

- 6 *Acts 16-20*  
What do Paul's missionary journeys teach us about how we should 'do' mission in the local community and beyond?  
Who exactly are *we* targeting for the gospel?
- 7 *Acts 20*  
Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian elders doesn't look back nostalgically to the past, nor does it dwell on matters like liturgy or pews or coffee mornings.  
Instead it focuses on the gospel message and the need to be alert to those who in the future may try to distort that gospel.  
Where do *our* church priorities lie?
- 8 *Acts 22*  
Paul once again shares his own personal testimony.  
Are there testimonies that you have heard in the past that have had a deep impact upon you?  
Have you ever shared your own testimony?
- 9 *Acts 27*  
As the ship transporting him is being battered by the waves, Paul exhibits a calm, assured faith.  
How about you? What are you like when the going gets tough? Does your faith sometimes fail you?
- 10 *Psalms 61*  
All we do as a church community is meant, ultimately, to lead people to the rock that is higher than them (see v.2b); that is to lead people closer in their relationship with God.  
It is our 'success' in doing this that is a true measure of the effectiveness of our mission action plans. Do you agree?

### **Closing**

*Light a candle, and quietly reflect on the discussion you've had and on any issues that have arisen for you. End with the Lord's Prayer.*

# SACRED

## Group Resources

## Month 17

## Opening Prayer

Lord, our God,  
help us to walk with you on the pathway to the beatitudes  
and to live out your mission in today's world.  
Bind us to all men and women of our time  
so that together we may bring the Good News  
to the ends of the earth.  
Open our hearts and our Christian communities  
to the needy, the afflicted, the oppressed.  
May we radiate the Living Christ  
and transform our lives in the hope of the Resurrection.  
This prayer we make to you who is the living God, now and forever.

**Amen**

*(from the Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver)*

## General Questions

- 1 How did you enjoy reading the Acts of the Apostles? What especially inspired you about the history of the early church?
- 2 If you were asked to draw out one lesson from the way the apostles went about their mission for the church today, what would that lesson be?

## Activity

For this activity, you will need two large maps – one of the World and one of your local town or parish – and plenty of coloured pins. Mount the two maps on a notice board and ask people to place a pin (or pins) on a country (in the first case) and a street (in the second) that is particularly on their heart from a 'mission' point of view. Then stand back to look at the maps, and to pray for those places that have been marked. Encourage individuals to commit to acting in some specific way on their missionary hopes for them.

## Further Ideas

*As usual, the intention is not necessarily to work through all of these ideas, just to take on some of them as the group chooses.*

- 1 *Acts 2*  
Peter's Pentecost sermon clearly had a great impact on the crowd gathered as "about three thousand were added to their number that day" (v.41).  
Describe the structure and content of his sermon.  
What can we learn from this for our preaching today?
- 2 *Acts 4*  
The last few verses of this chapter paint a picture of what life was like in the early church (see also 2:42-47).  
How does this compare with life in our own churches?  
Why are we so different?
- 3 *Acts 9*  
The chapter famously describes Paul's Damascus Road conversion. Did you have an experience (albeit a little less dramatic) which marked your own coming to faith in Jesus?  
Or was it much more gradual for you?
- 4 *Acts 10*  
What was the essential theological issue that Peter's vision sought to clarify? What might such a vision look like now, in terms of reaching new converts in the contemporary church?
- 5 *Acts 13/14*  
These chapters demonstrate an interplay between the decision-making of the church and an openness to the guidance and prompting of the Holy Spirit.  
  
To what extent do you think we model this within our own church management structures?