

Pentecost in a Box

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Oriented for faith-at-home formation, these simple objects illuminate the story of Pentecost and seek to deepen our understanding of the Holy Spirit. Gathered in a box (or, if mailing, an envelope!), families may enjoy these activities in one sitting or at their own pace.

Materials

Pentecost at a Glance handout (see boxed text)

Interactive Acts 2 Story script with pre-printed images (see attached document for images)

Pentecost greeting cards (1-2 per person in household – see attached document)

Birthday candles (1 per person in household)

Red streamers (1 length per person in household)

PENTECOST AT A GLANCE

What is Pentecost?

Pentecost is the 50th and last day of the Easter season. In 2020, it is Sunday, May 31st. It marks the birth of the Church when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2).

Key Symbols of Pentecost

- Wind – the Holy Spirit came on the first Pentecost like a mighty rushing wind
- Flames – the Holy Spirit rested on Jesus' followers on the first Pentecost like tongues of fire
- Red – the official liturgical color for Pentecost, reminding us of flames
- Dove – symbolic of the gift of the Holy Spirit (When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came to him like a dove.)

Digging Deeper: The Holy Spirit

- One of the three persons of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We receive the Holy Spirit when we are baptized. (see Acts 2:38)
- The Holy Spirit was sent to be our Advocate who teaches us. (see John 14:26)
- The Holy Spirit is always with us. (see John 14:16)
- The Holy Spirit encourages and strengthens us. (see Acts 9:31)
- The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual gifts. (see Acts 19:6; Hebrews 2:4)
- The Holy Spirit fills us. (see Acts 13:9, 13:52)
- The Holy Spirit sanctifies us (helps us become holy). (see Romans 15:16)
- The Holy Spirit gives us joy. (see I Thess 1:6)
- The Holy Spirit lives in us. (see 2 Tim 1:14, I Cor 3:16, I Cor 6:19)
- The Holy Spirit helps us live together as the Church. (see Acts 2:42-27)

ACTIVITY 1: Interactive Storytelling of Acts 2

Note: As you tell the story, place the corresponding images in front of you for everyone to see, gradually building an entire picture by the story's completion. If desired, pass out the images beforehand and prompt participants to place their images for all to see at the corresponding parts of the story.

Today we are going to hear a story from the New Testament, the Book of Acts, Chapter 2. This is the story of Pentecost.

After Jesus rose from the dead and went to live with God the Father in heaven, the disciples went to Jerusalem to pray and to tell people about Jesus. **[Image of 12 Disciples]**

One day, the disciples were all together in a house. And suddenly, the sound of a rushing wind came from heaven and filled where they were sitting. *Can you make wind noises with me?*

Then the disciples saw what looked like tongues of fire resting above each person's head. **[Image of tongues of fire]** And the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. Suddenly, they began to speak in different languages – many that they didn't even know!

Now, there were people from many places who spoke many different languages who were in Jerusalem at this time, too. **[Image of Large Crowd]**

When the people heard the disciples speaking lots of different languages, a crowd gathered around them. They were amazed and confused! *Can you show me your amazed and confused faces?*

How can we hear these words about God in our own languages, the crowd of people thought. What does this mean? **[Image of exclamation mark & question mark]**

Some people began to make fun of the disciples. But the disciple Peter stood up and began to speak to the crowd. **[Image of Peter with outstretched arms]** Peter told them that God promised to send God's Spirit to be with all people. Peter told them about Jesus, the Messiah. Peter told them that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord would be saved.

And the crowd heard Peter's amazing words and wanted to receive God's Spirit, too. They said, "What should we do?" Peter replied, "Turn away from the things you have done wrong and be baptized with water for the forgiveness of sins. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." **[Baptism Image]** About 3,000 people chose to follow Jesus that day, were baptized, & filled with the Holy Spirit.

The people stayed with the disciples to learn about God **[Scroll image]**, to pray to God **[Praying hands image]**, to sing songs to God **[Music image]**, and to eat with one another **[Eating image]**. This was the beginning of the Christian church. Every year on Pentecost, the church celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit. We remember that God is with us all the time and has given us many gifts.

ACTIVITY 2: Decorate Pentecost Greeting Cards

Decorate the pre-printed cards with Pentecost symbols/colors. If desired, paint flames on cards with forks (a combination of red, orange, & yellow paint works great!) or use straws to dip into the paint and blow gently across the paper (this works well with a stencil of flames or a dove). Consider who might be blessed by receiving your cards and then send them!

ACTIVITY 3: Sing Happy Birthday to the Church

Place your birthday candles on a celebratory treat. Beforehand, you may want to have participants decorate cupcakes or cookies with red frosting/sprinkles, flames, doves, etc. Together, talk about how Pentecost marks the birth of the Church and how people all over the world celebrate being the body of Christ on this day. Sing together and then enjoy your treats!

ACTIVITY 4: Reflect, Celebrate, & Pray

Reflect together: The Holy Spirit is in us. What is one way that God is working in you? (Alternate: The Holy Spirit gives us many gifts and talents. What is one way you can use your gift/talent to share God's love?) Use a marker to write your responses on your red streamers.

Gather together in a circle with each person holding a red streamer.

While waving your red streamers, say this prayer together:

Thank you, Holy Spirit!

Thank you for being with us!

Thank you for connecting us!

Thank you for helping us share God's love!

Thank you for helping us be the Church!

AMEN!

Complete your prayer by displaying your red streamers somewhere in your home.

OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

- Pentecost-themed Coloring Page - <https://coloring2print.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/pentecost-coloring-1.jpg>
- Illustrate-your-own Pentecost Storybook – Create-your-own or see a paid option here - <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Pentecost-Bible-Mini-Books-The-Holy-Spirit-Confirmation-3765914>
- Pentecost-themed Playdough Mat - <http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2014/04/pentecost-play-dough-mat.html>
- Outdoor Pinwheel or Supplies to Create-your-own Pinwheel