

**The Life and Ministry of John (2)****Acts 1:12-14; 3:1–4:23; 8:14-25; 12:1-2; Galatians 2:1-10**

**Memory Verse:** *“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12 ESV).

**Background Helps:**

From the four Gospels we learn that John was part of the inner circle of Jesus’ disciples. Not only was he one of the twelve apostles (Matt. 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16), but he was one of the three apostles (including Peter and John’s brother, James) who were closest to Jesus. In addition, in his own Gospel John refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20), indicating his unique personal relationship with Christ. He may also have been a cousin to Jesus (cf. Matt. 27:55-56; Mark 15:40; and John 19:25). It’s no wonder then that John turns out to be one of the “pillars” of the early church in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9). In the book of Acts, we see him serving as a coworker with the leader of the apostles, Peter, a partnership that can be traced back at least to Luke 22:7-13. So though John served somewhat in the shadow of the Peter, he played a very significant role in the launching phase of the Christian church. (In addition, he wrote five of the New Testament books, which we will study this year in Sunday school.)

**Lesson Helps:**

A possible lesson aim: My students will learn about John’s role on the ministry team of Peter and John, so that they will serve well on ministry teams in their own spheres of service.

Although Peter plays the more prominent role, our focus in this lesson will be on John and his service with Peter in the book of Acts. Note John’s role in the following events:

- John is one of the eleven disciples devoting himself to prayer (“together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers”) during the ten days between Jesus’ ascension and the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:12-14).
- John accompanies Peter to the temple for prayer where they heal a man lame from birth. John’s role in this incident is specifically mentioned in Acts 3:1, 3-4, 11; 4:1-3, 7, 13-21, 23. Although Peter plays the leading role, John also was teaching the people (4:1-2), was arrested and locked up overnight (4:3), impressed the Sanhedrin with his boldness (4:13), announced his intention to continue to speak in the name of Jesus (4:19-20), and reported back to the rest of the disciples (4:23).
- In Acts 8:14-25 John is sent with Peter by the rest of the apostles to check out the spread of the gospel to the Samaritans. These two apostles proceed to pray for these new Samaritan believers that they might receive the Holy Spirit, thereby endorsing this significant extension of the gospel beyond the Jews. Peter and John also preached the gospel in many of the villages of the Samaritans (8:25).

- According to Galatians 2:9, Paul identifies John as a pillar of the church in Jerusalem (along with Peter and James, the Lord’s brother) and as a missionary to the Jews (“the circumcision”).
- (Note: Save additional biographical information about John until we study the book of Revelation later.)


In your lesson, pay special attention to John’s role in the events in the book of Acts. Notice the emphasis on prayer (Acts 1:14; 3:1; 4:24-31 [the aftermath of the healing miracle at the temple gate]; 8:15), on helping a person in need with available resources (4:2-8), on seizing witnessing opportunities (4:9ff.; 8:25), on bold witness even in the face of opposition (4:1-2, 13, 18-21), and on John’s willingness to play “second fiddle” to Peter.

Discuss various ways (appropriate to age level) in which class members could serve the Lord *together* with other believers. Ask them to write down one way they will seek to serve Christ together with another Christian this week.

Be sure to review the memory verse, Acts 4:12. This review could be done in connection with the bold witness of Peter and John to the Sanhedrin.

**Home Assignment:**

 Read: John 20:30-31; 1:1-34

 Memorize: John 1:12

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