

Bible Study Ideas on the Holy Spirit for 14 – 16 year olds.

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The Foundations for Understanding the Holy Spirit

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[1] Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Preamble

People have come up with a lot of ways of trying to explain who the Holy Spirit is. Some say he is like the wind you can't see him, but you can feel his influence – just like you can't see the wind, but you can feel it blow on you. Others have compared him to a force something like electricity – once again they reason you cannot see electricity, but you know it's there.

Whatever we might compare him to the Bible is clear that the Holy Spirit is God. Jesus tells the church to baptise people in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit [Matthew 28:19]. This is hard to understand. How can God be three and yet one God at the same time? Perhaps we can understand it a little bit if we think about H₂O [water]. Water can be ice, or liquid or steam. All three states of the water still make it H₂O, but it can be in three different states. This is like the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit can be compared to steam, liquid and ice – they are three persons but one in unity and purpose. Like all three states of water are still water whether steam or ice, so God is still the same God even if he is Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

Key Passages:

Acts 16:6-10

Jon 16:12 - 15

Study Section

[1] [a] Is the Holy Spirit an “it” or a “he” – John 16:13?

[b] What difference does it make if we see him as a “he” rather than an “it”?

[2] [a] Does the Holy Spirit speak for himself – John 16:13?

[b] What is his special job – John 16:14?

[3] [a] What special phrase does the book of Acts use to describe the Holy Spirit – Acts 16:7?

[b] What does this phrase tell us about the Holy Spirit’s role?

Group Activity

Get into groups of four and nominate one of your group members to be secretary to report back to the main group at the end of your session together. Take 5 minutes to read one of the groups of three Bible verses below and discuss what each tells you about the Holy Spirit. Then report your findings back to the main group at the end.

Luke 1:35

Luke 4:18

Luke 5:17

Luke 1:41

Luke 3:16

Luke 6:19

Luke 4:1

Luke 3:22

Luke 4:14

Role Play

Do a role play of the baptism of Jesus. Particularly focus on various peoples' reactions to seeing the dove like form of the Holy Spirit coming down on Jesus, and reactions to hearing the voice of God calling Jesus his Son. Think of the types of people who would have witnessed this in his day [Priests, soldiers, common people, travellers etc], and then try to see what sort of people these people would be today. Then do your role play using modern day people – exploring what people of today would feel, think and say about what happened when Jesus was baptised.

Prayer Circle

Complete the time together by forming a circle and going around the circle from person to person asking the Holy Spirit to help you, or someone else, in whatever way you or they need help. You can either say the prayer out loud or quietly in your mind when it is your turn. When you have finished then say “Amen”, and the next person has their turn. The leader should finish this prayer time with a closing prayer.

[2] What Does the Holy Spirit Do?

Preamble

There is a saying that “Actions Speak Louder than words”. What people mostly mean when they say this is that they feel that it is one thing to say, for instance, that you will give money to a charity, but it is quite another to actually do it.

In a sense we can apply the same idea to us and God. God’s Word, the Bible, has a lot of promises in it, and if the Bible were some sort of fairy tale then all we would have is some good stories, with some useful morals. However, the Bible has much more to promise than this. Jesus says: “He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I WILL LOVE HIM AND MANIFEST MYSELF TO HIM.” [John 14:21].

This promise comes in a passage where Jesus is speaking about the Holy Spirit, and he promises that he will give every believer the evidence that he or she needs to know that God is real, and that he cares about each of us personally. God’s promises always have action associated with them. You can be sure that if he says he will do something to help you grow in your faith then he will!

Key Passages

John 3:1-15, John 14:12

Acts 1:1-8; 2:1-13; 2:47

Study Section

[1] [a] What does the Holy Spirit do for those who put their trust in Jesus – John 3:5&6?

[b] What does John 3:8 tell us about the way the Holy Spirit guides and influences us?

[2] [a] what does the writer of Acts mean when he talks about what Jesus “began to do and teach” – Acts 1:1?

[b] How would Jesus continue to carry on his miracles, good works and teaching after he went back to his Father in heaven – Acts 1:5?

[c] What does the Holy Spirit do in order to help us continue Jesus’ words and works today – Acts 1:8?

[d] What are the implications of John 14:12 for the way Christians are to help others to get to know Jesus?

[3] [a] What did the Holy Spirit enable the first disciples to do in a new effective way on Pentecost – Acts 2:4&11?

[b] What does the sentence “as the Spirit gave them utterance” imply about what he helps us to do – Acts 2:4?

[c] What does Acts 2:47 teach us about the way God helps people become Christians?

[d] What does Acts 2:47 tell us about how we can find those who are ready to become Christians?

Teaching Exercises

- A Tug of love. First have a tug of war – the teaching point here is that the normal human response to God is to fight against what he wants us to do
- Next make the teams on either end of the rope as equal in weight and strength as possible, then both teams lean back and try to stop the other team from falling down. When you get good at it then seesaw each other back and forth – the teaching point is that God wants us to cooperate with him when he influences us to do things by his Spirit. Rather than trying to resist him, we try to get our lives in balance with him.
- A trust Fall. Get one young person to put a blind fold on, and then put him on a chair with his back to a group behind him. He then falls backwards into their arms, and they catch him and support him. Let each person have a go

including the team leader. – The teaching point is that we need to let go and trust that God is there even when we can't feel him or see him. We can't see the Holy Spirit but he is there.

Prayer triplets

Get into groups of three. Share something that you want praying for, and then take turns praying for each other asking the unseen Holy Spirit to help you. When you get the answer to your prayer – may be in the next week phone or text the people in your triplet and let them know what has happened. Make sure you get each others numbers!

[3] How Can You be Filled with the Holy Spirit?

Preamble

It has been said that everybody is looking for experiences these days; so people seek them with drugs, alcohol, multiple sexual partners, adventure holidays etc. What we are really looking for are emotional highs. We don't like to get bored, or to feel low or depressed – so we look for excitement! What many psychologists would say is that we look for the highs to try to find meaning in our lives. In fact what they have recognised is that we all need to have a meaning for our existence.

The bible says that we were made to be in “God’s image” [Genesis 1:26]. Paul says that as Christians we have been made to be a pure temple for God’s Spirit to live in [1 Corinthians 3:16]. The simple fact is that if we want to find the real meaning of our lives then we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit – He will transform us into God’s image. So how can we be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Imagine that each of us were light bulbs with arms and hands. We have wires connecting us to power, but the switch that lights us up is off. We need to flip the switch to be filled with power to shine. Once we flip it then we will be doing what we were made to do – shine. This is like us and the Holy Spirit – the switch is like our right to choose to trust Jesus, and to ask him to come into our lives, by the Holy Spirit. If we want to be switched on in the Spirit then we need to invite him in. Then when he comes in we will become what God designed us to be – his temple, made in his image!

Key Texts

Galatians 3:5

John 4:7 – 18

Acts 2:38

Study Section

[1] [a] How hard is it to be filled with the Holy Spirit – Galatians 3:5?

[b] Discuss this statement – is it true? It took the Christians at Galatia many months of hard work, lots of prayer and bible reading to receive the Holy Spirit!

[c] Discuss this statement – is it right? It is as easy as simply trusting that Jesus will give us his Spirit if we ask him, and that he will do similar miracles as Paul speaks about in Galatians 1:5 again today!

[2] [a] What did Jesus mean by saying he could give the woman at the well “living water” – John 4:10?

[b] What does the symbol of water tell us about what the Holy Spirit will do for us – John 4:10?

[c] What deliberate sin was stopping the woman from being able to be filled with the Spirit – John 4:16 – 18?

[d] What deliberate sin or sins are holding you back from asking God to come into your life by the Holy Spirit?

[e] What does 1 John 1:9 promise us?

[3] What are the 3 things which Acts 2:38 tell us must happen in order for us to be real Christians?

Group Activity

Bring a number of sheets of paper suitable for making paper aeroplanes with. Bring paper clips, Blue tack, cellar tape. Get the kids into groups of three and ask them to design different types of aeroplanes using paper clips etc to weight the planes in different ways. The aim is to see who can get their plane to fly the longest distance. The group who do this win. Give something for a prize. Have some runner up prizes too.

The teaching point is that we are like planes. Just like we have to throw our planes, in order to let them glide on the air, so it is with us and the Spirit. If we want to glide in the Spirit then we have to learn to let go of our fears of him being in control [in other words the things that keep us from flying], and we need to learn to glide on the wind of the Spirit. We need to let him take control. We need to start to ask him to fill us, and to listen for what he is saying to us, and to search for how he wants to guide us. We need to trust him and follow where he leads. **THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO LET GO AND FLY IN THE SPIRIT!**

Prayer Time

Get into a prayer circle, and pray that God will help each person to open their selves to the Holy Spirit so that they can invite him in. While all eyes are closed except the leaders, encourage the young people to put up their hands if they want to be filled with the Spirit – for each person who does the leader goes to them lays his hand on them and says “be filled with the Spirit”.

[4] The Gift of Speaking in Tongues

Preamble

Some new Christians sometimes get a bit confused about the Holy Spirit, and the so called gift of tongues. Some Christian groups say that unless you speak in tongues then you really are only half way to being a Christian. They think of tongues as an un-recognised set of sounds and words which are not part of any known human language; these unknown sounds need to be interpreted by somebody. They claim we have to speak in this sort of prayer language in order to be fully Christian.

However, they have misunderstood what the Bible teaches on this subject. The Apostle Paul writing to the church at Corinth makes it clear that this special sort of prayer language was to be thought of as the least important of the gifts of the Spirit [1 Corinthians 14:19]. Indeed he says that he would prefer the Corinthians to speak three or four known human language words instead of hundreds of words in tongues [1 Corinthians 14:19]. In fact Paul recognised that there were two types of the gift of tongues. One being thought of as tongues of Angels and the other tongues of men [1 Corinthians 13:1]. The tongues of men were still the gift of tongues, but in known languages like French or English. The tongues of Angels seems to have referred to this special sort of other tongues being a prayer language.

The book of Acts has both types of tongues mentioned in it. However, the most important example of it is the gift of tongues given to the first Christians on the day of Pentecost. People from all different parts of the Roman world could understand what the disciples were saying in their own language, and the Holy Spirit had given them the ability to speak in other languages in order to preach the gospel [Acts 2:1-13].

What the Holy Spirit did when he filled them up with himself was to give them a new and deep relationship with God which filled them with praise and joy. They were given a new understanding of God, and they were filled with awe about his love for them, making them want to speak out about all of this. This is really what the gift of tongues means – it means we have the Holy Spirit living in us, and teaching us and guiding us. He fills us with God’s love, and it makes us want to talk to God, and other people, about how great God is and how much we care about him. So all Christians can say that they speak in tongues – even if it is just in English – because to speaking in tongues [a language] means we want to talk with God, to hear him speak to us, and we come to want to tell others about him.

The other type of tongues seems to be a personal prayer language, which the Holy Spirit gives to us. Some Christians find it helpful, and they obtain deep emotional and spiritual happiness by using it. Whether we use both types of tongues or just the human type all Christians do speak in tongues and are true Christians. So let’s look at a few texts about what the bible says about tongues.

Key Texts

Acts 2:1-5

Acts 10:44 – 48

Romans 8:15,16,26,27

1 Cor. 14:6 - 19

Study Section

[1] What are the characteristics of the gift of tongues in Acts 2:1-5?

[2] [a] What happened while Peter was preaching to a Man named Cornelius, and his family – Acts 10:44 – 48?

[b] What made Peter conclude they had become Christians – Acts 10:44 – 48?

[c] What sort of gift of tongues do you think the people in this story were speaking, human languages or other – Acts 10:44 – 48?

[3] [a] What happens when we have the Holy Spirit living in us – Romans 8:15

[b] What does the Holy Spirit confirm for us when he lives in us – Romans 8:16?

[c] What does the Holy Spirit help us to do when we don't really know what we feel or think deep inside – Romans 8:26,27?

[d] How does Romans 8:26,27 help us to understand the gift of tongues?

[4][a] If we speak out in church in an unknown prayer language then what must happen – 1 Cor. 14:13,14?

[b] Did Paul speak in this special type of prayer language – 1 Cor. 14:18?

[c] What are the ingredients of worship services – 1 Cor. 14:26?

Group Activity

Get enough helium balloons for the group with tie on labels. Write a message sharing your faith in some way on the label, with a code name for the sender, with an email address [or church PO Box number]; inviting the finder to contact you for more information. Perhaps you could give a prize to those who enquire – a Christian book or an invite to a church service.

Pray for the balloons to be blown by the Spirit so that somebody can get the message.

Finish with a time of Praise modelling the worship of 1 Cor. 14:26

[5] How Can I Recognise the Holy Spirit's Voice?

Preamble

Let's start off with a really practical question today. How can I recognise the voice of the Spirit? Sometimes people say: "When I pray it feels like I'm all alone. It just feels like my prayer is going no where! How can I move on from this? I want to hear from God, but I don't know where to start?"

Well the good news is that God does speak to us. There is a story in Acts chapter 3 about a day when Peter and John were going to pray at the temple. Just near the entrance there was a paralysed man, who could not walk, begging for money. Peter turned to him and said: "I have no money, but what I do have give I to you, in the name of Jesus get up and walk" [Acts 3:6]. He immediately was able to walk by a miracle. How did Peter know that Jesus would heal him? Because he knew the voice of Jesus so well; When Jesus' Spirit told Peter to perform the miracle in his name he knew that it was Jesus telling him what to do. So that is the key! We need to learn to recognise the voice of Jesus, and this is what this study is about!

Key Texts

Acts 8:26 – 40

John 5:19

Study Section

[1] [a] In what way did Jesus Christ know what the Father wanted him to do each day – John 5:19?

[b] In what ways can we expect to be guided like Jesus was by his Father – John 5:19; 14:12?

[2][a] How did Jesus directly guide the people mentioned in the following bible verses?

*Acts 9:4&5 _____

*Acts 9:10 – 12 _____

*Acts 10:1 – 8 _____

*Acts 8:26 _____

*Acts 16:6 – 9 _____

[b] Should we expect God to guide us like this today? In what ways can we learn to hear his voice?

[3] [a]How confident can we be that God will give us his Spirit, and speak to us – Luke 11:9 – 13?

[b] Can we expect God, the best Father that there ever has been, to protect us from receiving the wrong spirit, and thus hearing from the wrong spirit i.e. a false spirit – Luke 11:9-13?

Suggestions for how you can start to learn to hear the Spirits Voice

Learning to hear the Holy Spirit speaking to us is a bit like learning to walk when you are a toddler. You need to learn to take small steps, and as you get more confident with them, then you can take bigger ones. So it is the same with the Holy Spirit. As we ask God to help us to hear his voice he will start to speak to you. Here are some suggestions of how:

- He speaks to us in pictures, visions and dreams – Acts 2:17
- Are you having a deep desire to get to know Jesus better – that's the work of the Holy Spirit
- Are you feeling sort of hungry wanting to read your Bible more often and to pray more often – that's the work of the Holy Spirit
- Have you started to understand spiritual things which you found hard to understand in the past – that's a work of the Holy Spirit
- Have you started to feel that what God is doing in your life is really important – that's a work of the Holy Spirit
- Can you see special points in your past life where God was guiding you, or at work in some way, protecting you or moving you on – that's a work of the Holy Spirit

- Do you feel deep inside that you are confident that God has saved you as his special son or daughter – that's a work of the Holy Spirit
- Do you feel impressed to share your faith with someone you meet – that's a work of the Holy Spirit
- Do you feel that the words of Jesus', spoken in the Bible, are like he is speaking to you personally – that's a work of the Spirit
- Do you get an impression to help somebody in a specific way even when they have not said they need any help – that is the Spirit's work
- Do you feel guided to go somewhere, and when you get there something happens which shows God wanted you to go there for a special purpose – that's the Spirit's work
- Do you get a special message from God flash into your mind to give to someone you know – that is the Spirit's work
- When you pray does it feel like God is answering you, and even speaking to you in your emotions, or with pictures, or with words in your mind – that is a work of the Spirit

Please note that we need to thank God whenever he speaks to us in all of these ways, and as we grow in confidence more and more then we will come to hear his voice more and more. The Holy Spirit was poured out on all Christians forever after Pentecost, and if you are a Christian you have the Holy Spirit. That's a fact – so why not start to listen to him, and talk with him.

We will be talking about discernment next week. We do have an enemy as Christians, and it is important for us to check what we feel God is saying to us with the bible, and if we are unsure about things then it might be good to speak to a trusted wise Christian friend, who is experienced with hearing from the Holy Spirit.

What we can be sure of is that the Holy Spirit does communicate with us, and when he does he is telling us what Jesus wants for us!

Group Activity

Have a time of sharing in small groups. What amazing things has God been doing in your life? What amazing things has he been speaking to you about? Take time to listen, and take time to pray for God's guidance to help you to hear from him.

Each young person could be given an A5 booklet which they could keep as their Spiritual journal. You could suggest a one page format for the journal. It should be emphasized to them that it does not need filling in every day, but rather when they feel God is being active – then at these times they can record what he is doing in their lives.

Possible format

Date:

What is God saying to you?

What has God done for you?

What have I asked him to do for me?

What special things has he been teaching you – from the Bible or other Christian friends?

Perhaps they could personalise their journal in some way.

Come up with an email directory for the group, and mobile phone numbers for text messages. Encourage the group to start sharing things together. Can they pray for each other in some way? What has God been saying to them?

[6] Which Spirit?

Preamble

We have all heard of counterfeit money. As computer technology gets better it is becoming easier for criminals to forge paper money. It is also a lot easier to steal from people using internet scams.

When it comes to paper money how do police experts tell the difference between a real ten pound note and a false one? Do they compare different examples of counterfeit notes they have from past crimes to recognise the false notes?

Well the answer to this is of course “no”! If you want to be able to identify the counterfeit then you need to know what the original looks like. The better you know the original the better able you will be to recognise the fake!

In terms of the Holy Spirit we need to be able to recognise the true work of the Spirit and the false work of a clever counterfeit. Why is this important? – well it is because we have an enemy – Satan – who is fundamentally a deceiver.

We are told in Revelation 12 that there was a spiritual war in heaven, after the crucifixion, between Christ and Satan; and that the Devil was expelled from heaven with his demonic angels. Since then he has made attacking followers of Jesus his prime concern. So today we will be considering the important topic of “Which spirit?”

Key Verses

Acts 8:14 – 25

Matthew 7:16

1 John 4:1

Study Section

[1] [a] What are Christians told to beware of – Matthew 7:15?

[b] How does Jesus describe false prophets in order to show how dangerous they can be? What makes taking this warning seriously important? – Matthew 7:15?

[c] What is the acid test to identify false prophets or false prophecy? – Matthew 7:16?

[d] What sort of bad fruits in a person's life, or a prophecy they might give, might you expect to see – Matthew 7:16?

[2] [a] What does 1 John 4:1 tell us we must do?

[b] How might we test what we think the Holy Spirit is influencing us to do?

[c] What makes it important to check out what we feel the Spirit is saying to us?

[d] What are some of the ways we can check out that what we think the Spirit is saying to us is really the Spirit's work?

[e] According to 1 John 4:2,3 what is the main thing that Satan's counterfeit of the Holy Spirit will try to undermine?

[3] [a] Read Acts 8:14 – 25 – What was Simon's sin?

[b] How did the Apostles know that the spirit which was motivating him was not of God?

[c] How did his offer to try to purchase the Holy Spirit demonstrate that he was not a true Christian – Acts 8:17 – 21 compared to Ephesians 2:8 & Galatians 3:2?

Conclusions

It is very important to test what we think is right against what is right. Looking at the bible is the most important way. There are signs that we can look for which will tell us if the spirit who is trying to influence is not of God:

[1] That you feel influenced to deny Jesus in some way by what you are asked to do?

[2] That you feel influenced to try to sort something out without God's help – in other words you try to save yourself in some way rather than relying on God's free gift of salvation by faith in Jesus alone

[3] That you feel influenced to do something immoral and against God's law of love

[4] That you feel influenced to do something which will harm you or someone else

[5] That what you think God is asking is against what the Bible teaches

[6] That you feel you should put someone or something else in a very important place of influence as somehow representing God's voice to you, rather than going directly to God for yourself to get answers. In other words someone is trying to make themselves more important than God to you.

Group Activity

Do a bible quick draw in groups of 3. Each group has to find out what a text says first before the other groups can, as you call them out bible references. This game is good at getting people to think about the importance of knowing their bibles' layout well, so that they can know where to find things!

Trust circle

Get into a fairly tight circle and put one person in the middle. They need to be blindfolded, and they need to stand up straight and make themselves rigid like a branch. Then they are to topple back like a tree trunk falling into the hands of the various group members without resisting, and remaining straight and rigid. The group then passes the person around the group whilst the person lets them take complete control. Each group member can try this if it is safe to do so.

The teaching point is that although we are to be cautious about testing the Spirit, and new people or teachings, we are not to become hostile or unwilling to trust or help others. This would destroy our love for others making us fall into another trap of Satan's. Rather we are to trust that God will not let us be snatched from his hand [Read John 10:27,28 to them, also point out how Jesus says his sheep know his voice, therefore, we can come to identify his authentic voice as we grow in our experience of hearing from his Spirit], but rather that we should learn who, and what, we can trust; we need to let ourselves go fully into any good spiritual relationship which God offers us for our good. When new ideas or people come along we should give them time, and ourselves time to get to know each other, but we should not treat people we do not know in an unfriendly way.

Finish with a time of prayer asking God to guide the group – thanking Jesus that nothing can snatch us from his hand.

[7] The Holy Spirit Our Teacher

Preamble

It is said that the best sort of teacher is the one who loves his subject! What do you think – do you agree? Think about your teachers past and present. Which ones get your interest more? Why do you think that is?

The Holy Spirit loves his subject supremely – because it is not mathematics, physics or biology but a person – Jesus. The Holy Spirit has a passion for the Son of God. He loves to speak about him, and teach people about him. In God's family the most important thing is love & relationships. It has been said that when we die we cannot take anything with us except our characters and inner most selves. Our GCSEs, A levels, High School Diplomas and Degrees will not matter. What will matter is whether our lives were full of God's love.

What or who is the most important thing in the world to you? What do you think about the most, and talk about? Today we are going to focus on the Spirit as our teacher!

Key Verses

Acts 2:17 – 21; 2:42

Acts 4:11 – 26

John 16:12 – 15

1 John 2:26,27

Study Section

[1] [a] By what means does God promise that he will communicate with Christians in the last days – Acts 2:17,18?

[b] When did the last days begin – Hebrews 1:1,2?

[c] Can you think of stories from your own experience, or from things you have heard, where God has spoken to people about things through dreams or visions?

[d] What other means does the Holy Spirit use to teach us – Acts 2:42?

[2] [a] Had Jesus taught the disciples everything they needed to know from God by the time it came for him to die and leave them – John 16:12?

[b] According to Acts 1:3 & Luke 24:25 – 27 & 44 – 45 when did Jesus give them more teaching?

[c] Can you think of other writings in the New Testament which were written after Jesus went back to heaven which show that the Holy Spirit taught the church more things later?

[d] To what extent do you think he still has more to teach us today?

[e] When he does teach us more things will what he teaches contradict what he taught in the past?

[f] According to John 16:13 what are some of the ways he will speak to us?

[g] According to John 16:13,14 what sort of themes will be included in what he will reveal?

[3] [a] What does John mean when he says we do not need anyone to teach us when we are anointed with the Holy Spirit – 1 John 2:26,27?

[b] What is the key teaching which the Holy Spirit always emphasizes – 1 John 2:27?

[c] How do you think the Devil might try to discourage you from trusting that God can teach you all you need to know to have a relationship with him – 1 John 2:26,27?

[d] How certain does John say we should be that God can teach us all we need to know for a relationship with him – 1 John 2:27?

[e] What state was John's mind in when Jesus appeared to him, and gave him all the revelations recorded in the book of Revelation – Revelation 1:10?

[f] What are the things that God promises to do for us by the Holy Spirit's help – Ephesians 1:17 – 21?

Group Activity

Get into pairs. Each pair needs a different simple story book, and a reporters note pad and pencil. Then one out of each pair take a book each and join together over with their other story book colleagues on one side of the room, whilst the reporters take their note books and join together on the other side of the

room. Then each person with his or her story starts reading his story, whilst his or her partner tries to copy the story word for word. Everybody reads their different story books at the same time whilst everybody else tries to copy their partner's story.

The teaching point is that it is difficult to accurately hear what is being read to us if there is too much distraction. It is far easier to record a story word for word if no other noises are disturbing you. It is the same in the time we spend with God. It is important to make sure we have quiet times in the day to speak to him and to listen to what he has to say. We live in a world full of distractions; TV programmes, X box, Play station etc, these things must not fill our minds so much that there is no room to hear from God!

Close this time with a prayer circle. Before you start to pray let some relaxing meditative Christian music be played, then simply ask for God to speak in the silence. Have a silent time. Then get the group to share thoughts, feelings and pictures by way of prayers in the group.

[8] The Holy Spirit and Our Mission

Preamble

Now-a-days we learn from very early on how to be team players. We learn it on TV by watching football teams work together. We see how the best teams get the best results. It is not always the teams with the best players who win because of their individual skills, but rather the ones who work together towards the end of scoring the most goals.

In fact in life in general if we do not have any aims for our future, or even for the day we are presently living in, then we will come to live meaningless goal-less existences. In fact if you think of any day in your life you will find that you do have personal goals for that day, even if it is as simple as getting out of bed, getting dressed, eating your breakfast and so on!

It is the same with our Christian lives. God has not left us without goals and aims. His main aim is that the Gospel should be preached to every person and every nation [Matthew 24:14]. In fact he says that the supreme goal of Jesus' coming again, and the world finally ending, will not be reached unless we do our part in sharing our faith [Matthew 24:14]. That is not to say that God is limited by what we do or do not do, but it is to say that when he does come again to finally set up his eternal kingdom, he will do so having returned to reap a harvest of people who have been told about the good news of Jesus.

So we have a mission, and the Holy Spirit is the one who gives the power and guidance for that mission to work.

Key Verses

Acts 1:1 – 11

Acts 2:47

Study Section

[1] What are some of the key steps which we must take when we are taking part in planning any mission which we want to be guided by God's Spirit?

[a] Acts 1:3 _____

[b] Acts 1:4 _____

[c] Acts 1:5 _____

[d] Acts 1:8 _____

[2] [a] What makes it important to seek evidence that God is putting his power and resources behind our plans – Acts 1:8?

[b] How can we apply the principle of starting closest to home, and then the next closest, and then the next to our witnessing activities – Acts 1:8?

[c] What was the main content of the witness of the first disciples – Acts 1:3 & chapter 2:14 – 38?

[3] [a] What was the main piece of evidence that the first Christians could always look at to show that the Holy Spirit was working with them to find new Christians – Acts 2:47?

[b] What can we learn from Acts 2:47 about the way that we should seek out new potential believers?

[c] What ideas has God been giving you recently in order to share your faith?

[d] Who have you known recently that has become a Christian? How has the Holy Spirit guided them? What part did the Spirit ask you to play in them finding out about Jesus?

Group Activity

Get into groups of four appointing one person as secretary and discuss ideas for how you can share your faith. A guiding point for each group is to ask the question “what has God been saying to me recently about my faith, and sharing it?”

Give the group enough time to discuss things, and then get the various groups to report back with ideas. Make sure you have a white board to record ideas, and encourage the group to seriously think of how they might become Acts type Christians in the way they witness.

Finish the series with a Pizza celebration time either on the same night, or on another night.

Commit the whole group into the protection of the Holy Spirit. Encourage members to pray for the future work of the Spirit as it guides your group.