**FIRST STEPS TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Session 2 of 4

# Meeting together

### MEETING AIM

To recognise the initiatives the followers of Jesus took once the Holy Spirit had come, thinking about what this might mean for children today.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your particular situation.

The followers of Jesus were so emboldened by the coming of the Spirit that they took the initiative to care for one another as well as tell others about Jesus. If you’re going to explore how they celebrated the last supper in their homes (and children would probably have been present), if it’s not the custom for children to participate in Holy Communion, you may need to talk with church leaders.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome the children and share any refreshments you have. Talk about what makes us excited. What sort of things do we say and do to show we’re excited? Refresh the children’s memories about Pentecost. The followers of Jesus in Jerusalem were excited about what they’d seen and heard about Jesus and were very brave once the Holy Spirit had come to them.

### PLAY – 10 mins

**You will need:** two of the following cards (4cm by 3cm) for each child (eight cards per child) – an outline of a large loaf and grapes, three apples, two open hands, five circles piled together; four small bowls

Stick one card visibly on each bowl and place them around the room. Mix up all the cards, putting them on a tray. Explain the meaning of each card. The challenge is to sort all the cards, one by one, into the correct bowls. Once you have finished, congratulate everyone and wonder what all the cards mean.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** two long pieces of string, rope or wool; a set of cards from ‘Play’; scarves to put on heads when acting (optional); Bible

Begin by singing a song of praise, anything the children know. Then tell this story:

The followers of Jesus were so happy because they knew Jesus had come alive again, had gone to be with his Father in heaven and now the Holy Spirit had come in his place. They met together very often during the week. Let’s discover what five new things they did.

*Create a ‘street’ by arranging your string into two lines.* Jesus’ followers would walk down the street and when they met someone who didn’t know about Jesus, they’d say something about him. *Ask a few children to act out walking down the street, some wanting to talk about Jesus coming alive from the dead, some wanting to listen, some not wanting to listen.*

*Create a ‘temple’ gateway by stretching string over the backs of two chairs, or two adults holding string to form an archway.* Every day, Jesus’ followers went to the temple (the large building where people worshipped God). Here they would pray to God. *Show the ‘open hands’ card.* While they were there, they’d talk about what they were learning as they listened to Jesus’ disciples telling them about Jesus. *Ask a few children to walk through the ‘gateway’ of the temple acting out praying and discussing in small groups.*

*Create a ‘home’ with a circle of string on the floor, with several children sitting inside.* Jesus’ followers spent time in each other’s homes, getting to know each other, finding out more about Jesus. This might be in the evening after work or maybe during the day – many of them would be working in their homes.

They remembered Jesus’ death and the last supper he’d had with his friends when they broke bread and drank wine together. *Show the ‘bread and grapes’ card.* They made sure people who didn’t have enough to eat were given plenty of food. Show the ‘three apples’ card. They generously made sure poor people had enough money. *Show the ‘coins’ card. The children inside the circle should act out looking after sick people, giving out money and food, and breaking bread and drinking wine.*

The Bible tells us people living in Jerusalem really liked how these Christians were behaving and lots more people became followers of Jesus. *Read Acts 2:42-47.*

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

* How did the early Christians care for each other and talk about Jesus?
* How would the children have felt if they’d been in Jerusalem and seen the followers of Jesus behaving like this?
* What do they think was the best thing that they did?
* How do followers of Jesus today care for one another?
* These followers hadn’t done this before the Holy Spirit came. Why did they (do we) need the Holy Spirit to help them (us)?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** a large loaf of bread; washed red grapes; small clean cloth; candle (optional); Bible

If your church is celebrating Holy Communion this Sunday, find out if it is possible for children to join in, to reinforce the practice of the early Christians.

If this is not possible, provide an agape meal for the children. Sit round in a circle with a large loaf of bread and red grapes laid out on a cloth. You could light a candle, a sign that God is present. Talk about the last meal Jesus had with his disciples, his death and why he died. You could read part of the passion story from Luke (23:44-56). Remember Jesus rose from the dead.

Explain you’re all now going to take part in remembering his last meal, just like the early followers of Jesus did together in their homes. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Thank Jesus that he died and that he came alive again. Tear the bread in half so it has a jagged edge – his body was broken. Walk around and give each child a chunk of bread. Then give each child three or four grapes, asking them why you are using red grapes – Jesus’ blood. What do the children want to thank Jesus for? Invite any child to pray out loud. This may well be a holy moment.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** a large sheet of paper; felt-tip pens; cards from the ‘Play’

Refer to the small cards and the new things the Holy Spirit enabled the followers of Jesus to do. Which of them might the children be able to do in the next few weeks? How can they show their love for other children in the group? They can draw suggestions on the paper. Standing around the paper holding one of the cards in each hand, ask the Holy Spirit to help you show love for one another and to tell others about Jesus.

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