

Study 1: Acts 3:1–10

INTRODUCTION (11:00–11:40 a.m.)

GATHERING (10 min)

Allow your group to gather. People may have trouble finding their table, so there will most likely be a delayed start, but begin as close to 11:00 a.m. as possible. As you wait, make conversation around your table. Here are some fun “get to know you” questions if you need suggestions:

- Where is everyone coming in from? Any travel stories that made your trip to Urbana especially eventful?
- What have you all done during your break? Does your family have any holiday traditions?
- I know it's only been less than a day, but what's been a highlight for you so far at Urbana?

WELCOME (2 min)

Welcome! It looks like most of us, if not all of us are here, so we're going to get started. You made it! My name is _____ and I am so excited to be facilitating our time in Bible study these next three mornings! This is our small group for the conference and together we're going to have the opportunity to get to know one another better as we study Scripture together and have a good amount of time each day to consider its meaning for our lives and our communities.

ICEBREAKER (20 min, ~2 min/person)

Lead your group in an icebreaker:

Let's go around and share. What is your name? Where are you from? Netflix or Hulu? And what is your spiritual background?

GROUP NORMS (5 min)

Thank you all so much for sharing! We'll have more time to get to know each other throughout the week. Everyone turn to page 26 in your handbook. You'll see on that page a list of group norms that will help guide our small group. I want to share these for us so that we can host and care for each other well.

Group Norms

1. Use “I” statements (speak for yourself, not for everyone)
2. Avoid judgmental statements (no shame or blame)
3. Allow space for everyone to share if they choose
4. Practice active listening and give advice only if invited to do so
5. What we share here stays here (confidentiality)

These are really important group norms for us to establish so we can make this group as inclusive and hospitable for everyone as possible. I also want to name that I'm not the expert here. My hope is that I get to host this space well so that you all can bring all of who you are to the table. I believe that our experiences and the ways Jesus will speak to us through the passages are a gift to all of us. So please feel free to share your thoughts and experiences during this time and let's take risks together.

OVERVIEW (2 min)

During our times together, we'll come back to these group norms. These three Bible studies will be our chance to experience Acts as a small group. Tomorrow, we will also talk about the gospel message and have a chance to respond. The questions we'll be discussing during our studies, along with the gospel message tomorrow, can be found in your handbook beginning on page 31. Let me pray for us as we begin!

PRAYER (1 min)

Pray and ask God to help you as you study today's passage.

SCRIPTURE (11:40–12:10 p.m.)

Open to today's passage on page 27 in your handbook.

BACKGROUND (2 min)

Share some background for this passage:

Last night, Bishop Claude described the amazing account of the disciples waiting for and receiving the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. Fifty days after Passover, the Jewish community was in town for Pentecost, their traditional festival celebrating the giving of the law and the firstfruits of the harvest. In Acts 2, as the Spirit speaks the wonders of God in many different languages, an ethnically diverse group of Jews and Jewish converts listen and try to make sense of what is happening. Peter boldly preaches, and the early church community is born. Possessions are being sold, people are praying together, and miracles are beginning to happen in their community.

THE TEXT (3 min)

Read today's Bible study passage out loud. Then invite your group to re-read the passage quietly on their own:

ACTS 3:1–10 (NIV)

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. ² Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" ⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

⁶ Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹ When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

OBSERVATION (5 min)

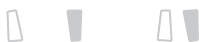
Let's discuss a couple things that will help us see the text.

1. Notice the people and places in this passage. Let's name them, what you know about them, and where you see them in the text.
2. Choose one as a group: What do you feel in your body as you imagine yourself in this scene?
 - As the man being carried to the temple gate every day to beg.
 - As a member of the crowd passing by this man begging every day.
 - As one of the people bringing this man to the gate.

INTERPRETATION (20 min)

Now let's discuss a few questions that will help us discover and understand the text.

1. In the process of this miracle, why do Peter and John look straight at the man and command the man to look at them (v. 4)? What impact do you think seeing and being seen may have had on Peter, John, and the man?
2. The man is begging for money, but Peter and John say they have none. So, what exactly are Peter and John offering to give to the man? List out all the ways their offer might have impacted the man, his community, themselves, and the crowds.
3. Peter and John had a daily practice of going to the temple at three in the afternoon to pray (which is the same time that Jesus breathed his last breath on the cross, recorded in Luke 23:44–46). How is the routine of daily prayer influential in this community of believers?



RESPOND (12:10–12:30 p.m.)

SUMMARY (2 min)

Summarize the passage:

It was just two chapters ago that we saw the disciples a little shocked and confused around Jesus' ascension and his command to go back to Jerusalem and wait for the promised Holy Spirit. But the disciples did go back, they waited, and the Pentecost we heard about yesterday has completely transformed them! The Holy Spirit has been activated in their lives, renewing the way they see and interact with people - like this man. The man is fully seen in his humanity and dignity, and with the power of the Holy Spirit, he is completely healed—walking, jumping, and praising God for all to see. The kingdom of God is breaking into the world and changing everything.

APPLICATION (2 min)

Select one application question from below, whichever seems most relevant to your group's discussion of the passage:

Let's take a moment to reflect on a question that will help us respond to the text in our lives. I will read the question, give us a couple minutes in silence, and then open up a time to share with each other.

1. In what ways do you identify with the man born unable to walk? How could you step out in faith right now and ask your group to pray for you?
2. Peter and John embody a "ministry of seeing" that dignifies and humanizes the man. Share ways in which your faith community excels in this ministry. In what ways do you struggle? Take time to celebrate, lament, and ask God to highlight who you might be missing or not seeing (since Peter and John probably saw this man before but only stopped today).
3. Think of your relationship with God at this moment. Are you like the man at the beginning of the passage - Searching, wounded, and in need? Or are you more like the man at the end of the passage — walking, jumping, and praising God? Perhaps you identify with the community of people who placed this man at the temple gate each day. Share what has impacted your relationship with God lately and what you desire from God at this conference.

SHARING AND PRAYER (15 min)

Share a brief story from your own life to answer the application question and then lead the group to share and pray for one another. Stay all together or split into groups of 2–3 to allow more time for each person.

CLOSING (1 min)

Close your time and let the group know about the invitation to faith:

As we close, I want to give you a heads up that toward the end of our study tomorrow, we will be invited to take a next step of faith. Acts shows us how powerful it is to know Jesus and follow him as Lord, becoming part of his work and being empowered by his Spirit. We want to give everyone a chance to consider this and respond.

In addition, we will have the chance to commit to hosting an exploratory Bible study with skeptics and seekers we know, and we will all have an opportunity to decide to follow Jesus. If you are interested in glancing through what we will read together tomorrow, please feel free to check out page 33 in your handbook and the exploratory Bible studies and artwork you received when you checked in.

Consider getting lunch as a small group!



SCAN THIS CODE AND FILL OUT THE SHORT SURVEY BEFORE THE WCC SESSION.

