

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

Pentecost – Acts 2:1-12

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: SPIRIT

Pentecost originated as a Jewish festival that occurred fifty days after Passover. It also is considered the birthday of the Christian church. Pentecost was a feast and pilgrimage holiday. On Pentecost Day, many people had gathered in Jerusalem, including the disciples, who were all in one place. A sudden, fierce wind filled the house they were in, and flames alighted on each of them. In the Bible, fierce wind and fire often are used as symbols of God's presence.

The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages. Religious Jews from all over the world had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost. Each of them began to hear and understand what the disciples were saying in their own language. The people asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Peter began to preach and advised them to change their hearts and lives and be baptized so that they could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which had been promised by Jesus. About three thousand people were baptized that day.

The Spirit may be a difficult concept for the children to grasp. There are things about the Spirit that even adults do not fully understand. Essentially, the Spirit can be explained as God's presence in our lives. It guides us, comforts us, and strengthens our faith. As you teach the children about the Holy Spirit, remember that it is okay to have questions that can't be answered. The main thing you'll want the children to come away from the session with is an understanding that God is with them through the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

As you attempt to gain a better understanding of the Spirit and prepare to teach your children about it, take a few moments to engage in the following spiritual practice. Sit in a quiet space, light a candle, close your eyes, and listen for what the Spirit is saying to you today. How is the Spirit guiding, comforting, or strengthening you? Consider doing this daily in the week leading up to your class.

Come Together

Welcome to Wonder

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder Annual Music CD, Activity Sheets, Attendance Chart, Wonder Box, CD player, slips of paper, writing utensils, markerboard or large sheet of paper

Prepare Ahead: On a markerboard or large sheet of paper, write today's Wonder Question, "What do you think the Spirit is like?" Prepare a place for each child to write or draw her or his answer.

- Play "Celebrate Wonder Theme Song" (CD) as children arrive.
- Greet each child, and show the children where to mark the Attendance Chart.
- Give each child a slip of paper. Invite each child to write or draw an answer to the Wonder Question and then to place the paper in the Wonder Box.
- Give each child this week's Activity Sheet, and invite the children to complete it.

Tip: Remind the children that the ideas placed in the Wonder Box will be shared during story time. The children do not have to put their papers in the box.

Sing and Celebrate

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 90, Celebrate Wonder Annual Music CD, Celebrate Wonder DVD, CD player, TV, DVD player

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Unit 3 Song" (Leader Guide).

- Give out Song Sheets.
- Play the song from the CD or from the DVD.
- Invite the children to sing and celebrate.

Wonder Time

Share a Story

Supplies: CEB Bible, Unit 3 Wonder Mat, Celebrate Wonder DVD, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you in a circle on the floor.
- Lay out the Wonder Mat on the floor.
- Read the Bible story, Acts 2:1-12.
- Watch the DVD segment for this week.

Wonder with Me

Supplies: Wonder Box

- How would you answer the question from the story, “What does this mean?”
- How would you have reacted at the appearance of a howling wind and flames of fire landing on people?

SAY: Let’s read aloud our answers to the Wonder Question that you answered earlier.

- Open the Wonder Box. Read each answer aloud, and show any pictures.
- Allow the children to discuss their thoughts about the answers.

SAY: I hope you will remember that the Spirit is the feeling that God is with you.

Experience Wonder

Experience the Sound (Listening Activity)

- Assign each child one of the words in the phrase “change your hearts and lives.”
- Have each child say his or her word over and over at the same time the other children are saying their words. Each child may say his or her word as fast or as slow as he or she likes. Eventually, with all of the children saying a different word at the same time, the sound will begin to be jumbled. This should make it difficult for the children to hear any word clearly besides their own. It will give them an idea of what it would have been like to hear so many languages at once, yet hear their own language clearly.

Tip: If you have a large group, divide the class into two teams: speakers and listeners. Have the listeners observe what it sounds like when the speakers do the activity. Have the teams switch roles after a few minutes so that both teams get a chance to be listeners. Afterward, discuss the children’s observations.

WONDER: What was it like to hear so many sounds at once? What do you think it was like for the people in the Bible story?

Wind and Flame Reverse Tag (Game)

Supplies: LED tealight candles (one per child)

- Ask for two or three volunteers to be IT. These children will represent the wind and move around the room like a howling wind. (Movement and noises of their choice are allowed.)

- Give each of the remaining children an LED tealight candle. Explain that they will hold their candle, but they may not turn it on. These children must remain still and quiet and wait for a child representing the wind to pass by.
- The children who are holding a candle will attempt to tag those who are representing the wind by tapping the wind children on the shoulder as they move by (the reverse of a tag game where IT attempts to tag children).
- Once a child with a candle taps a child representing the wind, the child with the candle must ask, “What does this mean?”
- The child representing the wind will then turn on that child’s LED candle and will continue moving like the wind. The child who is holding the candle may join the wind children in moving around the room, or she or he may choose to remain standing still with the lit candle. Continue until all candles are lit.

WONDER: How do wind and flame usually interact? (*Wind extinguishes the flame, as with birthday candles.*) What do you think it means that the wind and flame interacted differently in our Bible story and in our game? (*The wind, or God’s presence, appeared and then the flame, or Spirit, was ignited in each person. The wind brought forth the flame.*)

Wind and Flame Blow Painting (Art)

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 78, straws, small canvases (one per child), food coloring (red, yellow, blue, green), 4 bowls, at least 4 droppers, water, white paper, table covering, smocks, paintbrushes, cups, pencils*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy “Pentecost Art Template.” Cover the table. Put water in each bowl, then add a few drops of red, yellow, blue, or green food coloring to each.*

- Have the children put on smocks. Invite them to decide if they would like to paint wind, flame, or both on one painting. Invite the children to choose the colors they would like. Remind them that they may mix colors to make other colors (such as red and yellow to make orange).
- Encourage the children to practice painting by using the droppers to apply a few drops of their color(s) to the paper and blowing through their straw to move the color around on the paper to create an image of wind and/or of flame.
- Remind the children that their breath controls the movement of the color on the page and that they may want to move their head like a writing instrument to get the desired result. Let them experiment with slow or fast breath.
- Allow the children to do more than one painting on paper so that they can experiment with using the straw in different ways to move the color on the page.

- After the practice, give each child a small canvas. Let each child paint a final painting to hang on a wall at home. Set the paintings aside to dry.

Tip: Have paintbrushes and cups of water on hand for children who can't use a straw. Allow those who would like a little more structure to use the "Pentecost Art Template." They may paint directly on the template or trace it onto their canvas. The wind can be painted in the empty space around the flame on the template.

Peaceful Place

Supplies: suggested books ("One Family" by George Shannon and "You Are With Me: Prayers for Every Part of the Day" by Birgit Antoni), quiet toys (bubbles, coloring utensils, and paper)

- Create a Peaceful Place with quiet toys.
- Set up a reading area with the suggested books or others.
- Allow children who want or need a quieter activity to visit the Peaceful Place.

Tip: All of the supplies and activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional. You may include any quiet toys, books, or activities you wish.

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice

- Guide the children through this spiritual practice:

SAY: Our Bible story says that when the Spirit arrived, each disciple "saw what seemed to be individual flames of fire alighting on each of them." After this, they were filled with the power of the Spirit and began to speak in other languages. Perhaps what they saw was not flames, but light. Each of us has this light within us that fills us with power through God to do amazing things. Close your eyes and think about how you feel when you see the glow of Christmas lights: warm, comforted, and secure. Now, imagine yourself surrounded by this kind of light. Imagine its warmth. Imagine its power to make you feel good and as if anything is possible. Anytime you need to remember that God is with you or to draw strength to do something that is hard for you to imagine doing, you can do this practice. The Spirit is always present, and its light wraps each of you in warmth, love, and strength.

PRAY: God, thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide us. Amen.

**CELEBRATE
WONDER Pentecost Art Template**

