



CHRIST CENTRAL



SESSION 7

The Holy Spirit - Who, Why and How

Key takeaways for new believers:

- The message of the gospel is simply expressed:
 - We have all sinned and need forgiveness
 - When we turn from our sin and trust in Jesus for forgiveness, we are saved
 - God gives us His Spirit when we believe, both to transform us to be more like Jesus and as a deposit guaranteeing the future aspects of our salvation
- The essentials for all believers (individually and corporately) have always been the same:
 - Study of the Word of God
 - Pray
 - Meet together, to encourage and build up each other

Part 1

worship

- Review the story from session 6 (The Great Commission). Talk about participants' experiences of retelling the story or contemplating the story since the previous session.
- Listen to or sing worship songs. Example: How great is our God
- Allow participants to discuss any pastoral or spiritual issues on their minds



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Part 2 (story)

community

mission

Transition from session 6: In the last story, we saw how Jesus gave His disciples an important commission...to go and make followers of all people across the world. How can we / should we do that?

The Day of Pentecost / The beginning of the church (Acts 2:1-47)

Those who believed in Jesus (about 120 of them) continued to meet together in Jerusalem after Jesus went up to heaven. A few days later, there was a special religious festival in Jerusalem, and people from all over the world came to celebrate.

On the day of the festival, all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with God's Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as God's Spirit gave them this ability.

When the people who were visiting Jerusalem from other places heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers. They were completely amazed. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from around here, and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages about the wonderful things God has done!" They stood there amazed and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other. But others in the crowd ridiculed them. "They're just drunk, that's all!"

Then Peter stepped forward with Jesus' closest followers and shouted to the crowd. "Listen carefully, all of you! Make no mistake about this. These people are not drunk as some of you are assuming. Nine o'clock in the morning is much too early for that. No, what you see was prophesied long ago."

"Listen, God publicly endorsed Jesus by doing powerful miracles, wonders and signs through him, as you well know. But God knew what would happen, and his pre-arranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. You nailed him to a cross and killed Him. But God raised him back to life."

"Now he is exalted to the place of highest honour in heaven, at God's right hand. And God, as he promised, gave him his Spirit to pour out on us, just as you see and hear today. So, know for certain that God has made this Jesus whom you killed to be the promised King."

Peter's words pierced their hearts and they asked "What should we do?" Peter replied, "Each of you must turn away from your disobedience and turn to God, then be baptised in the name of Jesus to show that you've done this. Then you will receive the gift of God's Spirit. This promise is to you and your children and to everyone throughout the world who turns to God through Jesus.

Those who believed what Peter said were baptised and added to the church that day – about 3,000 in all.

Questions for discussion

1. What do you like about this story?
2. What bothered you about this story?
3. What does this story show you about God?
4. What does this story show you about people?



Part 3 (practice / takeaways)

identity

community

mission

Ask the remaining questions

5. What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
6. How will you remember this story?
7. Is there anyone you would like to tell this story to?

Pray that the new believers are able to learn and internalise the story, thoughtfully consider its implications for them and tell the story to others

Encourage the new believers to read and meditate on the following verses:

- Acts 2:44-47
- Joel 2: 28-29
- Matthew 28:18-20

Other useful media resources

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdVYhVwHsDc>
A short, stylised mini-movie of the events of Pentecost
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TyCwUrR_OM
Dramatisation of the events of Pentecost



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Notes for leaders

Here are some topics / questions that may come up during the discussion, or which you should consider in preparing for this session:

- The special Jewish festival that was being celebrated was the 'Feast of Weeks' or 'Feast of Harvest', occurring seven weeks after Passover. This was a special harvest pilgrimage festival that celebrated the end of the barley harvest. As a 'required' festival, there would have been Jewish pilgrims from all over the world in Jerusalem.
- References to *Jews* have been omitted in order to avoid the distraction of a discussion about the modern-day political entity of Israel. Instead, the general terms *God's people* / *people* have been used. Similarly we have not used the term *Gentiles* which might be a foreign concept to most new believers.
- While the outworking may be different in our time and culture, there are certain features or activities of the early church that are essential:
 - Studying God's Word in order to know Him more and more
 - Prayer
 - Meeting together, for encouragement, building each other up, demonstrating love and unity
 - Communicating the gospel
- Each new believer is a miracle – the work of God's Spirit, enabling us to hear and believe the gospel. The establishment of the early church at Pentecost itself came about through a dramatic and miraculous event!
- From the beginning, God placed believers in community for a reason, for encouragement, for mutual development and for completing God's mission.
- The birth of the church happened according to God's plan (as did all other aspects of the salvation story), and he authenticated it supernaturally. God is faithful to His promises, in particular the promise of His Spirit (as had been prophesied centuries earlier by Joel)
- God used ordinary people, 'unschooled Galileans', empowering them by His Spirit to publicly communicate the gospel. He continues to do the same today.
- On the day of Pentecost, many people believed and were saved. However many chose not to believe, even in the face of the supernatural evidence. Throughout history the reactions to the gospel are varied.