

God's Wonderful Gift

The Holy Spirit comes
Acts 2:1-47

Character Trait: Unity

(Estimated Lesson Time: 90 minutes)

Objectives:

- Children will recall that Jesus was faithful to keep His promise to His followers by sending the Holy Spirit.
- Children will repeat what Peter told the people to do: Turn away from evil and believe in Jesus Christ.
- Children will identify specific things they can do that show that they are in unity with Jesus.

Supplies:

- *God's Wonderful Gift* loaded onto a tablet or phone in the *Bible App for Kids*
- A ball *(suitable for throwing)*
- Red, orange, and yellow construction and/or tissue paper
- Scissors
- Stapler with staples
- Masking tape *(optional)*
- Glue

Welcome Activity:

(5 minutes)

Welcome the children.

SAY: Think of a gift you received in the past. Do you remember who gave it to you? What made that gift special? *(Call on a few volunteers to share aloud. Answers will vary.)*

SAY: Sometimes the most special gifts are those that are not even physical things. We can give and receive the gifts of time, talents, and encouraging words.

In today's lesson, we will learn about when Jesus sent the most precious gift of all to His followers: God's Holy Spirit.

Review:

(5 minutes)

Guide the children in a brief review of the previous lesson by asking the following:

- **What did Jesus tell the disciples to do?** *(Wait in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Spirit. Tell everyone in the whole world about Him. Make many disciples. Baptize people and teach them everything they learned from Jesus.)*
- **How did Jesus return to heaven?** *(He rose up into the sky and disappeared into a cloud.)*
- **What did the two angels tell the disciples?** *(Jesus will come back the same way!)*

Today's Bible Story:

(10-15 minutes)

Show *God's Wonderful Gift* from the *Bible App for Kids* or share the story aloud:

- Jews from all over the world were in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost.
- Jesus' followers were there, too.
- They gathered together, waiting for the gift Jesus had promised them.
- In the middle of the festival, God's gift arrived.
- It began with a sound, a sound like a howling wind that filled the house where they were waiting.
- Next, something that looked like fire settled on each one of them.
- Then God's Holy Spirit filled everyone in the room, and He gave them power to speak different languages!
- Jews from other parts of the world heard them and were amazed.
- "These people are speaking our languages," they said, "and proclaiming the wonderful things God has done!"
- "This is God's gift," Peter explained. "It was promised long ago. It comes to us through Jesus, the Messiah. You crucified Him, but God brought Him back to life."
- "What should we do?" the people asked, sadly.
- "Turn away from evil," said Peter. "Believe in Jesus Christ. He will forgive your sins and give you His Holy Spirit."
- On that day, three thousand people were baptized.
- They were just the first of many people who would come to trust in Jesus as their Savior.

Discussion:

(15 minutes)

Encourage the children to think more about the story by asking the following:

- **Why were the Jewish people in Jerusalem?** *(They were there for the Feast of Pentecost.)*
- **What were Jesus' followers waiting for?** *(The gift that Jesus promised them)*
- **What was the gift?** *(God's Holy Spirit)*
- **Was Jesus faithful to His followers? Why or why not?** *(Yes, because Jesus sent the Holy Spirit just like He promised.)*
- **What did the Holy Spirit enable them to do?** *(He gave them the power to speak in different languages!)*
- **What did Peter say when the people asked what they should do?** *(Peter told them to turn away from evil and believe in Jesus Christ.)*
- **How many people were baptized that day?** *(Three thousand)*

SAY: Jesus returned to heaven, but He did not leave His followers alone! Jesus promised to send a gift to help them. Jesus' followers were faithful to wait for it, and Jesus was faithful to send it: God's Holy Spirit!

Jesus has not left us alone today, either! God's Holy Spirit lives inside every person who believes in and puts their trust in Jesus (1 Corinthians 3:16, Galatians 4:6).

God's Bigger Story:

(5 minutes)

SAY: After Jesus returned to heaven, God sent His Holy Spirit to help His followers spread the good news about Jesus. Today, people are still hearing this good news through the words and actions of His followers and through God's Word, the Bible.

Memory Verse:

(10 minutes)

And everyone present *(with palms up, lace fingers together and wiggle them)* **was filled** *(slowly move hands from your sides upwards)* **with the Holy Spirit and began speaking** *(move index finger outward from lips)* **in other languages,**
as the Holy Spirit gave them *(extend hands forward, palms up)* **this ability.**

Acts 2:4 (NLT)

Activity:

(15 minutes)

Give one child a ball. Explain that while you sing a song, the children are to toss the ball around to different children while standing up. The child holding the ball when you stop singing is "out" and must sit down. Play until only one child is left standing. This child is the winner. Continue playing as time permits.

SAY: During the game, the ball could only be caught, held, and tossed by one person at a time. But this is not true of God's wonderful gift! At Pentecost, all of Jesus' followers received the Holy Spirit, and even today, we can all receive Him, too!

Response Activity:

(10 minutes)

SAY: Think back to the story. God's Holy Spirit enabled Jesus' followers to speak in different languages! What did the people hear Jesus' followers saying? *(Call on a few volunteers to share aloud. Answers will vary but should include that they proclaimed all the wonderful things that God had done, Jesus is the Messiah, that He was crucified, died, and buried, but God brought Him back to life!)*

SAY: When the Holy Spirit arrived, it looked like fire had settled on each of Jesus' followers. God's Holy Spirit is still here with us today, too. He lives inside the heart of every person who chooses to trust in Jesus. With God's Holy Spirit, we are never alone. He helps us, guides us, and comforts us.

Provide red, orange, and yellow construction and/or tissue paper. Demonstrate how to cut strips of varying shapes, sizes, and colors; then gather them together at the bottom. Using one staple, show how to secure all of the strips together. Tell the children to complete the activity. Walk around the room while the children work to provide help, guidance, and encouragement. At the end of the activity, invite the children to gently wave their paper fires to make the flames move.

For younger children...
Various strips of paper can be cut out in advance for younger children to use for this project. Additionally, a small piece of masking tape can be wrapped around the bottom of the paper fire in order to protect small hands from the staple.

For older children...
Explain to older children that God's Holy Spirit can enable them to share Jesus with others, too. Long ago, the Holy Spirit gave Jesus' followers the ability to speak in different languages. Challenge the children to consider the different ways the Holy Spirit enables each of them to share Jesus today. Encourage them to write these down on their paper flames.

Character Trait: Unity

(10 minutes)

SAY: Unity means being the same or having the same goal. The followers of Jesus shared unity in love and devotion to Him.

Encourage the children to think more about unity by asking the following:

- **What is the opposite of unity?** *(Answers will vary but should include division and disagreement.)*
- **Why is unity important?** *(Answers will vary but should include because it shows that we all have the same goals, beliefs, and values.)*
- **How can you have unity with your family and friends?** *(Answers will vary.)*
- **How can you have unity with other believers?** *(Answers will vary.)*

Connect with Others:

(5 minutes)

SAY: Unity is so important that Jesus prayed to the Father that we would experience unity with Him (John 17:23). Unity between all of Jesus' followers—way back then and still today—is an important witness to who Jesus is and what He did for us.

What are some specific things you can do that show that you are in unity with Jesus? *(Call on a few volunteers to share aloud. Answers will vary but should include making choices and living lives that follow the example that Jesus set for us. Then, invite the children who did not share aloud to turn to someone next to them to share.)*

Closing:

(2 minutes)

SAY: While on earth, Jesus taught people how to live God's way. After He returned to heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to help continue this work. The work of God's Holy Spirit in our lives helps bring unity among all those who trust in Jesus. This was true so long ago at Pentecost, and it is still true for all of us today.

Prayer:

(2 minutes)

SAY:

Dear God,
Thank You for the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit. Help us to accept His guidance in our lives so that we may all experience unity with You.
Amen.

Notes