

# Acts

## Lesson 1

## Would you rather?

- Listen carefully and decide which of the choices you'd prefer.

Fun questions:

1. Would you rather always be itchy or always be sticky?
2. Would you rather have your burps smell like rotten eggs or have a green cloud appear when you fart?
3. Would you rather your clothes were always way too small or way too big?
4. Would you rather be able to fly for one day or have super strength for one day?

Deeper Questions:

1. Would you rather always have to speak what you are thinking or never be able to speak again?
2. Would you rather be rich and have anything you want but no friends or family or be poor and have nothing except for your friends and family?
3. Would you rather know when you are going to die or how you are going to die?
4. Would you rather lose all your money and possessions or every picture you have ever taken?

## Small Group Check-in

- What are some of the most difficult decisions you have made?
- How have you made those decisions? Did you do a list of pros and cons, did you go with your gut, or something else?

## Bible Study

- Read Acts 1:15-26
- Do you think that Jesus knew that Judas was going to eventually betray him when he selected Judas as a disciple? Why or why not?
- If Jesus did know, why would he have still selected him as a disciple?

Do you ever include God or your faith in how you make decisions? Why or why not?

What does it look like to include God or our faith in making decisions?

A little background on today's text: Here in Acts, Luke describes Judas' death in detail, compared to Matthew who simply says that Judas hung himself. A large part of that was the difference in audience: Matthew's Jewish audience felt that suicide was morally reprehensible and didn't need the details to understand the weight of Judas' death. Luke's Greek audience were morally neutral towards suicide; thus, he includes the details to help communicate the negative weight.

After Judas' death, there was a vacant position of one of the original leaders of the Christ followers. There was nothing magical about needing twelve leaders, however there was deep meaning within the Jewish faith, of which Christianity came, of the number of twelve due to the number of the tribes of Israel. The first job of the early church became selecting who would replace Judas.

Jesus, being fully God, was omniscient. He knew what Judas would do – he even says so during the Last Supper.

Jesus also knew that someone was going to have to betray Him. He knew that it would be Judas and so Jesus chose Him as a disciple because He was chosen to serve

that role in the redemption of the world.

- If Jesus knew what was going to happen, does that teach us anything about how we should make decisions? If so, what?
- What do you think about how the remaining disciples chose who would replace Judas? Verses 21-22 seem logical, praying for discernment in verses 24-25 seems right too, but then casting lots (i.e. roll dice or draw straws) in verse 26 seems kind of strange.
- Why would such an important decision be made by something as seemingly silly and by total chance as casting lots?

Jesus knowing was going to happen teaches us that sometime the right decision is also the really hard decision but that we still rely on and follow God's plan.

**NOTE:** As you work through the next two questions, please keep in mind that it's important to process the fact that the disciples didn't *start* by casting lots, it's only where the decision process ended. They first wisely chose the criteria they felt was most important in Judas' replacement. Then they narrowed that group down to two, most likely, very qualified candidates. Reading in between the text here, I almost picture the room split in two as half supported Mathias and the other half supported Barsabbas. Not being able to decide, they prayed, giving the decision to God and *then* cast lots knowing that they really couldn't go wrong between the two.

## Small Groups