

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A –Pentecost
Lesson Plans for Younger Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21

The word Pentecost comes from the Greek meaning fiftieth day. This was the Greek name for the Hebrew Feast of Weeks, which took place fifty days after Passover. The Hebrew festival commemorated the calling of the Hebrew people into covenant with God at Mount Sinai. The new Christians kept this name because this was the same day the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles. The church saw this as the beginning of a new covenant relationship between the followers of Jesus and God. This new relationship is summarized by the prophet Jeremiah, “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.” (Jeremiah 31:33)

A Notation for this week’s Scripture

Most biblical scholars agree The Book of Acts is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. This book contains the stories of the early church and the work of the disciples. Today’s lesson is the Pentecost story, the second most important feast of the church after Easter. Following the instructions of Jesus, the disciples are waiting together in Jerusalem. Jesus had promised to send His Spirit to be with them. The Spirit entered the room like a mighty rush of wind and settled like a tongue of fire on the head of each disciple. This was the gift of encouragement and boldness the apostles needed to begin their mission of evangelism. Pentecost is considered the birthday of the church because three thousand new souls accepted Jesus as their savior that day.

Theme: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Before Class:

Look over the art options below and decide which one you want to do. Gather supplies: paper, crayons, tape, scissors, and glue.

Happy Birthday Option: You will need to draw a large birthday cake and precut candle shapes with flame on top.

Flame Crowns: Precut headbands and flames.

Holy Spirit Twirlers: You will need red and orange crepe paper and silver or orange ribbon and craft sticks. Precut streamers the streamers.

Beginning

Wish each child “Happy Birthday” as he/she enters. Have a cake or cupcake with a candle on it (or a picture of a birthday cake.) Explain that today everyone celebrates because today is the birthday of the church. Let’s find out why.

Opening Prayer: Holy Spirit we pray that you come into our hearts to make us strong and brave to do God’s work here on earth. Amen.

The Story: Acts 2:1-21

We know that Jesus always keeps His promises. Jesus loved his disciples. He didn't want them to be too sad or too afraid after He went back to His father in heaven. So Jesus promised to send His Holy Spirit to come and live in the disciples' hearts so that they would always remember Jesus and be brave to do the work He asked them to do. Jesus told them to spread the Good News of God's love.

Fifty days after Easter the promise came true. The disciples were all together in an upper room in Jerusalem. They were afraid Roman soldiers might come to arrest them, just like the soldiers had done to Jesus. They were worried and not sure what do next. All of a sudden there came a loud sound from Heaven, like the sound of a mighty wind blowing through the room. (Invite the children to make loud wind noises with you.)

Flames of fire, danced over each disciple's head. The Holy Spirit had come just as Jesus promised. The Holy Spirit entered each one's heart and made them feel brave and strong. Peter remembered what Jesus had asked them to do. He led the disciples outside. There were people from many countries visiting in Jerusalem.

A miracle happened that Pentecost. The Holy Spirit gave the disciples the ability to speak in different languages. The people became curious about these local men speaking in foreign languages. A large crowd gathered. Peter spoke to the crowd about the saving love of Jesus. The crowd was amazed because they were each able to understand in their own language. The Holy Spirit opened their hearts as well as their ears. That special Pentecost Day three thousand people were baptized and became followers of Jesus.

We say the church was born that day. A group of twelve disciples had grown to fifty and on this day there were three thousand more. What a happy birthday.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder if you ever felt God's Spirit in your heart.
- I wonder if it made you feel strong or brave or maybe something else.
- I wonder why birthdays make us so happy.

Art Options:

Happy Birthday to the Church

(You will need to have a cake cut out to tape the candles to.)

Have each child draw or color a precut candle shape with a flame on top. Invite them or help them to write their names on the candle. Each child gets to glue his candle on the cake by saying "I am glad to be part of the church."

Flame Crowns

Using the precut headbands and flames invite each child decorate and then attach the flames to headbands. Teachers will need to assist fitting them on their heads.

Spirit Twirlers

Tie 24 inch piece of red and orange crepe paper together with an 18 inch piece of silver ribbon. An alternative is to glue or staple fire colored pieces of crepe paper to craft sticks. Tell the children the Holy Spirit is like the wind. We can't see it but we can feel its power.

Holy Spirit Procession

Explain that a procession is like a holy parade. Choose appropriate music. Put on the crowns and show them how to twirl their ribbons. Process around the room or grounds as appropriate.

To the Tune of "*When the Saints Come Marching In*"

Oh when the Spirit comes in my heart

Oh when the Spirit comes in my heart

I'm going to sing and praise the Lord

When the Spirit comes in my heart.

Invite the children to create other lyrics by asking "what else will you do when the Spirit comes in your heart?"

Closing:

Have the children help put all supplies away. Return to the circle.

Explain that in the season of Pentecost we focus on the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Teach them this call and response, inviting them to take turns being the leader.

Leader: The Spirit lives in you.

Response: And also in you.

Closing Prayer: Dear Jesus thank you for always keeping your promises and for giving us your Holy Spirit. Help us to be strong and brave to do your work in the world. Amen

Lesson written by Trudy Ardizzone, 2011

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