

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

What kind of name/reputation did your family members who lived before you provide?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

In my first book I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit. During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.

Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?" He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!" **Acts 1:1–11 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

The only way to "know" history is to trust eyewitness testimony. Why was Luke (the author of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts) convinced of the resurrection of Jesus?

Jesus gave his disciples permission to dream great dreams for God for their families, their friends, their neighbors, and their communities. What dream is God stirring in you for others?

The disciples wanted to know when "the end" was coming; Jesus refocused them to witness to the world about him during the time they had left through the power of the Holy Spirit. How do you believe Jesus wants you to focus your time and relationships?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for securing a place in Heaven for me. Thank you for giving me the task of helping people be reconciled to you. Help me to be a faithful witness to Jesus!

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Have you ever been confused when you heard another language being spoken?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Once when [Jesus] was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” **Acts 1:4–5 NLT**

On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

They were completely amazed. “How can this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!” They stood there amazed and perplexed. “What can this mean?” they asked each other. **Acts 2:1–12 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Does it surprise you that Pentecost happened at a house, not the temple?

What are some truly surprising things that God did that day?

What does it say about God’s heart for the nations that everyone heard the “wonderful things God has done” in their own native languages?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for including even me in your great and glorious plan. Thank you for reaching past sin barriers, language barriers, and national barriers to offer the Good News of Jesus to everyone who will believe. Thank you for your incredible gifts of kindness, patience, and mercy!

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Have you ever received a gift that dramatically affected the course of your life?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

“God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this. Now he is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God’s right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today. For David himself never ascended into heaven, yet he said, ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit in the place of honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies, making them a footstool under your feet.”’

“So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!”

Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God.” Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!”

Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. **Acts 2:32–41 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Do you consider patience and kindness to be more powerful than anger and “control”? Why or why not?

God FORGAVE the people who mobbed and crucified Jesus. When Peter was asked what the offenders should do—once they realized they had killed the Son of God—Peter was led by the Holy Spirit to direct them to TURN TO God (repent) and receive the gift of baptism, the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In this, God made his enemies into his family. What do you learn and feel about the God who offers this?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, it is unfathomable how incredibly patient, kind and forgiving you really are. I share in the guilt of Jesus’ death, for my sin was paid for there as well. You paid for my forgiveness before I sinned. I’m tempted to think your picture could be in the dictionary next to “Too good to be true” but you are perfect in your goodness. Thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit!

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

What inspires joyful generosity in your life?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer.

A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. **Acts 2:42–47 NLT**

Peter told the crowds: “Friends, I realize that what you and your leaders did to Jesus was done in ignorance. But God was fulfilling what all the prophets had foretold about the Messiah—that he must suffer these things. Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah. For he must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his holy prophets. **Acts 3:17–21 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Many people have asked the question (or some version of it): “If God is good, why is there so much suffering in the world?” Knowing that Jesus himself suffered greatly and *participated in our temptations and suffering*, how would you answer that question?

What an amazing picture of the forgiven people of God worshipping and caring for one another! What does that description of the early church encourage you to do now?

Do you long for Jesus’ return and the “restoration of all things”?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for your amazing plan to reconcile people to yourself through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. I pray that people would recognize your grace, turn to you, and be reconciled so that they can participate in your good, pleasing, and perfect plan!

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you value speaking the truth in love? How does that look?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of men who believed now totaled about 5,000.

The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest. They brought in the two disciples and demanded, “By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?”

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of our people, are we being questioned today because we’ve done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, ‘The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.’ There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.”

The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing the council could say. **Acts 4:1–14 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Does it surprise you that “ordinary men” who had “been with Jesus” were led by the Holy Spirit to speak wisdom, truth, and opportunity to the rulers of the people and religious elite? Do you see a pattern of God asserting his truth in surprising ways?

What was the purpose of the physical healing, the ultimate outcome of the miracle?

What do you believe is God’s goal when he does something miraculous today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, may we see you and respond in faith. We want to see miracles so that Jesus may be glorified and people be reconciled to you!