

Session 10: Repent and Be Baptized

Acts 2:1-41 | 75 to 90 minutes | Young Adult Inductive Study

PART ONE: LEADER PREPARATION GUIDE

SESSION OVERVIEW

Discovery Aim: The group discovers what the Holy Spirit made of the restored man: the coward of the courtyard preaching to thousands in the city that crucified Jesus, seven weeks later and a short walk from the fire. They hear the mechanics of salvation stated by the man who lived them (Acts 2:38), and they discover that Peter's great sermon quotes the very promise he once lived on the water.

Catholic Touchstone: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). The Catechism places this verse at the door of its baptismal teaching (CCC 1226): repentance, baptism, forgiveness, the Spirit, the Church. Salvation is not a private transaction; it lands a person in a body devoted to the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Set the scene's arithmetic before your group so the miracle of the man registers: Pentecost falls fifty days after Passover. Seven weeks ago, in this same city, this man crumbled before a servant girl at a fire a few minutes' walk from where he now stands. The authorities who engineered the crucifixion still hold office; the crowd contains Passover pilgrims who may have shouted in Pilate's courtyard. Into that city, at nine in the morning, Peter stands up "with the eleven" and lifts up his voice. Same man, same city, same danger, opposite direction. The difference is not therapy, self-improvement, or the passage of time: it is the event of that morning: "tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:3-4). Note for your own eyes what image the Spirit chose: fire. Say nothing; if your group has been paying attention for nine weeks, someone may see the arc of fires themselves; if not, Session 12 gathers it.

The sermon itself is the kerygma in its first public form, and its shape is worth showing the group: this Jesus, attested by mighty works, "you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up" (Acts 2:23-24), and therefore "let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (2:36). Peter indicts the crowd to their faces, and the result is not a riot but a piercing: "they were cut to the heart" (2:37). Truth spoken in the Spirit wounds in the way surgery wounds. And their question is the question this entire study has been building toward, the question of every awakened soul in history: "Brethren, what shall we do?"

Peter's answer is the session's summit: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Walk your group through what is in it: repentance (the interior turning); baptism in Jesus' name (not optional, not decorative: "for the forgiveness of your sins"); and the gift of the Spirit (God's own life given). Then the reach: "the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off" (2:39), a horizon that will take even Peter years to see the width of. And then where salvation lands the three thousand: not in a private spiritual experience but in a community: "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (2:42): the Church, with the Eucharist at its heart. The man prescribing all this is prescribing nothing he has not received: he repented in tears, was restored at a fire, and is at this moment filled with the promised Spirit. The Gospel's first preacher is its proof of concept.

One resolution belongs wholly to the group, so guard it: Peter's sermon opens by quoting Joel, and the quotation ends: "And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). Eight sessions ago your group watched a sinking man call on the name of the Lord in three words and get caught. When they read 2:21 aloud, ask only: "Where have we watched somebody do exactly this?" and wait. The man who cried "Lord, save me" now stands in front of the world announcing that everyone who cries it will be.

OLD TESTAMENT ROOTS AND FULFILLMENT

Joel 2:28-32 (the live discovery text; do not preview it). Peter's own chosen text: the Spirit poured out on all flesh, sons and daughters prophesying, and the promise of 2:32. The group reads Joel whole and finds what Peter claims is happening in front of the crowd, and what the promise at the end is.

Ezekiel 36:26-27. "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you... and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." The interior transplant Pentecost performs; supply it in the answer to Question 1 if useful.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Cyril of Jerusalem | *Catechetical Lectures, Lecture 17 (on the Holy Spirit)*

Catechizing candidates for baptism beside the very places these events happened, St. Cyril points to Peter as the Spirit's exhibit: the one who had denied with oaths before a little maid now, clothed with power from on high, catches three thousand souls in a single cast of the net. For Cyril the transformation is the argument: no natural cause turns that man into this man in fifty days; the Spirit who descended in fire is known by what He made of the fisherman.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Irenaeus of Lyons | *Against Heresies, Book III, Chapter 12*

Defending the faith against those who claimed a secret gospel behind the public one, St. Irenaeus leans his whole weight on Peter's Pentecost preaching: this is the apostolic proclamation, delivered

in public, in Jerusalem, by eyewitnesses filled with the Spirit, announcing the crucified and risen Jesus as Lord and Christ. What the Church hands on, Irenaeus insists, is nothing other than what Peter stood up and said: the kerygma is not esoteric; it was shouted in the street to three thousand people at nine in the morning.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose of Milan / *On the Mysteries*

Unfolding the sacraments to the newly baptized, St. Ambrose insists on what the water, joined to the Spirit and the word, actually does: it is not a symbol of a change accomplished elsewhere but the working of God, in which sin is truly forgiven, the old man buried, and the Spirit given, just as Peter promised the crowds. What you saw with your eyes was water, he tells the neophytes; what was accomplished in you was the power of God.

CATECHISM CONNECTION

- **CCC 1226:** From the day of Pentecost the Church has celebrated and administered baptism; the Catechism quotes Acts 2:38 and 2:41 directly as the door of its teaching on the sacrament.
- **CCC 731-732:** On Pentecost the Holy Trinity is fully revealed and the Kingdom announced by Christ is opened; the Spirit is poured out and the Church is manifested to the world.
- **CCC 1076:** The Church was made manifest to the world on the day of Pentecost by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; from Pentecost onward Christ acts through the sacraments in what the tradition calls the sacramental economy.
- CCC 1329, 1342: The Church has always recognized the breaking of bread as the Eucharist and has been faithful to the Lord's command from the beginning.

THE WAY OF SALVATION (STUDY STRAND, LEADER ONLY)

MOVEMENT 10 OF THE KERYGMA: NEW BIRTH, THE SPIRIT, BAPTISM, THE CHURCH

Tonight the strand surfaces in the text itself: Acts 2:38 IS the kerygma's call, spoken by our man. Supporting didactic texts: Titus 3:5 (the washing of regeneration, planted in Session 6); Ezekiel 36:26-27. Two resolutions tonight: Acts 2:21 resolves Session 2 (the group must find it; see Question 3), and the tongues of fire quietly complete Zechariah's refining arc (courtyard fire, shore fire, Spirit fire): if no one sees the fires yet, hold it; Session 12 gathers the thread explicitly. One plant remains: Peter will write "Baptism... now saves you" (1 Peter 3:21) with his own pen; it resolves in Session 12. Do not teach this strand aloud.

THREAD WATCH (LEADER ONLY, NEVER REVEAL)

- **Acts 2:21 belongs to the group.** The Joel quotation's last line is the resolution of “Lord, save me.” Ask; wait; let them erupt. Do not take it from them.
- **The third fire.** Tongues as of fire. If someone traces courtyard, shore, Pentecost, celebrate hugely; otherwise, silence until Session 12.
- **Strengthen your brethren, underway.** Luke 22:32's commission is visibly operating: “Peter, standing with the eleven”: he stands, and they stand with him. Track silently.
- **“All that are far off” (2:39).** A horizon wider than Peter yet knows; it becomes Session 11's Cornelius. Say nothing.
- **Sealed guesses are done; surrender prayers are live.** A quiet word at dismissal: “Keep praying your prayer from last week.”

SESSION GOALS

1. The group measures the transformation by the arithmetic: seven weeks, same city, same danger, opposite direction, and names its cause: the Holy Spirit, not self-improvement.
2. The group discovers Joel 2 and, on their own, connects Acts 2:21 to “Lord, save me.”
3. The group can state the shape of the kerygma from Peter's sermon: you crucified him; God raised him; He is Lord and Christ; repent and be baptized.
4. The group walks through Acts 2:38 phrase by phrase and states where salvation lands a person: the community of 2:42 with the Eucharist at its heart.
5. Distribute Take-Home 10.

TIME NOTE

Core session runs about 80 minutes; the readings are long, so assign strong readers in advance and read Acts 2:14-36 in the selective chunks marked. If long: cut the second Dig Deeper and one Win question. **Do not cut** the Joel discovery or Question 5.

PART TWO: DISCUSSION GUIDE

OPENING PRAYER

Come, Holy Spirit. You turned a courtyard coward into the preacher of Pentecost, and you have not weakened since. Fill this room as you filled that one. Cut us to the heart with the truth about Jesus, put His answer in our mouths, and make of us what you made of the fisherman: witnesses. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

WIN: OPENING QUESTIONS

Open questions; every answer is welcome.

W1. Have you ever seen a person change so much that old acquaintances did not recognize who they had become? What did people credit for it?

W2. What is the boldest thing you have ever done, and where did the boldness come from in the moment?

BUILD: INTO THE TEXT

READ ALOUD: Acts 2:1-14 (through “lifted up his voice”)

1. Do the arithmetic out loud before anything else. Pentecost is fifty days after Passover. Seven weeks ago, in this same city, a few minutes' walk from this spot, this man crumbled before a servant girl. The men who crucified Jesus still hold office; the crowd includes Passover pilgrims. And “Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice.” What changed this man, and what did NOT change him? Rule things out.

ANSWER (SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION)

Rule out the usual suspects. Time did not do it: fifty days does not rebuild a man. Therapy, resolve, and self-improvement did not do it: Peter's resolve was precisely what failed at the fire, and his restoration (last week) healed him but notice: even after the shore, he waited in the upper room; he did not preach until this morning. What changed him arrived at nine o'clock: “tongues as of fire... and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” The transformation is the Spirit's signature, and the early Church treated it as an argument in itself (St. Cyril of Jerusalem points at Peter and says: no natural cause turns that man into this man). And what did NOT change: his name, his history, his voice, his role: grace does not replace Peter with someone else; it makes Peter finally, fully himself, the rock the name promised. God had a new heart to give (Ezekiel 36:26-27), not a new man to substitute.

2. Peter's first move is to open the Scriptures: “this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.”

Live discovery: say: “Read Joel 2:28-32 in pairs, the whole oracle Peter reaches for. What does Joel promise? Who is included? And what is the very last line of the promise?” Let pairs report before the answer box, and have someone read the last line aloud twice.

ANSWER (SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION)

Joel promises the Spirit poured out on ALL flesh: sons and daughters, old and young, even servants, prophecy and dreams and visions: God's own life, democratized beyond every boundary Israel knew. Peter's claim is staggering in its plainness: THIS, this morning, this noise, these people, is

THAT. The last day's promise has begun. And the oracle's final line, which Peter quotes as the hinge of his sermon: "And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). Hold that line; the next question is about it.

3. Read Acts 2:21 aloud once more: "And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Now think back across this whole study. Where have we watched somebody do exactly this: call on the name of the Lord and be saved, in the most literal way imaginable?

ANSWER (SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION)

Wait for it; do not rescue them quickly. The answer is Session 2, on the water, in three words: "Lord, save me," and the hand that immediately caught him. The man preaching this verse to the world is the man who lived it first: he sank, he called on the name, and he was caught, and now he stands in front of thousands announcing that what happened to him is on offer to everyone: whoever calls will be saved. This is why his preaching lands: the Gospel's first preacher is its proof of concept. He is not commending a theory; he is describing his own rescue and holding out the same hand. The group should feel the arc snap closed: the three-word prayer has become the first sermon's promise to the world.

READ ALOUD: Acts 2:22-24, 32-37

4. Look at the sermon's spine: "this Jesus... you crucified and killed... But God raised him up"; "God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." Peter indicts the crowd to their faces, in their city, and instead of a riot, "they were cut to the heart." Why does the accusation heal instead of enrage, and what is the crowd's question when it lands?

ANSWER (SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION)

Because it is the truth, spoken by the Spirit, aimed not at humiliation but at rescue, and because the accusation comes bundled with the remedy: the One you crucified, God raised, and He is Lord: which means the worst thing you ever did has been overruled by God and turned into the hinge of your salvation. Truth in the Spirit wounds the way surgery wounds: it cuts to heal. Notice also who is preaching: a man with his own betrayal seven weeks old. There is no contempt in this sermon; the preacher knows the courtyard from the inside, and mercy received has made him fearless and gentle at once. And the crowd's question is the one this entire study has been building toward, the question of every pierced heart in history: "Brethren, what shall we do?" When that question is asked sincerely, the Gospel is one verse from landing.

READ ALOUD: Acts 2:38-42

5. Here is the answer, from the mouth of the man who lived every word of it: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Take it apart phrase by phrase: what is

each element, and, knowing Peter's story as you now do, where have we watched him live what he prescribes?

ANSWER (SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION)

Repent: the interior turning, godly grief aimed at God: Peter learned it weeping in the dark and had it completed by three questions at a fire. Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins: not a symbol of forgiveness granted elsewhere but the appointed washing in which it is given (the Catechism opens its baptismal teaching with this very verse, CCC 1226): the man prescribing the washing once learned at the basin that being cleansed by Christ is not negotiable: “if I do not wash you, you have no part in me” (John 13:8). Not his baptism, but the same lesson: forgiveness comes through Christ's washing, on Christ's terms. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit: the power that turned him inside out this very morning. The repentance and the Spirit he prescribes, he has visibly received before our eyes; the surrender each element demands is written across his own story. Then verse 39: “the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off”: a horizon whose width will surprise even Peter (hold that thought one week). And verse 42, where the three thousand land: “they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Salvation is not a private transaction that leaves you where it found you: it lands you in a body, at a table, under the apostles' teaching, in the prayers: the Church, with the Eucharist at its heart, on day one (the Church has always recognized “the breaking of bread” as the Eucharist: CCC 1329, 1342).

6. Three thousand baptized in a day, and the Church is visibly loose in the world. Step back and take in what God has done through this one surrendered man, and then answer honestly: what is the relationship between Session 9 and Session 10, between the fire on the beach and the fire on their heads? Could Pentecost have happened to the unrestored Peter?

ANSWER (SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION)

Let the group build the answer: the surrender precedes the sending; the healing precedes the harvest. Consider what an unrestored Peter, still owned by the courtyard, still boasting or still hiding, would have made of that morning. In God's providence, it was the man with no boasts left, whose confidence had moved to “you know that I love you,” whom the Spirit could use without the message being about Peter. This is the study's practical word to every person in the room: the surrender you made last week was not the finish line; it was the removal of the cork. What God pours through surrendered people is not proportioned to their strength but to their availability. And a caution against the wrong lesson: the sequence is not “get fully healed, then serve” as an excuse for endless delay; Peter's healing was one week old and he was already in the upper room praying with the brethren. Surrendered, praying, and available: that is the readiness God, in His wisdom, prepared in Peter. The Spirit is sovereign and not bound to our sequence, but in Peter's story, the healing fittingly preceded the harvest.

DIG DEEPER: NINE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

Peter's first recorded joke may be Acts 2:15: these men are not drunk, "since it is only the third hour of the day," nine a.m. The detail also timestamps the Church's birthday: the Spirit did not wait for a solemn midnight; He came at the hour the workday begins, and the Church's first act was public witness during business hours, in the street, in every pilgrim's language.

DIG DEEPER: BABEL REVERSED

At Babel (Genesis 11), proud humanity's speech was confused and the nations scattered. At Pentecost, devout men "from every nation under heaven" each hear the mighty works of God in his own tongue, and by day's end three thousand are gathered into one body. The Fathers loved the symmetry: what pride scattered, the Spirit gathers; the Church is Babel run backward.

SEND: TAKING IT WITH YOU

S1. "Brethren, what shall we do?" is still the live question. If you have never been baptized, or never really repented, or never asked for the Holy Spirit: which phrase of Acts 2:38 has your name on it, and what is the concrete next step this month?

S2. Peter witnessed in his own city, among people who knew his failure. Who in your daily geography has watched your courtyard moments, and what would Spirit-given boldness (not self-generated bravado) look like with them this week? Ask Him for it by name.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

1. Pray daily and explicitly to the Holy Spirit this week: "Come, Holy Spirit; do in me what you did in Peter." If that prayer scares you a little, good; pray it anyway.
2. Take one step on your Acts 2:38 phrase: a conversation about baptism or Confirmation, a real examination and repentance, or (if you are Catholic) Confession and intentional reception of the Eucharist within the 2:42 community this Sunday.
3. Tell one person, this week, one true sentence about what Jesus has done for you in these ten weeks. Not a speech: one sentence, in your own words, during business hours.

CLOSING PRAYER

Come, Holy Spirit: fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Lord Jesus, what you did with one surrendered fisherman fed three thousand in a morning; we hand you again what we surrendered at the shore, and we ask you to send us. Father, let the promise be for us and for our children and for all that are far off, until the whole catch is gathered in. Amen.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of

your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 2:38 (RSV2CE)

Before you dismiss: hand out Take-Home 10; quiet reminder: “Keep praying your surrender prayer.”

PART THREE: LEADER REFERENCE CARD

EVERY PASSAGE IN THIS SESSION

Primary Texts (read in marked chunks)

- Acts 2:1-14, the Spirit, the fire, the crowd, Peter stands
- Acts 2:22-24, 32-37, the kerygma preached; cut to the heart; “what shall we do?”
- Acts 2:38-42, the answer; the three thousand; the four devotions

Live Discovery Text

- Joel 2:28-32, the Spirit on all flesh; “whoever calls on the name of the LORD”

Supporting Texts

- Acts 2:21, the resolution of “Lord, save me” (the group finds it)
- Ezekiel 36:26-27, the new heart and Spirit within
- Genesis 11:1-9, Babel (Dig Deeper)
- Titus 3:5, the washing of regeneration (strand)

Catechism

- CCC 1226, Acts 2:38 at the door of baptism
- CCC 731-732, Pentecost
- CCC 1076, the Church manifested; the sacramental economy
- CCC 1329, 1342, the breaking of bread is the Eucharist from the beginning

Memory Verse

- Acts 2:38