

STUDENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

EMPOWERED – Session 8

Empowered to Welcome

Acts 10:1–48

SESSION FOCUS

The Holy Spirit continually stretches the Church beyond fear, assumptions, inherited boundaries, and limited understandings of belonging.

Acts 10 tells the story of Peter and Cornelius and reveals how the Holy Spirit challenges assumptions while forming humility, compassion, discernment, and openness.

This session explores what it means to become a Spirit-shaped community marked by both truth and welcome.

The goal is not ideological debate.

The goal is Spirit-led humility, attentiveness, and faithful presence.

OPENING REFLECTION

Take a few quiet moments before beginning.

- Why do people naturally create categories of “insiders” and “outsiders”?
- What assumptions shape how people view others?
- Why are unfamiliar people or experiences sometimes uncomfortable?
- What helps people feel genuinely welcomed?

Personal Notes:

SCRIPTURE READING

Read Acts 10:1–48 slowly.

As you read, notice:

- Peter’s assumptions
 - how the Holy Spirit moves
 - and how the story changes throughout the passage.
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KEY IDEA

The Holy Spirit continually stretches believers beyond fear, superiority, assumptions, and limited understandings of belonging.

PART 1: THE HOLY SPIRIT CHALLENGES ASSUMPTIONS

(Acts 10:9–16)

Peter's understanding is challenged through his encounter with God.

Spiritual growth often requires humility and teachability.

Reflection Questions

1. Why is it difficult to let go of assumptions?
2. What helps people remain teachable?
3. How can fear quietly shape the way believers see others?

Personal Notes:

PART 2: GOD IS ALREADY AT WORK

(Acts 10:24–33)

Cornelius was already seeking God before Peter arrived.

The Holy Spirit often moves ahead of us.

Reflection Questions

4. Where have you seen evidence that God was already at work before you realized it?
5. Why do Christians sometimes struggle to recognize God's work in unfamiliar places?
6. How does humility affect spiritual discernment?

Personal Notes:

PART 3: THE HOLY SPIRIT PRODUCES HUMILITY

(Acts 10:34–43)

Peter recognizes that God shows no favoritism.

Grace removes superiority and self-righteousness.

Reflection Questions

7. What is the difference between conviction and superiority?
8. How does remembering our own need for grace affect the way we treat others?
9. Why is humility essential in Spirit-led living?

Personal Notes:

PART 4: THE HOLY SPIRIT EXPANDS THE CHURCH

(Acts 10:44–48)

The Holy Spirit continually moves the Church outward toward people.

Fear pushes inward.

The Spirit moves outward.

Reflection Questions

10. Why does fear often make communities more closed?
11. What does healthy Christian welcome look like?
12. How can believers remain both discerning and compassionate?

Personal Notes:

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Take a few quiet moments to reflect honestly.

- Where might the Holy Spirit be inviting you toward greater humility or openness?
- How do fear or assumptions shape your relationships?
- What would Spirit-led compassion look like in your everyday life?

Personal Response:

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray for:

- humility
- wisdom
- compassion
- discernment

- and openness to the Holy Spirit.
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OPTIONAL PRACTICE FOR THE WEEK

This week:

- Re-read Acts 10:1–48 daily
- Practice intentional listening in conversations
- Reflect on quick assumptions or judgments
- Pray:

“Holy Spirit, help me become more attentive to where You are already at work.”

FINAL THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit continually stretches the Church toward greater humility, compassion, and openness. Spirit-led living moves believers outward toward people with grace and discernment.

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STUDENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

EMPOWERED – Session 9

Empowered for the Mission

Acts 13:1–12

SESSION FOCUS

The Holy Spirit does not simply comfort the Church inwardly.

The Spirit sends believers outward into the ongoing mission of Jesus.

Acts 13 reveals a church praying, worshiping, listening, and responding to the Spirit’s leading. The believers at Antioch become a community shaped not by self-preservation, but by participation in God’s work in the world.

This session explores what it means to live spiritually available, attentive, and responsive to the Holy Spirit.

Mission is not merely religious activity.

It is participation in what God is already doing.

OPENING REFLECTION

Take a few quiet moments before beginning.

- What comes to mind when you hear the word “mission”?
- Why do many Christians feel intimidated by mission or evangelism?
- What keeps people spiritually passive or inward-focused?
- What kinds of distractions make attentiveness difficult?

Personal Notes:

SCRIPTURE READING

Read Acts 13:1–12 slowly.

As you read, notice:

- how the believers listen
 - how the Spirit speaks
 - and how the church responds.
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KEY IDEA

The Holy Spirit sends ordinary believers outward into the mission of Jesus through attentiveness, willingness, and faithful participation.

PART 1: THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAKS IN WORSHIP & PRAYER

(Acts 13:1–3)

The believers create space to worship, fast, pray, and listen.

Discernment grows through attentiveness.

Reflection Questions

1. Why is slowing down difficult for many people?
2. What practices help believers become more attentive to God?
3. How does community help with discernment?

Personal Notes:

PART 2: THE HOLY SPIRIT SENDS ORDINARY PEOPLE

(Acts 13:2–3)

Barnabas and Saul were ordinary believers shaped through community and faithfulness.

Mission belongs to the whole Church.

Reflection Questions

4. Why do people often feel spiritually unqualified?
5. What does mission look like in everyday life?
6. How does the Holy Spirit work through ordinary people?

Personal Notes:

PART 3: THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES DISCERNMENT & COURAGE

(Acts 13:6–12)

Mission often includes difficulty, resistance, or uncertainty.

The Holy Spirit produces wisdom and steadiness.

Reflection Questions

7. Why is discernment important in spiritual life?
8. What fears most often prevent faithful action?
9. How does prayer shape courage and steadiness?

Personal Notes:

PART 4: THE HOLY SPIRIT KEEPS THE CHURCH MOVING OUTWARD

(Acts 13:1–12)

Fear pushes communities inward.

The Holy Spirit continually moves believers outward.

Reflection Questions

10. What causes churches to become inward-focused?
11. How can believers remain outward-looking in everyday life?

12. Where might God already be inviting you into participation?

Personal Notes:

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Take a few quiet moments to reflect honestly.

- Where might the Holy Spirit be inviting you toward greater attentiveness or availability?
- What fears or distractions most affect spiritual responsiveness?
- What would Spirit-led participation look like in your everyday life?

Personal Response:

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray for:

- attentiveness
 - courage
 - discernment
 - compassion
 - and willingness to participate in God's mission.
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OPTIONAL PRACTICE FOR THE WEEK

This week:

- Re-read Acts 13:1–12 daily
- Begin each day praying:

“Holy Spirit, help me notice where You are already at work today.”

- Practice one intentional act of encouragement or compassion
 - Reflect on where fear or distraction affects attentiveness
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FINAL THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit sends ordinary believers into the ongoing mission of Jesus.

Mission begins not with pressure or performance, but with attentiveness and willingness to participate in the work God is already doing.

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