

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Pentecost Sunday
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: John 20:19-23 and Acts 2:1-21

Today, we celebrate Pentecost that comes 50 days after Easter. It is the day in which we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and the followers of Jesus. Some call it the birthday of the church because it is the day that we are reminded again and again that the Holy Spirit moves in us and among us to help us do God's work in the world.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel and Reading

As we celebrate the Holy Spirit's descent upon the disciples and the gift of speaking in different tongues and being able to understand one another, we celebrate the diversity that God has given us. We celebrate all of the various ways in which God has gifted us with different skills, language, visions, and dreams. We are all made in God's image AND we all bring varied gifts to the community.

Theme: Gifts from the Spirit

Before Class: We have two readings today because Pentecost is really about the reading from Acts. You can decide to read both Acts and John, or just one of them. Look through the Lesson Plan to find what will best fit with your group and your timeframe. You will need copies of the Bible or of the reading for the children. You will need a roll of paper, magazines, scissors, glue, markers, and other craft materials you may have on hand. Before class, you will need to find a place for the Holy Spirit Mural. If you decide to show one of the stories listed below, you will need a computer and projector. Alternatively, if you wanted to use the Brick Bible Story and won't have access to a computer during class, you could print it off and share it.

Beginning: Gather the children and tell them that this is a special day in the church. It is often known as the Church's birthday because this is the day that the Holy Spirit came to the disciples.

Opening Prayer: *Collect Of the Holy Spirit*

Almighty and most merciful God, grant that by the indwelling of your Holy Spirit we may be enlightened and strengthened for your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen. (Book of Common Prayer, page 251)*

The Story: John 20:19-23 and Acts 2:1-21

First Reading: Acts 2:1-21

You can find this story in a children's bible, or you can use these creative resources to help tell the story.

- Brick Bible is Bible Stories told using Legos. It does not tell the whole passage, but the first part and you can read the rest to the children. This is the Pentecost story:
http://www.thebricktestament.com/acts_of_the_apostles/instant_fluency/ac02_01-03.html
- This is a YouTube video that tells the Pentecost story (also using Legos):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ww-0sCm0ge4>

Questions:

- I wonder what it was like to be a disciple that day?
- I wonder what it would have been like to be able to speak another language all of the sudden?
- “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” I wonder what this means to for you?
- If this happened today, I wonder what our reaction would be?
- How do we hear God speak to us today?
- How do we see God acting through the Holy Spirit today?

Second Reading: John 20:19-23

Invite one of the children to read the scripture for the day.

Questions:

- I wonder what it was like to be a disciple that day, to be locked in a room, and then to have Jesus come stand with you?
- Why do you think Jesus said, “Peace be with you?”
- What is this Pentecost Sunday calling us to do? Who is it calling us to be?

Activity: The Holy Spirit came to the disciples on Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is still here among us. The Holy Spirit gives us gifts and abilities to help do God’s work here on earth.

Brainstorm with the children: I wonder what gifts and abilities we have that might have been given to us by the Holy Spirit? (write their answers up on the whiteboard) (You can help them begin to think about gifts, by using the gifts of the spirit found in 1 Corinthians 12: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, speaking about God to others, speaking a different language, teaching, taking care of others, prayer, etc.)

Once you have brainstormed, invite the children to create a Holy Spirit Mural. Using the roll of paper, magazines, markers, and any other craft supplies you brought, invite them to create a mural for all to see the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given them.

Drama Option: Invite the children to rewrite the story as if it were happening today. How might it be the same? How might it be different?

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share with one another the part of the mural that they created. Hang the mural up for all to see.

Closing Prayer: Collect for Pentecost

Almighty God, on this day you opened the way of eternal life to every race and nation by the promised gift of your Holy Spirit: Shed abroad this gift throughout the world by the preaching of the Gospel, that it may reach to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs-- in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

‘In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.
Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.
And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist.
The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.
Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' "

John 20:19-23

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

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