



Pentecost

Goal: To celebrate the life-giving movement of the Holy Spirit in the world.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Acts 2:1-4, 38-39

Pentecost is the dramatic story of the coming of the Holy Spirit on Jesus' followers in Jerusalem. There was the sound of a "fierce wind" and what seemed to be "flames of fire" alighting on the disciples. The Spirit was poured out on people "from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem." They heard others speaking "in their native languages," declaring "the mighty works of God" (v. 11, CEB).

Peter preached and talked about the pouring out of God's Spirit, predicted by the prophet Joel (vv. 16-23; see Joel 2:28-32). Peter proclaimed Jesus was crucified, but was raised up in his resurrection and exalted "at God's right side" (Acts 2:33, CEB). This was Peter's message, and it became the central message of the church. Peter urged the crowd to "change your hearts and lives. Each of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (v. 38, CEB).

We celebrate the life-giving Spirit of God who is with the church now and forever. We are never alone. God's Spirit is always with us. God's grace gives us the Spirit and, in gratitude, we celebrate by serving God and others!

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

It was a big celebration, this day of Pentecost when God's Spirit was seen and experienced by the early church gathered together. Just as the people gathered to celebrate, so too your church will mark this day of Pentecost in special ways during worship. Think about the big themes in this story—God's Spirit present in wind; God's Spirit present with all the different kinds of people—and how children will connect with them. Find out what will happen in worship and help prepare the children to be participants. Help them name the ways God's Spirit is alive and well, working in their lives today.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Think about your children as you prepare to share this story of Pentecost, what we have also called "the birthday of the church." The story is rich in imagery, and you can help them connect by inviting their stories of the experience of feeling and watching the wind, or what it's like to hear people speaking in other languages. There may be children in your group who are learning other languages or children for whom English is a second language. Hearing them speak is a great way for the entire group to connect with this story about all the different people gathered in one place when God's Spirit was felt among them.

Holy Spirit, set me on fire for the gospel. Help me speak the truth in love and peace amid injustice. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023–2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 12, 15, 25

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

candle

red cloth

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1

red, yellow, and orange
tissue paper

toilet paper tubes

electric fan

Responding

Celebrating

cupcakes or other party
treats, Spirit tubes
from “Welcoming and
Preparing”

Offering

copies of GN 2

Extra

copies of GN 3, large
paper clips

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” requires more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG **A**

Play “I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy”—**MM 22**—as the children arrive. Welcome each child by saying, “May the Holy Spirit be with you, (*Name*).” Prompt the children to respond, “And also with you.”

Invite the children to help set up the worship space. On a table, provide a red cloth (the liturgical [church] color for Pentecost), a Bible, an electric fan, and a candle.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities. Suggest that one or two children prepare to lead today’s singing.

Invite the children to make Spirit tubes. Give each child a copy of **GN 1**, and time to decorate it using markers or crayons. Suggest that they use the color red in some way to represent Pentecost. When they have finished coloring, have them cut out the rectangle. Help the children cut the colored tissue paper into approximately 1" x 12" strips. Show them how to glue the tissue strips into the inside of the toilet paper tube, then glue the rectangle around the tube, overlapping one side. Invite the children to add their Spirit tubes to the worship center, and assure them they can take them home.

Singing

Gather and sing “Praise God, All You Nations (Da n’ase)—**MM 4**; **SCM 15**. Encourage the children to add movements. Tell the children the second version of the song is in the original language of the song, the Twi language from Ghana, Africa.

Praying

TD

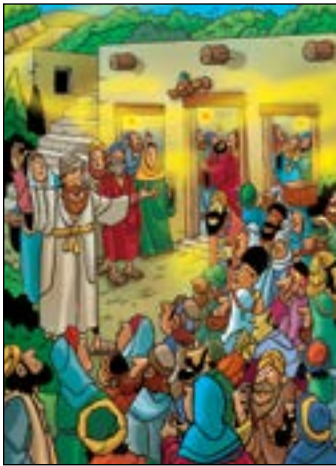
Turn on the candle and the electric fan. Ask the children how an experience of God might be like the wind. After they have responded, invite them to breathe deeply and think about how the air entering their lungs is like the Spirit. Then pray:

God, you come to us in unexpected ways, like a sudden wind that surprises us, twirling, diving, and rising again. Help us to keep our eyes and our hearts open for the movement of your Spirit all around us. Amen.



Preparing to Hear the Story

In front of the fan and the candle, ask the children to close their eyes and listen. Remind them that, after Jesus was resurrected and spent some time with his disciples, he ascended into heaven. Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would come and be with them. Keeping their eyes closed, invite the children to imagine what the disciples might have thought the Holy Spirit would look, sound, and feel like.



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.

Hearing the Story L

Ask a volunteer to open a Bible to Acts 2. Suggest that the children pretend they are the disciples waiting for the Holy Spirit. Invite them to pay attention to the way things sound, look, and feel in their imaginations as you read. Read **SCM 12** or listen to the story audio. Conclude the reading by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to respond by saying, "Thanks be to God." Place the Bible on the worship table.

Have the children gather their Spirit tubes from the worship area. Ask the children to listen for the following parts in the story. When the story talks about the wind, have them hold their Spirit tubes near the front of the fan, blowing the "flames" away from the fan. Encourage them to hold a hand to their ear to pantomime listening and to their mouth for speaking. Read the story again using **SCM 12** or listen to the story audio. If reading, express the emotions with your voice, facial expressions, and gestures. Turn off the fan.

Reflecting on God's Grace C

Invite the children to share the things they saw, heard, and felt as they imagined being a disciple at Pentecost. Wonder together about the disciples' experience.

- ▼ I wonder, "What were some of the signs that the Holy Spirit was with them that day?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What are the different ways we see, hear, and experience God's Spirit at work in the world today?"

Singing

Sing "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy"—**MM 22; SCM 25**. Add this stanza to celebrate God's gift of the Holy Spirit to the church.

I've got the Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,
down in my heart (*Where?*),
down in my heart (*Where?*),
down in my heart.

I've got the Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,
down in my heart (*Where?*),
down in my heart to stay.

Turn off the candle.



RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.



Celebrating God's Grace



Invite the children to join you in celebrating the Spirit's movement on the day of Pentecost. Explain that, on Pentecost, we celebrate God's gift of the Holy Spirit to the world.

Give thanks for God's gift with a party. Enjoy cupcakes or another party treat. Play "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy"—**MM 22**—and sing the new verse, "I've Got the Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, down in my heart."

Invite everyone to wave their Spirit tubes to celebrate this great day! Wonder together about the ways the Holy Spirit brings life to the church and to the world.

T *Transitioning from an activity with movement to a quiet or listening one can be difficult for some children. Alerting them of the change in advance, such as saying, "After this we will be praying," allows children time to anticipate the change and act accordingly.*

Praying God's Grace



Explain that one of the exciting things about the Pentecost story is that the Spirit touched people from all over the world. Talk together about the many wonderful differences that people bring to your congregation.

(Provide some examples, such as the older person who always brings the bread for communion, the woman in a wheelchair who leads the choir, the newcomer from Southeast Asia who volunteers in the nursery, and so on.)

Wonder aloud about other diverse communities the children belong to (for instance: school, a soccer team, a music group, and so forth). Ask the children what kinds of things they think we can learn from people whose backgrounds are different from our own.

Place mural paper on a table or the floor. Ask the children to cut out magazine pictures of people from different cultures, backgrounds, genders, and ages. Glue the pictures to the paper. Title the mural: "The Spirit Gathers Us from North and South, East and West!" Together, admire the images and talk about why it is important to be part of a diverse community.

Hang the mural in a well-traveled location in your church building. Invite people to add their prayers to the mural.



Offering God's Grace




Tell the children that they will make three paper helicopters.

- Hand out copies of **GN 2** and scissors.
- Cut out each of the rectangles and cut the short solid lines.
- Fold each rectangle on the longer dotted lines of the bottom half, making a narrow center section.
- Fold the left half of the top to the back and the right half to the front. On each, fold the center section in half toward the top, then in half again.

Ask the children which one they think will fly the best. Have them hold the helicopters up at the base then release and watch them twirl. Experiment with the helicopters! Fold some only partway on the bottom, roll the bottom up halfway, provide some weight to the bottom part by taping around it or securing it with paper clips, and so on.

Encourage the children to give the helicopters to others to help spread the good news.

 *Children who struggle with attention may have difficulty following directions. Provide specific instructions and time for children to complete each step.*

Extra Activity

Hand out copies of **GN 3**, scissors, large paper clips, and crayons. Encourage the children to read the words with you. Prompt the children to cut out the wind and tell them that it represents the Holy Spirit. Help them open up the paper clip so it looks like a tall thin "S." Have them tape the Holy Spirit to one end of the clip and poke the other end through the circle in the center of the world. Show them how to gently turn the Holy Spirit around the world so that it touches each person. Wonder together about the following:

- I wonder, "Where do you see the Holy Spirit working in your family?"
- I wonder, "Where do you see the Holy Spirit working in the place where you live? In your church?"
- I wonder, "Where do you see the Holy Spirit working in the world?"



LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Ask the children to help clean the space.

Gather together with the Spirit tubes. Invite the children to listen for words about flame and wind in the closing prayer. When they hear *wind*, they should blow on or through their Spirit tubes. As they hear the word *flame*, invite them to wave their Spirit tubes. Pray the following, pausing after each of those words:

Holy Spirit, you come to us in **wind**. Fill us with life and help us to follow you.

Holy Spirit, you come to us in **flame**. Help us feel the warmth of your life in our hearts. Inspire us to follow you.

Amazing God, we thank you for coming to us in **wind** and **flame** to show us your love and grace. Amen.

As the children leave, say to each child, “(Name), share God’s love with everyone you meet!”



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).

GOD'S LOVE IS
FOR ALL PEOPLE
EVERYWHERE.

God's Spirit blows like the wind.

cut

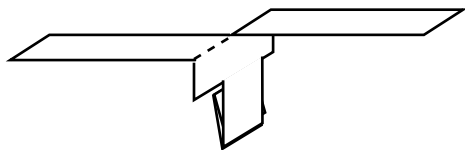
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God's love is for all people everywhere.

Spread God's good news everywhere!

The Spirit moves around the world.

