

Youth Teaching Resources

April 14, 2024



Season of Easter

April 7, 2024—“True Community”—Acts 4:32-35

April 14, 2024—“Why the Surprise?”—Acts 3 (RCL 3:12-19)

April 21, 2024—“This Is the Way”—Acts 4:1-12 (RCL 4:5-12)

April 28, 2024—“What Hinders Me?”—Acts 8:26-40

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Why the Surprise?

Acts 3 (RCL 3:12-19)

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Tyler Johnson

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Gathering

As your group comes together, ask students how they are doing, what their week looks like, and reflect on the previous week's challenge.

Opening Activity

Ask your students if they have ever been surprised. Could be a surprise party, or anything where you were caught off guard. What makes a good surprise?

Listening to the Scripture

Read aloud Acts 3:12-19.

- Do you believe miracles happen today? When you are reading healing miracles from the Bible, how do you reckon with that today?
- Would you react to a healing miracle in the same way the crowd reacts to the miracle?
- Peter talks about the surprise of the crowd, as if they never heard of the power of God. Was Peter right to be annoyed with the crowd for their unbelief?
- Do we discount the proximity in time from the time of Jesus' death and resurrection to this moment? If this is the world before phones and instant messaging, could the surprise from the crowd be due to the news not having spread to them yet?
- What was Peter challenging the crowds with? How have you been challenged in your own faith?

If you would like to continue the discussion, consider *Digging Deeper*.

- What is the common result in the Gospel being preached, whether it was from Jesus, the women who discovered the empty tomb, or Peter in this passage? Can you identify the pattern?
- Can you identify the number of titles Peter gives Jesus?

If the group is up for a challenge, discuss what Tony poses as *The Hardest Question*: Which Prophets did Peter quote?

- Have the group look at the passages Tony identifies in 1-2 Samuel for a broader look at Peter's quotations.

Listening to the Scripture *continued*

- Identify the last time you were surprised or put in awe by your faith. Think about what that moment felt like and the impact it had on the current view and journey of faith. How can you put yourself in places to be surprised by God again?

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartledge

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

A similar pattern—J. Bradley Chance notes that this story reflects a pattern first shown in the Gospel of Luke. After Jesus’ first sermon (Luke 4:16-30), he performed acts of healing, including one for a man who had been paralyzed (4:31-5:25). Jesus’ claim of authority to forgive sins as well as to heal prompted conflict with the Jewish authorities.

A similar pattern is shown in Acts 3. Shortly after Peter finished his sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), he healed a lame man (3:1-11) and spoke of the authority of Jesus to heal and forgive (3:12-26), leading to a confrontation with the Jewish leadership (*Acts* [Smyth & Helwys, 2007], 68).

Jesus as servant—The description of Jesus as God’s “servant” would have reinforced the connections between Jesus and earlier Jewish heroes, including Moses (Josh. 1:7, 13; 9:24; 1 Chr. 6:49). Prophetic references to a coming messiah often used servant terminology (Ezek. 34:23-24, 37:24-25; Zech. 3:8), including the “servant songs” of Isaiah 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:1-11, and 52:13-53:12.

Divine titles—Peter used an impressive assortment of titles for Jesus (vv. 14-15). The Jesus who had been crucified was no ordinary man: he was “the Holy One,” “the Righteous One,” and the “Author of Life.” The word translated as “Author” (also used in Acts 5:31; Heb. 2:10, 12:2) could also mean “Founder” or “Pioneer Leader.” Humans put “the author of life” to death, but God raised him up: Christ initiated a new kind of life that reaches beyond death.

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartledge

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Which prophets did Peter quote?

In his sermon, Peter spoke much about Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecies, but he offered little in the way of specifics. Modern readers may wonder just what prophets or prophecies Peter had in mind.

We cannot be sure, of course, but the reference to it being foretold that Jesus would suffer could point to the “Servant Songs” of Second Isaiah (v. 18, cf. Isa. 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:1-11, and 52:13-53:12). Although the songs sometimes seem to speak of Israel itself as the suffering servant, they also speak of an individual who would suffer on behalf of others, and the songs had come to be interpreted as Messianic.

Peter also mentioned Moses, who the ancients considered to be a prophet as well as a lawgiver. Moses had reportedly said that God would raise up another prophet like him, one who would hear and declare God’s commands to God’s people (v. 22, cf. Deut. 18:15-18). Peter considered Jesus to be the long-awaited prophet like Moses, who spoke for God, and who should be obeyed.

But who did Peter have in mind when he spoke of “the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets” (v. 21)? Prophetic traditions from Isaiah 2:2-4, 9:5, 7; 11:6-9, as well as Micah 4:1-4, and others looked forward to a new age of peace when God would reign over the earth and all peoples would bend the knee in worship as they lived together in harmony.

The issue becomes a bit thornier when we consider v. 24: “And all the prophets, as many as have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, also predicted these days.” Samuel was regarded as a faithful prophet whose words were true. They “never fell to the ground” according to 1 Sam. 3:19-20, but none of his recorded speeches mention a coming messiah or time of restoration. His public preaching called for the Israelites to repent (1 Sam. 7:3-5) and warned them against the dangers of trusting a king rather than God (1 Sam. 8:10-18, 12:6-25). He predicted that Saul was destined to become king (1 Sam. 9:20, 10:1-8), but then criticized his failure to obey at every turn (1 Sam. 13:10-15, 15:10-31), even from beyond the grave (1 Sam. 28:15-19).

The closest Samuel came to predicting anything that could be construed as messianic is found in 1 Sam. 12:22, where he warned against the dangers of kingship but said, “For the LORD will not cast away his people, for his great name’s sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself.” When criticizing Saul, Samuel said that God would have established his kingdom forever, but would instead choose “a man after his own heart” (1 Sam. 13:13-14, cf. 15:28). Samuel later anointed David to be that king, but he made no predictions about his reign that we know of (1 Sam. 16:13).

The Hardest Question *continued*

In Jewish thought, however, the entire books of 1-2 Samuel are associated with Samuel. So, although it is Nathan who predicted that God would make David's kingdom an everlasting one (2 Sam. 7:4-17), the prophecy could have been associated with Samuel. It was this prophecy that gave rise to later predictions that a descendant of David would arise and restore Israel to its former glory. Thus, Peter could claim that "Samuel and those after him all predicted these days." He was speaking in broad generalities about the prophetic tradition, rather than specific prophecies.