

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 Sunday

Goal for the Session *Like the disciples at Pentecost, youth will affirm that God inspires them, gives them gifts, and works through 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,” 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

Focus on Your Teaching

Teenagers have a special way of communicating. The cyber world has transformed the ways young people connect and create community. Social networking provides a place for teenagers to process the events and experiences of their lives. Technology offers a platform for youth to share their ideas, hopes, and passions, especially important for those who don't want the risk of speaking in public. As they explore who they are and what gifts they have to offer, the church can be a faith partner, offering affirmation, support, and instruction.

O God, help me to recognize and affirm the giftedness of each one in this group as we celebrate the presence of your Spirit among us. Amen.

YOU WILL NEED

- Bibles
- copies of Resource Sheet 2
- art supplies
- sheets of newsprint

For Responding:

- option 2: clay, fishing line, dowel rods
- option 3: copies of Resource Sheet 1, felt-tipped markers

For Web Connection:

- Internet access

Option: Play a recording of meditative music during the breath prayer time.

LEADING THE SESSION

GATHERING

Before the session, set up three centers: one with sheets of newsprint and art supplies, another with sheets of newsprint and felt markers, and a third with enough space to move around in. For option 2 in Responding, buy air-drying clay at a craft store or make clay that can be baked, finding a recipe online.

Greet youth as they arrive and explain that this is Pentecost Sunday, a time when Christians celebrate the beginning of the church and the gifts of God's Spirit. Invite them into the spiritual practice of breath prayers. Explain that breath prayers help us recognize our connection to God as the source of life.

Ask youth to sit comfortably, close their eyes, and spend a few moments quietly breathing in and out, slowly and deeply. As they do this, ask them to be conscious of the gratitude they feel for the gift of breath. Then invite them to speak the Hebrew word for God, *Yahweh* (yah-way), as a breath prayer, saying "yah" as they breathe in and "weh" as they breathe out. Have them continue for one minute, noticing what images and words come to them.

Quietly invite them to continue breathing deeply as you offer the following prayer aloud:

O God, we gather as your people, united by your Spirit. Help us to hear the messages of the Spirit during our time together. Amen.

EXPLORING

Offer the following background information:

- ✠ The Feast of Pentecost was a harvest festival that came 50 days after Passover.
- ✠ Many Jews traveled to Jerusalem from other countries for this festival.
- ✠ The story in Acts 2 takes place when all of the disciples were gathered in Jerusalem, 49 days after Jesus had died on a cross on the day after Passover.

Distribute Bibles and ask youth to find Acts 2:1–21. Have youth form into three groups according to interest: art, music/rap, or movement.

Ask each group to read the passage and re-tell the story through illustrations, creating a song or rhythm poem, or create actions without words. Give the groups time to prepare their versions of the story and then present these to the rest of the group. Then discuss:

✧ What surprised you or caught your attention in these ways of telling the story?

Before Jesus left his followers he promised that God would send the Spirit to be with them and to help them in spreading the gospel.

✧ How does the Spirit appear in this story?

✧ What happened because of the Spirit's presence?

Explain that both Hebrew and Greek use the same word for “wind” as for “breath” or “spirit.” Talk about how wind can be a helpful way of symbolizing God's Spirit. Explain that fire was also used as an image for God in biblical times.

✧ How do the actions of fire and wind differ in the story?

✧ What do you think it means that the fire settled on each individual?

The prophecy from Joel refers to the belief that God would come to judge the world one day. The belief in “end times” continues to this day. If time permits, older youth could learn more about the “day of the Lord” by reading Joel 2:28–3:21.

Not everyone was in awe over what happened in that place. Some accused Jesus' followers of being drunk.

✧ How did Peter respond to this accusation?

Peter's witness that day was powerful and verse 41 says that about 3,000 people were baptized later that day. This is a very different Peter than the one who betrayed Jesus.

✧ How does this part of the story help you to trust that the Spirit will help us?

On this Pentecost Sunday, the end of the Easter season, churches celebrate the gift of God's Spirit poured out over Jesus' followers then and now. Invite those who wish to name some ways in which they have felt the presence of God's Spirit. Ask:

✧ What gifts do we have from God that can help you spread the good news?

**EASY
PREP**

RESPONDING

Choose one of the following learning activities:

1. Progressive Community Youth will use their God-given gifts to plan a progressive community event for the children in the church. Decide on some activities: for example, a game, a sing-song, acting out a Bible story, teaching an action prayer, making a snack. Plan each activity and decide where each will be held and how children will move from one to the other. Identify gifts within the group (playing a musical instrument, dancing, storytelling, playing games, baking) and assign leaders for each activity. Make arrangements with children's program leaders to offer the event.

Clay could be shaped into forms to represent the Spirit (dove shapes) or fire (flame shapes) of Pentecost.

- 2. Clay Chimes** Youth will identify their God-given gifts by printing them on wind chimes. Have them roll out pieces of clay (about ¼-inch thick) and cut into shapes; use toothpicks to engrave a word or two on each one describing a gift that God has given them (such as, joy, friend, care, love). Have them use pencils to poke holes through the top of each shape and place on trays for air-drying or baking. When hardened, have them thread lengths of fishing line through each shape and attach to dowel rods. As these chime in response to air movement, they can serve as reminders of God's gifts.
- 3. Light Reflection** Youth will reflect on the ways that God inspires them, gives them gifts, and works through them. Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 1 (The Power of the Spirit) and felt-tipped markers and read in unison the words of the African-American spiritual. If group members know the tune, they can sing the words instead. Ask youth to name the gifts from God mentioned in this song. Then have them reflect on how they can let their light shine. Have them think of the gifts that God's Spirit has given them and fill in the box on the bottom of the page. Encourage them to decorate around the box with symbols of wind and fire that recall the story of Pentecost.

CLOSING

Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 2 (Calling on the Spirit). Explain that the litany includes some of the other names by which God's Spirit is known. Invite the group to use this litany to celebrate the presence and gifts of God's Spirit, encouraging them to say the words with enthusiasm.

Gather in two groups facing each other. Ask the groups to take turns saying the "Leader" phrases in unison in response to the whole group saying, "Come!" Then ask the youth to breathe deeply and enter into a moment of silent prayer, inviting God's Spirit to work through them in the coming days.

Close with the following blessing:

Come, Spirit, be with us always. Empower us to be ministers of the gospel, called by God, filled with Spirit, committed and faithful. Amen!

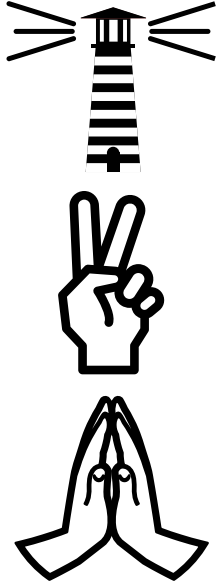
■ ENHANCEMENT

WEB CONNECTION

Pentecost Sunday celebrates the birthday of the Christian church, which began in Jerusalem and spread throughout the world. Churches can connect with each other through the "Ecumenical Prayer Cycle," which helps congregations connect in prayer with every region of the world, every week of the year. It can help Christians learn more about their sisters and brothers "living in diverse situations, experiencing diverse problems, and sharing diverse gifts." Visit the Web site to see which countries are featured this Sunday. What are their thanksgivings? What are the prayer requests? Read one of the prayers together.

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle:
www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/prayer-cycle

The Power of the Spirit



This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine,
Ev'ry day, ev'ry day,
Gonna let my little light shine.

On Monday, gave me the gift of love,
On Tuesday, peace came from above.
On Wednesday told me to have more faith,
On Thursday, gave me a little more grace.
On Friday, told me to watch and pray,
On Saturday, told me just what to say,
On Sunday, gave the power divine
Just to let my little light shine.

African American Traditional

Fill the box below with words and phrases and/or drawings
describing the gifts God has given you and how you can let your
light shine in the world.

G O D G I F T E D

G O D I N S P I R E D

G O D E M P O W E R E D

June 5, 2022
Pentecost Sunday

Youth
Resource Sheet 2

Calling on the Spirit



ALL	Come!	LEADER	Morning Star Come! Cool of evening
	Come!		Dark night of the soul
	Come!		Source of illumination
	Come!		Essence of inspiration
	Come!		Swift as a sudden shower
	Come!		Sweet as a mountain spring
	Come!		Borne on chariots of cloud
	Come!		Riding the wings of the wind
	Come!		Breath of God
	Come!		Finger of God's right hand
	Come!		Song of the universe
	Come!		Dance of the distant stars
	Come!		Soul of all that lives
	Come!		Gift of all that gives
	Come!		Sign of healing and wholeness
	Come!		Silence within our prayer
	Come!		Everlasting hope
	Come!		Tongues of fire and flame
	Come!		Love that never ends
	Come!		Life of the Living God
	Come!		Wisdom and Understanding
	Come!		Knowledge and Fortitude
	Come!		Caregiver, Comforter
	Come!		Laughter in the midst of tears
	Come!		Protector of the poor
	Come!		Friend of the utterly alone
	Come!		Known and yet Unknown
	Come!		Holy Spirit, come!