

FACILITATOR / TEACHER GUIDE

EMPOWERED

Session 2 – What Kind of Church Are We Becoming?

Acts 2:42–47

SESSION PURPOSE

This session explores how the Holy Spirit forms believers not only individually, but communally. Participants will examine the kind of Church that emerged after Pentecost and how the Holy Spirit shaped believers into a worshiping, generous, prayerful, and deeply connected community.

The goal of this session is not nostalgia for the early Church or unrealistic idealism. Instead, participants should begin asking:

- What kind of people is the Holy Spirit forming us into?
- What does Spirit-shaped community look like today?
- How does the Holy Spirit move believers beyond isolated faith into shared spiritual life?

This session also intentionally challenges modern individualism and consumer-driven approaches to church by re-centering the Church as a Spirit-formed people rather than merely a religious gathering or institution.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- Recognize that the Holy Spirit forms believers into community
 - Understand the importance of spiritual practices in Christian formation
 - Reflect on the difference between attending church and belonging to the Church
 - Identify characteristics of Spirit-shaped community in Acts 2
 - Explore how isolation and individualism affect spiritual life today
 - Understand that spiritual growth happens both personally and communally
-

KEY PASSAGES

Primary Passage:

- Acts 2:42–47

Supporting Passages:

- Hebrews 10:24–25
 - Romans 12:9–16
 - Galatians 6:2
 - Colossians 3:16
 - John 13:34–35
 - Ephesians 4:1–6
-

SESSION LENGTH

60–75 minutes

(Adaptable depending on group size and depth of discussion.)

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bible (print or digital)
 - Participant Study Guide
 - Pen or journal
 - Comfortable discussion setting
 - Optional whiteboard or notepad for themes
-

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Before leading this session:

- Read Acts 2:42–47 slowly several times
- Reflect honestly on your own experiences of church community
- Consider both the beauty and the challenges of Christian community
- Be prepared for participants who:
 - carry church hurt
 - feel isolated
 - distrust organized religion
 - or struggle with vulnerability and belonging

Important:

Do not romanticize the early Church as flawless.

Acts itself later describes conflict, disagreement, and struggle.

The emphasis of this session is:

- the direction of Spirit-formed community,
not
- unrealistic perfection.

The goal is to help participants imagine what healthier, Spirit-dependent Christian community can look like.

SESSION FLOW (60–75 MINUTES)

1. WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Welcome participants and briefly reconnect to Session 1.

Suggested transition:

“Last week we explored who the Holy Spirit is and why believers need the Spirit. This week we begin exploring what happens when the Holy Spirit forms people together into community.”

Open with prayer.

Suggested prayer focus:

- openness
- humility
- healing
- community
- and willingness to grow together.

2. OPENING REFLECTION: EXPERIENCES OF COMMUNITY (10 MINUTES)

Invite participants into gentle reflection.

Discussion prompts:

- When have you experienced genuine Christian community?
- What makes people feel safe, connected, and spiritually supported?

- What makes community difficult?
- Why do so many people today struggle with loneliness or disconnection?

Facilitator Guidance:

This conversation may become emotional for some participants.

Allow honesty without trying to “fix” people’s experiences too quickly.

Important:

The goal is not to pressure participants into vulnerability, but to normalize honest reflection.

3. READING THE PRIMARY PASSAGE (5 MINUTES)

Read Acts 2:42–47 aloud slowly together.

Encourage participants to listen for:

- repeated themes
- emotional tone
- patterns of life
- and what stands out most strongly.

Optional Reflection Question:

“What words or phrases immediately stand out to you in this passage?”

4. MOVEMENT 1 – THE HOLY SPIRIT FORMS DEVOTED PEOPLE (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The Holy Spirit forms people whose lives become intentionally shaped around God.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 2:42
- Colossians 3:16

Key Truths:

- Spiritual growth requires intentional formation
- The early believers devoted themselves to:
 - teaching
 - fellowship
 - prayer

- and worship
- Spiritual maturity does not happen accidentally

Key Emphasis:

The Holy Spirit does not merely create emotional moments.

The Spirit forms habits and rhythms that shape believers over time.

Facilitator Insight:

Many modern Christians want inspiration without formation.

This session helps participants recognize that spiritual growth develops through repeated participation in practices that keep believers attentive to God.

Discussion Questions:

- What currently shapes most people spiritually today?
- Why is consistency often difficult in spiritual life?
- What spiritual practices help people remain grounded?

5. MOVEMENT 2 – THE HOLY SPIRIT FORMS GENUINE COMMUNITY (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The Holy Spirit forms believers into relationships marked by belonging, honesty, and mutual care.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 2:44–46
- Romans 12:9–16
- Galatians 6:2

Key Truths:

- Christianity was never intended to be lived alone
- Isolation weakens spiritual life
- The Spirit forms communities where people support and strengthen one another

Facilitator Insight:

Be sensitive here.

Some participants may deeply long for community while also fearing vulnerability because of past wounds or disappointment.

Avoid clichés like:

“The Church is perfect if people would just...”

Instead, acknowledge honestly:

- community is difficult,
- relationships are imperfect,
- but the Holy Spirit still forms believers together.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is vulnerability often difficult in church settings?
 - What helps people feel safe enough to be honest?
 - How does isolation affect spiritual growth?
-

6. MOVEMENT 3 – THE HOLY SPIRIT PRODUCES GENEROSITY (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The Holy Spirit reshapes how believers view money, possessions, and responsibility toward others.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 2:44–45
- 2 Corinthians 9:6–8

Key Truths:

- Generosity grows from trust in God
- Spirit-led living loosens fear and self-protection
- Generosity is not merely financial; it includes time, attention, encouragement, and compassion

Facilitator Guidance:

Avoid reducing this section to fundraising or obligation.

The deeper issue is transformation of priorities and trust.

Discussion Questions:

- Why are generosity and trust connected?
 - What fears often prevent people from living open-handedly?
 - In what ways can generosity become part of spiritual formation?
-

7. MOVEMENT 4 – THE HOLY SPIRIT CREATES JOYFUL WITNESS (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The life of the early Church became a visible witness to the world around them.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 2:46–47
- John 13:34–35

Key Truths:

- The witness of the Church is not only preaching
- People notice how Christians treat one another
- Joy, love, and integrity become part of Christian witness

Key Emphasis:

The goal is not image management or performance.

The goal is lives genuinely shaped by the presence of God.

Facilitator Insight:

This section connects strongly to modern disillusionment with Christianity.

Many people reject Christianity not because they reject Jesus,
but because they have encountered:

- hypocrisy
- division
- or lack of visible love within churches.

Discussion Questions:

- What kind of witness does healthy Christian community create?
- How does the way Christians treat one another affect the credibility of the Gospel?
- What characteristics make a church spiritually healthy?

8. SUMMARY & KEY INSIGHT (5 MINUTES)

Key Insight to Emphasize:

The Holy Spirit does not merely form isolated spiritual individuals.

The Spirit forms a people.

Acts 2 presents believers becoming:

- worshiping people
- praying people
- generous people

- truthful people
- and people shaped together by the presence of God.

Key Takeaway:

Christianity was never intended to be lived alone.

Spirit-led living includes participation in healthy spiritual community.

9. FINAL REFLECTION & PRACTICE (5 MINUTES)

Final Reflection Question:

What kind of person is the Holy Spirit shaping you to become within community?

Practice for the Week:

Encourage participants to:

- Read Acts 2:42–47 daily
- Pay attention to moments of connection or isolation
- Intentionally encourage or reconnect with someone this week
- Practice one act of generosity or hospitality

Encourage participants to focus on attentiveness rather than pressure or performance.

CLOSING PRAYER (FACILITATOR-LED)

Pray for:

- healing from isolation
- healthy community
- courage for vulnerability
- wisdom in relationships
- and openness to the Spirit's forming work

Suggested emphasis:

Ask God to continue shaping the group itself into a healthier, Spirit-dependent community.

FACILITATOR REMINDER

Do not allow this session to become:

- merely nostalgic,

- overly institutional,
- or focused on church programs.

The deeper issue is:

“What kind of people is the Holy Spirit forming us into together?”

Create space for:

- honesty
- reflection
- and relational warmth.

Do not pressure participants into vulnerability.

Healthy spiritual community develops gradually through trust, grace, and consistency.

If participants leave:

- more aware of their need for community,
- more thoughtful about spiritual formation,
- and more open to shared life with others,

then the session has succeeded.

Keep the tone:

- grounded
- hopeful
- relational
- and centered on Spirit-dependent living.

© 2026 Sven Verbeet – St. John’s United Church

This material may be shared and used for personal study, small groups, or ministry purposes with attribution. It may not be sold or republished without permission.