**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 1 of 4

# Pentecost

### MEETING AIM

To explore the Pentecost story and the difference the coming of the Holy Spirit made to the early Church and to our lives today.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 2:1-41

### 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 situation.

We all have different experiences of the Holy Spirit. However, it’s clear that God intends us to rely on his power and help to live as followers of Jesus. Use your preparation time to invite the Holy Spirit to strengthen and help you in your own life.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome the children as they arrive and share out any refreshments you have provided. Chat together about what has happened since you last met; share in the triumphs and difficulties of the children’s lives and share something appropriate from your own life. Chat with the children about their best friends. What do they like about them? What would life be like without them?

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need**: bucket; lots of small balls

Place the bucket full of balls in the middle of the room. One player must attempt to empty the bucket while everyone else tries to re-fill it. Change the ‘emptier’ frequently to keep the game moving.

Alternatively, if you are able to go outside, divide the children into two teams and stand teams in lines. Place a bucket full of water and sponge at one end of each line with an empty bucket at the other end. The player next to the bucket should fill the sponge with water and pass it down the line. The player at the end squeezes out as much water as possible into the empty bucket, before passing the sponge back to the start. The team with the most water in their bucket at the end of the time limit are the winners!

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** two dice; music; story sections below on numbered cards; blank paper; pens

Place two sets of the story sections at the front of your space. Divide the group into two teams and sit each team in a circle. Give each group a die. Play the music, passing the die around the circle. When the music stops, one player in each circle should throw the die and run to collect the corresponding story section from the front. When teams have collected all the sections, they should order the story and guess what happened next.

Listen to both groups’ versions of the story and then read the story out from the front to check they had the right order and to see if their final section was right. Encourage sound effects as you read!

1. Jesus had gone back up to heaven. The disciples had witnessed amazing things in their time with him, but they had never seen anything like that. He told them that they wouldn’t be alone because the Holy Spirit would come on them and they’d have power. It sounded good!

2. But it hadn’t happened yet…They were sitting in together in a room wondering what was next, when there was an enormous noise. It sounded like the strongest wind. The whole house shook. The noise sounded like it was coming from heaven. Was this the power Jesus had told them about?

3. Suddenly they all had flames of fire on the tops of their heads! It wasn’t burning them on the outside, but inside they felt God’s power running right through their bodies. What a feeling! They had never known such joy and such peace. The Holy Spirit had come, just as Jesus promised!

4. They started speaking in different languages! They spilled out of the room, still speaking foreign words. Crowding around them, some Jews who were from different countries could hear the disciples speaking their languages.

5. Amazed, these Jews asked each other: “Aren’t these men just simple fishermen from Galilee? How can they speak in our languages? We are from all over the world, but they are telling us all the great things God has done in our very own languages! How can this be?”

6. Some of the Pharisees, who had been watching from further away, raised their eyebrows and tutted. “They’re drunk,” they exclaimed. “Making fools of themselves yet again.”

At the point get the two groups to come up with their own version of what happened next. When they’ve finished, encourage them to read these out.

Finally, tell the group what actually happened:

Peter suddenly felt very brave. He stood up and started speaking in a very loud voice over all the noise and chatter. Explaining to everyone what was happening, he invited them to follow Jesus and be baptised. That very day, 3,000 people became Christians and were baptised and that was the beginnings of the Church.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* I wonder how the disciples felt after Jesus had gone up to heaven.
* How do you think they felt when they heard the wind and the house shook?
* What happened to Peter to make him so brave?
* How does this story make a difference to our lives today?
* Have you ever experienced the Holy Spirit?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** coloured rectangular sponges, each cut into four strips; felt-tip pens; thin string or fishing wire

Encourage each child to choose eight pieces of sponge. Chat about how a sponge works. To do its job, it must soak up water. In the same way, we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ask what is important to the children about this story. Invite them to write it on the strips of sponge. Layer four pieces on top of the other four. Tie the string around the middle and spread the strips out into a star shape.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** reflective music and the means to play it

Ask the children to sit separately in their own space. Play a gentle song and invite them to think about the power of God – the roar of the wind and the house shaking in the story. Encourage them to think about their own lives and situations where they might need God’s power.

Invite the children to put out their hands and ask the power of the Holy Spirit to come into their lives, bringing his power to make the difference that they need.

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