

# June: Follow the Spirit

## Introduction

If you want to know what the Spirit of God is all about, the best place to start is probably with the book of Acts in the Bible. Acts, the sequel to Jesus' story in the gospels, is actually short for "The Acts of the Apostles," but it has often been said that it should really be called "The Acts of the Spirit." Acts is the adventures of Jesus' followers in the early years of the church, and it turns out to be quite a good handbook on how the Spirit works. If you read it through you'll note many ways that God works through his Spirit.

In Acts 2 it's like a surprise party, bursting onto the scene and creating a ruckus. In chapter 3 it's God's healing power to bring a paraplegic to his feet. In Acts 4 it's simple boldness to speak up for Jesus. In Acts 6 it's the calling for some to look after the poor and vulnerable. Sometimes it's like a signpost, directing people to go somewhere or talk to someone or do something else. In Saul's case it was a sudden redirection, along with a brand new identity. For Peter in Acts 10 it was an eye-opening vision, throwing wide the gates so more people can experience the love and wonder of God. In chapter 13 it was wisdom to know what to do in a tricky situation, guiding people to follow Jesus into uncharted territory. Sometimes it was a simple reminder of the way and words of Jesus, sometimes it was a courageous step in an unexpected direction, sometimes it was a change of heart to become more compassionate and generous to the people around them. These are the adventures of people who follow the Spirit.

The challenge for us this month is to practise the art of walking by the Spirit too. And it will require some practise. It's not something that comes naturally to many of us. It didn't for the early church either. But then again, nobody ever sat down at a piano for the first time and played Mozart (well, except maybe Mozart). The good news is following the Spirit is an art that God himself helps us with. It's like if Mozart himself were your piano teacher, guiding your fingers and helping you learn the necessary skills.

So here are a couple of tips as we head into this month.

Firstly, make sure you really are open to the Spirit's leading. Often we think we already know what God wants us to do, but the Spirit doesn't always work like that. Maybe God wants you to do something new and unexpected that has never been done before! The key is to move with the Spirit, keeping our eyes and ears open to God's leading.

Also, look for the places where God is already working and see if you can join in. A key element this month is discovering what God is already doing among your family, friends, schoolmates and workmates, as well as in the rest of the world.

You might also like to read through the book of Acts this month. Take note of the many ways the Holy Spirit works in the lives of Jesus' followers.

And lastly, one of the key jobs of the Holy Spirit is to empower us to change, reform ourselves and live differently. It's the power to help us develop the fruits of the Spirit and live out the way of Jesus: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, humility, compassion, generosity and so on. See if you can develop more of these gifts this month. Are there any you could use God's help with?

Listen well this month to what God might be saying, and ask the Spirit to do its transforming work in your life. Learn the ways of Jesus, follow the Spirit, and may you slowly become a more striking contrast to the values of the world, and a more true representation of Jesus.



- Meditate on the word 'Yahweh' (a form of the Hebrew name of God used in the Bible) when feeling anxious, stressed, or distracted. Sometimes repeating the word out loud helps!
- The Spirit is active in the world whether we join him or not, or whether we notice him or not. For one week this month, before you start school, quietly pray this prayer: Lord help me to see the people around me through your eyes. Show me what you're up to and if there's something I can do to help. Give me the courage to respond if I hear or sense you speaking to me. Take time to reflect on His presence at the end of your day.
- Take on our photo challenge this month called '[9 Nudges.](https://au.pinterest.com/pin/483011128761414662/)' Don't forget to upload your photos to your journal/news feed or #9nudgesaBY (<https://au.pinterest.com/pin/483011128761414662/>)



- The Fruits of the Spirit are relational. Reflect on a relationship you have where one of the fruits may be lacking (e.g. Self-control towards a younger brother). Make an effort this month to practise that fruit!
- Jesus refers to the Spirit as the comforter (John 14:16). Keep your eyes open for people who might be in need of comfort, and join with God's Spirit in providing comfort or encouragement to them this month. If you're short of ideas on ways that you can do this, visit the [Encouragement Foundation's](#) website.
- Spend time discussing with your mentor how to follow the Spirit or how they have seen God work in their lives.



- Spend one afternoon brainstorming ways you can make a difference at your school. Consider whether God might already be doing something you can get on board with.
- Get out your Big Year Crew's poster/film/creative project from your Margins month. What have you done so far? Are there ideas you haven't yet acted on? How is your passion? Has it grown over the year? Died out a bit? Moved in a new direction? Take time to chat about this with your crew.
- With your Big Year Crew spend some time praying for God's Spirit to be active in your community. You can get creative with this - walk or ride around your neighbourhood and stop to pray at each street sign. Walk around your school and pray for the different departments. Get a map and write down all the street names in your area place them in a hat and take turns pulling one out to pray for.