

‘ACTING THE BIBLE’
at
Beckley School

**PETER HEALS AT THE
BEAUTIFUL GATE
(Acts 3:1-10)**

23 May 2024

Joint Benefice of

**The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Beckley St. Nicolas, Forest Hill with Shotover
St. Barnabas, Horton-cum-Studley St. John the Baptist, Stanton St. John**

The Four Parishes 'Acting the Bible' team (previously known as 'Open the Book') leads assembly once a fortnight in Beckley School. The team take stories fresh from the pages of the Bible, and make them into mini dramas, to be acted out by themselves, together with Beckley schoolchildren. Through this, it is hoped that the Bible stories are brought alive, and remembered by the children, especially as they too are involved in the acting.

The team is led by Betty Dye, a Licensed Lay Reader, and includes members from Forest Hill, Stanton St John and Beckley. They meet once a fortnight to write the scripts, with the aim of adhering as closely as possible to the original Bible texts. This often involves comparing different Bible translations and even reading the New Testament in the original Greek!

ACTING THE BIBLE

Peter and John heal at the Beautiful Gate

Acts 3 v1-16, 4 v 1-21

NARRATOR; 5 x CROWD; PETER; JOHN; CRIPPLE; TEMPLE POLICE;
CHIEF PRIEST.

(Cripple lies on a mat in the central area)

NARRATOR: *(walks in from hall door, and speaks directly to the children)* There is a spring in his step, a smile on his face: Peter is a changed man. He is ready to do what Jesus asked him, to feed his sheep, care for his lambs. Was it only 2 months ago when he stood shivering outside the courtroom and told everyone he had nothing to do with that man Jesus, not once, not twice, but three times? Was it only two months ago when he was too frightened to even support Jesus as he hung dying on the cross? But then, look what had happened! Jesus was with them again, risen from the dead, there on the beach telling Peter to feed his sheep. And finally, there was Jesus taken up from earth to heaven. And then that amazing, fantastic time when the Holy Spirit had come with power, leaving them as new men. Of course he was still the old Peter, but inside of him he had a new life, a new strength, a new understanding of what God wanted him to do. So now he and John were going together to the Temple to pray to their wonderful God. It was a busy time of day and there were crowds of people.

(Narrator goes to stand with the Crowd. Peter and John walk slowly from behind the curtain towards the cripple on the mat.)

CROWD 1: Look! Here come the apostles, Peter and John, walking through the archway of the Beautiful Gate.

CROWD 2: And there is that crippled man, lying on his mat!

CROWD 3: That crippled man is here at the Beautiful Gate every day.

CROWD 4: His friends bring him, so that he can beg for money.

CRIPPLE: *(to Peter and John)* Please, please good friends. I am crippled from my birth. I cannot walk. I cannot work. Please give me some money so I can buy some food to eat.

PETER: Look at us!

CROWD 5: Will they give him some money?

PETER: I do not have any money to give to you. But what I do have, I will give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk!

(Peter takes the hand of the cripple and slowly pulls him up)

CROWD 1: Whatever is Peter doing?

CROWD 2: Look at the crippled man's feet!

CROWD 3: Look at his ankles!

(Cripple gets up slowly, with a lot of wobbling)

CROWD 4: Look at his legs! He is standing up!

(Cripple stands straight and takes a slow step, then jumps up and down)

CRIPPLE: Look at me! I can walk! Look, everyone! The bones in my ankles and my knees are strong. I was a cripple, but now I am walking! These men have healed me!

CROWD 5: Look! He is jumping! He is dancing!

CROWD (all): Peter and John have healed him! *(Crowd moves forward to stand near to the crippled man)*

PETER: No, no! We are not the ones who cured him. This man has been healed in the name of Jesus - the same Jesus who you handed

over to Pilate to be crucified. God raised Jesus from the dead, and we know this to be true because we saw him with our own eyes. What you saw was done by faith in the name of Jesus.

CROWD 1: Oh no! Here comes the Temple guard!

CROWD 2: Now there will be trouble!

(Guard walk on from the hall door)

CAPTAIN OF THE TEMPLE GUARD: What's all this noise? Move aside, you lot. Now just stop all this. You can't preach that sort of nonsense here in the Temple. I am arresting you all in the name of the High Priest. Come with me. It will be prison for you.

(Grabs Peter, John and the Cripple by the elbow, drags them behind the curtain. Crowd look horrified)

CROWD 3: The guard has arrested them!

CROWD 4: He has taken them to the prison!

CROWD 5: They must spend the whole night, cold, thirsty and hungry, in prison!

(One of the Crowd picks up the mat and they walk slowly off to the hall door)

NARRATOR: In the morning all the Council Leaders and all the important Priests met together in Jerusalem. They were very angry that Peter and John had been telling the crowd that Jesus had risen from the dead. The Chief Priest decided to question them, so he told the guard to fetch them from the prison.

(Chief Priest walks on from hall side. Temple Guard walks on from behind curtain. At a sign from the Chief Priest, Temple Guard goes back and pulls out Peter, John and the Cripple from behind the curtain)

CHIEF PRIEST: By what power and in whose name have you healed this crippled man?

PETER: Sirs, if we have been brought here because we did a kind thing for a sick man, and you want to know how he was healed, it is high time that all of you know that it was done in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth! He is the one you killed on the cross, the one whom God raised from the dead. It is by his power that this man at our side stands in your presence, perfectly well.

CHIEF PRIEST: *(to the Captain of the Guard)* What can we do? These followers of Jesus are ordinary uneducated men, but they are suddenly speaking out with such authority! And everyone in Jerusalem knows that this man has been healed by them.

TEMPLE GUARD: Silence them with threats, so they will be too afraid to speak out again.

CHIEF PRIEST: *(to Peter and John)* You may go free. But never speak or teach or heal in the name of Jesus ever again!

PETER: Whether it is right in the eyes of God to listen to you rather than to what he says, you must decide.

JOHN: For us, there is no question. We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.

(short pause, all freeze, then Narrator steps forward)

NARRATOR: After further threats, the Leaders let them go. They could not think of any way of punishing Peter and John because everyone was praising God for what had happened.