

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

*Witnesses? Who? Us?*  
Acts 1:1-14

Copy this sheet for the gathering-time, Bible-study, and worship-experience leaders, for the next church meeting.

## ***Witnesses? Who? Us?***

### **Focal Text**

Acts 1:1-14

### **Background Text**

Acts 1

### **Main Idea**

Jesus' disciples are to be His witnesses to everyone.

### **Leaders' Responsibilities:**

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## **Prior to this Coming Session:**

### **Gathering Time Leader:**

Prepare the words to the song or chorus you will be singing, if it is unfamiliar to the worshippers.

Find the words to the hymn **“When the Church of Jesus”**; it can be found in the Baptist Hymnal, among other places.

### **Worship Time Leader:**

**This week, the Sharing Guide will coax the leader into personalizing the message toward the end. It should be easy to do, and will encourage leaders to begin thinking about their own ability in organizing and presenting a message for Christ. If you don’t feel you can do that, please discuss it with someone who is willing and able to help you with this.**

Prepare the words for any music that you may use in the worship service.

A few days prior to the session, consider asking someone in your group to share a brief testimony, during the worship time (no more than about three minutes). Consider asking someone who has made a decision to follow Christ, as a youth or an adult, to emphasize the people who were involved in his or her spiritual journey. Ask that individual to practice his or her testimony during the week. Suggest that they write out what they plan to say and then practice saying it, while keeping track of the time (remembering the three-minute time period), or even better, encourage them to practice it with someone who will help them to stay within the three minutes. The timer on your oven works well for this activity.

## **Suggested Music sources:**

“Do You Really Care?”, CCLI # 64832  
“Rescue the Perishing”, CCLI # 34549  
“Share His Love”, CCLI # 26454  
“People Need the Lord”, CCLI # 18084  
“Redeemer, Saviour, Friend”, CCLI # 2831523  
“Above All”, CCLI # 2672885  
“Trading My Sorrows”, CCLI #2574653

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)**Witnesses? Who? Us?****Focal Text**

Acts 1:1-14

**Background Text**

Acts 1

**Main Idea**

Jesus' disciples are to be His witnesses to everyone.

**Question to Explore**

To what extent and in what ways am I being Jesus' witness?

**Teaching Aim**

To lead participants to evaluate the extent to which they are being Jesus' witnesses

**Gathering together:**

Assign one person (a man, woman, or child) to greet people as they arrive. Have Christian music playing softly.

An appropriate opening hymn is “**Do You Really Care?**” This song was written by Bill Cates, for a musical to be presented at the large and beautiful Glorieta Conference Center, in the US State of New Mexico. After singing the song, the following comments are appropriate for the subject of the Bible study and the sermon. (Choose another song that refers to our need to care for and witness to others, if “**Do You Really Care?**” is not available).

**First thoughts:**

The words to the song “**When the Church of Jesus**” will deeply disturb Christians who take the time to think about their message. In the first verse, the words evoke a feeling of guilt in the Christian's heart, by portraying the picture of the church of Jesus, shutting the door in order to keep “the roar of traffic” from drowning out the voice of prayer. The song asks that through prayer, we become more aware of the needs of the world outside of our closed doors, instead of our tendency to often shut out “the noise.”

The writer of this song, E. Pratt Green, was well aware that the answer to the questions proposed by our topic: Witness? Who? Us? is a resounding Yes! Us! The world that we are tempted to banish is the one we are called to love and care for.

The second verse is clearer still, as it questions the very heart of Christian worship, a heart that does not propel Christians into the very world, which has been shut out by the doors of the church. It states that our hearts have been lifted by our devotion, high above the hungry, suffering world, and yet that very devotion could “drug” us to forget (or shut out) the needs of the world.

The third and final verse drives home the lesson of the hymn. It is a prayer that the dying Saviour would teach us how to live as true Christians, lest such gifts as money, talent, and time, should salve our conscience and prevent us from being involved in meeting the needs of others. **Leader: If you have access to the words of the song, have someone read it in a meaningful way.**

I have never heard this hymn sung in any Christian meeting; yet, it has been around since 1960! Perhaps the tune is too difficult, or perhaps the words are more of a sermon style, but whatever the reason for its neglect and lack of use, it has a timely message for us today as we reflect on this topic: Witnesses? Who? Us?

### **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to share prayer concerns and to make announcements of ministry opportunities or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation.

**Break time!** Take a five-minute break between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during Bible study time.

Distribute youth and adult Bible study outlines, or have paper available for taking notes.

Also distribute the activity sheets for preschoolers and younger children to use during the Bible study and worship times.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### Witnesses? Who? Us?

#### **Focal Text**

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Acts 1

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#### **Question to Explore**

To what extent and in what ways am I being Jesus’ witness?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead participants to evaluate the extent to which they are being Jesus’ witnesses

### **Introduction to personal study:**

A young woman came to faith in Christ, through the love of a church and through the witness of a Sunday-school teacher who taught two-year-olds. This teacher was not raised in a Christian environment; however, as a young teenager she had answered an advertisement from a church that was looking for a “Christian nursery worker.” Following her interview, there was much discussion about her religious background. One dear woman announced, “We are going to hire this girl and love her to Jesus.” The young woman had never heard the name of Jesus before, but each week, as she helped with the little ones of the church, she heard more about God’s love. After a few months, the young woman had given her life to Christ. Those who worked with her and faithfully witnessed to her had impacted her life. Jesus called His disciples to share the message of His love with those in their circles of influence. Who, in our (your) circles of influence, needs to hear that message?

### **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

## **Acts—Volume Two**

The **Acts of the Apostles** provides a bridge from the story of Jesus’ ministry on earth to the birth and growth of His churches. This Book records the transformation of a group of shaky-kneed fishermen, into a bold community of believers, marching forward with the life-giving message of Jesus Christ. Like a butterfly, emerging from its cocoon, the Spirit-filled church, which was born and which grew together in Acts, had very little resemblance to the nervous, disillusioned believers who clustered behind locked doors, following the crucifixion.

It was the very same Gentile physician, Luke, who travelled with Paul on some of his missionary journeys, who wrote the **book of Acts**. This historical document is the second volume of Luke’s narrative; and it begins by revisiting the events with which he ended the **Gospel of Luke**. The work of Jesus did not end with His resurrection; likewise, the story of Jesus continues through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Another exciting aspect of this book is that it depicts the progress of the gospel as believers carried out Jesus’ commission to reach the world with the Good News. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, believers penetrated geographical, social, racial, and religious barriers, to carry the life-giving message of Jesus’ salvation from Jerusalem to Rome, and throughout the empire.

Luke also records the messages of some of the first preachers, particularly Peter and Paul, who, through the use of Old Testament messianic prophecies; show that Jesus was truly the fulfillment of the Jewish hope. Some have suggested that the book would have been more accurately entitled “The Acts of the Holy Spirit.” Luke focuses on the ministry of the apostles, beginning with Peter, John, and James, and finally and almost exclusively, on Paul’s salvation and ministry.

As the “**Gospel According to Luke**” ends with the ascension, the book of “**Acts**” begins there. In Luke 24:46-48 and in Acts 1:8, the risen Lord commissions believers to preach the gospel to all nations—including the Gentiles. The theme of world evangelism runs through both Luke and Acts. Clearly the gospel is for everyone; the message of salvation is all-inclusive.

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

### **You will be my witnesses—Acts 1:1-8**

This book, like the “**Gospel According to Luke**,” was written to Theophilus, whose name means, literally, the “friend of God.” Theophilus may have actually been the

name of a fellow believer, or Luke may have used the title as a general dedication to those believers who would read the record. Luke begins by reviewing the events he described in Luke 24. At the end of the book of Luke, Jesus promises that He would send “what My Father has promised” (Luke 24:49). Jesus instructed his disciples to stay in the city until they were clothed with power from on high. Following His ascension into heaven, they stayed continually at the temple, praising God (24:53).

The entire first chapter of Acts sets the stage for the Day of Pentecost, which is described in the second chapter. During the forty days, from the time of Jesus’ resurrection until His ascension, Jesus continued to teach His followers as He always had; He taught them things that concerned the Kingdom of God. Additionally, Jesus opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures and the meaning of His death and resurrection (Luke 24:45-47). These forty days gave time for preparation—a time for Jesus to encourage this group of ordinary individuals to whom He had given the most extraordinary charge.

In addition to understanding the true meaning of Jesus’ passion, the disciples had to come to terms with their misconception of what the Kingdom of God meant. When Jesus spoke of the promised gift of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they asked if this would be the time when the Kingdom of God would be restored to Israel (Acts 1:6). Although they had just witnessed the miracle of Jesus’ resurrection, they apparently still clung to the hope that Jesus would rule an earthly kingdom.

Carefully, Jesus clarified their purpose, elevating the meaning of “the Kingdom of God,” beyond Jewish national independence; the Kingdom of God that they were to proclaim, was the Good News of Jesus (1:7). Jesus would return to rule and to reign in glory, but the day and the time of His returning was not central to their task. This is a lesson for us even today; the church is not to be about prediction, but about proclamation.

The expanded universal Kingdom, which Jesus preached, was as difficult for the disciples to understand as it is for us. The idea that we live only temporarily in this present age, and that our true citizenship is in the heavenly Kingdom, is an idea that is not easily put into practice. This was not an easy transition for the church; it literally took years to sufficiently internalize and act upon Jesus’ teaching.

At the core of the church’s mission is Acts 1:8. Jesus’ promise is twofold. First, you will receive the supernatural power of the very God of all creation. Secondly, you will be, *you can’t help but be*, witnesses wherever you are. The primary evidence of the Spirit-filled life is a Christian dedicated to sharing the lifesaving message of Jesus wherever God places that Christian.

## **Geographical references in Acts 1:8**

Jesus predicted that His disciples would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Although the disciples had travelled with Jesus during His time on earth, they had



covered a relatively small geographical area. More importantly, they had stayed in a relatively small ideological area—that of the Jews. On only a few significant occasions did they witness Jesus' dealing with those outside their faith; see, for example, in John chapter 4: the Samaritan woman at the well, and the centurion in Matthew 8:5-13. Acts 1:8 provides an outline of the entire book of Acts, as the early church shared the Gospel, first only with the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea, with the Samaritans ("half-Jews"), then with Gentiles such as the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius, and lastly, with those considered to be pagan Gentiles. Acts 1-7 records the ministry in Jerusalem, while Acts 8:1–11:18 records the ministry in Judea and Samaria. Acts 11:19, through to the end of the book, records the ministry "to the ends of the earth."

### **Witnessing in your family**

This commission may be applied to each individual believer as well. We are to share the love of Jesus within the concentric circles of our influence. Concentric circles refer to the circles of relationship that each person has—their family, friends, neighbours, co-workers, as well as the people to whom we regularly relate—people like our hair dresser, and those who we may see only occasionally, like our plumber, the people in our town, province, state, or country, and on and on it continues—to the ends of the earth. Generally, those within the most intimate circle are members of our own family. Those who know us best will be influenced most by how we live out our Christian faith. Let us pray for opportunities to witness within our own families, as well as to those in our places of employment, in our communities, and in our world.

### **Ascension to the Right Hand of God—Acts 1:9-11**

After giving His commission to His followers, Jesus was taken up before their eyes and hidden by the clouds (1:9). As the followers gazed upward, two messengers announced Jesus' second coming, telling them that they would see Him come again "in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven" (1:10). Two messengers had similarly appeared at Jesus' tomb to announce His resurrection (Luke 24:4-7).

### **Waiting on the Lord—Acts 1:12-14**

In His final instructions to His followers, Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem for the Gift that God had promised them, and about which He Himself had told them. "In a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). Following the assurance that Jesus would return, the disciples went back to Jerusalem to await Jesus' promised Gift (1:12).

The lists in Luke and Acts are the same. Matthew and Mark list the apostles in a slightly different order and call Judas, the son of James, by the name Thaddeus (Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-17).

When John baptized in the Jordan, he said, "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you

with or in water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:7-8). Just what does it mean to be baptized with the Spirit? Through the prophesying of Joel, God declared that He would “pour out” His Spirit “on all people” (Joel 2:28-32). God did pour out His Spirit on Jesus, following His baptism by John (Luke 3:22). Such baptism, or pouring out of the Holy Spirit, means to be immersed in the presence and being of God (Acts 2:4). The very essence of the Spirit’s work is the creating and building up of the church of Christ, through the salvation and equipping of individual believers (John 16:8). In the next session we will explore, in detail, how God immersed the believers, who had gathered on Pentecost, with His Spirit, supernaturally equipping them to fulfill His commission of Acts 1:8.

So, with a spirit of anticipation and excitement, the disciples returned to Jerusalem to wait, and to ponder and process all that they had experienced during their time with the Saviour. The last forty days alone had been incredible! They spent this precious time together, waiting on Him, in prayer (1:14). This group included the eleven apostles, Jesus’ mother (Mary), His younger brothers, and some women who were joined by unnamed disciples (Acts 1:13). This is one of the four places where the apostles are listed by name. (See Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-17, and Luke 6:13-16.) Judas Iscariot is not listed, of course, in the Acts account.

### **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

Jesus clearly tells us that, as His disciples, we will be His witnesses. The question then becomes: To what extent and in what ways am I being Jesus’ witness? God has given us power from on high to minister in His name. Let us ask Him for eyes to see the opportunities He has placed in our paths and for the boldness to share in His name. These are the teachings of the Bible study that will serve as your goals for imparting to your congregation as you lead this session.

### **For Personal Reflection:**

1. **What have I learned from this study?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. **What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. **What is one action I will take this week to apply this scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### **Witnesses? Who? Us?**

Regroup the church, after the gathering time and break, by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus, if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas (shaker eggs), bells, etc. Children who stay with their parents in the Youth or Adult studies should have the material on worship, as suggested in **The Children's Corner** at the beginning of this unit of studies. (Ask your leader who downloads the studies, to access those suggestions).

**Begin by helping the group to locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the scriptures, and the Question to be Explored by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

Acts 1:1-14

#### **Background Text**

Acts 1

#### **Main Idea**

Jesus' disciples are to be His witnesses to everyone.

#### **Question to Explore**

To what extent and in what ways am I being Jesus' witness?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead participants to evaluate the extent to which they are being Jesus' witnesses

#### **Connect with Life:**

Begin the study by telling the group this: Children of all ages love to throw rocks into ponds and lakes. It's fun to watch the ripples spread out across the water. Like those ripples, our lives touch many others. As followers of Jesus, we are His witnesses to our families, in our communities, and to our world. Let us explore to what extent and in what ways we are being Jesus' witnesses.

#### **Guide the Study:**

Share background information regarding the Book of Acts, from the Acts: Sharing God's Good News with Everyone: Session One.

Say: Volume One of Luke's account of Jesus life and ministry, is known as the 'Gospel According to Luke.' Let's see how Luke ends that account.

Ask a volunteer to read Luke 24:36-53. Point out the promise of Luke 24:48-49.

Continue to explain: Now let's turn to Volume Two, the Book of the 'Acts of the Apostles,' or what we commonly call the 'Book of Acts.' Note that some have suggested a more appropriate title of 'The Acts of the Holy Spirit.' Have someone read Acts 1:1-3.

Discuss the dedication to Theophilus—the friend of God.

Tell the group: God gave the first believers forty days to share with Jesus following His resurrection.

Ask: "What would it be like to spend time in His presence?"

Now follow up with this: How would this be different from the time they spent together before the crucifixion?

Seek responses to this question: What other forty-day periods do you recall from Scripture? Examples: Moses in the Lord's presence on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 24:18, 34:28); Noah in the Ark (Genesis 7-8); Elijah sustained when fleeing from Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 19:8); and, Jesus tempted in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11).

Ask a volunteer to read Acts 1:4-5.

Discuss the meaning of the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, from the background material in the Acts: **"Sharing God's Good News with Everyone: Session One."**

Have someone read Acts 1:8.

Promote a brief discussion on this: Where is our Jerusalem? Our Judea? Our Samaria? The ends of the earth?

Have the group consider the thought that perhaps those verses are meant to be understood literally or geographically; if so, then explain that we already live in and are responsible for "the ends of the earth."

Discuss the various geographical areas that Jesus mentioned. Read the verse again, on this time replace the words "Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria," with the names of people in your community, or in your county, state or province.

Say: Jesus said that we will be His witnesses. What kind of witnesses can we (you and I) be? Explore the impact that negative witness may have on people around them.

Discuss how one can improve his or her witness in an environment such as a work place.

Bring up this important point: Perhaps our most challenging environment to witness in, is with our families. Discuss the challenges we face, in being an effective witness for Christ, in our homes. Note examples of believers who have impacted their loved ones for Jesus. Examples: Andrew first found his brother, Peter, to tell the Good News to (John 1:41); Philip told Nathanael (John 1:45); Grandmother Lois told her daughter Eunice who told her son Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5).

Ask a volunteer to read Acts 1:9-11. Discuss the announcement of the two messengers. Note the similar appearance of the two messengers, following Jesus' resurrection (Luke 24:4-7).

Have someone read Acts 1:12-14. Note that a Sabbath day's walk was approximately one kilometre, (0.6 of a mile). Explore the significance of this time of waiting. Ask volunteers to list the various people included in this group. Note that Jesus' immediate family members were now believers.

Encourage those people, with loved ones who are lost, to continue to love them to Jesus.

### **Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to break off from the adults and to apply the lesson for themselves.

Ask a volunteer to pray that each member of your group would have sensitivity in sharing God's love among their circles of influence. Pray especially for any family members who do not know Jesus.

**Take a five-minute break to separate the Bible study and worship times. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.**

# Youth!!! Take Ten

## Bible Study Application for Youth

*You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study, and to help each other as youth, to apply the lesson to your own needs.*

### Witnesses? Who? Us?

Acts 1:1-14

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

### A Really, Really Important Talk

Think for a moment. When you were first being told about Jesus, what did that person (or people) say that helped you understand and maybe make a decision to follow Him? Now, how did that person make you feel? Share with each other some of the thoughts you had.

Most people cannot remember the exact words, but most of us can remember how people make us feel when they are talking to us about something important. What are some things you could do to help a person feel valued, cared for, and important? How can your actions match your words when you are sharing about Jesus?

If you have your Bibles, write (in your Bible) the name of one person who doesn't know Jesus yet. Would you commit to pray for that person until they come to know Christ? Wouldn't it be fun to show them their name in your Bible, someday, and tell them how you prayed for them? What are some things you could say or do this week that would help them to take a step forward in their spiritual journey?

**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)**Witnesses? Who? Us?**  
**Acts 1:1-14****Beginning the Service:**

Sing either “**Rescue the Perishing**” or “**Trading My Sorrows**,” as people begin to regroup for worship. You may wish to select other music (at your discretion), which encourages witnessing.

**Worship leader:** Today we are focusing on sharing the most important person in our lives, with someone else. Let’s think together about some important events in our lives—events such as our wedding, the birth of a child, or even a new job. Remember how excited you were and how you couldn’t wait to tell someone about your wonderful news? Why is it—that when we have the most exciting news of all—that we are so reluctant to share it? Today’s time together isn’t meant to make us feel guilty, but to help us regain enthusiasm for what is meant to be our greatest purpose and joy—helping someone else come to know Jesus Christ.

Have someone read John 20: 15-18. Say: “These verses take place not long before the Acts verses that we are studying today. Did you catch Mary’s excitement when she told the disciples that she had seen the Lord? What a celebration there is in heaven when someone says ‘I have seen the Lord!’ Today, one of us is going to share how they came to know Jesus Christ.”

**Testimony time:**

Listen to the person who was asked to share his or her testimony.

**Offering:**

Sing either “**People Need the Lord**” or “**Above All**,” during the collecting of the offering. Feel free to take up an offering in a way that you consider appropriate to your particular setting.

**Sharing Guide:**

**This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond**



to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

## **Witness? Who? Us?**

### ***Acts 1:1-14***

**Important note to the worship leader:** This simple outline can be finished by any fertile mind, with a bit of reading. The first part is complete. Try adding your own examples to points **III**, **IV**, and **V**. It will make the message more personal to you and more meaningful to your congregation. The point of the sharing guide is that the disciples of Jesus are to be his witnesses everywhere. All disciples—each and every Christian—are to be witnesses. Witness? Who? Us? The answer is an unequivocal, unashamed, resoundingly glad and glorious **Yes! Us!**

#### **Introduction:**

A game called the "Blame Game" was popular in youth meetings years ago. A group of young people met in the home of one of the youths, following the evening worship. The game tested the youths' skills of rhythm and co-ordination. With participants seated in a circle, the leader would start the game with the words: "Who stole the cookies from the cookie jar." Everyone would keep time by clapping. The person on the right of the leader would answer, accusing a person (John, for example) in the circle, "John stole the cookies from the cookie jar." Then John would respond, "Who? Me?" and the person accusing John would answer, "Yes! You!" John responded with a denial, "Couldn't be!" The group would answer, "Then who?" John then accused another in the circle, keeping the accusation going rhythmically. Each time the rhythm was broken, someone was eliminated from the game. It was a game of accusation and denial—played to the beat of handclaps.

It may seem like a silly game now; but, actually, we play the game of blame over and over. The title of the sermon presses the question about witnessing, and the response is an innocent "Who? Me?" It seems that the accusation is rejected over and over, as in the game that these young people were playing.

But the scripture for today suggests that witnessing is a practice in which all Christians are to participate. This scripture makes five statements about witnessing for Jesus.

#### **I. The content of a witness to Jesus (Acts 1:1-5)**

1. A witness should be comprehensive—it should include all that Jesus did and taught, from the beginning (his virgin birth), until the time he was taken up into heaven (v.1).



2. The content of your witness to Jesus will not include the entire “Gospel According to Luke,” on the very first effort, but a witness for Jesus will certainly work toward the goal of knowing Jesus as thoroughly as is humanly and spiritually possible.
3. A witness to Jesus must be that which the Holy Spirit teaches (v.2). A former soldier recalled his first effort at giving a witness to Jesus. It was nothing more than a few verses of scripture that he had memorized. Today, after many years of walking with the Lord, he might need a great deal more time to give a witness than he did fifty years ago. One day, he recalled, early in his new faith, a soldier confronted him with the question: “What has happened to you? I knew you during the days of our basic training. You were pretty wild back then. But now you won’t have anything to do with the drinking that goes on at the PX (Post Exchange).” The only response he could give at the time was, “The blood of Jesus has cleansed me from all my sins.” He still thinks that it was a very inadequate witness to that particular person, and the Christian has wished a thousand times over since that day—that he could have been more effective in witnessing. However, the Holy Spirit will always work in every attempt that we make to share a testimony of what Jesus has done for us.
4. Ultimately, a Christian can expect to witness with the totality of his or her life—revealing the totality of the life of Jesus.

## **II. The purpose of a witness for Jesus Christ (v.6)**

1. **What the purpose is not:** It is not about times and seasons (v.7). A future minister and teacher was cautioned by the instructor of his first college Bible class: “Beware of people who come with charts of the end time, predicting when final events in human history will come, and when the Lord shall return.” In the fall of 1975, a full page in a local newspaper was bought for the purpose of setting out the time of the end. It was to be, according to this person’s calculations, in September of the following year! Such predictions prove themselves to be wrong; our efforts to determine times and seasons are misguided. It is enough to hear what Jesus told the apostles, “It is not for you to know times or dates the Father has set by his own authority ...” (Acts 1:7).
2. **What the purpose is:** It is about Jesus and the Kingdom of God (v.8).

## **III. The extent to which a witness to Jesus is to be given (v.8)**

1. A witness to Jesus must reach out to the farthest outpost of humanity.
2. A witness to Jesus must reach as deep as human nature reaches.

#### **IV. The “oughtness” of a witness to Jesus (v.11)**

1. A witness to Jesus ought to be made because He is coming again.
2. A witness to Jesus ought to be made because every human being needs to be prepared to meet the Lord Jesus.

#### **V. The apostolic certainty of a witness to Jesus (vv.12-14)**

1. A witness to Jesus will be certified by the apostles of Jesus.
2. A witness to Jesus will have the witness of the apostles behind it.
3. A witness for Jesus will be in the company of a long list of witnesses.

#### **Call to Commitment:**

Worship Leader: “Let’s spend some time together in prayer; let’s pray specifically for those in our circle of influence who do not know Jesus. As we are praying, let’s lift up their names to the Lord.

Ask people to pray as they feel led. Encourage the children and youth to pray as well.

#### **Concluding the Service:**

When the time seems appropriate, close the prayer time with the song “**Redeemer, Saviour, Friend.**”