

Lesson 8

Eyewitness Testimony

Objective

Students will learn that we can prove the Bible is from God by looking at eyewitness testimony.

Supplies

Teachers and/or Coordinators ensure supplies are ready prior to each class.

Print From the Site:

- ☐ Eyewitness - Student Activity Sheet (Writing) - one per older student
- ☐ Eyewitness - Student Activity Sheet (Drawing) - one per younger student
- ☐ Eyewitness - Grade 5-6 Student Booklet - for each Gr. 5-6 student to take home or to read during the class time.
- ☐ Eyewitness - Visual Aids for Lesson - one for teacher to show
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Pens/Pencils/Pencil Crayons
- ☐ Attendance Chart
- ☐ Stickers (for attendance)
- ☐ One Brown Paper Bag
- ☐ Various Snacks Individually Wrapped (each should be different so students can describe them for the "What Do You Have Game.")

Optional Supplies

- ☐ Snack - Various snacks (see above for game)
- ☐ Smartphone or Video Recorder

Teacher Tips

- ★ See Lesson 1

1) Introduction to Lesson

As students enter, welcome them and help them find a chair to sit at. Thank them for coming. Take attendance.

Say: **This quarter we are looking at whether the Bible is from God and can we prove it? This will help you be able to know for sure that the Bible truly is from God and will help you share that knowledge with others. Let's get started!**

2) Class Time - Eyewitness Testimony

30 minutes

Have visual aid page ready to show students

Ask: **What do you think of when you hear of an eyewitness?** (Let students answer).
Today we are going to see the importance of eyewitnesses and why we can trust the reliable witnesses that saw Jesus alive. And we will see there were not one, not two, but many people who saw Him.

**An eyewitness is a person who saw a certain event take place.
 Testimony is saying that a certain thing happened. It is evidence.**

Today we are going to look at evidence from the Bible itself. What do the eyewitnesses of the Bible say?

Christianity is a Historical Religion: We can use the Bible because it is based on eyewitness historical facts. For example, how do we know about the 1st President of the United States? Eyewitnesses who wrote it down. And as we have seen, these facts in the Bible have been already proven through scientific, archeological, historical, and predictive ways, just to name a few.

The Bible is a Historical Book: With eyewitness testimony added to outside sources we see that events, places, and people that are listed have been and can be proven to be accurate.

Here are some examples of historical context:

In the book of Luke, the author Luke, a doctor, says he wrote the book to a man named Theophilus to gather all the evidence from different eyewitnesses and share it with him. Based on facts. Let's all get our Bibles and turn to Luke 1:1-4 (Help as needed.)

Luke 1:1-4

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses

and servants of the word. 3 With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Let's look in the book of John, turn there now. We see Thomas physically touching Jesus' wounds after Jesus rose from the dead. And when Thomas does, he believes and calls Jesus Lord and God. John 20:24-29.

John 20:24-29

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them.

Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

*Show visual aid of courtroom

If you were in a courtroom for a murder trial and you were the jury, you would be shown evidence. Based on a reasonable doubt, you would have to determine if the person was innocent or guilty. Evidence might include physical evidence – a gun with finger prints (let's call that archeological evidence), an alibi, someone who says they were with the person, (let's call that scientific foreknowledge), statements from people who can verify the facts of the case (let's call that outside sources). But also in a court case, there is usually and hopefully eyewitness testimony.

Today we are going to look at the eyewitness testimony of those in the Bible. We will hear the evidence and listen to testimony from witnesses. Based upon what you hear, you will be able to see that there is a lot of evidence from historical sources which is enough to prove that Jesus is the Son of God and the Bible is the word of God.

So even though the jury are not witnesses, they have to decide if someone is guilty or innocent from the evidence and eyewitness testimony given. So even though we were not alive at the time the Bible was finished, we can trust the eyewitnesses just as if we were on a jury hearing the facts from others.

We can trust and use the Bible. Why? Because if it is true in all other areas we have looked at, then it makes sense we can look at it to see what it says.

Let's look at these witnesses from the Bible. These witnesses wrote from 50-100 AD. These writers were alive when Jesus was and each statement they gave could be argued against or agreed to by those that heard them at that time (the acid test). Let's look at a few people who said they were eyewitnesses:

Peter: He was an apostle of Jesus, one of the twelve who followed Jesus through his entire work on earth and saw him rise from the dead. Let's turn to and read:

2 Peter 1:16

We told you about the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. We told you about his coming. The things we told you were not just clever stories that people invented. No, we saw the greatness of Jesus with our own eyes.

Question:

What did Peter say about his eyes? (Saw Jesus alive with his own eyes.)

Peter, when giving a sermon to over 3000 people, mentions that Jesus rose from the dead. Let's turn to Acts 2:22 and read:

Acts 2:22-23

"My fellow Israelites, listen to these words: Jesus from Nazareth was a very special man. God clearly showed this to you. He proved it by the miracles, wonders, and miraculous signs he did through Jesus. You all saw these things, so you know this is true. Jesus was handed over to you, and you killed him. With the help of evil men, you nailed him to a cross. But God knew all this would happen. It was his plan—a plan he made long ago.

Peter says, "you know this is true." These people who heard Peter weren't Christians until later and if what he was saying was not true, they could have easily denied what Peter was saying then and there. But when Peter said, "you know this is true," they didn't say "liar!" Instead, their hearts were broken and later they said, "What shall we do," knowing they had just killed Jesus the Christ and that he was no longer in the grave but had risen. These people knew what Peter was speaking of and understood the facts were true.

John

He was also an apostle of Jesus, one of the twelve who followed Jesus through his entire time he worked on earth and saw him rise from the dead. Let's turn to and read:

1 John 1:1-3

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Question:

What three things did John say he and others did in verse 1? (Saw, heard, and touched Jesus.)

Paul

An apostle of Jesus who wrote most of the letters in the New Testament, explains who saw Jesus rise from the dead. As I read let's count how many people Paul says saw Jesus alive.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

*I gave you the message that I received. I told you the most important truths: that Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures say; that he was buried and was raised to life on the third day, as the Scriptures say; and that he appeared to Peter and then to the twelve apostles **(THAT'S 12)**. After that Christ appeared to more than 500 other believers at the same time. **(THAT'S AT LEAST 512!)** Most of them are still living today, but some have died. Then he appeared to James **(THAT'S 513)** and later to all the apostles. **(THE SAME ONES)** Last of all, he appeared to me. **(THAT'S 514)** I was different, like a baby born before the normal time.*

Question:

Who does Paul say saw Jesus after he rose from the dead? Peter and the apostles, 500 others, James (Jesus' brother), and Paul. For a total of at least 514 people who saw Jesus alive.

Imagine what would happen in a courtroom if over 500 witnesses came in to testify that a certain event happened. The judge would definitely have no choice but to believe! We have over 500 people saying they saw Jesus rise from the dead - that is definitely enough witnesses to know it must have happened!

Remember we do not have just one witness for the Bible. Paul says over 500 all testified and witnessed events of Jesus and the early church. These could be easily checked by other people.

There are many witnesses that were still alive, many proofs. The testimony of 500 would definitely prove in a court case today.

If the New Testament documents were the only single source which presented to us about the life of Christ that would be more than enough proof of his historical reality. The Biblical Writers – Matthew, Peter, John, Paul, Luke – any words they write are accurate. Statements about cities, islands, people, government rulers, events and more. These facts have been proven by outside sources.

There is much evidence to prove the Bible is real and the events written in it are true. Next week we will look specifically at the miracles of Jesus' resurrection. Was it real and how can we know?

Any thoughts or questions?

3) Activity Time - What Do You Have Game

10 minutes

Prep

Gather different snacks that can be individually wrapped and easy to transport. Students will each get to pick one and then describe it as best they can using all their senses just like an eyewitness would. Put the snacks in a paper bag. *check for allergies.

Activity

Say: **We are going to play a fun game! Each of you is going to get a turn and reach into this paper bag. You will choose one item, using your senses – like taste, touch, smell, and sight, describe it and tell everything you know about it to us. Then finish eating it while the next person gets a turn.**

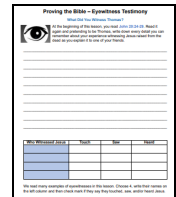
4) Activity Time - Student Booklet Activity Sheet

10 minutes

Hand out 1 student sheet to each student based on whether they are older and can write sentences or younger and can draw pictures.

Students will pretend to be Thomas and describe what he saw, heard and touched and write/draw down their descriptions.

Then students will find 4 eyewitnesses and check if the eyewitness saw, heard, and/or touched Jesus.



5) Optional Activity - Snack (From What Do You Have Game)

5 minutes

Hand out a few snacks to each student. Say, **Today I want you to enjoy a snack while we remember all the fun facts we learned. The Bible is reliable and trustworthy. We can trust it has been written and recorded properly. What was the most meaningful thing you learned today and why? Let's go around the room and share.**

This is more evidence that the Bible is accurate, which we would expect if it came from God.

Provide a napkin for children to clean their hands if needed. Review with students by asking them questions from the lesson again and discuss any questions they have while snacking. What questions do they have about today's lesson?

6) Optional Activity - Describe Jesus Video

15 minutes

Using a smartphone (or if preferred a video recorder) - you can still do this activity without a recorder if that is not possible. Have students take turns telling something they know about Jesus. A Bible story, His characteristics, choose something. Then in as many details as possible have them share about how Jesus has helped in their lives. (Making our family better, Jesus loves me, takes care of me, protected me when... etc.)

Make sure to tell them: **If anyone does not want to be recorded, just let me know. You will still share, but I won't record it.**

*If you are able, send each student their video afterwards.

7) Optional Activity - Memory Verse

2-5 minutes

Everyone go to **John 8:32** in their Bibles and read the verse aloud as a class 2 times.

John 8:32 “ *and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*”

Other options include:

- You saying a word and having them repeat it as you go through the verse
- Have students repeat a small phrase ex: “and you will know...” a few times before working on the next phrase.
- Have students repeat after each other
- Ask students to think of hand gestures. Ex: Point to themselves “AND YOU”, point to their heads when they say “WILL KNOW”, etc. and then go through verses as a class with gestures.

We can have confidence that the Bible is true and it will free us from sin, from evil, and give us the wisdom we need.

8) Closing Prayer

*If desired, ask the children if they have any prayer requests and write them down to help you remember. Then ask all children to bow their heads and fold their hands to pray.