

Prayer and Collect

Spend some time praying together. Thank God for how he has made us all differently and wants to work through each person's personality and character as we witness to others about Jesus. Pray that we might grow in our willingness to be witnesses. Pray also for those gifted as evangelists to have a greater sense of that call on their lives.

*Lord Jesus,
you send us out into your world
to be your witnesses
in the things we say and do.
Grant us the help of the Holy Spirit
that we may point people to your love,
and so bring glory to you. Amen.*

Looking ahead

Be attentive to the opportunities that come along this week to witness about your faith in words or action. How do you feel at those moments? When do you think that you have made the best use of them?

Reflections for individuals

Readings for this week

Monday = John 4.28-42
Tuesday = John 9.13-34
Wednesday = Ephesians 4.11-13
Thursday = I Corinthians 12.12-31
Friday = Luke 17.11-19

EVERYDAY WITNESS

5

5: Witnesses and Evangelists

Icebreaker

Have you ever been a witness to a crime or maybe to an event? Or been on a jury?

Collect

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Reading

Acts 4:13-20

Introducing the theme *(read aloud)*

Rich, one of the authors of this session says:

*“Whenever it comes to choosing which film to watch in our house, if the option is there for a courtroom drama, that will get my vote. Maybe it’s because I grew up with thoughts about working for justice in society by being a lawyer. Perhaps it was because I was simply gripped the first time I watched Alec Baldwin shout ‘You can’t handle the truth!’ in the movie **A Few Good Men**. In movies, law courts are depicted as places of drama and intrigue. This fiction was shattered when I had to do my civic duty and enrol for jury service. After two weeks of waiting around, I finally became part of a jury for a very dull case. The difference between the movies I love and what I saw while on jury service was the distinction between the role of the lawyer and the witness.”*

When we think about the idea of being **evangelists**, many of us are put off. It may be because we’ve seen one too many televangelists and street-corner preachers or simply because we don’t think we know enough to share our faith. In the lawyer-witness analogy, we picture an evangelist as a bit like a lawyer. We think we need to know all the details of the case, the fine elements of the argument and be quick on our feet in case we’re caught out. However, the majority of us are not called to be evangelists but witnesses. We see an example of this in Acts. In this reading, we note that

1. Peter and John were recognised as ‘uneducated and ordinary’ people who had spent time with Jesus;
2. Peter and John simply spoke about what they had ‘seen and heard’.

In other words, Peter and John did what all witnesses do in a courtroom. They testified to what they had seen and heard. They were living with the promise in mind that Jesus had made to them at the start of Acts, when he said you **will** be my witnesses.

Activity

Discuss together or in smaller groups the following:

1. How does the analogy of lawyer and witness help you to understand the difference between the evangelist and the witness?
2. As you reflect on your whole life, what kind of witness do you think you currently are? What kind of witness would you like to become?

To read aloud

There is a famous quote, often attributed to Theodore Roosevelt: ‘**Comparison** is the **thief of joy**’ (emphasis added). It can be far too easy to get lost in comparing ourselves to everyone else. In the process, we either end up becoming arrogant, as we think we’re better than others, or falling into low self-esteem because we think we’re worse than everyone else. It’s no different when we think about witnesses and evangelists; yet we are all called to witness. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:20: ‘*There are many members, yet one body.*’ How each of us goes about the task of being a witness will look different, depending on the situations we find ourselves in. The point is to recognise that we are **all** witnesses for Jesus, individually and corporately.

3 How can we spur one another on in our roles as witnesses for Jesus?

4 How can we encourage one another to speak about the things we’ve seen and heard?

5 Who do you know who has been gifted as evangelists, how can we release that gift of the Holy Spirit to help to equip us all in our witness concerning the good news of Jesus Christ?