

# Easter: Pentecost Sunday

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## Preparation

### Background for Scripture Readings

#### First Reading

- For the people of Israel, Pentecost originally had been a festival celebrating the wheat harvest and later it was associated with the covenant at Sinai and the exodus event.
- To remember this, Jews went to the temple in Jerusalem on the feast to offer sacrifices to God. That is why Jews from all parts of the world were gathered there in Jerusalem when the Spirit came upon the disciples.
- In today's story of the first Christian Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descends on the disciples and the Church is born.

#### Second Reading

- In his first letter to the community in Corinth, Paul stressed that God's gifts were given to serve and build the community.
- Paul compared the Christian community to the human body.
- A person becomes a member of this body in Baptism.

#### Gospel

- In the Gospel according to John, the word "peace" appears five times and three of them occur in the form of Jesus' greeting, "Peace be with you."
- After his greeting in today's passage, Jesus breathed new life on the frightened disciples, and they received the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- The disciples were entrusted with the mission of forgiving sins.

# Breaking Open the Word

## Leader Instruction

### Catechist Reflection Guide for Pentecost Sunday

**First Reading:** Acts 2:1-11—They were filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 104:1+24, 29-30, 31+34—Lord send out your Spirit.

**Second Reading:** Romans 8:8-17—Live by the Spirit.

**Gospel:** John 14:14-16, 23b-26—The Advocate will teach you.

#### **Invitation to prayer** (30 sec.)

Ask the children to quiet themselves and sit comfortably. Begin the session with the Sign of the Cross. 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.

#### **Listening for a word or phrase** to speak to your heart (3-4 min.)

For Ages 5-6 and Ages 7-8: Read aloud the words "**My helper**" Tell children that **Today we celebrate the feast of Pentecost. It celebrates the day the Holy Spirit came down on the disciples and gave them power to do the things Jesus did.** Explain that the dove is one of the symbols for the Holy Spirit. Tell the story and meaning of Pentecost by adapting Acts 2:1-11 and John 14:14-16, 23b-26 from a children's Bible or in your own words.

For Ages 9-11 and Ages 12-14: Read aloud Acts 2:1-11. Ask young people 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 or phrase. Ask them to silently repeat that word or phrase and to write it on their heart.

#### **Loving God through his word** (3-5 min.)

For Ages 5-6: Talk with children about who some of their helpers are (*people who teach, show us how to do things, protect us, keep us safe*). Have children draw their picture and tell about it. Conclude by using their examples and explain that **Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to be our helper. The Holy Spirit teaches us, shows us how to do things, protects us, and keeps us safe.** Close with the prayer.

For Ages 7-8: Have a conversation with the children, explaining that **Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to be our helper. We need the Holy Spirit's help to continue Jesus' work. The Holy Spirit will show us the right things to do. He gives us courage to be different. The Holy Spirit lives within us and we can talk to him anytime we want.** Have children write their prayer. Help where needed. Close with the prayer.

For ages 9-11: Ask young people to share their word or phrase. Ask young people to take some quiet time and silently read the questions on the handout and think about what their response is. Have young people share their responses. Emphasize that **Although we do not have the dramatic experience that the disciples had, the Holy Spirit does give us power and strength to do the right thing. We just have to ask and follow his guidance.** Close with the prayer.

For ages 12-14: Ask young people to share their word or phrase. Have young people take a few minutes to reflect on the questions. Clarify any questions young people may have. Ask volunteers to share their

responses. Emphasize that **Although we do not have the dramatic experience that the disciples had, the Holy Spirit does give us power and strength to do the right thing. We just have to ask and follow his guidance.** Close with the prayer.

**Living the Gospel** words through the week (3-5 min.)

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.