

GOD'S BIG PLAN

The Helper Comes Acts 2:1-47

Supporting Scriptures: Mt 1:18-20, 12:30-32; Mk 13:9-11; Lk 1:13-16, 30-37, 2:25-33; Jn 1:29-34, 14:15-29, 16:5-16; Acts 1:8; Rom 5:1-6; 1 Cor 2:1-16, 6:12-20; Gal 5:16-26; Eph 4:1-32, 6:10-18; 1 Thess 5:19



Lesson Goals: To understand that God keeps His promises.
To understand that the Holy Spirit is God.
To understand that the Holy Spirit is given to believers.

Scripture Memory The Spirit will teach you everything and will remind you of what I said while I was with you. John 14:26 (CEV)

NOTE: Familiarize yourself with this story. Don't read it. Tell it as a STORY. To reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

The Lesson: Let's review what we have learned so far. (Review the previous stories, focusing on those leading to Christ's death and resurrection. Encourage your students to share.)

Let's think back to the night before Jesus was nailed to the cross. He wanted His followers to understand what was about to happen. How did He try to make them feel better? Do you remember Jesus telling them that it really was better for Him to go away than for Him to stay with them? Do you remember why? What did He promise? Jesus explained that if He went away, He would send a Friend, the Helper. The Helper is the Holy Spirit. Now, think back to after Jesus came back to life but before He returned to heaven. When Jesus was telling His followers to go all over the world and tell people about Him, why did He tell them to stay in Jerusalem? "Don't leave Jerusalem," Jesus told them. "Wait for the gift My Father promised." Jesus knew that they would need help to do the things He had told them to do. They needed to wait for God to send them the Holy Spirit. Let's see what they did!

READ: Acts 2:1-3 (Hold your Bible open throughout the story.)

Jesus' followers were obeying what Jesus had told them. They were waiting in Jerusalem for the Gift that God would send. It had already been ten days and Jesus' followers, those who believed in and had chosen to follow Him, were all together on a special holiday. The day was Pentecost. It was fifty days after Easter and it was time to celebrate the wonderful harvest of grain that God had blessed the farmers with. It was also a time to remember when God gave Moses the Law.

Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like a strong wind blowing! It filled the room where the followers had gathered. Then, there was fire! No, the room wasn't on fire, instead there were flames of fire that floated above them and then came down to rest on their heads. And then, God kept His precious promise! Each and every one of the believers was filled with God's Holy Spirit! Once the Spirit had filled them, He gave them the ability to do something amazing. They began speaking, but it wasn't the language they had grown up speaking. They were speaking other languages they had never learned before!

A crowd gathered when they heard the sound from heaven. That had surprised them. Even more surprising, though, was what they heard next. They heard people speaking, lots of them. But they didn't just hear noises, they understood what they were hearing! These people were speaking their languages! The

crowd knew that none of these believers came from the cities they had traveled from. Instead, they were from Galilee. How in the world could they speak foreign languages?

Peter stood up and explained: “What you see and hear is what God promised the prophets long ago. God is pouring out His Holy Spirit. This had to happen before Jesus comes back. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Peter reminded them of all that had happened before, how Jesus was handed over to them and crucified, but also how God raised Him from the dead. Peter then told them that they were responsible for Jesus’ death.

When the people heard this, they were sad and ashamed. They asked Peter, “What should we do?” And Peter told them, “Turn away from your sins and be baptized in Jesus’ name. Your sins will be forgiven and you, too, will receive the Holy Spirit.” That same day, about three-thousand people believed in Jesus and chose to follow Him! The believers studied God’s Word. They shared their lives together. They prayed. Their hearts were honest and true and they were well respected. Because of the way they lived, there were people every day who came to know Jesus and who joined them.

Review:

Let’s review what you have learned. Who would like to retell the story? (Ask your group if anything was left out or told inaccurately.) Would anyone else like to retell the story?

Who remembers what day it was when God chose to send the Helper, the Holy Spirit, to the believers? It was Pentecost, fifty days after Easter. What was so special about the day of Pentecost? What was celebrated? It was a time to celebrate the harvest of grain and it was a time to remember the giving of the law. The believers in Jerusalem came together that day for one celebration but had reason for another. More than a harvest of grain, God was giving them a harvest of souls. The seed of God’s word was planted and people believed. Three thousand people believed in Jesus that day and more believed every day after that! The believers also saw God’s gift of His Son and the Holy Spirit as a way to help them live more like Him. With the law, they were always reminded of their failure to do everything they should, but now God’s Spirit was living in them! They would be able to do greater things than Jesus had done. They had a Helper!

When Peter was preaching, he told the people to turn away from their sins and be forgiven. At that moment they would receive the Holy Spirit. They wouldn’t have to wait. Then Peter told them something else, “This promise is for you and your children. But it is also for people who aren’t here yet.” That means you! When we believe in Jesus and choose to follow Him, we have a Helper, too! What does the Helper help us do? The Helper helps us know truth from lies. The Helper brings understanding, not confusion. Just like all the languages Peter and his friends were speaking could have been confusing, they weren’t because there were people who needed to hear them to understand. The Helper will also teach us and remind us what the Bible says.

Who remembers the traveling church we talked about before? When God wanted to live with His people, what did He do? He moved into the tabernacle in the form of a cloud. What else did God do to move in with us? He sent Jesus - God in a body. But now, what does God do to be with us? If we will let Him, if we choose to follow Him, He doesn’t just come to live with us like a neighbor, He moves into us. He lives in us, not with us. And He promised to be with us forever!

Is the Holy Spirit living in you? If you have never chosen to follow Jesus, then the answer is no. But you can change that today. Will you follow Him? And if you are a follower of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is in you. The church isn’t where God lives, you are. Your body is His temple, so live like it. “How,” you ask? “What does that look like?” The Bible explains that when we let the Spirit show us how to live, it looks like “Love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” When we belong to Jesus, we give up wanting to do things our way and we let God’s Spirit, the Helper, be in control.

Planning for Next Week
Lesson 45 • Peter and Paul Go and Tell
Acts 17:16-34

PRESCHOOL LESSON

SING: “Father, I Adore You”

SHARE: Have you ever asked for something that you really wanted? Then you waited and waited. Maybe you didn’t get what you had asked for. Maybe you did!

Well, before Jesus went back to heaven, He told His followers not to leave Jerusalem because God was going to send them the gift He promised. God had promised them a Helper and Jesus knew that they would need help to do the things He had told them to do.

Jesus’ followers obeyed Him. They waited in Jerusalem. They waited one day and then two. They waited three days and then four. They waited five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten days! Jesus’ followers were all together for a special holiday. The holiday was Pentecost.

Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like a strong wind blowing! It filled the room where the followers were sitting. Then, there was fire! No, the room wasn’t on fire, instead there were flames of fire that floated above them and then came down to rest on their heads. And then, God kept His promise! Every one of the believers was filled with God’s Holy Spirit! That means that God’s Spirit (someone we cannot see) came to live inside of them. Once the Spirit had filled them, they began speaking, but it wasn’t the language they had grown up speaking. They were speaking other languages they had never learned before!

A crowd grew when they heard the sound from heaven. What a surprise! Even more surprising was what they heard next. They heard people speaking, lots of them. But they didn’t just hear noises, they understood what they were hearing! These people were speaking their languages! How in the world could this happen?

Peter stood up and explained: “What you see and hear is what God promised long ago. God is giving His Holy Spirit. This had to happen before Jesus comes back. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Peter reminded them of all that had happened before, how Jesus was handed over to them and crucified, but also how God raised Him from the dead. Peter then told them that they were responsible for Jesus’ death because of the bad things they had done.

When the people heard this, they were sad and ashamed. They asked Peter, “What do we do?” And Peter told them, “Turn away from those bad things. Your sins will be forgiven and you will receive the Holy Spirit..”

That same day, about three-thousand people believed in Jesus and chose to follow Him!

PRAY: Thank you, God, for sending Your Holy Spirit to help us.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Memory Verse Activity - Make flame headbands. Print the verse, word by word, on the flames. Have part of your students wear the headbands. Encourage the other students to put the verse in order.
- Make an acrostic with the word "Spirit." Review the Spirit's characteristics in our lives.
- Make activities with doves and talk about how the Holy Spirit came from heaven like a dove when Jesus was baptized.
- Make a "Fruit of the Spirit Tree." Decorate a bulletin board or wall with a large tree. Cover it with fruit labeled "Love," "Joy," "Peace," etc.
- Sing "The Fruit of the Spirit" song. Also sing songs about Love, Joy, Peace, etc. For example: "Beloved, Let Us Love One Another," "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy," "Be Patient."
- Learn words or phrases from other languages and teach them to your students. Talk more about how the Holy Spirit enabled the believers to speak foreign languages so that others could understand.
- Use an egg to help explain the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. One complete egg is made up of a shell, the white, and the yolk. They cannot be separated and still be one egg, nor are they three. God is One, made up of three parts.
- Make "flames" from red and orange foam or construction paper. Simply begin on one corner, cutting about an inch from the edge, cut around and around until you reach the center. Write the memory verse on each and hang from a string. A breeze will make them twist and twirl like flames of fire.
- For older students and adults: Get into a deeper discussion of "The Fruit of the Spirit." Talk about it being singular (fruit) not plural (fruits). Read Galatians 5:15-26. Talk more in depth about who receives the Holy Spirit (only believers). Use the supporting Scriptures for more discussion.