

Icebreaker:

The Day of Pentecost turned out to be an incredibly memorable day for the disciples and for the church. What has been an incredibly memorable day in your life – one you will never forget?

Read Acts 2:1-13 and discuss:

1. If you had stumbled upon this group or been part of the crowd in Acts 2, what would have been your reaction? Would you have been excited, confused, or concerned?
2. The Holy Spirit is described as “like a violent rushing wind” and lands with “tongues, as of fire.” Do the metaphors wind and fire help you to understand the Holy Spirit? What is the Holy Spirit doing in this story and also for you in your life?
3. Those gathered experienced God’s presence as they never had before. Have you ever experienced God’s presence? Can you describe that?
4. Have you ever asked for the Holy Spirit to be present in your life? Why or why not? If you have, what difference did it make?
5. Those gathered in the upper room were literally speaking the languages which the people outside could understand. The Spirit allowed the disciples to speak the gospel to people in a way they could hear. In what ways might we speak the gospel that others in the world might understand?
6. People who heard the disciples speaking in different tongues were “amazed and perplexed.” Some even thought the disciples were drunk! In what ways might our “drunkenness” in the Spirit catch the attention of those outside the community of faith?

Prayer:

As you close in prayer, discuss some ways you could ask for the Holy Spirit’s help. Pray that you will be mindful of his presence this week. Also, please pray for the following needs in our church family:

- > Prayers of healing for Mary.
- > Prayers of comfort for the West family in the death of Jan’s sister-in-law.

Leader’s Notes:

There is an emphasis on the Holy Spirit in Acts 1 and 2. While being one of the 3 persons of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is a little mysterious. To help you in your group here are some things we know about the Holy Spirit from the New Testament: God sends the Holy Spirit to the disciples after Jesus has gone to heaven (Acts 1:5). God’s Spirit lives within us if we ask Jesus into our lives. Jesus said in John 14 that the Holy Spirit is an Advocate or Counselor (John 14:16). The Holy Spirit will teach us, and remind us of all that Jesus said (John 14:26). He is the Spirit of Truth – God is truth and will guide us into truth (John 16:13-14). If you have time, read John 14 through 16 to get Jesus’s specific teaching about the Holy Spirit and about loving each other. Enjoy the wild and wonderful story this week of Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit came and empowered the disciples to speak the gospel in a way it could be heard and understood!

[Question 1] Imagine hearing people speaking or shouting in your own language about God and praising Jesus. It was strange and we might think they were drunk, too! But put yourself in that situation and talk about how you might have reacted.

[Question 2] The Greek word for wind (“pneuma”) can be translated wind, Spirit or breath. God breathed the world into being, and God’s Spirit comes like a wind, blowing where it wants to go. In the Bible, fire is often a purifying presence – to burn off what needs to leave. Tongues symbolize speech. God’s Spirit (wind) came upon them to speak (with tongues) about Jesus (who purifies us from sin). This is a quick interpretation of Acts 2:2-3 but speaks to the power and mystery of the Holy Spirit.

[Question 3] Certainly the disciples and early Christians experience God’s presence in a miraculous way. For us, we may have seen God’s presence in the birth of children, when people surrounded us in a time of crisis, or when things came together in a way that could not have been coincidence but was in fact God moving through others. Have you experienced God in some way?

[Question 4] God calls us to ask for the Holy Spirit to help us. Some things we might ask of the Holy Spirit: Fill our hearts with love; help us to be aware of his presence and available for the work he has for us; guidance or wisdom in a difficult situation or decision.

[Question 5] In 2017, we live in a nation where less and less people go to church and more people question the role of the church and God. So we might speak to them in ways they understand – through relationships and friendships, by reaching out to neighbors in practical ways, making small connections which lead to bigger connections, through acts of service or support, and even as Home Groups through ministries like Str8up, Habitat for Humanity, or Family Promise (Interfaith Hospitality Network).

[Question 6] We might catch other people’s attention by acting in “unusual” ways such as having joy and hope in the face of trying times, by offering care or support that goes above and beyond, by being incredibly generous in a time of need. It could even be the first one to say you’re sorry or rekindling a broken relationship or reaching out someone unexpectedly. What else would people not expect from Christians?