

When the Spirit Shows Up



**Bible references – Genesis 1:1-2; Exodus 31: 1-5;
Judges 6:33-35; 14:5-6; 1 Samuel 16:12-14;
Psalm 51:11; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Joel 2:28**



From the very beginning, the Spirit of God is present and at work. Throughout the Old Testament, he appears at key points in the story, bringing change, empowering individuals and shaping events in unexpected ways. This session traces those moments, exploring what happens when the Spirit shows up and how his presence is experienced. As the story unfolds, a tension begins to emerge, alongside a growing promise that something more is coming.

You will need:

- Large sheets of paper
- Felt-tips/markers



Beat

Leader's notes:

Begin the session with a short discussion activity to help the group think about how situations can change depending on who is present. Ask the young people to consider what happens when different people enter a room. You could use examples such as a teacher, a close friend, someone they do not know very well, someone in a position of authority or even a famous celebrity.

Invite them to share their thoughts, either as a whole group or in pairs. Encourage them to think about how the atmosphere might change, how people behave differently, and how others respond depending on who has arrived.

Draw the discussion together by highlighting that even when nothing is said, something often changes. The presence of a particular person can affect the way people act, the way they feel and the overall atmosphere.

Explain that in this session they will be exploring a similar idea through the Bible, asking what happens when the Spirit of God is present and how people and situations are affected when he shows up.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

Why does it make a difference when certain people are in the room?

 **Amplify****Leader's notes:**

The headings provided in this Amplify section are for the leader's reference only. They will help the leader to link the Sound Check activity to key parts of the teaching.

The Beginning**Say:**

Over the next four sessions we're going to trace the story of the Holy Spirit throughout the Bible. As we do that, we'll focus on a simple question: **What happens when the Holy Spirit shows up?**

To begin, we need to go right back to the start of the story. The Bible opens with a picture of the world at the very start of creation.

Read:

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

– (Genesis 1:1–2)

Ask:

What do you notice about how the world is described at this point?

Say:

The world is described as formless and empty. There is darkness, and nothing has taken shape yet.

Ask:

What is the Spirit doing in this verse?

Say:

The Spirit is described as hovering over the waters. There is a sense of movement, of presence,

of something about to happen ... He is there before anything else takes shape, and when he is present, things do not stay the same.

As the story unfolds throughout the Old Testament, there are moments where his presence is described more clearly and we begin to see what changes when the Spirit is at work!

The Moments

Leader's notes:

Divide the group into pairs or small teams.

Give each group one or more of the following passages:

- Exodus 31: 1-5 (Bezalel)
- Judges 6:33-35 (Gideon)
- Judges 14:5-6 (Samson)
- 1 Samuel 16:12-13 (David)

Say:

As you read the passage, don't worry about understanding every detail. Just focus on what happens in the moment when the Holy Spirit is mentioned.

Leader's notes:

Give the group time to read the passage and consider the following questions:

- What is happening in this moment?
- What changes when the Spirit is there?
- What seems different because of his presence?

Bring the group back together to share what they have discovered.

You can use the following information to aid discussion with your group.

Exodus 31: 1-5 (Bezalel)

God chooses Bezalel and fills him with his Spirit, giving him skill, creativity and understanding to carry out the artistic work needed for the tabernacle (the 'tent of meeting'). The Spirit's presence is linked to ability and craftsmanship.

Judges 6:33-35 (Gideon)

As enemy armies gather against Israel, the Spirit comes on Gideon and he calls people together to respond. The Spirit's presence leads to action and leadership in a moment of need.

Judges 14:5-6 (Samson)

When Samson is confronted by a lion, the Spirit comes powerfully upon him and he is given the strength to overcome it. The Spirit's presence is linked to sudden strength in a specific moment.

1 Samuel 16:12-13 (David)

When David is chosen and anointed as king, the Spirit comes upon him from that day forward. The Spirit's presence marks him out and sets him apart for God's purpose.

Say:

In each of these passages, the Spirit comes upon a particular person. It is not everyone, and it is not all the time, but there are points in the story where his presence is clearly described. People are given what they need for that situation, whether that is skill, strength or a sense of calling. When the Spirit shows up, something changes.

The Tension

However, as we continue through the story, we begin to notice that the Spirit does not always respond in the way we expect him to.

Read:

¹⁴ Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him.

– (1 Samuel 16:14)

Ask:

How is this different from what we have seen so far?

Say:

Up to this point, we have noticed what happens when the Spirit comes on someone. Here, we are told that the Spirit has departed.

Ask:

What does this tell us about the Spirit in the Old Testament?

Say:

In the story of the Old Testament, the presence of the Holy Spirit is not constant or guaranteed. The Spirit comes, but he does not always remain. This helps us to understand something else that we see in the story. Here's what David writes in the Psalms.

Read:

**¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.**

– (Psalm 51:11)

Ask:

- What do you notice about David's prayer?
- Why do you think he says this?

The Promise

Say:

Having seen what happened to Saul, David must have realised that the presence of the Holy Spirit was not guaranteed. He noticed that the Spirit comes, but he does not always remain. As we move along in the story of the Spirit, we begin to hear promises of how this will change in the future.

Read:

²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

– (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

Ask:

What appears different about the presence of the Holy Spirit compared to what we have seen so far?

Say:

Instead of the Spirit coming upon someone for a particular moment, this is a promise that the Spirit will be placed within God's people. It suggests that in the future, the presence of the Holy Spirit will no longer be temporary or uncertain. God speaks through the prophet Joel to take this promise one step further.

Read:

**²⁸ 'And afterwards,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions.**

– (Joel 2:28)

Ask:

- Who is this promise for?
- How might this change the way people experience the Holy Spirit?

Say:

This is a shift in the story. Up to this point, the Spirit has come upon particular people, in particular moments, for particular purposes, yet this promise speaks of something different. The Spirit will not only come upon people but will be within them, and this is not for a few individuals but for *all* people.

This goes beyond anything we have seen so far. As the Old Testament story draws to a close, it leaves us asking what it would look like for this promise to become reality, and what it would mean if the Spirit did not just come for a moment, but remained within each one of us.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

What questions does this raise for you about the Spirit and how he is at work?

 **Sound Check****Say:**

In Amplify, we traced the story of the Holy Spirit through the Old Testament and noticed how his presence is described at different points in the story. In Sound Check, we're going to pull that together and map out what we've seen.

Leader's notes:

Divide the young people into groups and give them a large sheet of paper and some pens.

Ask them to divide the page into four sections.

- The Beginning
- The Moments
- The Tension
- The Promise

In each section, ask the group to summarise what that part of the story shows about the Spirit and how he is at work. Encourage them to use short phrases or images to describe what is happening in each part of the story.

If needed, prompt their thinking by asking:

- What is happening in this part of the story?
- How is the Spirit described?
- What changes from one section to the next?

Bring the group back together to share their summaries of the Holy Spirit.

Say:

As we've listened to each other, a clear picture begins to emerge. Right at the start of creation, the Spirit is present and life begins. As the story unfolds there are moments where he comes upon particular people for specific tasks, and in those moments something changes.

Over time, we begin to notice that his presence is not experienced in the same way in every situation, which creates a tension in the story. Alongside that, there is a growing sense that

something is going to change and that the way people experience the Spirit will not always be the same.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

As you look at this part of the story, what stands out to you about the way the Spirit is described?

 **Selah****Say:**

We've seen that throughout the Old Testament the Spirit is present and active. He comes, he empowers, he speaks, but he doesn't always remain. He rests on certain people, for certain moments, for specific purposes, and then the moment passes.

Ask:

Think about the story of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. What feels unfinished in the story of the Spirit so far?

What are we still waiting for?

Say:

We're going to listen to a song that picks up on the same image we saw at the beginning of the story – the Spirit moving over the waters. Some of the words in this song look forward to something that hasn't happened yet in the story we've explored so far today. As you listen, stay with what we've seen, and notice what the song is longing for.

Watch:

'Rest On Us' – Marantha! Music (Lyric Video) (4:39)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZASBXVS03IM

 **Coda****Say:**

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always,

brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

- As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?
- What is the one thing you have discovered about the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.

