

The Holy Spirit at Pentecost

Grades
3-4

SPIRIT

ACTS 2:1-21

What's happening in this story?

When Jesus ascended, he promised the apostles the Holy Spirit so they could share the gospel with others. They are not sure what their next step is—how do they go into the world to share the gospel? That's where the Spirit comes in. But it's not the "sweet, sweet Spirit" that the hymn describes; it's a violent wind carrying in tongues of fire and giving people the ability to speak in foreign languages! This story reminds us that God's Spirit is active, moving, and powerful—something to be in awe of.

What does this story mean for kids?

Kids will gloss over the hard words and wonder about literal interpretations in this story, like how there could be flames on people's heads. They might ask questions about what it feels like to have the Holy Spirit. We might talk about a special feeling during prayer or a sense of something special we can't quite put into words. While these experiences point to the Holy Spirit, this text tells us that the Holy Spirit is God's continuing presence, empowering us to follow Jesus.

Why this theme?

The theme of Spirit is quite abstract, and grade-school kids are largely concrete thinkers. Help them understand the Holy Spirit as God's presence surrounding them like a blanket or a hug, and filling them throughout their life—like breath or the water that makes up much of their body's cells.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Some kids learn best through feeling, smelling, tasting, hearing, and moving—sometimes all at the same time. Today's lesson is filled with sensory experiences they will enjoy.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Markers
- Glue stick
- Scissors
- Masking tape
- Crayons

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Straws
- Tissues
- Streamer (red)
- Mural paper

WHIRL SUPPLIES

• **WHIRL KIDS STUDY BIBLES**

• **DVD**

• **WALL CHART**

• **LEAFLETS**

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Set out tissues and straws. Invite kids to use the straws to blow the tissues across tables or other flat surfaces. Tell kids that today's story involves strong wind. Can they fill up the room with wind by blowing the tissues?

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

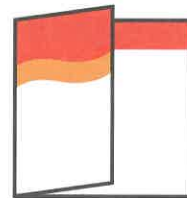
What do you think about when you hear the word *spirit*? Kids may bring up school spirit, spirituals sung in church, or even ghosts. **The English word *spirit* comes from a Latin word for *breath*. What do you think *spirit* could have to do with *breath*? The disciples in the story today were gathered when the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit, entered them. Like the air we breathe, the Holy Spirit is always in us too.**

Pray together: **Thank you, God, for giving us the Holy Spirit to guide us and be with us always. Holy Spirit, send us out to do your work. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and markers.

What did you do on your last birthday? Who celebrated with you? Draw a birthday cake with candles in the space. When the Holy Spirit came to Jesus' disciples, it was the beginning of the Christian

church. Sometimes it's thought of as the church's birthday! Tell kids to draw a cross in the middle of the cake and write "Happy Birthday, Church!" below it. **When it's someone's birthday, we often give a gift. After Jesus ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit provided God's people with gifts to pass on to the world. What gifts has the Holy Spirit given you to pass on?**



Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

The Holy Spirit is in each one of us. Leo is worried that the Holy Spirit might not be in him. Let's watch what he does to see what he finds out.

View Episode 10, "Holy Android," on the Year Gold Spring Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- In the beginning of the video, what do the kids enjoy about hearing the Pentecost story?
- Why does Leo think the Holy Spirit isn't in him?
- What does Leo do to correct the "problem"?
- How do you know the Holy Spirit is working in your life?
- In what ways is it reassuring to know God is always with you?



Open your Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Today's passage is from the book of Acts. It's in the New Testament in the Gospels and Acts section of the Bible. Invite kids to check out the book introduction and comic on page 1303.



The Pentecost story happened not long after Jesus died, was raised, and ascended into heaven. The disciples had gathered together, and the Holy Spirit came to them in a spectacular way.

Help kids find Acts 2:1-21 and read it in this creative way together: Ask kids to follow your lead as a volunteer reads verses 1–4. Tell them that during verse 1, you'll all gather together. During verse 2, everyone blows and makes the sound of rushing wind. During verses 3-4, you'll tap them on the head with a red streamer—a tongue of fire. Beginning with verse 5, kids will take turns reading verse by verse. Ask the volunteer to begin. After the reading, ask kids to look at the map on page 1530. **How many of the places that we just read about can you find on the map?**

Invite kids to check out what Ruby says about Acts 2:4-5.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **What “supernatural” marvels happened when the disciples gathered at Pentecost?**
- **What emotions do you think the disciples experienced?**
- **How would you have felt if you had been one of the disciples that day?**
- **What surprised the other people in Jerusalem at the time?**
- **The Holy Spirit filled the disciples with the power and courage to tell others about Jesus. Where can the Holy Spirit guide you to tell others about Jesus?**

Make your mark on the Wall Chart.

Look at the chart and find the theme for today. Give kids time to find the word *Spirit*. **The Holy Spirit appeared as a burning flame to the early followers of Jesus. We may not see the Spirit as a flame, but it burns like a flame in our hearts.** Invite one kid to glue a piece of the red streamer in the box by *Spirit*.



BIBLE BIT

The word *Pentecost* comes from the Greek name for *Shavuot*, or the Feast of Weeks, a festival in ancient Israel memorializing the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, pay attention to the languages that Mimi speaks. Where in the world are those languages spoken?

OUR CHURCH

Invite a congregation member who has participated in an overseas mission to class. What is it like to do God's work while experiencing a language barrier?

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out markers.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. **At Pentecost, the twelve disciples felt the Spirit come like tongues of fire. People from many countries understood what the disciples said about God, even though they didn't speak the same language.**
2. **"Jesus loves you" is written on your leaflet in five languages. Choose one non-English language and practice saying it with someone near you.**
3. When kids are ready, name the languages one by one and invite them to say "Jesus loves you" in that language. Then follow the lines to the countries where each language is spoken, inviting kids to tell you anything they know about those countries.
4. **Christian faith translates into every language. Jesus' love is for everyone, no matter what language they speak or where they live.** Invite kids to name other languages they know and point to countries where they are spoken on the map. **What languages do we hear at our church? In your neighborhood or school?**
5. **There's one more language of the Holy Spirit—the language of our actions. How do people in our church show they are filled with the Holy Spirit? Inside the flame, write something you can do to show you are filled with the Holy Spirit.**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost with a Wow! entrance—a strong wind, a burning flame, and giving the gift of speaking in different languages to the disciples. Most days aren't like that day. But the Holy Spirit is with us every day. How does the Holy Spirit work in us and guide us in Wow! ways and in everyday ways?

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out scissors, markers, crayons, and tape.

Write your name inside the inner flame. Color the outer flame. While kids work, write "The Holy Spirit lives in..." on mural paper large enough to fit everyone's flame. Ask kids to cut out their flame and tape it to the mural paper. **The Holy Spirit burns brightly in us!** Post the flames in a place where others can see these symbols of the Holy Spirit.

Send kids out with a blessing.

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.