

Investigating

God's Word...

YEAR FIVE

Acts 1-14

Sunday School Curriculum

Summer Quarter

Lesson Sequence

Summer Quarter

The **Lesson Sequence** gives the teacher an overview of the entire quarter.

The central goal of the ***Investigating God's Word...*** curriculum is to enable children the opportunity to read and study the entire Bible—from Genesis to Revelation—by the time they “graduate” from 6th grade.

Week One	Acts 1
Week Two	Acts 2
Week Three	Acts 3:1-4:12
Week Four	Acts 4:13-5:16
Week Five	Acts 5:17-6:15
Week Six	Acts 7
Week Seven	Acts 8
Week Eight	Acts 9
Week Nine	Acts 10
Week Ten	Acts 11
Week Eleven	Acts 12:1-13:12
Week Twelve	Acts 13:13-52
Week Thirteen	Acts 14



Lesson Four

Acts 4:13-5:16

Suggested Schedule

Welcome <i>Psalm 96:4-6</i>	2-3 min.
Drill Time <i>Pentecost</i>	5 min.
W.O.W! <i>Ordinary</i>	5 min.
Historical Context <i>Timeline</i>	2-3 min.
Bible Investigation <i>Acts 4:13-5:16</i>	20-30 min.
Lesson-At-Home <i>Acts 4:13</i>	2-3 min.

Overview

Acts 4:13 records the reaction of the Sanhedrin to the healing of the crippled man by Peter and John. These were just a couple of uneducated, ordinary fishermen! Unwittingly, they attributed the boldness and power of these men to their relationship to Jesus. Unfortunately for them, they could not silence these apostles, even after many threats. They knew the crowds were not on their side, so these chief priests and elders released these “ordinary” guys.

When Peter and John report all that had happened to them before the Sanhedrin, the other apostles and the rest of the church pray. They ask the LORD to give them boldness to speak His Word, and for God to perform healings and signs and wonders among them. After they pray, another mini-Pentecost occurred, causing the apostles to speak the Word with boldness. Prayer answered!

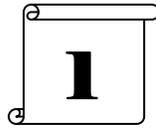
At the end of Acts 4, we get another summary description of life in the early church. They were one of heart, caring for one another as well as the poor. The early church members sold property often and gave it to the apostles to distribute. Barnabas is introduced as one person who gives in this way. Yet, at the beginning of Acts 5, we have the story of Ananias and Sapphira, the anti-givers. They attempt to act like others in their giving, yet not truly give. Since they lied to God, they were struck dead. Great fear goes through the church, yet God continues to do great signs and wonders too.

Preparation

Read and meditate on Acts 4-5 this week.

Teaching Encouragement

It is easy to forget that the apostles were just ordinary men who were chosen by God to do extraordinary things. These ordinary men were changed by a relationship with Jesus and by the work of the Spirit. On the other hand, Ananias and Sapphira were just ordinary sinners who followed their own hearts instead of Jesus. They were judged for their ordinary sin of lying to God and to His people. So, what sort of ordinary people will your students be? Pray that they will be ordinary men and women who will be made extraordinary by the Lord Jesus Christ!



Welcome

Greet the students. Welcome visitors. To prepare the students for class today, read Psalm 96:4-6.

⁴For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. ⁵For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. ⁶Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.

Say: *Who is most worthy of our praise? [The LORD.] Then why do we so often give our high praise to people or things? They can quickly become our idols! Let's praise God alone by studying His Word today.*



Drill Time

Now, let's move on to DRILL TIME—our weekly opportunity to review what we have learned in the past. Are you ready?

Today's questions: *On what feast day did God send His Holy Spirit upon the apostles? How did the Holy Spirit come upon the apostles? What did some of the people think had happened to the apostles? Who gave his first major "sermon" on Pentecost? How many accepted the message of the gospel on Pentecost?*

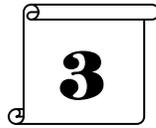
Call on volunteers or select students to make attempts.

Answers:

1. On Pentecost.
2. A sound like a violent wind came from heaven; tongues of fire rested on them; they spoke in other languages.
3. Some thought that the apostles were drunk.
4. Simon Peter.
5. About three thousand.

Say: *Just as Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit had been sent to the apostles to empower them to be His witnesses. We'll read more of the "acts" of the Holy Spirit in our Bible Investigation time.*

The answers to today's Drill Time questions are found in Acts 2.



W.O.W!

Our *W.O.W!* (*Word of the Week*) this week is **ORDINARY**. **Write it on the board.** This is a family word. What does it mean to be **ORDINARY**? **Allow answers.**

Something that is ORDINARY is something of common quality or ability. It is what is to be normally expected. An ORDINARY day is one where nothing very special happens—just a day of school or work, with nothing exciting in it.

An ORDINARY person is someone who is just sort of plain and normal—again, nothing very special. To be ORDINARY is to be sort of like everyone else.

We use the word EXTRA-ORDINARY to describe something or someone who is NOT ORDINARY. An EXTRA-ORDINARY person is one who has gifts and abilities far greater than normal people. We often think of star athletes or people with great intellects as EXTRA-ORDINARY.

In our reading today, some people will be called ORDINARY. Pay attention, and see if they are really EXTRA-ORDINARY!

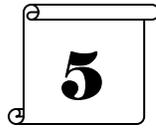


Historical Context

As you continue your studies, draw this timeline on the board, if necessary.

Book of Acts Timeline





Bible Investigation

Have your students open their Bibles to Acts 4.

Introduction: *We left off with Peter and John before the high priests and other members of the Sanhedrin (the Jewish ruling body). Remember, these were the same men who had put Jesus on trial—which led Him to be crucified. What did they ask Peter and John? [By what power or what name did they heal the crippled man?] Peter and John told them that they healed this man in the name of Jesus, and that salvation is only found in Him. Let's see how they respond to their MESSAGE!*

Let's read. Read Acts 4:13.

¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Discussion: *There's our Word of the Week already! Who are the ORDINARY men? [Peter and John.] The high priests were highly schooled men who realized that Peter and John were unschooled, normal guys—very ORDINARY. What did these ORDINARY men do for a living before they met Jesus? [They were fishermen.] But, these ORDINARY men became EXTRA-ORDINARY! How? [They had been with Jesus.] It was Jesus that changed these ORDINARY men into courageous preachers of God's Word!*

Application: *You may grow up to be just ORDINARY men and women. But, you will be EXTRA-ORDINARY if you follow Jesus. Jesus will change you by His love and grace and power to become quite OUT-OF-THE-ORDINARY. Jesus chooses ORDINARY people to do His work so we will depend on His power, not our own skills, talents and gifts! Take your ORDINARY selves and give them to Jesus.*

Let's continue. Read verses 14-17.

¹⁴ But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. ¹⁵ So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ¹⁶ “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

Discussion: *The members of the Sanhedrin knew that these ORDINARY fishermen had done an EXTRA-ORDINARY miracle in healing the crippled man. But, what were they afraid of? [They were afraid that the gospel of Jesus would spread.] These men wanted to stop the spread of the gospel. Do you think they can stop the growth of God's Kingdom? [No!]*

Listen to what happens next. Read verses 18-22.

¹⁸ Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. ²⁰ For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." ²¹ After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. ²² For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

Discussion: *What did the religious leaders tell Peter and John not to do? [They told them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.] Will Peter and John obey this command? [No.] Why not? [They will obey God! They cannot help talking about Jesus.] Did you hear how the people responded to the healing of this crippled man? They praised God! So the rulers could do nothing to Peter and John at this point.*

Application: *How will you respond when someone threatens you and tells you not to talk about Jesus? This happens to missionaries all over our world. Will you obey God, or give into the fear of man? God will give us courage if we ask Him!*

Let's continue. Read verses 23-24a.

²³ On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God.

Discussion: *What did the other disciples and followers of Jesus do when they heard what had happened to Peter and John? [They prayed!]*

Listen to their prayer. Read verses 24b-30.

²⁴ ... "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.'" ²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate

met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ²⁹ Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

Discussion: *What did the apostles ask for in this prayer? [For boldness, so they could speak God’s Word. For God to heal and perform miracles and signs.] Instead of being fearful of the threats of the Sanhedrin, they prayed for faith and boldness to speak God’s Word more and more. They also wanted God to perform more miracles, so Jesus could be praised.*

Application: *Do you pray for God to give you boldness to be His witness? That should be a regular prayer for all who follow Jesus.*

Listen to what happens next. Read verse 31.

³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Discussion: *Did God answer their prayer? [Yes!] In a similar manner to Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled the apostles. What did the Holy Spirit give the apostles the ability to do? [Speak the Word of God boldly.]*

Let’s read more. Read verses 32-35.

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

Discussion: *Wow! Again we find out some amazing things about these first Christians. In your own words, how would you describe them? Allow answers. They had incredible unity. They were selfless and loving towards one another. They were boldly proclaiming the Word of God. Why did they bring money and put it “at the apostles’ feet?” [So the apostles could wisely distribute money to the needy.] How amazing it was that no one had any needs! They chose to share all they had. It sounds like a family, doesn’t it? They were acting like the family of God.*

Let's finish this chapter. Read verses 36-37.

³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Discussion: *Here we have an example of one man bringing his own money to give to those in need. Barnabas sold a field and gave all of the money to the apostles, out of love for Jesus. This sets us up for what will happen in the next chapter.*

Let's begin reading Acts 5. Read Acts 5:1-2.

¹ Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. ² With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

Discussion: *Did Ananias bring the apostles ALL of the money from the sale of his land? [No.] Barnabas brought ALL of the money to the apostles. Why did Ananias (with Sapphira's full knowledge) keep part of it for himself? Allow answers. For whatever reason, he wanted the apostles to think he had given all of the money to them.*

Listen to what happens. Read verses 3-6.

³ Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴ Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't it the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God." ⁵ When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. ⁶ Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

Discussion: *Wow! Ananias thought he was just lying to Peter and the apostles. Who was he really lying to? [God.] Do you understand why this was such a great sin? Ananias could have sold the land and kept the money—no one was required to give their money to the poor. He could have given some of it and kept some of it too! Instead, Ananias wanted to look good to others AND still keep some of the money. He wanted to have the approval of men and be selfish at the same time.*

Application: *Ananias did the exact opposite of what the Church of Jesus Christ is all about. Christians are to joyfully and lovingly give and share with one another. God calls you and me to be God-centered and others-centered, not self-centered like Ananias.*

Listen to what happens next. Read verses 7-11.

⁷ About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ Peter asked her, “Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?” “Yes,” she said, “that is the price.” ⁹ Peter said to her, “How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.” ¹⁰ At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

Discussion: *Was Sapphira any different than her husband? [No.] She, too, was willing to lie to the Holy Spirit in order to have extra money. How did the early church respond to these two deaths? [They became very afraid.] They had a healthy fear of the LORD, didn't they? They saw His holiness and power at work. God requires His people to serve Him alone in all honesty.*

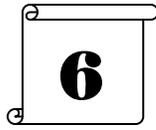
Application: *Our selfishness is abhorrent to God. He demands that His people love Him alone, and not their idols!*

Let's finish our reading for today. Read verses 12-16.

¹² The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. ¹³ No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. ¹⁵ As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. ¹⁶ Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.

Discussion: *We just read how the apostles prayed for boldness AND for great miracles to happen through them. They prayed that people would be healed so they would be pointed to Jesus. Were their prayers answered? [Yes.] The apostles did signs and wonders in the name of Jesus—but it was really the Holy Spirit working through them.*

Conclusion: *Even though some were scared of the apostles, the LORD kept adding people to the early church. These apostles were just ORDINARY men, remember? Yet God made them EXTRA-ORDINARY because they were connected to Jesus. It is the power and grace of our Savior that uses the ORDINARY in this world to do great things for Him. We'll pick up here next time...*



Lesson-At-Home

Distribute the “Lesson-At-Home” bookmarks. Read the Scripture Memory verse (Acts 4:13) together.

Acts 4:13 (NIV)

¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Say: *Will people be able to say this about you one day? The work of the Holy Spirit is to make ORDINARY people into bold and courageous witnesses of Christ. May that be each one of us!*

Repeat the verse.

Direct the students’ attentions to the bottom half of the bookmark. It includes reminder points of today’s lesson that can be discussed with their parents and reviewed during the week.

Close in prayer and dismiss the students.