



Group Session

Small Group Study

Volume Overview

Who is the Holy Spirit?

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! (Galatians 5:22–23)

When it comes to God, we frequently think about and discuss God the Father and God the Son. The concept of God as our Heavenly Father and Jesus' life on earth are

generally easy to understand. However, Scripture makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is equally God. Through these sessions, we'll look at the following questions: Who is the Holy Spirit? What role does the Holy Spirit play in our life? What can we learn about the nature and ways of God through what Scripture tells us about the Holy Spirit? How does the Holy Spirit help me in my faith? God living within us can empower us, help us grow, and equip us in a unique way that God among us could not.

You Will Need

- **Group Activity Page**, one per student or team
- Pens or pencils, one per student or team
- Small prize for the winner

Getting Ready

- Print the **Group Activity Page**, one per student or team.
- First time leading Learn for Youth? Look here for the Facilitator Guide.

To access the Bible Engagement Project library from a computer, visit App.BibleEngagementProject.com.

Engage

Welcome

Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming.

QUESTION

What is your favorite go-to word right now? What is the most out-of-date word you've heard used recently?

Opening Prayer

Prayer thoughts: Thank God for everyone who came and for the Holy Spirit who is working in our life. Ask the Holy Spirit to be present, teaching us and helping us to understand Him better.

Introduction

Today we'll be talking about how the Holy Spirit empowers us to follow Jesus. He helps us to live in obedience and to carry out the gospel mission throughout the earth. We're going to look at a miraculous story in the Book of Acts. Let's find out how it applies to our personal faith.

Group Activity

Creativity Challenge

You Will Need

- **Group Activity Page**, one per student or team
- Pens or pencils, one per student or team
- Small prize for the winner

Getting Ready

- Download the **Group Activity Page** and print one per student or team.

Today's Bible story tells about how the Holy Spirit brought together two people who came from very different backgrounds. Part of that was probably speaking different languages on a regular basis. So we're going to find out how well you can recognize different languages. Since we're talking about the Holy Spirit today, I'll give you a page with "Holy Spirit" written in ten languages. You'll have a few minutes to identify which language each one is written in. I've got a prize for the one who gets the most right.

- *Optional: Divide the kids into teams.*
- *Optional: Give each team the **Group Activity Page** and a pen or pencil, and let them complete the quiz as a team.*

Time's up. Trade your paper with someone else, and let's go over the answers. The one who has the most points will win a prize.

Answers:

- E. esprit Saint (French)
- D. الروح القدس (Arabic)
- F. Heiliger Geist (German)
- H. 神聖的靈魂 (Chinese)
- B. רוח קודש (Hebrew)

- C. roho takatifu (Swahili)
- J. Uhane Hemolele (Hawaiian)
- I. Holy Spirit (English)
- A. Espíritu Santo (Spanish)
- G. Άγιο πνεύμα (Greek)

- *Give the prize to the winner.*

QUESTION

If you could speak any other language, which language would you choose? Why?

QUESTION

If you could pick any other country to live in, where would you choose to live? Why?

Let's watch the video before we read today's Bible story.

Watch



Consider What the Bible Says

Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.

That was a good intro to our Bible story. We're going to look at a story in which the apostle Peter and an army officer named Cornelius each had a very strange and powerful encounter with God.

The Holy Spirit Will Connect with Those Who Seek God

Read Acts 10:1–8.

In the first part of this story, we learn some important details about Cornelius. We also learn some important information about the type of life we should aspire to live.

QUESTION

Why do you think God chose to send an angel to visit Cornelius?

We can tell from Scripture that Cornelius was known for his devotion to God. Not everyone who is devoted to God gets an angelic visit, though!

QUESTION

How did Cornelius demonstrate his devotion to God?

QUESTION

How would you describe seeking God to a new Christian?

Someone who follows Jesus should desire all that He has planned for their life. Respect for God and a holy lifestyle puts us on the path to receive blessing and direction from God. Just know that blessing and direction come differently to different people.

QUESTION

How did Cornelius respond to the angel? Why do you think that's important?

QUESTION

Why do you think God wanted Cornelius to summon Peter?

Let's turn our attention to Peter, who was in a town approximately thirty miles away. While he was praying, Peter had three visions where God told him to eat food that Jewish law didn't allow him to eat. Peter was confused by the visions because he knew eating the food was against Jewish law. God was preparing him for the new people He was bringing into Peter's life and into the Early Church.

The Holy Spirit Guides God's People into Service

Read Acts 10:19–23.

Before we proceed with discussion, remember that Peter was baptized in the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. That encounter radically changed Peter's life.

QUESTION

Do you think it's a coincidence that the Holy Spirit summoned Peter for ministry while he was praying? Why or why not?

QUESTION

What can we learn from the way Peter responded to the three men who came looking for him?

Peter's lack of hesitancy shows that he was focused on listening to and obeying the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit's Empowerment Is Available to All Believers

We learn from Acts 10:34–43 that Peter shared the good news about Jesus with Cornelius and his friends and family. The following verses show us the result of Peter being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Read Acts 10:44–48.

Cornelius and many of the people who were there were Gentiles. That’s just a word for people who aren’t Jewish. Regardless of their background, God baptized them all in the Holy Spirit while Peter was telling them about Jesus.

QUESTION

Why do you think it’s significant that Gentiles received the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Until that time, only Jews had been baptized in the Holy Spirit. This shows that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is available to everyone who has responded to the good news of Jesus. Peter shared the gospel at Cornelius’s house because the Holy Spirit had given Peter the power to tell others about Jesus. And that same gift that empowered him was shared with everyone there.

QUESTION

How did Peter and the Jewish believers know the Gentiles had indeed received the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

While the Bible describes several things that happened when different people were baptized in the Holy Spirit, there is one evidence that is consistent. When someone receives the Baptism, they speak in tongues. “Speaking in tongues” is God empowering a person to speak a language they’ve never learned. Just like at Cornelius’s house, it’s how we know we’ve received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

QUESTION

What can we learn from Cornelius about seeking and receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Did You Know?

The Bible calling Cornelius a “God-fearing man” is not unique to the New Testament. It’s a phrase used in other places as well to describe Gentiles who worshipped the God of Israel. Inscriptions all over the ancient Greek and Roman world speak of these individuals, highlighting how they were forced to live on the fringes of both Jewish and pagan Gentile society, neither of which they belonged to. One example is in the great theater in the city of Miletus (Acts 20:15). The theater has a designated spot where the God-fearers were to sit alongside the city’s Jewish minority.

Reflect

The Holy Spirit Empowers

After reading this story, there is one very important idea we need to emphasize. Through his faithfulness to God, Cornelius was a prime candidate to accept Jesus as his Savior and experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit. And being faithful in prayer like Peter can help us better hear what the Holy Spirit has to say to us.

However, the biggest takeaway from this passage is that the Holy Spirit empowers us to be obedient and to carry out the mission of God to reach others. We need the Holy Spirit's empowerment in our life to help us fulfill our God-given purpose. There are things God intends for you to do, and you need the strength of the Holy Spirit operating in your life to do them.

Listen to God

Let's take time to consider how our life demonstrates a real trust in the Bible. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. Sharing your responses with the group is completely voluntary.

- *Pause for a few moments of silent reflection before asking students if they want to share.*

QUESTION

Has the Holy Spirit empowered you or someone you know in a specific way similar to Peter in today's Bible story? Tell us about it.

QUESTION

If not, would you like to be empowered by the Holy Spirit? What are some steps you can take to receive this empowerment? Think about what we learned from Cornelius and Peter.

QUESTION

Have you received the baptism in the Holy Spirit? If you have, would you like to share your experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit? If you haven't, what's keeping you from asking God for it?

- *You may have students who would like to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.*

Activate

As you reflect on this session, make some intentional decisions and changes to start seeking the empowerment of the Holy Spirit like Cornelius and Peter did. Take some time this week to connect with God beyond your normal routine. One way is to make it a goal to complete all five of your personal devotions.

Conclusion

The power of the Holy Spirit is available to you as a follower of Jesus. It's both an initial experience and a lifelong journey as we saw in Peter and Cornelius today. God wants to empower you to accomplish feats well beyond your talent or capability. He wants to partner with you in changing the world, but this doesn't happen accidentally. It's so important that you choose now to be a seeker of God. Be faithful in your seeking, and the Holy Spirit will be faithful to pour out His power in your life.

Salvation Opportunity

Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.

One very important detail of the Bible story is the great lengths God went to in order to connect with Cornelius. First, God sent an angel to his house. Then God spoke to Peter, who was over thirty miles away, preparing him to minister to Cornelius. Everyone in this room can have confidence in this: God is going to great lengths to connect with you as well. He has already proven it by sending Jesus. The Son of God surrendered himself on the Cross to prove His overwhelming love for each of you. He has been working in the details of your life in order to make a connection with you.

Is there anyone here that we can pray for who doesn't have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?

Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond, and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as we close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.

Prayer

Father, we believe that Your Holy Spirit is God. We believe He's working in our life. We believe that He empowers us to serve You. We choose to seek You and to position ourself to receive from You. We ask for Your power to flow in our life and for your help to accomplish Your mission. Please move in and through our life for the good of others and the benefit of Your kingdom. Amen.

Next time we're together, we'll talk about how the Holy Spirit helps us grow in our faith. Be sure to work through your devotions this week. Remember, our goal is to go through all five of them. They'll help you develop a lifestyle of seeking God. While doing your devotions, be sure to pray and ask for the Holy Spirit to empower you. Then, listen for His leading just like Peter and Cornelius did.