



# Pentecost

**Goal: To hear the story of God's Holy Spirit coming to the disciples.**

## RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

### . . . In Acts 2:1-4, 38-39

Pentecost is the dramatic story of the coming of the Holy Spirit on Jesus' followers in Jerusalem. There was the sound of a "fierce wind" and what seemed to be "flames of fire" alighting on the disciples. The Spirit was poured out on people "from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem." They heard others speaking "in their native languages," declaring "the mighty works of God" (v. 11, CEB).

Peter preached and talked about the pouring out of God's Spirit, predicted by the prophet Joel (vv. 16-23; see Joel 2:28-32). Peter proclaimed Jesus was crucified, but was raised up in his resurrection and exalted "at God's right side" (Acts 2:33, CEB). This was Peter's message, and it became the central message of the church. Peter urged the crowd to "change your hearts and lives. Each of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (v. 38, CEB).

We celebrate the life-giving Spirit of God who is with the church now and forever. We are never alone. God's Spirit is always with us. God's grace gives us the Spirit and, in gratitude, we celebrate by serving God and others!

### . . . In Your Children's Experiences

It was a big celebration, this day of Pentecost when God's Spirit was seen and experienced by the early church gathered together. Just as the people gathered to celebrate, so too your church will mark this day of Pentecost in special ways during worship. Think about the big themes in this story—God's Spirit present in wind; God's Spirit present with all the different kinds of people—and how children will connect with them. Find out what will happen in worship and help prepare the children to be participants. Help them name the ways God's Spirit is alive and well, working in their lives today.

### . . . In Your Relationships with the Children

Think about your children as you prepare to share this story of Pentecost, what we have also called "the birthday of the church." The story is rich in imagery, and you can help them connect by inviting their stories of the experience of feeling and watching the wind, or what it's like to hear people speaking in other languages. There may be children in your group who are learning other languages or children for whom English is a second language. Hearing them speak is a great way for the entire group to connect with this story about all the different people gathered in one place when God's Spirit was felt among them.

*Holy Spirit, set me on fire for the gospel. Help me speak the truth in love and peace amid injustice. Amen.*



## Supplies

Music & Melodies  
(MM) 2023-2024

Stories, Colors & More  
(SCM) i-iv, 12, 19

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

blanket or mats

snack

## Guided Play

choice 2: children's  
Bibles, internet-  
connected device  
with *Growing in Grace &  
Gratitude* e-book  
([www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads)),

pictures of Pentecost  
from past classes or  
from an internet image  
search (optional), large  
pillows, blanket

choice 3: headbands  
cut from long strips of  
red construction paper;  
copies of **Grace Notes**  
(GN) 1; red, orange, and  
yellow crayons

## Exploring

choice 2: red, orange,  
and yellow crepe paper

choice 3: copies of **GN 2**  
on card stock

choice 4: copies of **GN 3**

## GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

### Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **SCM i-ii**, "Your Visual Schedule," to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii-iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

Before the session, for "Guided Play" choice 2, find Pentecost pictures you may have on hand from past classes or do an internet image search and print a few pictures. For "Guided Play" choice 3, cut long strips from large sheets of red construction paper to make headbands.

"Exploring God's Grace" choice 2 requires more prep.

### Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet children as they arrive and say, "Grace and peace be with you." Prompt them to respond, "And also with you." Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time. Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers you do not know. Tell the parents/caregivers that today's story is about the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost. Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity to start:

- 1. Red, Orange, and Yellow**—Ask the children what colors they think of when they think of fire. Give the children small sheets of red, orange, and yellow construction paper. Invite them to tear the papers into pieces, big or small. Give each child a piece of white paper and invite the children to glue their torn pieces on the white paper to make a picture of fire.
- 2. Story Corner**—Place large pillows and a blanket on the floor to make a story corner. Set out several children's Bibles with bookmarks placed at the Pentecost story. Include the *Growing in Grace & Gratitude* e-book. Add some supplemental Pentecost pictures you have gathered from past classes or an internet image search. Invite the children to look at the pictures of Pentecost. Tell them that they will hear the story of this special day in the church.
- 3. Flame Headband**—Give the children copies of **GN 1**. Invite them to color the flames with red, orange, and yellow crayons. While they work, size the headband to each child's head and staple the headband. Cover the inside of the staples with masking tape to prevent scratches. Cut the flames as the children finish coloring. Give the children pieces of rolled tape and let them secure their flames to the headband.



## Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, playing and singing “I’m Gonna Sing When the Spirit Says Sing”—**MM 19**; **SCM 19**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

Invite the children to dance with their flame headbands to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit.

### Come and Hear

A B MS

Say or sing the following song to the tune of “The Bear Went Over the Mountain” and do the motions indicated. Invite the children to join you.

Come and hear God’s story. (*walk four steps to the right*)

Come and hear God’s story. (*walk four steps to the left*)

Come and hear God’s story. (*walk four steps to the right*)

Sit down and fold your hands. (*fold hands in your lap*)

### Two Little Eyes

A MS

Invite the children to repeat each line after you and follow your actions.

Two little eyes to look to God. (*point to eyes and then point upward*) /

Two little ears to hear God’s word. (*cup hands around both ears*) /

Two little feet to walk God’s ways. (*point to feet and step in place*) /

Hands to serve God all my days. (*hold hands outstretched with palms up*) /

### Hearing the Story

L

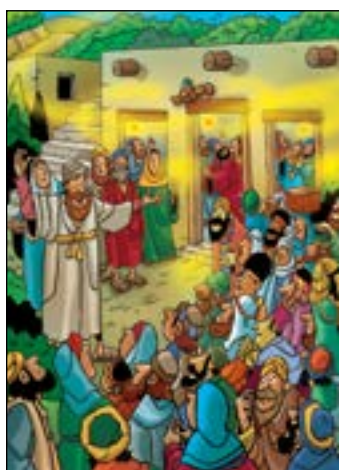
Open the Bible to Acts 2 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost.

Read **SCM 12**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

After you have read the story, invite the children to repeat each line after you and follow your actions:

Long, long ago in Jerusalem (*move hand back over shoulder with thumb out*) /

the disciples were waiting and praying. (*fold hands in prayer*) /



Today’s story can be found in *Growing in God’s Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), [www.pcusastore.com](http://www.pcusastore.com).



The wind blew in with a great big rush. *(reach out to the left and sweep arms to the right) /*  
 Over the crowd, there came a hush. *(put index finger to lips, saying, "Shhh") /*  
 Around the room, they saw dancing flames. *(wiggle fingers all around in the air) /*  
 This is how the Holy Spirit came. *(circle hand upward) /*

A flame came to rest atop each disciple's head, *(rest hand on top of head with fingers stretching upward) /*  
 and in that room is where Peter led. *(point with index finger of one hand and moving from close to body outward) /*  
 He told people about God's love, *(hug self) /*  
 and how Jesus was sent from above *(point upward) /*  
 to teach us how to love one another, *(point to self and outward) /*  
 to help us be sisters and brothers. *(point to both sides) /*  
 On that day the church grew. *(make a "roof top" with fingertips of each hand touching in a point starting low and reaching higher) /*  
 To this day it includes me and you. *(point to self and to someone else) /*

## EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

### 1. Spreading Colors

LG A B T

Gather the children around a table with a bowl of water and washable markers in the center. Give each child a round coffee filter, a plastic spoon, and at least two paper towels. Have the children place their coffee filter on the paper towels. Let them color with washable markers in the center of the coffee filters. Invite the children to dip a small spoonful of water and gently pour it on their coffee filter. Have the children step one position to the right around the table and pour a little water on their neighbor's filter. Repeat the process at least three times. (Too many times will cause a watery mess.)

Ask the children to watch as the colors spread from the center to the outer edges. See if they remember hearing about how the story of Jesus spread from a small group of people outward to more and more people. Engage them in a conversation about how they can help spread the story.

**T** *Transition times vary, so plan accordingly. Cleanup may require only a short warning while hand washing may require more warning and time. Use a song or short activity to signal the change.*

The coffee filter will absorb water quickly, but having the children add water to their neighbor's filter emphasizes their role in spreading the word. If a child is upset about "ruining" their art, either allow them to make another or point out that what the group created together with the water is new art.





## 2. Wind Sock

A B MS L

Tell the children that they are going to make a wind sock to remind them of the Holy Spirit coming like a mighty wind.

Give the children a sheet of white card stock and invite them to color and decorate it. When they have finished, show them how to tape red, orange, and yellow crepe paper streamers to one of the long edges of their paper.

Roll the paper into a cylinder shape, short edge to short edge, and staple at the top and bottom where the edges meet. To make a handle, tape a ribbon to two sides of the cylinder opening at the end opposite the crepe paper.

Invite the children to run holding their wind socks behind them.

## 3. Spreading the Good News

MS B

*Before the session, cut out the notes from card-stock copies of GN 2 for each child.*

Tell the children that they are going to spread the good news about Pentecost to the people in your church. Read the message on the notes from GN 2.

Give the children one or more notes, and invite them to color them in the colors of wind (blues, grays, and whites) or flames (reds, oranges, and yellows).

After the children have finished coloring, take a walk through your church, inviting the children to leave their notes for people to see and take.

**B** *Providing opportunities for children to explore the church helps them understand their surroundings during worship. However, it can also provide opportunities for unwanted behavior such as being disrespectful in a holy place. Help children focus on respecting others and being polite.*

## 4. Coloring Page

FM C

Hand out copies of GN 3 and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “What did the disciples feel when they heard the wind and saw the flames?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did it feel like to be filled with the Holy Spirit?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What did the disciples tell others about Jesus?”

Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.



## LOVING AND SERVING GOD

FA

Call the children together, playing and singing “I’m Gonna Sing When the Spirit Says Sing”—**MM 19; SCM 19**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate. Ask the children who they will tell about the Holy Spirit today.

If you would like to share a snack, now would be a good time. Invite the children to repeat after you and follow your actions as you pray:

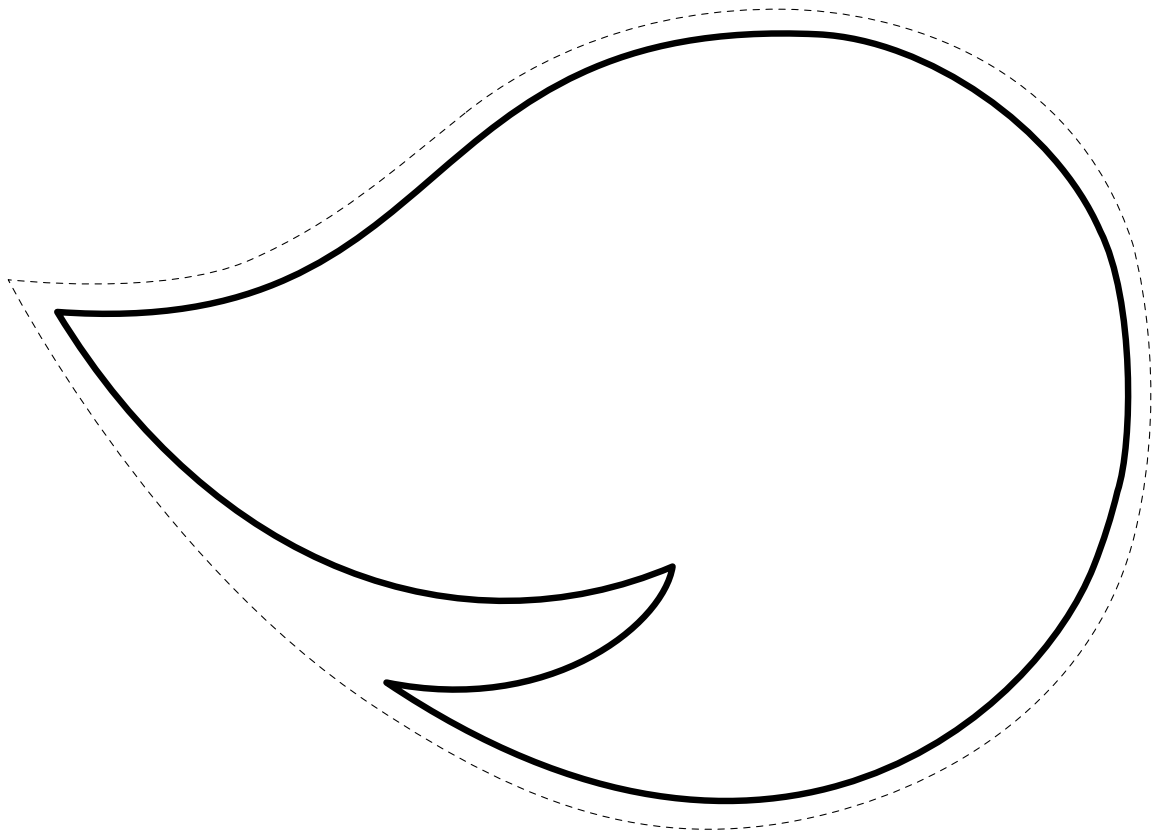
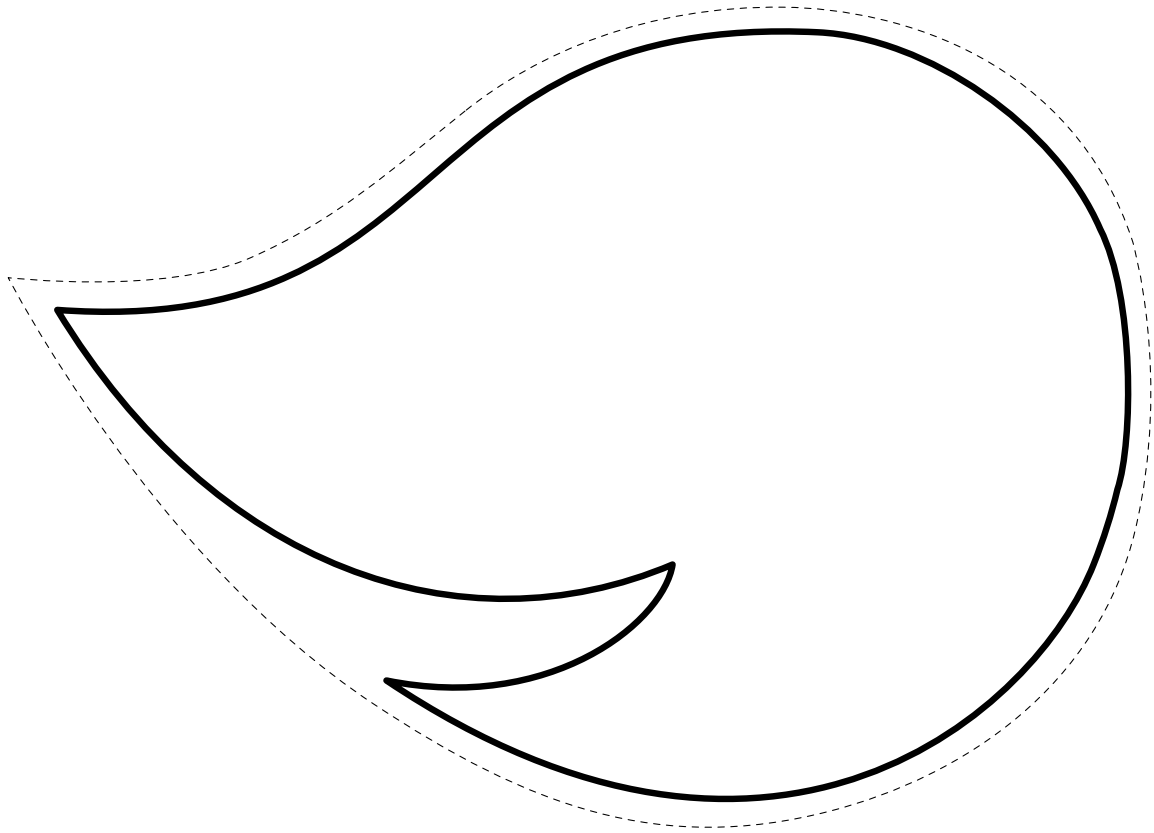
For food to eat, (*raise hands to mouth*) /  
and friends to share, (*hold hands out*) /  
for those we love everywhere, (*place hands over heart*) /  
we thank you, God. (*put hands together in prayer*) /

As the children leave, give them a sending and a blessing:

(*Name*), tell everyone about the wind and the flames! The grace of God is with you.

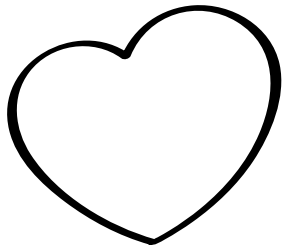


Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit [www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads). Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).

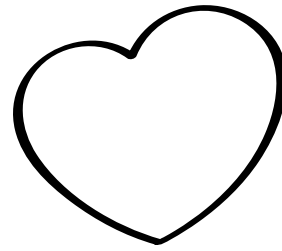




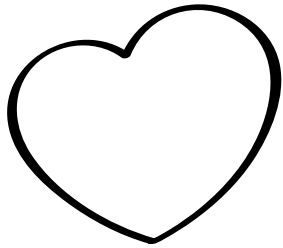




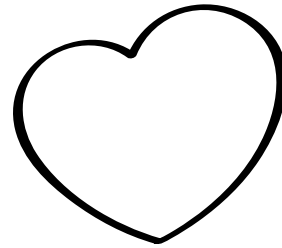
God loves you  
and the Holy  
Spirit will be  
with you too.  
God's love is  
for everyone.



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