

Creative Bible Study, “Power Up! Living in the Spirit”

STEP 1 – Hear the Scripture

- A. Kids don’t need to hear it from you, they need to hear it from a peer
 - a. Hear adults reading scripture at them all the time
 - b. Give the kids a chance to prepare and rehearse
 - c. Should be quasi voluntary – don’t put somebody on the spot, but push kids to do it
- B. Keep it interesting
 - a. If it’s a long passage, don’t read it all at once. Find a creative way to break it up, to keep the listeners engaged
 - b. Including multiple voices helps kids hear the scripture differently
 - c. If you have a short passage, try reading from a couple different versions (pick the versions ahead of time to make sure there’s enough variation to make a difference)
- C. Listening and Hearing are different
 - a. Hearing connects the person with something from the reading
 - b. Hearing stimulates creativity
 - c. Hearing motivates the listener to do something or change something
 - d. Helping someone to hear takes work for the reader

Step 2 – Feel the Scripture

- A. It’s more than words on a page
 - ✓ Scripture is God speaking to us, here and now. We can’t just approach it as a story to be read, or a lesson to be taught. It’s possible that your listener has a part of this scripture memorized. Your challenge is to help them experience it in a new way. Your challenge is to get them to hear God.
- B. There’s something for everyone
 - ✓ Digging into the Bible isn’t just for readers. Non-readers can get just as much, if not more, from hearing scripture than readers can. You need to know your group. For younger non-reading hearers, you need to remember to engage their imaginations. For young hearers, you need to remind them to use their imaginations. For older hearers, you need to challenge them to think beyond what’s written and get them to see what’s not written.
- C. You can’t be thinking the same way after hearing it
 - ✓ Because we understand scripture to be the living word of God, it means that you shouldn’t let anyone walk away unchanged. If you are truly sharing God’s word then transformation will take place. Your responsibility is to create an environment where the hearers will be able to hear God. Your responsibility is prepare a space for God to show up. That means you have to be prepared. It means that you’ve got to find a special way to prepare your hearers. Hope them settle into the scripture reading. When we settle into scripture, we walk away changed.

Examples for Feel the Scripture

The counselor begins the meeting by rushing in and telling the campers he or she has to go *right now!* (creating a sense of urgency without scaring campers). Before leaving, he or she gives the campers this message:

“I told you some important things while I was with you. There will be an Advocate and Companion, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father is sending, who will teach you and remind you of everything I have told you. I want to leave you with peace. I give you my peace, which is not the same kind of peace as the world gives. Don’t be troubled or afraid.”

Then he or she rushes out, leaving the other counselor(s) looking bewildered. Continuing the role-play, the remaining staff engage one another and the campers with questions such as these:

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- What just happened?
- How do you feel?
- What do you think about what was said? What did it mean?
- What do you think is going on?
- What do you think we should do next?
- What do you think the counselor meant when she (or he) said the Holy Spirit was coming?
- What do you think he (or she) meant about leaving peace behind?

End the role-play, having the counselor return to the campers and tell them that something very similar happened to Jesus’ disciples. Choose a volunteer to read John 14:25-27 and talk about the comparison between how campers felt during the role-play to how the disciples must have felt. Remind campers that the disciples had spent the better part of three years following Jesus—and now he was talking about leaving.

- How do you think Jesus’ words made the disciples feel? (*worried, annoyed, confused, etc.*)
 - What do you think the disciples thought about the Holy Spirit?
 - What do you think the Holy Spirit should be doing in your life?
 - Jesus knew the disciples would be anxious and scared about the coming events. How do you think his words would be an assurance for them?
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Choose a volunteer to read John 14:25-27. Ask:

- What is your first impression?
- Was anything confusing?
- What stood out to you?
- What was the tone of the messages?

Choose another volunteer to read the passage again. This time invite campers to **listen for action words** and phrases (“*Father will send,*” “*teach,*” “*remind,*” “*Peace I leave,*” “*Do not be afraid*”). Ask:

- What action words did you hear?
- What do these action words tell us about what Jesus is saying? (*Something is about to happen; movement or change is coming; the disciples are going to have to act.*)

Choose a third volunteer to read the passage once again. This time challenge campers to **listen for the promises** in the words. (*The Holy Spirit is coming; the Spirit will teach and remind; Jesus leaves peace.*)

- What do you think is the significance of the fact that Jesus says two times that he will leave the disciples peace?
- What is the implication when someone promises to “leave something with you”? (*that he or she is going away and that there is a level of trust between you*)
- What are your impressions of the Holy Spirit?
- What does this passage tell you about the Holy Spirit?
- How do the words of this passage change your thinking about the Holy Spirit?

How does this passage affect how you act?

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Type today’s scripture and print copies for each camper. (**Leader Note:** *You can also cut and paste the verses from an online Bible source such as biblegateway.com.*) Use a font that looks like it could be handwriting. If it is practical, personalize the letter by using a mail-merge program to substitute some of the “you’s” with each individual camper’s name. Address each letter with a camper’s name and cabin number or name. If your camp has a mail-call tradition, give campers their letters in that way. Give them time to read their letter.

Point out how hard it was in Paul’s time to send correspondence and, consequently, how excited people were to receive a letter. The people of the church would have gathered around to hear it read, and then they would have discussed it in depth—as you will now. Ask:

- How did it feel to get a personal letter from Paul?
- What do you think is the most important part of the letter?
- What does Paul really want you to know and hear?
- What is going to be the hardest part of doing the things in this letter?

Ask campers to think about people in their lives whom they want to encourage and help to find their way. Pair campers up and ask them tell the other about such a person and what that person has meant in that camper’s life. Once campers have had a chance to talk with their partners, invite them to each write a letter to their special person, using Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians as the template or model. Have Bibles or the printed copies of the scripture on hand for campers to refer to as they consider what they will write.

Remind campers that what they write may or may not be letters that they actually send, but they are to write them just the same. Encourage campers to pray over their letter and ask God to direct them about whether or not to send it.

When campers have finished writing, ask:

- How did it feel to be encouraging?
- How do you think this letter will make a difference?
- Tell us about a time someone encouraged you.
- Why do you think encouraging words can be so powerful?
- Do you encourage others often? Why or why not?

Put your campers into pairs (preferably with someone they don’t know very well). Give one a slip of paper with an action scripture written on it. This person is to act out the scripture while the other mirrors his or her partner’s actions.

Encourage the one acting to use exaggerated motions and act out the idea of the scripture rather than each literal word. After a few minutes of “mirroring,” let the “mirror partner” guess what the actions were.

Give different scriptures to the “mirror partners” and have them lead. Afterward, ask:

- How did it feel to try to mirror your partner when you had no idea what that person was doing?
- How did it feel to try to act out some of the scriptures?
- How is this exercise like trying to mirror Jesus’ actions?

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- How can we better mirror the actions of Jesus?

Suggested Action Scriptures (feel free to choose others):

Jeremiah 18:1-4 (potter and clay)

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (a time to...)

Ephesians 3:14-15 (prayer)

Psalm 100:1-4 (celebration)

Matthew 14:15-21 (Jesus feeds five thousand)

Matthew 9:1-7 (Jesus heals paralyzed man)

Read I Thessalonians 1:4-7 again, focusing closely on verse 6. Remind campers of the past two days’ lessons, in which Jesus promises the Holy Spirit would come and then that promise is fulfilled in a dramatic way. Ask:

- Now that the Holy Spirit has come into our lives, what do we do?
- What does verse 6 tell us?
- What does it mean to be “imitators of...the Lord”?

Look up some stories of Jesus and talk about what he was doing in each. Suggested stories:

Mark 11:15-17 (Jesus goes against accepted tradition to stand up for what is right)

Matthew 8:1-4 (Jesus heals)

Luke 19:1-10 (Jesus reaches out to an outcast and changes his life)

Mark 2:5 (Jesus forgives)

Matthew 7:24-29 (Jesus taught using parables)

John 13:12-17 (Jesus serves with humility)

Divide into small groups of three or four and assign one passage to each group. Each group should create a skit that shows how we can imitate in today’s world what Jesus did in his time. Remind them that they do not have to do exactly what Jesus did, but they should find creative ways to be imitators.

Ask a volunteer(s) to read Galatians 5:16-26 out loud. Point out that this is a passage of comparisons and contrasts.

- What is Paul comparing and contrasting? (*living by the Spirit versus living by selfish desires*)

On a poster board make two columns. Label one “Spirit” and the other “Selfish Desires.” Ask campers to review the scripture lists for both and identify the kinds of results that happen when people live by selfish desires (*temporary “fun” with a high cost, others get hurt, bodies don’t work well, disease, jail, can’t keep a job, can’t keep relationships strong, can’t make friends, families suffer*). Next, list the results living by the Spirit produces (*happiness, stronger relationships, closeness with God, reliability, making a positive difference*). Ask:

- What kind of life do you want to live?
- Which column do you think will help you to get there?
- How do the choices you make now affect your life long-term?

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If you have enough campers, divide into groups of five to seven (if not, make do with smaller groups). Ask each group to create two skits—one that shows a person living by selfish desires and one in which the participants’ lives get an extreme makeover and they then live by the Spirit. Encourage the groups to model their skits after a favorite makeover show. Have them perform for each other. The skits could also be part of worship or campfire.

Step 3 – Share the scripture

A. Gotta Have something to say

- ✓ It’s not about the moral of the story or the theme of the day. Devotion time is about stepping into the presence of God and walking away with something you didn’t have before. You could leave with more knowledge, different perspective, better acquainted with God, at peace with your life...it’s good to have a goal for the “lesson,” but you can’t let the “lesson” become the goal.

B. Gotta give them a way to say it

- ✓ You’re going to be working with kids and teens. They haven’t been taught how to share their faith story. They haven’t been taught how to talk about God. They haven’t been taught why they should do those things. They are coming to camp to learn those things. You’re not going to be able to teach them all of it in a week. But, you’ve got to start somewhere. Capitalize on the time that God has given you, and teach them that scripture is more than words on a page, old stories that have no impact on their lives, and something that old people blab on about. Help these young people to realize that they have a part to play in the story of God’s people and in the kingdom of God, NOW.

Examples : Random Acts of Kindness

Divide into groups of four to six (preferably with an adult leader with each group). Tell them each group is going to plan and carry out a secret “random act of fruitiness” (random act of kindness with a “fruit of the Spirit” twist). Reread Galatians 5:22-23 so the campers remember all the fruit listed in the scripture; remind them also that there are other fruit not listed.

Set a time limit for each group to plan and carry out their random act, and remind them to be sneaky so the act remains anonymous. (*Examples could be clean the bathroom of another cabin, put love notes on the cars of the staff, make an appreciation poster for kitchen staff, send affirmation notes to a camper who is homesick or feeling left out...*) Encourage campers to be creative and find ways to make a difference with their fruit. This activity could even be expanded to continue all day or throughout camp.

Read Ephesians 4:1-6

Using several dry erase boards all around your space (or a piece of paper for each camper), ask each camper to write a social media “status update,” “text,” or “tweet” as if he or she had been one of the Galatians to whom Paul sent this message. Before having the campers write, ask them to consider these questions:

- How do you think Paul’s letter would have made you feel about your past behavior?
- What kind of fruit are you bearing in your life right now?
- How are you going to bear fruit in the future?

Have volunteers read what they wrote; take time to talk together about each one. Ask other campers to “like” or to comment on the status updates. (**Leader Note:** *If time is short, work in smaller groups.*)

Affirm all the efforts. If you used paper, hang the sheets around your worship space.

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Signs of Unity: This outdoor art activity gives campers an opportunity to express their understanding of unity and community in a more public forum.

Give campers a container of sidewalk chalk and head outside. Ask volunteers to define or give examples of “unity,” “community,” and “uniformity.” Talk also about today’s symbol, the numeral 1 in a circle.

After the discussion, tell the group that their task for the next 30 minutes is to cover the area near their meeting space with symbols and messages of unity and community. This can involve writing out messages or scripture, drawing, and so on. If campers are unsure of what to do, invite them to create messages or artwork that would show a visiting guest what camp community is all about.

Here are the scriptures that are emphasized by the Curriculum.

DAILY OVERVIEW

Day	Theme	Scripture
1	Power Up with the Promise of Peace	John 14:25-27
2	Power Up and Celebrate the Spirit	Acts 2:1-18, 22-24, 33 YC/IG Acts 2:1-6
3	Power Up to Imitate Christ	I Thessalonians 1:4-7
4	Power Up with the Fruit of the Spirit	Galatians 5:16-27 YC/IG Galatians 5:22-23a, 25-26
5	Power Up as One Community	Ephesians 4:1-6
6	Power Up with Courage	II Timothy 1:6-7
7	Power Up for Peace Wherever You Go	John 20:19-23