

Acts 2:1–21 or
Ezek. 37:1–14
Ps. 104:24–34, 35b
Rom. 8:22–27 or
Acts 2:1–21
John 15:26–27;
16:4b–15

Celebrate the Spirit!

Goal for the Session *Children will celebrate Pentecost, the church’s birthday, and the many people who make the church grow.*

■ P R E P A R I N G F O R T H E S E S S I O N

Focus on Acts 2:1–21

WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Michael H. Floyd

Peter explains what has happened as the fulfillment of an oracle prophesied long ago. According to the prophet Joel, God would one day empower all classes of the community to become prophets by pouring out the Spirit in a theophany of wind and fire, so that all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved (Joel 2:28–32a). The disciples have all become prophetic. God’s deeds of power (Acts 2:11) include the sending and raising of Jesus (Acts 2:22–24), and God’s purpose is the salvation of all (Acts 2:21, 40).

WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Donald K. McKim

There is now a new community of women and men where the one Spirit bestows many gifts—on all people, regardless of who they are. 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. To realize that “all flesh,” all people, receive the Spirit, enables us to watch and participate in God’s work in this world with a wide-open vision. We live in eager anticipation of the Spirit’s work in our midst as we join with all others to accomplish the Spirit’s purposes.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Kristin Emery Saldine

Pentecost emphasizes the centrality of Christ to the church’s identity, authority, and proclamation. This christological focus at Pentecost is essentially ecclesiological, and it affords an opportunity for us to see the church in its many dimensions. The first, and most important, dimension of the church is its universality. We confess this each time we recite the Apostles’ Creed: “I believe in the holy catholic church.” The Holy Spirit gifts the church to proclaim the Good News to the ends of the earth. Pentecost reminds us that, even though all our faith practices are rooted in local contexts, the church’s identity extends beyond every congregation, denomination, and cultural tradition. Pentecost celebrates the face of Christ throughout the world.

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

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

The text states clearly that Jews from all parts of the Middle East are each able to hear in their own native languages. Like a gathered conference of the United Nations, each delegate hears the proceedings in his or her own tongue. The Word of God not only transcends cultural barriers, but it arrives in the particular language of each listener. Pentecost verifies Christmas. All wrapped up in human form, God comes to us in our very own bodies; God speaks to us our very own language(s). Through ordinary human speech, the Holy Spirit establishes unity amid diversity, a fulfilled promise that even the most divided congregations and communities can take to heart.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Acts 2:1–21

YOU WILL NEED

- red tablecloth (from May 16)
- permanent markers
- copies of Resource Sheet 1
- scissors
- Singing the Feast*, 2020–2021; CD player
- children’s Bible
- 3 red balloons
- baking soda
- funnel, tablespoon
- vinegar
- 3 empty plastic water bottles
- colored pencils
- Color Pack 23, 24, 30, 32
- Internet-connected device (optional)

For Responding

- option 1: copies of Resource Sheet 2 on red paper, paper clips, scissors
- option 2: Color Pack 25, scissors, white paper, crayons, tape
- option 3: materials listed in activity

Option: Watch a demonstration of the baking soda and vinegar balloon blowing activity at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JK5-2X_GqP8.

Focus on Your Teaching

Even though it’s sometimes important for children to walk in quiet lines or sing and respond in unison, try to keep in mind that each one is God’s unique child. Children learn in different ways and have unique skills and talents. As they hear about that first Pentecost celebration in the church, they will learn about the many gifts the Spirit gives. Make today’s session a celebration of the church’s birthday. When you talk about gifts, be sure learners understand you are speaking about the things the Spirit helps them do to make the church grow.

Lord, thank you for the gifts your Spirit has given to me. Help me to grow in appreciating your gifts in each child. Amen.

LEADING THE SESSION

GATHERING

Before the session, arrange the red tablecloth (from May 16) in the center of your learning space. Pour vinegar into each empty water bottle, about half full, and put on the cap. Use a funnel to place two tablespoons of baking soda inside each red balloon. If you are using option 1 in Responding, cut out the “Pente-copters” on copies of Resource Sheet 2 (Pente-copters), one per child. If you are using option 2, cut out the squares on Color Pack 25; cut 6" squares of white paper, one per child. If you are using option 3, assemble the materials listed next to the activity.

Greet children warmly as they arrive. Invite learners who were absent last week to write their names on the red tablecloth with permanent marker.

Announce that today is a birthday celebration for the church! Say you want to blow up balloons for the celebration. Uncap one of the bottles of vinegar. Ask a child to help you put the balloon onto the top of the bottle, being careful to keep the baking soda in the balloon. (Be mindful of allergies.) Grasp the balloon firmly and have the child tip the balloon up so the baking soda falls into the bottle. After the balloon inflates, quickly remove it and tie off the end. Repeat with other balloons. Recap the bottles and set aside.

Pray aloud, inviting learners to repeat each phrase:

Dear God, / be with us today / as we learn and celebrate / the love you give us. / Amen.

Sing “I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy” (Color Pack 30; track 12 on *Singing the Feast*, 2020–2021) while children bat the balloons and try to keep them airborne. Afterward, place the balloons on the tablecloth.

I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy
down in my heart,
Down in my heart, down in
my heart;
I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy
down in my heart,
Down in my heart to stay.

God is with us, God is with
us, praise ye the Lord;
Praise ye the Lord, praise ye
the Lord.

God is with us, God is with
us, praise ye the Lord;
Praise ye the Lord always.

Did you know? Red is the color associated with the Day of Pentecost on the Christian church year calendar. It is a reminder of the power of the Holy Spirit that came as tongues of fire. *Pente* (or *penta*) means "five." Pentecost is celebrated 50 days after Easter.

**EASY
PREP**

EXPLORING

Show Color Pack 24 and say that today's story is about a gathering of Jesus' followers after Jesus had gone to live with God. Read aloud Acts 2:1–12 from a children's Bible. Invite children to take part by making sounds of the wind (v. 2), crackling flames (v. 3), and of everyone talking at the same time (v. 6). Pause after verse 12 and show Color Pack 24. Read the words on the picture in unison. Ask:

- ✠ What clues suggest that all these people are not from the same town or nation? (Differences in clothing styles; expressions suggesting difficulty understanding each other.)

Continue by reading aloud verses 13–21 from the children's Bible. Discuss the story:

- ✠ What amazing things happened in this story?
- ✠ How did the disciples know God had sent the Holy Spirit to them?

Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 1 (Pentecost Booklet) and scissors. Have learners cut around the outside of the booklet on the solid line and then fold it on the dotted lines. Have them use red colored pencils to color the letters of the title. Look at each page of the booklet and have learners tell what part of the Pentecost story goes with each page. Invite them to write a key word or two on each page to help them to tell the story to others. As time allows, learners may color the illustrations.

Recall how the Spirit helped the disciples tell others about God.

- ✠ When the disciples told the people about God's amazing deed of power, what things do you think they told them? (For example: creation, raising Jesus from death, sending the Spirit.)
- ✠ Why do you think the church grew after this day?
- ✠ Who helps the church to grow today? After each person is named, have learners bat balloons in the air and say "Thank you, God!" Be sure to say the name of each child.

RESPONDING

Mark the activities you will use:

- 1. Pente-copters** Children will celebrate Pentecost by making a wind toy. Give each child one pente-copter cut from Resource Sheet 2 (Pente-copters) and scissors. Lead learners in the following steps: Cut on the long solid line at the top and the two short solid lines on the sides. Fold up the small tab at the bottom of the copter, then fold in the long lower sections. Place a paper clip at the bottom. Fold the two flaps on the top in opposite directions. Show children how to toss the pente-copter in the air and watch it float to the ground. Ask learners what parts of the Pentecost story might be illustrated by these toys. (Wind, flames, Spirit working in the disciples.) Invite them to use their toys to illustrate their responses. Encourage learners to use these at home to celebrate how the Spirit is at work in their families too.

If you have a large group, have some learners work in pairs. If your group is small, do some of the enlargements yourself. It may help learners if they fold both the small square and the large square into quarters, then unfold and use the fold lines to guide their work.

YOU WILL NEED

- unfrosted cupcakes
- mini chocolate chips
- frosting or whipped topping
- red sprinkles
- table knives
- drinking straws
- plates
- napkins

I've Got Spirit in My Hands

I've got spirit in *my hands*,
 and it's keeping me alive,
 keeping me alive,
 keeping me alive.
 I've got spirit in *my hands*,
 and it's keeping me alive,
 spirit is keeping me alive.

I've got spirit in *my head* . . .

I've got spirit in *my hips* . . .

I've got spirit in *my feet* . . .

I've got spirit in *my tongue* . . .

I've got spirit in *my life* . . .

2. **Cooperative Picture** Children will create artwork that depicts the first Pentecost and celebrates the growing church. Emphasize that the Spirit does not make people identical—each person is a unique child of God—but the Spirit does help people work together to make the church grow. Give each child a square cut from Color Pack 25, a 6" square of white paper, and crayons. Demonstrate how to draw what is on the square from the picture to the square of white paper, expanding the proportions to fit. Encourage the children to copy exactly what they see, trusting that the other children's drawings will complete the picture. After the enlargements are finished, have learners assemble the picture and tape it together. Together, think of what these people might be saying to each other about God, Jesus, or the church. Print these in the speech bubbles. Display your cooperative picture in your learning area.

3. **Pentecost Cupcakes** Children will make Pentecost cupcakes with surprises to celebrate the many gifts the Spirit gives to God's people to help the church grow. Give each child an unfrosted cupcake. Lead them in the following steps: Poke a straw into the center of the cupcake, pull it out, and blow on the other end of the straw to dislodge the cake onto a napkin for snacking later. Repeat three times to create a small hole in the center of the cupcake. Place a few mini chocolate chips into the hole. Frost with frosting or whipped topping. Sprinkle red sprinkles on top. Say a prayer of thanks for food, and then enjoy eating the cupcakes (being mindful of allergies). As you eat, talk about the gifts given by to the Spirit to help the church grow, such as: ability to sing or write poems or dance; empathy; listening; helping.

CLOSING

Gather around the red tablecloth and sing "I've Got Spirit in My Hands" (Color Pack 32; track 13 on *Singing the Feast, 2020–2021*) to celebrate God's gift of the Spirit.

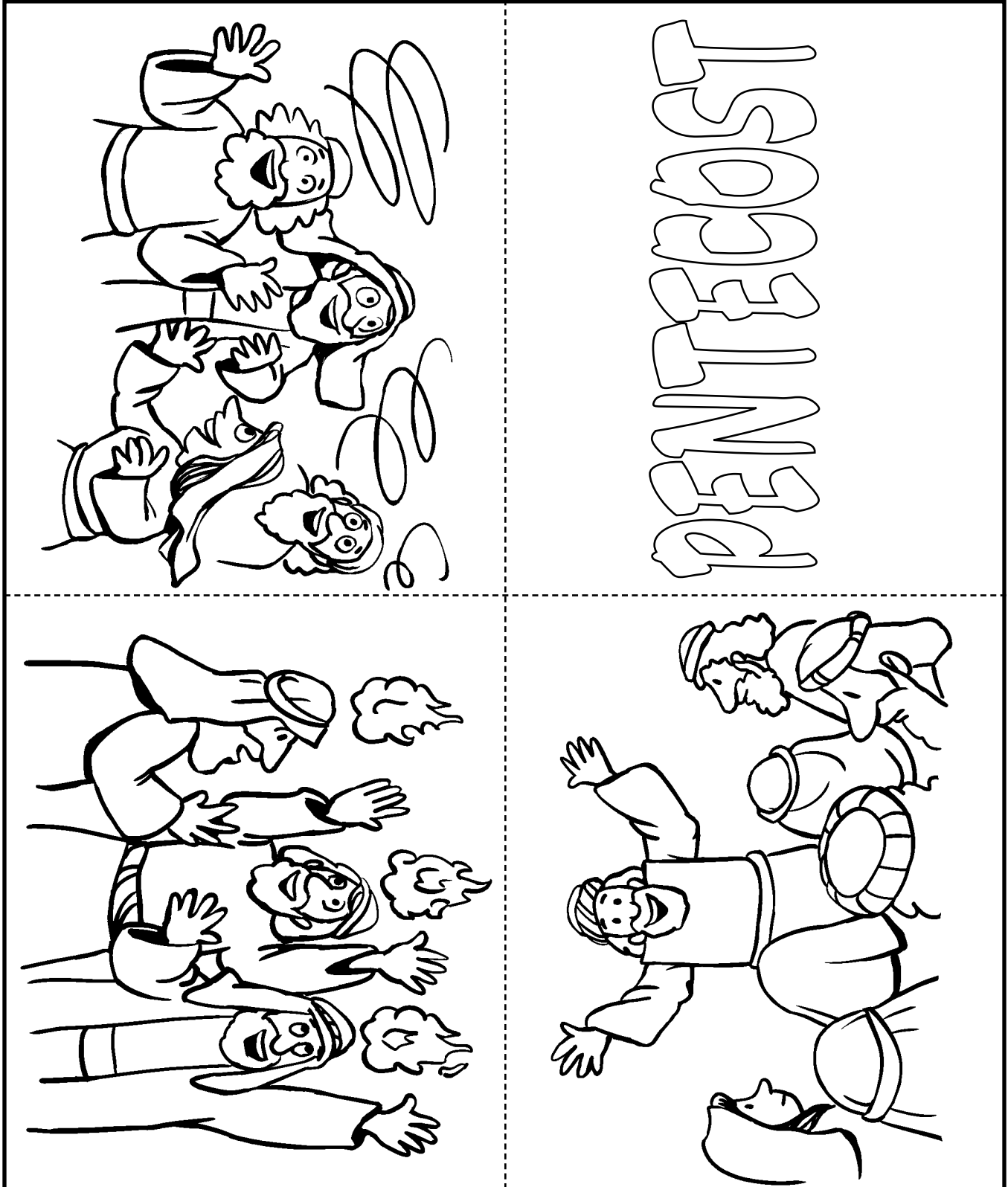
Invite learners to join you in a "pente-prayer" that uses five fingers. Pray aloud and invite learners to repeat each line:

- Dear Lord, bless the people in my family.* (Hold thumb with opposite hand.)
- Bless the teachers who point us to you.* (Hold index finger.)
- Bless everyone who makes our church grow.* (Hold middle finger.)
- Bless those who need healing.* (Hold ring finger.)
- And bless me! Amen.* (Hold little finger.)

May 23, 2021
Celebrate the Spirit!

Grades K-2
Resource Sheet 1

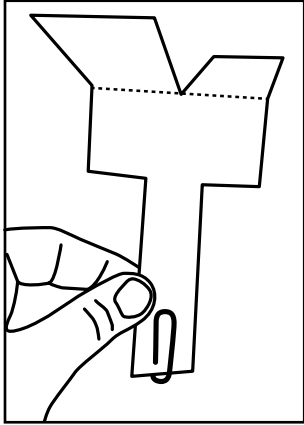
Pentecost Booklet





May 23, 2021
Celebrate the Spirit!

Grades K-2
Resource Sheet 2

Pente-copters



| | | | |
|--|------|--|------|
| cut | | cut | |
| fold | | fold | |
|  | |  | |
| cut | cut | cut | cut |
| fold | fold | fold | fold |
| | fold | | fold |