

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



Date: 5.25.25 | The Apostles are Arrested and Freed
Scripture: Acts 5:12-42

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

Middle School Students:

- God is eternal and has existed for eternity past and will exist for eternity into the future.
- Each person who comes to faith in Christ receives the Holy Spirit and is given a spiritual gift.
- Jesus promised that God would send the Holy Spirit to minister to God's people in a special way.
- The Holy Spirit intercedes before the Father on our behalf.
- The Holy Spirit inspired and guided people to write the Bible.

High School Students:

- God is eternal, and although He is not bound by time, He chooses to operate in it to relate to us.
- Each person who comes to faith in Christ receives the Holy Spirit and is endowed with a spiritual gift to be used to serve in the church.
- Jesus promised that God would send the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit has come to convict, teach, comfort, lead, strengthen, and seal us, as well as to produce fruit within and through us.
- The Holy Spirit intercedes before the Father on our behalf when we do not know how to or what to pray.
- The Holy Spirit inspired and guided people to write the Bible and used the personalities and voices of men to communicate the very words of God.



MEMORY VERSE

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." - Acts 2:38-39



INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON

- **Set the Scene:**

Say:

“Imagine you’re in a situation where standing up for what you believe might get you in trouble. I will read a few scenarios, and I want you to respond by either stepping forward (or raising your hand) if you would speak up, or staying still if you’d stay quiet.”

- **Read a Few Scenarios Aloud:**

- “Your friends are making fun of someone for believing in Jesus. Would you say something?”
- “A teacher at school says the Bible is just a made-up book. Would you respectfully speak up?”
- “You’re told not to talk about Jesus, but someone nearby clearly needs hope. Do you tell them?”
- “You could get in trouble for going to church or praying. Would you still do it?”

- **Follow-Up Discussion:**

Ask:

- “What made some of those situations hard?”
- “Have you ever had to choose between doing what’s right and staying out of trouble?”
- “What helps you be brave in those moments?”

Say:

“Today’s story from Acts 5 is about people who did speak up—even when it meant getting arrested, beaten, or worse. They were told to stop talking about Jesus, but they said, ‘We must obey God rather than people.’ Let’s see what happened and why they were so bold.”

THE POWER OF THE **HOLY SPIRIT**



BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

The early church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, demonstrated remarkable courage in proclaiming the identity of Jesus and performing miracles to validate their message. Peter's healing of the lame man provoked a trial before the Sanhedrin (Acts 3:1–4:22), so the power of the gospel was already drawing opposition. The Christians prayed for God to grant them the power to perform signs and wonders (4:30), which He answered mightily. These miracles were often done in public places, like Solomon's Portico (3:11), where Christians gathered and witnessed to others. Initially, the Sadducees tried to silence Peter and John by intimidation (Acts 4:18, 21), but the apostles continued to testify boldly and with unity, even as opposition increased. Beyond bold testimony and supernatural signs, the Spirit also produced a deep unity and love among believers, which led to generous, voluntary sharing of resources—compelled by love, not law (4:32-37).

However, not all was pure. The miraculous judgment of Ananias and Sapphira brought holy fear upon the church and outsiders alike (Acts 5:1–11). In Acts 5:11, we read that great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

The apostles, especially Peter, continued to perform many signs and wonders (Acts 5:12). They also continued their mission to share the gospel with those around them. As a result, they filled Jerusalem with their teaching. The healing power of the Holy Spirit was so compelling that people laid the sick in Peter's path, hoping even his shadow would heal them (Acts 5:15; cf. Acts 19:12). This power, along with the apostles' teaching, led to massive growth in the church. Many held the apostles in high esteem, though not everyone dared join them (Acts 5:13). Some may have been afraid to attach themselves to the church because of the judgment on Ananias and Sapphira or the warning from the Sanhedrin. As the apostles' influence grew, so did the jealousy of the Jewish leaders (Acts 5:17).

Fueled by jealousy and in an attempt to retain their influence and power (Acts 7:9; 13:45 and 17:5), and in response to the public defiance of the Sanhedrin's threats, the Sadducees ordered the arrest of all the apostles (Acts 5:17–18). During the night, an angel of the Lord freed them and commanded them to return to the temple courts to preach about their new life in Christ (Acts 5:19–21). The next morning, the Sanhedrin convened

THE POWER OF THE **HOLY SPIRIT**



for trial, only to find the apostles missing. The guards later found them preaching in the temple—fearful of the crowd, they rearrested them without violence.

The apostles were brought before the Sanhedrin. The semi-circle seating arrangement, with the accused in the center, was meant to intimidate. The High Priest reminded them of previous restrictions and made two charges: they had filled Jerusalem with their teaching, and they intended to blame the Jewish leaders for Jesus' death. Peter and the apostles responded with unwavering boldness: "We must obey God rather than human beings... The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross." (Acts 5:29–32). This reply left the Sanhedrin in a predicament—they claimed to obey God yet opposed His clear work.

Infuriated, some leaders wanted to kill the apostles. But Gamaliel, a highly respected Pharisee and teacher of Paul (Acts 22:3), intervened (Acts 5:34). He urged caution, arguing that if this movement were not from God, it would fail naturally, just as others had. His historical examples persuaded the Sanhedrin to release the apostles, but not without punishment. They were flogged—a brutal beating with leather whips, totaling 39 lashes (Deuteronomy 25:3), and were again ordered not to speak in Jesus' name (Acts 5:40).

Despite their suffering, the apostles left the Sanhedrin rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus (Acts 5:41). They did not cower. Still, they continued daily preaching both in the temple and from house to house (Acts 5:42). This paradoxical response—joy in suffering—became a hallmark of the early church's witness and a theme in the book of Acts. Their faithfulness and unity, even in adversity, led to the continued growth of the church (Acts 6:1).

Even when facing arrest, intimidation, and physical suffering, the apostles remained steadfast in proclaiming the gospel. Their boldness, the miraculous signs, and sacrificial unity inspired respect, drew converts, and provoked opposition—all evidence of the Spirit's power at work. "Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah" (Acts 5:42).



LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY



Remind your group that we are studying the New Testament. The book of Acts is about God sending the Holy Spirit to permanently dwell within Jesus' disciples and other believers after He ascended back to heaven. With the help of the Holy Spirit, those who followed Christ told many people about Jesus, helped others, and started the first churches. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the message of Jesus began to spread all over the world.

TELL
THE
STORY



Tell the story: After Jesus ascended into heaven, his disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and were given power to be Jesus' witnesses. They went into Jerusalem and shared the good news. Thousands of people believed in Jesus, and the church began. Peter played an essential role in the early church, following the example Jesus had set. Like Jesus, Peter preached the gospel and healed people, all so that others might come to know Christ too. With this growth came persecution. Believers were threatened by the Jewish leaders and endured suffering all because they shared about Jesus. Even still, the apostles remained faithful to the command to go and tell, and God used their obedience to help even more people trust in Jesus. Today, we will learn how the apostles didn't stop sharing the gospel even when they were arrested.

Read directly from Scripture, use The Jesus Storybook Bible, The Biggest Story Bible, or the summary provided in the lesson

Peter and John had already been arrested and released, yet they did not stop telling people the good news about Jesus. The apostles were doing many signs and wonders among the people at the temple, and more and more people believed in the Lord.

People carried sick people into the street, hoping that when Peter walked by, his shadow might fall on them and heal them. Crowds of people came, bringing those who were sick or suffering. All of them were healed.

The high priest and other religious leaders were very jealous, so they arrested Jesus' apostles and put them in jail. But that night, an angel of the Lord opened the jail doors and brought out the apostles. The

Put the events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc...



THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



angel told them, “Go and stand in the temple, and tell the people all about this life.” So the next morning, the apostles entered the temple and began teaching.

That next day, the high priest and other religious leaders met. They ordered their servants to go to the jail and bring the apostles to them. When the servants got to the jail, the doors were locked and guarded. But when they went inside, the apostles weren’t there. The leaders were confused.

Then someone came to them and said, “The apostles are teaching in the temple!” So the religious leaders brought the apostles before them and said, “Didn’t we tell you to stop teaching about Jesus? Everyone in Jerusalem has heard!”

Peter responded, “We must obey God rather than people. God raised Jesus to life after you killed Him on the cross. Jesus is our Ruler and Savior. He came to change people’s hearts and forgive their sins. The Holy Spirit God gives to everyone who believes proves this is true.”

The Jewish leaders were angry and wanted to kill Peter and the other apostles.

But one of the religious leaders, Gamaliel, told them, “Men of Israel, you have to be careful. Other men have claimed to be important, but their plans failed. If these men lie and you leave them alone, their plans will fail too. But if their words are from God, you won’t be able to stop them.”

The Jewish leaders agreed with Gamaliel. Instead of killing Jesus’ apostles, they beat them and told them to stop talking about Jesus. Then they let them go free.

The apostles left, praising God for being counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. Every day, in the temple and people’s homes, the apostles continued preaching about Jesus. They told people the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

The apostles did not let being thrown in jail or beaten stop them from sharing the good news. They knew Jesus had commanded them to go and tell everyone about Him. The apostles understood that obeying God and pleasing Him was more important than obeying the religious leaders and avoiding persecution. God is more important than anyone else, and His way is always best. God is worthy of our obedience. Like the apostles, we must be faithful in sharing about Jesus, even if we suffer. God gives us joy even in suffering.

THE POWER OF THE **HOLY SPIRIT**



Re-tell the Bible Story: Have students retell the story as best they can.

Share the GOSPEL:

Jesus calls His followers to be faithful and tell others about Him, even in times of trouble. Jesus was obedient to His Father, even to the point of death. Just as Jesus experienced rejection and suffering, so will His followers. The apostles obeyed God by sharing the gospel even when they faced arrest. We can have joy in suffering, knowing God uses our suffering, like Christ's, for His glory.



QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

How do we see evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in today's story? The Holy Spirit gave the apostles the power to do signs and wonders (like healing people), the boldness to share the gospel, and the hope to rejoice in suffering. More than ever, believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.

What hardships did the disciples have to endure to tell others about Jesus? (Acts 5:18 and 5:40). The religious leaders were jealous of the apostles and had them arrested. The apostles were also beaten and told not to share about Jesus again.

What attitude did the disciples have as they suffered persecution for Jesus' name? (Acts 5:41). The apostles rejoiced, thankful they were worthy to suffer for Jesus. Things were difficult, but they rejoiced because they obeyed God and followed Jesus. Throughout this persecution, the apostles never stopped preaching in the temple or sharing good news from house to house.

How do we see God's sovereignty in today's story? (5:18-21; 23-25; 42) The apostles were arrested and imprisoned, but an angel of the Lord opened the doors and let them out to continue teaching and preaching. Man's sin will never stop God's plan.

Why can we still rejoice in suffering? Jesus said His followers would face hard times as we follow Him. He also promised we can experience peace, comfort, and joy in suffering because His Spirit lives in us. Romans 8:28 teaches us that God uses all things for His glory and our good.

How can we be faithful to share the good news right now? Even as a kid, you can obey the command to share the gospel. God has placed people in your life who need to hear about Jesus. Ask God to help you see opportunities to share the good news with others and the courage and boldness to do it!

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?

What does the story teach me about myself?

Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?

Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?

How does this story help me live on mission?

Application (include Mission Measures where applicable) - See Attached Application Questions. Choose the questions that work well with this section of scripture and tailor them to fit the age group of your students.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



PRAYER PROMPT:

Thank You, Lord, for the gift of salvation. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus so that we can have forgiveness and eternal life. Help us live to please You in everything we do. In Jesus' name, amen.

BIBLE SKILLS PRACTICE:

“Compare & Contrast: Barnabas vs. Ananias/Sapphira”

- Skill Focus: Observation and interpretation
- Activity: On a whiteboard or worksheet, make two columns. Have students compare:
 - What each person/family did with their money
 - How the community responded
 - What motivated them (based on the text)?
 - What were the outcomes?

MISSIONS EMPHASIS:

Our Creek Families will collect money in the funnel for United Christian Ministries in May and June.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

Acts 2:38-39

38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

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THE POWER OF THE **HOLY SPIRIT**



ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - god is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

THE POWER OF THE **HOLY SPIRIT**



ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.

THE POWER OF THE **HOLY SPIRIT**



Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?

THE POWER OF THE **HOLY SPIRIT**



Application Questions

LOOK OUTWARD >>>

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and in the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD >>>

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?