

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Acts 2:1-15,33,38-41 The coming of the Holy Spirit

Before he was taken up into Heaven, Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem because he was sending the Holy Spirit. This week we consider why Jesus sent his Holy Spirit, and if we would welcome his Holy Spirit into our room.

Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper or mini flames cut from red, orange or red card
- A Bible verse wristband printed on card

You will need:

- To research five or six greetings in different languages – see Start It section
- Cards and pens (optional)
- Up to five bouncy balls (all different colours) and sticky notes (optional)
- Bean bags (optional)
- Access to a calendar and a laptop/tablet
- Yellow, orange or red card cut into ten large flames, and pens. On the back of each flame stick a verse from the Holy Spirit sheet.
- Glue or a stapler

Start It

Ask: Can any of you speak more than one language? If so, what is it and how did you learn to speak it? (Perhaps it is your first language.) How do you greet someone in that language?

Play a game based on saying 'Hello' in another language. Research five or six greetings for 'Hello' / 'good day'. According to the 2011 census, the top 12 languages (after English) in England and Wales are: Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Arabic, French, Chinese, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish and Italian. But you may wish to select languages that are widely spoken in your area. Use these websites to help you. <https://translate.google.co.uk> <https://www.babelfish.com>

Option One – Matching

Create cards with the greeting and the language written on them and ask the children to match each 'Hello' to the correct language.

Option Two – Bounce

Decide on the greeting / 'Hello' the group want to learn to say. Write each 'Hello' on a sticky note and stick each on a ball. Start with one ball / one 'Hello'. Everyone stands in a circle and a ball is bounced across the circle. When someone catches the ball, they say 'Hello' in that language, then bounce it on again. Start introducing more balls and more 'Hello's. Find out how many balls / 'Hello's your group can manage!

Option Three – Bean bags

Give each pair or small group a bean bag and a set of cards, each with a different 'Hello' written on it. Ask them to arrange the 'Hello's on the ground, spaced out and at least a metre away from them. The group takes turns throwing the bean bag, aiming at a 'Hello'. If they can

cover the 'Hello' and say it correctly, the 'Hello' can be picked up. Allow access to a laptop/tablet to double check pronunciation. Too easy? Only allow pronunciation checks to be done before the throw. Or add in another set of cards, with the languages on it plus another bean bag – both must be covered before they can be said.

Sing It

● **Say:** Jesus promised to send the disciples a special helper to be with them for ever (John 14:16). Today's song tells us all about the different ways the Holy Spirit helps us.

'Holy Spirit for children' by Ayi and her friends (3 mins 29 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjDEZXgmCrA>

Tell It

● **Say:** Today we are going to discover more about the spectacular day that the Church was born. We used the word 'spectacular' a few weeks ago when we looked at the story of Elijah. Today we're going to fast forward quite a long time and discover more about the spectacular Holy Spirit.

● **Say:** In today's Bible story the disciples were given the power of the Holy Spirit, and because of this they were able to speak in many different languages to spread the message of Jesus.

● **Say:** Our story starts in the book of Acts in the New Testament, when Jesus had risen from the dead and was spending time with the disciples. In Acts, Luke was writing to his friend Theophilus, and he shared everything that happened with Jesus.

Read Acts 1:1-9 (ICB).

'To Theophilus,

The first book I wrote was about everything that Jesus did and taught. I wrote about the whole life of Jesus, from the beginning until the day he was taken up into Heaven. Before this, Jesus talked to the apostles he had chosen. With the help of the Holy Spirit, Jesus told them what they should do. After his death, he showed himself to them and proved in many ways that he was alive. The apostles saw Jesus during the 40 days after he was raised from death. He spoke to them about the kingdom of God. Once when he was eating with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem. He said, "The Father has made you a promise which I told you about before. Wait here to receive this promise. John baptised people with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit."

● **Say:** The disciples were asked to wait for a promise, a gift, but they didn't know when it would arrive.

Ask:

→ How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus told them they were getting a promise, a gift?

→ How do you feel when you are waiting for a gift?

→ Would it make it harder if you did not know when the gift would arrive? If so, how?

● **Say:** It took 50 days for the promise, the gift, to arrive.

Ask: What date do you think it will be 50 days from now?

Give the children the opportunity to guess what the date would be in 50 days, and then work it out together on a calendar.

● **Say:** In 50 days it will be (*insert date*). That may feel like a long time to wait for something, but Jesus had to wait for a special day. The surprise arrived on the festival of Pentecost, a special celebration for the Jewish people.

Ask:

- What is your favourite celebration or festival?
- Why do you love it so much?
- What surprises are there at your favourite festival?

🗨 **Say:** Pentecost is a special time for the Jewish people as it gives them a chance to say thank you for the wheat harvest and to celebrate God's gift of the Ten Commandments.

🗨 **Say:** On this special Pentecost, God had another gift to give to the people.

Video

'God sends the Holy Spirit' by Saddleback Kids (3 mins 29 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMQKy1Mx49M>

Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine that they are in the room with the disciples. Read Acts 2:1-4 and then discuss their thoughts about what happened.

Read Acts 2:1-4 (*ICB*)

'When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a noise came from Heaven. It sounded like a strong wind blowing. This noise filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw something that looked like flames of fire. The flames were separated and stood over each person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak different languages. The Holy Spirit was giving them the power to speak these languages.'

Ask:

- What did the disciples do as soon as they were filled with the Holy Spirit?
- Why do you think the Holy Spirit helped the disciples to speak in different languages?
- How did this help spread the message of Jesus?
- How many people believed in Jesus after they had listened to the disciples?
- Do you think the disciples could have done what they did without the power of the Holy Spirit? Explain your answer.

🗨 **Say:** The same Holy Spirit who helped the disciples to do amazing things for God, is available for you today. And that's pretty spectacular!

Action It

Cut out ten large flames in either red, yellow or orange. On the back of each flame stick a different Holy Spirit verse. Lay these out on a table or on the floor, face down without the Scripture showing. Alternatively you could stick them up around the room for the children to collect and bring back to the whole group.

Ask the children to choose or collect a flame, and read the Scripture together. For each flame discuss what the Scripture teaches us about the Holy Spirit and write down the children's summarised response on the other side of the flame.

Depending on your group, you could divide them into pairs and ask them to collect a flame, read it and give their thoughts about it. Start to build up a 'fire' as you look at the different flames. By the end of the activity, you should have lots of words and phrases that describe the characteristics and work of the Holy Spirit.

To aid discussion, here are the notes from the *To Serve* leader's handbook that provide additional information on the work of the Holy Spirit.

'When we became followers of Jesus, the Holy Spirit came to live within our lives (1 Corinthians 12:12-13) and began a process of transforming our identity into the likeness of Christ, freeing us to become the person God has created us to be. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit we are equipped with his power and gifts, and all that we need to follow love and follow God.' (p79)

Ask: As you look at all the characteristics and work of the Holy Spirit, explain why you think this was such a special gift.

Pray It

● **Say:** When Jesus went up to Heaven, the disciples must have felt like they had been left all alone. When the gift of the Holy Spirit came, they had someone to help and guide them even after Jesus had gone. Throughout the book of Acts we see lots of examples of the Holy Spirit giving the disciples the power to do amazing things.

● **Say:** Look at all the flames in front of you and think about all we have discussed about the Holy Spirit today.

Ask: What would you like to ask the Holy Spirit for?

Discuss ideas with the children from the Holy Spirit fire you have created. How do they need the Holy Spirit to help them, guide them, where do they need power?

Give each child a slip of paper, or a mini flame if you have left-over coloured paper. Ask them to finish the following prayer.

Dear Holy Spirit,

Please ...

Once the children have written their prayers, then share them together.

Bible verse

Share this month's Bible verse with the group.

'The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them.'

— (Romans 8:14 *ICB*)

Give each child a Bible verse wristband. Some children may want to colour it in before wearing it. Stick or staple the ends together to make a wristband.

TIPS

- Check the sizing with the child before gluing/stapling the wristband.
- If stapling, make sure the ends of the staple are not next to the child's skin.
- For smaller wrists or highly decorated wristbands, make a loop round the child's wrist then glue/staple it leaving the two ends sticking out like a tail so the text/design is still visible.

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It Ideas for children and families.

Explore It

IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

FOR ME



Discover

The work of the Holy Spirit can be challenging to understand and we can sometimes get a little muddled about the relationship between God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

To find out more, watch the clip, and if you still have questions then get in touch with an adult who can give you more information.

What does the Holy Spirit do? by CCC Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMPoPNWyBdo>

TOGETHER



Learn

One of the ways God shows he loves us is through the gift of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were able to speak many languages through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Ask a grown-up to help you find out the following (Google might help as well):

- ➔ What are the top five languages spoken in your town or city?
- ➔ How do say 'God loves you' in the top five languages?

If you want to find out how to say each of these, you could try Google Translate.



Song for the week

'Holy Spirit for children' by Ayi and her friends

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjDEZXgmCrA>



Memory verse

'The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them.'

— Romans 8:14 (ICB)

KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



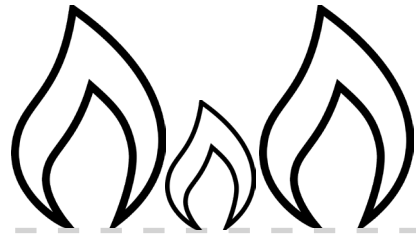
<p>So it is with you. You heard the true teaching—the Good News about your salvation. When you heard it, you believed in Christ. And in Christ, God put his special mark on you by giving you the Holy Spirit that he had promised.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ephesians 1:13</p>	<p>He saved us because of his mercy, not because of good deeds we did to be right with God. He saved us through the washing that made us new people. He saved us by making us new through the Holy Spirit.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Titus 3:5</p>
<p>But dear friends, use your most holy faith to build yourselves up strong. Pray with the Holy Spirit.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Jude 1:20</p>	<p>I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper. He will give you this Helper to be with you forever.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">John 14:16</p>
<p>We brought the Good News to you. But we did not use only words. We brought the Good News with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with sure knowledge that it is true. Also you know how we lived when we were with you. We lived that way to help you. And you became like us and like the Lord. You suffered much, but still you accepted the teaching with the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1 Thessalonians 1:5-6</p>	<p>Also, the Spirit helps us. We are very weak, but the Spirit helps us with our weakness. We do not know how to pray as we should. But the Spirit himself speaks to God for us, even begs God for us. The Spirit speaks to God with deep feelings that words cannot explain. God can see what is in people’s hearts. And he knows what is in the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit speaks to God for his people in the way that God wants.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Romans 8:26-27</p>
<p>And this hope will never disappoint us, because God has poured out his love to fill our hearts. God gave us his love through the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to us.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Romans 5:5</p>	<p>But the Holy Spirit will come to you. Then you will receive power. You will be my witnesses—in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Acts 3:31</p>
<p>In the beginning God created the sky and the earth. The earth was empty and had no form. Darkness covered the ocean, and God’s Spirit was moving over the water.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Genesis 1:1-2</p>	<p>But the Helper will teach you everything. He will cause you to remember all the things I told you. This Helper is the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">John 14:26</p>



The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them.



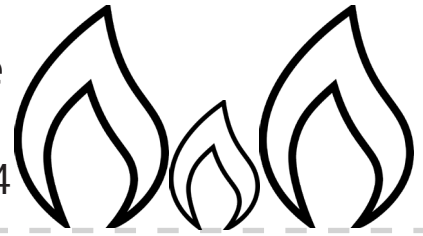
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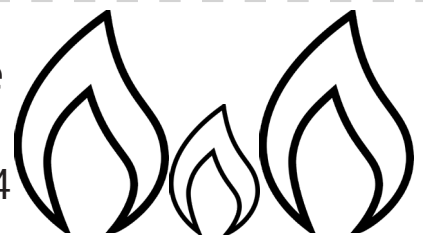
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Romans 8:14



Explore It

FOR LEADERS



PETER MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Acts 3:1-10 Peter heals a crippled man

After Pentecost, the followers of Jesus could do miracles and told people about his Holy Spirit. But some were persecuted for their beliefs. This week we explore how we can help others who are being persecuted for their beliefs.

Each child will need:

→ Pens/pencils and paper

You will need:

- Accessories / clothing like hat/scarf/sunglasses/jewellery (optional) – see Start It section
- To be familiar with the guidelines on writing to children who are facing persecution: see <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/act/letter> Select a response suitable for your group, eg letter/card/colouring-in/artwork – see Action It section

Start It

Play a game of *Spot the Difference*. Divide the group into two teams. Stand the group in a line opposite each other. One team will be the 'spotters' and one team will 'make the difference'. Give the 'spotters' a minute to look carefully at the 'make the difference' group then ask them to turn away so that they are not facing the other group.

The 'make the difference' group each have to change one thing about their appearance, eg tie their hoodie around their waist, brush their hair differently, tuck a trouser leg into a sock. (You may want to provide additional clothing.) The 'spotters' then turn around and guess what has changed. Then reverse the roles of the teams.

Sing It

● **Say:** Today's song gives you a sneak preview of the story we will be looking at later.

'Peter and John went to pray' by Quiz Worx (2 mins 59 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnQRNwX92Pw>

Tell It

● **Say:** In the last session we looked at the difference that the Holy Spirit made in the lives of the disciples. One of the people transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit was Peter. Listen to this story about Peter before he was given the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Read Luke 22:54-62 (*ICB*).

'They arrested Jesus and took him away. They brought him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed them, but he did not go near Jesus. The soldiers started a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat together. Peter sat with them. A servant girl saw Peter sitting there near the light. She looked closely at Peter's face and said, "This man was also with him!"

'But Peter said this was not true. He said, "Girl, I don't know him."

'A short time later, another person saw Peter and said, "You are also one of them."

'But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"

'About an hour later, another man insisted, "It is true! This man was with him. He is from Galilee!"

'But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about!"

'Immediately, while Peter was still speaking, a rooster crowed. Then the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. And Peter remembered what the Lord had said: "Before the rooster crows tonight, you will say three times that you don't know me." Then Peter went outside and cried with much pain in his heart.'

Ask: How confident do you think Peter was about sharing that he knew Jesus? If 'zero' is not at all and 'ten' is totally confident, then what number would you choose for Peter?

🗨️ **Say:** After Pentecost, Peter was like a different person.

Read: Acts 2:14; Acts 14:38-41 (ICB).

'But Peter stood up with the eleven apostles. In a loud voice he spoke to the crowd: "My fellow Jews, and all of you who are in Jerusalem, listen to me. Pay attention to what I have to say."

'Peter said to them, "Change your hearts and lives and be baptised, each 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. This promise is for you. It is also for your children and for all who are far away. It is for everyone the Lord our God calls to himself."

'Peter warned them with many other words. He begged them, "Save yourselves from the evil of today's people!" Then those people who accepted what Peter said were baptised. About 3,000 people were added to the number of believers that day.'

Ask:

➔ After Pentecost, when Peter received the gift of the Holy Spirit, how confident do you think he was about sharing that he knew Jesus? If 'zero' is not at all and 'ten' is totally confident, then what number would you choose for Peter now?

➔ What difference did the Holy Spirit make in Peter's life?

🗨️ **Say:** Peter's new-found confidence came through the power of the Holy Spirit. Not only did this gift from Jesus make a difference in the life of Peter, but he was also now able to make a difference in the lives of others as well.

Video

Peter heals a beggar who can't walk by Saddleback Kids (1 min 57 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orp4ZT9710Y>

Discuss:

➔ How do you think the man felt sitting and begging by the side of the Temple gate every day?

➔ When Peter and John met the beggar, what was he hoping to get from them?

➔ What did Peter do instead?

➔ How do you think that made the beggar feel?

➔ Do you think Peter would have been able to heal the beggar without the gift of the Holy Spirit? Explain your answer.

➔ What did Peter remind all the people about?

🗨️ **Say:** Just like Peter, we can make an amazing difference in the lives of others when we are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Action It

Ask:

- How do you feel about telling other people about Jesus and how much you love him?
- What kind of reaction do you get when you tell them?
- What makes you unsure about sharing that you're a Christian?

🗨️ **Say:** Today we have read about the difference the Holy Spirit made in the lives of the disciples and their new-found confidence to tell the world about Jesus. Things weren't always straightforward for the disciples, however, and many of them faced prison, or even death, for sharing their beliefs. A disciple named Stephen was the first to lose his life for sharing his faith with others. The authorities at the time were so angry about what he was saying that they had him killed.

Optional: Stephen's story is found in Acts 6:10 to 7:60 if you want to read or summarise it to the group.

Ask:

- Do you think there are people today who face danger for sharing the good news about Jesus?
- If so, what do you know about them?

Video

Hami's story by Open Doors UK and Ireland (1 min 57 secs)

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/resources/children-at-home>

Ask: How does it make you feel knowing that there are children in the world that wouldn't be able to gather together like we are to talk about Jesus?

🗨️ **Say:** We can sometimes feel a little helpless when we see situations like this, and we don't know how to help. But just as Peter used the power of the Holy Spirit to help the beggar, he can guide us to make a difference in the lives of others.

Letter/Artwork

Explain that the children are going to write, or send a piece of artwork, to children who are facing persecution for their beliefs. Before the children start the activity, share a brief prayer asking the Holy Spirit to guide the children's writing and artwork so that it brings hope to those who will see it.

Pray It

🗨️ **Say:** In today's Bible reading, Peter said to the beggar, 'I don't have any silver or gold, but I do have something else I can give you: by the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth – stand up and walk!'" (Acts 3:6 *ICB*)

🗨️ **Say:** God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can do amazing things in our lives.

Ask: Where would you like to make a difference in the world?

After the children have shared their thoughts, remind the group of this month's Bible verse:

'The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them.'

— (Romans 8:14 *ICB*)

Pray for each one of them asking for God's Holy Spirit to guide them to make a difference in the world, just like Peter did.

Remind the group to let the Holy Spirit guide them to make a difference

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It Ideas for children and families.

Explore It IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

FOR ME



Create

Create a picture or collage that represents the Holy Spirit.

What colours and shapes remind you of the Holy Spirit?

Create your picture and put it up on your wall to remind you to ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance every day.

TOGETHER



Watch

Watch the clip with someone at home and talk about the children featured in it.

If seven kids can change the world – you can do it too by Inspire More

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPY0LqeQet0>

How do these children inspire you to make a difference?

Most of the children in the clip started their journey with one small step. What small step could you take to make a difference in the lives of others?

Pray together, asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance about your next step to making a difference.



Song for the week

'Peter and John went to pray' by Quiz Worx

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnQRNwX92Pw>



Memory verse

'The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them.'

— Romans 8:14 (ICB)

KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



Explore It

FOR LEADERS



AN ANGEL MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Acts 12:6-11 Peter leaves the jail

This week, we continue travelling with Peter who has been seeing the power of the Holy Spirit before his own eyes. We explore if believing in God can sometimes make life more challenging.

Each child will need:

- A balloon
- Story outline sheet

You will need:

- A balloon pump and a bucket
- Resources to re-tell the story – see Action It section

Start It

Play a target game with balloons. Use a balloon pump and give each child an un-tied balloon filled with air to hold tight. Ask the children to imagine they are filled with the Holy Spirit, just like the balloon is filled with air. The game is to let your balloon go and aim for the bucket. The winner is the person whose balloon goes inside. If you have a large group, perhaps do this in rounds.

Play this several times. It's likely that no one is successful, but there is a lot of chaos and fun trying.

💡 **Say:** We all kept trying to aim for the bucket, but the balloon had very different ideas about where it wanted to go. That's a bit like how the Holy Spirit might work in us. We may have very firm ideas about where we think we should be heading, but it's important to listen and let the Holy Spirit lead us too. Although, unlike the balloon, his directions have purpose.

Ask: Who can remember this month's Bible verse?

'The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them.'

— (Romans 8:14 ICB)

💡 **Say:** Just like our balloons, we may not know the end destination, but it will hopefully be fun and exciting getting there!

Sing It

💡 **Say:** Throughout the Bible God regularly sends his angels to be with his people. Although we can learn lots from the Bible about angels, they still seem very mysterious.

💡 **Say:** Today's song gives us a sneak preview of the story we will be looking at later. It will be tricky to join in with the verses as they tell the story, but you'll soon pick up the chorus. Here are the words:

Angels watching over me, every move I make,
Angels watching over me,
Angels watching over me, every step I take,
Angels watching over me.

(Amy Grant)

'Angels' by Amy Grant (3 mins 38 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koGOTI48DcY>

Tell It

● **Say:** In the past two sessions we have discovered that the Holy Spirit gives Christians the power to make an amazing difference in the lives of others. The disciples were able to communicate in lots of different languages and Peter and John healed a beggar on the side of the road. The only problem was that there were many people who were angry about what the disciples were doing and saying.

● **Say:** In our Bible verse we meet someone called King Herod. He is not King Herod from the Nativity story, King Herod the Great who met the wise men and killed the babies in Bethlehem. He is King Herod Agrippa, his grandson.

Read Acts 12:1-5 (ICB).

'During that same time King Herod began to do terrible things to some who belonged to the church. He ordered James, the brother of John, to be killed by the sword. Herod saw that the Jews liked this, so he decided to arrest Peter, too. (This happened during the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.)

'After Herod arrested Peter, he put him in jail and handed him over to be guarded by 16 soldiers. Herod planned to bring Peter before the people for trial after the Passover Feast. So Peter was kept in jail. But the church kept on praying to God for him.'

Ask: Why do you think King Herod Agrippa was so angry about what the disciples were doing?

● **Say:** We discovered in last week's session that there are Christians today who face the same persecution (bad treatment) as Peter and the other disciples did.

Ask:

→ What did the Church do while Peter was in prison?

→ How did we support persecuted Christians in the last session?

● **Say:** In the United Kingdom and Ireland we are able to worship freely without the fear that we will be thrown into prison, but being a Christian can still be challenging.

Ask: We may not be in prison, but do you ever feel that believing in God has made your life more difficult? Explain your answer.

● **Say:** When we are facing challenges because of our beliefs, we can sometimes feel like we are alone. The stories in the Bible may have happened many years ago but we can still relate to them today. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can find the strength to live as Jesus wants us to and make a difference in the lives of those who are being persecuted for their faith.

● **Say:** As Peter sat in the prison, he was chained to two soldiers.

Ask: What do you think happened next?

Video

Slapstick theater (Peter escapes from prison) by Saddleback Kids (2 mins 12 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzM9aFqkw6s>

● **Say:** In the story an angel came to Peter just at the right moment. In this case it was an angel sent by God to make a difference in Peter's life, but God often sends people into our lives who lift us up when we need help.

Ask:

- Have you, like Peter, ever felt that God has sent somebody into your life who has helped you?
- Who was it?

● **Say:** Today's story reminds us that, just like Peter, we are not alone, and God is always with us.

Action It

Ask the children to recreate their own version of the story. Use the story outline sheet as a starting point. Depending on your group, and their interests, a number of different options are available. Here are some suggestions:

- use finger puppets created by the children to tell the story <https://artsphere.org/blog/family-finger-puppet-handout>
- create a stop motion video of a section of the story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0Lj3ha3XF8>
- create a storyboard for a scene from a film – don't forget to cast your main characters
- act out the story, film it and share it with the rest of your church

Once the children have created their version of the story, share it together and discuss the difference the angel made in Peter's life.

● **Say:** Peter was protected by God when he sent an angel to be with him. The angel made a huge difference in Peter's life.

Pray It

● **Say:** For our time of prayer, we are going to think about all the people in the world who are in prison because they believe in Jesus. Just as the Church prayed for Peter, we are going to pray for those locked away because of their beliefs.

Give the children a few moments to write a short prayer. Ask the children to read out their prayers and then bring the time of reflection to a close.

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It Ideas for children and families.

Explore It

IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

FOR ME



Create

What do you think an angel looks like?

Instead of relying on pictures you have already seen in books or on the TV, try to think about what an angel looks like to you.

Create a picture to show your angel and stick it up in your room as a reminder that God is always with you. It could go next to the Holy Spirit picture that you created last week.

TOGETHER



Watch

In this week's session we created our own version of the story of Peter's miraculous escape from prison. This story has been turned into a song for the musical 'Risen'. Watch the clip with someone at home to discover a Bible story brought to life through musical theatre.

If you could turn any Bible story into a musical, which one would you choose? Ask someone else at home for their ideas as well.

Acts – the musical - Peter's miraculous escape from prison by Risen the musical

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQVfxVND3Aw>



Song for the week

'Angels' by Amy Grant

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koGOTI48DcY>



Memory verse

'The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them.'

— Romans 8:14 (ICB)

KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



Story Outline

Characters:

- Peter
- King Herod Agrippa
- An angel
- Guards

King Herod Agrippa was angry with Peter. Peter kept telling the people about Jesus and he kept performing miracles. Peter was a nuisance!

So King Herod Agrippa had Peter arrested. Peter was thrown into jail and was chained to two guards, with more guards standing at the doorway.

The night before his trial, Peter was sleeping in his cell. Then an angel suddenly appeared, and his room was filled with light.

The angel woke Peter up and said, 'Hurry! Get up!'

Peter woke up, got dressed and followed the angel out of the cell. They went straight past the guards, through the open gate and out into the street.

Peter thought he must be dreaming. But then the angel disappeared, and Peter realised he was really free.

Peter said, 'Now I know that the Lord really sent his angel to me. He rescued me.'

Peter was protected by God when he sent an angel to be with him. The angel made a huge difference in Peter's life.

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



SAUL MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Acts 9:1-20 Saul is converted

This week we explore how, like Saul and Ananias, the Holy Spirit might want to work through us.

Each child will need:

→ Pens/pencils and A3 paper

You will need:

→ A bag filled with random objects (optional) – see Start It section

Start It

Play a game of guess the object. Encourage lots of guessing, and when the object is guessed highlight how the children changed their minds when they got more clues.

Option one – guess the object

Fill a bag with random everyday objects like dice, a toy, a book, a ruler, a plate, a sock, a hairbrush, a mug (nothing sharp). Children take turns feeling an object in the bag and describing it to the rest of the group.

Option two – guess the picture

Use an interactive game which reveals an image. <https://wordwall.net/resource/2637008/guess-the-picture>

🗨 **Say:** We made some pretty wild guesses sometimes, but when we saw the bigger picture, or got more clues, we changed our minds.

Share the following questions with the group. Most of them could have a yes/no answer, but encourage the group to explain their choices.

- Can you think of anything that you used to have a really strong opinion about but then you changed your mind?
- Is there a food that you used to hate but now would eat all day if you could?
- Is there a TV programme that you would never watch, but now you can't miss?
- Is there a pop group that you were never a fan of but now you love them? What changed your mind?

Sing It

🗨 **Say:** Throughout these sessions we have discovered how the Holy Spirit helps us to make a difference in the world. Today's song reminds us to get up every morning and commit our day to God, making a difference for him.

'I want to make a difference' by Jana and Ron Alayra (2 mins 43 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2eQlabUY68>

Tell It

🗨️ **Say:** Today we will find out more about Saul who played a big part in the book of Acts and made a huge difference for God.

Read Acts 9:1-2 (ICB)

'In Jerusalem Saul was still trying to frighten the followers of the Lord by saying he would kill them. So he went to the high priest and asked him to write letters to the synagogues in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted the high priest to give him the authority to find people in Damascus who were followers of Christ's Way. If he found any there, men or women, he would arrest them and bring them back to Jerusalem.'

Ask:

- ➔ What do we discover about Saul in Acts 9:1-2?
- ➔ How much did he like or dislike Christians?

🗨️ **Say:** Saul absolutely hated the Christians as he thought that they were a threat to the one true God. He would go to any lengths to shut down anyone who said they believed in Jesus.

Video

Paul's conversion (Acts 9:1-19) by Saddleback Kids (1 min 37 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLZ67inPx-4>

Ask:

- ➔ What happened to Saul on the road to Damascus?
- ➔ Imagine that you are Ananias. How would you have felt if God asked you to look after Saul?
- ➔ Would you have been afraid? Why?

🗨️ **Say:** In the Bible we find out exactly what God said to Ananias.

Read Acts 9:15 (ICB)

'But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. He must make me known to non-Jews, to kings, and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.'"

🗨️ **Say:** That was all Ananias needed to hear. Saul was chosen by God and that was good enough for Ananias.

Read Acts 9:17-19 (ICB).

'So Ananias went to the house of Judas. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus sent me. He is the one you saw on the road on your way here. He sent me so that you can see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something that looked like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes. He was able to see again! Then Saul got up and was baptised. After eating some food, his strength returned.'

Ask: What happened when Ananias went to visit Saul?

🗨️ **Say:** Before this moment, Saul had put all his energy into attacking Christians and making life as difficult as possible for them. Now he used that same energy to tell as many people as he could about Jesus.

🗨️ **Say:** Saul's name changed on that day; he now went by the name of Paul. It wasn't Jesus who gave Saul a new name; Saul was his Hebrew name and Paul was his Greek name.

Video

Paul in Damascus (Acts 9:20-31) by Saddleback Kids

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_IsmzsFU5Y

Ask: How did Paul's life change once he met Jesus and was filled with the Holy Spirit?

🗨️ **Say:** The Holy Spirit transformed the mind of Saul/Paul, and he was able to do amazing things for God. Jesus can do the same for us as Christians so that we can make a difference for him in the world.

Action It

Ask: Who can remember this month's Bible verse?

'The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them.'

— (Romans 8:14 ICB)

Spend a moment sharing together how they have been letting the Holy Spirit lead them.

Make a difference for God

Explain that we are going to think about ways we can make a difference for God. Give each child a piece of A3 paper and ask them to either write their name or draw a picture of themselves in the centre. Ask them to create a spider diagram showing all the places they go during the week, eg school, home, dance club, church ...

Discuss together some practical things they could do to make a difference for God.

Then ask the group to write one or two practical things that they could do in each setting, to make a difference for God.

Using a different colour, now ask them to write what they need from the Holy Spirit to be able to carry out the task. It would be great if the group leaders could complete their own sheet too, to share ideas with the children.

🗨 **Say:** Today we have taken the time to think about the different places we visit during the week and how God can use us to make a difference in each one. We have also recognised that we cannot do this in our own strength. As you try and carry out some of these tasks over the coming weeks, it is important that you pray regularly, asking for the Holy Spirit's power to help you make a difference for God.

Pray It

Have a look at the 'Make a difference' sheets that you have completed together. What are the common things that the children, and group leaders, need help with? It may be the courage to speak up, or guidance about the right words to say, but there will be common threads within the children's thoughts. Jot down the common themes on a sheet of paper that the whole group can see. Ask each child to choose one to pray about and go round the room sharing in a time of prayer.

To bring the time of prayer to a close, use the lyrics from today's song. You can either read them out or display them for the children to read.

Jesus changes lives forever, if he calls I won't say 'never',
I'll say, 'Now! Use me, Lord, somehow!'
He's at work every minute, his great plan, I am in it,
I'll say, 'Now! Use me, Lord, somehow!'

*With all my heart this is what I say,
I want to get up and make a difference,
Get up and make a change!
With all my heart this is what I say,
I want to get up, get up with all my might,
Get up and give you all my life,
I want to make a difference today!*

('I want to make a difference' by Jana and Ron Alayra)

Ask the children to take their 'Make a difference' sheets with them, to share with someone at home.

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It Ideas for children and families.

Explore It

IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

FOR ME

TOGETHER



Watch

Just because you are young, it doesn't mean that God doesn't have a purpose for you. He wants you to make a difference in the world. Watch the clip to give you some ideas.

Kids can make a difference by Scholastic News

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3QbI5LOSic>



Share

Spend some time talking through your 'Make a difference' sheet with someone at home. There are lots of places where you can make a difference for God, but you will need the power and strength of the Holy Spirit to do it and the support of other Christians, just like Ananias.

How can someone at home support you as you try to make a difference for God?



Song for the week

'I want to make a difference' by Jana and Ron Alayra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2eQlabUY68>



Memory verse

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