



Lesson 1: January 3, 2021
An Amazing Messenger
Scripture: Luke 4:14–22

- 1) Discuss what good news might be to the poor. Ask: what does a poor person most hope for? Reflect on these ideas: release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, freedom to the oppressed—how is each good news for those who are hearing it? Journal briefly about what good news sounds like to you based on where you are right now.

- 2) Sing a song about justice, working together, solving complex issues, etc., or write one.
- 3) Create characters who need the kind of good news the year of Jubilee offers, describing their lives with detail and complexity. Address the issues of those who have become wealthy and powerful and who would lose some of their wealth or power, as well.

FIRST QUARTER 2021 ONLINE ACTIVITIES



Lesson 2: January 10, 2021

The Ultimate Fish Story

Scripture: Luke 5:1–11

- 1) Retell today's story in a modern-day context of your choosing. Write it down and consider what is appropriate language for its transfer in a current setting.

- 2) Taste some fish prepared similar to one or more of the ways they were prepared/preserved in Jesus' day. Try a taste of pickled herring, Filipino salted dried fish, sardines, etc. Imagine the smells and flavors common to fisherman in Jesus' day.
- 3) Create a mural of this story with different aspects of the story included in it. Post the mural where it can be enjoyed by others.



Lesson 3: January 17, 2021

Healing for the Whole Person

Scripture: Mark 2:1–12

- 1) Research together what first-century Palestinian peasant homes were like and construct a simple replica of what Jesus' home might have looked like.
- 2) Reflect on the problem this text creates—Jesus healed one man because his friends lowered him right down into the middle of Jesus' teaching session. Why did he heal this one man and not all the others who were in need of healing all around him? Why not just heal everybody? Reflect on this by researching theodicy, a theological way of talking about why bad things happen to good people and God's role in this.

- 3) Brainstorm which people in the congregation and community could benefit from a little extra compassion and help. Plan and organize ways that others can join you in helping some of these neighbors. How does it feel to decide who to help and not to be able to help everyone?



Lesson 4: January 24, 2021

Standing in the Gap

Scripture: John 17:14–24

- 1) Research the meaning of the word *intercede* or *intercessory*, as well as the other types of prayer. Practice several kinds of prayer. Reflect and journal on what prayer is and what it does/doesn't do.

- 2) Using fingerpaint, create art that reflects what prayer feels like. How does it feel to be talking to God? What is God saying to you? Allow the fingerpaint to become the vehicle for expressing these feelings.

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Lesson 5: January 31, 2021

Women Speak Out

Scripture: Luke 2:36–38; Acts 2:16–21, 21:8–9

- 1) Research the meaning of the words *prophesy* and *prophecy*. List some stereotypes for these two words, like fortunetelling, and then list some truer understandings of this phenomenon.

- 2) Brainstorm a list of jobs or careers from which women and others (like people of color) were excluded in the past but are no longer. List some famous people who would formerly have been excluded from these jobs/careers and celebrate their accomplishments.

- 3) In honor of the 101st anniversary of the nineteenth amendment giving women in the United States the right to vote in 1920, do some research to identify early women in your congregation or denomination who accomplished great things for God despite the discrimination against them. Choose one or two and share their stories in worship. Celebrate together with a special treat.



Lesson 6: February 7, 2021

No Insignificant Witnesses

Scripture: John 4:25–42

- 1) Journal about the effects of “slut shaming” in our culture, particularly against women. Share from the background of this text about why the woman at the well might have had several husbands and be living with a man who wasn’t her husband—and that our salacious response to this is imported and not found in Jesus’ response in the text. Consider what it means that we so quickly reduce her value by the perceived morality of her actions.

- 2) Create a list of people whose advice or testimony might be questionable on a particular topic (for example, you might not take nutritional advice from the owner of a fast food franchise or fashion advice from a nudist). Similarly, list people whose testimony or advice you would trust, recognizing that, like the Samaritan woman, they might not always be those expected.

- 3) Brainstorm people groups who claim to be better than certain others. Discuss the preoccupation people have with protecting their own privileged status. Consider how Jesus worked throughout his ministry to continually break down barriers and dismantle unjust social structures. Ask what Jesus might want us to do today to follow His model in this area.

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Lesson 8: February 21, 2021

Risk Taker

Scripture: Acts 18:1–3, 18–21, 24–26; Romans 16:3–4

- 1) Research the craft of tent making in first-century Palestine. Find pictures of first-century tents and consider the supplies or skills such a craft would require. Imagine how the work of tent making might have allowed Priscilla, Aquila, and Paul the time and energy to do ministry, too.
- 2) Trace the journeys of the figures in the texts for today by using Bible maps. What are the reasons for these travels, if they are known? Try to discover something about the kinds of trips they would have been (by ship, walking, etc.). Imagine how these tradespeople would have supported themselves during these journeys and what strategies they might have used in setting up a new business in a new city. Write down what you find in a journal.
- 3) Sing a song that celebrates the various gifts each person brings to a ministry context, something like “Many Gifts, One Spirit” or another suitable hymn.

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Lesson 9: February 28, 2021

Showing Generous Hospitality

Scripture: Acts 16:11–15, 40; 1 Corinthians 1:26–30

- 1) Do a hospitality inventory of your congregation. Imagine putting on glasses that let you see your congregation like a visitor who has never visited before. Make a list of things that you imagine might make a first-time visitor feel welcome, as well as a list of things that might not feel welcoming.

- 2) Use Bible maps and trace this part of Paul's journey. Imagine the likely method of his journey (by ship, walking, etc.) and the route. Consider what the journey might have felt like and the impact that it may have had on Paul and the others.

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Lesson 10: March 7, 2021

Facing the Impossible

Scripture: Deuteronomy 18:15–22

- 1) List qualities of trustworthy and untrustworthy leaders and reflect on how Moses exemplified the qualities of a trustworthy leader.

- 2) Look at some ways people are still oppressed today (i.e., gender or economic or social oppression). What are some of the ways that you can determine to help those who are oppressed and need an advocate?

- 3) Harriet Tubman is called Black Moses as a moniker of respect. Research her life. In what ways did she fulfill the prophetic side of Moses' ministry?

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Lesson 11: March 14, 2021

Making Wise Choices

Scripture: Joshua 5:13—6:5, 15–16, 30

- 1) Research the origins of the lyrics to “Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho”. How was the song used to communicate information about escape from slavery?

- 2) Think on examples of why it can be important to obey directives that don't seem logical. Compare them with God's instructions to march for seven days. Think about the kinds of things the soldiers may have been saying as they marched around the city's walls each day. What would you have been saying to yourself or others?

- 3) Compare and contrast Joshua's experience with Moses at the burning bush.

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Lesson 12: March 21, 2021

Seeking Wisdom for the Future

Scripture: 2 Kings 22:14–20

- 1) Conduct a study of young King Josiah and be sure to analyze the message from God for King Josiah that Huldah, the prophetess, gave to his emissaries. Reflect on what it must have felt like to rule a nation at such a young age.

- 2) Make a chart that compares how women participate in religion and government today and their role during Old Testament days.

- 3) Compare and contrast Huldah's role to religious figures who advise the U.S. president. Are there any important differences? What are the similarities?

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Lesson 13: March 28, 2021
The Bearer of Bad News
Scripture: 1 Kings 18:5–18

- 1) Read Matthew 17:1–13 and reflect on how Elijah, who boldly addressed King Ahab, is the same Elijah who was present at the Transfiguration.

- 2) Create a composite of a faithful believer using Elijah, Obadiah, and Jesus as models. What characteristics did he possess? Read 1 Kings 19:1–10 so you can see how Elijah suffered from fears and insecurities, even after he had performed the greatest miracle of his ministry.
