

A NOTE FOR PARENTS

Happy Pentecost Sunday! Though Pentecost may be a big word that might not be immediately familiar for us or for our kids, it represents one of the most important days in the entire history of the church.

Following Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, the disciples remained in Jerusalem to discern the next steps for this small group of Jesus-followers. They knew that they had witnessed amazing events in the weeks prior, but now that Jesus had left, what would happen to them? Where would they go? Who would lead them? How would they stand boldly in the face of opposition? Do they try to simply survive or was there something more that God wanted to do through them?

50 days after Jesus' death, as the Jewish world was celebrating the Old Testament festival of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit rushed into the room where the disciples were meeting and the course of the world was changed! As the first act of God's power within the church to expand his mission to all people, the Spirit inspired those in the room to speak in unknown languages that could be understood by visitors from around the world.

They were astounded at this powerful act of God, and before the end of the day the church would increase by at least 3,000 people who received the message of Jesus' salvation and were baptized. Amazingly, from this point on the church continued to grow exponentially—not only from among those who had been Jews but from people across all racial and ethnic barriers!

A movement like this had never been seen in the world before, and the power of the Holy Spirit to unify people from all walks of life is clearly evident today. In a time in which racial and cultural tensions threaten to divide and shatter any sense of unity in our world, the story of Pentecost reminds us of the unique witness God's church plays to bring diverse people together. Indeed, the Pentecostal church is the fastest growing segment of the church worldwide, especially among people who live outside the majority world in regions of South America, Africa, and Asia. The power of the Holy Spirit gives hope to people who had lost it and unites people under God's vision for the world.

This is not a time for the Church, or for individual Christians, to hide from difficult conversations about differences and inequality. Rather, it is the moment for the Church to offer another way—a way of unity that cuts across cultural divides and recognizes that we are all equal at the foot of Jesus' cross. God's Spirit unites and unifies us as he overshadows our differences in the light of what brings us together—the salvation of Jesus Christ.

The work of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost displayed God's heart of inclusion as Peter declared the words of the prophet Joel, "I will pour out my Spirit of all people." There is no language, social class, skin color, gender or age that exists outside of God's promise of the Spirit. The Spirit brings all of these people together in Jesus and he empowers them to declare this message of hope to those who have yet to find it.

Almighty God,
on this day you opened the way of eternal life
to every race and nation
by the promised gift of your Holy Spirit:
Shed abroad this gift throughout the world
by the preaching of the Gospel,
that it may reach to the ends of the earth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Note: Look for a video introduction to this worship experience at lhcco.org/worship-at-home/! If you're looking for a kids lesson for your children to watch together on Sunday mornings, we recommend the TruFire lessons from the Assemblies of God. These lessons follow the same curriculum path that we use with LHC Kids. Find all videos at lhcco.org/teaching/kids-church

READ

As a family, read **Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-21**

As you read, think about how important it was for God to include everybody—young or old, rich or poor, man or women, Jew or Gentile—in his plan of salvation. Talk about any of the questions below, and give opportunity for children and others present to pose their own questions:

About the Bible text:

- Before he ascended into heaven, what did Jesus tell the disciples to do? Why do you think this time might have been confusing for followers of Jesus?
- What did Jesus promise to send to the disciples? Why do you think the Holy Spirit was such an important promise for Jesus' followers? What would the Holy Spirit give them power to do?
- What happened when the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' followers? What do you think it would have felt like to be there on that day? What would you have experienced: seen, heard, felt, smelled, said?
- What did the crowd of people say when they heard the disciples talking in their own languages?
- What did Peter say about what the Holy Spirit did among the people on Pentecost?

About how the Bible speaks to us today:

- Why do you think it is important to appreciate how God made every person unique?
- How can you appreciate the many different types of people in God's church?
- How can you make sure that all people—whether they are similar to you or different—hear about God?
- How do you think the Holy Spirit has given you power to tell God's story to others?
- Is there anybody that you can think of right now who needs to hear about God's good news?

RESPOND & PRAY

Work together as a family to research another country somewhere in the world. Use resources around your house or the internet to find out some important facts about that country. Discover answers to questions like: what language(s) the people speak? How many people live in this country? What are the major cities? What kinds of food do they eat? What is the weather like? What do houses and schools look like? What is life like for an average person who lives there?

Think together about some items that people who live in this country might need prayer for: What kind of physical needs do many people face (like food, clothing, etc.)? What are the main ways that people worship in this country? Do they worship the one true God or false gods? Are there missionaries who can teach the people about God? Websites like operationworld.org and agwm.com (Assemblies of God World Missions) can be really helpful for finding out this kind of information.

If you want, work together to make a poster or infographic that you can share with others. Email your creation to brooks@lhcco.org!

Talk about how God might want to use your family to reach this country with his message of hope. Then, pray together for this country and the issues you discovered in your research. Try using Google Translate or another program to learn how to say a short prayer for this country in their own language.

SING

Sing the song below together, and encourage everybody to reach out their hands to Jesus in worship. Explain that sometimes physically reaching out in worship can increase our willingness to praise God.

Holy Spirit¹ - Bryan & Katie Torwalt — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPks3NQwH28>

VERSE 1:

There's nothing worth more, that will ever come close
No thing can compare,
You're our living hope
Your Presence Lord

CHORUS:

Holy Spirit You are welcome here
Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere
Your Glory God is what our hearts long for
To be overcome by Your Presence Lord

VERSE 2:

I've tasted and seen, of the sweetest of loves
Where my heart becomes free,
and my shame is undone
In Your Presence Lord

BRIDGE:

Let us become more aware of Your Presence
Let us experience the Glory of Your Goodness
Let us become more aware of Your Presence
Let us experience the
Glory of Your Goodness

BLESS

Sit together and open your Bible and read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 over your family:

For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all given one Spirit to drink.

Now, take a look out a window in your house. Think of all the people who live in the houses you can see. Many of them may look, talk, and have similar traditions as you do, but others may be quite different. Imagine what it is like to sit and talk with them to find out what is important to each of them. Remember that God's Spirit has given you the power to share God's story of salvation with everybody! Speak this blessing over your family:

May you be filled with power from God's Spirit to know how wide and long and high and deep Jesus' love is for you. May you be encouraged to find unity with others as you witness God's power at work in you, in our church, and in your conversations with those who don't know Jesus yet, so that they can hear your story and believe in Him.²

¹ Words and Music by Bryan & Katie Torwalt | CCLI# 6087919

² Adapted from TruStory lesson Cycle A Summer Lesson 3: God's Spirit Changes Everything.