



[Author Note: We played the game Power Poser to kick things off. It is a posing game for the whole crowd, based on the Marvel heroes. You can purchase it here: <https://www.downloadyouthministry.com/p/power-poser/games-3982.html> ]

Welcome to youth group tonight! I am excited to get into it!

Have you seen the movie Captain America, specifically the first one? I love how the movie opens in the modern day as they uncover his frozen shield, and then pretty much the rest of the movie is all his backstory. It's not until the very end of the movie do we get back to modern day again. Lots of movies use these flashbacks in time—maybe it is just a few-minute montage or a lengthy section—but it's always cool to learn the backstory of a certain character or plot.

As we begin this new series, we are going to start with the backstory of the Holy Spirit. Today we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to continue to be the Church of Jesus—the gathered group of people worshipping, learning, and teaching Jesus to the world. In fact, the theme verse for this whole series comes at the very beginning of Acts. Let's look at what Jesus said to His disciples right before He ascended into heaven:

### **Acts 1:8 (NLT)**

***<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."***

We are going to dig deeper into this passage next week, but the truth of this passage tells us that we have received power from God through the Holy Spirit. Did you know that you have God's power if you have a relationship with Him? Maybe that makes you feel like a superhero!

But like every superhero story, there's always an origin story, a backstory, to really understand the power behind the superhero.

The first thing to learn tonight, and this may sound strange, but is that **The Holy Spirit is a person**.

That can sound a little odd, and maybe even slightly unimportant to you, but it is meaningful to understand that the Holy Spirit is not simply some force like in Star Wars or magic power that God grants to certain people. Instead, the Holy Spirit is the 3<sup>rd</sup> *person* of the Trinity, along with God the Father and Jesus the Son.

Let's take a look at the two passages on your outline from the Gospel of John. This is well before the verse in Acts we already read. Jesus was teaching His disciples here:

### **John 14:16-17 (NLT)**

*<sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. <sup>17</sup> He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.*

and then Jesus continued the thought a few chapters later...

### **John 16:7-8 (NLT)**

*<sup>7</sup> But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup> And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment.*

Notice all the times Jesus used personal pronouns like, "he" or "him". Just the other day, I was talking with my younger son about the Holy Spirit and I said "he" and my son quickly asked, "wouldn't you say 'it' instead?" I thought it was very impressive that he noticed that! He must take after his [father/mother]. Ha. But what makes this point important is that we don't mistake the Holy Spirit as an 'it.'

Now when we say **the Holy Spirit is a person**, I don't mean he is walking around in a human form or body. But He does have personality and emotions and the ability to interact with us in the same ways that other people have.

This becomes important for our understanding that the Holy Spirit is not some force we conjure up or mystical power. If that is our belief, and some

churches may drift into this arena, that is where heresy starts to develop. What happens when we do that, in our minds, is we begin to become more powerful than God, controlling this mystical force by the words we say, the actions we take, the songs we sing, even the atmosphere we create.

I ran across this **Babylon Bee** article that I thought I'd share:

<https://babylonbee.com/news/holy-spirit-unable-move-congregation-fog-machine-breaks>

[The spoof article is joking about fog machines and the Holy Spirit.]

Ok just to clarify, this is satire. It's meant to be funny, poking a joke at things that are a little too close to home! But back to reality, the Holy Spirit being a person connects to the Holy Spirit's driving purpose. This is the second point on your outline:

**The Holy Spirit's purpose is to relate the creation with the Creator.**

Let me unpack that a little bit, by looking again at the main passages we already read in John.

**John 14:16-17 (NLT)**

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First off, underline that last phrase, "later will be in you." We will come back to that.

But also, notice the word used here is "**Advocate**". The Greek word here is **Paraclete** I love that word because I always picture a parakeet. [Show a picture of a parakeet to help the students remember the word.] But, expanding on that word, it can be defined as:

**"Comforter, encourager, or counselor"**



**Series Key Verse: Acts 1:8 (NLT)**

*<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

**Message Recap:** The message focuses on the day of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. After a brief reminder of Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit, (John 14 & 16, and Acts 1:8) we looked at the amazing way God used this special celebration to unleash His power.

**ICE BREAKER**

*What is your favorite holiday and why?*

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Have you ever seen a fire spread out of control? Does anyone have a story?
- How do you think the disciples acted before the day of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit came? How did they act after? *It is inferred from the actions of the disciples recorded at the end of the gospels and in Acts 1 that they were somewhat afraid they were going to be hunted down and crucified like Jesus. However, after the Holy Spirit came, they were filled with power and boldness.*
- Take a moment to read **Acts 1:4** and **Acts 1:14**. What did the disciples do as they waited?
- Have you ever felt you had to wait on God? Was it easy or difficult? What made it easy or difficult?
- What did the Holy Spirit empower the disciples to do? How was this part of God’s mission? *Right away the disciples were able to speak in different languages they did not know. At the time of Pentecost, all*

*sorts of people had gathered in Jerusalem. The disciples speaking different languages would help spread the gospel to parts of the country as these people would take the message back with them.*

- Take a moment to read **Acts 1:8** (on the outline page). Jesus gave the disciples an enormous mission before He ascended into heaven. What do you think is Jesus' mission for you?
- How have you been a witness for Jesus? How does it make you feel knowing that the Holy Spirit is with you to accomplish this task?

### **CLOSING THOUGHT**

*Say the following or something like it:*

One of the great challenges of being a witness for Jesus is how we think our friends and other will react to us. But know that the Holy Spirit empowers you when you share Jesus with others. We cannot predict how others will react, but we can be obedient to Jesus.

### **PRAY**

*Make sure to pray at the end. You can open it up for people to share highs and lows if they like before praying.*



**PART 3: The Presence**

**Acts 2:14 (NLT)**

<sup>14</sup>Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, "Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this...[then he preached about Jesus]"

**Acts 2:23-24 (NLT)**

<sup>23</sup>But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him. <sup>24</sup>But God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip.

**Acts 4:12 (NLT)**

<sup>12</sup>There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."

**See Also Acts 5:33-37 (NLT)**

The Holy Spirit gives us \_\_\_\_\_

The Holy Spirit points to \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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