

Easter: Pentecost Sunday

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Preparation

Background for Scripture Readings

First Reading

- In the Acts of the Apostles, the story of Pentecost occurs on the fiftieth day after Passover, the day after seven Sabbaths.
- The strong wind recalls the mighty wind that swept over the waters at creation and the breath of life that God blew into human beings.
- The tongues of fire at Pentecost symbolize a new call and a new covenant.

Second Reading

- In 1 Corinthians, Paul describes the unity of Christians who are filled with the Holy Spirit.
- They are one body, breathing with the same breath.
- The gifts of each contribute to the life of the whole.

Gospel

- The Gospel reading portrays the timeless events of Jesus' Resurrection and the descent of the Spirit.
- Jesus breathes on the disciples, creating them anew, and proclaims the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Filled with the Spirit, the disciples continue to spread new life and remedy the separation caused by sin as they forgive sins.

Breaking Open the Word

Leader Instruction

Catechist Reflection Guide for Pentecost Sunday

First Reading: Acts 2:1-11—The Holy Spirit descends upon the Apostles.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 104:1-2, 24, 35, 27-28, 29b–30—Lord, send out your Spirit.

Second Reading: Galatians 5:16-25—Exhortation to live by the spirit not the flesh.

Gospel: John 15:26-27; 16:12-15—Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit as a Guide.

Invitation to prayer (30 seconds)

Ask the children to quiet themselves and sit comfortably. Have them take three deep breaths while you prompt them to relax as they breathe in God, our Father who loves us, Jesus Christ, his Son, our brother, and God's Holy Spirit who lovingly guides us. As an invitation to prayer, make the Sign of the Cross.

Listening for a word or phrase to speak to your heart (3-4 minutes)

Read the Gospel passage or the special phrase slowly and deliberately while the children are silently listening. Ask them to listen for a word or phrase that seems to be God's word for them today. Spend about 30 seconds as they select their "word" from God. Ask them to silently repeat that word or phrase and to write it on their heart.

Ages 5-6: Help the children to sound out the words on their sheet. In your own words or using a children's Bible, tell children about Jesus' message and promise to send the Holy Spirit who would be a guide for the Church.

Ages 7-8: In your own words or using a children's Bible or the words on the handout, tell children about Jesus' message and promise to send the Holy Spirit who would be a guide for the Church.

Ages 9-11: Read aloud all of John 15:26-27; 16:12-15.

Ages 12-14: Read the Gospel passage slowly and deliberately while the children are silently listening. Ask them to listen for a word or phrase that seems to be God's word for them today. Spend about 30 seconds as they pick out their "word" from God. Ask them to silently repeat that word or phrase and to write it on their heart.

Loving God through his Word (3-5 minutes)

Ages 5-6: Invite children to color in the words Helper and Guide. Initiate a conversation about the role of the Holy Spirit by using the following questions: **Who are some of the people who helped you today? What do helpers do? What are some ways you can help others?** Read aloud the text to the children. Have children repeat the closing prayer to the Holy Spirit after you.

Ages 7-8: Read aloud the text to the children. Focus their attention on the idea of a helper. Use the questions on the handout as conversation starters. Talk about today's feast of Pentecost as the birthday of the Church.

Ages 9-11: Spend a few minutes having young people share their word or phrase. Remind young people that today is the feast of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit did come down on the disciples and gave them the power to testify or speak about Jesus as the Risen Lord and Savior. Emphasize the extreme change in the disciples from being enclosed in the Upper Room to moving out into the streets of Jerusalem to witness. Initiate a conversation on what it means to testify. Use the questions on the handout as conversation starters.

Ages 12-14: Spend a few minutes having young people share their word or phrase. Remind young people that today is the feast of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit did come down on the disciples and give them the power to testify or speak about Jesus as the Risen Lord and Savior. Emphasize the extreme change from the disciples being enclosed in the Upper Room to moving out into the streets of Jerusalem to witness. Initiate a conversation on what the Spirit of Truth means. Use the questions on the handout as conversation starters. Have young people silently reflect on the questions and then share their responses in a small group. When the conversations are completed ask volunteers to share some of the responses to the questions.

Living the Gospel words through the week (3-5 minutes)

The handouts describe one or two ways children and young people can live this reflection on the Gospel through the week at home, school, or play. If appropriate, have them add one or two more personal choices to act on this week.