



2023–2024 Presbyterian Women/*Horizons* Bible Study

Workshop for Leaders

By Olive Mahabir

Sacred Encounters

The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts

What Is This?

A guide for leaders who plan to use this Bible study in their small groups. The workshop provides

- a foundational background for the content of the study
- activities for generating interest and building enthusiasm for the study
- a review of the study's Scope and Sequence.

What Can You Expect Participants to Learn?

Participants will have an opportunity to

1. learn how the New Testament was developed
2. understand why Luke-Acts is a composite work
3. explore the narratives used in the Bible study
4. gain an appreciation for the importance of preparing for the study.

Room Set-up

If you meet in person, the most helpful set-up will be tables with six to eight chairs. Participants at these tables will have their study materials in front of them.

Remember to set up a computer and projector for showing the introduction video from YouTube.

If you meet via Zoom or another online meeting platform, adapt the workshop as needed. Set up and test the YouTube video before starting the meeting.

Materials Needed

- A copy of the Bible study for each participant and a copy of the Scope and Sequence
- An easel pad, or white board and a marker

- Pens, pencils, paper for taking notes
- Bibles
- Computer and projector for the slide show and showing the YouTube video

The workshop should not exceed 75 minutes with 45 minutes for discussions and questions.

Workshop Lesson Plan

Welcome and Introductions

(slide two in the slide show presentation)

Welcome participants, introduce yourself, and thank them for their interest in preparing themselves or other leaders to explore this year's Bible study. Consider the time you have available, your context, and the particular resources you want to highlight, and choose the activities you will use from this workshop.

Opening Prayer

(slide three in the slide show presentation)

Dear God, we thank you for everyone gathered here today and ask that you surround us with your powerful, life-changing presence. Thank you for loving each of us and for calling us to walk with you. We come before you as we meet and declare our dependence on you. Be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Fill our hearts with your love, fill our words and conversations with truth and grace. We ask all of these things in praise and adoration of you. In Christ's name. Amen.

Introductory Quiz

(slide four in the slide show presentation)

Start the workshop with a short quiz. This should be light-hearted and fun. Use the following questions

(and/or) come up with your own. You can provide these questions on a page with space for participants to fill in the answers. Invite participants to share their answers, and provide the correct answers when necessary.

How many books are in the Bible?	66
How many are in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible? (for Protestants)	39
How many are in the New Testament?	27
How many Gospels are in the Bible?	4
How many letters/epistles are in the New Testament?	13
What is the last book in the New Testament?	Revelation
Who is known as a physician in the New Testament?	Luke
Which book of the Bible did Jesus write?	None
When did the New Testament become Holy Scripture for the church?	4th century
Is the Old Testament just as important as the New Testament?	YES

Introductory Video

(slide five in the slide show presentation)

Use this link to show a video introduction to the Bible study by its author, Olive Mahabir (9 minutes).

www.youtube.com/watch?v=orHnWu72Akg&t=29s

Bible Basics

(slide six in the slide show presentation)

Present the following as foundational information for the content of the study.

A Brief Review of New Testament Writings

(slide seven in the slide show presentation)

- The New Testament consists of twenty-seven books, and Christians believe these books are inspired by God and authoritative for life and practice.
- Before the writing of the New Testament, the Jewish/Hebrew Scriptures (what we refer to as the Old Testament) was the sacred Scripture of the early church.
- The New Testament manuscripts were written in the second half of the first century CE by various writers in various locations. They recorded what they witnessed or what they had researched.

- These New Testament manuscripts were written over a period of fifty years.
- Through the process of canonization, church councils decided which books would be included in the New Testament.
- In 397 CE the Council of Carthage officially adopted the New Testament we have today. This decision meant that no further additions or subtractions would be accepted as the biblical canon.

How Are Luke and Acts Linked?

(slide eight in the slide show presentation)

- Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts in the second half of the first century CE in southern Greece.
- Luke was a companion of Paul and is named a “beloved physician” (Col 4:14).
- In the 20th century, scholars found similarities in language, structure, and theology of both books and determined that Luke and Acts are two volumes of the same work.
- Luke is the only writer to continue the gospel story after the resurrection and to include the ascension of Jesus Christ at the conclusion of the book (Lk 24:50-53). Acts continues where the Gospel of Luke’s narrative ends.
- Luke and Acts are linked by a common recipient named Theophilus. In his prologue to the Gospel, Luke addresses Theophilus as “most excellent.” Theophilus is again mentioned by name in Acts 1:1-2a: “In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven.”

Why Study Luke-Acts?

(slide nine in the slide show presentation)

- In Luke-Acts the message of Jesus Christ includes all people regardless of their race, class, gender, or sexuality (as in the case of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:26–40).
- For Luke, Jesus was an inclusive leader and Christianity was an inclusive movement.
- Luke-Acts demonstrates the unfolding of God’s redemptive purposes in human history and provides a distinctive perspective on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

- Luke presents a radical, inclusive, and hope-filled message to his community and highlights the universal scope of Jesus' message and the inclusivity of God's love and salvation.
- Throughout the Gospel, Luke shows Jesus caring for the poor and lowly, the outcast, the sinner, and the afflicted.
- In Acts, through the work of the Holy Spirit, the apostles continue this mission of mercy and compassion.

Lesson Components and Scope and Sequence Review

(slide 10 in the slide show presentation)

Refer to the table of contents for exact locations in your edition of the Bible study and point out the featured resources there.

Resources in the Bible Study

(slide 11 in the slide show presentation)

Authors. Read introductions to Olive Mahabir, the author of the Bible study, and Wilma Angélica Quiñonez Cubero, the author of Suggestions for Leaders.

Art. The art in this PW/*Horizons* Bible study is by various artists and is another way to explore the stories. Information about the art and artists can be found on pages 5–7 of the study and near the front of the large-print edition. Thinking about and discussing the art can add an additional dimension to the characters and story in the lesson. Flip through the Bible study and find a piece of art that catches your eye. What is it about that piece of art that intrigues you? Which story does the art depict? Does the art add additional insights to the lesson or story?

Discussion Questions. Questions are placed in each lesson under the heading “Contemplate.” Reflecting on the questions is an excellent way to review the story and invite participants to talk.

Suggestions for Leaders. Suggestions follow each lesson and are intended to help leaders engage participants in the lesson content.

Annotated Bibliography. The bibliography is a list of books and resources with brief explanations of the content.

Lesson Components

(slide 12 in the slide show presentation)

Describe the four components of each lesson. The format is consistent across lessons: Introduction, Examining the Characters, Sacred Encounter, and Transformation.

1. **Introduction** provides context and details of the story.
2. **Examining the Characters** provides insight into the diverse range of engaging characters in the narrative. Readers will see primary characters as interesting and three dimensional and supporting characters as equally significant.
3. **Sacred Encounter** describes the plot of the story, the way Luke creates and organizes a chain of events in the narrative. It is the “what” of the text, while the characters are the “who” and the theme is the “why.”
4. **Transformation** asks how is the character changed? How do we identify with the character/s? How are we changed?

Lesson Scope and Sequence

(slide 13 in the slide show presentation)

Lead participants through the Scope and Sequence for each lesson. Choose from the following questions to ask about each text/narrative.

1. How many characters are in the story? List them.
2. Does the story have a main character?
3. What is the story's context?
4. What events happen before and after the story?
5. What are the main actions of the story?
6. What is the resolution?
7. Who do you identify with in the story?
8. What do you find problematic in the story?
9. How was the person changed in the story?
10. How can the story change our lives today?

Lesson One: *Elizabeth's Sacred Encounter*

(slide 14 in the slide show presentation)

Scripture: Luke 1:1–24; 39–45

Main Idea: God calls us to make ourselves available for God's purpose.

Lesson Two: *The Exorcism in Gerasa*

(slide 15 in the slide show presentation)

Scripture: Luke 8:26–39

Main Idea: Jesus' presence and human vulnerability can result in a personal and communal transformation.

Lesson Three: *A Bleeding Woman Encounters Christ*
(slide 16 in the slide show presentation)

Scripture: Luke 8:43–48

Main Idea: Jesus calls us out of the shadows and claims us as his own.

Lesson Four: *Mary and Martha Encounter Jesus*
(slide 17 in the slide show presentation)

Scripture: Luke 10:38–42

Main Idea: Jesus calls us to value the role of each person in the community of faith.

Lesson Five: *A Person with Leprosy Encounters Jesus*
(slide 18 in the slide show presentation)

Scripture: Luke 17:11–21

Main Idea: Jesus challenges us to overcome our prejudices, embrace others, and invite all people into the community of faith.

Lesson Six: *A Person with a Physical Disability Encounters Jesus*

(slide 19 in the slide show presentation)

Scripture: Acts 3:1–10

Main Idea: God calls us to affirm that each person is a child of God who should be treated with dignity and equity.

Lesson Seven: *An Ethiopian Eunuch Encounters the Good News of Jesus*

(slide 20 in the slide show presentation)

Scripture: Acts 8:26–40

Main Idea: The Word of God is an essential tool for expanding the reign of God.

Lesson Eight: *Lydia Encounters Jesus in Worship*
(slide 21 in the slide show presentation)

Scripture: Acts 16:11–15

Main Idea: Baptism connects us to God and the community of faith.

Lesson Nine: *People Encounter Jesus Through the Work of the Disciples*

(slide 22 in the slide show presentation)

Scripture: Acts 9:36–43

Main Idea: The community of faith relies on the power of Jesus Christ in times of crisis

Respond and Reflect

(slide 23 in the slide show presentation)

If you have twelve people or fewer, ask these questions of the whole group. If more, use small groups of four or five so more participants have time to respond.

1. What have you discovered that will help you prepare to lead or participate in this Bible study?
2. What challenges do you imagine you might face?
3. Name one way you will prepare yourself to recognize sacred encounters in your own life?

Closing Prayer

(slide 24 in the slide show presentation)

Lord, we thank you for the blessing of reading your word together. We ask that these stories of life, truth, and hope will continue to impact us, and that your love and grace follow each of us as we return to our daily lives, refreshed and blessed by you. We ask all this in the wonderful name of Jesus. Amen.

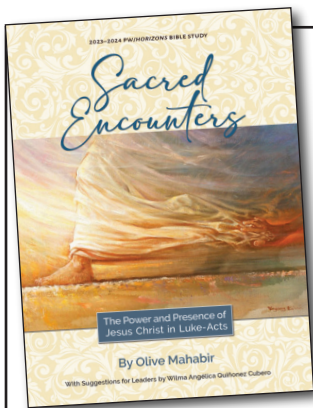


Presbyterian Women

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Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts by Olive Mahabir

About this study

Within the pages of this study, Olive Mahabir invites you to consider Jesus and Jesus' disciples who shared the Good News through sacred encounters with everyday people.

The Gospel According to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, or Luke-Acts "one story in two parts," demonstrate the unfolding of God's redemptive purposes in human history and present a distinctive perspective on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Written by Luke, a physician and traveling companion of Paul, the message to the early Christian community (and to us) is radical, inclusive, and hope-filled.

Further, this message invites the church to deeper, compassionate engagement with the world. "What are the potential implications for the church if we treat our interactions as sacred encounters that demonstrate the transformative love of Christ Jesus?" (from the introduction)

Turn to page 2 of your study to learn more about Olive Mahabir and Suggestions for Leaders writer Wilma Angélica Quiñonez Cubero.

Bible study editions, supplemental materials, and other helps

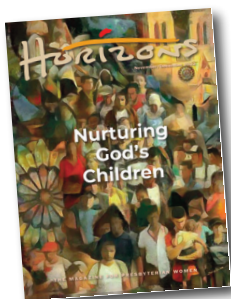
Bible study editions

- English edition; item #HZN23100; \$10
- Spanish edition; item #HZN23110; \$10
- Spanish download edition; item #HZN23111; \$10; purchase and download at presbyterianwomen.org/shop
- Large-print edition (spiral bound, one-color interior); item #HZN23150; \$15
- Ecumenical edition; item #HZN23102; \$10
- Audio edition; download only; item #HZN23172; \$15; purchase and download at presbyterianwomen.org/shop

Supplementary materials

- *Sacred Encounters* Companion DVD; disc set, item #HZN23102; also available as a download (purchase and download at presbyterianwomen.org), item #HZN23104; \$20
- Workshop for Leaders; item #HZN23101; available as a free download at presbyterianwomen.org/downloads
- Pendant/charm; features the cover art from the study, item #HZN23300; \$10
- Bulletin cover; 8½" x 11", free download at presbyterianwomen.org/downloads

Order online at presbyterianwomen.org/shop or call 800/533-4371, Monday through Friday, 10 AM to 5 PM EST.



The **Anna H. Bedford Bible Study Resource**, available exclusively in *Horizons* magazine, offers insights and questions to accompany this study.

Summer 2023

Lessons 1 and 2

September/October 2023

Lessons 3 and 4

November/December 2023

Lessons 5 and 6

January/February 2024

Lessons 7 and 8

March/April 2024

Lesson 9

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