



Joining in with the Spirit: Session 1 – Facilitator’s ppt script.

The numbers correspond with the slides. This is an edited version of the Content booklet. ① indicates an animation click is needed.

1. Intro slide

2. What does ‘Joining in with the Spirit’ cover?

3. The end point of discipleship is “Being with another person...*in order to become capable of doing what that person does...* An ‘apprentice’ of Jesus is learning from Him how to lead their life as He would lead their life if He were they.” (Dallas Willard) ① The aim of any apprenticeship is to join in doing what the teacher does, to the extent that you are then able to apprentice others.

4. The first two sessions in this module shape our understanding of what that mission is, and the last three unpack how we might live it out *in the power of God’s Spirit*. ① It is impossible to grow in any aspect of our lives as disciples without God’s Spirit – Jesus did nothing apart from the Spirit.

5. What is the ultimate purpose of being a disciple (and life)?

6. The word ‘mission’ means ‘sent out’ and ‘mission’ statements say what the purpose of the organisation is *sent* to do – what does it exist for? At a fundamental level all human beings need a sense of mission. A psychologist called Viktor Frankl spent most of his life studying the question, ① “What makes life meaningful?” The answer included: A project to work on, ideally which helps others. ① “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.” (John 4:34).

7. Ultimately, Jesus summarizes the goal of discipleship *as being able to apprentice others*. ① Pope Francis calls the church a “community of *missionary* disciples” because it is impossible to separate being with God and becoming like Christ from *joining in with what God is doing*.

8. As ① God sent Jesus into the world, so He sends His disciples into the world. ① Jesus didn’t die and rise again to save us *from* something, but *for* something.

9. What is God’s mission?

10. Just as our picture of *God* is the most important thing in determining our relationship with Him, so our picture of the *world* will shape the purpose of our lives. In looking at Jesus life, death and resurrection, we have already seen how everything He did was rooted in God’s mission. So how might we understand it? In short, the mission of God is “to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.” He is working towards no less than, “the re-creation of the world, when the Son of Man will rule gloriously.” (Matthew 19:28) ① The two themes of *covenant relationship* with God, ① and the life of *God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven* are two of the most important strands of the story of God’s world, and of our lives. In the extended materials there are three versions of the big story of God’s mission you can read – including one written for children. It is the mission of God that shapes a disciple’s life, and the life of God’s people. It helps us know who we are but also *what we are here for*.

11. What is the purpose and priority of the church?

12. At the heart of the church is of course worship. ① We exist to worship God and will enjoy Him forever. But our worship has always been expressed *by responding to the call to join in with God for His purposes*. ① “The Church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning.” (Brunner). It is not that the church has a mission, but that “the mission of God has a church”. The Methodist Church defines what church is very similarly to Pope Francis: “a discipleship movement shaped for mission.”

13. This neatly describes the relationship between the three words, church, mission and discipleship, in a way that is sometimes counter-intuitive to our expectations. ① Our task is not grow the church – Jesus said “I will build my church.” ① Neither is it to do God’s mission for Him – we are to join in with where He is at work. ① Our commission is to “make disciples.” (Matthew 28) ① As we grow in *discipleship*, ① we will be paying attention to where God is at work and equipped and led to join in with His *mission*. ① And as we join in with His *mission*, the community of worshipping people called out (*church*) by God will be *shaped around His purposes*.

14. What is the mission of the church?

15. When Puccini was fairly young, he contracted cancer, and so he decided to spend his last days writing his final opera, *Turnandot...* When it came to the part in the opera where the master had stopped writing because he died,

Toscanini stopped everything, turned around with eyes welling up with tears, and said to the large audience, "This is where the master ends." And he wept. But then, after a few moments, he lifted up his head, smiled broadly, and said, "And this is where his friends began." Then he finished conducting the opera. Mission is 'to continue the opera' – *to faithfully do the same things that Jesus did, in the manner in which He did them, for the same ultimate goal.* The creation-wide restoration mission of God has many dimensions, and there have been many attempts to define it.

16. In 1984 the Anglican Church created a "mission statement" and these were fully adopted in 1996. The statement says: The mission of the church is the mission of Christ: To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers. To respond to human need by loving service. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.
17. Mission doesn't mean 'compelling them to come in!' It is the invitation to God's future and to hope for the new creation of all things: 'Behold, I am making all things new' - and you are invited to this divine future for the world!"

18. Is mission about who we are or what we do?

19. In trying to summarise the nature of the church, one bishop described us as an **instrument** of God's reign – in other words – one of the (main) ways He sees His purposes on earth. But he also used two other words. The church is a **sign** of God's reign, and a **foretaste** of His rule. God needs a visible Christian community that functions as the body of Christ who live out His mission. Mission is not just something we do; it is who we are. The French philosopher Pascal said that it is virtually impossible to try and persuade people of the truth of Christianity, unless the more important thing is in place - *to make people wish that it were true because they see the vision of what it offers lived out in real people's lives.*

20. What does the Holy Spirit do? How does the Holy Spirit relate to the Spirit of Christ or God? Why is Spirit "holy"?

21. How is it that God can be with each person, and in each place, throughout time and space? How can God act in the world? From the beginning of the Bible, it is through the Holy Spirit that God carries out every aspect of His purposes. It is the Holy Spirit who is the agent of God's mission and the way in which God is present to us. He is God's personal and empowering presence. No aspect of God's mission is possible without God's Spirit.
22. As Christians, we are familiar with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It is important to know that this is a continuation and expansion of the work of God's Spirit *throughout all of history.* It is with the arrival of Jesus that the Spirit appears in the *fulness* in which we know Him. It is good to know as well that the Holy Spirit is not only an invisible "power", but a *person* who helps, strengthens, cries out from within our hearts, knows our own spirits, prays for us, works things together for good, and creates the character of God in us, known as the fruits of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is more than personal, but also not less than personal.
23. The Holy Spirit is a divine and a distinct person. Yet the Holy Spirit only works to point us to the Father or the Son. He is 'God behind the scenes', acting anonymously, meaning we are never directly aware of the Holy Spirit, but His presence will make us more *aware of the Father or Son.* Jesus said the Spirit will "testify about me." (John 15:26) In one way, if we find the Holy Spirit hard to relate to, it is perhaps a sign that what really matters is that He is helping us see the Father, through the Son, even more clearly.
24. So even while we honour the Holy Spirit as a distinct person it is consistent to know the Spirit in our lived experience as the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Paul talks about the "Spirit of Christ" three times, and the "Spirit of God" 16 times. Nevertheless, as the Bible progresses there is an increasing move to celebrating the Spirit as "Holy" as the normal way of addressing the Spirit. The Spirit's holiness is not about distance, but about a *uniqueness* – in being the only one who creates life as a distinct person.
25. **The booklet unpacks how the Holy Spirit creates and sustains life.** From the second verse of the Bible it is the "Spirit of God" who brings order out of a totally uninhabitable world of darkness and chaos, bringing life and meaning to the creation (Genesis 1:2) and human beings. (Genesis 2:7)
26. In the New Testament this theme continues. Each Gospel emphasises how Jesus' work is connected to the creative work of the Spirit. The bird hovering over Jesus at His baptism recalls the Spirit over the waters at creation, bringing new life.
27. **The Holy Spirit re-creates a broken world.** If the *first creative work* of the Holy Spirit makes us God's creatures, the *second work is to reverse the effects of sin* by restoring us as His children, growing into who He made us to be, wanting to obey Him. The Holy Spirit's power is linked to the power of Jesus' works and His resurrection. "Christ Jesus...who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from

the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 1: 1-4) And we see this in the action of the Holy Spirit as being a guarantee, and a foretaste of the complete healing of all things. The Holy Spirit has begun His work and will not stop until the whole creation is liberated.

- 28. The Holy Spirit restores disciples.** We have seen how a key discipleship principle is that it is our practices of being with God which help change us indirectly as they give space for the Holy Spirit to change our hearts – the place of our deepest desires. The Holy Spirit is working to change us from the inside out, to grow the character of Jesus in us (the fruit of the Spirit). ^① Whereas in the Old Testament people received the Holy Spirit for particular tasks, ^① in Christ the Holy Spirit lives in us for a *lifestyle*. A word for this process is ^① sanctification –the journey of being made more holy – set apart for God - throughout our lives. Just as the Holy Spirit does the “heavy lifting” in our transformation, even in our being able to put our trust in Christ most of the work belongs to the Spirit.
- 29. The ^① Holy Spirit makes God’s love and presence real** Only by the Holy Spirit can the love of God be made real to us, and can we be secure in our identity as His covenant children. ^① The Spirit is God’s personal presence.
- 30. The Holy Spirit commissions and strengthens disciples.** The Holy Spirit appoints and commissions God’s people to carry out tasks and gives the strength and wisdom to put them into action. In the Old Testament the Spirit usually gives people power for *certain* tasks, at certain times.
- 31.** Yet there is a promise that one day God “...will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.” (Joel 2:28-29) ^① Jesus announces and demonstrates that His whole ministry is through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promises His disciples, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; And you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1: 8) ^① At Pentecost, Peter quotes Joel’s words to show this is the fulfilment of that promise. ^① Because the Spirit now comes on a *community*, Pentecost is often known as the birthday of the church.
- 32. Why is mission “joining in with the Spirit”?**
- 33.** Our tour through the Bible shows just how much the “chief actor in the historic mission of the Christian church is the Holy Spirit. He is the director of the whole enterprise. The mission consists of the things that he is doing in the world”. (Bishop John V. Taylor) The incredible gift is that it is not our job to do God’s work for Him – *we just get to join in!* ^① As one writer put it, “I used to ask God to bless what I am doing. Now I find out what God is blessing and go there.”
- 34.** If Jesus is our model for mission, it is instructive to see how much He saw Himself as being led by His Father in it: ^① “...the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing.” (John 5:19) and how His whole life and ministry are in the power of the Spirit. ^① Jesus did all that He did as a human being empowered by Holy Spirit. Just the same as us.
- 35.** It is not surprising that for the early Christians it was natural that they ^① “prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8: 14-17), that Ananias prayed for Saul (who became Paul) saying ^① “the Lord...has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 9: 17), that they saw the gift of the Spirit being poured out on those who were not expecting it (Acts 10:45) and that Paul said all the fruit of His ministry came from God: ^① “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.” (1 Corinthians 3:6)
- 36. What will help me want to ‘join in with the Spirit’?**
- 37.** For those of us who might struggle because of all kinds of pressures or fears to seek the kingdom two themes from this session may help us. ^① **We don’t engage with God’s mission because it is a *task to be done*, but because it is the outworking of who God is.** By looking at the nature of the Holy Spirit, ^① we can see that God is in Himself a God who *always overflows to others*, always goes to them. He is a *missionary* God. ^① The more we keep company with a God whose nature is to go to the darkest cross to reach those in need, the more we will want to share in His mission.
- 38. Experiencing the Spirit as the best, and most necessary, gift we can receive.** Moltmann writes that, ““The Spirit is more than just one of God’s gifts among others; the Holy Spirit is the unrestricted presence of God *in which our life wakes up*...the greatest and most wonderful thing which we can experience...We feel and taste, we touch and see our life in God and God in our life.” The philosopher Kierkegaard asked, ^① “What is a Christian? A person who has caught fire from God’s...presence...a Christian is a person set on fire.”
- 39.** The story is told of a young monk seeking advice from an older monk about his spiritual life. “Abba,” he said, “as far as I can I say my little office, I fast a little, I pray and meditate, I live in peace and as far as I can, I purify my thoughts. What else can I do? ^① Then the old man stood up and stretched out his hands toward heaven. His fingers became like ten lamps and he said to him, “If you will, you can become all flame.”