

Acts 2:1–21 or
Gen. 11:1–9
Ps. 104:24–34, 35b
Rom. 8:14–17 or
Acts 2:1–21
John 14:8–17
(25–27)

Pentecost

**Goal for
the Session**

As their witness to the Pentecost story, children will celebrate the exciting gift of the Holy Spirit for all.

■ 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,” Margaret P. Aymer

Pentecost gives power to the band of Jesus followers to speak the languages of the world, to tell the gospel in every language. The early church was to bear witness to the ends of the earth in the languages of the people of the world. We also should pay attention to the explanation for the phenomenon given by Peter. In quoting Joel, Peter is announcing the end of this present age and the beginning of the age to come, the age of the reign of God. For Peter—and for Luke, who tells his story—the unusual tongues of fire and abilities of speech are signs that God’s reign is immanent, that God will ultimately redeem God’s people.

WHERE is God in these words?

—From “Theological Perspective,” Linda E. Thomas

As the eleven worshiped, there was a noise so loud that it could not be ignored. So startled were they that they lost control of themselves—their sensory systems were flooded with adrenaline so that their minds and bodies processed intensely the sound, energy, and feeling of the coming of the Holy Spirit. She had come as Jesus had promised, and it was an experience rather than something cognitive. Rational theological reflection could not adequately explain the knowledge conveyed in this sensory event. All of the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. Not one was excluded. No mortal could engineer the vivacity of the coming of the Holy Spirit sent by the awesome God of Jesus Christ.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

—From “Pastoral Perspective,” Michael Jenkins

The image of God in which we were created is the image of the triune God of grace. When we say God the Trinity, we are saying that God is in God’s own being, a “Holy family.” In the image of the God who, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is eternal and living community, differentiated in person, united in love, we are ourselves created for community, and never fully live in God’s image until we live in communion. Communion assumes difference—not uniformity, not conformity to a single idealized form of life, or nationality, or ethnicity, or tribe.

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

—From “Homiletical Perspective,” Richard L. Sheffield

In “[their] own languages” they heard “them speaking about God’s deeds of power” (v. 11); they heard that “the love of God is broader than the measures of our mind.” Wulfert de Greef writes: The God of Israel is now also the God of the nations. . . . [However,] the fact that the nations are also now included among God’s people does not imply that Israel’s importance is in any way diminished. Calvin observes that God’s care for us as Gentiles implies that he has joined us together with the Jews. We have been united with the descendants of Abraham into one body. We are together with Israel, the people of God.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE
Acts 2:1–21

YOU WILL NEED

- red cloth
- Christ candle
- Bible, bookmark
- offering basket
- Singing the Feast*, 2021–2022
- CD player
- Color Pack 1, 2, 29
- Resource Sheet 1

For Responding

- option 1: copies of Resource Sheet 2; orange and red crayons and markers; scissors; large embroidery hoop or cardboard ring; yarn; hole punch
- option 2: 36-inch lengths of red ribbon or crepe paper; *Singing the Feast*, 2021–2022; CD player
- option 3: construction paper, crayons, drinking straws, tempera paint, water, spoons, newspapers
- option 4: 7-inch poster-board squares; yarn; tape; scissors; ribbons, sewing trims, fabric scraps, and/or thick yarn

God of the Spirit, may I be open to the working of the Holy Spirit in my life and especially as I teach these children. In Jesus' name. Amen.

■ LEADING THE SESSION

GATHERING

Before the session, for Responding option 1, obtain an embroidery hoop or cut a 6-inch circle from cardboard for each child. For option 3, thin tempera paint so it is the consistency of ink. For option 4, cut poster board into 7-inch squares, one per child, and cut a variety of weaving supplies into 8-inch lengths, about ten pieces per child with some extras. Place a bookmark at Acts in the worship table Bible.

Invite the first children to arrive to arrange the worship table with the red cloth, Christ candle, Bible, Color Pack 1, and offering basket.

When everything is ready, gather around the worship table. Invite a child to receive the offering. Ask:

❖ What does this white candle represent?

Light the Christ candle. Say that we light the Christ candle as a reminder that Jesus is always with us. Ask:

❖ What has changed on our worship table?

The children may notice two things: the red cloth and Color Pack 1. Hold up Color Pack 1 and encourage the children to describe what they see. Ask:

❖ What might the dove represent?

❖ What do you see over the people's heads?

❖ Why might the artist have used so much blue, red, and orange?

Explain that today is Pentecost Sunday and the story of Pentecost is today's Bible story. If your church has any special banners or other decorations for Pentecost, tell about them.

EXPLORING

Invite a child to retrieve the Bible from the worship table, open it to the bookmark, and read the name of the book (*Acts* or *Acts of the Apostles*). Ask the children if the name of the book is familiar. They may recall hearing it from previous sessions. Explain that today's Bible story is from the second chapter of Acts, so it happens before the stories about Peter and Paul. Tell the story on Resource Sheet 1 (A Gift from God). Ask:

- ❖ Why had Jesus' followers stayed in Jerusalem?
- ❖ What did Jesus promise to send them?
- ❖ On what day did the Holy Spirit arrive?
- ❖ How would the Holy Spirit help them?

Show Color Pack 2. Ask:

- ❖ Why had so many people traveled to Jerusalem?
- ❖ What are the people looking at?
- ❖ What part of the story is shown in this picture?
- ❖ What happened next?
- ❖ Some people call Pentecost the birthday of the church. How might this be the birthday of the church?

The discussion of the previous question will prepare children for the Responding options.

RESPONDING

To personalize the mobile, have the children print their name on one flame and the names of two other people in the congregation on the remaining flames. If they want to add more names, they can print a different name on each side.

**EASY
PREP**

Offer at least two options so children have a choice. One might be more challenging to interest older children.

1. **Pentecost Mobile** This mobile is a way for children to celebrate Pentecost and invite others to join their celebration. Recall that the signs of the Holy Spirit were the strong wind and the tiny flames. Explain what a mobile is and tell the children they will make one. Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 2 (Pentecost Flames), crayons and markers, and scissors. Have children cut out the flames and color them on both sides. Punch holes where indicated on the flames. Give each child a hoop or cardboard circle. Tie a length of yarn to each flame, varying the lengths. Tie or tape the other end of each strand of yarn to the hoop or cardboard ring. Attach three 18-inch lengths of yarn, spaced equally, to the hoop or ring. Tie them together at the top to create a hanger. Hang the mobiles in a hallway or space where the congregation will see them.

2. **Dance in the Spirit** The Holy Spirit comes alive as children move to music. Recall how excited the disciples and the people outside were at the arrival of the Holy Spirit on that Pentecost Day. Have the children stand in a big circle with at least an arm's length between them. Give each child two 36-inch red ribbons or crepe-paper streamers. Show them how to make loops, spirals, and waves, and invite them to create other movements. The only rule is that they remain standing in the same place. Play "I'm Gonna Sing when the Spirit Says Sing" (Color Pack 29 and track 11 on *Singing the Feast*, 2021–2022) and encourage children to make a variety of moves with the streamers to accompany the song. Sing it together with the motions. For one stanza, substitute "dance" for "sing."

3. **Blow-Paint Art** Children will make small posters to celebrate Pentecost Day at home. Ask the children to think of a greeting for Pentecost Day, such as *Happy birthday, church! The Gift of the Holy Spirit*, or *Good News for the World*. Print these greetings on newsprint for children to copy. Distribute construction paper and crayons. Suggest that they select a paper color and crayon in sharply contrasting colors. Explain that they must make the crayon lines thick so the paint won't stick to the waxy crayon. Cover the work surface with newspapers. Give each child a straw and a small paper cup of thinned tempera paint. Demonstrate how to drip just a couple of drops of paint onto the paper with a spoon and blow it around the paper with the straw. Tell the children they can use more than one color of paint, but they shouldn't soak the paper. As their posters dry, ask:

❧ How might blowing through the straws remind you of Pentecost Day?

Talk about where they might display their posters at home.

4. **Weaving a Community** The gift of the Holy Spirit weaves Jesus' followers into a community—the church it will be. Distribute the 7-inch poster-board squares prepared in advance. Demonstrate how to wind yarn around a square to create a simple loom. Keep the yarn evenly spaced, about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart. Tape down the yarn loops on the back to keep them in place. Set out the weaving materials. Invite children to select one piece at a time, think about who in the church it could represent, and then weave it in and out of the yarn on the front of the square. Have learners continue with the weaving materials until their looms are full. When all have finished, notice how the many different materials came together to form a beautiful square. Suggest that they display their weaving squares at home as a reminder that the Holy Spirit comes to all kinds of people and brings them together.

CLOSING

Gather at the worship table. Show Color Pack 1 and ask the children to review the story. Go back to the questions in the opening of the session and see if the children's answers are different.

I'm Gonna Sing when the Spirit Says Sing

I'm gonna sing when the Spirit says sing,
 and obey the Spirit of the Lord.

Sing "I'm Gonna Sing when the Spirit Says Sing" (Color Pack 29 and track 11 on *Singing the Feast*, 2021–2022). Ask the children what other words they could substitute for *sing* in this song.

Pray:

Loving God, we are thankful that your love is shown through Jesus, and on this Pentecost Day, we give you thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

To each child, say, "Thank you for coming. See you next week."

A Gift from God based on Acts 2:1-21

When Jesus left his followers to be with God, they went back to Jerusalem to the upstairs room where they had been staying. After praying for God's help, they selected Matthias to be one of the twelve disciples. Then they waited. Jesus had promised to send them the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would give them the wisdom and power they needed to teach and heal as Jesus had. But Jesus didn't say when the Holy Spirit would come. So, they waited day after day, through each night, wondering when the Holy Spirit would come to them.

As they waited, many Jews arrived in Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of Pentecost, so the city was bustling with people speaking many languages.

On that Pentecost Day, Jesus' followers were all in one place, perhaps the upstairs room where the twelve disciples had been staying. Without any warning, a terrible, strong wind blew through the house. It howled so loudly that they couldn't hear themselves think. At the same time, what looked like little flames of fire danced over each person's head. The wind blew and the flames danced and weren't put out by the wind. As all that happened, each one was filled with the Holy Spirit. And they began to speak in languages they didn't know before. One person spoke the language of the Parthians; another, the languages of the Medes. Over there a person spoke the language of the Mesopotamians; and here, the language of the Egyptians. The wind stopped and the flames disappeared, but the noise of people speaking all these languages was quite an uproar!

It was so noisy that people outside wondered what was going on in that house. When they looked in the door and the windows, they were amazed. "I know that man is a Galilean, but how can he speak my language?" "Why, that man is speaking Egyptian, and he is not an Egyptian." Someone said, "I think they have had too much new wine" and laughed.

Peter said, "Everyone, those who live in Jerusalem and those who have come from other places! We are not drunk. It is only nine o'clock in the morning. What you see and hear is what was spoken by God's prophet Joel: 'I will pour out my Spirit on all people, young and old. They will speak of important things.'"



Then Peter explained the history of God's people and about Jesus, who was the Messiah. When he told how Jesus was put to death, the people listening were upset. "What can we do?" they asked Peter and the other disciples.

"Change your hearts and live in God's ways," answered Peter. "Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then you, too, will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you, for your children, and for your children's children. It is for everyone."

Many people believed what Peter said and were baptized. About three thousand joined the community of those who believed in Jesus that day.

June 5, 2022
Pentecost

Pentecost Flames

