

LESSON THREE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES: The Spirit Builds Community

AIM:**TIME: 60 minutes****General:** To show how the Holy Spirit built the new Christians into a loving community:

- 1] The people prayed together, praised God; learnt from the apostles' teachings and shared in the Eucharist or 'the breaking of bread.'
- 2] This made them loving and united.

Personal: To help the children to realise the importance of community prayer, particularly Sunday Mass; and to encourage them to reach out to other members of their parish community.**Text used:** Acts 2:42 - 47**I. STARTER:** [10 minutes][Train a few children before the class to act the following role-play.]**Narrator:** We are going to act a scene that might take place in any of our homes. The mother has gone out to the market. Lets see what the children are up to!

(Belongings- books, bags, sweaters etc. are all strewn about. Two of the children, who are supposed to be studying, start arguing and finally fighting. The smallest child, Maria, keeps saying- 'I'm hungry! Lets have dinner!' But the eldest girl, Sonia, is busy watching T.V. and eating popcorn and shuts her up. At this point, the mother comes in. Things change immediately as she speaks to them in a firm but loving way-)

Mother: Sonia, why are you watching T.V. now? Can't you see that Maria is hungry?*(Sonia, looking ashamed, puts off T.V. and goes to serve the food)*Mervin and Johnny, what is the use of fighting? You're only hurting yourselves! Come on, lets see if you can be friends again. *(Boys make up.)*

Lets get this room in order, so that we can have dinner. Maria, help the boys to put away their books.

(Family sits down happily for their meal.)[Teacher congratulates actors]

- Does this happen in your home also?
- How would you describe the children's behaviour before their mother came home?
- What happened after she returned?

II. DEVELOPMENT: [10 minutes]Lets turn to our text for today: [Read the scripture passage: Acts2:42-47.]

- What kind of picture do you get when you read this?
- What made the people so loving, united and happy? In the skit we acted, the mother made the home peaceful and happy and everyone started cooperating with each other. Who did this in the story of Acts? *[The Holy Spirit is like the mother in the skit].* He made the followers of Jesus loving. Even today, the Holy Spirit brings about a change among the people- From disorder to order; from selfish behaviour to helping others; from quarrelling to friendship. It can be summed up in one word: The Spirit builds unity.

[Write the word UNITY on black-board]

- When people are united in every way, they become a ...what? Add something to UNITY to give the answer. [COMMUNITY] [Write on Black-board]

III. ACTIVITY: [25 minutes]Let us look again at the passage in the Bible and find out how the Holy Spirit worked. What did He do to build the people into a loving community?

[Give out the handout and allow the students to work on it in pairs for about 15 minutes. Go over the de-coded answers:]

After the Holy Spirit came the people did the following:

1. Praised God.
2. Listened to teaching.
3. Had fellowship.
4. Took part in the Mass ('breaking of the bread' means the Mass.)
5. Prayed.
6. Shared their belongings.

[Ask different students to share how **they** do the same activities. Accept all their contributions:]

We do the same things as the first Christians when we:

1. Sing praise to God, at Mass, at prayer meetings, at home. Praising God is a wonderful way of remaining close to God and looking at life in a happy way.
2. Listen to readings and the sermon at Mass, or read the Bible on our own. Do you realise that the Holy Spirit is feeding you through the Word of God? How many of you read the Bible daily?
3. Meet together with other Christians, at area masses, prayer meetings etc. Some people feel that they don't need others. They try to follow God by themselves. God's plan was to make us a family, to help each other. Whenever we get the chance we should join with others in prayer, or to share a meal. Make sure you pray together during these meals.
4. Go for Mass. The 'breaking of bread' means the Mass. The Eucharist is where we can meet God and receive his help and strength. Do you go for Mass every Sunday? During the week also?
5. We pray as a family, or by ourselves. Every one of us needs to spend some time alone with God every day, so that we can really become His friend.
6. Give our time, our things, our money to help other brothers and sisters of our community. Have you reached out to any parish member in the past month?

IV. PRAYER: [15 minutes]

[Ask someone to share how he/she experienced God while doing any of the activities mentioned. The students could also share their own experiences, if they like. Ask them to choose one activity that they feel God wants them to start doing and to tell this to their partner.]

E.g. 'I feel God wants me to start praying by myself every day.' OR

'I feel God is calling me to give some of my clothes to the poor children of our parish.'

After each partner has shared, they pray for each other to be able to do what God has asked.

Sing as a prayer: 'Come Holy Spirit, I Need Thee' OR 'Bind Us Together, Lord'.

End by singing with actions: 'Its God who builds Community'.

Ask the students to begin doing what they have chosen at once and be ready to share with their partner next week if they have made any progress.]

YOU WILL NEED:

One handout per student. Someone to share his testimony. A few students to practice the skit.