**FIRST STEPS TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Session 1 of 4

# Pentecost

### MEETING AIM

To reflect on the miracle of people hearing about Jesus in their own language and to ask the Holy Spirit to help each child share something true about Jesus with someone else.

### 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 particular situation.

This is the climax of the Easter story, as Jesus sent the promised Holy Spirit to his people. The focus here is on how the Holy Spirit came to help God’s people share the good news of Jesus. Share a time when you were able to talk about Jesus to someone else, doing this in a way three to seven-year-olds can relate to.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome the children and share any refreshments you have. What shapes can children make with their mouths and lips? What can they do with their voices? Encourage imaginative suggestions.

### PLAY – 10 mins

**You will need:** small pieces of card roughly 5cm by 5cm; felt-tip pens

Before the session, make sets of playing cards by drawing the following images on cards: the outline of an upturned mouth, a downturned sad mouth, a ‘straight’ mouth, an open mouth, a flame or ’flickering’ squiggle. You’ll need one set per child.

Hide the cards around your space and show the children a copy of the five cards. Challenge the children to find as many cards as they can, then ensure each child has a full set of five. If time, play a game of snap. You’ll need to add in extra cards for a longer game.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** a set cards from ‘Play’ for each child

Briefly tell the group the ascension story (you could read it from Acts 1:1-11 or from a Bible storybook). Jesus’ friends had gone into the city of Jerusalem and were waiting. Jesus had told them he would send the Holy Spirit to them. They waited on Friday, and on Saturday and on Sunday and on Monday and on Tuesday and on Wednesday and on Thursday and on Friday and on Saturday. How long were they going to have to wait? They were puzzled. *Show the ‘straight’ mouth card.*

Sunday came around again, the day when they remembered Jesus had come alive again – the first day of the week! This Sunday was a special festival, Pentecost, the festival celebrating that the wheat had been harvested. Pentecost was also the festival when everyone remembered that God had given Moses the Ten Commandments. All Jesus’ friends had gathered together in one large room. They were still waiting.

And then…suddenly, there was a loud sound, coming from above them, the sound like a wild, wild wind; a wind that seemed to crash from one wall to another. They felt it on their faces. They heard it with their ears. It blew out their hair. It ruffled their clothes. And then…suddenly they saw orange and yellow flickering, like flames, darting around the room and finally a flickering settled on each person’s head. *Show the ‘flickering’ card.*

The Holy Spirit had come! Everyone in the room began to speak in different languages. *Ask how many different languages can the children name. Show the open mouth card.* The Holy Spirit, who is ‘God everywhere’, had come to be with everyone who loves Jesus, not just then, but for all time, for now! Jesus had gone to be with his Father. He’d sent the Holy Spirit in his place. Jesus’ followers were very happy and excited! *Show the upturned mouth.*

This Sunday was a special day in Jerusalem, the end of the wheat harvest, called Pentecost. Hundreds of Jewish people were visiting from lots of countries. These countries we now know as Israel, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iran. They all spoke different languages. But now they heard Jesus’ followers speaking their own language. They were amazed. What was going on?

Peter stood up. opened his mouth and began to talk in a loud, clear voice. *Show the open mouth card again.* He told them all what Jesus had done. He told them how years ago God’s people had been told that Jesus would come. He told them how Jesus had died but come alive again and gone back to be with his Father, God.

The crowds got upset and sad. *Show downturned mouth.* “What have we got to do?” they called out. Peter simply said: “Turn back to God. God will forgive you from the wrong things you’ve done. He will wash them away. You too will receive the Holy Spirit. This is for you and for your children, wherever you live.”

Wow! The crowds were amazed at this. Thousands of them turned back to God. Thousands knew that God had forgiven them. The Holy Spirit was with them. *Show upturned mouth card.*

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

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

* What miracles of Jesus can you think of? What about the miracle of the Holy Spirit coming, the wild wind, the flickering, the speaking in lots of languages?
* Why was it an important miracle that people visiting Jerusalem could hear what Peter had to say about Jesus in their own language?
* Why is it important everyone has a chance to hear about Jesus?

Share a time recently when you’ve been able to tell someone something true about Jesus. (It’s important for them to realise this is true today. You needed the Holy Spirit to give you the best words to speak.)

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** lollipop sticks; elastic bands; little stickers; strips of yellow, orange and red paper (as long as possible) on which are written something true about Jesus, such as ‘Jesus came alive again’, ‘Jesus loves me’, ‘Jesus made sick people well’, ‘Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with me’

Let the children choose at least six strips of paper to decorate with stickers. Fasten them together onto the end of the stick with an elastic band. Encourage everyone to wave their streamers and shout the true things about Jesus.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** a lighted candle

Sit in a circle and light a candle. Ask each child to think of someone they know they’d like to tell something true about Jesus. Invite any child to share the name of the person they’ve thought of, and what it is about Jesus that they want to say. Remind them how the Holy Spirit helped you.

Go around the circle and simply pray over each child:

“Holy Spirit, be with *[child’s name]*, and help them to share something true about Jesus with *[name they thought of]*.”

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