



Filled with the Holy Spirit

Goal: To imagine ways the Holy Spirit fills us.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

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

The dramatic story of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost fulfilled Jesus' promise to his disciples that they would receive power when the Spirit comes to them (Acts 1:8).

Now the Spirit arrives with "a sound from heaven like the howling of a fierce wind" (2:2, CEB) and "individual flames of fire alighting on each one of them" (v. 3). Even more, disciples "began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak" (v. 4).

This was a key event in the life of the church. The Holy Spirit fills believers in Christ on Pentecost, through dramatic events. The Spirit comes and stays with the church. Now, the Spirit fills us and is always with us, in less dramatic but tremendously important ways. Grace is given.

Receiving the Spirit's grace means following Peter's words: "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 repent—we change how we live—we are baptized, and we receive forgiveness of sins. We, our children, and all people can be filled with God's Spirit. In gratitude!

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Fifty days after Easter, Christians celebrate Pentecost, the day when God's Spirit was seen and felt, as the disciples came together to begin the work of the early church. The story you will tell of the Day of Pentecost invites children to think about their lives and how they live as followers of Jesus. Children of all ages will be able to provide examples of good and bad ways of living as a follower of Jesus. They will be able to provide their own responses to the question asked in the story: How will you change the way you live?

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

The Pentecost story is full of action, color, and lots of drama. It's a very busy story that will engage the active imaginations of the children you are teaching. It tells about the earliest Christians and how they responded to the challenge of living as Jesus' disciples, which makes it a timeless story that is easily understood by Christians today, and especially the children you teach. Get the room ready in ways that will help the children experience all the excitement of Pentecost, and invite their reflections on how God's Spirit is moving among them, even today.

*Blow fresh winds of grace into my life, O Lord, that I might
serve you in Spirit and in truth. In Christ's name. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2022–2023

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 13, 13a, 13b, 17

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

e-book or story audio
(see p. vii)

red, yellow, and/or
orange tablecloths

red candle

box or table fan

red crepe paper

world map (or
SCM 13a and **13b**)

small stickers

Responding

Celebrating

cupcakes or cookies,
plastic knives, red and
yellow frosting and
decorations, clear
plastic cups, clear soda

Praying

fan with streamers from
“Hearing the Story”

Extra

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

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the children arrive, post **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker on a clothespin. Use the 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.

“Claiming God’s Grace,” “Celebrating God’s Grace,” and “Praying God’s Grace” require more prep.

Welcoming and Preparing

LG A B M MS

Welcome the children as they arrive by saying, “Grace and peace to you.” Prompt the response, “And also with you.”

Invite the children to prepare the worship space. Ask them to place the tablecloths, a red candle, and a Bible on a table. Ask a couple of children to tear off strips of red crepe paper and tape them to the fan, making sure the fan is unplugged during this task.

Tape mural paper to the wall or spread it on the floor. Invite children to draw faces or stick figures of all colors on the mural paper with markers or crayons. Encourage conversation as the children create the space.

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

Tape a world map (or use **SCM 13a** and **13b**) to the wall where the children can reach it. Ask them if they can find your community on the map. Invite the children to say their names and what country their ancestors came from. Begin with yourself. Some children may not know; you might ask them if there’s a place they’d like to visit. Place a sticker for each child on the map, marking the place they have named. Ask the children what they know about these places. Exclaim about how wonderful it is that God made us all so different, and yet brought us all together as a community.

Singing

MS T

Gather the group in the worship space. Play “Every Time I Feel the Spirit”—**MM 13**; **SCM 17**—as children listen. Play the song again, inviting the children to sing, clap, and dance along.

Praying

Turn on the candle as a reminder of Jesus’ presence with us. Encourage a few moments of still silence as the children watch the candle flame, and then lead them in a breath prayer. Invite them to all inhale together, then exhale. Repeat two more times.

On the next inhale, say, “Come, Holy Spirit.” Be silent on the exhale. With each inhale, speak the phrase; with each exhale, be silent. Repeat several times, then offer “Amen.”



Preparing to Hear the Story C

Tell the children that today is the Day of Pentecost. Explain that Pentecost was a Jewish harvest festival, when people from all around came to Jerusalem to sell their crops and celebrate a good harvest. There were people who knew each other, but hadn't seen each other in a year. There were many people from different lands who spoke different languages.

Invite the children to share anything they might know about this special day. If not mentioned, explain that Pentecost took place weeks after Jesus had died and been resurrected (fifty days after Easter). The disciples had seen Jesus then and spent time with him, but ten days before Pentecost, Jesus ascended into heaven. He was no longer with them, but he had told them something special. He said he would send the Holy Spirit to be with them always. They didn't know what this was or when it would happen. Wonder aloud what his disciples might have been feeling.



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), pcusastore.com.

Hearing the Story C B

Invite a child to find Acts 2 in the Bible. Place the open Bible on the worship center. Read **SCM 13** or listen to the story audio. If reading, use your voice and emotions to convey the feelings. Conclude the reading by saying, "Word of wisdom, Word of grace," and prompt the children to say, "Thanks be to God."

Ask the children what sounds are in the story. Make a list on newsprint of all the sounds (for example, wind, flames crackling, many languages, "ooohs" of astonishment).

Plug in the fan. Invite the children to close their eyes and feel the wind from the fan. Hand each child a piece of scrap paper and invite them to hold it until you offer further instructions.

Ask the children to supply the sound effects as you read the story again. For example, at the mighty rushing wind, ask a volunteer to turn on the fan with the streamers. At the flames, crumple the scrap paper to make the sound of crackling fire. When you read the final paragraph, invite children to clap and celebrate.

Reflecting on God's Grace C

Ask the children to gather around the mural paper they prepared earlier. Wonder what they could add to the mural now to create a Pentecost image.

Invite them to work together to add to the picture. As they work, ask:

- ▼ What part of the story amazes you the most?
- ▼ What does the story make you wonder about?
- ▼ How might we celebrate Pentecost together?



Singing

Give God an offering of music. Play, sing, and clap with “Every Time I Feel the Spirit”—MM 13; SCM 17. Turn off the candle.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

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



Claiming God’s Grace



Before the session, for each child, cut two each of the following from colored construction paper: 1" x 9" red strips, 1" x 8" orange strips, and 1" x 7" yellow strips.

Make spirit spinners to remember that the Holy Spirit rested on the disciples’ heads in the form of a flame and that, through the Holy Spirit, many people were baptized on Pentecost.

Give each child a set of precut colored strips, a length of yarn, and blue or light blue construction paper.

- ▼ Have the children stack the papers in the following order: red, orange, yellow, yellow, orange, and red. Gather them at one end.
- ▼ Place the yarn in the center of the two yellow strips with about 3 inches sticking out beyond the paper strips.
- ▼ Staple the yarn and strips at the gathered end.
- ▼ Collect all the other ends together, forming a flame.
- ▼ Pull the yarn between the strips, bowing the center yellow strips a bit to fan out the flame, then staple in place.
- ▼ Have the children fold the blue construction paper in half and cut a water drop shape from both layers.
- ▼ Cover one side of a water drop with glue and place it under the long end of the yarn.
- ▼ Align the other shape over the first and adhere them together.
- ▼ Bend a paper clip open and tie at the flame end of the spinner.



Encourage the children to hang their spirit spinner where they will be reminded of the Holy Spirit.

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



Celebrating God’s Grace



Celebrate by preparing and serving birthday snacks. Have the children wash their hands before you begin. Invite them to frost cupcakes or cookies. Use red and yellow frosting and decorations. While the children are decorating, wonder together why the church chose the color red for the celebration of Pentecost.



Pour soda into clear cups and watch the bubbles fizzing upward. Recall that, in the story, God’s love and joy bubbled up inside the disciples. Just like the bubbles in soda, the disciples couldn’t keep their joy down. Say a prayer of thanks and enjoy the snack together.



Praying God’s Grace

C L TD SD

Turn on the fan from “Hearing the Story.” Comment that the children are hearing and feeling the wind, just as those gathered during Pentecost did.

Explain that you will lead the children in a “finish the sentence” prayer. You will say the first part of a sentence and they will complete it. Offer that it is all right to speak out (they don’t need to raise hands for permission), to speak at the same time as someone else, or to finish the sentence silently, praying in their hearts and minds. Encourage the children to wave the spirit spinner flames, if they made them in “Claiming God’s Grace,” as they pray:

God, help me to share the gift of your Spirit with . . .

God, thank you for the gift of . . .

God, help me to follow Jesus’ way of love by . . .

God, give me courage to . . .

Encourage the children to repeat after you to finish the prayer:

God, we are grateful / for the gift of your Spirit. /

Amen. /

Extra Activity

A

Remind the children that, when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, flames danced on the heads of the disciples, filling them with the Holy Spirit. Tell them that the same is true when the Holy Spirit fills any disciple of Jesus, including you and me. Flames may not be visible, and they don’t burn us, but God’s love and power are given to all who follow Jesus.

Hand out copies of **GN 1** and invite the children to use crayons to draw people who are followers of Jesus below the flames. Tell them to be sure to include themselves!

While children are adding people, put red, orange, and yellow tempera paint into cups and thin the paint with water. Have several straws in each color. Give each child a drinking straw. Show the children how to draw a small amount of paint by dipping one end of the straw into the paint cup and closing the other end with their thumb. Position the straw over the page and release the thumb. As the paint drips onto the page, instruct the children to gently blow the paint on the paper through the straw. Continue with different colors.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit gracesightings.org. Remind the parents and caregivers about the e-book and story audio (see p. vii).

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

LG

Invite the children to gather, and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

Ask them to consider how they can share the gift of the Holy Spirit, the love of Jesus, and the goodness of God this week.

Sing “Every Time I Feel the Spirit”—**MM 13; SCM 17**—together.

Finish with a breath prayer similar to the one you began with. Encourage a few moments of still silence. Invite the children to inhale together, then exhale. Repeat two more times. On the next inhale, say, “Guide me, Holy Spirit.” Be silent on the exhale. With each inhale, speak the phrase; with each exhale, be silent. Repeat several times, then offer “Amen.”

As the children leave, offer a Pentecost blessing over each by saying, “(Name), may the Spirit of grace guide you as you tell the story of Jesus this week.”



