



PENTECOST

MEETING AIM

To discover the transforming nature of the Holy Spirit.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 2:1-41

BACKGROUND

In this family time, we are exploring the story of Pentecost. Here, we're looking to help your children understand that the Holy Spirit helps us to share the good news of Jesus, just like he did at the first Pentecost. The Holy Spirit enables us to keep sharing the news that Jesus loves us, died for us and forgives everyone.

STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments and chat about what your children have found exciting today (or yesterday, if you're doing this in the morning). Ask your family when they have heard anyone speak another language, or if they can say anything in another language.

PLAY

10 MINS

You will need: small prizes; things that can act as buzzers (eg horn, kazoo or bell); Bible

Give each of your family a 'buzzer'. The game is a competition to guess what the words in foreign languages mean.

Read out the different words in their languages; give four points if they guess on the first word, three on the second, two on the third, or one for the fourth. If they guess wrongly, they have to wait for anyone else to guess before they can have another go:

Jesus: Isa (*Turkish*), Gesù (*Italian*), Iesus (*Latin*), Jeesus (*Estonian*)

Fire: Fuego (*Spanish*), Fuoco (*Italian*), Feu (*French*), Feuer (*German*)

Speak: Schwärzen (*Luxembourgish*), Parler (*French*), Parlo (*Italian*), Spreken (*Dutch*)

Holy Spirit: Espírito Santo (*Portuguese*), Heilige Geest (*Dutch*), Esprit Saint, (*French*) Spirito Santo (*Italian*)

Peter: Patrus (*Nepali*), Petros (*Greek*),

Pierre (*French*), Pedro (*Spanish*)

Baptise: Krikštykite (*Lithuanian*), Pembaptisam (*Malay*), Bautizo (*Spanish*), Baptise (*Norwegian*)

Amazing: Fantastike (*Danish*), Verbazingwekkend (*Dutch*), Surpreedente (*Portuguese*), Incroyable (*French*)

Tongue: Lingua (*Italian*), Zunge (*German*), Tunge (*Norwegian*), Tong (*Dutch*)

Pentecost: Penetekota (*Hawaiian*), Pentekoste (*Maltese*), Pentikostí (*Greek*), Pentecôte (*French*)

At the end of the game, ask if anyone knows the Pentecost story? See if your children can recap what they know.

Read the first part of the passage (verses 1-13) and if they can count how many languages are named as you read it.

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

Explain that you've looked at how the Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to speak lots of different languages. In the next part of the passage, we read about Peter trying to explain what has been going on to the crowd. Again, the Holy Spirit gives Peter the words to communicate and preach the good news about Jesus dying and rising from the dead.

Explain that the problem we sometimes have reading the Bible today is that the language doesn't always make sense to us. Even though it's in English, sometimes it's a funny-sounding English that isn't how we talk every day. The Bible challenge today is to see if we can make sense of what Peter said using our everyday English.

Take a look at the part of the passage where Peter speaks. Make sure everyone can see a printout of this part of the passage. Together, can you translate some of the words into more simple language that your children and their friends would understand?

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Chat about the story using these questions:

- What do we learn about the Holy Spirit in this passage?
- What did the Holy Spirit enable the disciples to do?
- Why do you think the disciples being

able to talk in different languages was important?

- What are the good things that Christians have to tell people about?
- How can we ask the Holy Spirit to help us share the good news about Jesus today?

CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

You will need: glass jars (one per family member), PVA glue; brushes; different coloured tissue paper; marker pens that will write on glass

Make a Pentecost tealight holder by gluing strips of tissue paper to the outside of the jar to look like flames. In other spaces around the jar, write down words from the translated passage that give you hope, remembering the message of hope at Pentecost. (It might be worth making an example of one to help your children.) As you work, continue chatting about the Bible passage and some of the things you discussed in 'Chatting together'. If appropriate, share a story about how the Spirit has helped you and worked in your life.

PRAYER

5 MINS

You will need: battery-operated tealights; jars from 'Creative response'

Explain that the same Holy Spirit who you've been learning about, who came to the disciples at Pentecost, still lives in us today, and helps us spread the good news that Jesus has died for us and risen again.

Give everyone a tealight and invite them to turn the candles on, and put them in the jars as you pray, as a sign of asking the Holy Spirit to live in us. Then pray a prayer of thanks for the Holy Spirit and ask him to help you share the good news of Jesus.

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PAUL AND SILAS

MEETING AIM

To explore how Paul and Silas put their faith in God, even in the toughest times.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 16:16-40

BACKGROUND

As we learn about Paul and Silas in prison, we focus on how worship was the key to Paul and Silas' freedom. Sometimes we feel like things are too big to be overcome, and we lose hope. However, Paul and Silas put their hope in God, which meant that they were truly free...in or out of prison!

STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments and chat about what your children have found exciting today (or yesterday, if you're doing this in the morning). For refreshments, you could have breadsticks or strawberry wands (which are dairy and gluten free!); say that you chose them because they are like prison bars!

PLAY

10 MINS

You will need: a padlocked box full of goodies; a luggage label that says 'WORSHIP'; sheets of paper, each with a letter of the word 'WORSHIP' written on them.

Before the start, attach the label to the key to the box. Hide the letters of the word 'WORSHIP' around your house.

Show your children the box, but keep the key hidden. Explain that they have to find the letters, and then use them to spell a word. This is the codeword that will get them the key to their prize! Once they have succeeded, give them the key and share the treats out. Ask what your children think worship is.

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: table; cardboard box; scissors; masking tape; play people (such as Playmobil, Duplo or Lego) Cut the sides of the box and then lightly tape them together so that the walls can come down easily.

Have some fun telling this unusual story, by playing it out in a mini theatre! Have the play people handy to enact the story, using the box as the prison. You will need people to be Paul, Silas, the female slave, the other prisoners, the jailer and Lydia. Depending on the age of your children, they could take part in the re-enactment.

Ask one of your family to read out the passage, making sure they do different voices for the characters, while you or your children move the characters around to act them out. When it comes to the part where Paul and Silas are worshipping, sing a Christian song you all know! Tell the story again, encouraging your family members to do all the elements of the story.

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Chat about the story using these questions:

- Why did Paul and Silas end up in prison? Was it fair?
- What were the different things that Paul and Silas did in prison that were not how the other prisoners or the jailer expected them to do? Why did they behave like this?
- Why did the jailer start believing in Jesus?
- How can this story give us hope for today?

CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

You will need: a large padlock cut out of paper or a 3D version made of cardboard – it should be large enough for everyone to write on; felt-tip pens

Extend the discussion about the Bible passage by asking the family to think about how the story of Paul and Silas can give hope for us today about the things that feel too big, bad or powerful to overcome. Sometimes we feel like we've got to the end of the story, but we forget that we have a big, good and powerful God!

Ask your children to consider the things that might feel like today's version of the prison that Paul and Silas were unfairly put in. Generate discussion around different ideas, and encourage everyone to write their thoughts onto the padlock.

PRAYER

5 MINS

You will need: worship music and the means to play it; large keys cut out from big paper; felt-tip pens

Remind your children that it was as they worshipped that the prison walls came down. Paul and Silas had been jailed by the Romans, but the power of their worship meant that they were set free. The big, bad or powerful things you discussed and wrote on the padlock can feel too much to be overcome, but it as we worship God, we discover that we are truly free and the prison walls come down!

Play a worship song. Chris Tomlin's 'Amazing grace (my chains are gone)' would be fitting, or pick a song that is meaningful to your family. Give your children the pens to choose from, and explain that as a reminder that worship sets us free, you're going to write praise to God on the paper keys as the worship song plays. They can write things that God is (eg creator, wonderful, love) or things that they are grateful for.

When the song finishes, say a prayer of thanks for all that God is, and how worshipping him sets us free.

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PAUL IN DANGER

MEETING AIM

To understand the role of risk and relationship in God's work.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 23:12-22

BACKGROUND

In this passage we read about the plot to kill Paul; this is a window into seeing the risks that he took for the gospel, but also the risks that those around him took to support him. Here, we particularly look at the role of friendship in God's work, recognising the risk that Paul's nephew took to protect Paul, and realising and remembering that God calls us to be brave and good friends to one another today.

STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments and chat about what your children have found exciting today (or yesterday, if you're doing this in the morning). Ask them to think about why the friends they have are so special to them. Encourage them to share stories and explore this idea!

PLAY

10 MINS

You will need: noisy objects (such as large bunches of keys, jingle bells or tubs of dried beans); string

Tie lots of noisy items to one of your children. They stand at one end of your room, while everyone else stands at the other, facing the wall. The jingly person has to get as far as they can across the room without everyone else hearing them. When they make a noise, the others turn around.

Change around the roles and play again. See who can get furthest across the room without being heard!

BIBLE STORY

15 MINS

You will need: Bibles or copies of the passage from *The Message*

Begin by reading the story with your children. You might want to try *The Message* paraphrase of this passage for this activity, to make it more readable for your children.

After you've read through the passage, challenge your children to direct the rest of the family in creating a news report of this story. Encourage them to go through the passage again so they can get the details correct. Encourage them to use their imaginations! They could feature an undercover reporter, or interview Paul and Paul's nephew. Give them ten minutes to plot and plan and then ask them to perform their news report.

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Chat about the story using these questions:

- What do we already know about Paul before this story?
- Who were Paul's enemies in this story?
- Who were Paul's friends in this story?
- Where do you think God was at work in this story?
- What do you think Paul's nephew risked to get the news of the plot to Paul?
- What do we learn about being a friend in this story?

CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

You will need: a selection of notecards or letter-writing paper; envelopes; chocolate bars; sticky tape

Explain that part of our job as Christians is to support other Christians, like Paul's nephew did.

Show the family the notebooks and paper. Ask them to choose someone to encourage with a note. Get them to think about someone they admire, or someone that they see doing important work for God, and encourage them to write this for them. Then get them to choose a chocolate bar to tape the letter to and give with their encouragements! Either post these or deliver them on a daily walk.

PRAYER

5 MINS

You will need: different colour cotton thread; patterns to plait friendship bracelets (these are easy to find online) In the story, Paul's nephew took a big risk to make sure that Paul was safe. By being a good and brave friend, Paul's nephew also enabled Paul to keep on going with the work of spreading the news about Jesus. Say that by being good and brave friends, we too can play really important parts in God's work.

Explain that friendship bracelets are normally things we give to our friends, but today you're making bracelets to encourage yourselves to be the kind of friends God wants us to be. Discuss what makes a good friend. You might want to think about the different ways we are friends when we can't see each other face to face. Get your family to think about what kind of friend they want to ask God to help them be, and ask them to choose different colour threads to represent different parts of their prayer. Play some worship music while you plait, and pray quietly as you work that God would help you become a good friend to those who need one.

At the end of the music, say a prayer that asks God for help to become the best and bravest friends we can be, and to thank God for our friends.

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SHIPWRECK

MEETING AIM

To explore the challenge and excitement of going on God adventures.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 27

BACKGROUND

In this passage we read about Paul's voyage and shipwreck. We can learn that Paul's faith takes him to risky places, but that God is still with him, even when things are looking very dicey! Here we explore the challenge and excitement of going on God adventures, but also the promise and security that knowing God will always be with us.

STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments and chat about what your children have found exciting today (or yesterday, if you're doing this in the morning). Ask your family to think about adventures that they would like to go on, and if they were doing something risky, who would they want with them?

PLAY

10 MINS

Your children may already know this classic game and have their own version of actions, but if not, it goes like this. There are several actions that everyone has to remember when you shout out a command. Each time you shout one, it is a race to finish first. Each time, the last person to perform the action goes 'out' and the last one left is a winner. Or, it might work better (and fairer) if the last person to finish the action becomes the next 'Captain', shouting commands to everyone else.

The commands and actions are:

Bow: run to the front of your space

Stern: run to the back

Port: run to the left side

Starboard: run to the right side

Get in the boats: sit down on the ground and start rowing

Captain's coming: stand to attention and salute

Climb the rigging: mime climbing a ladder

Man overboard: get in pairs where someone has a piggyback

Jumping Jack Sparrow: do a jumping jack

BIBLE STORY

15 MINS

You will need: atlas; Bible

This story tells us more about Paul's mission, and what a pioneer he was! Ask your children to think about the technology we have that makes travelling now very different to travel in the times of the New Testament, 2,000 years ago.

Find the right page in your atlas so that you can follow the journey together as you tell the story. You can find the details of the route if you look online for maps. You could even have a small boat figurine to show the route!

Read the passage. It might be easier to use *The Message* version, as the language is easier to follow.

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Chat about the story using these questions:

- How does Paul show his faith in this story? What do you think gave him that faith?
- What was Paul's mission on the journey?
- Why was the journey worth the risk to Paul?
- Where can you see God at work in the story?
- What would it look like if we had Paul's courage today? What are the risks that God might ask us to take?

CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

You will need: pens; paper

Ask your family if you were going on a big adventure, what are the kind of things you'd need?

Now ask them: if you were going on a big adventure of faith, what things might you especially need? Together, write a list of the things that would be important to have with you if you were all going on a God adventure. Ask your

children to especially think about what they might want to have to remind them that God is with them.

PRAYER

5 MINS

You will need: coloured paper; instructions to make origami boats (easily found online – try YouTube for an instructional video); 'How far I'll go' from *Moana* and the means to play it

Explain that Paul's faith took him on great adventures, like the one you've read about today. There were risks, but the work God had given him to do, to tell people all over the world about Jesus, was worth the risk to him. Most importantly, though, he knew that God was with him wherever he went. God still asks us to go on adventures of faith today. It might be going to other countries to tell people about God, but it might also be all kinds of things that we need to be brave to do where we are.

Ask everyone to choose a piece of paper and write their own prayer for the adventures that God might ask them to do. They could pray for bravery, for a sense of God calling them to specific work, or simply that God would be with them as they go. As they write these prayers, play 'How far I'll go', a song reminiscent of bravery and adventures at sea! Then show them how to fold their prayers into boats. They could stick the boats up around your house as a reminder of the adventures God might take them on, if they're willing to go. As you finish say a closing prayer, thanking God for faith adventures, but also for his companionship.

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