

**Acts 2:1–21**

**Ps. 104:24–34, 35b**

**Rom. 8:22–27 or**

**Acts 2:1–21**

**John 15:26–27;**

**16:4b–15**

# Holy Fire!

**Goal for  
the Session**

*Tweens will celebrate the awe-inspiring story of the coming of the Holy Spirit on all believers.*

## ■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

### Focus on Acts 2:1–21

#### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Michael H. Floyd

This passage describes the impact of the Holy Spirit’s coming in two phases, first on the assembled disciples (Acts 2:1–4) and then on the gathering crowd (Acts 2:5–21). The occasion for the assembly of the disciples is the festival of Pentecost or Weeks, celebrated fifty days following the festival of Passover. Pentecost, originally a harvest festival, eventually came to commemorate the giving of the law at Sinai. The Spirit’s manifestation as wind and fire recalls similar images of God’s presence and activity in creation, exodus, and covenant making.

#### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Donald K. McKim

Theologically, the Christian church begins to take shape when the Holy Spirit fills those who believe in Jesus as the Messiah, enabling them to proclaim the gospel and to witness to the Christ “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The church emerges by the Holy Spirit, who dramatically establishes a fellowship of faith, calling believers into the household of God to be witnesses to what God has done in Jesus Christ for the purposes of salvation. The church is the place where this new fellowship begins to take shape as it recognizes the gifts of the Spirit in and for all people.

#### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Kristin Emery Saldine

The story of Pentecost is not meant to be a benchmark of what the church should look like on any given Sunday. Rather, it seeks to communicate how important the church is and how inseparable it is from Christ. Every year, on the Day of Pentecost, we are reminded of who we are as a church, what we proclaim, and the source of that proclamation. Pentecost sums up the gospel with simplicity and audacity: Jesus Christ offers salvation to all, and the church exists to proclaim it.

#### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” G. Lee Ramsey Jr.

Significant in this text is the radical social equality of those who receive the Holy Spirit. This becomes even clearer as the story in Acts unfolds. Old and young, women and men, slave and free all receive the power of God to prophesy, see visions, and dream. Occasionally God anoints big dreamers who with their lives and words paint upon a global canvas, renewing visions for human community. But God also anoints ordinary believers like the ones who sit in the pews. They too see visions and dream dreams that can move the church and its surrounding community a little closer to the “Lord’s great and glorious day” (v. 20).

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE**

**Acts 2:1–21**

## Focus on Your Teaching

Many tweens will have witnessed or seen videos of the awe-inspiring power of natural forces such as wind and fire, so they will have some insight into the excitement of this fiery story of Pentecost. The focus of this day is celebration, so encourage tweens to have fun and express their exuberance, as they feel led. As you prepare for this session, remind yourself to be open to the leading of the Spirit through tweens' comments and suggestions. Approach this session with a sense of anticipation and fun. Above all, enjoy this time with your group!

*Powerful and loving God, through this joyful celebration of your Spirit poured out, deepen my understanding of your love for me. Amen.*

**YOU WILL NEED**

- ☐ red cloth
- ☐ large white battery-powered candle
- ☐ red, orange, and yellow streamers
- ☐ Color Pack 24, 25, 26, 31, 34
- ☐ *Singing the Feast*, 2023–2024; CD player
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ copies of Resource Sheet 1
- ☐ marker
- ☐ paper, scissors, tape
- ☐ empty glass bottles
- ☐ red soda pop, cups

**For Responding**

- ☐ option 1: copies of Resource Sheet 2, pens
- ☐ option 2: Internet-connected device, supplies listed at Web site
- ☐ option 3: dowel rods, red satin ribbon, stapler, yarn, clear tape, electrical tape, pony beads

## ■ LEADING THE SESSION

### GATHERING

*Before the session*, if you will be using option 2 in Responding, make and launch a practice rocket. If you will be using option 3 in Responding, cut dowel rods into 12-inch lengths and cut 1/2- to 1-inch-wide red satin ribbon into 3-foot lengths; arrange for tweens to meet with a younger group.

Greet each tween with the words, “Alleluia! God’s Spirit is moving among us!” Invite learners to arrange the red cloth in the center of your meeting space, placing the candle on top of the fabric. Ask them to decorate your space with red, orange, and yellow streamers.

Gather the group and light the candle, explaining that today is Pentecost Sunday, the day the church celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit on Jesus’ disciples. Teach the following acclamation, then say it together several times, with exuberance:

Jesus is risen,  
The Spirit is given.  
Praise God!

Sing “Every Time I Feel the Spirit” (Color Pack 31; track 6 on *Singing the Feast*, 2023–2024). Offer this prayer:

*God of love, breathe new life into us this Pentecost Day. Fill us with your Spirit, so that we may celebrate your love and offer it to everyone we meet. Amen.*

Begin a conversation by asking:

✠ When have you felt like jumping for joy? (Be sure to tell an experience of your own.)

## EXPLORING

Remind the group that the Bible stories for the past three weeks have come from the book of Acts, written by the same writer as the Gospel of Luke. Acts continues the story of Jesus' disciples and tells about the start of the early church. Show Color Pack 24 and read through the time line. Use a marker to print *The Festival of Pentecost* on Day 50.

Ask tweens to find Acts 1:1–5 in their Bibles. Ask a volunteer to read aloud the passage. Show Color Pack 25, and ask tweens to imagine that these are some of Jesus' followers waiting for the promised gift of the Spirit. Cut speech bubbles from paper. Ask each tween to choose one person in the picture, imagine what this person might be thinking or saying, write this on a speech bubble, and tape it to the picture. Discuss:

- ✠ What do you think it was like to wait in Jerusalem for those ten days?
- ✠ What do you think the disciples expected would happen when the Spirit came?
- ✠ What questions might they have had about this promised coming of the Holy Spirit?

Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 1 (The Holy Spirit Comes), empty glass bottles, and paper. Ask for volunteers to read the various parts. The whole group will contribute to the sound effects. Demonstrate how to make wind sounds by blowing across the tops of the bottles and fire sounds by crinkling the paper. After the dramatic reading, ask:

- ✠ Why do you think God made the Holy Spirit known through fire and wind?
- ✠ Why do you think the Holy Spirit enabled the followers to speak in different languages?
- ✠ What do you think will happen next?

Have tweens turn to Acts 2:12–21 in their Bibles, and ask two volunteers to read aloud the passage, alternating verses. Discuss:

- ✠ How do you think this experience helped the disciples continue with Jesus' ministry?
- ✠ In what ways might the lives of those gathered in Jerusalem have changed after this event?

Show Color Pack 26. Marvel at the power of fire, asking:

- ✠ What words would you use to describe a fire like this?
- ✠ Why do you think fire is a symbol for the Holy Spirit?

Continue your celebration by serving red soda pop. Draw attention to the bubbles rising up and popping on the surface of the drinks, observing that the Holy Spirit bubbling up in the disciples changed their lives completely.

Draw Exploring to a close by recalling that the coming of the Holy Spirit helped the disciples go out and change the world. Ask:

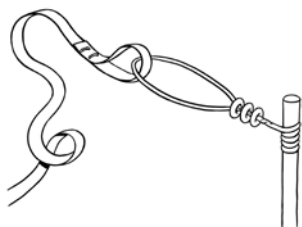
- ✠ Where would you like to see the Holy Spirit bring change in the world today?

EASY  
PREP

## RESPONDING

Mark the activities you will use:

1. **Spirit Puzzle** Invite tweens to think more deeply about how the awe-inspiring experience of the Holy Spirit changed the disciple's lives forever. Distribute copies Resource Sheet 2 (A Gift from God) and have learners work alone or in pairs to complete the puzzle. When all are finished, read aloud Galatians 5:22–23a. Suggest that when we see people acting with those qualities listed in Galatians, we are seeing the Spirit move. Have tweens name times they have seen these qualities at work. Ask each one to consider: In what ways is the Spirit at work in me to change my life and the lives of others?
2. **Joy Launchers** The power and joy of the Holy Spirit helped launch the Christian church. Follow the directions for making vinegar and baking soda rockets at [bit.ly/FOWMakeBSVRocket](http://bit.ly/FOWMakeBSVRocket). Take the instructions and all materials outside for this project, away from windows and vehicles. Have tweens launch their bottles one at a time, ensuring that the group stands well back from the launch site. After all the rockets are launched, talk about how the love and joy of the Holy Spirit in the disciples was so powerful it launched the church. Ask: Where do you see the joy and love in our church today? Suggest that whenever we see those things, we are seeing the Spirit moving.
3. **Celebration Twirlers** The awe-inspiring Pentecost story encourages us to celebrate God's gift of the Spirit. Guide tweens in making celebration twirlers to give to younger church school children, following these instructions: Fold over 1 inch at the end of a 3-foot length of red satin ribbon to make a loop. Secure the loop with staples. Thread a 12-inch piece of yarn through the loop. Place the ends of the yarn together and wrap tightly with a small piece of clear tape to hold the ends together. Thread the taped end through several pony beads. Use electrical tape to affix the yarn to one end of a 12-inch dowel rod. Practice moving the dowels to create interesting movements with the ribbons. Demonstrate the movements to the younger children, and then play some lively worship music and invite the children to celebrate Pentecost with their twirlers.



### I've Got Peace like a River

I've got *peace like a river*,  
I've got peace like a river,  
I've got peace like a river in  
my soul.  
I've got peace like a river,  
I've got peace like a river,  
I've got peace like a river in  
my soul.

I've got *joy like a fountain*,  
...

I've got *love like an ocean*,  
...

## CLOSING

Gather the group and light the candle. Invite tweens to close their eyes and slowly breathe in and out. Encourage them to focus on the movement of the air in and out of their lungs, imagining the breath of the Spirit moving in and around them. Lead a breath prayer of blessing, demonstrating how to inhale deeply while saying, "Come Holy Spirit," and exhale while saying, "Give us your peace." Pray this prayer together several times, then sing "I've Got Peace like a River" (Color Pack 34; track 12 on *Singing the Feast*, 2023–2024).

Extinguish the candle.

Say good-bye to each tween by name, thanking each one for being a member of the group.

## The Holy Spirit Comes

**Narrator 1:** For ten days the disciples waited.

**All:** *(Make a deep sighing noise.)*

**Disciple 1:** Waiting, waiting, waiting.

**Disciple 2:** How much longer?

**Disciple 3:** We've been waiting for ages.

**Disciple 1:** How do we even know what it will be like when the Spirit comes? Suppose it's already happened and we didn't realize it?

**Narrator 2:** On the day of Pentecost, all of Jesus' followers were together in one room. Suddenly there was a noise from heaven like the sound of a mighty rushing wind! It filled the house where they were meeting.

**All:** *(Make wind sounds by blowing across empty glass bottles.)*

**Disciple 2:** What's happening?

**Narrator 1:** Then like wild tongues, fire spread out and touched each person there.

**All:** *(Crackle paper to make fire sounds.)*

**Narrator 2:** Everyone was filled with the Spirit and began praising God in whatever languages the Spirit helped them to speak.

**Narrator 1:** Many faithful Jews from every country in the world had come to Jerusalem for the Pentecost celebration.

**Onlooker 1:** What's that noise?

**Onlooker 2:** It seems to be coming from that house over there.

**Onlooker 3:** Let's go and see what's going on.

**All:** *(Make sound of footsteps.)*

**Onlooker 1:** It's coming from that house.

**Onlooker 2:** Something exciting is going on.

**Onlooker 3:** What are they saying?

**Onlookers 1 and 2:** Shh! We're listening!

*(Pause.)*

**Onlooker 3:** Hey, aren't these people Jesus' followers?

**Onlooker 1:** Wait a minute—don't they all come from Galilee? Then why do we hear them tell of the wonderful things God has done in our own languages?

**Onlookers 1, 2, and 3:** What's going on here?



Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until God sent a special gift.  
what it was, follow the line from each object on the left until you reach a  
the first letter of the name of the object in the box.

The objects on the left are:

- A lightbulb
- A cowboy hat
- A top hat
- A bomb
- A crayon
- An octopus
- An ice cream cone
- A sneaker
- A rabbit
- A tree

The words and phrases in the word search are:

- no longer
- The
- shared
- were
- able
- disciples
- to
- but
- good
- The
- went out of
- news to
- afraid
- the story of
- Jesus.
- heal
- everyone.
- tell with
- perform
- Jesus
- was
- Thousands of
- people
- joined the church.
- miracles.
- and
- disciples

The connections are as follows:

- Lightbulb → The
- Cowboy hat → no longer
- Top hat → shared
- Bomb → were
- Crayon → able
- Octopus → Jesus.
- Ice cream cone → heal
- Sneaker → everyone.
- Rabbit → tell with
- Tree → perform

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