

Love each other like the members of your family. (Romans 12:10a)

Pentecost – Acts 2:1-12

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: SPIRIT

As Christians, we celebrate Pentecost as the “birthday of the church”—the day God sent the Spirit to the followers of Jesus. Originally, Pentecost was one of three Jewish festivals when the Jewish people would gather in Jerusalem.

Before Jesus died, he promised his followers he would not leave them alone. Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The followers of Jesus did not know what to expect as they waited. It was a time of uncertainty. They were probably anxious and scared. During this time of waiting in Jerusalem, the disciples and other followers of Jesus were celebrating Pentecost. While they were celebrating, the Holy Spirit arrived. A sound from heaven like a howling wind filled the house where they were gathered. They saw flames like fire above each person’s head, and they began to speak in other languages.

Our Faith Word this week is *spirit*. A simple definition of the word *spirit* is, “God’s presence that guides, comforts, and strengthens us.” The Holy Spirit did not just come to the disciples, but to each person gathered. The presence of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost comforted those who missed Jesus. The Spirit gave guidance and strength to God’s people to spread the good news about Jesus. God’s Spirit is with each of us all the time.

The concept of the Holy Spirit is sometimes a difficult one for children—and adults—to understand. It is OK to admit to your children that the stories in the Bible can be hard to understand and that you don’t know all the answers. Tell the children you will wonder and explore together how much God loves us.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Light a candle and watch the way the flame dances in the breeze, as if searching for the place God is calling the flame to be. Maybe the flame is in stillness and reaches straight up, as if to say, *I am yours God, do with me what you will*. At this moment, which flame are you? Pray for the courage and empowerment to do God’s work in the world.

Come Together

Supplies: Annual Music CD, Attendance Chart (Class Pack—p. 2), Leader Guide—p. 78, crayons and markers, CD player

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy “Wind and the Spirit” (Leader Guide—p. 78) for each child.

- Play music (*Celebrate Wonder Annual Music CD*) as the children arrive.
- Greet each child as he or she enters by name and show the child where to mark his or her attendance on the Attendance Chart and place his or her offering.
- Invite the children to color the “Wind and the Spirit” sheet and wonder aloud what the word *spirit* means.

SAY: Today we will wonder about the word *spirit* and what it means for us as followers of Jesus.

Sing and Celebrate

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder Annual Music CD, “Celebrate Wonder Theme” Song Sheet (Leader Guide—p. 92), CD player

- Play the song, “Celebrate Wonder Theme” (*Celebrate Wonder Annual Music CD*).
- Let the children sing and celebrate.

Wonder Time

Share a Story

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Celebrate Wonder DVD, Story Mat and Spirit Poster (Class Pack—pp. 3 & 4), Wonder Box with wind chimes and small battery-operated fan inside, DVD player, television or projector and screen

- Invite the children to sit in a circle on the floor around the Story Mat (p. 3).

SAY: Today is Pentecost. This is the day the Spirit came to the followers of Jesus.

- Open the Wonder Box. Show the children the wind chimes from the Wonder Box. Tell the children there was a great wind when the Spirit arrived. (Use the fan to blow the wind chimes.)
- Show the children the poster with the word SPIRIT on it (p. 4).

SAY: We use the word *spirit* to describe God’s presence that guides, comforts, and strengthens us. God’s presence is always with you. We may not be able to see the Spirit, but we can feel the Spirit. We don’t see the wind that blows the wind chimes,

but we can feel the wind and see the wind chimes move. Read “Pentecost” from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*—p. 32.

- Watch the *Celebrate Wonder DVD* for Session 12.

Wonder with Me

Supplies: Spirit Poster (Class Pack—p. 4)

- What is your favorite part of the Bible story?
 - What do you think the people felt when they felt the strong wind and saw flames above the heads of their friends?
 - What do you think the Holy Spirit feels like?
 - What do you think it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- Show the children the Spirit Poster (p. 4).
 - Let them trace the letters with their fingers.

SAY: The Spirit is God’s presence that guides, comforts, and strengthens our faith. Sometimes we call the Spirit the Holy Spirit. Whenever you feel the wind or see the leaves blow in the wind, think of the Holy Spirit and know that God is with you.

Experience Wonder

Pentecost Wind (Sensory)

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder Annual Music CD; CD player; red, yellow, and orange tinsel; small jingle bells; fan; plastic bin

- Fill the bin with red, yellow, and orange tinsel and the bells. Let the children play in the tinsel and bells with their hands.
- Encourage the children to feel and ring the bells and let the shiny tinsel run through their fingers.
- Help the children tie the bells to the ends of the tinsels.
- Turn the fan on and let the children hold the tinsel and bells up so they can see and hear the bells and tinsel being blown by the fan.
- Play music and encourage the children to dance with the tinsel and bells.

WONDER: What did the wind sound like on the Day of Pentecost? Do you think it was loud and scary or soft like the bells?

Wind Spinner (Activity Sheets)

Supplies: Activity Sheets—p. 3, crayons or markers, paper punch, yarn

- Give each child “Pentecost Wind Spinner” (Activity Sheets—p. 3). Have the children color the spinners.
- Punch the spinners out when the children are done coloring.
- Punch a hole in the center end “tip” of each spinner and loop a piece of yarn through the hole.
- Let the children hold the spinners up to the fan.

SAY: Watch the wind blow the spinners.

WONDER: I wonder if the wind blew in circles on the Day of Pentecost, like the spinner.

Big or Little Wind? (Game)

Supplies: Story Mat (Class Pack—p. 3), various objects that may or may not be blown by the wind

- Show the children the items you have laid out on the Story Mat (p. 3).
- Ask the children if they think each item can be blown by a big wind or a little wind. Let them try to blow the items themselves. Let them use the fan to blow the items.

WONDER: Which kind of wind reminds you of the Spirit? A big wind? A little wind? Both kinds of wind?

Peaceful Place

Supplies: Story Mat and Spirit Poster (Class Pack—pp. 3 & 4), Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook and other quiet items that relate to the story, suggested books: “The Day When God Made Church: A Child’s First Book About Pentecost” by Rebekah McLeod Hutto and “We Are One” by Ysaye M. Barnwell, individual bubble solution containers with wands

- Invite the children to spend time looking at the pictures in the books. Have them look for the word *spirit* on the pages of the book.
- Have the children blow bubbles and watch them float on the air. Have the children wonder if the Holy Spirit is like a bubble.
- Let the children tell the story of Pentecost in their own words, using the Story Mat (p. 3) and the items from the “Big or Little Wind?” game played previously.

Tip: All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional. You may pick and choose what you like. Allow the children who may want or need a quieter activity on this particular day to choose to visit the Peaceful Place.

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice

WONDER: What helps you remember the Holy Spirit?

SAY: The Holy Spirit is like your breath. You can feel it, but you cannot see it. Anytime you need to remember God is with you, you can do this spiritual practice. A spiritual practice is something we can do to remind us of God.

- Close your eyes.
- Hold your hand up and blow on it. Feel the warmth and the air on your skin.

SAY: The Holy Spirit is like your breath. You can feel it, but you cannot see it. We can remember the Holy Spirit whenever we see the leaves blowing in the trees.

PRAY: Holy Spirit, we feel your presence all around. Help us remember you are always with us. Amen.

CELEBRATE
WONDER Wind and the Spirit

