



Filled with the Holy Spirit

Goal: To celebrate the sights and sounds of Pentecost.

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

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More (SCM) i–iv, 14, 17, 20

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

internet-connected
device

blanket or mats

flame plates made in
“Guided Play” choice 1

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: red, yellow, and
orange construction
paper squares

choice 2: straws;
lightweight items such
as feathers, beads,
cotton balls, and ribbon

Exploring

choice 2: empty clear
plastic water bottle for
each child, baby wipes,
waxed paper

choice 3: card-stock
copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1, red and yellow
tempera paint

choice 4: copies of **GN 2**

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **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.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

Before the session, cut red, orange, and yellow construction paper into 1-inch squares for “Guided Play” choice 1.

Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet children as they arrive and say, “Grace and peace be with you.” Prompt them to respond, “And also with you.”

Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time.

Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers that you do not know personally. Tell the parents today’s story is about Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity to start:

1. **Flame Plates**—Tape a large craft stick to the back of a small paper plate for each child. Invite children to glue the construction paper squares onto the plate. Save for “Hearing the Story.”
2. **Wind**—Invite the children to practice blowing out of straws. They can blow on each other’s skin to see if it tickles, and they can also blow different objects, such as feathers, beads, cotton balls, and ribbon, across a table to see how they move with the wind and if they are heavy or light. While they are experimenting with the different objects, tell them that we cannot see the wind, but we can feel it and see what it does.
3. **Rhythm Instruments**—Play “Every Time I Hear the Spirit.” Invite the children to dance and play rhythm instruments.

TD *For children who have tactile sensitivities, stimulations like body contact—that most people do not particularly notice or are not bothered by—could cause reactions that may be interpreted as bad behavior. If blowing on the child’s skin elicits a reaction, help the child to focus the blowing on other objects.*



Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into story time, call them to the story corner, singing “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in the Morning”—**SCM 20**. Repeat words and phrases as it seems appropriate.

I Spy

VI

This is a variation of the “I Spy” game. Say, “I spy red!” Invite the children to name or point to all the items they can find of that color in the room. Tell the children that red is the color for Pentecost, a special celebration for the church.

Breathing Exercises

M L

The word *ruach* in Hebrew means “spirit” and “breath.” Doing breathing exercises can help a person become calm and focused and aware of God within us. Do the following exercises with the children:

- ▼ **Basic Breathing:** Invite the children to sit in a comfortable position. Invite them to relax their shoulders, arms, and neck. Invite them to breathe in through their nose and out through their mouth. Encourage slow, even breaths by saying, “Breathe in . . . breathe out.”
- ▼ **Noisy Breathing:** Tell the children to breathe in through their nose and then blow out through their mouth, blowing out as much air as they can, then taking a deep breath in through the nose. It’s OK if they make noise as they breathe in and breathe out.
- ▼ **Belly Breathing:** Invite the children to lie on their back on the floor in a comfortable position. Have them place their hands on their belly. Invite them to breathe in through their nose and out through their mouth. Invite them to be aware of the rise and fall of their stomach.



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.

Return to the “Basic Breathing” exercise.

Hearing the Story

L

Open the Bible to Acts 2. Comment that we read the Bible to hear stories about all of God’s people. Tell the children that they will hear a story about how the Holy Spirit came to the disciples at Pentecost.

Read **SCM 14**. Ignore the directions in the parentheses in this reading. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Give the children their flame plates made in “Guided Play” choice 1. Invite the children to follow the directions provided in the story in the parentheses. Read the story again.



EXPLORING GOD’S GRACE

1. Singing Over and Over L

Tell the children that people told the story of Jesus and the Holy Spirit over and over again. Explain that they will sing a song that repeats over and over to remind them that we, too, can tell the story of Jesus and how we can praise him, love him, and serve him. Invite them to sing “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in the Morning”—**SCM 20**. Teach the following motions to go with each verse:

Jesus (*hands cupped to the side of the face telling about Jesus*),
Praise him (*hands in the air waving*),
Love him (*hands folded across the chest*),
Serve him (*hands out to the side, palms up*).

2. Sounds of Pentecost L SD

Fill clear plastic water bottles with varying amounts of water. Show the children how to make a sound by placing your lips at the edge of the opening of a bottle and blowing over the opening. Point out that it sounds like wind when you blow. Blow over several bottles of varying amounts of water so the children may hear the changes in sound. Invite the children to take a water bottle and make a wind sound. Allow the children to switch bottles and try different sounds.

Have the children close their eyes. Gently crumple a sheet of waxed paper to make the sound of a crackling fire. Encourage them to think about the story of Pentecost they heard. Tell them this is what a crackling fire sounds like. Give each child a sheet of waxed paper and show the children how to gently crumple the paper to make the sound. Have extra sheets of waxed paper on hand in case some children crumple the paper too quickly.

Option: Read the story again using these sound effects.

3. Flame Painting TD FM T

Cover your table. Hand out copies of **GN 1**. Give the children a paint smock to wear. Invite the children to use red and yellow paints to paint on one side of the flame. Help the children fold their flame in half and invite them to press down and rub the paper so that the paint spreads to both halves. Open the paper and see the flames. Lay aside to dry. When the flames are dry, help the children cut them out.

T *Washing hands can take time! Waiting in line for the sink may make some children anxious. Devise a routine for your group so they know what to expect. Use a song, movement poem, or physical activity to match the time required.*

Water can be messy! Sit at a table. Have paper towels handy.

After each child blows over a water bottle, wipe off the rim with a baby wipe.

Note that there are sounds that are bothersome to some individuals.



Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.

4. Coloring Page



Hand out copies of **GN 2** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of Pentecost. Engage the children in conversation as they color by using the following questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “How did the disciples feel when they heard the wind?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did the disciples feel when they saw the flames?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did the disciples say to each other?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did they tell other people?”

C *Some children don’t verbalize quickly. Nod and show them you are listening, giving them time to formulate an answer.*

LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Call the children together, singing “Every Time I Feel the Spirit”—**SCM 17**. March around the room with the flame plates and rhythm instruments while celebrating that God fills us with the Holy Spirit.

If you would like to share a snack, now would be a good time.

Pray:

Thank you, God, for the food before us.

Thank you, God, for the friends beside us.

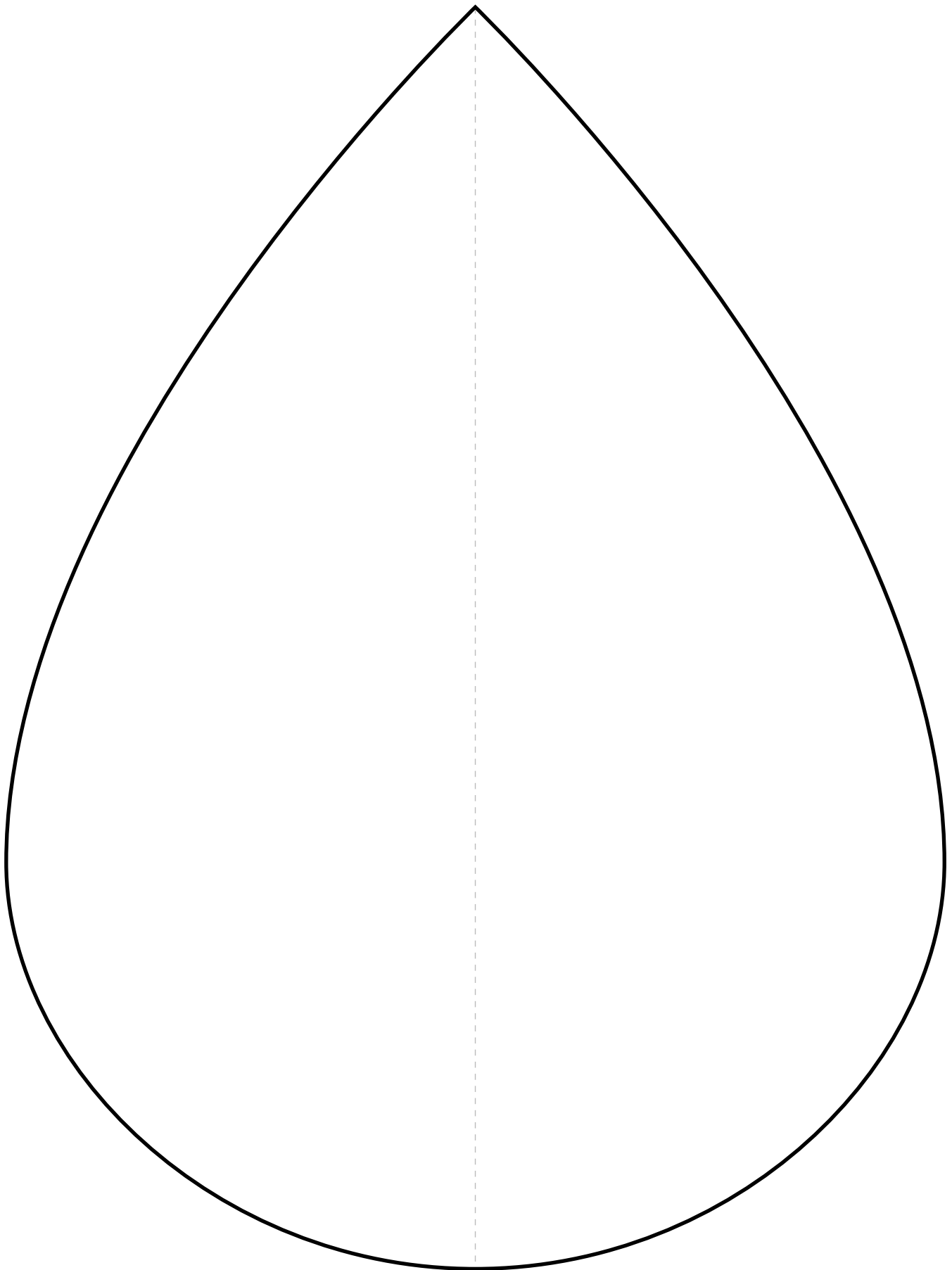
Thank you, God, for the love between us. Amen.

Remind the children that Pentecost is a special celebration in the life of the church. Remind them to tell the story of Jesus and that we can praise him, love him, and serve him.

As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), show your love for Jesus and for others every day. The grace of God is with you.”



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads, where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).



Filled with the Holy Spirit



The Holy Spirit filled the room with sights and sounds.