



SESSION

1

Ascension and Pentecost



MEETING AIM

To explore the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 1:1-11; 2:1-42



BACKGROUND

We're looking at two passages in this session. Acts 1:1-11 looks at Jesus' ascension to heaven, including his promise of sending the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:1-42 looks at the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. The big connecting theme is that of Jesus leaving, but equipping us with his Spirit to help us continue the work that he began.

+ GATHERING TIME



As the group arrive, welcome them and let them chat and catch up. If you'd like to gently introduce the topic in this time, you could ask the question: "Who are the people that shape your everyday actions?" A further prompting question, or alternative question could be: "Do you have any habits that you've picked up from other people?"

+ KIM'S GAME



You will need: a collection of objects (such as a crayon, a keyring, a hairbrush, a pound coin - It's a good idea to come up with many different things so the group have lots to remember); tray or table; cloth; paper and pens; small prize (optional)

This is a classic game that is likely to have been played by most of the group. Show the objects to the group for one minute and ask them to use this time to try and memorise as many objects as they can. After a minute, cover the objects up again and give each group member a piece of paper and a pen. Ask them to write down as many objects as they can remember in two minutes. At the end you might want to give a small prize for those who remembered the most.

Explain that this game is a metaphor for how you're looking at Jesus leaving the Holy Spirit with us. Jesus ascended so his physical body was no longer dwelling with us, but

left the Holy Spirit to continue his work in us when we can't see him, like a memory or imprint of what happened when he lived and died two thousand years ago.

+ BIBLE EXPLORATION



You will need: Bibles; paper and pens

Split the group into two groups. Give each group one of the passages (and put at least one leader with each group to encourage things to take shape).

Ask the groups to read their passages together and then work out how to present their passage to the other group as a news story. Give each group time to read the passage and rehearse their news stories, and then invite them to join together and present them. As the groups plan their stories, remind them that you're trying to give as accurate a representation of the Bible story to the other group, as they won't have read the same passage. Suggest they find ways of including specifics from the passage such as quotes or details that have been written down in the passage.

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Recap what went on in each passage (both may need a brief summary if details were missed in their delivery). Use these questions to generate some group discussion about the passages:

- What do you think it would have been like for the disciples and Jesus over those 40 days that he appeared to them? What do you think Jesus would have used that time for?
- What would it have been like for the disciples when Jesus ascended into heaven?
- How about the wait between Jesus' ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit, how do you think that was for the disciples?
- What does the second passage tell us about what the Holy Spirit is like?
- What is the Holy Spirit's job?
- How is the Holy Spirit important for us today?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: a large sheet of paper; marker pens

Put a very large piece of paper in the middle of the group (or split into two if the group is too large). In large letters write out: "THE HOLY SPIRIT AND JESUS' WORK TODAY". Give each group member

a pen and invite them to mind map by drawing lines from the centre and writing out the different ways that the Holy Spirit enables us to carry on Jesus' work in us today. Prompt them by suggesting they think about how the Holy Spirit might live in us, the kinds of actions it would help us as individuals to do, or the kind of ways the Church would continue Jesus' work by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Give them some time to write these different things down, and then use this as a way of discussing how the Holy Spirit empowers us to do the work that Jesus began in his ministry on Earth.

+ PRAYER



You will need: the song 'He lives in you' from *The Lion King* (live musical version) and the means to play it

Play the song once and give each group member a copy of the lyrics (available online, and then ideally printed out one per person). This song is about the character Mufasa living in and through Simba after he has died. This idea has huge resonance with the idea of Jesus continuing to live and be at work with the Holy Spirit living in us today.

Ask the group to think about how the Holy Spirit might change how they live today.

Play the song through once more and invite the group to close their eyes and, while it's playing again, to silently ask God to live in them. You may want to open up the second playing of the song with a prayer of thanks for the Holy Spirit for Jesus to refill everyone with his Holy Spirit in order to continue his work in us today.

BECCA DEAN

is a writer and PhD researcher in Durham. Her book, *Be Live Pray*, helps young people engage in prayer and spirituality in more inclusive and creative ways. She blogs at beccaislearning.com.