

SESSION 6 LEAD IT: MIDDLE SCHOOL



GOALS

Through this session students will...

- See what happened to the apostles when they obeyed Jesus' instructions regarding the Holy Spirit.
- Evaluate whether they want the same thing to happen to them.
- Search for anything that might be holding back the work of God's Spirit.

MATERIALS: Group

- Whiteboard and markers
- A piece of poster board labelled "The Acts of the Apostles and New Believers" affixed to the wall
- Print and cut emoticons for Digging Deeper (located in student journal pages) exercise and supply a way to affix them to the poster board labelled "The Acts of the Apostles and New Believers"

MATERIALS: Each Student

- Student journal pages for Session 6
- Session 6 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:

Believe it or not, we are nearing the end of this study! Take a minute to consider what your group needs to do to finish strong. Are there any attitudes in the group that need addressed? Is there anything holding you back from being the group that God needs to accomplish His mission?

You may want to debrief with other adult volunteers helping you with this study. It helps to have a fresh set of eyes helping you see issues that you haven't noticed from the teaching position. The closing sessions could be even more powerful if you can identify and eliminate issues that are holding your group back.

You may have noticed that we've regularly reminded you to stay in contact with your prayer team. We firmly believe that your prayer team is crucial to the success of the series. You may have identified a couple things from your Prep It that you'd like your prayer team to pray for. Take a minute to communicate any specific or special needs to your team.

Prayer

After your group has gathered open your time in prayer. Pray that your group will be soft to God's conviction and open to responding to Him.

Review

Share with your students that this session is the second of two parts. The previous session was a fact-finding mission concerning the apostles, while this session is a fact-applying mission concerning your group.

Discuss these questions to review your previous session:

How would you describe the apostles when they were hanging out with Jesus?

-usually confused, didn't quite get it

What did Jesus stress in His final conversations with the apostles?

-The work of the Holy Spirit

What are some things you learned about the Holy Spirit?

DIGGING IN

Before your students get into Acts 2, ask a volunteer to read Acts 1:1-8 from a Bible as a refresher on the role of the Holy Spirit (they read verses 4-8 in the last session). Also encourage them to take note of the instructions that Jesus gave the apostles concerning what they are to do once He leaves.

Take a moment to explain the details of the Feast of Pentecost to your students. Below you will find a refresher from your personal prep. As you talk with your group share about the power that came as a result of the Spirit. Remember, the idea here isn't to get into a debate about the gifts of the Spirit, but rather to acknowledge the legitimate power that came through the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost was a feast that the Jews celebrated in Jerusalem 50 days after Passover. Jesus was crucified during Passover, which is why such large crowds had gathered in Jerusalem. Pentecost was a celebration of the Jews receiving God's Law at Mt. Sinai (think back to Session 2). The 50 days between Passover and Pentecost is significant because it marked the span of time (7 weeks) between Israel leaving Egypt and Israel arriving at Mt. Sinai.

Divide your group into three smaller groups (if you have only three students, have each student be a group). Explain that you're going to break Acts 2 down to three scenes. The verse references are noted on their journal pages. Each group will tell the story of their scene to the group.

1. Divide into three smaller groups and assign each group one of these passages:

Acts 2:1-18 | Acts 2: 22-24 | Acts 2:36-41

2. Invite the groups to move to separate areas in the room and read their scene from their Bibles or Bible apps.
3. Have them decide how they want to tell the story of the scene to the rest of the group, making sure that each group member shares part of the story. They may want to act it out or simply retell it in their own words. A couple rules:
 - They aren't to re-read the story, but to convey it in their own words or actions.
 - Every person participates in some fashion.
4. After a couple minutes, have the groups share the story of their scene.
5. After the story of each scene is shared, process it as a group with the questions below. Write responses on the board and encourage students to jot down responses on their journal pages.

What do we learn about any of the apostles from this scene?

What do we learn about other groups of people in this scene?

After each group has shared, your board should look similar to the chart below but don't worry if it's not as detailed.

The Apostles

- were all together
- the Holy Spirit Came Upon them
- they spoke in languages
- declared the wonders of God in languages
- Peter addressed the crowd boldly
- Peter quoted Joel
- identified the crowd as those who crucified Jesus
- called them to repentance
- promised the gift of the Holy Spirit

Other People

- were staying in Jerusalem
- were God-fearing Jews from every nation
- gathered around in bewilderment when they saw the commotion
- amazed, accused apostles of being drunk
- asked what this means
- were soft hearted
- 3,000 repented, accepted Jesus and were baptized

Process the information by discussing the following questions:

How well did the Apostles follow Jesus' instructions from Acts 1? Honestly, were you a little concerned that they might not?

What was the initial reaction of the crowd after the Holy Spirit came?

What was the crowd's response to what Peter said?

How were Jesus' promises in Acts 1 fulfilled in Act 2?

This scene in Acts 2 is one of the most famous scenes of transformation in all of Scripture. Can you think of other examples of God transforming people in Scripture?

-Sampson being given strength

-Gideon becoming a mighty warrior

-David is transformed from a shepherd boy to a warrior and then a king

Do you believe that God still transforms people today? Can you think of any examples?

DIGGING DEEPER

Share with your students that the events of Acts 2 made a huge impact in the lives of the apostles and everyone around them. In fact, ever since God's Spirit descended on that day, things have never been the same. As we read further into the story, we get a better understanding of how this transformation impacted the attitudes and lifestyles of the apostles and new believers of those early days.

Divvy out the passages below to your students. Depending on the size of your group, some students may have more than one passage, or some passages may have more than one student. Hopefully by now you've printed and cut out the emoticons supplied in the student journal pages. Lay your emoticon in front of your group and share the following instructions:

Circle any descriptions of the apostles or believers, including those that indicate character or attitude.

Underline every action of the apostles and new believers.

After you have read your passage(s), you'll be asked to choose which emoticon best describes the actions and attitudes in the passage and tell why.

Less involved option: Have students draw a simple emoticon directly on the poster board.

Have your students read "The Acts of the Apostles and New Believers" using their Scripture sheets.

Acts 2:42-47 | Acts 4:1-4 | Acts 4:7-13 | Acts 4:18-20 | Acts 4:31-33

Once students have finished circling and underlining, call for your group's attention. Ask students to choose the emoticon that depicts the actions or attitude most prevalent in their passage and share with the group why they chose that particular emoticon.

After sharing, have them affix the emoticon to a piece of poster board labelled "The Acts of the Apostles and New Believers."

TAKING IT INWARD

After emoticons are affixed to the poster board, process the information using one of the following options:

- Have students snap a photo of the emoticon collage.
- Have students draw on their journal pages a quick sketch of the poster board making sure to depict each emoticon on the board.

Then discuss the following questions.

Going by our emoticons on the wall, how have the apostle's descriptions and actions changed from last week's session?

-From timid to confident

-From jealous and squabbling to enjoying each other, working as one body

-From clueless/didn't "get it" to understanding and devoted

What changed these men?

-The Holy Spirit

Can you imagine what it must have been like to be a part of this exciting time in the life of the church? Have you ever experienced anything similar? If so, what led up to that experience?

Of the emoticons representing these Acts passages, which do you need more of in your life? Take a minute to write your response under "My Acts Emojis" on your journal page.

If your group needs prompted, remind them of traits and actions represented by the emoticons:

-awe, enjoying the company of fellow believers, belief, courage, boldness, speaking boldly

What do our selections as individuals reveal about our group? Is there an issue or two we need to address in our ministry?

Do we want to experience the transformation that comes through the Spirit? What do we need to do to experience this?

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Perhaps your group is sensing the need for the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. This could be a turning point in your group. For this reason we have intentionally left the close of this session open-ended. The questions below are simply a guideline; you may want to go a completely different direction.

- Share observations from your personal prep with your students. You may want to refer to your observations of the characteristics from Acts 2 that you feel your group exhibits, that it lacks, and actions it needs to take to accomplish the mission God has called you to.
- Take a moment to share with your students how the concepts of obedience and repentance are the first steps in experiencing the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Ask students to consider their personal level of obedience as well as the group's level of obedience. What observations about obedience do they have? Ask students if there is anything that the group needs to repent of. Are there things that they need to individually repent of?
- Now take some time to make it practical. What are some of the apostles' actions that you can begin to enact in your life?
 - Set aside daily time for prayer*
 - Commit to meeting together for accountability*
 - Share with one another to help meet needs*
 - Have a weekly meal time*
 - Continue to study God's Word together even after this series ends*
 - Encourage each other to seek the Holy Spirit each day*