

INVESTIGATING GOD'S WORD...

ACTS 1-14 | **YEAR FIVE** | SUMMER QUARTER



SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM
FOR MIDDLE ELEMENTARY CHILDREN

SS05SU-E

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.

LESSON ONE	Acts 1
LESSON TWO	Acts 2
LESSON THREE	Acts 3:1–4:12
LESSON FOUR	Acts 4:13–5:16
LESSON FIVE	Acts 5:17–6:15
LESSON SIX	Acts 7
LESSON SEVEN	Acts 8
LESSON EIGHT	Acts 9
LESSON NINE	Acts 10
LESSON TEN	Acts 11
LESSON ELEVEN	Acts 12:1–13:12
LESSON TWELVE	Acts 13:13–52
LESSON THIRTEEN	Acts 14

LESSON ONE | ACTS 1

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

WELCOME

Proverbs 24:3–5
2–3 mins.

DRILL TIME

The Twelve
5 mins.

W.O.W!

Ascension
5 mins.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Timeline
2–3 mins.

BIBLE INVESTIGATION

Acts 1
20–30 mins.

LESSON-AT-HOME

Acts 1:8
2–3 mins.

OVERVIEW

The last quarter of the year takes us to the New Testament Book of Acts. Written by Luke, it is considered the follow-up volume to the Gospel of Luke, written to the same recipient. As the Gospel of Luke ended with the ascension of Jesus, the Book of Acts begins there, giving a bit more detail on that event. Jesus instructs His disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the promised Holy Spirit. With the Spirit's power, they will become effective witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. After he said this, Jesus was taken into heaven. Two angels tell the disciples that Jesus will return in the same way He ascended.

The eleven disciples return to an upper room in Jerusalem where they devote themselves to prayer. Some women and Mary, mother of Jesus, were also there. During this time, Peter instructs the disciples that it was time to find a replacement for Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Jesus. Judas bought some land with the blood money and committed suicide there. The Scriptures prophesied that Judas would be replaced, so the disciples nominate two men: Barsabbas and Matthias. Both men had followed Jesus from the beginning. The LORD chooses Matthias to replace Judas by the casting of lots.

PREPARATION

Read and meditate on Acts 1 this week.

TEACHING ENCOURAGEMENT

As with the rest of God's Word, the main character is always God. The Book of Acts has been described as the "Acts of the Holy Spirit" emphasizing the fact that it is God who is at work in the lives of these apostles. In the very first chapter, the Holy Spirit is promised to the disciples in order for them to have power to advance the kingdom of God. The same is true for all believers today. Show your children how they too need the Holy Spirit in order to be Christ's witnesses. They need to be empowered to live Godly lives as well as have the boldness it takes to profess Christ to others. This comes from a prayerful looking to God who graciously gives His people the gift of the Spirit upon conversion. Thank God for the fulfillment of this promise!



WELCOME

THE **WELCOME** SERVES AS BOTH AN OPPORTUNITY TO GREET THE CHILDREN AS WELL AS AN EFFORT TO HELP THEM GET FOCUSED. EACH WEEK, YOU WILL BEGIN WITH QUESTIONS OR AN ACTIVITY THAT WILL ENGAGE THE CHILDREN AND HELP THEM THINK ABOUT GOD AND HIS WORD.

DRILL TIME GIVES THE CHILDREN THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECALL AND REHEARSE WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN TAUGHT IN THE PAST—AT HOME, SCHOOL AND/OR CHURCH.

THIS ELEMENT ALLOWS THE INVESTIGATING GOD'S WORD... CURRICULUM TO COVER MUCH MORE BIBLICAL "GROUND," SINCE TIME IS NOT EXPENDED REPEATING THE SAME BIBLE STORIES OVER AND OVER AGAIN FROM YEAR TO YEAR.

Greet the students. Welcome visitors. To prepare the students for class today, read Proverbs 24:3–5.

³ By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; ⁴ by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. ⁵ A wise man is full of strength, and a man of knowledge enhances his might...

Say: *These wise words demonstrate that seeking Godly knowledge and wisdom will bring you spiritual blessings that will strengthen you in this life. That should motivate you and me to study God's Word and apply it to our lives. Let's do that today!*



DRILL TIME

First, 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: *What are the names of Jesus' closest twelve disciples? Which disciple betrayed Jesus?*

Call on volunteers or select students to make attempts.

Answers:

- | | | |
|----|----------------|------------------------|
| 1. | Simon Peter | Matthew |
| | Andrew | Thomas |
| | James | James, son of Alphaeus |
| | John | Simon the Zealot |
| | Philip | Judas, son of James |
| | Bartholomew | Judas Iscariot |
| 2. | Judas Iscariot | |

Say: *The twelve disciples were also given the name "apostles." They were followers of Jesus who were now also sent out to do their King's business. Only Judas Iscariot was not truly a follower of Jesus, or a true apostle. We will read more about him as we study God's Word today.*

THE **W.O.W!** IS THE WORD OF THE WEEK. THIS ELEMENT IS INCLUDED TO HELP THE CHILDREN BUILD THEIR THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL VOCABULARIES. THESE WORDS ARE VITAL TO THE CHRISTIAN'S UNDERSTANDING OF GOD AND HIS WORLD.

EACH WEEK, THE BIBLE LESSON WILL BE PLACED IN **HISTORICAL CONTEXT** BY USE OF A TIMELINE. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE CHILDREN LEARN HOW THE STORY OF REDEMPTIVE HISTORY FITS TOGETHER. BIBLE STORIES MUST NOT BE VIEWED AS DETACHED SCENES—THEY ARE TO BE SHOWN AS A PART OF A MUCH BIGGER PICTURE. THE TIMELINE IS A USEFUL TOOL TOWARD THAT END.



W.O.W!

Our W.O.W! (Word of the Week) this week is **ASCENSION**. Write it on the board.

To ASCEND is to gradually move upwards. When you ride an elevator to the top stories of a tall building, you are ASCENDING to great heights.

When Christians use the word ASCENSION, we are talking about the ASCENSION of Jesus Christ. After rising from the dead and spending some more time with His closest disciples, Jesus ASCENDED. Where did He ASCEND to? [Into heaven.]

We will read about the ASCENSION of Jesus today. That must have been an amazing sight—to see Jesus gradually being taken higher and higher to heaven!

The ASCENSION of Jesus is a vital part of His reign over His people as King Jesus. Kings are said to ASCEND the throne of their country. Jesus' ASCENSION, then, was not just to return to heaven, but a demonstration of the fact that He is the supreme King of the universe!



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As you study this quarter, draw this timeline on the board. Always remember that the students need to understand God's Word in its historical context.

This Week's Timeline





BIBLE INVESTIGATION

THE BIBLE INVESTIGATION TIME IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE WEEK'S LESSON. IT PLUNGES THE STUDENT DIRECTLY INTO GOD'S WORD, NOT SIMPLY A PARAPHRASE OF A BIBLE STORY.

ALL SCRIPTURE TEXT INCLUDED IN THE CURRICULUM IS FROM THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION (ESV).

THE BIBLE READING IS TAKEN IN SHORT SECTIONS, SEPARATED BY TIMES OF DISCUSSION, QUESTIONS, AND APPLICATION POINTS. THIS FORMAT ALLOWS AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO STOP, THINK ABOUT AND DISCUSS WHAT IS BEING READ.

Have the students turn in their Bibles to Acts 1.

Introduction: *For this final quarter of the year, we turn our attention to the New Testament. Does anyone know who wrote the Book of Acts? **Allow answers.** Luke wrote the Book of Acts—the same Luke who wrote the Gospel of Luke. The Book of Acts can be seen as the second volume of a two-volume book, both written by Luke. The fuller title of the Book of Acts is “The Acts of the Apostles.” Yet we’ll see that we don’t read about too many of the apostles. Thus, we’ll call this book, “The Acts of the Holy Spirit!”*

*Let’s begin in Acts 1. **Read Acts 1:1-2.***

¹ In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

Discussion: *Stop there for a moment. Who wrote the Book of Acts? [Luke.] What was his “former” book? [The Gospel of Luke.] Who did Luke write both of these books to? [Theophilus.] Theophilus was most likely a prominent Roman leader who became a Christian. Luke wanted to give Theophilus an orderly account of the life of Jesus and the work of the Spirit in the early church.*

*Let’s read those verses again. **Read verses 1-2.***

¹ In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

Discussion: *What did Luke write about in the Gospel of Luke? [All that Jesus did and taught before His ASCENSION.] The Gospel of Luke starts with the birth of Jesus and ends with His ASCENSION. Let me read the last part of the Gospel of Luke to you so we can put the Book of Acts in context.*

Read Luke 24:50-53.

⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple blessing God.



THIS GREY SIDEBAR
FOUND ON ALL PAGES
IS FOR THE TEACHER
TO WRITE NOTES AS HE
OR SHE PREPARES THE
LESSON.

OTHER TEACHING TIPS OR
IMPORTANT EXEGETICAL
INFORMATION MAY ALSO
APPEAR ON THE SIDEBAR.

Discussion: *These last verses in the Book of Luke briefly describe the ASCENSION of Jesus into heaven. What did the disciples do after Jesus ASCENDED? [They worshiped Him, then returned to Jerusalem with great joy.] Where did they stay continually? [At the temple, praising God.]*

Application: *When you and I receive Jesus as our ASCENDED King, our response must be daily worship and praise!*

*Now, let's go back to the Book of Acts. **Read Acts 1:3-5.***

³ He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Discussion: *Do you remember any of the convincing "proofs" that Jesus gave His disciples to prove that He was alive? **Allow answers.** Doubting Thomas certainly was given some convincing proof, when Jesus allowed him to touch the nail holes in his hands and the place where the sword entered His side! Isn't it amazing that Jesus spent forty more days with His disciples before His ASCENSION? According to verse 4, what did He instruct them to do after His ASCENSION? [To wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Holy Spirit.] What is this baptism of the Holy Spirit all about? We will read about that in Acts 2.*

*Let's continue in Chapter One. **Read verses 6-7.***

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority."

Discussion: *Before Jesus ASCENDED to heaven, what did the disciples think He would do? [Restore the kingdom to Israel.] The disciples were still looking for Jesus to begin an earthly reign by overturning the Romans and restoring Israel. Was Jesus going to rule on earth at this point? [No.] Only God sets the dates and times for these things. The disciples could not know!*

*Listen to these next words of Jesus. **Read verse 8.***

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon



APPLICATION POINTS ARE
WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC
OF THE DISCUSSION,
RATHER THAN BEING
LEFT TO THE END OF THE
LESSON.

you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Discussion: *What did Jesus say that the apostles would receive when the Holy Spirit comes? [Power.] They will receive power to be Christ’s witnesses. Where will they witness for Jesus? [Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.]*

Application: *To understand what Jesus was saying, we need a quick geography lesson. **Draw four concentric circles on the board.** Let’s put Jerusalem in the center circle. Jerusalem is the city the disciples were now in. Judea is the next circle out, since it is the region in which Jerusalem is located. Then, we’ll put Samaria in the third circle, since it is another territory region just north of Judea. Finally, the disciples would witness to the ends of the earth. Do you see how the Holy Spirit would empower these followers of Christ to be witnesses where they were first, and then gradually outward? That’s what Jesus has in mind for all of His followers. We are to be His witnesses in our homes as well as our city, our state, our nation, and the entire world!*

*Listen to what happened next. **Read verses 9-11.***

⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Discussion: *Here again we read of Jesus’ ASCENSION into heaven. Who were the two men who spoke to the disciples? [Two angels.] What did the angels say? [Jesus will come back in the same way as He ASCENDED.] That means that Jesus will DESCEND from heaven one day to gather all His people to Himself. Isn’t that comforting good news? We don’t need to stare into the sky; but someday, His people will see His return.*

*Let’s keep on reading. **Read verses 12-14.***

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and



Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Discussion: *How many of the original twelve disciples were now gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem? [Eleven.] Who was missing? [Judas Iscariot.] We remember that Judas is the one who betrayed Jesus. What were the eleven disciples (and others) doing? [Praying.] Who else was with the eleven disciples? [Some women and Mary, the mother of Jesus.] What do you think they were praying about?*

Allow answers.

Let's continue. Read verses 15-17.

¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, ¹⁶ “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.”

Discussion: *Stop there for a minute. Who has emerged as the leader of the apostles? [Peter.] Remember that Peter was the one who denied Jesus three times. Yet Jesus restored him, and Peter is now leading this band of believers. How many were there at this point? [One hundred and twenty.] Who was Peter talking about as “one of our number?” [Judas Iscariot.]*

Listen to more of what Peter says. Read verses 18-20.

¹⁸ (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹ And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰ “For it is written in the Book of Psalms, “ ‘May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it; and “ ‘Let another take his office.’

Discussion: *We find out in the Gospel of Matthew that Judas actually hanged himself in that field, after trying to return the “blood money.” What a sad end to his life—betraying the Lord Jesus and then suicide. Why is Peter talking about Judas now? [He has to be replaced, according to Scripture.]*



Application: *Just coming to church and learning about Jesus does not make you a true believer in Jesus. Judas spent three years with Jesus, yet never truly believed in Him. Your heart must turn to Jesus in faith or you too will betray Jesus instead of following Him.*

*Let's finish our reading for today. **Read verses 21-26.***

²¹ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”

²³ And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” ²⁶ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Discussion: *Two men who had followed Jesus from the beginning were possibilities to replace Judas. Who was chosen? [Matthias.] We don't know much about Matthias at all, since this is the only time he is mentioned in the Bible. We do know that He was now one of the twelve apostles!*

Conclusion: *The Book of Acts begins with the ASCENSION of our Lord Jesus into heaven. Who will now be at work in the lives of the apostles? [The Holy Spirit.] They are prayerfully waiting in Jerusalem for the promised Spirit.*

We'll pick up our study in Acts 2 next time and see what happens!



LESSON-AT-HOME

THE LESSON-AT-HOME SECTION IS THE CLOSING TIME EACH WEEK. BOOKMARKS ARE GIVEN TO THE STUDENTS THAT INCLUDE THE SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE AND A LESSON REVIEW. THE LESSON REVIEW CONTAINS WORDS AND PHRASES THAT CAN SPARK MEMORIES AS WELL AS CONVERSATION WITH PARENTS.

Distribute the “Lesson-At-Home” bookmarks. Read the Scripture Memory verse (Acts 1:8) together.

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Say: *These are some of the last words Jesus spoke to His disciples before His ASCENSION. How can they be witnesses throughout the world? [Only by the power of the Spirit.] The same goes for you and me today. We need God’s Spirit to be His witnesses!*

Review 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.