

A Very Special Happy Birthday



Every child can relate to the idea of a birthday party. Try this interactive story-telling method to help children celebrate the beginnings of the church.

Background:

The “birth” of the church was long-anticipated and expected. From the beginning chapters of Genesis and onwards, we read how God, the Father, worked out a plan to redeem imperfect people back to himself. In the Gospels, Jesus speaks of building “his church”. Then, in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit ushers in a new age and the birth of the church.

Among the crowds gathered in Jerusalem, there were one hundred and twenty believers gathered and waiting just as Jesus had told them to do. By the end of the festival, specifically the Day of Pentecost, three thousand others had been added to this group of followers. The Day of Pentecost marks the beginning of an age when imperfect people could have their sins washed away in baptism and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This was the beginning of the church.

Items to Gather:

- 12 cupcakes topped with soft icing or whipped cream
- A plate or platter for the cupcakes
- 12 candles
- Matches or a lighter
- “Sprinkles” or “Hundreds and Thousands” (or any tiny cake decorations)
- A gift box and wrapping paper.
- The following verse that you have transcribed on an index card or piece of paper:
“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

Prepare:

- The words below are provided as a guide and are not meant to be read like a script. Keeping this in mind, read and become very familiar with the events of [Acts 1:12-2:41](#) so that you are able to share the story with the children in a natural way. For additional help, refer to the lesson: [Sermon at Pentecost](#).
- Place the verse card inside the gift box and wrap it like a birthday gift.

How to Tell the Story:

1. Introduction: Ask the children to share their experiences of birthday parties.
As you and the children are talking about this, set out the 11 cupcakes and the gift box on a table in front of the children. (Keep the 12th cupcake hidden from view.)
2. The church had a beginning: Explain that birthday parties are a way of remembering and celebrating the birth or beginning of a person's life. "Today, we are going to talk about a different kind of beginning. It is not the beginning of a life of one person. This is the beginning of the church."
3. One hundred and twenty followers of Jesus: Just before his ascension, Jesus had told the apostles to go to Jerusalem and wait for a special gift to arrive. ([Luke 24:49](#)) Tell the children about the 120 followers who had gathered together with the apostles. Now, add a few sprinkles to the tops of the cupcakes. Ask the children to help you estimate 120 sprinkles in all.
4. Eleven Apostles: Ask the children to count the cupcakes and point out that there are only 11. Talk about how Jesus had chosen 12 Apostles, but after Judas betrayed Jesus and died, there were now only 11. Matthias was chosen to replace Judas. This is the time to bring the 12th cupcake out from hiding.
5. Arrival of the Holy Spirit: Have the children make sounds like the wind and then talk about how the apostles heard a sound like a mighty wind. Place a candle in each of the cupcakes and, as you light them, talk about the flames of fire resting upon the head of each apostle. The sound of wind and flames made it clear that the Holy Spirit was there that day. We cannot see the Holy Spirit, but we know he was there because of these things. Jesus said that the Spirit would give power. Explain the power these 12 men now had to speak in languages they had not even studied.
6. Peter's Sermon: The Holy Spirit also gave Peter the power to courageously preach a sermon to a huge crowd of people that day. Push one of the cupcakes in front of the others as you talk about the sermon content. Jesus wanted all of the Jews to have good hearts and turn to God. Peter told this crowd of Jews that, instead of following Jesus, they had crucified him.
7. "What should we do?": The people felt terrible (quietly blow out the candles and set them aside). They had done a terrible thing. How could they ever make it right? They asked Peter.
8. The gift for everyone: Peter knew that the Holy Spirit had given the apostles a special kind of power, but the Holy Spirit was also a gift that God wanted everyone to have in their life. Peter knew exactly what to say to the people that day. Now, you or one of the children can open the gift and read Acts 2:38.
9. Three thousand people were baptised: As you discuss this, group the cupcakes back together and bring out the sprinkles again. Remind the children that there were 120 believers at the beginning of this day. Begin adding more sprinkles to the cupcakes so that you cover them with what seems like 3,000. These may even spill over onto the plate. Talk about how 3,000 people were added to their number on that day.
10. Conclusion: This was the beginning of the church. In the book of Acts, we read that, from that day forward, more and more people began to follow Jesus and were baptised. And even today, when people are sorry for their sins and are baptised, God still adds them to the church as well. Some day, I pray that even you will be added to that number.

And now it is time to celebrate and eat those cupcakes!

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Learning from the Life of Paul



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From a blinding light to angry mobs to a shipwreck, the Apostle Paul's story is one that involves devotion, determination and drama.

These sixteen lessons from the life of Paul help children grasp how God used Paul and others to expand the reach of the good news of Jesus to far away places .

The lessons are already covered on www.missionbibleclass.org within the book of Acts section but are grouped together here so that you can teach them as one unit.

Online materials make it easier to keep children and families engaged in the Word of God. Instead of printed materials lesson links can be emailed to teachers and parents each week.

Each of these sixteen lessons listed below include:

- A Bible lesson and teaching instructions
- Practical and enjoyable activities to help children learn
- Links to other online resources
- A slideshow to view online or download and use
- The same slideshow in .pdf if you choose to download and print
- An online video depicting the story from Paul's point of view

[Click here to view the lessons.](#)

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The One About the Cross

"Teacher, when you tell stories, do you think sometimes you could tell me the one about the cross. I keep wondering what that cross is about." I will never forget that question from a little boy who attended church and my Bible class for the first time.

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Website Update

Next time you open www.missionbibleclass.org you'll notice a few changes to the look and feel.

Since I have two great interns working with me right now, we're using the opportunity to update the look of the site. There are quite a few details to take care of so please let me know right away if you notice something is not quite right.

As always, may God bless you as you share His Word with children!

Mary

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I Think I'll Just Hum...



Sometimes I prepare what I think is a great class and yet my students struggle to think past the surface level of the Bible story. But sometimes, often when I least expect it, the kids run ahead of the teacher and want to go deeper.

Instead of just appreciating the facts or even the drama of the story they may ask questions about the characters or wonder why the characters did what they did. They might want to discuss motivations and causes. They may even ponder over what God was up to or discuss how he interacted with the characters.

Sometimes the Biblical truths become personal. They dig deep into a child's heart and convict them to act upon these truths.

And then sometimes, like this past Sunday, a child takes one more step and actually makes a plan. It is at times like these that a teacher knows she has truly passed on the message.

Earlier in the week a young woman and I had prepared a lesson together on the [Tower of Babel](#) using the [Lesson Template](#). This time I stood back and she did the teaching.

- First she had the letters of the words “proud” and “humble” written on cards. She mixed the letters up and showed how to unscramble them to form the words.
- Then she drew the face of a girl on a balloon and spoke as if she was the girl on the balloon. She began “bragging” about everything from her good looks to her amazing skills at sports. Every time she bragged she would blow some more hot air into the balloon. The bragging continued until the balloon finally popped.
- Using a simple flip chart she then told the story of how people began building a tower thinking only of how they would make a great name for themselves. God was not pleased and mixed up their language so it must have sounded like they were just babbling to one another. Not being able to communicate led to the people going their separate ways.
- After this, two towers were built in class...
 - One was built out of large Lego blocks. As each block was stacked the young teacher talked about how great God was.
 - The other tower was built from wooden Jenga blocks. As we had planned, I built this tower making a point to blatantly brag about my own abilities at each level. As expected, my tower crashed and the first one held.
- As we gathered back together we looked once more at the word “humble” and talked about what it meant.

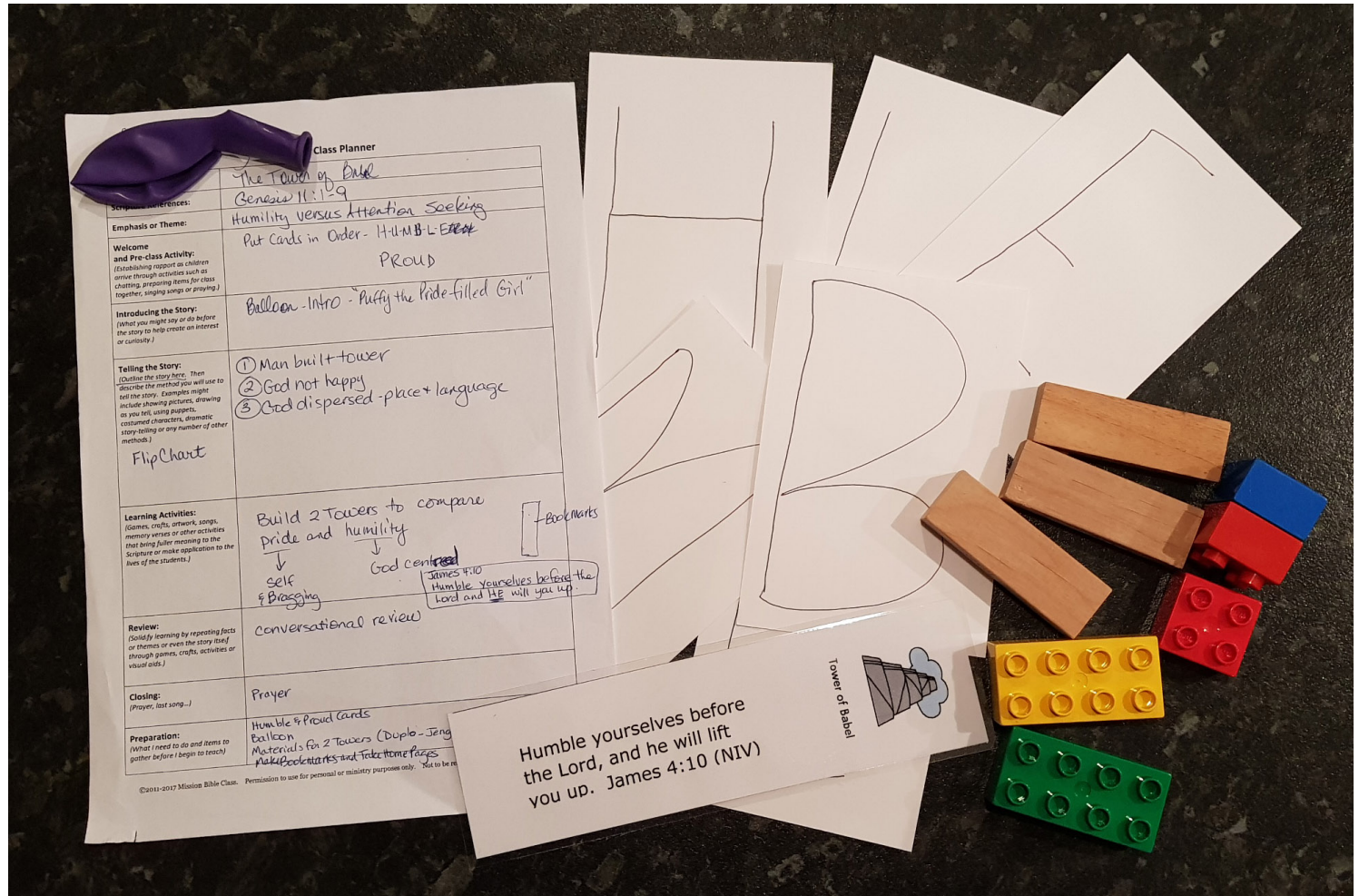
One boy had taken in the facts and had been convicted that he should be humble. But now, he was ready to put it into ACTION. At

his own instigation he devised a way to go deeper!

And here is a seven year old boy's simple plan of action...

"Every time I start being too proud I think I'm going to just hum." In answer to the perplexed expressions on our faces he went on to explain, "I'm going to hum because that will help me stop being proud and remember to be HUM-ble."

Yes, that little boy really understood the message. He has a plan of action and now, so do I. Next time I start thinking that teachers have all the answers...I'm going to start humming.



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