

MinistryPlace.net

# Pentecost , The Holy Spirit Comes

*Scripture: Acts 2:1-41*

**Theme: God sends the Holy Spirit to empower His people**

*High School (Ages 15-18)*

---

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

## Lesson Overview

---

This Sunday school lesson explores the transformative power of Pentecost, where God's presence in the Holy Spirit breaks through human limitations to empower His people in a way that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers. Acts 2 describes a pivotal moment when the disciples, still in Jerusalem after Jesus' ascension, are gathered together in unity, yet their hearts are burdened by fear and uncertainty. The passage reveals that the Holy Spirit's arrival is not just an event but a divine act of empowerment: tongues of fire descend upon them (v. 3), and suddenly, they are filled with the Spirit, enabling them to speak in languages they never knew (v. 4). This event exposes the tension between human limitations and God's sovereign will, showing how the Spirit's work dismantles barriers, when Optional reflection: children can draw a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

## Bible Story

---

On the day of Pentecost, as the disciples gathered together in Jerusalem, they were all drawn together in one place, just as Jesus had commanded them to do. Outside, the Temple courtyards buzzed with the sounds of Jewish pilgrims from every nation under the sun: Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, and more, worshipping God in their own languages. Inside the Upper Room, Peter, James, John, and the other eleven were seated, some with heads bowed in prayer, others listening intently as the crowd outside prayed aloud in the Spirit's power. The air was thick with expectation, and the promise of Jesus' return, spoken in the Upper Room on the night of the Last Supper, now hung over them like a cloud of anticipation. Even though they had seen the risen Lord, they still felt the weight of their mission: to carry the Gospel to every corner of the earth. But today, something different was about to happen.

Just as the disciples finished praying, a sound like a strong, rushing wind filled the room. It was not a sound they could understand, but one that seemed to come from everywhere at once, a noise like the roar of a storm, yet gentle enough to fill the space without shaking the walls. Suddenly, they were not alone. The Holy Spirit, who had promised to be with them forever, had arrived. As the wind swirled around them, tongues of fire descended upon their heads, glowing like embers on a hearth. Peter, who had doubted even Jesus' resurrection at first, now stood trembling before the crowd, his eyes wide with awe. The disciples had spent the past thirty days with Jesus, learning, suffering, and witnessing His resurrection, but now, the Spirit's presence was tangible, a living presence that would empower them for the mission ahead.

When the crowd outside heard the noise, they looked up in confusion. Some thought it a natural disaster, a windstorm, perhaps, but others noticed something even stranger: the disciples standing in the Temple courtyard, all speaking in different languages. Peter, sensing the Spirit's prompting, stepped forward and addressed them with surprising boldness. 'Men of Judea,' he began, his voice cutting through the crowd like a blade. 'Listen to me!' He recounted how Jesus had been crucified and raised to life, how the prophets had foretold His coming, and how God had now fulfilled His promises in this very city. 'You are not drunk,' Peter declared, 'as these men are who have been drunk with wine, but this is what God intended when He promised to send His Spirit.' The crowd's confusion turned to astonishment as Peter explained that each disciple was speaking the language of the people they were with. A Galilean Jew could now speak Hebrew to an Egyptian visitor, and a Greek-speaking merchant could understand Aramaic with the disciples. The Spirit had broken down barriers, and the power of God was being displayed in a way no human could have predicted.

The response was immediate and explosive. Some in the crowd were skeptical, but others, especially those who had heard the wisdom of Solomon's temple, were convinced. Peter pointed to the prophets, pointing out that what they were witnessing was not just a miracle, but the fulfillment of ancient promises. 'God has made this Jesus both Lord and Christ,' Peter declared, 'and through Him, we all have the forgiveness of sins.' As he spoke, the crowd fell silent, their minds reeling. A Jewish woman named Mary, mother of John Mark, stood among them, her heart pounding. She had seen Jesus' miracles, but this was different, this was God's power in action. Others, like Simon the Zealot, who had once fought against the Romans, now found their hearts opening to the message of peace and reconciliation. The Spirit was not just filling them with tongues, but with truth, compelling them to believe what they had been too afraid to accept before.

As the crowd surged forward, Peter saw an opportunity to preach. 'Repent!' he shouted over the noise. 'Turn from your sins, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins may be forgiven.' The crowd, moved by the Spirit, responded in unison. Hundreds of people, men, women, and children, began to believe, confessing their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. The number of those added to the church that day was so great that it surpassed the entire population of Jerusalem, which was then only about 100,000 people. Peter, filled with the Spirit, could not have spoken to all of them alone, yet here they were, responding in droves. The apostles had never expected such a response. They had been hiding in fear after Jesus' arrest, but now, God's power was turning their lives upside down. The Holy Spirit was not just filling them with tongues, but with boldness, with courage, and with the willingness to share the Gospel without hesitation.

That evening, as the new believers gathered in the Temple, the apostles were overwhelmed. They had never seen anything like it. Peter, who had once denied Jesus three times, now stood as a witness to the power of God. 'Look!' he told the disciples later that night, pointing to the crowd outside. 'God has done this through us, not because we are worthy, but because He chose to use us.' The disciples looked at each other, their faces flushed with the same fire that had filled their heads during Pentecost. They knew they were not perfect, far from it, but God had given them a mission, and now, the Spirit was equipping them for it. The next day, they would continue to preach, not just in Jerusalem, but throughout Judea and Samaria, just as Jesus had commanded. This was only the beginning. The church was being born, not in secret, but in the open, with the power of God's Spirit making it impossible to ignore.

## Key Verse

---

## Acts 2:4 , 'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.'

The key verse (Acts 2:4 , 'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.') calls us to respond to God's truth.

### Activities

---

#### Activity 1: Activities: Pentecost Wind Experiment

A hands-on experiment to illustrate how the Holy Spirit brings empowerment through wind (symbolic of divine power). Participants will observe how wind affects a small object, much like the Holy Spirit empowers believers.

##### Supplies needed:

- *Small kite or lightweight paper streamer*
- *Blower (e.g., hair dryer on low setting)*
- *Table or flat surface*
- *Timer (optional)*

1. Set up the experiment on a flat surface. Attach the kite/streamer to a string and hold it at a distance from the blower.
2. Turn on the blower to simulate the wind (Holy Spirit's power). Observe how the streamer moves unpredictably, just like the Holy Spirit moves in ways we can't control.
3. Discuss: How does the Holy Spirit's power feel different from what we might expect? How does this reflect the power of the Spirit in Acts 2?

#### Activity 2: Group Discussion: Empowerment Through the Holy Spirit

A structured group discussion using the Acts 2 passage to explore how the Holy Spirit empowers believers.

##### Supplies needed:

- *Bible*
- *Whiteboard or poster paper*
- *Markers*

1. Read Acts 2:1, 41 together. Pause after key verses (e.g., v. 4: 'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit').
2. Brainstorm on the board: What specific ways did the Holy Spirit empower the early believers? (e.g., speaking in tongues, boldness, unity).
3. Compare to today: How can we experience the Holy Spirit's power in our lives? Write 3 personal examples on the board.

#### Activity 3: Create a 'Spirit Empowerment Map'

A visual map tracing the journey from the cross (Jesus' sacrifice) to Pentecost (Holy Spirit's gift).

##### Supplies needed:

- *Large paper or poster board*
- *Markers/crayons*
- *Stickers or drawings (e.g., cross, dove, wind)*

1. Draw a timeline from 'Jesus went to the cross' (bottom) to 'Holy Spirit descends' (top).
2. Label key events: 'Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension, Pentecost.' Add images for each.
3. Color-code: Red for sacrifice, blue for Spirit, green for empowerment. Discuss: Why is the cross necessary for the Spirit?

### Discussion Questions

---

- Acts 2:1, 4: What did you notice about the crowd's response to the Holy Spirit's power? Why do you think they were 'amazed' (v. 12)?
- Acts 2:4: The apostles were 'filled with the Holy Spirit', how does the Spirit empower you to serve others today?
- Acts 2:38, 39: Peter's message included baptism and the promise of the Spirit for all. Why do you think these were included?
- If you could describe one way the Holy Spirit empowers you personally, what would it be? How does it change your life?
- Acts 2:41: How did the early believers respond to the Holy Spirit's work? What can we learn from their unity?

## Prayer Focus

*Pray for boldness to share the Gospel and for the Holy Spirit to empower students to live out their faith in courageous ways. Ask for clarity to discern how God wants them to serve in their communities.*

### >> Missions Spotlight

Millions in Brazil experience the Spirit's power, pray for young believers there to grow in wisdom, unity, and courage to spread the Gospel fearlessly. Challenge students to 'go and tell' (like the early church) in their own neighborhoods.

### -> To the Cross

The cross was the bridge: Jesus' sacrifice unlocked the Spirit's fullness (John 14:16). Without the cross, the Spirit couldn't live in us, yet in Christ, we're empowered for mission!