

Reading Tracks

TRACK ONE

Follow along with basics of the story in a short selection of readings this week..

Monday: Acts 2:1-47

Tuesday: Joel 2:28-29

Wednesday: Ezekiel 36:25-27

Thursday: Acts 10:1-48

Friday: Acts 11:1-18

Saturday: John 14:15-17

TRACK TWO

Get a little bigger perspective by reading assigned sections from *The Story* © 2011 by Zondervan.

Read pages 389-399 this week.

TRACK THREE

Get the whole story by reading through most of the Bible in longer sections.

In your Bible, read Acts 1-15 this week.

This Week's Scripture Memory Verse

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38 (NIV)

Next Week in Worship

Next Week's Message: *Why are You Persecuting Me?*

Next Week's Readings: Acts 9:1-19

In this week's readings we learned about the power of the Spirit of God to create a new community of grace and life transformation in Jesus. When *The Big God Story* continues next week, we will see the power of the Spirit spread into the life of one of Jesus' fiercest opponents and the resulting spread of the Gospel.



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Group Discussion

Connect

When you hear someone use the word “spiritual,” as in saying that someone is a “spiritual person” or something is a “spiritual experience,” what do you think that usually means to people?

Learn

Read Acts 2:1-47 together as a group. This long but important passage is sometimes called the birth of the Christian Church. It is also called “Pentecost” because it happened on a Jewish holiday of that same name.

- What are the key points in this story?
- Peter explained these strange happenings by quoting an ancient prophecy from the prophet Joel (Acts 2:17-21). What was the connection between Joel’s words and what was happening in this story?
- This passage explains the outpouring of God’s Spirit as a sign of living in the last days. What do you think of the explanation that Christians have been living in “the last days” for the last 2,000 years? How do you find that explanation helpful? How is it difficult?

Read Acts 10:1-48. This passage too is long but helpful for understanding the early church’s experience of the Holy Spirit.

- What does this story have in common with the one from Acts 2?
- Extending the community of God’s people to include Gentiles is a huge step for a faithful Jew like Peter. What made Peter take this step?

The message this week suggested that we think of ourselves as living in the fifth and final “act” of the Big God Story. (The five acts are Creation, Fall, Israel, Jesus, and New Creation.) We live as a bridge between the preceding acts of the story and the final scenes of God’s victory in creation.

- How would this way of thinking apply to the stories of Peter and the first Christians in Acts 2 and 10?
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Apply

Consider the “five acts” way of thinking that we learned this week. What decisions are you facing that might be guided by the conviction and understanding that we live in this story of God’s dawning new creation?

Pray

In addition to any prayer requests that you would normally share as a group, pray also for this week for God’s Spirit to work in your life—and the life of your group—and for you to be cooperative with the work the Spirit does.