

Acts

Session 1 | Jesus's Mission | Acts 1:1-11

These studies are written for small groups but can be adapted for individual use and are intended to accompany our sermon series.

IN – Who is at the table?

Spend 10 minutes catching up with each other if you haven't done so already, and pray for those who are absent today - why not drop them an encouraging a text message.

UP - Where is Jesus at the table?

Spend 10 minutes in prayer and worship

Scripture – Acts 1:1-11

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1. Why do you think Luke wrote Theophilus a second book (verse 1) – why was it important for him to complete the story? What does it look like therefore for us to live in light of both Luke's books?
2. What do you think the 'instructions through the Holy Spirit' given to the apostles might have been? What would he have repeated from what he'd told them previously, and what new things might he have added? How has Jesus done the equivalent in your life?
3. Why do they need the baptism of the Spirit (verse 4)? Additionally, what would have happened if they didn't wait in one place for this? And what does that about Jesus's call on our lives?
4. Why does Luke talk about Jesus baptising with the Spirit automatically lead to them thinking about the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel? How did their thinking need to change and how does ours sometimes as well?
5. Look through the book of Acts – how is the sequence of 'Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth' (verse 8) fulfilled? How is it unfulfilled, and what does that mean for us?

OUT - Who is missing from the table?

This term we have our mission week. You can find the details of the different events on our website (htl.church/remembering).

Discuss who you are inviting to which event, what you might come to alone, and then spend time in prayer for the mission.

Commit this week to praying for Kingdom conversations, experience show us that when we pray for these conversations, He answers, God is good!

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Session 2 | Gospel Salvation | Acts 2:22-41

These studies are written for small groups but can be adapted for individual use and are intended to accompany our sermon series.

IN – Who is at the table?

Spend 10 minutes: Last week we suggested you committed to praying for Kingdom conversations, how did you get on?

Briefly catch up with each other if you haven't done so already, and pray for those who are absent today - why not drop them an encouraging a text message.

UP - Where is Jesus at the table?

Spend 10 minutes in prayer and worship

Scripture – Acts 2:22-41

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1. Look at verses 22-24, what does Peter think it's important to say about Jesus in his Pentecost sermon, and what doesn't he say? What does this mean for our sharing of the gospel with others?
2. Several times in this sermon, Peter either directly quotes passages from the Old Testament, or alludes to things from it. Why does he do this, and in his context why is it important? What does such an approach look like for us in today's culture and society?
3. Verses 32-33 shows two key experiential evidences for who Jesus is that can be part of our gospel witness. What are they, and what experiences have you had that you can share that look like this?
4. What do you think is going on in the people's hearts as Peter is speaking that leads to them being 'cut to the heart' and asking what they need to do to be saved? (verse 37). What do we therefore need to be praying for God to do in people's lives alongside hearing the gospel message?
5. Looking at what Peter continues to do after his main sermon (verses 38-41), how does this speak to our follow-up to mission? What do we still need to do, or perhaps need to do better?

OUT - Who is missing from the table?

“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” *John 1:39* and “Follow me.” *John 1:43*

Next week is our *Remembering Mission Week* (details of the different events can be found on our website (htl.church/remembering)).

How have you got on with your invitations to an event that’s appropriate for you and your friends? Who is still left to invite, and which events might you come to alone?

Spend some time praying for the mission.



As part of our ongoing equipping for mission you’ll be able to pick a *4 Points* Wristband and leaflet. Each symbol helps us explain the gospel message. Challenge everyone to learn the brief explanation that fits with each symbol. It’s not about being word perfect so no pressure! The aim is to build our confidence in sharing the gospel message.

The first symbol is



GOD LOVES ME!

“The four points is a very simple overview of the Bible, and the first thing you need to know is God loves you very much. His love for you is unlimited and completely unconditional. There is nothing you can do to make God love you any more or any less than he does right now. There is nothing that God wants more than to love and be loved by you.”

Bible: Psalm 100:5, 1 John 3:16

Acts

Session 3 | Revival Community | Acts 2:42-47

These studies are written for small groups but can be adapted for individual use and are intended to accompany our sermon series.

IN – Who is at the table?

Spend 10 minutes briefly catching up with each other if you haven't done so already, and pray for those who are absent today - why not drop them an encouraging a text message.

Share if you have been able to attend any of the events for Mission Week yet. Are you planning to attend any of the remaining ones?

UP - Where is Jesus at the table?

Spend 10 minutes in prayer and worship

Scripture – Acts 2:42-47

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1. What of this description of the post-Pentecost earliest church should be true of our lives, and what was specific to their context, situation and stage in God's mission?
2. What different parts of this community appeal to different people that you know? What does this tell us about what we should look like as a church?
3. What elements of this earliest church's life is most challenging to you to live out or be part of? How about culture around us more generally?
4. Have a quick look at the community described after the Spirit next falls in a powerful way in Acts 4:32-37. What things are especially highlighted as this community grew, and why? How does this speak to our growth as disciples and as a church?
5. Going back to chapter 2, how does verse 46's mixed model of worship location speak to our church life? What's the role of Missional Communities in this verses Cell Group or other models?

OUT - Who is missing from the table?



Spend time praying for the Mission week happening this week.

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The second symbol is



I HAVE SINNED

"Sadly we have been separated from God's love by something the Bible calls sin. Simply put, sin is when we choose to live for ourselves rather than for God. We sin when we ignore God, break his laws and basically do things our way. Sin destroys relationships with friends, with family and with God. The Bible says that sin ultimately brings death."

Bible: Isaiah 59:2, James 1:15

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Session 4 | Missional Prayer| Acts 4:23-31

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IN – Who is at the table?

Spend 10 minutes catching up with each other if you haven't done so already, and pray for those who are absent today - why not drop them an encouraging a text message.

UP - Where is Jesus at the table?

Spend 10 minutes in prayer and worship

Scripture – Acts 4:23-31

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1. What causes the community to react to Peter and John's imprisonment, interrogation and release in prayer (verse 23)? How does this challenge our prayer life as individuals and as a church?
2. Do you think the prayer that's recorded in verses 24-29 was prayed by just one person, a chain of people, or is it a summary of the things that were prayed? Why does it not matter, and what does this mean for our corporate prayer life as a church?
3. In their prayer, how do they relate what's happening to Old Testament scripture, and why is that important for them to do? Does God need reminding of Scripture, or is there something else going on – and how does this speak to how we can use Scripture in our prayer lives?
4. The community's end prayer request (verse 30), is relatively short compared to everything else they pray - why? What does relate to in Jesus's teaching on prayer, and how does this speak to the shape of our own prayers?
5. What don't they ask for in verse 30 – and what is surprising about that? How does this speak to our priorities compared to theirs?
6. Why do you think God physically shook the building where they prayed (verse 31)? Was this normal in their experience do you think, and what are we to expect in responses to our prayers?

OUT - Who is missing from the table?



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The third symbol is



JESUS DIED FOR ME

"The third point is probably one of the most well-known facts in the history of humankind but is often misunderstood. The key is to realise that the penalty for sin is death. We've all sinned, and we all deserve to die. But God, who is full of mercy, loved you so much that he sent Jesus to come and die in your place. Jesus died, so that we can have eternal life."

Bible: Romans 6:23, Romans 5:8

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Session 5 | Signs and Wonders | Acts 5:12-16

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IN – Who is at the table?

Spend 10 minutes catching up with each other if you haven't done so already, and pray for those who are absent today - why not drop them an encouraging a text message.

UP - Where is Jesus at the table?

Spend 10 minutes in prayer and worship

Scripture – Acts 5:12-16

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1. Do you think the equivalent of what's going on in verses 12-16 could happen today? If not yes: why? If not completely yes – what elements of it can't and why?
2. Why does what's happening led to more and more people joining the early believers (verse 14)? What do signs and wonders do in people's heart that help belief in Jesus? How does this speak to our evangelism today?
3. How does what's going on in this passage mirror what Jesus did in his ministry, and why? Additionally, what differences are there, and what does this say to us about our discipleship?
4. Why is even Peter's shadow able to bring healing (verse 15)? What's the bigger picture here that makes sense of this, and how is this exciting for us today?
5. How does the fact that 'all of them were healed' (verse 16) challenge us both as a church and individually as disciples? How do we not come under a wrong condemnation or theology in this?

OUT - Who is missing from the table?



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The fourth symbol is



I NEED TO DECIDE TO LIVE FOR GOD

"Not only did Jesus die for our sin, three days later He rose from the dead! Through his death and resurrection, Jesus has now made a way for us to have a relationship with God. All you need to do is accept you have sinned, ask for God's forgiveness and then decide to live the rest of your life only for him. The choice is yours"

Bible: John 14:6, 1 John 1:9

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Session 6 | Facing Persecution | Acts 6:8-15

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IN – Who is at the table?

Spend 10 minutes catching up with each other if you haven't done so already, and pray for those who are absent today - why not drop them an encouraging a text message.

This week, we are looking at the persecution suffered by Jesus' followers. Did you know more than 365 million Christians worldwide face persecution and discrimination for their faith – that's a staggering one in seven believers.

One of our Mission Links is Open Doors. If you are able, pause to watch a short 2-minute film telling of the five top countries on their 'World Watch List'. It can be found on the link below:

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/>

UP - Where is Jesus at the table?

Spend 10 minutes in prayer and worship

Scripture – Acts 6:8-15

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1. Look at verse 8. Up to this point in the book of Acts we have only read of the Apostles performing signs and wonders and working miracles. But Stephen is not unique, as we will see with Philip a few chapters later.

This happened after the laying of hands, a command of scripture that applies to us today. Why is this important and what are the implications?

2. Read verses 9-10. The 'Freedmen' had themselves been freed from slavery, yet they sought to entrap Stephen by arguing with him, which as you've read, they failed to do. But note that Stephen succeeded because they could not stand up to his wisdom or "by the Spirit by whom he spoke".

What do you understand by this and how might you encourage each other to work with the Holy Spirit when confrontation arises, and wisdom is needed? Perhaps you have stories you can share?

3. Look at verses 11-15. We see the distortion of truth and the scheme of the enemy to take Stephen's life. Yet Stephen is described as having a face like the face of an angel.

What challenges are facing the church in the UK now and what challenges are you facing? What do you learn from Stephen's example to strengthen you in your current troubles? Why not lay hands on each other for a fresh filling and empowerment in living out your faith.

OUT - Who is missing from the table?

Imagine someone has asked you what you believe, how would you respond? You could practice the 4point Gospel you've hopefully learnt over the last few weeks. Spend some time praying for your non-Christian friends and acquaintances.

Also spend time praying for persecuted Christians, using the suggestions from the [Open Doors Website](#) to help you.

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Session 7 | Spirit Led Mission | Acts 8:26-40

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IN – Who is at the table?

Spend 10 minutes catching up with each other if you haven't done so already, and pray for those who are absent today - why not drop them an encouraging a text message.

UP - Where is Jesus at the table?

Spend 10 minutes in prayer and worship

Scripture – Acts 8:26-40

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1. Reflect together on the angel of the Lord directing Philip and share your experiences of the Lord directing you in a similar way. What can we learn about guidance from your experiences?
2. Discuss the interplay between the work of the Holy Spirit speaking to Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch reading the book of Isaiah. What encourages and challenges you in this part of the story?
3. We see the importance of knowing scripture and how to explain it. How might we grow in confidence to do this ourselves?
4. This story contains the miracle of Philip being transported in the flesh from one place to another. What a miracle! Acts makes it clear that we are to share the gospel with signs and wonders, but I imagine transportations isn't the top thing we should be aiming for. However, we do need to grow in this area, how might you pursue this?

OUT - Who is missing from the table?

Spend time waiting on the Holy Spirit, seeking a fresh filling and empowerment. Lay hands on anyone who needs healing, this is your place of 'practice' in signs and wonders.

Spend time praying for your non-Christian friends to know Jesus.

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Session 8 | Compelled to Proclaim | Acts 9:26-31

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IN – Who is at the table?

Spend 10 minutes catching up with each other if you haven't done so already, and pray for those who are absent today - why not drop them an encouraging a text message.

Ask the question: How early should you put up your Christmas decorations? You'll see why later!

UP - Where is Jesus at the table?

Spend 10 minutes in prayer and worship

Scripture – Acts 9:26-31

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1. To make sense of this week's passage read Saul's conversion in Acts 9: 1-19a. What encourages you from his conversion?
2. Now read Acts 9:19b-25, notice the words 'at once he began to preach.' So often a new Christian cannot help sharing Jesus with anyone and everyone, it's wonderful isn't it.

Why do many become less likely to do that the longer they walk with Jesus? Why does this happen?
3. Now look back through Acts 9:26-31. Perhaps understandably the Christians in Jerusalem were nervous about Paul and suspicious of him. How are we at welcoming those we don't know and perhaps feel threatened by?
4. Once again, we see the pattern of persecution and increased numbers. What are your reflections on this?

OUT - Who is missing from the table?

In less than four weeks, we will be in the season of Advent so whatever your thoughts were on Christmas decorations this is a reminder to begin thinking about who you will be inviting to our different events.

They have been designed for you to invite many different people according to where they are at in their faith journey and what might appeal to them. Spend time chatting about this and praying for all the preparations.

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Session 9 | Breaking Barriers | Acts 11:1-18

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IN – Who is at the table?

Spend 10 minutes catching up with each other if you haven't done so already, and pray for those who are absent today - why not drop them an encouraging a text message.

UP - Where is Jesus at the table?

Spend 10 minutes in prayer and worship

Scripture – Acts 11:1-18

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1. How does Peter respond to criticism (verse 2)? How do we respond to criticism?
2. Have you ever had a vision from God (verse 5) or a dream you thought was from God? Was it easy to understand and how did you respond to it?
3. Discuss what you think is happening in this passage in relation to food laws and Gentiles being included in God's salvation plan.
4. God is surprising people by the way he is working in this passage, do we leave space to be surprised by God or do we limit him to ways we think he will work? Have you ever been surprised by how God has worked or acted?
5. This passage is essentially Peter telling a story, or sharing a testimony. How do those listening respond (verse 18)? What does this tell us about how we should respond to stories of God at work?

OUT - Who is missing from the table?

Have a look at the Christmas events and services coming up at HTL. Who do you know that you could be praying for in preparation for inviting them to one of these events or services? Talk amongst yourselves and pray for opportunities over the coming weeks.

Acts

Session 10 | Sent on Mission | Acts 13:1-3

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IN – Who is at the table?

Spend 10 minutes catching up with each other if you haven't done so already, and pray for those who are absent today - why not drop them an encouraging a text message.

UP - Where is Jesus at the table?

Spend 10 minutes in prayer and worship

Scripture – Acts 13:1-3

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1. What do you understand as the role of prophets and teachers in the church? Does every Christian have a responsibility to be involved with prophecy and teaching?
2. The voice of the Holy Spirit was heard in worshipping and fasting. Share any experiences you have of “hearing” the Holy Spirit communicate with you and what the context for these experiences were. Were you actively seeking the voice of God? How did you hear? How did you respond?
3. Why do you think there was prayer and fasting before Barnabus and Saul were sent out?
4. Talk about your experiences of fasting. *Important: please note that some people shouldn't fast for medical reasons.* Some questions might include... Have you ever fasted? If “yes”, what was the reason behind you fasting and how did it go? Did you feel any difference in your relationship with God? Were you praying for something in particular? If you have never fasted before, how could you give it a go? N.B. You can look on the HTL website for more information about fasting, under the “Resources” section

OUT - Who is missing from the table?

Look at the Christmas events and services coming up at HTL. Have you invited anyone yet? Who could you invite? Share any stories or invitation (whether people have accepted invites or not) and pray for those who you can invite. If you don't know anyone who you could invite, pray that you would meet someone you can invite!

Acts

Session 11 | Connecting with Other Faiths | Acts 17:16-32

These studies are written for small groups but can be adapted for individual use and are intended to accompany our sermon series.

IN – Who is at the table?

Spend 10 minutes catching up with each other if you haven't done so already, and pray for those who are absent today - why not drop them an encouraging a text message.

UP - Where is Jesus at the table?

Spend 10 minutes in prayer and worship

Scripture – Acts 17:16-32

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1. Paul describes Athens as a city full of idols. Is Leicester also a city full of idols? (verse 16)
2. Talk about your experience of living in a city where many different faiths are represented. How does that make you feel?
3. Talk about your experience of talking with people of a different faith to Christianity. Has conversation been heated, healthy, constructive, interesting or confrontational? How have you found is a good way to talk about the Christian faith with those who hold to another faith?
4. Jesus is the known God. He is the revelation of God and he is not unknown (verse 23). How does talking about Jesus impact the conversation with those of other faiths?
5. What do you think are the most significant and profound things about the Christian faith? If you have some understanding of other faiths, how do these things relate to the other faiths?

OUT - Who is missing from the table?

Look at the Christmas events and services coming up at HTL. Have you invited anyone yet? Who could you invite? Share any stories or invitation (whether people have accepted invites or not) and pray for those who you can invite. If you don't know anyone who you could invite, pray that you would meet someone you can invite!