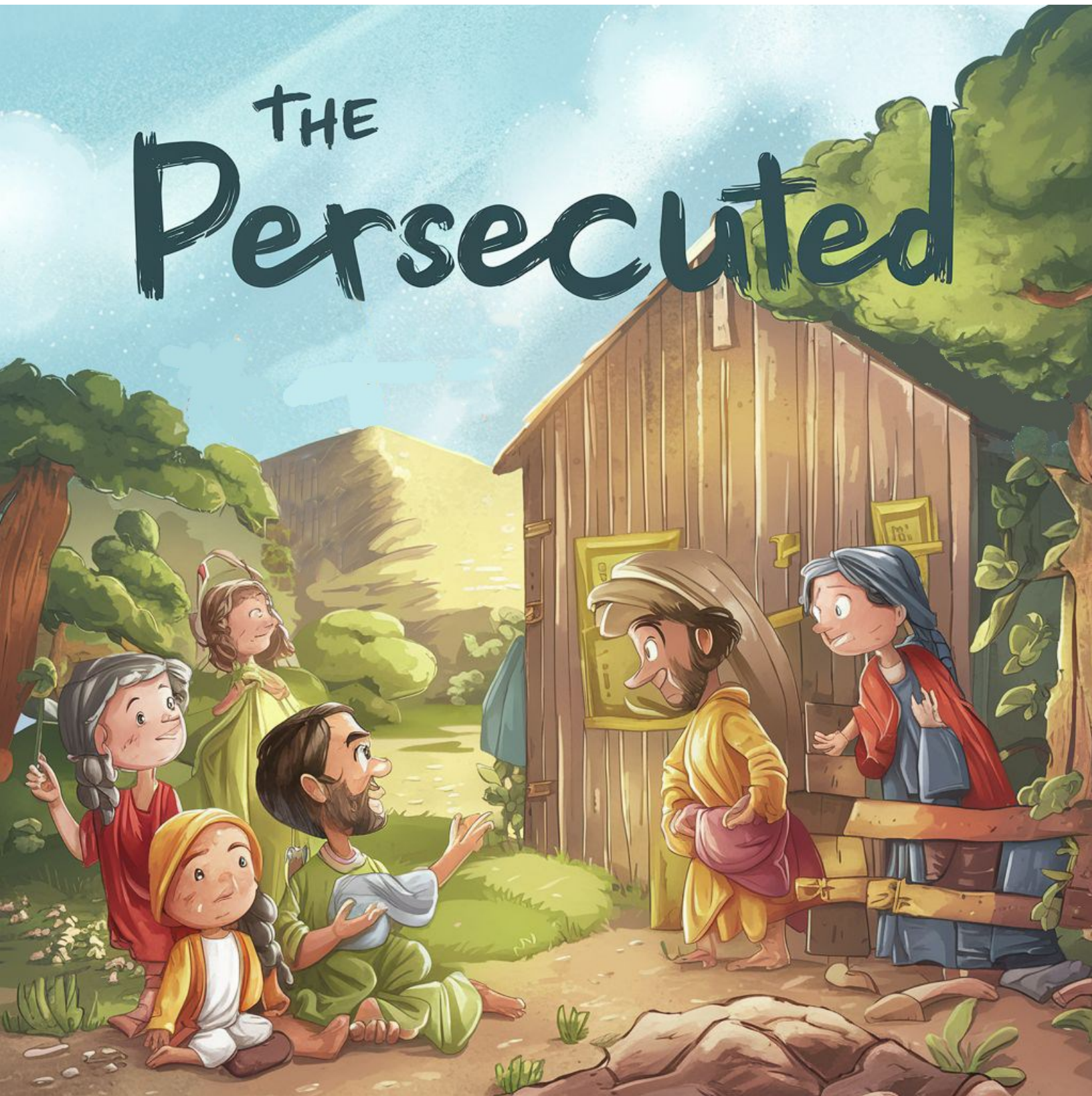


THE Persecuted





The Persecuted

BEE-Attitudes Not ME-Attitudes

The Beatitudes have taught us how to have an attitude that focuses on others instead of ourselves. So when we are being persecuted for being righteous, we can remember to pray for our persecutors because we have learned how to have BEE attitudes.

When we are poor in spirit and recognize our need for a savior. We mourn over our sins and meekly submit to the Lord. When we do these things, we begin to hunger and thirst for God's righteousness. God gives us the kingdom of heaven, he comforts us and tells us we'll inherit the earth, and he fills us with his righteousness. After all the brokenness, we begin to grow in our ability to love others. We become merciful and pure in heart and peacemakers. When we begin to do those things, we will be persecuted. And that's okay, because we gain the kingdom of heaven! If there is one thing I want you all to remember from the past lessons in the Beatitudes, it's this: God blesses us when we follow him. God gives us what we need, gives us his favor, when we follow him. He loves us and wants us to have a life full of him. The Beatitudes are what our attitudes are when we follow Jesus. So let's follow Jesus with our BEE attitudes instead of our ME attitudes!

Power Point

Blessed are
those that are
persecuted

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 5:11,
"Blessed are the persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Persecuted: Simple Meaning

There has always been persecution for Christians. There have always been those that have been unhappy with Christians sharing about Jesus. Not to mention, Jesus Himself was killed by those that hated Him. Stephen in the Bible (Acts 7) was someone that followed Jesus, yet he was killed for sharing about Jesus. Paul the Apostle was one of those that tried to kill Christians. He had hated Christians, yet Jesus changed his heart and mind on the road to Damascus.

There is a video for kids on YouTube called "Secret Smuggler: The Story of Brother Andrew" (6 min.). Brother Andrew is someone who experienced persecution and went to visit many countries where Christians were being persecuted. God protected him many times as he took Bibles into these countries.

Consider watching this video with your class and then having a discussion about Brother Andrew's experiences. Then, go on to help your class understand that Christians in many countries suffer persecution, but God is their protector.





Bible Story: Saul Persecutes Christians

Once upon a time, there was a man named **Saul**. He didn't like the people who followed **Jesus**, and he wanted to stop them. So, he decided to go to a place called **Damascus** to find these Christians and make them stop believing in Jesus.



One sunny day, as Saul was on his way to Damascus, something wonderful happened. A bright light appeared in the sky, and it was so dazzling that Saul fell down! He covered his eyes with his hands, and then he heard a voice. It was like a whisper from the clouds, saying, "Saul, why are you hurting my friends?"

Saul was scared and confused. He asked, "Who are you?"

The voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you're trying to stop. But now, I want you to change your ways."

Saul's heart raced. He realized he was wrong. He had been mean to the Christians. Jesus told him to go to Da-

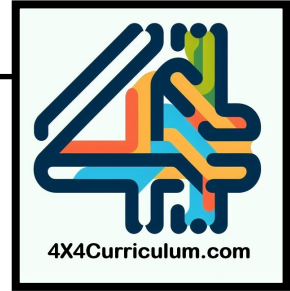
mascus and meet a man named **Ananias**. Ananias would help him understand the truth.

So, Saul got up, and his eyes were still blind from the bright light. His friends helped him to Damascus. When he met Ananias, something amazing happened. Ananias prayed for Saul, and suddenly, Saul could see again! Not just with his eyes, but also with his heart.

From that day on, Saul became a friend of Jesus. He traveled far and wide, telling everyone about Jesus and how love is stronger than hate. And the people listened because they saw the change in Saul. He went from being a mean man to a kind one, all because of that moment on the road to Damascus.

And that's the story of how Saul became a friend of Jesus, and how love changed his heart forever. The end.





Game Idea:

World Map Mash-up

Buy a world map per team and cut it up into pieces. Have the teams compete to put the maps together the fastest. You could even make a relay race out of it. — have teams race to get pieces of the map before they can put it together as a team.

Review Questions:

1. What is persecution?
2. Is God with those that are persecuted?
3. Why are we blessed if we are persecuted?

Prayer for the World: Have your kids form a prayer circle to pray for Christians around the world. You could pass a world globe beach ball around and ask the student who catches it to say a prayer.



Gum Wrapper Chain Crown

Students can make gum wrapper paper chains to remind themselves of those who are in chains for their faith. This is a fun craft that requires no glue, tape, or staples (only folding). You will not be using gum wrappers, but strips of decorative paper (*scrapbook paper is perfect*) that are 1.25" x 12" in length. Use a paper cutter to cut them. You will need about 25 strips to make a crown. Crowns remind us "Theirs is the kingdom."

These zig-zag chains can also be turned into: bookmarks, bracelets, arm bands, belts, or a let's-see-who-can-make-the-longest-chain contest!



Crown made with a paper chains

A tutorial of step-by-step instructions can be found on the supplemental page.

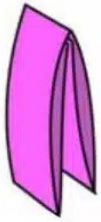
As your students are making their chains, **begin a discussion** with them by asking this question: How do you think it would feel to be persecuted for your faith in Jesus?



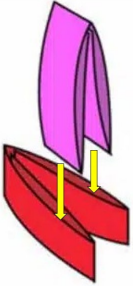
Directions to make a Gum Wrapper Paper Chain

PREP: Use a paper cutter to make strips of paper that are 1.25" x 12" in length. You'll need about 25 for each student to make a crown.

Time needed: 30 minutes



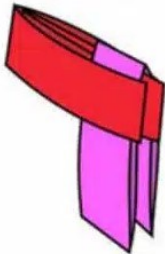
1. To make one link, fold a strip in half, wrong sides together, and make a crease. Open it up and fold each side in half again. Lastly, fold both sides together to look like "bunny ears". Press to make the shape flat. Repeat for all links.



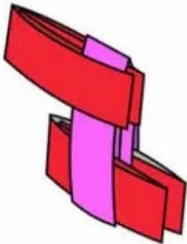
2. To start the chain, line up two paper links as shown



3. Slide each "bunny ear" **INSIDE** the other "bunny ear"



4. Push two links together as shown. You're done. The chain has begun!



5. Add another link the same way, always making a zig-zag line. *(If you see a square instead, it just means you have put it in the wrong direction. Take the link out and insert it from the other direction.)*

If you are making crowns, have the child make the chain long enough to fit around their head and then staple or paper clip the ends together.