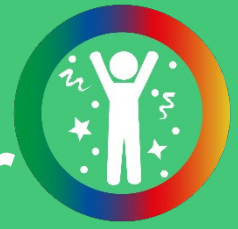




Faith Adventures for Children Together



*Committed to URC Children Together:
enabling everyone to grow more like Jesus
together in the home, church and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link:

<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

Acts 2: 1-14 Pentecost

Theme: Celebrate God: here, now, and always

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

Today we are looking at the feast of Pentecost. In Jesus' time it was a big harvest celebration (called The Feast of Wheat) when people would celebrate bringing in the wheat from the fields. It was a 'pilgrim festival' meaning that all adult men were expected to go to Jerusalem – this is why there were so many people in the city from so many different places.

Jesus had promised his followers that his father, God, would send them the Holy Spirit to help them in their work of bringing people to God. This had also been prophesied in the Old Testament (Joel 2:28-29)

Jesus' followers were surely upset that Jesus had ascended into heaven and left them, but the coming of the Holy Spirit filled their hearts with joy and focus. Sometimes, even when we are feeling sad, we can see good things happening.

Today we think of Pentecost as 'The birthday of the Church' because, helped by the Holy Spirit, this is the day that the disciples started preaching to other people about Jesus. That is why we are celebrating today.



Together

How do I help my group to come together and get started with the theme?

Gathering prayer

Jesus, our friend

(use alternate index fingers to point and tap the middle of opposite palms)

Be with us today

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move up and down twice)

As we share together,

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move one forward and one back and alternate twice)

Pray together,

(hands together, palm against palm, as though praying)

Play together,

(hands to each side, palms up, make two small circles outwards)

And get to know you better,

(point up with one hand)

As children together in your family

(one hand out, palm down in front of you, move it sideways and up in three 'steps' as though to indicate children of three different heights)

AMEN

(Two thumbs up, and bring fists slowly together to meet in front of you)

OR

Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.

Help us to grow closer to you in all we do.

Help us to speak and to listen, to learn and to grow together,

Adventuring together with you wherever we may go.

Amen

In-person game

Split the group into small teams of between two and four children. (If you only have one or two children, play against the clock). You will need groups of three items that go together, either the actual items or photographs. E.g. three things you write with; knife, fork and spoon; salt, pepper and mustard; shampoo, brush and comb. Hide two from each set around the room and give the third item from each set to a team. The aim is for the team to find the items which make up a set of three and be able to explain what they have in common. If you have enough sets, you could then give them another set to find.

Online game

Send everyone to find three things that belong together somehow. In turn, the participants show their three items and the rest of the group have to try to work out what the three things have in common. The answer might be really obvious – e.g. they are all purple, or they are all things you write with – or may be obvious only to the person holding them – e.g. they were all gifts from a grandparent, or all foods that person doesn't like. You could organise this just for fun or as a team game where each team has to guess the connection between items held up by members of the other team and get more points the fewer items they need to see.



Experience

For this story we recommend using the Children's International Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3A+1-12&version=ICB>

Where can I find the story online?

For under fives by Saddleback Kids <https://youtu.be/OMQKy1Mx49M>

David Suchet reads the story from the Jesus Storybook Bible <https://youtu.be/yezAl2zg0Bo>

Songs to support the story

For under fives: No More Waiting, by John Hardwick https://youtu.be/FEyyJuZxIHk_ or <https://youtu.be/aAQMYTzeHal>

Older children: Blowing Wind And Tongues Of Flame, Bob Hartmann <https://youtu.be/3VyjpsFPF-I>

Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new story to share

The passage ends with the words of the people who saw what happened at the first Pentecost; they were heard to ask "What does this mean?". We have written a reflective poem about what difference the Holy Spirit makes in our lives. Perhaps the group could write their own reflections too:

Pentecost means never really feeling alone
When you are sat on your own, all alone in your room
Knowing that Jesus said, 'I shall be with you'
And the Holy Spirit says 'You are not alone
I am with you, Here, now and always'.

Pentecost means comfort when you are afraid
When things in your life are making you feel wobbly and scared
Knowing that Jesus said, 'I shall be with you'
And the Holy Spirit says 'Don't be afraid
I am with you, Here, now and always'.

Pentecost means clear understanding
When you feel confused and not sure of the way
Knowing that Jesus said, 'I shall be with you'
And the Holy Spirit says 'I will guide you
I am with you, Here, now and always'.

Pentecost means peace in your heart
When life is busy and loud and leaves you feeling anxious
Knowing that Jesus said, 'I shall be with you'
And the Holy Spirit says 'Peace, be calm
I am with you, Here, now and always'.

Pentecost means God within us
When you know that you are a friend of God
Knowing that Jesus said, 'I shall be with you'
And the Holy Spirit says 'We are in this together
I am with you, Here, now and always'.



Modern parables

Jesus used stories to help people understand the things of God, even though they weren't necessarily overtly Christian stories. Lots of children's books can be used in a similar way as a conversation starter on the week's theme. Examples are shared here but you may think of others too.



'Under the Love Umbrella' by Davina Bell

Talking together: How might we talk about the story together?

- Where have you seen God this week? How could we celebrate that?
- In verse 12 the people were wondering what it all meant. What do you think it all means? What about for you personally?

Wondering together: Suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder if you've ever been confused by something that happens in church?
- The Holy Spirit helped the disciples not to be afraid and to speak about Jesus to everyone in ways they would understand. I wonder how you would like the Holy Spirit to help you?

What's in the box (for under fives)

Use the special box or bag and sing "What's in the box/bag? What's in the box/bag? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box/bag" (to the tune of The Farmer's in the Dell). You could tap the top of the box twice after the word 'box'. Pull out the things one by one and then let the children play with them, talking about the theme or the story in simple terms.

This week's box could include:

- A battery powered fan or hand fan (feel the breeze on your hands and face, you can't see it but you can feel it. Can you see it making things move? It's like God's spirit moving)
- Bubbles (let's blow some bubbles – where do they go? They're filled with air – look how pretty they are)
- A torch (see the light from the torch shining on your hand and lighting up things around the room. God's spirit lights us up and warms us)
- A toy medal or sticker (we get a medal or a sticker when we're brave. God helps us to be brave. When are you brave? What makes you a bit frightened sometimes?)
- A feather (Feathers are very gentle and soft to touch. God's spirit is gentle but strong)
- A tactile cross of wood or fabric (a cross shape reminds us of Jesus. Jesus/God loves us and it's always in the box because Jesus/God always loves us!)
- A set of play people to act out the story or random shapes/bits you can move around to make pictures from the story as you tell it (eg stones, felt, twigs etc)



Express

Praying together: how can you involve the children actively in prayer?

Bubble prayers

You will need:

A bowl
Some washing up liquid
Straws

What you do:

Gently blow through the straws (make sure you remind the children not to suck the mixture).

Watch the bubbles form and see the way the light shines on them. There are rainbows revealed within which are a reminder that God is with us here, now and always, and God's promises are true.

Look at each bubble; they all share the same shape, spherical, but each is different in size, unique and special. Just like us.

Gently blow some more bubbles as we pray:

God the Father created these bubbles, the universe, and each and every one of us. Here, now and always.

Gently blow some more bubbles as we pray:

God the Son, Saviour of us all, who breathed the same air as us on this earth, the same air with which these bubbles are filled, lives today in our hearts.

Here, now and always.

Gently blow some more bubbles as we pray:

God the Spirit, who moves these bubbles, fills this space with power which plays within us, guiding and strengthening us.

Here, now and always.

Spoken prayer

We meet together and celebrate once again

Here, now and always

God sent his Holy Spirit to help all that believe

Here, now and always

The Spirit lives in us as our own special helper

Here, now and always

Let us carry your flame in our hearts to be the light of your love in this dark world.

Here, now and always

The warmth of God's love be with us

Here, now and always

Responding together

Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond. [See here for more suggestions.](#)

With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage them to use what they've got to hand in their response.

However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.



The Holy Spirit is like.....

In this story the Holy Spirit is described as being like fire and like a mighty wind. In other parts of the Bible and in our churches, the Holy Spirit is pictured in other ways. I wonder what you think the Holy Spirit is like. Think about some of the things you know or feel about God's Spirit and the ways in which God helps you through the Holy Spirit. Use paints/colours/collage and paper to design an image of the Holy Spirit that works for you. It may feature images that others have used, like fire and wind, or it might be something from your own understanding and imagination.

You will need:

- Scissors
- Paper/ card / tissue paper / collage bits
- Pens or paints or wax crayons

Let your creativity out to play!

Exploding experiments.

All these experiments remind us of the way that the Holy Spirit fizzles up inside of us, filling us with life, here now and forever.

Diet Coke and Mentos

You will need: a 2-litre bottle of Diet Coke and a pack of Mentos

What you do:

Don't do this one indoors!

Just open up the bottle and slide the Mentos out of the packaging and into the bottle of coke.

You'll want them to drop in very quickly one after another. Then move away quickly and watch as the foam shoots out the top!

Growing marshmallows

You will need: marshmallows, paper plates or paper towels, microwave oven

What you do:

Put two marshmallows on a paper plate or paper towel.

Put the plate in the microwave. Set the timer for 1 minute (60 seconds) on high.

Stand back and watch through the window of the microwave. After about 20 seconds, you'll see the marshmallows start to puff up. They'll grow to about four times their original size!

When the microwave turns off, take the plate out and put it on the counter.

Leave marshmallows on the plate and watch it for a minute. When it shrinks back down, you can pull it with your fingers and make it into whatever shape you want. It will stay in that shape and get hard and crunchy. You can eat it, too.

Fizzing hands

You will need: 3 tablespoons Bicarbonate of soda, food colouring, 3/4 cup vinegar, washing up liquid, a wide mouth jar, a disposable nitrile glove, a paperclip or safety pin, rubber bands, safety glasses, a spoon and a baking tray.

What you do:

Use a tray or a baking sheet underneath all the materials as you do this as it makes it easier to clean up.

Add vinegar, a good squeeze of washing up liquid, and food colouring to the jar.

Stir with a spoon or swish to combine the ingredients. Set aside.

(Adults only) Open up a paper clip or safety pin and use a pointed end to poke a small hole in each fingertip of the glove.

Put three tablespoons of bicarbonate of soda into the glove, shaking it to fill the fingertips.

Stretch and fit the open end of the glove over the top of the jar.

Be careful NOT to spill any bicarbonate of soda in.

The fingers of the glove will drape over the jar.

Place rubber bands around the base of the glove to secure it around the jar.

Take your tray/baking sheet and jar/glove outside. Gently lift the glove and tip it to empty the baking soda into the jar. Swirl everything around, then stand back to keep clear of the foamy reaction!



Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- Go outside and look for signs that the wind is acting on the world around you. Is it a gentle breeze or a strong blustery wind? What proof do you have that it is there? Do you think that wind is a good image for God's Holy Spirit?
 - When the disciples were given the Holy Spirit as a helper, they weren't afraid any more and spoke to everyone about what God had done. Can you find someone to talk to about God's gifts?
-

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of Pentecost with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk

Why not have a look at next month's resources on **Journeys?**

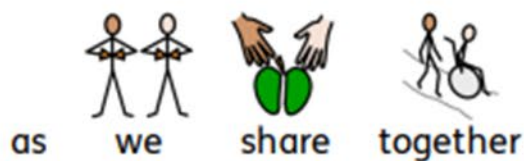




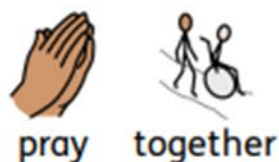
Jesus our friend,



be with us today



as we share together



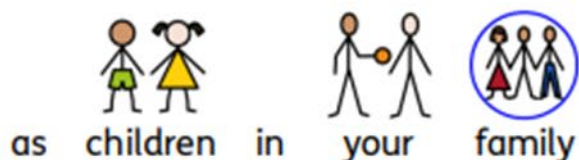
pray together



play together



and get to know you better



as children in your family



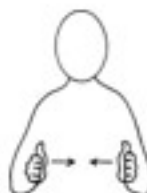
Amen



Right middle finger touches centre of other palm, repeat with left hand



Alternate hands back and forth



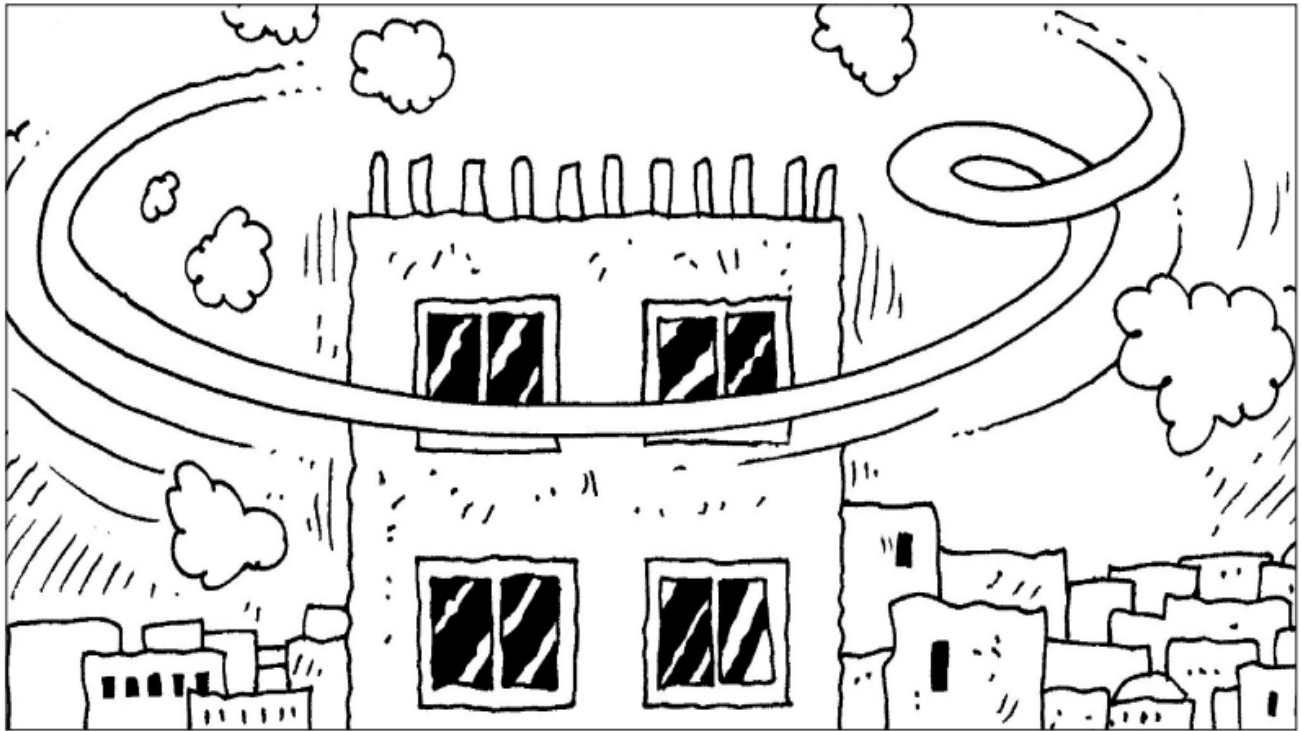


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