Sermon at Pentecost

Español



Scripture Reference: Acts 1:12-2:41

Suggested Theme: The Holy Spirit is for all believers. The church began on the Day of Pentecost.

Memory Verse: “Peter said to them, ‘Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” Acts 2:38, ICB

Story Overview:

While the eleven Apostles waited in Jerusalem, Matthias was chosen to replace the now-dead Judas. During the Jewish feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles just as Jesus had promised. The Spirit gave these uneducated men the miraculous power to speak in languages they had never learned or spoken before (spoke in tongues). Because of this, the crowds of Jewish pilgrims from many countries could hear about Jesus in their languages. After Peter preached the first Gospel sermon, 3,000 people were baptised. Emphasise that this was the church’s beginning, or “birthday,” and that the Holy Spirit is for all believers.

Background Study:

Click here for an overview of the Book of Acts

Replacing Judas:

Following the ascension of Jesus, the eleven Apostles, along with Jesus’ mother, brothers, and some women, all gathered together in the upper room of a house in Jerusalem. There were 120 believers gathered. At Peter’s reminder that they needed a replacement for Judas (who had betrayed Jesus), the others put forth two men: Joseph and Matthias. Both of these fit the same requirements that the other Apostles had. They had been together with Jesus since His baptism (1:21-22). The ancient method of casting lots was used to choose between the two, and Matthias was chosen. Perhaps stones or something similar were used to cast the lots (like tossing a coin or throwing dice), but whatever the items used, the process involved an element of chance. By casting lots, they believed that God would control the outcome (Proverbs 16:33). After this event, the Scriptures do not record decisions being made by this method.

The Arrival of the Holy Spirit:

Jesus ascended to heaven forty days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3). The Apostles must have been in Jerusalem for about ten days because the Day of Pentecost (the New Testament name for the Feast of Weeks) was fifty days after the Passover Sabbath (Leviticus 23:15-21). God chose this perfect day to reveal

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the Holy Spirit because thousands of Jews from all over the world gathered in Jerusalem. Jesus had described the Spirit as wind before (John 3:8), and the sound of mighty rushing wind from heaven now marked the arrival of the Holy Spirit on this day. The writer of Acts describes what looked like tongues of fire dividing and resting on each of the Apostles. The Holy Spirit allowed them to speak other languages and dialects miraculously. All of this noise and activity drew a crowd of people. These people were amazed because they could hear the apostles speak in their own language. Some were asking what it meant. Others made fun of them and thought they were drunk.

The Sermon and the Response:

Peter stood up and preached the first "Gospel Sermon." Before the Spirit had given him special abilities, Peter had been a mere fisherman from Galilee. Now, he could clearly explain how the Old Testament scriptures of Joel were being fulfilled this day. He told how God had sent Jesus of Nazareth and that they had crucified him. He pointed out that even the revered King David had looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. All of this, but the people had rejected him.

The message was clear, and scores of people were "cut to the heart" and felt intense remorse. When they asked Peter what they should do, he answered, "Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Peter continued explaining the message of Christ, and those who accepted him were immediately baptised. The day began with 120 believers, but 3,000 were added to their number that day.

The Beginning of a New Age:

This was the beginning of the church. It is more than just a group of people who believe in Jesus. The church is the body, and Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22-23). The church is part of the eternal purposes of God (Ephesians 3:10-11). As we continue reading the book of Acts, we will learn more about the church and how it grew.

Baptism also took on a new and fuller meaning at Pentecost because Jesus had now died and been resurrected. At baptism, a person showed true repentance, had their sins washed away (forgiven) by the blood of Jesus Christ and received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

John the Baptist had baptised people. Still, he preached as the prophets from the Old Testament had. He baptised to demonstrate repentance and forgiveness (Mark 1:4). Baptism now allowed a person to completely relate to Jesus Christ through dying with him (repentance), being buried with him (baptism) and being resurrected (living a Christ-centered life). Refer to Romans 6:3-8.

Peter knew what to tell the people that day because after Jesus was crucified and resurrected, He had instructed His disciples about their mission. (Matthew 28:18-20, ICB). See The Great Commission and Ascension.

Way to Introduce the Story:

Teach the children the phrase "Jesus loves you" in several different languages. Example: Spanish- "Cristo te ama" French- "Jesus vous aime" German- "Christ liebt dich." You might want to invite someone from another language to join your group and do this. After the children have learned the phrase, explain, "In today's bible lesson, we are going to learn about a time when the Apostles wanted to teach people about Jesus. Since these people knew all kinds of different languages, the Holy Spirit gave the Apostles a special ability. Even though they had never studied a language, they could speak it perfectly."

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The Story:

After living His life on earth, Jesus went up to Heaven to be with God the Father. There, He would prepare everything so that one day when He came back, believers could live with Him and the Father. Just before He left, He told the Apostles they had a very important responsibility. They were to go and tell everyone in the world the good news about Jesus' resurrection (His coming back to life). They were to baptise them and teach them how to be followers of Jesus.

As He left, Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem because He would be sending a special Helper to them. He knew they would be sad to see Him go, but the special Helper would be with them and give them comfort and power. The special Helper would be a gift to the whole world.

The eleven Apostles and other disciples went to Jerusalem just as Jesus had told them. Jesus' mother, brothers, and other women joined the Apostles to pray and wait in an upstairs room.

Soon, they realised that there were only eleven Apostles now instead of the original twelve. Judas was missing.

The other Apostles remembered the sad way that Judas had betrayed Jesus when Jesus was still on earth. He had said he was Jesus' friend but did not act like a friend. Judas betrayed Jesus and made a deal with some leaders who wanted to hurt Him. Judas felt shame and guilt after the soldiers took Jesus away and crucified Him. But instead of doing the right thing and asking for forgiveness, he did the wrong thing and killed himself instead.

Peter said, "The new Apostle must be someone who has been with us from the beginning. He should have known Jesus really well and should have been following since the time Jesus was baptised." Two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias, were put forward.

The Apostles prayed that God would show them the right choice and then cast lots (sort of like tossing a coin). In this way, Matthias was chosen to be the new 12th Apostle.

After this, the Apostles continued waiting for the special Helper Jesus said would come. The Apostles must have wondered how they would know when the Helper arrived.

The group waited forty days in all. And then a very strong wind began to blow. After the wind, the apostles saw flames come down and sit above their heads. The time had come! The Helper, the Holy Spirit, had arrived.

Pentecost was a special holiday; thousands of Jews had come from many other countries to worship at the Temple. They came from other countries, so they spoke different languages.

They rushed over to see what was happening when they heard the noise. The Apostles went outside into the Temple area, where many people were gathered.

Remember how Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would help the Apostles tell the good news? That is exactly what happened. The Apostles began speaking in different languages, and the people from other countries could understand. This was amazing because, before that day, the Apostles had never studied or learned those languages. Speaking in another language you have never learned or studied is called "speaking in tongues."

Peter explained that the Holy Spirit was from God and was making all of these amazing things happen. He told them the good news about Jesus Christ. He told them that God sent His son to earth but that the people crucified Him. He told them how Jesus was resurrected and then went back to heaven to reign as King.

Many of the people felt very sad and sorry that they had not believed Jesus. They asked Peter, "What should we do?"

Peter answered them in just the way Jesus had told him to, "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

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About 3,000 people were baptised that day, adding to the number of believers. The Holy Spirit is a gift for all believers- believers back then and believers now. This day was the beginning of the church, and anyone who follows Jesus is part of it. In fact, you could call this the birthday of the church! If you read the bible book of Acts, then you will learn about some of the exciting things that happened to the church in the years to come.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

Try this interactive story-telling method using a cupcake and a candle:
A Very Special Happy Birthday



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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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Review:

- Who was the man chosen to take Judas' place as an Apostle? (Matthias)
- What sign first showed that the Holy Spirit had come upon the Apostles? (Small fires burned above their heads (tongues of fire))
- What was the name of the Jewish feast day when the first gospel sermon was preached? (Day of Pentecost)
- The people in the crowd spoke different languages. How did they know what the Apostles were saying? (The Holy Spirit gave the Apostles the power to speak in other languages (in tongues))
- Which Apostle preached the first Gospel sermon? (Peter)
- What did Peter tell the people to do? ("Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38))

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- How many people were baptized that day? (3000)
- What did this story show you about the Holy Spirit?
- What is the Holy Spirit's role? (The Holy Spirit comforts us and gives us God's power and spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit helps us change, convicts us of sin, and talks to God for us when we don't know what to say to God)
- What do you think the apostles learned from these experiences?

Reflection:

- What do you think it felt like to have flames of fire above the disciples' heads?
- How would you feel if you had a flame of fire on your head?
- How would you feel when you realized this was God the Holy Spirit on your head?
- Why do you think God gave the disciples the Holy Spirit, and with it the ability to speak in tongues?
- What part of this event do you wonder about the most?
- What question do you have for God about this story?
- The disciples probably missed having Jesus with them, but God sent them the Holy Spirit. Does the Holy Spirit help you feel that God/Jesus is with you?
- Have you ever felt or known that the Holy Spirit is with or in you? Share about it.

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a lifelong friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- Building Up the Temple Song
- Deep and Wide Song
- Jesus Called Them One By One
- ABC: Jesus Died for You and Me Song
- J-E-S-U-S Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

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- Collect and show photos of people being baptized.
- Use a bible concordance to find verses that use the word “church.”
- Learn some phrases in other languages and teach them to the children. Discuss that learning a new language takes a lot of time and practice. Because of the power of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles could “speak in tongues” or in a language they had not studied before.
- Say the memory verse together a number of times. Have words like “fast, slow, baby talk, bass voice, opera singer, etc., on small cards. Children can draw cards and then say the memory verse according to the card they choose. For example, a child draws a card with “opera singer” on it so they sing the verse as an opera singer would. Repetition will result in the children memorising the verse.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

- Decorate a birthday cake or cupcakes.
- Use birthday cards and write messages to your church. Write about why you are happy that God planned for the church.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

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Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page with text (Ministry Spark)
- Craft: Windsock idea (Ten kids and a dog)
- Interactive group activities (Holy Spirit) (Sermon 4 kids)
- Interactive group activities (Birthday of the church) (Sermon 4 kids)
- Printable, Decoder word puzzle (Sermon 4 kids)
- Printable Bookmarks. Enter your own personal text and then print them. (Activities fro kids)
- Printable Crossword puzzle (Sermon 4 kids)
- Printable, Unscramble the words puzzle (Sermon 4 kids)
- Teaching ideas (Sunday school sources)
- Worksheet, Pentecost (Sermon 4 kids)
- Video to show children: Virtual Reconstruction Of Second Temple. Temple Mount (7 minutes 46 seconds) at https://youtu.be/HHLD6RXVLaM

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