

PENTECOST BLESSING BAG

Worship resources for home from Polk City UMC

Oriented for at-home worship and faith formation, these simple objects illuminate the story of Pentecost and seek to deepen our understanding of the Holy Spirit. You may enjoy these activities in one sitting or at your own pace.

Materials

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Pentecost at a Glance handout | <input type="checkbox"/> Red pinwheel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interactive Acts 2 story script with pre-printed images | <input type="checkbox"/> Blowing bubbles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birthday candles | <input type="checkbox"/> Red straws |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Red, orange & yellow streamers |

PENTECOST AT A GLANCE

What is Pentecost?

Pentecost is the 50th and last day of the Easter season. In 2020, it is Sunday, May 31. It marks the birth of the Church when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit (read Acts 2).

Symbols

 WIND The Holy Spirit came on the first Pentecost like a mighty rushing wind.	 FLAMES The Holy Spirit rested on Jesus' followers on the first Pentecost like tongues of fire.
 RED The official liturgical color for Pentecost, reminding us of flames.	 DOVE Symbolic of the gift of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came to him like a dove.

Digging Deeper: The Holy Spirit

THE HOLY SPIRIT...

- Is one of the three persons of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We receive the Holy Spirit when we are baptized. (Acts 2:38)
- Was sent to be our Advocate who teaches us. (John 14:26)
- Is always with us. (John 14:16)
- Encourages and strengthens us. (Acts 9:31)
- Gives us spiritual gifts. (Acts 19:6; Hebrews 2:4)
- Fills us. (Acts 13:9, 13:52)
- Sanctifies us (helps us become holy). (Romans 15:16)
- Gives us joy. (1 Thess 1:6)
- Lives in us. (2 Tim 1:14, 1 Cor 3:16, 1 Cor 6:19)

ACTIVITY 1: Interactive storytelling of Acts 2

Note: As you tell the story, place the corresponding images in front of you for everyone to see, gradually building an entire picture by the story's completion. If desired, pass out the images beforehand and prompt participants to place their images for all to see at the corresponding parts of the story.

Today we are going to hear a story from the New Testament, the Book of Acts, Chapter 2. This is the story of Pentecost. After Jesus rose from the dead and went to live with God in heaven, the disciples went to Jerusalem to pray and to tell people about Jesus. **[Image of 12 disciples]**

One day, the disciples were all together in a house. And suddenly, the sound of a rushing wind came from heaven and filled where they were sitting. *Can you make wind noises with me?*

Then the disciples saw what looked like tongues of fire resting above each person's head.

[Image of tongues of fire] And the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. Suddenly, they began to speak in different languages – many that they didn't even know!

Now, there were people from many places who spoke many different languages who were in Jerusalem at this time, too. **[Image of large crowd]** When the people heard the disciples speaking lots of different languages, a crowd gathered around them. They were amazed and confused! *Can you show me your amazed and confused faces?*

"How can we hear these words about God in our own languages?" the crowd of people thought. What does this mean? **[Image of exclamation mark & question mark]**

Some people began to make fun of the disciples. But the disciple Peter stood up and began to speak to the crowd. **[Image of Peter preaching]** Peter told them that God promised to send God's Spirit to be with all people. Peter told them about Jesus, the Messiah. Peter told them that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord would be saved. And the crowd heard Peter's amazing words and wanted to receive God's Spirit, too.

They said, "What should we do?" Peter replied, "Turn away from the things you have done wrong and be baptized with water for the forgiveness of sins. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." **[Baptism Image]** About 3,000 people chose to follow Jesus that day, and were baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. The people stayed with the disciples to learn about God **[Scroll image]**, to pray to God **[Praying hands image]**, to sing songs to God **[Music image]**, and to eat with one another **[Food image]**.

This was the beginning of the Christian church. Every year on Pentecost, the church celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit. We remember that God is with us all the time and has given us many gifts.

ACTIVITY 2: Sing Happy Birthday to the Church

Place your **birthday candle** on a celebratory treat. Beforehand, you may want to have participants decorate cupcakes or cookies with red frosting/sprinkles, flames, doves, etc. Together, talk about how Pentecost marks the birth of the Church and how people all over the world celebrate being the body of Christ on this day. Sing together and then enjoy your treats!

ACTIVITY 3: Blow Spirit Blow

The disciples heard a sound like a blowing, rushing wind when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost. In fact, the Hebrew word for spirit is *ruach*, which also means “breath,” or “wind.” Take your **pinwheel** and **bubbles** outside and use your breath to blow bubbles, and let the wind or your breath blow the pinwheel. Thank God for the gift of breath (life) and for always being present with us through the Holy Spirit.

ACTIVITY 4: Holy Spirit Sticks

Reflect together: The Holy Spirit gives us many gifts and talents. What is one way you can use your gift/talent to share God’s love?

Use a marker to write your responses on your **colored streamers**. Then tape the streamers to one end of the **red straw** to form a Holy Spirit stick. Gather together in a circle with each person waving your Holy Spirit stick and say this prayer together:

Thank you, Holy Spirit!
Thank you for being with us!
Thank you for connecting us!
Thank you for helping us share God’s love!
Thank you for helping us be the Church!
AMEN!