

The Fire Left the Fireplace
South Jersey Small Group Guide

Warm-Up Questions

1. What's one thing you were absolutely convinced you couldn't do — but ended up doing anyway? How did it go?
2. Growing up, what was your impression of the Holy Spirit? Where did that impression come from?

Key Passage: Acts 2:1-13, 36-39

Recap

This week we looked at one of the most dramatic moments in the entire story of Scripture — the Day of Pentecost. A group of ordinary, frightened, deeply flawed people gathered in a house in Jerusalem, and the Spirit of God showed up in a way nobody was fully prepared for. Wind. Fire. Languages nobody had learned. And a crowd outside who couldn't agree on what they were witnessing.

But beneath the spectacle was a theological reality that changes everything. For centuries, God's presence had lived in a designated place — the Temple — accessible only to priests, only under the right conditions, only on behalf of everyone else. Pentecost is the moment that arrangement ended. The fire left the fireplace. The holy presence of God moved out of a building and into ordinary people. And that includes anyone who follows Jesus today — not when they feel spiritual enough, not when they've cleaned themselves up, but right now, exactly as they are.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. The sermon opened by identifying three kinds of people: those who've had an overwhelming or chaotic experience of the Spirit, those who've had a safe but underwhelming one, and those for whom the Spirit is just genuinely unfamiliar territory. Which of those three resonates most with your own experience — and why?
2. The connection between Sinai and Pentecost — fifty days after the Exodus, fifty days after Easter — suggests God was making a deliberate point. What do you think it means that God chose that specific moment and that specific imagery to send the Spirit?
3. The sermon described the difference between being told how to live and actually being changed from the inside out. Where in your life do you feel the gap between knowing the right thing and actually doing it? What has that been like?
4. Pentecost involved people from every nation hearing God speak in their own native language. The sermon connected that to the loneliness of feeling like nobody actually speaks your language — whether culturally, spiritually, or personally. Has there been a time when you felt that kind of loneliness? What did it feel like to be seen or understood in the middle of it?
5. Peter is one of the most striking characters in this story — someone who failed in an embarrassing, public way and was then completely remade by the Spirit. Is there an area of your life where you've

written yourself off as too far gone, too inconsistent, or too disqualified for God to use? What would it mean to let that go?

6. The sermon made the case that the Spirit's presence in your life isn't just a warm feeling — it's evidence that Jesus is alive, active, and still moving. When you think about your daily life, where do you actually see the Spirit at work? Where is it harder to recognize Him?

7. Peter's answer to "What do we do?" was three things: repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Spirit. Which of those three feels most unfinished for you personally right now — and what would a next step actually look like?

8. The sermon ended with an honest choice: you can keep doing life on your own, or you can stop. What does doing life on your own actually cost you? And what feels most scary or most hopeful about the alternative?

Pray