

*Get Ready!***Celebrating The Good News**

By: Andy Cisneros

**Text**

Acts 2

Key Quest Verse

“Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given to me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.” Ephesians 6:19

Bible Background

In our texts, we see examples of early Christian evangelists that were effective because they received the power of the Holy Spirit. They chose a lifestyle, not just spontaneous acts, of making others disciples of Christ, depending on the Holy Spirit for the ability to witness. In Acts 2, a diverse group of people were gathered in the city of Jerusalem for Pentecost which became the setting for 3,000 people to respond to Peter faithfully proclaiming the truth. As believers we too are called to be witnesses, not just do witnessing. We can trust today, just as the early leaders of the church trusted, in the power of God to “cut to the heart” of those who hear.

Adapted from The Word in Life Study Bible 1996, NKJV, Thomas Nelson Publishers

Get Ready!

Lesson Quest

What I want my students to:

Know: How important it is to know what God’s mission is for them.

Feel: That they can know and be excited about what God wants for them.

Do: Commit to a mission in the body of Christ (the church).



Leader’s Devotion

Don’t be too quick to judge the success of your teaching by counting how many of your students make a decision to live their life for Christ. Present them with the truth and pray for God’s spirit to work within them. Consider this:

“Jesus called us to be His witnesses (Acts 1:6-8), but that is not a call to convert others. Conversion is the responsibility of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11). That means that we need not measure our success in witnessing by the number who respond. If that were the case, Jesus would have often been considered a failure: many who heard Him, and even some who followed Him, turned out to be uninterested (John 6:60-66). We ought to avoid the trap of evaluating our faith by how others respond to us. The spirit of God converts people, we don’t. If we do, our converts are on shaky ground. The story is told of an evangelist traveling on an airplane who sat across the aisle from a noisy drunk. After watching the fellow carry on for a while, the minister’s seatmate turned and sarcastically remarked, “I understand he’s one of your converts!” The evangelist replied, “Must be. If he were God’s, he wouldn’t act that way.”

Taken from The Word in Life Study Bible NKJV, 1996, Thomas Nelson Publishers

Get Set!



Option A

WHAT DID YOU SEE?

Materials: Older youth or adult.

After your class has begun, have an older youth or another adult come to your room. Have them do a variety of things: give you something, tell you something, show you something and either shake your hand or give you a hug and then leave the room. Ask your students: **What just happened? What did you see, what did you hear? You have witnessed something here this morning and you have shared what you saw and heard. That makes you a “witness.” Today in our lesson, we will look at a man who became a great witness and see for ourselves the message that he had to share with others.**

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Option B

NOT ASHAMED

Materials: none

Where do you think would be the hardest place to ever admit you were a Christian? Allow each student to answer and change their answer throughout the discussion. Today we are going to learn about men that were not ashamed of their decision to follow Christ. They can be examples for us when we find ourselves in moments where we aren’t sure if we want to identify ourselves as a Christian or not. Great things can come about if we are willing to tell others about the One that we serve, including others desiring to serve Christ as well.

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

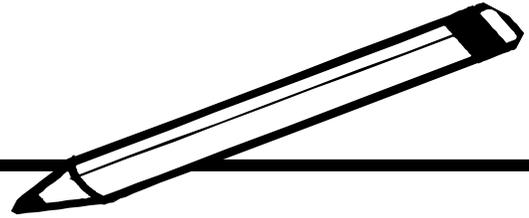
Get Set!**Bible Story**

Following Jesus resurrection He appeared to His disciples over a period of 40 days talking to them about the kingdom of God. On one of these occasions He gave them some special instructions while they were eating together. His instructions were that they were to remain in Jerusalem until they received the special gift He had told them would be sent to them by His Father. That promised gift was God's power or His Holy Spirit. Once they had received that power, then they were to be witnesses. They were to begin in Jerusalem and then move out into Judea and then Samaria and finally to the ends of the earth.

The disciples did as Jesus instructed them and on the day of Pentecost, as they were together in one house, they heard a violent wind. This sound filled the whole house and then they saw what appeared to be tongues of fire coming down and landing on each one of them. They began to feel different, they were full of energy, they began talking in languages that were not their own, languages they had not learned and had never spoken before. The gift that was promised them had come and filled them up! Wow! Can you even begin to imagine speaking another language that you had never spoken before?

At that time there were others in Jerusalem who believed in Jesus and who loved and worshiped God. These people were from all over the known world and each group spoke a different language. All of the sudden, they heard the disciples speaking in their languages and they could understand the message that they were hearing. They were utterly amazed and spoke to each other asking what had happened to these men. They knew that all of them were from Galilee and had only spoken their own language before. They really wondered what all of this meant. Some people, however, thought that they were drunk. Peter then boldly stood up and began to speak with the crowd. He shared that it was early morning and they had not been drinking. He told them that they should listen carefully to what they were about to hear. He went on to speak to them about what would happen in the last days and how important it was for all to repent and follow the Lord. He shared what he had seen and heard during the time that he had walked and talked with the Lord before He ascended into heaven. That day with the spirit God placed within Peter and the others, they spoke out without hesitation about Jesus and things to come. Peter warned them of what would happen if they didn't believe. He also let them know that if they repented and were baptized that they too would receive the Holy Spirit to help them share with others. That day, about three thousand people were baptized and joined the church.

If you are part of God's family you also have been given His spirit, His power so that you can be His witnesses and share all that you have seen and heard as you study His Word.

Go!**Holey Witness****SCIENCE**

Materials: One gallon Ziploc plastic bag, pitcher of water, four sharpened pencils, worksheet “Holey Witness”

Quest Connection

Procedure: Fill the plastic bag with water and seal. **The water in the bag represents our power to be witnesses to the world. There are many times when there are obstacles or it becomes difficult to be a witness for Christ. What are some of the obstacles you face? (rejection, ridicule, competing activities, etc.) These pencils represent the obstacles we face. What do you think, will the water spill out when we stick a pencil through the bag? I’m going to stick this pencil right through the bag, hope your clothes dry quickly.** Hold the bag over the students’ heads. Stick the pencil through one side of the bag and out the other, leaving it in place. **What do you think, will it hold any more pencils?** Stick the rest of the pencils through the bag, again leaving them in place. **Sometimes we think that our witness can be ruined when we face difficult circumstances, like standing up for what we know is correct, but the truth is it is those exact times when our witness can be it’s most powerful because others will recognize our faith in Christ.**

Close

Pass out worksheets and allow for time to complete. Allow students to brainstorm with each other and share similar experiences.

Go!**Useless Body****MUSIC**

Materials: A stereo, the CD, *Casting Crowns*, specifically the song, “If We Are the Body” (lyrics are also included in the resource pages of this lesson)

Quest Connection

Sometimes we think of being a missionary as someone who goes to far away places and leaves their familiar cultural norms and families behind. While this is true, often we don’t even have to leave our very own Church building to be a witness and share Christ’s love with someone who is just waiting to hear. We may have to leave our seat though, it will take effort, no matter if we’re crossing the ocean or crossing the hall. Let’s listen to a song that captures this idea in it’s lyrics.

Close

Is anyone willing to share a time in their life when they felt excluded. As the teacher, be prepared to share a personal experience if the students do not immediately volunteer. **Believe it or not, sometimes churches and the members of churches make mistakes that are rooted in the idea that only people that are “good enough” or “look, act and think like us” can be apart of the body of Christ. But does that make any sense? Christ died to cover all sins, for all people and it’s our job for those of us who are already baptized to invite others to become part of the family. What are specific and practical ways we can be friendly and inviting to visitors that come into our church?**

Go!**Experience Matters****CREATIVE WRITING**

Materials: Pen and paper, worksheet “Experience Matters”

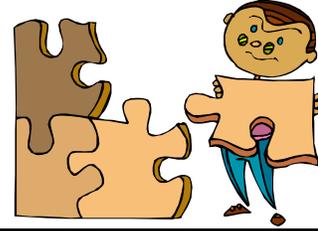
Procedure: Have students complete the worksheets individually and then begin a group discussion using the Quest Connection.

**Quest Connection**

To determine possible places for serving God, we can examine these six different kinds of our personal experiences. Discuss: Which experiences do you think have made the biggest impact on your life? How can you use your experiences to serve others?

Close

I want to encourage you to save this worksheet and periodically update it, keeping your responsibility to serve God and others a priority in your daily life. Have students save these in a special place like their Bible.

Go!**A Bigger Picture**

GAME

Materials: You need two 50 piece puzzles.**Procedure:** Separate the boys from the girls and have a race. Put two puzzles in front of them and see who can assemble their puzzle the fastest. Do not give them a picture of the puzzle until halfway through. If your group is not big enough then have one group do it together but put give them a goal of a completing it within a predetermined time.**Quest Connection**

Often we don't know how things fit together and it's especially difficult when can't see the bigger picture or know the outcome. But God has given us a life to live for Him, for His glory and we do know the bigger picture, we know that eternal life is offered to all who choose to follow Him and accept His Son as their Savior. We don't have to go through life trying to make it all make sense like putting a puzzle together, God is in control of all our pieces, even the ones that don't seem to fit neatly anywhere.

Close

Give each student a puzzle piece to keep to remind them that they are a part of the bigger picture of bringing others to Christ.

Go!**No Thanks, Please****SERVICE****Materials:** Pen and paper**Procedure:** Read Matthew 6:3-6.**Quest Connection**

Discuss: How do these verses change your view of public service? Is it wrong to receive recognition for the good things that you do? Is it wrong to do good things so that you will receive recognition? Jesus says in these verses that it is the hypocrites that pray in public places so that they will be seen and heard. They are not praying to communicate with God, they are praying to receive recognition. He also says that when you give or pray in secret and are not given recognition by others, God still sees your faithfulness and will reward you.

Close

Think of one thing you can do to serve someone else for which you will receive absolutely no honor or praise and write it down on a piece of paper. I want to challenge each of you to complete some type of service this week without being acknowledged and next week we'll talk about how it felt to receive no thanks or praise next week. It might be hard, but I am confident we will all benefit from serving.

Go!**Pure Motives****CREATIVE WRITING**

Materials: Pictures of several different cars, cardstock, scissors, glue, pens

Procedures: Have each student pick out their favorite picture of a car and cut and glue in on cardstock paper for support. Then have them paste what drives them (example: school, girls, boys, money etc.) on their car.

Quest Connection

We are actually witnessing by our behavior in common, every day life. What drives us or motivates us is often no secret; people notice our priorities. If others knew what motivates you would they recognize you as a witness for Christ? Witnessing is not about doing, preaching a sermon or baptizing a person, it is about being. Are you being a witness for Christ in the way you live?

Close

Say a prayer for your class, asking God to search each one of them and to sort out priorities and motives in their lives so that they may be effective witnesses for Him.

Dear God,

Today I want to thank you for the following people who have been witnesses in my life:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

I also want to pray that I can be a witness to the following people in my life:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Ministry experiences: How have you served God in the past?

Spiritual experiences:
What have been your most meaningful times with God?

Educational experiences:
What were your favorite subjects in school?

Family experiences:
What have you learned growing up in your family?

Vocational experiences: What jobs (if any) have you been most effective in and enjoyed the most?

Painful experiences:
What problems, hurts, and trials have you learned from?

If We Are The Body

James 2:1-9 / John 5:19-21

Lyrics: Mark Hall / Music: Casting Crowns

It's crowded in worship today
As she slips in trying to fade into the faces
The girls teasing laughter is carrying farther than they know
Farther than they know

But if we are the body
Why aren't His arms reaching?
Why aren't His hands healing?
Why aren't His words teaching?
And if we are the body
Why aren't His feet going?
Why is His love not showing them there is a way?
There is a way

A traveler is far away from home
He sheds his coat and quietly sinks into the back row
The weight of their judgmental glances
Tells him that his chances are better out on the road

But if we are the body
Why aren't His arms reaching?
Why aren't His hands healing?
Why aren't His words teaching?
And if we are the body
Why aren't His feet going?
Why is His love not showing them there is a way?
There is a way

Jesus paid much too high a price
For us to pick and choose who should come
And we are the body of Christ

But if we are the body
Why aren't His arms reaching?
Why aren't His hands healing?
Why aren't His words teaching?
And if we are the body
Why aren't His feet going?
Why is His love not showing them there is a way?
There is a way

Jesus is the way



On the pencils write various obstacles you face that either continually or just every once in a while sneak up on you and make it seem difficult to be a witness. Share your obstacles with each other, it's probably more likely than not that we all face similar challenges.