

04 GROWING PAINS

KEY TEXT: ACTS 15:7-9,22-31

CENTRAL truth

Regardless of our experience with our families of origin, something remarkable happens after we put our faith in Jesus: through Him, we are adopted into God's family. This week, we will read about the conflict that arose when a group of Jewish believers claimed that non-Jewish believers needed to still follow Jewish laws to be members of God's family. We'll be reminded that **we belong to God's family through faith in Jesus alone.**

key question

What role did the Holy Spirit have in the Council's decision?

Verse 28 indicates that ultimately, the church's decision was empowered by God—the leaders in Jerusalem had simply followed the guidance of the Holy Spirit. God had shown them that in Christ, there are no ethnic distinctions that bar people from belonging to His family.

keep in mind

- This session includes a **Culture note** that discusses the importance of circumcision within Jewish community. Depending on the age of the group you lead, be prepared for a student to ask what circumcision is. Use the note to help you!
- The Gentile believers were confused and unsettled by the teaching that they had to become Jewish first to be a part of God's family. Take time to point to the early church's example as a way to sharpen our discernment when we encounter teachings that we are unsure about. Remind students that God has given us Scripture, the Holy Spirit, and godly community to help us grow in our understanding.

application

What are some preferences we may need to let go of to love other believers well?

the win

FOR THE STUDENT: Students should understand that we belong to God's family through faith in Jesus alone. By His grace and love, we're children of God.

FOR THE LEADER: At times, loving our brothers and sisters in Christ can be difficult. Help students to identify any preferences that they may need to release to serve someone well. Challenge them to ask for the Spirit's help.

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