



GOALS

Through this session students will...

- Track how well the apostles understood and applied Jesus' teachings
- Consider their own level of understanding of Jesus' teaching
- Begin to understand the importance of the Spirit's work in the lives of Jesus' followers

MATERIALS: Group

- Whiteboard and markers
- "Tracking the Apostles" diagram

MATERIALS: Each Student

- Student journal pages for Session 5
- Session 5 Scripture sheets
- A Bible and pen (Students should bring their own Bibles. You can decide if you would like them to use a physical Bible or a Bible app like, "YouVersion.")
- Colored pencils/highlighters

Leading Up to the Session:

This week marks the halfway point of the series. You may want to use this milestone to check in with your group to see how they are processing the material, evaluating how well they are making the jump from the conceptual to the practical, applying what they've learned to their everyday lives. This week's session will have your students checking in on the disciples to determine how well they applied what Jesus had taught them. Perhaps having individual conversations this week about how they are doing with the application of the material might help them make a connection to the material that follows.

Keep your prayer team up to speed on your group's progress. Since this session is the halfway point, make sure you let them know how much you appreciate their commitment and dedication to your group, and share any spiritual victories you have experienced.

Prayer

Begin your time together in prayer. If you feel your group is up to the task perhaps even consider involving a few of your students in that prayer. You can give them some specific topics to pray for including understanding and wisdom as you proceed through the lesson, thankfulness for what God has been doing in the group, for the Holy Spirit to empower your group to accomplish the mission God has called you to.

Review

As always, start with a review regarding the previous sessions.

- How did the apostles respond when Jesus asked them to follow Him?
- What were the excuses of the "prospective followers"?
- What were some of the excuses we use today when hesitating to follow Jesus?

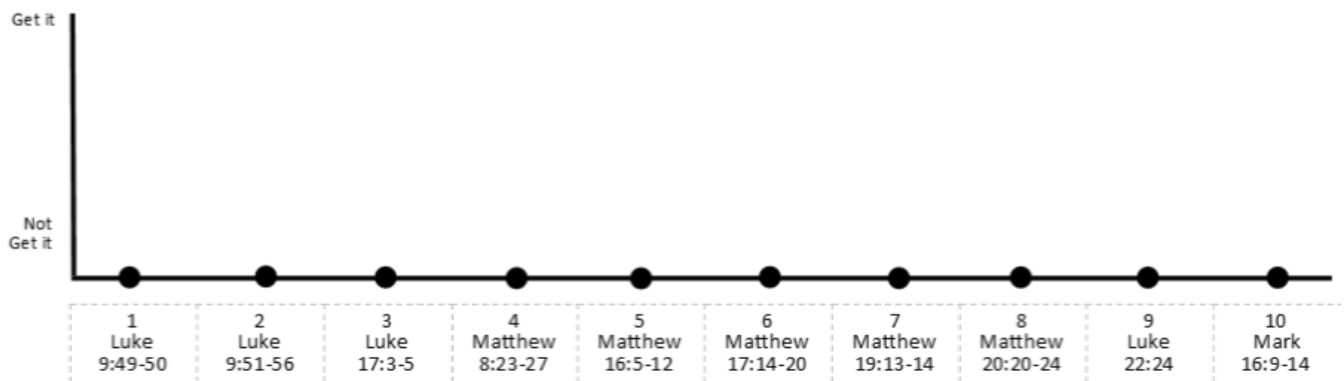
DIGGING IN

Share in your own words:

Now that we've learned the origins of the apostles, we're going to track their walk with Christ just as we tracked Israel's relationship with God in Session 3. As we read through some Scriptures today we will be watching to see how well the Apostles "got it" when it came to Jesus' teachings.

- Assign one or more passages noted on students’ journal pages to each student and invite students to read the passages from their Bibles.
- After they’ve read their Scripture, ask them to choose a word from the list noted on their journal pages that best describes the apostles in each specific passage.
- After a few minutes have students read the passage out loud before sharing their perspective of what is happening between Jesus and the apostles.
- Ask students to share the word that they chose from the list to describe the situation.

Draw the following chart on the board (though the verse references aren’t necessary):



After students have shared their word have your group discuss where to place a dot on the chart that corresponds to the apostle’s understanding of Jesus’ teachings at each Scripture moment. Be sure to follow the numbered order of Scriptures in the chart below. Once you have placed all the dots, connect the dots with a line. Hopefully this will help students track the “ups and downs” of the Apostle’s understanding.

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Luke 9:49-50 | 6. Matthew 17:14-20 |
| 2. Luke 9:51-56 | 7. Matthew 19:13-14 |
| 3. Luke 17:3-5 | 8. Matthew 20:20-24 |
| 4. Matthew 8:23-27 | 9. Luke 22:24 |
| 5. Matthew 16:5-12 | 10. Mark 16:9-14 |

Ignorant (didn’t understand)	Jealous
Discerning (understanding)	Faithless
Unbelieving	Power Hungry
Inquisitive	

TAKING IT INWARD

After you have completed the above diagram, take some time to discuss the questions below.

Considering everything you have just processed, how would you describe the apostles’ understanding of Jesus’ teaching overall?

Why do you think that these men struggled so much with understanding Jesus?

What do you think kept Jesus from giving up on them?

For the next questions ask your students to write their responses in their student journals before you discuss them together as a group.

As you think through the words that you used to describe the Apostles in the “Digging In” exercise above, are there any of those words that would describe our group at times? Which ones? Why did you choose those words?

What would you think about entrusting a mission as important as Jesus’ mission to a group with that description? (Don’t feel too bad, obviously these same words applied to the disciples at one point as well, but they were able to pull it together and do some amazing things)


Take a few minutes to talk through these two questions as a group. Although some of these descriptions may not be positive, reinforce the point that the Apostles struggled with many of the same things that we do. Remind your group that we have been entrusted by Jesus with the same mission that He entrusted to the apostles.

DIGGING DEEPER

Share in your own words:

Imagine that you were going away for a long time. When you’re saying your good-byes to the people closest to you (family, friends, boyfriend/girlfriend), what types of things would you share with them? Would you discuss important things, or things like the weather, sports scores, and gossip?

Share that when we know we are about to leave someone we care about for a long time, we discuss important things. In a similar way Jesus took the opportunity to have a lengthy discussion with His disciples in the week before His death; this conversation revealed a great deal about the confidence that He had in those men. Obviously Jesus’ confidence wasn’t in the fact that He had assembled an all-star team of followers, but rather, His confidence was in the fact that the “gift” His Father was about to send (The Holy Spirit) would change these men in ways they couldn’t have imagined.

Ask your group to think of a symbol they can use to denote the Holy Spirit (e.g., a bird/dove, fire, ghost). Invite volunteers to draw their suggestions on your board. Here’s an example for a simple bird/dove: 

After deciding on a symbol, instruct your group to read through the passages noted on their Scripture sheets under Digging Deeper. Ask students to draw the symbol over any references to the Holy Spirit in these passages, including any pronouns and any titles. Invite students to move to a place of solitude to experience these verses with minimum distraction.

After a few minutes of exploring the passages, ask students to look at what they marked and tell you two types of information:

- 1. What titles did you find for the Holy Spirit?**
- 2. What actions of the Holy Spirit did you find?**

Write their responses on your board and invite students to write them in the space provided on their journal pages. Your chart will look similar to below, but don’t worry if it’s not as detailed.

The Holy Spirit

Scripture	Titles/Descriptions
John 14:15-17	TITLE: Advocate TITLE: Spirit of Truth -help you -be with you forever -He lives with you -will be in you

John 14:25-26	<i>TITLE: Advocate</i> <i>TITLE: Holy Spirit</i> <i>-Father will send</i> <i>-will teach</i> <i>-will remind you</i>
John 15:26-27	<i>TITLE: Advocate</i> <i>TITLE: Spirit of Truth</i> <i>-will testify about Jesus</i>
John 16:6-15	<i>TITLE: Advocate</i> <i>TITLE: Spirit of Truth</i> <i>-Jesus will send</i> <i>-Will prove world is wrong about sin, R, J</i> <i>-will guide into all truth</i> <i>-Not speak on his own</i> <i>-Will speak only what he hears</i> <i>-Tell what is yet to come</i> <i>-Will glorify Jesus</i> <i>-Will receive from Jesus what he will make known to us</i>
Luke 24:46-49	<i>-Father has promised</i> <i>-Will cloth with power from on high</i>
Acts 1:4-8	<i>-Gift the Father has promised</i> <i>-Will baptize</i> <i>-Will give power</i> <i>-Will come on them</i>

TAKING IT INWARD

Help students understand what these actions of the Holy Spirit might look like when applied to our own lives. For instance, what are some ways the Holy Spirit might work to guide us to truth in our own lives? How would our lives be different if we lived in the power promised in Acts 1?

The questions below are noted on students' journal pages. Invite students to answer each question (or choose one or two for them to answer) and then discuss as a group.

What do the titles tell you about the Holy Spirit?

Do you think about the role of the Holy Spirit in your life? If not, do you view The Spirit as more of a "silent partner" in the Trinity?

How can the Holy Spirit help our group accomplish the mission that God has called us to?

Thinking back to the characteristics of the Holy Spirit that we just discussed, can you think of any that might be able to help you through a struggle you are having right now? How so?

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Reinforce the things you have discussed with your group by closing with the following questions:

Based upon what you have learned about the Holy Spirit from Jesus in this session...

What should our response to the Holy Spirit be as individuals? How can we each respond to/receive power from the Holy Spirit?

What should our response to the Holy Spirit be as a group? How can we as a group respond to receive power from the Holy Spirit?

What are some specific characteristics of the Spirit that might aid you in what God has called you to do?

What are some specific characteristics of the Spirit that might aid us in what God has called our group to do?

After you have allowed time for your group to work through their responses to these questions, challenge students to commit to praying for the Holy Spirit to work through the group and empower you with the abilities and skills necessary to accomplish the mission that God has called you to. Since prayer is the conduit for the Holy Spirit's work in our lives, encourage students to pray daily throughout the week. Below are a few ideas that you can implement to remind students to pray. Suggest any of these but also be sure to tap into the creativity of your students. They may have better ideas. And be sure to share them with us at facebook.com/InWordResources.

- **Decide on a specific time each day for everyone to pray. Make it easy to remember like 4:04 p.m. (encourage students to set alarms on their cell phones).**
- **Send out a group text reminding students to pray. There are a host of apps that can assist you in this, and can even become part of your youth ministry toolbox. (Apps like GroupMe can make this type of communication easy).**
- **Give students a sticker they can affix to their cell phone. Each time they look at their phones they will be reminded to pray.**
- **Encourage your students to meet together a couple minutes before school begins each day and pray together.**
- **Give students a prayer journal (or create one) and ask them to record their prayers for an entire week. (This could be the beginning of a spiritual discipline that they carry with them for a lifetime.)**

After choosing an idea (or ideas) to implement, invite students to write the plan on their journal pages under Putting Into Practice.

Close out your time together by reminding students of the power of prayer. Remind them that no great spiritual movement or mission has ever succeeded without people surrounding it in prayer. Encourage them to see how important prayer is to the mission that God has called your group to.

Kick off a week of prayer by asking students to pray as you end your time together. If time allows you can encourage each student to say a prayer, even if it is only a few words. Remind them that prayer doesn't have to be eloquent to be effective. Sometimes the simplest prayers can be the most meaningful and effective!