



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE—YOUTH

Year 3—The God Who Pursues Relationship: A Story of God's People

Module 6—Jesus and His Church

Lesson 4: The Early Church and Their Role as God's People—Acts 2; 4:32-37

ENCOUNTER 1—Community Discussion

Read Acts 2 and 4:32-37 together out loud as a group. Encourage each person to journal through the passage using these questions. After allowing sufficient time for reflection, invite the group to share their thoughts.

How is this God's story?

How is this others' story?

How is this my story?

How is this the world's story?

ENCOUNTER 2—COMMUNITY DISCUSS

(Read the biblical reflection included with this lesson. The questions are designed for your group to enter into a meaningful dialogue about the Scriptures. The bulleted teaching points are taken from the reflection and correspond to the questions.)

GOD'S STORY

What happened at Pentecost?

- Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled at Pentecost.
- At Pentecost, the Spirit descended on the disciple's community (120 people) and He baptized the disciple's community into one—the body of Christ.
- Pentecost then, is considered the birth of the church as a spiritual body of Jesus.

How did the Holy Spirit come?

- When the Spirit came, as Jesus had promised, the Spirit came with a noise like a rushing wind (v.2) and with fire overtop of all of them (v.3).

What was Peter's message to the people?

- Peter preached a message of repentance and thousands of people received his word. This is the power of God, to use ordinary men from all nations, tribes and languages to share in a mission. That mission? It is simple, to restore the world to its intended wholeness through the ongoing participation of the church as empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit.

OUR STORY

What is repentance?

- Repentance is a change of mind and heart or a renewing of the mind, turning away from the sins of our lives and turning to the truths of God.
- We trust in God alone for our salvation and in that trusting relationship we strive to move away from trusting in self and instead trust exclusively in the saving grace of God for all of our needs.

How do repentance and faith work in the life of a Christian?

- Repentance—turning away from sin. Faith—turning to God through allowing Jesus to form us spiritually under His reign.

What are some steps we can take in the repentance process?

- Here are some steps in the repentance process that can help us live under the lordship of Jesus:
 1. Do something with the sorrow you feel.
 2. Confessing your sins to God
 3. Is there a need to take your forgiveness to another level?
 4. Make a commitment not to repeat the sin
 5. Receive forgiveness.

OTHERS' STORY

What are some things we learn about the early church in Acts 1-4?

- They were devoted to the disciples teaching (v. 42).
- They were committed to fellowship and sharing meals with one another (v. 42).
- They were committed to praying together (v. 42).
- They relied on God's power and remained in awe (v. 43).
- The believers were together, sharing everything they had (v. 44).
- They possessed nothing individually but collectively as a community (v. 45).
- They met together every day wither in the temple or in their homes (v. 46).
- They worshipped together in love (v. 47).
- They continued to see conversion and repentance—salvation (v. 47).
- They were of one heart and mind—or of one mission (4:32).
- They shared everything, choosing to live a simple life free of material possessions (4:32).
- They preached about the resurrection and lived it publicly (4:33).
- They saw to it that no one was needy. Justice was a big concern (4:34).
- They funded the movement, giving generously not only to those in need but to the mission of the church as a whole (4:36).

THE WORLD'S STORY

What are the ways we, the church, can present the gospel to our world?

- Lacking a spirit of timidity, we must boldly and clearly present a gospel of love. We must live out a hospitable gospel that presents the atoning work of Jesus in the light of grace, mercy and truth.

PRAYER

(Lead your group in corporate prayer.)

Merciful God, we humble ourselves before You today. We ask that You would make Your presence known in our lives today.

May your Holy Spirit invade our lives in such a way that our thoughts and actions are in line with You.

Where we fall short, we are truly sorry. Forgive us, we pray. We repent and turn to You, leaving our sin behind and looking ahead to new days.

Renew our lives to the glory of Your name. Amen.

WEEKLY PRACTICE

(Read the weekly practice out loud, and challenge your group to practice missio beyond today.)

Find a person in either the group or outside of the group and create a list of both of your “frequently left undone” items in your life. Perhaps you do not say sorry and seek forgiveness. Perhaps you walk past the homeless person each day without saying hello. Maybe you don’t give generously to those who need it and you know you should. With this list, commit with your teammate to actually do something about the things you normally leave undone. Journal your experience in a paragraph or less and share your experience with the group next time you meet.

BECOMING MY STORY

(Encourage the group to spend time this week in God’s Word, allowing it to penetrate their heart and life.)

1 John 1:9

James 5:16

Acts 17:30

Psalms 38:5

Spend time this week reading and journaling through the above scriptures. Reflect on how the passage is God’s story, my story, others’ story and the world’s story. In the context of Acts 2 and 4:32-37, consider the following questions:

How are these Scripture passages related to the message in Acts 2 and 4:32-37?

How do these scriptures tell us about the story of God being continued from Acts 2 and 4:32-37?

What is God saying to you through these passages?

Consider other passages you might know related to Acts 2 and 4:32-37 and read them this week, journaling as you go.