translation, your best option would be to use the word in the translation, unless no one outside the church understands it. If you don't have a Bible translation, your challenge is to find a word that accurately conveys the meaning of the original. An 'angel' is a supernatural, spiritual being who is a messenger from God. Angels appear to humans in human form, they are inferior to Jesus, and they often come with a specific message or to do a specific task. If there is no word in the language for 'angel' that a non-believer would understand, you could translate this as 'messenger off/from God,' 'envoy of God,' or perhaps 'ambassador of God.' Be aware, though, that 'prophet' also conveys those meanings. You might need to add 'spirit (messenger from God)' to this description.

Found in: *Birth, Promise of God's Spirit (two white-robed men), The Twelve Are Rescued from Jail, African, Peter and Cornelius, God Frees Peter from Jail*

Anoint

Anointing in the Old Testament signified an act of God in which someone received divine favor or appointment to a special place, service, or function in the purpose of God (especially for kingship). Anointing often was associated with God's Spirit being given. In the S-T4T story of *David King*, the act was done by a man appointed by God to do it. He filled his horn (a ram's horn) with oil and poured the oil on David's head. If the people in your area have a similar ceremony (with an appropriate word to go along with it) to appoint someone to a special task, you could use the phrase 'anointed his head (with oil).' If they don't, you could say something like, 'He poured oil on his head to appoint him/show him as the next king.'

Found in: *David King, Nathan's Story*

Baptism, Baptize

This word is an important term in the Bible and needs to be thought through carefully before attempting to translate. If you have a Bible translation, you may choose to use what the translation uses. If the translation uses the borrowed term (as we also borrow the term from the Greek *baptizo*), but no one understands it, you might want to consider explaining the term. If you are working with long-term believers, you need to see with what term they feel most comfortable. If you need to find a term for some reason, a careful study of the meaning of the concept of 'baptism' is needed. The Greek word means to 'put inside or under water,' or 'to wash in a spiritual sense.' John's baptism was done when a person wanted to stop sinning and obey God so God would forgive his sin. In baptism in the church, a person also makes a public demonstration of his commitment to Jesus and his union with him. Some ideas for translating this term include:

- 1) to wash someone in water to make him ceremonially clean;
- 2) to wash someone with water as part of their initiation into the religious community;
- 3) 'bath,' with a qualification such as 'bath of enlightenment' (Tamil) or 'bath of dedication;'

- 4) using the word for a custom in the culture that refers to ceremonial washing to make something ritually clean;
- 5) using the borrowed term with an appositional ‘unpacking of meaning,’ i.e. ‘he was baptized,’ he was ceremonially washed.’

Keep in mind that in many cultures and religions, people ceremonially wash often to remove sins. You may need to specify that this is a once for all ceremony.

Found in: *Jesus’ Baptism, God’s Spirit, God’s Spirit CFT, Peter’s Sermon, African, African CFT, Ananias Obeys God, Peter Meets Cornelius, Paul’s Vision, The Philippian Jailer, The Philippian Jailer CFT*

Belief/Believe/Trust/Faith

This describes man’s response to God’s promise. It probably implies more than mental agreement, but putting one’s faith/confidence in God.

Found in: *Abraham, David King, Sight, Peter’s Sermon, Peter and the Crippled Beggar, The Twelve Are Rescued from Jail, Seven Men Chosen to Serve, African, African CFT, Peter and Cornelius, Peter Meets Cornelius, The Antioch Church, Paul & Barnabas Mistaken for Gods, Paul’s Vision, The Philippian Jailer, The Philippian Jailer CFT, Return, Return CFT*

Believers

After Pentecost, the people who followed Jesus were also called ‘believers.’ We’ve used that term in the story set to refer to Jesus’ followers after Pentecost and to emphasize the fact that people became followers of Jesus through belief in him.

Found in: *God’s Spirit, Promise of God’s Spirit, Peter’s Sermon, Peter and the Crippled Beggar, Peter Before the Religious Leaders, The Lying Couple, The Twelve Are Rescued from Jail, Seven Men Chosen to Serve, Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned, African, African CFT, Paul Meets Jesus, Ananias Obeys God, Peter and Cornelius, Peter Meets Cornelius, The Antioch Church, God Frees Peter from Jail,*

Paul & Barnabas Mistaken for Gods, Paul’s Vision, The Philippian Jailer, The Philippian Jailer CFT, Paul in Athens, Return, Return CFT

Bless, Blessed, Blessing

This refers to when God helps, does good to, or favors someone or something. It includes the connotation that God is pleased with them (i.e. has a good relationship with them). In the *Creation* and *Abraham* stories, the specific blessing includes God giving them the ability to reproduce and multiply. Try to avoid using a word related to luck or games of chance.

Found in: *Creation, Abraham, Birth, Sight, Triumphal Entry, Peter Before the Religious Leaders (‘God’s great favor was upon them all’), Stephen is Arrested and Stoned, The Antioch Church (‘God’s favor’)*

Church

In the New Testament, the word never actually refers to a building but to a group of people who believe in Jesus. In the New Testament, ‘church’ may refer either to a group of believers who live in one place or to the wider community of the whole church of Jesus. If the word ‘church’ in the language conveys something different than the New Testament definition, you might choose to explain the term in a phrase instead of using the word ‘church.’ You could say something like ‘gathering of believers’ or ‘the group of believers,’ or even in some instances ‘all those believing in Christ.’

Found in: *God’s Spirit, Promise of God’s Spirit, Peter’s Sermon, The Lying Couple, Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned, Paul Meets Jesus, Ananias Obeys God, The Antioch Church, God Frees Peter from Jail, Paul and Barnabas Mistaken for Gods, Paul’s Vision*

Closest Followers/The Twelve (see Followers)

Please see the note under ‘Followers’ for a full discussion of these terms.

Curse

This word in the text actually means punishment or judgment and means that

something unpleasant is going to happen to that person. Although many languages have a way to pronounce a curse on someone or something, be sure that the word you choose does not have any magical connotations.

Found in: *Disobedience*

Disciple (see Followers)

Disobedience (see Sin)

Eternal Life

‘Eternal life’ in the New Testament has two aspects:

- 1) life that never ends;
- 2) a quality of life beginning when someone allows God to rule his life.

Some options for conveying the two-fold meaning of this phrase include

- 1) ‘real life that never ends;’
- 2) ‘new life that never ends.’

Or if your language does not have a noun for ‘life’

- 3) ‘really live unendingly because of him;’
- 4) ‘he will cause such people to never come to the end of real living.’

Found in: *Assurance, Peter Meets Cornelius*

Evil Spirit

‘Evil spirit’ refers to spiritual beings who serve Satan as his agents, being under his authority. These spiritual beings have power to oppress a human being and even take control of him. We know from the Bible that evil spirits were created by God and chose to disobey him. It seems that many South Asian languages do not have a term that can express that adequately. (Their ‘evil spirit’ may refer to a dead person’s spirit that ‘haunts’ people.) Try to choose a word that refers to an independent spirit being that is evil and opposed to God. If there is one, you can also use a neutral word for an independent spirit

being and add a qualification like ‘spirit from Satan,’ or ‘bad/evil spirit.’ Be aware that extra explanation might be necessary during the discussion time.

Found in: *Possessed Man, Philippian Jailer, Philippian Jailer CFT*

Fasting

Fasting refers to going without food in order to worship God or as part of one’s worship to God. Although many religions practice this, you may find that the word only refers to fasting for a particular god or in a particular religion. If that is the case, you may need to explain the concept in the story rather than use a specific term.

Found in: *Paul and Barnabas Mistaken for Gods*

Fellowship

Fellowship is a close association among believers which includes them meeting regularly with other believers, and may refer to public worship services. It implies that the believers had a communal spirit by sharing what they had with each other.

Found in: *God’s Spirit, Peter’s Sermon*

Followers (also Closest Followers/The Twelve)

If the language has an understood term for the devoted followers of a guru, you may use that term here. We’ve designated the twelve disciples as ‘closest followers’ and the other disciples simply as ‘followers.’ You will want to differentiate between the two groups in the same way, as well.

Found in: *Possessed Man, Sight, Triumphal Entry, Last Supper, Arrest and Trial, Execution, Alive!, God’s Spirit, Promise of God’s Spirit, God’s Spirit CFT, Peter’s Sermon, Peter and the Crippled Beggar, The Lying Couple, The Twelve Are Rescued from Jail, Seven Men Chosen to Serve, Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned, African, African CFT, Ananias Obeys God, Peter Meets Cornelius, God Frees Peter from Jail, Philippian Jailer, Philippian Jailer CFT, Return, Return CFT*

Forgive, Forgiveness

Some languages don't have an adequate word for 'forgive.' If that's the case, understanding what 'forgiveness' means is imperative to translating it correctly. Forgiveness involves two people, one of whom has done something wrong to the other and offended him. The one who was offended sets aside his rights and does not punish the other as he deserves. If the other accepts the forgiveness, the relationship between the two is restored and the guilt is removed.

Found in: *Nathan's Story, Jesus' Baptism, God's Spirit, Peter's Sermon, The Twelve Are Rescued from Jail, Peter Meets Cornelius*

God's Spirit (see Holy Spirit)

Heaven

Heaven can refer to the sky, or to the place where God and his angels live, depending on the context. When it refers to the place where God lives, it is also the ultimate destination of believers. Because it is linked so closely to the place where God is, one can replace 'I have sinned against heaven' with 'I have sinned against God,' or 'the kingdom of heaven' with 'the kingdom of God.' If your language does not have an adequate word for 'heaven,' or if the hearers do not understand adequately the concept of heaven at this stage, you can replace it with 'the place where God lives.'

Found in: *Jesus' Baptism, Triumphal Entry, Alive!, God's Spirit, African, Return, Promise of God's Spirit, Peter's Sermon, Stephen Arrested and Stoned, Paul Meets Jesus, Peter and Cornelius, Return CFT*

Holy Spirit

DAVID KING STORY: You can translate this term directly as 'God's Spirit.' The meaning here specifically is that David was suddenly and fully possessed by God's Spirit. In other words, God 'qualified him to be governor of his people, by infusing such graces as wisdom, prudence, counsel, courage, liberality, and magnanimity' (Adam Clarke's commentary).

The Hebrew *ruach* [spirit] can have the physical meanings 'wind' or 'breath.' It also can mean 'power' or 'authority' that God gives to someone to do extraordinary things.

NEW TESTAMENT: The concept of 'holy' refers to people or things that belong to God, are consecrated to him, or are like him. Often, however, Scripture translations use 'God's Spirit' because many languages do not have a word for 'holy' that adequately expresses the concept. Since 'holy' in many South Asian languages is either a church-y term that non-believers can't understand or a term with unwanted connotations, we encourage you to use the same term for 'God's Spirit' that you used in the *David King* story.

Found in: *David King, Birth, Jesus' Baptism, Alive!, God's Spirit, African, Return, Promise of God's Spirit, God's Spirit CFT, Peter's Sermon, Peter Before the Religious Leaders, The Lying Couple, The Twelve Are Rescued from Jail, Seven Men Chosen to Serve, Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned, African CFT, Ananias Obeys God, Peter and Cornelius, Peter Meets Cornelius, The Antioch Church, Paul & Barnabas Mistaken for Gods, Paul's Vision, Return CFT*

Lord (see Master)

Lord's Supper

This reference to eating together probably included both simply fellowshiping, i.e. eating together and sharing in the Lord's Supper, i.e. the bread and wine that Jesus asked them to share in remembrance of him. Think about how you explained this in the 'Last Supper' story, and try to explain this in a way that will relate back to that story. For example, you could say something like: '...devoted themselves to Jesus' followers' teaching and fellowship, and eating and drinking together to remember what Jesus had done for them, just as Jesus told them to do.' OR '...and remembering what Jesus had done for them, eating and drinking together.'

Found in: *God's Spirit, Peter's Sermon*

Master

The original 'Lord' has the connotation here of 'master,' 'supreme head,' or 'owner.' At a surface level, this is a title for a respected man, such as 'sir.' Any of these is an acceptable rendering.

Found in: *Last Supper, God's Spirit, Peter's Sermon, Paul Meets Jesus, Peter and Cornelius*

Miracles, Wonders, and Signs (also Miracles)

These words refer to powerful deeds or happenings that evokes awe or something that points to a truth beyond itself. Basically, all three words refer to similar things. Perhaps all three words were used to show that Jesus did many miracles of different types.

Found in: *Triumphal Entry, God's Spirit, Peter's Sermon, Peter and the Crippled Beggar, Peter Before the Religious Leaders, The Twelve Are Rescued from Jail, Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned*

Paradise

'Paradise' refers to the place where the righteous dead go. It can be translated or described in several ways:

- 1) 'the very good place called paradise;'
- 2) 'place of well-being;'
- 3) 'place of happiness/of happy people;'

Found in: *Execution*

Pharisees (see Religious Leaders)

Place of Worship

The temple was the unique Jewish place of worship. If the word for 'temple' in your language refers only to a specific religion's place of worship, you may choose to change the word to something more general like 'place of worship.' Even the word 'temple' in English has such religious connotations that few people truly understand what it means.

Found in: *Birth, Assurance, Triumphal Entry, Peter and the Crippled Beggar, The Twelve are Rescued from Jail, Stephen is Arrested and Stoned, Paul in Athens*

Promised One (see Savior/Promised Savior/Promised One)

Promised Savior (see Savior/Promised Savior/Promised One)

Prophet (see Spokesman)

Relationship

Some languages may not have one term for 'relationship,' or the term has unwanted connotations. Some languages express the idea in terms of action. TEV translates Genesis 15:6 as 'Abram put his trust in the LORD, and because of this the LORD was pleased with him and accepted him.' Therefore, 'right relationship' with God refers to a man's state of trusting God and God accepting him into communion with himself.

Found in: *Abraham, Promise, Sight, Promise of God's Spirit*

Religious Leaders

Both Pharisees and Sadducees were Jewish religious parties at that time. Many scribes and priests were members of one of these sects. If possible, it is best to keep these sect names as generic as possible—'religious leaders.' If you use a term for 'religious leaders' used in a major religion here, be sure that those names do not refer ONLY to a member of that specific religion.

Found in: *Jesus' Baptism, Triumphal Entry, Last Supper, Arrest and Trial, Execution, God's Spirit CFT, Peter and the Crippled Beggar, Peter Before the Religious Leaders, The Twelve Are Rescued from Jail, Seven Men Chosen to Serve, Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned, Paul Meets Jesus, Ananias Obeys God, God Frees Peter from Jail*

Righteousness/Right Relationship

The Old Testament idea of righteousness is based on relationship between God and man, or between man and man. 'Righteousness' refers to holiness. The CEV (Contemporary English Version) translates this concept in Isaiah 53:11 in the following way:

*...he will take the punishment
for the sins of others,
so that many of them
will no longer be guilty.*

In other words, 'righteousness' takes away guilt.

Found in: *Abraham, Promise*

Sadducees (see Religious Leaders)

Satan

This name refers to the spiritual being, whom God created and who is the leader of the evil spiritual beings who decided to rebel against God. You may need to qualify the name 'Satan' with 'leader of the evil spirits' if 'Satan' is unknown to your audience.

Found in: *Disobedience, The Lying Couple*

Savior/Promised Savior/Promised One

'Savior,' as used in the New Testament, means 'one who saves from spiritual and eternal danger.' Often, the wholeness of man includes both physical and spiritual aspects which are difficult to distinguish, but the actual term 'savior' in the New Testament is used only for Jesus as a spiritual deliverer. 'Promised Savior' is also the word we've chosen to use for the English version of the stories as the term to describe who Jesus is—the Messiah, the Christ, the Promised Savior. We've chosen, for the audience's first exposure to the gospel, to use a consistent term for Jesus' role in God's redemptive plan throughout the story set. Later, it could be helpful to introduce other terms that have similar meanings (such as 'Christ,' 'Messiah,' 'Promised King,' 'Anointed One,' etc.).

The terms 'Christ' and 'Messiah' have the same meaning, namely, 'the person who is anointed (i.e. appointed) by God for a special purpose.' Anointing with oil was the symbol of being appointed and set apart by God for a position of authority and responsibility, especially for kingship, or as a High Priest (*Key Biblical Terms in the New Testament*). Many aspects of Jesus' roles and character are implied in the term 'Anointed One,' including his kingship over all the nations, his role as

God's representative, his role as the means of bringing about God's victory over his enemies, and finally, as the one appointed to accomplish redemption for God's people. We are told in translation resources that as we search for a way to translate 'Messiah,' or 'Christ,' we should search for a term that includes the concepts of one who is specially appointed by God, and one who is savior or king. The term 'Promised Savior' seems to be the title which best fits how we've set up Jesus' entry into the world (see *Promise* story). Jesus' kingship and anointing have been introduced through the stories themselves, rather than giving him the title 'King' or 'Anointed One' at this point in the audience's experience with the Gospel.

Some languages do not have an appropriate personal noun that expresses the idea of savior, and it needs to be translated 'the one who saves,' or 'the saving person.'

Found in: *Promise, Birth, Jesus' Baptism, Assurance, Triumphal Entry, Arrest and Trial, Execution, Alive!, God's Spirit, Return, Peter's Sermon, The Twelve Are Rescued from Jail, Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned, Ananias Obey God, Return CFT*

Scripture

This word used in the New Testament refers to the Jewish holy writings, most often what we now consider the entire Old Testament. These writings were considered to have authority. You may use any generic term in your language for a set of holy writings which have authority. If you must qualify which holy writings, you could say something like 'the holy writings of Abraham's descendants.'

Found in: *God's Spirit CFT*

Sin/Disobedience

Sin refers to an act of disobedience to God. Be sure that the word you use here does not mean that someone has failed to perform a religious act (i.e. alms, ritual prayer, following religious dietary rules, etc.), or that the term is so religious that it does not convey meaning to the average person anymore. If necessary, you can use 'disobedience.'

Found in: *Abraham, David King, Nathan's Story, Promise, Birth, Jesus' Baptism, God's Spirit, Peter's Sermon, Peter and the Crippled Beggar, The Twelve Are Rescued from Jail, Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned, Peter Meets Cornelius*

Spirit of God (see Holy Spirit)

Spirit

'Spirit' refers to the 'soul,' or 'life,' and it is the center of the inner life of man—his feelings and emotions.

Found in: *Execution*

Spokesman

Choose a term for 'prophet' that adequately describes the prophet's function. A prophet:

1. receives a call from God;
2. takes God's message to men because he had been given it by God himself;
3. has as his only priority bringing the Word of God to men.

We chose 'spokesman' because, in English, it can convey these three meanings but doesn't carry the unwanted connotation of a fortune-teller. If you use a religious term, be sure that it has meaning that the average hearer will understand. If you find that it is too difficult to keep saying 'God's spokesman' throughout the story *David King*, you may include Samuel's name. However, if it is too confusing or difficult for people to remember Samuel's name, then you may choose to simply say 'God's spokesman.'

Found in: *David King, Nathan's Story, Promise, Jesus' Baptism, Sight, African, Peter's Sermon, Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned, African CFT, The Antioch Church*

Temple (see Place of Worship)

The Twelve (see Followers)

Trust (see Belief)

Vision

Visions refer to a supernatural experience in which a divine revelation is given to a person when they are awake, whereas 'dreams' are what God causes people to see when they are asleep. If your language only has one word for 'vision' and 'dream,' you may want to specify whether the person was awake or asleep when they received the message from God.

Found in: *Abraham, Paul Meets Jesus, Peter and Cornelius, Paul's Vision*

Wisdom

The biblical concept of wisdom includes the ideas of 'thinking things that are true and doing things that are good.' Only God can cause someone to be wise. In fact, it is implied in the New Testament that when someone has wisdom, he has insight into the will of God.

Found in: *Birth, Seven Men Chosen to Serve, Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned*

Worship

Worship's foundation is the idea of 'service,' shown through showing awe and wonder to God (*IVP New Bible Dictionary*). Patriarchs thought this worship could take place anywhere God had revealed himself.

The Old Testament sets up a complicated sacrificial system in the Temple. Jesus made it clear that this sacrificial system of worship was no longer necessary, and that our worship was based on our love for God. Different cultures and languages have different words for worship, some of which refer only to certain ceremonies or rituals one must do. In every story in this story set where 'worship' is used, it implies more than just performing rituals; it includes the heart of love, awe and wonder of the worshiper for God. Be sure that the word or combination of words you choose for worship includes this idea.

Found in: *Abraham, David King, Birth, Assurance, Triumphal Entry, Philippian Jailer, Promise of God's Spirit, Peter's Sermon, Stephen Is Arrested and Stoned, African CFT, Peter Meets Cornelius, Paul & Barnabas Mistaken for Gods, Paul's Vision, Paul in Athens*

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Appendix:

Indigenous Worship for House Churches

(Caste Hindu Settings)

In order to facilitate the widest possible multiplication of true worship among various caste Hindu communities, it's crucial to model and train with indigenous patterns from the very beginning.

The apostle Paul set an example for us to follow with the high premium he put on cultural adaptation: "I have become all things to all [unreached or unengaged] peoples that I might by all means save some." (cf. I Co 9:19-22). His commitment to assuming the culture of his target group was limited only by his higher loyalty to obeying our Lord's commands.

What are some ways in which we can begin leading those we're training in indigenous worship? Here are several suggestions being used by some of our colleagues in South Asia:

1. Expressing **PRAISE** to the one, triune God. (Father, son and Holy Spirit).
 - a. **CALL TO WORSHIP:** A songbook produced by ASAP personnel includes several very Indian options for a "call to worship," both in Sanskrit and in Hindi (*Sadguru Yishu Bhajan Mala*).¹
 - b. **INDIGINEOUS MUSIC STYLES:** This same songbook is primarily filled with devotional songs (*bhajans*) in Hindi with lyrics that praise the Lord Jesus specifically, the whole Trinity, or the one true God. In general, they are accompanied with indigenous musical instruments and sung with the house church following the "sing-repeat" pattern of the worship leader. One or more sets of *manjiras* (small brass hand cymbals) are usually used. If a person can keep the beat by clapping to a worship song, s/he can easily play a *manjira*.
 - c. **INTERJECTED COMMENTS:** Often a worship leader will insert appropriate devotional comments and/or verses between two bhajans or even in the midst of a single bhajan's lyrics. This creates more opportunities for modeling praise and/or affirming the biblical truths being emphasized in the story.

2. Creating an **ATMOSPHERE OF REVERENCE:**
 - a. **BODY POSTURE:** Sitting cross-legged without shoes, on a covered floor (e.g. rugs or mattresses), is a more typical Indian body posture for approaching God for worship than is sitting on chairs or in pews.
 - b. **FRAGRANCE:** The presence of a commonly used aroma in the house can add to the feeling that this meeting is indeed a time set apart for worship. This can be done with either an essential oil diffuser or with stick incense.
 - c. **DECORATIONS:** Decorations which are aesthetically placed in the house/room can also increase the atmosphere of reverence (e.g. flowers, candles, oil lamps, etc.)

Detailed instructions on the use of these and other Christ-honoring worship suggestions will be posted on the ST4T website in the near future.

¹ Examples appropriate for Forward Caste groups in the Sadguru Yishu Bhajan Mala would include the first two on p. 8 and the third on p. 9. The same could be used with OBC groups; however, the third on p. 9 might be best, done in more of a 'shouted' (vs. 'chanted') style. All caste Hindu groups might also use the bottom one on p. 69 as a "benediction" type of bhajan at the end of the house church meeting.