

Acts: Mission Accepted

The Spirit Comes

Large Group Lesson 1

Scripture: *Acts 1-2*

Main Point: *The Spirit was poured out so people might hear the Gospel and be saved.*

Memory Verse: *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. John 14:26*

Supplies: *Bell*

Introduction

Good morning friends! Today we begin a *NEW* series in a *NEW* book in the Bible in the *NEW* Testament. This is actually a book that your parents are studying in big church. Does anyone know? It's the book of Acts! You can find the book of Acts right after the Gospels in your Bible. In fact, why don't you open your Bible or grab a Bible off the shelf and open it up now!

(Give time for kids to grab a Bible and find the book of Acts—Our new Kinder friends will need extra help)

Large Group Lesson

Acts is a book focused on the "Acts of the Apostles" and is sometimes called a history of the early church. These are the events that happened right after Jesus ascended into heaven—we see the church start to form and Jesus' followers start to spread the news of what Jesus did on the cross! It was a super exciting time, but also a little bit of a scary time.

Why was it scary? Well, Jesus—their leader, was gone. The disciples had just watched Jesus go up, back to heaven. He is literally "raised up" right before their eyes! He gives them some hope and encouragement in Acts 1:8-9

*But you will receive power when the **Holy Spirit** has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.*

Can you imagine that sight?? The disciples are left wondering when the Holy Spirit will come and when Jesus will return again. They have to start moving forward, carrying out the MISSION without Jesus on earth with them. What was the mission? Look at Matthew 28:19-20 & verse 8 for the reminder:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Their mission: to tell the world about what Jesus had done and make followers! The story of the sending and filling of the Spirit took place fifty days after Easter. In Acts 2 we find the disciples all gathered together and Jesus sends his "helper" to them in an unexpected way. It was the day of Pentecost, a special feast day. Jerusalem was packed with thousands of celebrating Jews from around the world. The apostles and some of Jesus's other closest friends were gathered to celebrate, when suddenly a "mighty rushing wind" from heaven "filled the entire house", Acts 2:2-4.

And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Then, what looked like flames, which were shaped like a tongue sticking upward that just happened to be on fire, sat over each person's head. These tongues of fire were symbols that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." And, because of that, they were able "to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance"(2:4). Basically, the Spirit gave them the ability to speak about the mighty works of God in the languages of all the different people from all the different places.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?"

How do you think that sounded to outsiders? I want everyone right now to speak gibberish. For real, just speak whatever made up words you want until I ring this bell.
(allow it to go on for a few minutes & then ring the bell)

Did that sound a little crazy? Do you think if people walked by kids church right now they would think we're insane? Yeah they would! That's what people thought about these 120 people together in this room at Pentecost.

But Peter, one of Jesus' close followers, stood up and explained all these things to those who were watching them happen. He said, "What you see--men and women, both young and old,

speaking in many tongues about the wonderful things of God- is just what the prophet Joel said would happen when God poured out his Spirit." He's telling them this is exactly how God said it would be AND that Jesus is truly God's son!

Look at vers 2:36:: *Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."*

The Bible says the people listening "were cut to the heart" (2:37), which means they felt deeply sorry for not believing in Jesus. They asked what they should do. Look at verse 38 to see what Peter tells them:

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Three thousand people received Peter's message, were baptized, and then received the Holy Spirit too. Three thousand is a big number, right? But it's true! Look at verse 41:

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

What an amazing day and a fulfillment of the "helper" Jesus had promised. Not only did they have the mission to tell the world about what Jesus has done, but they had the tools to do it: *The Holy Spirit.*

The prophet Joel had a vision of what it would be like when God's kingdom came and Christ as King ruled over it. In that vision God poured out his Spirit on all people: men and women, young and old. Now that Jesus had come, that vision was coming true. It all began at Pentecost. The Spirit came down and enabled his followers to preach in different languages so that God's kingdom could spread. It spread and spread and spread, from that small group of disciples to all nations.

The book of Acts tells the story of how the gospel spread from Jerusalem to every part of the world. Jesus's rescue mission had begun, and it cannot be stopped. The kingdom of God is coming, just as Joel foretold!

We'll keep understanding the mission and how it spread in the coming weeks! For now, let's pray and head to our small groups to discuss this story more.

Close in prayer and dismiss to small groups.

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Small Group Discussion

Scripture: *Acts 1-2*

Main Point: *The Spirit was poured out so people might hear the Gospel and be saved.*

Discussion

Today we learned about the Holy Spirit and the day of Pentecost. We learned that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to help fulfill the mission He had given his disciples. Jesus desired people to hear the truth of what He had done on the cross for them (*the Gospel*) and be saved.

Ask the questions to your group. If they need help, look at Acts 2 in their Bibles for assistance.

- How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus said he was leaving them?
- Why did Jesus say it was better that he go?
- What did he say he would send to be with them always?

Takeaway: When Jesus went to heaven, he sent his Spirit to be with his people always.

- Fifty days after Easter, on the day of Pentecost, who was gathered together in Jerusalem?
- And what did it look like when God sent the Holy Spirit to the disciples?

Takeaway: God first sent the Holy Spirit to his disciples on the day of Pentecost.

- What are some of the things that happened when the Spirit was poured out?
- As people spoke in different languages, what did Peter say it was a sign of?
- What happened to people who responded to Peter by believing in Jesus?

Takeaway: The Spirit was poured out so people might hear the gospel and be saved.

- Who had said that he would send his Spirit?
- Who was filled with the Holy Spirit?

Takeaway: The promised Spirit fills all who call on the Lord Jesus to be saved.

Bible Challenge: "Jesus Loves Me" in All Languages

Supply List: paper, construction paper, scissors, glue sticks

Have children cut a heart out of construction paper and glue it to the middle of another piece of construction paper. Then children can cut out the different ways to say "Jesus loves me" and glue them around the heart. Remind children that when the Spirit came on Pentecost, the people spoke in different languages. Jesus also came to save all the nations of the earth.

Memory Verse Challenge: Balloon Relay

Supplies: Balloons

- Divide children into teams, and have them line up. Give each team a balloon.
- On "Go" the first child on each team blows the balloon down to the opposite side of the room (until it hits the wall) and blows it back to the next person in line.
- Every time they finish a rotation, read the memory verse together as a group.
- The first team to race all players wins.
- Remind children that at Pentecost a mighty wind from heaven filled the room.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. John 14:26