

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

Read Acts 4:1-22 aloud.

1. What was the background for this passage? What had just occurred?

Review Acts 3. Peter & John healed a lame man at the Temple, and this led to an opportunity to speak about Jesus.

Why would talking about Jesus lead to being arrested?

When do you feel reluctant to mention God?

2. In verse 7, the Jewish rulers ask “by what power the man had been healed.” Why this question?

There was no denying a miracle occurred. So the question is how.

In what sense could this question be intimidation?

How do you feel when powerful people ask who gave permission? These were the same guys who killed Jesus 2 months earlier.

In Peter’s answer in verse 10, what words are significant?

3. In verses 13-14, what did the Jewish leaders observe about Peter and John?

Not religiously trained, performed a miracle, followers of Jesus.

How did these rabbis react to what they saw?

They were astonished! Scratched their heads because this event did not fit with anything they knew or expected.

When have people been pleasantly surprised to see the positive impact Jesus has made in your life?

Can they see there’s been healing in your life because of Jesus?

What keeps people from seeing that we have been changed by the power and love of Jesus?

4. Restate verse 20 in your own words.

Why did Peter and John point to their experience as validation of their actions? Why didn’t they open the Bible and demonstrate how Jesus was the messiah? Why didn’t they argue about the possibility of resurrection?

Which is more persuasive – a true story or good logic?

5. Peter and John based their actions on their experience (“what we’ve seen and heard”). In what ways is our situation different? In what ways is our situation similar?

None of us have seen or touched the risen Lord, but we’ve definitely experienced his power in our lives.

One strength of Christianity is that it rests on good historical evidence – the resurrection. What is the factual evidence for the resurrection of Jesus?

- a. Empty tomb.

Lots of people knew where the tomb was, and they all found it empty.

- b. Missing body of Jesus.

If the Jews or Romans wanted to stop Christianity, all they needed to do was show the body of Jesus.

- c. The conviction of early believers, their willingness to die for Jesus.

You don’t risk your life for something you know to be a hoax.

- d. The rise of the Christian faith.

Thousands made life changes, and the movement continues today.

- e. Jesus is alive in our hearts.

Subjective, but there is no denying that we have been changed.

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It’s okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

What is your story that you could tell a non-Christian about what you have “seen and heard”? Maybe tell it as a before & after story...

Before I started following Jesus...

But when I met Jesus, things changed...

Today, my relationship with Jesus helps me...

III. Other resources

The point – Let people know how God has changed your life. Tell what you have seen and heard.

Prayer ideas

Pray for non-Christians by name. Ask God to bless them.
Pray for opportunities to talk about Jesus with non-Christians.
Thank God for the people who told you the story of Jesus.

Ask God to guide our congregation through the process of discerning whom he has prepared to preach at College Hills.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Take a nature walk. Go outside and each kid find one thing that goes through a change each year (leaf, bug, egg shell, frog, etc.). Each kid show what he or she has found.

Tell the story of Acts 3. Read Acts 4:1-20 aloud (you could shorten to 13-20, if your kids have trouble sitting still).

What kind of changes happened to people in this story?
How was the healed man changed?
How had Peter & John been changed in the last 3 years (v. 13)?

What changed these people?

How does Jesus change our lives today?

What are some ways that our lives need to be changed?

Adults, how has Jesus changed your life for the better? How were you worse off before you met Jesus?



August 12, 2007

LIFE Group Guide

Acts 4 – Fearless witnesses

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: **The gospel is such wonderful news, we simply have to tell it.**

A slight change with the next three LG guides. We are going to pair these discussions with the adult classes rather than the sermons. Evangelism is such an important but challenging subject, I want to give the Go Fish series our full attention.

This guide looks at session 2 of Go Fish – Why Fish? If you were to watch the entire 40-minute session, you would hear Andy Stanley explain that a distinct feature of the Christian faith is that it is based on historical events. You could not reason your way to the conclusion that salvation depends on God dying for humans, and that God was willing to do just that. It's a story so unbelievable that nobody could have dreamed it up! It is based on historical evidence. And it is a story so good, it has to be told.

Leadership tip: We have a great resource speaker coming to our area! Join the Small Group Ministers' Network for a dynamic small-group training event. Rick Rusaw, preacher at Life Bridge Church in Colorado and author of *The Externally-Focused Church*, will be at Smyrna First Baptist on Sept. 7 at 6:30 and Sept. 8 at 8:30 am. \$15 covers the conference and two meals. I hope you will join us.

I. Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ What are your impressions about the first two weeks of the Go Fish series?
- ❖ What is something you remember about 7th grade?
- ❖ When people are getting to know me, they are often surprised to learn that I...