

Explore the Bible Adult Leader Guide Teaching Plans

Session 2: Empowered

Text: Acts 2:1-15

Memory Verse: John 16:13

PREPARE TO LEAD THE GROUP TIME

READ Acts 2:1-15 and Understand the Context. Record any questions you have about these verses, and then seek out answers as you study and prepare.

STUDY Acts 2:1-15, using the commentary provided. Consult a Bible dictionary to find out more about the Day of Pentecost.

PLAN the group time using the ideas under Lead Group Bible Study and More Ideas. Consult blog.lifeway.com/explorethebible for an idea using a current news event to introduce and conclude the session. Review the Bible Skill (PSG, p. 26) for use as an activity during the session.

GROW with other group leaders at the Groups Ministry blog (lifeway.com/groupministry).

GATHER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

Personal Study Guides; A whiteboard and a dry erase marker, or a large sheet of paper and a marker; and copies of **PACK ITEM 5** (*Bookmark: Memory Verses*). Prepare to display the following Pack Items: **PACK ITEM 1** (*Map: Expansion of the Early Church*); **PACK ITEM 2** (*Outline: Acts 1–12*); **PACK ITEM 3** (*Poster: Spring 2016*); **PACK ITEM 4** (*Time Line: Acts 1–12*); **PACK ITEM 6** (*Miracles in the Early Church, Acts 1–12*); **PACK ITEM 10** (*Accusations Faced by the Early Church*).

LEAD GROUP BIBLE STUDY

FOCUS ATTENTION (FIRST THOUGHTS)

CONSIDER: As the group settles, direct them to the question you've written on the whiteboard or a large sheet of paper: *If you had to choose to live without one power source you currently rely on, which one would you give up? Explain your reasoning.* (PSG, p. 23) Discuss their responses. Follow up by asking: *What does your decision reveal about you?*

INTRODUCE: Highlight the title of today's study: Empowered. Briefly summarize the events of Acts 1 and introduce Acts 2:1-15. Challenge the group to see how the Holy Spirit's presence then and now enables believers to fulfill God's mission.

REVIEW: Call attention to the pack items you have displayed in the room: **Pack Item 1** (*Map: Expansion of the Early Church*); **Pack Item 2** (*Outline: Acts 1–12*); and **Pack Item 3** (*Poster: Spring 2016*). Also give out copies of **Pack Item 4** (*Time Line: Acts 1–12*) to each person. Explain the value of each item as we seek to see the Book of Acts in its context and to gain a clearer understanding of the location, time, and events in this biblical record.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

EXPLAIN: Share a brief summary and definition of *Pentecost* or *Feast of Weeks*. Clarify its significance to the Jewish people.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Acts 2:1-4, while others follow along in their Bibles.

INQUIRE: *Why is unity of purpose and focus critical for the church? Why, then, do so many believers struggle to be unified in purpose and focus?* (PSG, p. 24)

READ: Enlist someone to read aloud the two paragraphs in the PSG under The Spirit Given, Verse 1 (p. 24), beginning with *The statement ...* and ending with *... our witness for Christ.*

DISCUSS: Guide a discussion of what it means as a church to be focused on Jesus.

DESCRIBE: Refer to the abruptness and unexpectedness of the arrival of the Holy Spirit. Call attention to the comparison words (vv. 2-3).

SAY: *The Holy Spirit is not wind or flame, but the Holy Spirit is similar to the roar of a powerful wind or the purifying quality of fire.* Review the Key Doctrine (PSG, p. 25) and the explanation for Verses 2-3 (PSG, pp. 24-25) to thoroughly clarify the sights and sounds associated with the coming of the Holy Spirit.

CLARIFY: Write this equation on the whiteboard or a large sheet of paper:
filled = saturated = inundated = waterlogged

ASK: *How well do these words describe the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? Explain.* Also ask from the PSG (p. 26): *What are the evidences of the Holy Spirit indwelling a believer?*

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read aloud Acts 2:5-13, directing the group to underline words in their PSG (pp. 27-29) that describe the reactions of the people to the coming of the Holy Spirit.

CLARIFY: *Have you ever noticed that when God through the Person of the Holy Spirit shows up, people are curious? It was true on this most holy and unique Day of Pentecost, and it's true today. The message of Jesus, spoken through His committed followers, arouses the attention of a waiting world.*

GUIDE: Use **Pack Item 6** (*Miracles in the Early Church, Acts 1–12*) to explain how the Holy Spirit worked through the early church leaders to heal and bring salvation to many people.

ASK: *How did all these reactions open up the opportunity for the early Christ-followers to respond? From the PSG: When have you seen unbelievers so curious about Jesus that they were stirred to ask questions? What types of things does God use today to lead unbelievers to seek Him and His offer of salvation? (PSG, p. 29)*

READ: Read Acts 2:14-15, guiding the group to paraphrase Peter's response to the accusations that day.

INQUIRE: *Why it is critical for believers to be prepared to seize the moment when we are given opportunities to explain our faith? From the PSG: What excuses do we sometimes voice about sharing our faith in Jesus? Why do you think we sometimes fail to seize opportunities to witness? (PSG, p. 29)*

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE (IN MY CONTEXT)

ANALYZE: Call for a volunteer to read aloud the first statement under In My Context (PSG, p. 30): *Believers are enabled by the Holy Spirit to fulfill their God-given mission.* Ask the group to explain ways they've seen modern-day followers of Christ, like us, fulfill their God-given mission through the Holy Spirit.

CHALLENGE: Lead the group to complete the second question set under In My Context (PSG, p. 30): *Review the things your Bible study group does that cause people to be curious about Jesus. In what projects could your group become involved as a means to initiate curious conversations about Jesus? Identify steps the group will take to be more involved or more intentional.*

CONCLUDE: Wrap up today's session by discussing the following question: *Why is it crucial that we seize every opportunity to share Jesus with others? What excuses do we need to overcome?*

PRAY: Allow time for silent prayer; then close the study by asking God to empower and equip every believer present with boldness, courage, and the desire to be a witness for Jesus Christ.

PRACTICE

Follow up with any group members who indicated by word or expression that they have questions about the role of the Holy Spirit.

Ask God to examine your life thoroughly and point out opportunities to share Jesus with others whom you may have overlooked or shunned. Seek to diligently follow His leading instead of offering excuses.

MORE IDEAS

FOCUS ATTENTION (FIRST THOUGHTS)

As a supplement to the Focus Attention idea, call attention to the Bible Skill featured in the PSG (p. 26). Utilize this activity to make sure the group has a solid foundation and understanding of who the Holy Spirit is and how He works in and through the lives of believers.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

To supplement the examination of Acts 2:1-4, call for the group to explore additional Scriptures that focus on the issue of unity within the body of Christ. Use Ephesians 4:1-6, 11-16; John 17:23; Philippians 4:1; and/or Colossians 3:14; add others that may be particularly relevant to your congregation. Emphasize that if unity was a priority for the early church, it must be a priority for our church today. (Note: Unity in the body is the focus of next week's session.)

To ensure that the focus of Acts 2:5-13 doesn't become side-tracked, be prepared to respond briefly and accurately to questions about speaking in tongues. If you need additional understanding during your preparation, go to mywsb.com and enter "Acts 2" in the search box. Use the study tools for clarification.

To emphasize seizing opportunities, as studied in Acts 2:14-15, direct attention to **Pack Item 10** (*Accusations Faced by the Early Church*). Discuss the hardships the apostles faced and how God still used their difficulties for His glory. Allow volunteers time to discuss how God has turned their difficulties into opportunities to share about Him.

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE (IN MY CONTEXT)

Personalize the instructions found in Acts 2:1-15 by allowing adequate time for the group to respond privately to the first question set in their PSG (p. 30): *Reflect on the privilege believers have been given to bear witness for Christ. How does your attitude affect your activity as a witness? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any attitudes that need to change and to fill you with power to share the love of Jesus this week.*

SUGGESTED MUSIC IDEA

Use the lyrics to the song "Holy Spirit, Rain Down" by Russell Fragar to conclude this week's session. Remind the group of the Holy Spirit's presence and power in the life of every believer.