

FACILITATOR / TEACHER GUIDE

EMPOWERED

Session 9 – Empowered for the Mission

Acts 13:1–12

SESSION PURPOSE

This session explores how the Holy Spirit sends and empowers believers to participate in the ongoing mission of Jesus. Participants will examine how the church at Antioch listened for the Spirit's leading, responded in obedience, and became a community shaped by outward movement rather than inward preservation.

The goal of this session is not pressure, guilt, or performative activism.

Instead, participants should begin understanding that Spirit-led living naturally moves believers outward:

- toward people,
- toward compassion,
- toward witness,
- and toward participation in the work God is already doing in the world.

This session also helps participants reflect on:

- attentiveness,
- calling,
- availability,
- and the difference between merely attending church and participating in the mission of God.

Acts 13 reminds believers that the Holy Spirit does not simply comfort the Church inwardly.

The Spirit sends the Church outward.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- Understand mission as participation in the work of the Holy Spirit
- Recognize the connection between worship, prayer, and discernment
- Reflect on what it means to live with spiritual availability
- Explore how ordinary believers participate in God's mission

- Understand the role of discernment and courage in Spirit-led living
 - Identify ways fear, comfort, or distraction can hinder attentiveness to God's leading
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KEY PASSAGES

Primary Passage:

- Acts 13:1–12

Supporting Passages:

- Matthew 28:18–20
 - Isaiah 6:8
 - 1 Peter 4:10–11
 - James 1:5
 - Ephesians 6:10–18
 - Romans 10:13–15
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SESSION LENGTH

60–75 minutes

(Adaptable depending on group size and discussion depth.)

MATERIALS NEEDED

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

Before leading this session:

- Read Acts 13:1–12 slowly several times

- Reflect honestly on moments where you sensed God leading you toward action, service, or mission
- Prepare for participants carrying:
 - uncertainty about purpose
 - fear of inadequacy
 - spiritual passivity
 - exhaustion
 - or confusion about what “mission” means

Important:

This session should NOT feel:

- guilt-driven,
- performance-oriented,
- or focused on religious busyness.

The focus is:

- attentiveness,
- availability,
- discernment,
- and faithful participation with the Holy Spirit.

Mission should be framed relationally and spiritually, not merely organizationally.

SESSION FLOW (60–75 MINUTES)

1. WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Welcome participants and reconnect briefly to the previous session.

Suggested transition:

“Last week we explored how the Holy Spirit stretches the Church beyond fear and assumptions. This week we explore how the Holy Spirit sends believers outward into the ongoing mission of Jesus.”

Open with prayer.

Suggested prayer focus:

- attentiveness

- willingness
 - courage
 - discernment
 - and openness to the Holy Spirit.
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2. OPENING REFLECTION: PURPOSE & MISSION (10 MINUTES)

Invite thoughtful discussion.

Discussion prompts:

- What comes to mind when you hear the word “mission”?
- Why do many Christians feel intimidated by the idea of mission or evangelism?
- What keeps people spiritually passive or inward-focused?
- What kinds of things distract believers from participating in God’s work?

Facilitator Guidance:

Keep the conversation calm and reflective rather than programmatic or overly task-oriented.

The goal is helping participants think honestly about:

- spiritual availability,
 - purpose,
 - and participation.
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3. READING THE PRIMARY PASSAGE (5 MINUTES)

Read Acts 13:1–12 aloud slowly together.

Encourage participants to notice:

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

Optional Reflection Prompt:

“What part of this passage stands out most strongly to you?”

4. MOVEMENT 1 – THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAKS IN THE CONTEXT OF WORSHIP & PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The Holy Spirit often speaks when believers slow down enough to listen.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 13:1–3
- Psalm 46:10
- John 10:27

Key Truths:

- The believers were worshiping and fasting together
- Discernment grows through attentiveness and prayer
- The Spirit speaks within community as well as individually

Key Emphasis:

The church at Antioch was not frantic or reactive.

They created space to listen.

Facilitator Insight:

Modern life often trains people toward:

- distraction,
- noise,
- hurry,
- and constant reaction.

Spirit-led living requires intentional attentiveness.

Discussion Questions:

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

5. MOVEMENT 2 – THE HOLY SPIRIT SENDS ORDINARY PEOPLE (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The Holy Spirit empowers ordinary believers for participation in God's mission.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 13:2–3

- Matthew 28:18–20
- 1 Peter 4:10–11

Key Truths:

- Barnabas and Saul were ordinary people shaped through community and formation
- Mission is not limited to pastors or missionaries
- The Holy Spirit works through ordinary faithfulness

Key Emphasis:

Mission is not only:

- preaching,
- traveling,
- or public ministry.

Mission includes:

- compassion,
- hospitality,
- encouragement,
- generosity,
- presence,
- and faithful witness in everyday life.

Facilitator Guidance:

Avoid making participants feel pressured toward dramatic action.

The emphasis is:

- availability,
- attentiveness,
- and faithfulness.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do people often feel unqualified for mission?
 - What does mission look like in everyday life?
 - How does the Holy Spirit work through ordinary people?
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6. MOVEMENT 3 – THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES DISCERNMENT & COURAGE (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The Holy Spirit strengthens believers when opposition or confusion arises.

Read Scripture:

- Acts 13:6–12
- James 1:5
- Ephesians 6:10–18

Key Truths:

- Mission often includes resistance or difficulty
- The Spirit helps believers remain grounded and discerning
- Courage grows through dependence on God

Key Emphasis:

Spirit-led living is not:

- panic,
- aggression,
- or fear-driven reaction.

The Holy Spirit produces:

- wisdom,
- steadiness,
- and faithful courage.

Facilitator Insight:

Many people struggle with:

- fear of conflict,
- fear of rejection,
- or uncertainty about how to engage difficult situations.

Acts presents believers responding prayerfully and dependently rather than reactively.

Discussion Questions:

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

7. MOVEMENT 4 – THE HOLY SPIRIT KEEPS THE CHURCH MOVING OUTWARD (10 MINUTES)

Teaching Focus:

The Holy Spirit continually moves the Church outward toward people.

Read Scripture:

- Isaiah 6:8
- Romans 10:13–15

Key Truths:

- Fear pushes communities inward
- The Holy Spirit continually sends believers outward
- The Church exists not only for itself, but for participation in God’s mission

Key Emphasis:

The goal is not:

- religious activity,
- spiritual performance,
- or institutional preservation.

The goal is participation in the ongoing work of Jesus.

Facilitator Guidance:

This section should feel hopeful and invitational rather than heavy or guilt-driven.

Mission begins with openness and attentiveness.

Discussion Questions:

- What causes churches to become inward-focused?
- How can believers remain outward-looking in everyday life?
- Where might God already be inviting you into participation?

8. SUMMARY & KEY INSIGHT (5 MINUTES)

Key Insight to Emphasize:

The Holy Spirit does not merely form inward spirituality.

The Spirit sends believers outward into the mission of Jesus.

Mission is not about:

- pressure,
- performance,
- or spiritual achievement.

It is participation in what God is already doing.

Key Takeaway:

Spirit-led living means remaining attentive and available to the work of the Holy Spirit in everyday life.

9. FINAL REFLECTION & PRACTICE (5 MINUTES)

Final Reflection Question:

Where might the Holy Spirit be inviting you toward greater attentiveness, availability, or participation?

Practice for the Week:

Encourage participants to:

- 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, compassion, or faithful presence this week
- Reflect on where fear or distraction affects spiritual attentiveness

Encourage attentiveness rather than pressure.

CLOSING PRAYER (FACILITATOR-LED)

Pray for:

- attentiveness
- courage
- discernment
- compassion
- and willingness to participate in God’s mission

Suggested emphasis:

Ask God to help participants remain spiritually available and responsive to the Holy Spirit’s leading.

FACILITATOR REMINDER

Do not allow this session to become:

- guilt-driven,
- overly programmatic,
- or focused on religious busyness.

The goal is helping participants recognize:

- the Holy Spirit sends ordinary believers,
- mission begins with attentiveness,
- and Spirit-led living naturally moves outward toward people.

If participants leave:

- more aware of God's activity,
- more open to participation,
- and more attentive to the Holy Spirit's leading,

then the session has succeeded.

Keep the tone:

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

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