

**Acts 2:1–21**  
**Ps. 104:24–34, 35b**  
**1 Cor. 12:3b–13**  
**John 20:19–23**

# It's Pentecost!

**Goal for  
the Session**

*Children will describe what happened to Jesus' followers on Pentecost and celebrate that God's Spirit is also with them.*

## ■ P R E P A R I N G F O R T H E S E S S I O N

### Focus on Acts 2:1–21

#### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective” by Stephen A. Cooper

In this lection the group of disciples—restored now to the full twelve—behold a vision, are filled with the Holy Spirit, and speak in foreign tongues (2:1–5). Reactions from inhabitants of Jerusalem follow (vv. 6–13); then Peter addresses the marveling if divided crowd (vv. 14–21). Peter’s oration interprets the happening, cites relevant Scripture, and draws the conclusion: the events around Jesus Christ followed by this bestowal of the Spirit prove that the last days whereof the prophets spoke have come. The speech continues beyond the lection and culminates with a call to repentance and baptism (2:38); three thousand heed the call and form a community to communicate the fullness of what they have received.

#### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective” by David P. Gushee

The early church, at least in large part, seems to have been remarkably open to a dynamic and fluid way of operating, based on its theology and experience of the Holy Spirit. Where to go, what to do, how to worship, who should speak in worship, what should be said in worship, who should lead the community, how the community should be led, how to relate to outsiders, who should relate to outsiders, what to say when under threat—these and many other matters seem to have been handled through reliance on the empowerment and direction of the Holy Spirit.

#### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective” by David M. Bender

This narrative challenges our congregants to find the Spirit within them and to locate, claim, and utilize their authentic voices, gifts, and skills with which to love and serve. However, we cheapen the Spirit and her gifts if we reduce them to dwelling exclusively within the individual. This Spirit that swept through the house gifted more than those disciples at Pentecost and the disciples with whom we minister today. That Spirit has been loosed into the world, and its creative and life-giving power is now the gift of families and communities, of churches, and of nations. The relevant question becomes not just “How will *I* respond to these party gifts of the Spirit?” but “How will *we* respond to these gifts?”

#### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective” by Jana Childers

Apart from this text, there is little evidence of the Holy Spirit working in any “violent” fashion. Many Christians have become accustomed to thinking of the Holy Spirit as more of a Hawaiian breeze than a Chicago gale. However, this important passage may at least remind contemporary congregations that the Spirit does not always arrive as a still, small voice or a faint stirring in the heart. The Holy Spirit’s power is not always subtle, fragile, or polite. Even today it can be electric, atomic, and volcanic.

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE**

***Acts 2:1–21***

## Focus on Your Teaching

Young children can experience wonder, awe, and thanksgiving. These are important aspects of faith formation, and the story of the Spirit's coming to the disciples on Pentecost is a perfect setting for exploring them. The Spirit, sometimes called the Holy Spirit, is a challenging concept for young learners. They will continue to develop their understanding and appreciation as they mature. Encourage learners to be open to the Spirit's presence in their lives and to give thanks for the many ways the Spirit is at work in God's people.

*Gracious God, thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Help me to grow in my awareness of the Spirit's activity in my life and in the world around me. Amen.*

**YOU WILL NEED**

- red cloth
- battery-powered candle
- Bible
- red paper streamer or wide ribbon
- scissors
- Color Pack 25, 26, 27, 32
- Singing the Feast, 2019-2020*; CD player

For Responding

- option 1: graham crackers, red icing, red punch, knives, plates, cups, napkins
- option 2: copies of Resource Sheet 2 on card stock, crayons or markers, scissors, hole punch, red yarn, large embroidery hoop or poster board and tape
- option 3: copies of Resource Sheet 1, pencils, crayons

## ■ LEADING THE SESSION

### GATHERING

*Before the session*, review what your church teaches about the Spirit. Arrange a red cloth in the center of your learning space and place the candle and Color Pack 25 on it. You may want to hang red streamers or ribbons in the doorway. Cut a 30" piece of red paper streamer or ribbon for each learner. If you are using option 2 in Responding, bring a large (about 12") embroidery hoop or cut two 1" x 18" strips of poster board, tape two ends together to form a long strip, and then form a circle with the long strip and tape it.

Welcome learners as they arrive. Gather the group around the candle and light it. Explain that today is Pentecost, and that red is the church color for this festival day. Ask a volunteer to read the words on Color Pack 25. Say that they will learn more about Pentecost today.

*God, thank for our Sunday school class. / Send your Spirit to guide our learning and our play. / Amen.*

Tell the learners about something awesome or amazing you have seen. Invite learners to tell about awesome things they have seen. Say that today's Bible story has some awesome and amazing things in it.

### EXPLORING

Open your Bible to Acts 2 and say that this is where the Bible story is found. Tell the story using the following script:

#### Story Script

After God raised Jesus from death, Jesus visited his disciples several times. Then it was time for Jesus to go to heaven to live with his Father, God. Jesus told the disciples that God's Spirit would come to them and never leave them. He told them to wait in Jerusalem for the Spirit to come.

The disciples did just that! On the festival day of Pentecost, they were gathered together in one place. Let's imagine they are singing with us. Sing "Where I Sit Is Holy" (Color Pack 27; track 22 on *Singing the Feast*, 2019–2020).

Suddenly, they heard an amazing noise like a mighty wind blowing. Then they saw something awesome—it looked like flames of fire resting on top of each person! (Show Color Pack 26.) The Holy Spirit came and filled each person there.

People from many countries were crowded into Jerusalem for the festival. The Spirit helped the disciples to tell these visitors about God's power and love. Each one could understand the disciples in his or her own language. It was amazing!

Then Peter stood up and spoke to the crowd. Peter taught them about God's Son, Jesus. He told them how God raised Jesus from death, and how because of this, each person is promised forgiveness and life with God forever. Peter said that God is always present in the Spirit.

Jesus' followers rejoiced that the Spirit had come to them.

### **Where I Sit Is Holy**

Where I sit (*dance, pray, love, play*) is holy,  
 Holy is this ground;  
 Forest, mountain, river,  
 Listen to the sound;  
 Praise spirit circles all  
 around me.

(Repeat four times using words in parentheses)

Where we sing is holy,  
 Sacred is this place;  
 As we bring together,  
 We fill with light and grace;  
 Praise spirit circles all  
 around me.

Discuss the story:

- ❖ What amazing and awesome things happened when the Spirit came to the disciples?
- ❖ Look at Color Pack 26. If you had been with the disciples on that day, what do you think you would have said?
- ❖ When the disciples told the other people in Jerusalem about God's amazing deeds of power and love, what Bible stories do you think they told them?

Summarize that the Spirit is God's presence with us. The Spirit brings good things to our lives, such as joy, patience, and kindness. The Spirit helps us to pray, to have faith in God, and to love our neighbors. Invite children to ask questions about the Bible story and about the Spirit. If you don't know the answer to a question, say that you will find out and bring the answer next week.

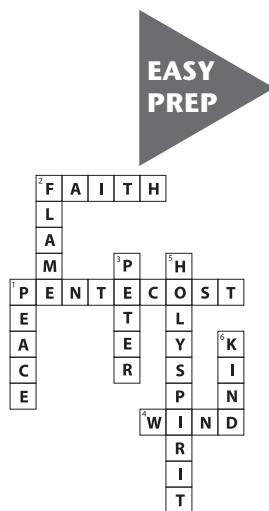
Stand in a circle. Distribute paper streamers or ribbons and invite learners to wave these as they celebrate God's gift of the Spirit by singing "Give Me Joy in My Heart," (Color Pack 32; track 6 on *Singing the Feast*, 2019–2020).

## **RESPONDING**

Mark the activities you will use:

1. **Pentecost Party** Learners will enjoy a party to affirm that God's gift of the Spirit is a reason to celebrate. Have learners wash their hands. Invite each one to spread red frosting on a graham cracker. (Be mindful of allergies.) Give a cup of punch to each one. Say a prayer of thanks for food. As you eat, talk about all the wonderful things that the Spirit makes possible in the lives of God's children (for example, joy, patience, kindness, peace; helps us to pray, to have faith in God, to love our neighbors). Comment that

Option: To create a spiral effect with your mobile, be sure to cut each piece of yarn a different length, with 14" being the longest piece. When you tie or tape the yarn to the mobile, arrange the pieces from longest to shortest around the circle.



some people call Pentecost Sunday the birthday of the church, and wonder about why that might be.

2. **Pentecost Mobile** Making a mobile will help learners express their celebration of the Spirit and share it with others in the church. Recall the amazing sound like a mighty wind and the awesome sight of flickering flames when the Spirit came to the disciples on Pentecost. Explain that the group will work together to make a mobile about this. Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 2 (Pentecost Mobile), scissors, and markers or crayons. Have learners cut out the flames and color them on both sides, either to look like flames or with pictures of some of the good gifts the Spirit brings to us. Punch holes in the flames where indicated. Cut three lengths of yarn for each child. Vary the lengths between 8" and 14". Have learners tie a piece of yarn to each shape. Work together to tie the flames to the embroidery hoop or tape them to the poster-board circle. Attach three 18" pieces of yarn, spaced equally around the circle, and tie at the top to use for hanging the mobile. Hang the mobile in a hallway or the fellowship hall where other church members will see the flames dance in the breeze and be reminded of the Spirit's presence.
3. **Signs of the Spirit Puzzle** As they solve a puzzle, learners will consider how the Spirit is with Jesus' followers, and celebrate this. Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 1 (Signs of the Spirit Puzzle) and pencils. Read the directions aloud. Invite learners to work individually or with you to solve the puzzle. When all have finished, ask volunteers to read the clues and the answers aloud. Encourage learners to tell what they like most about having the Spirit in their lives, and affirm that God's gift of the Spirit is something to celebrate.

## CLOSING

Gather around the candle and invite the children to tell what they will tell their families about Pentecost.

Explain that during the prayer, learners will join in on the phrase "Come, Holy Spirit, come." Distribute paper streamers or ribbons and invite learners to wave these as they say the phrase. Pray aloud:

God,

*Thanks for sending us the gift of your Spirit. | Come, Holy Spirit, come.*

*When we are not sure what to do, | come, Holy Spirit, come.*

*When it's hard to believe that God loves us, | come, Holy Spirit, come.*

*When we want to help others, | come, Holy Spirit, come.*

*When we feel like celebrating, | come, Holy Spirit, come.*

Amen.

Drape each child's streamer or ribbon across his or her shoulders, saying, "(Name), God's Spirit will be with you always."

## **Signs of the Spirit Puzzle**

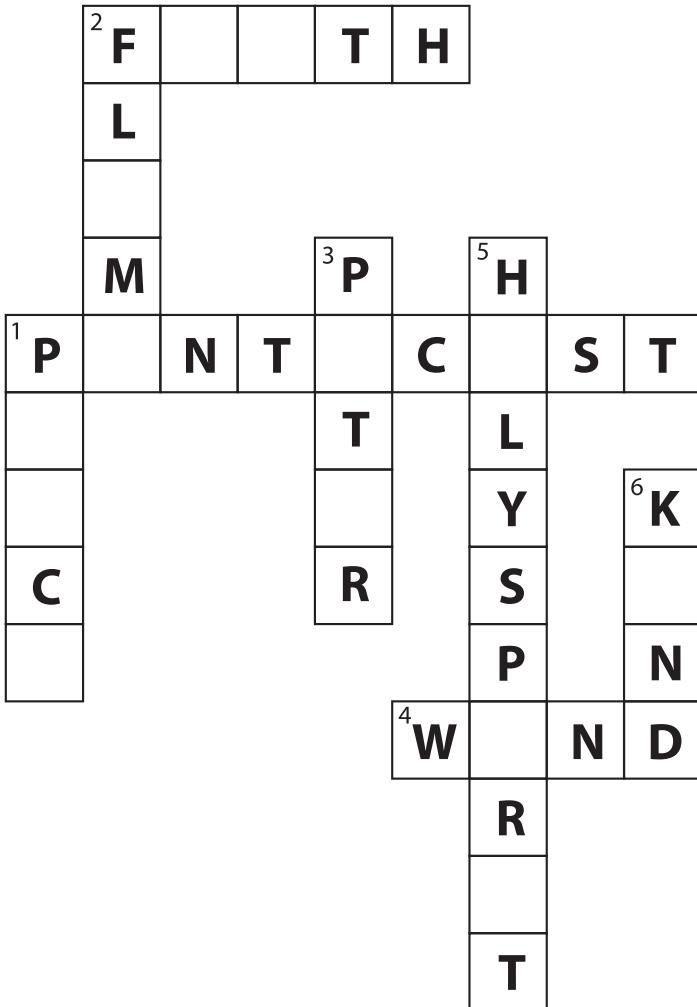
**Directions:** What signs of the Spirit did the disciples receive on Pentecost? What signs of the Spirit can you see today? Read the clues and fill in the missing vowels in this puzzle to find out.

## Across

1. Jesus' disciples gathered in Jerusalem on this holiday
2. The Spirit helps us to have \_\_\_\_\_ in God and to live in God's ways.
4. When the Spirit came, the disciples heard a sound like a rushing \_\_\_\_\_.

Down

1. The Spirit helps us to live in \_\_\_\_\_ with other people.
2. When the Spirit came, something like a \_\_\_\_\_ rested on each disciple's head.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ explained what was happening to the crowd.
4. Another way to say "Spirit."
5. The Spirit helps us to be \_\_\_\_\_ to others.



May 31, 2020  
It's Pentecost!

## **Pentecost Mobile**

