

PROMISE/MISSION

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- A beanbag, ball, or other small object that can be thrown
- Copies of the downloadable 622 service booklet
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader's notes
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: ALPHABET GLOBETROTTER

Have the teens sit in a circle. One person begins by holding a ball (or another object that can be thrown) and naming a geographic location (must be something that could be found in an atlas). Then the ball is thrown to someone else in the circle at random, who must name another geographic location that begins with the same letter of the alphabet that the previous place ended with, and so on (for example, London – Niagara Falls – Switzerland).

DEPENDING ON YOUR GROUP YOU MAY WISH TO ALLOW TEENS A "PASS" IF THEY GET STUCK, OR MAKE IT COMPETITIVE BY ELIMINATING PARTICIPANTS TILL ONLY ONE REMAINS.

622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: AWKWARD VS. EQUIPPED

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- Brainstorm about a list of people who might seem ill suited for a task. Have fun with it and let the teens make it as silly as they like. (You might want to give an example to get things started, see notes below).
- Can you think of a time you were given an assignment or job to do that you didn't feel ready for or capable of doing? What happened? How could you have been equipped so that you *did* feel capable?

A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *Some examples might be a vegetarian becoming a butcher, a comedian becoming a funeral director, a neat freak doing demolition work, etc.*
- *This is a great opportunity to share a story of your own. We've all had experiences that made us feel unprepared for a task. The miracle is that God takes us as we are and equips us to do his work – in the same way that he took an odd collection of fishermen and tax collectors (his disciples) and turned them into powerful missionaries.*

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THE LESSON: ACTS 1, 2

The first part of the lesson can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

The book of the New Testament called “Acts” follows on the tail of the Gospels and was written by Luke, one of the Gospel-writers. In fact, it’s the sequel to the book of Luke. The Gospels end with the resurrection of Jesus, and the book of Acts tells us what happened afterwards.

The full title for the book of “Acts” is “The Acts of the Apostles” because the book follows the same disciples whom we met in the Gospels - who were transformed from being a confused and frightened collection of men into bold witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. But some scholars prefer to refer to the book as “The Acts of the Holy Spirit,” because it was *through* the Holy Spirit that the disciples were able to accomplish all that they did.

As we read through today’s text, keep this in mind: Jesus left the disciples with a job to do, but he also kept his promise to send them exactly what they would need in order to fulfill that mission.

Refer to Acts 1:1-11; Acts 2:1-4,42-47.

(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY AND FOCUS, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: ACTS 1:1-2:47.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS’ NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they’ve just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- Based on this passage, what was Jesus’ first instruction to the disciples?
- Take a look at Acts 1:8. This verse is sometimes referred to as the “key” to the whole book of Acts. Why do you think that might be?
- What do you think we can learn for our own Christian lives from looking at how the disciples were equipped for their mission?
- What sorts of things characterized the early Church as described in Acts 2? What inspiration can we draw from that?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *Jesus tells them in verse 4 to “wait”. There was a mission, but before they ran out the door, they needed to be ready. Jesus was going to send what they needed – the Holy Spirit – but they first had to wait.*
- *Acts 1:8 gives a summary of the rest of the book. It indicates what is going to happen and how it is going to happen. Jesus’ disciples are going to be equipped (“receive power”) through the Holy Spirit and they will carry the Gospel first to the Jewish community, then to the Samaritans (who were half-Jewish), and then to everyone else (the Gentiles).*
- *When God gives us a task, he also equips us for that task. We might feel that a life of devout discipleship is beyond us, but that is where we need to trust and look to him. He has given us the Holy Spirit, and we have also been given the Church, with many resources that we might sometimes tend to undervalue – scripture, a tradition filled with the insights and gifts of previous generations of believers, and of course each other.*

A NEW CREATION:

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- *The early Church was characterized by devotion in learning, fellowship, celebrating Holy Communion, prayer, and generosity (to name a few). Our churches today may be different in various ways, but we can allow this image to motivate us to greater devotion in the conviction that, when we offer ourselves and our churches to God, he can do more than we could have imagined with that offering.*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU'LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY "AT-HOME CHALLENGE" IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow the rule of prayer that you created for yourself.

(If you didn't make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the "Forms of Prayer to be used in Families," which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don't have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>.)

Spend some time bringing before God those things that make you feel unprepared to serve him. Ask him to guide and equip you, then just remain quietly in his presence, waiting. Close with this prayer adapted from Hebrews 13:20-21: *"God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip me with everything good that I may do your will, working in me that which is pleasing in your sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."*

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this prayer, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

Heavenly Father, we thank thee for loving us, and for sending thy dear Son into the world to save us from our sins. We pray to thee for all who do not know of thy love, both at home and in other lands. Grant that through the work of our missionaries they may be led to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and with us become soldiers and servants in thy holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN MISSIONS FROM THE SERVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, BCP PAGE 625)

622 (AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE "PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS" SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the "Grace", the final prayer in the booklet.

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ACTS 1, 2: **SPIRIT-FILLED WITNESSES**

1 ¹In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven”..

2 ¹When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance...

⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.