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## Application Guide: Acts 8

### 1. Warm-up (5-10 min)

**Choose one:**

- a. When an activity you are involved in starts to get difficult, do you tend to dig in and work harder or lose enthusiasm and give up? Give an example.

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- b. What do you think about television evangelists/ministries that are always asking for money? How much do you think ministries should depend on money and how much should they depend on the Holy Spirit? What's a good balance?

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### 2. Engaging the Chapter (15-20 min)

**Picture it:** Imagine you are living a simple life in Jerusalem back in the days of the early church. You have a nice little home on a quiet street and your family has a small business making tents in a shop behind your home. The family business has been passed down for generations and your grandfather still works there part-time with your father and two uncles. You help out sometimes, too. You have lots of family living nearby and you spend a lot of time together playing with your cousins. Like everyone else you know, you never really go on vacations or go to school; you are happy just working in the family business and spending time with close friends and extended family. You feel very fulfilled with your life. There is always enough to eat, you love God and you go to the temple every day to worship.

Over the last 2-3 years you have been hearing stories of a man named Jesus who may be the long-hoped-for Messiah. You have gone to hear Jesus preach and even saw Him heal a blind person. Then you started hearing people say that the priests and rulers of the synagogue found out that Jesus was a fraud, like so many other so-called messiahs of the day, and that people should stay away from Him and His dangerous teachings. Before you knew it, Jesus had been crucified with two other criminals and now those who followed Him were being hunted down, put in jail and sometimes killed by the temple guards. At the same time you are hearing stories about Stephen and Philip, and that they are performing miracles just like Jesus did. People are being healed of diseases, and a demon-possessed person that used to live on your street came home demon-free and normal—praising Jesus for the miracle just last week.

Your dad and one uncle think that your family should just follow what the priests say because they are experts in these things—they've known them their whole lives and they trust them. But you're grandfather and another of your uncles really believes that this Jesus is the true Messiah sent by God. Next thing you know there are soldiers knocking at your door looking for "Christians."

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Would you tell the temple soldiers, who are friends with your dad, about your grandfather and uncle that believes in Jesus? How would you know what to believe and who to trust? Something in your heart tells you that Jesus really is the Messiah, but you don't want to disappoint your church leaders, either. What would you do? Would you believe and get baptized or report to the soldiers about the Christians in your family, knowing they will be punished?

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**3. Applying the Chapter to Your Life (5-10 min)**

**Choose one:**

- a. Write a 1-2 page journal response to the question above. Try to imagine the scene and think what it would be like to really live through this situation back then, or if it happened to you today.
- b. Discuss the question above in a small group. Try to imagine the scene and think what it would be like to really live through this situation back then, or if it happened to you today.

**4. Prayer Time (3-5 min)**

- a. Spend some time praying by yourself or in a small group, asking Jesus to help you and your family to really live out what you believe is true about Jesus and the Gospel.