

THE GOSPEL WRITERS

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Pencils, pieces of paper, a container
- Copies of the downloadable “622 service” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: SENSORY STORIES

For this game, the teens pretend to have only one sense (sight, smell, taste, touch, hearing) that they can use to describe an object. Ahead of time, write out “assignments” (see examples below) on pieces of paper, folded and placed in a container. One at a time, each teen selects a piece of paper and begins to give a verbal description of the object they’ve selected using only that one sense. The others must try to guess what the object is.

- Sight / a piano
- Smell / cookies
- Taste / toothpaste
- Touch / a teddy bear
- Hearing / a mouse

FOR GROUPS OF FOUR OR MORE, TRY DIVIDING THE TEENS INTO TEAMS. THE “HOME” TEAM GETS TO GUESS AND THE OPPOSING TEAM GETS TO SEE THE PIECE OF PAPER AND KEEP THE DESCRIBER ACCOUNTABLE FOR NOT USING OFF-LIMITS DESCRIPTORS.

622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order for service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: PERSPECTIVES

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- If you did the ice breaker: Were there any instances where you would have described something differently from how another person did? How would you have changed your description if you could have used all five senses to describe your object?
- Have you ever had an experience where you and a friend watched the same movie (or read the same book), but experienced it differently?
- What do you think makes *your* perspective unique?

A few things worth pointing out (if they don’t otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *Because each of us is unique, we come at things from different angles. Depending on how much information we have, we communicate in the best way we are able, but because all humans are limited, we always have to do the best we can with the senses we’ve got.*

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- *Many of us have had the experience of getting out of a movie theatre with a friend and having experienced it differently. For example, perhaps one person was sitting behind someone tall and couldn't see part of the screen. Or perhaps the volume was turned down and one of us had difficulty in hearing parts of the movie. Maybe one of you had seen a prequel and another had not. There are many factors that go into how we experience the world, so it's not surprising that we may have a slightly different take on things from someone else.*
- *Invite your teens to consider: their past experience, their personality, any special (or limited) abilities, etc.*

THE LESSON: LUKE 24

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

The amazing miracle of Jesus entering human history is recorded for us in the four Gospels: authored by Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each of these men, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote an eyewitness (or eyewitness-based) account of the life, ministry, death and resurrection of our Lord.

Their accounts were written from different perspectives and were originally intended for different audiences, but together their testimonies have been handed down through the centuries: *to us*. St. Matthew was a Jewish tax collector who wanted his readers to understand that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy: Messiah and King. St. Mark liked to use the word "immediately" to convey how action-packed Jesus' life of service was. St. Luke was a Gentile (non-Jew) and according to tradition, a doctor. It is Luke that tells us the most about Jesus' birth and his compassionate ministry of healing. St. John had a style all his own, and wanted his readers to understand that Jesus was not just human, but fully divine. Together the Gospels paint a rich portrait of our Lord for a common purpose: "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

Jesus left his disciples with a job to do. They were to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and then they were to go and share the good news, acting as witnesses to all they had seen "in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The Gospel accounts we hold in our hands today are one of the ways in which those first eyewitnesses obeyed this commission!

Refer to Luke 24:36-53.

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Note: *Before reading the text, point out that our reading takes place after the death and resurrection of Jesus.*

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- How were the disciples feeling at the beginning of the passage? At the end? What did it take to get them from one place to the other?
- How did Jesus equip the disciples for the task of being his witnesses?
- What can we learn from this about how Jesus works with his people?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *When Jesus first appeared to them, the reaction of the disciples was shock and fear. They did not know what it was they were seeing, and you may also recall that they had all recently deserted him! Their fear quickly turned into a bewildered joy – it seemed too good to be true, but in the end they went on their way worshipping "with great joy". Jesus appeared and spoke peace to the disciples and took the trouble to show them that he was who he claimed to be. Next he "opened their minds to the scriptures". He commissioned them and blessed them. Step by step, Jesus took them from a place of fear and uncertainty to a place of joy, confidence and purpose.*

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- *The disciples had already spent a great deal of time following Jesus and learning from him. But it was their encounter with the risen Christ that transformed them into powerful witnesses. Jesus patiently showed them that he was truly resurrected. He then took them to the scriptures and “opened their minds” so they could understand what had happened and why. Next he blessed them and gave them a mission as his witnesses, but promised them “power from on high” – the Holy Spirit – to help them.*
- *We can learn first of all that Jesus is kind, patient and forgiving. Even when we make a mess of things, he doesn’t write us out of his plan, but comes to us speaking peace and offering a second chance. Jesus equips us for the task that he gives. 2 Peter 1:3 says that we have been given “everything needed for life and godliness” just as the disciples were. Moreover, because we know that he is trustworthy, we can move forward with joy and confidence, even when we don’t have all the answers. Commentator Matthew Henry wrote that, like the disciples, “While waiting for God’s promises, we must go forth to meet them with our praises”.*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

*The Gospel writers had this in common: they’d met Jesus and been changed by him and it became their task to write about what had happened so that others could have the same encounter. **Have you met Jesus? If so, how has that encounter changed you? Is there someone he might be prompting you to share your story with?** Spend some time in silent prayer, reflecting on these questions and asking God to direct you.*

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through one or all four of the following collects.

O almighty God, who by thy blessed Son didst call Matthew from the receipt of custom to be an Apostle and Evangelist: Grant us grace to forsake all covetous desires and inordinate love of riches, and to follow the same thy Son Jesus Christ; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen. (COLLECT FOR THE FEAST OF ST. MATTHEW THE APOSTLE, PAGE 292)

O almighty God, who hast instructed thy holy Church with the heavenly doctrine of thy Evangelist Saint Mark: Give us grace, that, being not like children carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of thy holy Gospel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (COLLECT FOR THE FEAST OF ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST, PAGE 272)

Almighty God, who calledst Luke the Physician, whose praise is in the Gospel, to be an Evangelist, and Physician of the soul: May it please thee that, by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him, all the diseases of our souls may be healed; through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (COLLECT FOR THE FEAST OF ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST, PAGE 295)

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Merciful Lord, we beseech thee to cast thy bright beams of light upon thy Church, that it being enlightened by the doctrine of thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist Saint John may so walk in the light of thy truth, that it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(COLLECT FOR THE FEAST OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, PAGE 110)

CLOSING PRAYERS (622 AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU’RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.

LUKE 24: **YOU ARE WITNESSES**

³⁶As they (the disciples) were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” ³⁷But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. ³⁸And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” ⁴⁰And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marvelling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate before them.

⁴⁴Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

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