



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

Children's Liturgy of the Word

PENTECOST

The Descent of the Holy Spirit

Pentecost commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, gathered with Mary in the Upper Room.¹ This event fulfilled Jesus' promise to send the Advocate,² the Spirit of truth,³ who proceeds from the Father.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was not limited to that moment but continues to renew the Church. The Holy Spirit acts as a Counsellor, guiding the Church. The Spirit also provides the power and courage to witness to our faith and empowers us to witness Christ throughout the world. The Holy Spirit prepares hearts to receive the Gospel and confirms the Apostles in their witness to the risen Lord. The Risen Christ grants his apostles the power to forgive sins through the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost celebrates the Holy Spirit's descent, empowering the Church to carry out its mission and be Christ's witnesses, providing guidance, courage, and the ability to forgive sins.

¹ Jesus ate the Passover supper in an upper room with his disciples (Mk 14:15; Lk 22:12.)

² Luke 24:49; Gospel of the Ascension of the Lord, Year C.

³ John 14:16-17: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him."

Objective

- † To introduce children to the Holy Spirit.
- † To introduce children to the Sacraments of Confirmation through the Holy Spirit and Reconciliation through the Church.

Background

Acts 2 marks the Holy Spirit's descent upon the Apostles in Jerusalem on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, ⁴ fulfilling Jesus' promise and signifying the birth of the Church. Accompanied by signs like a violent wind and tongues of fire, this event highlights God's transformative presence. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles speak in various languages the Church's universal mission to proclaim God's deeds to all nations. The presence of devout Jews from every nation underscores the inclusive nature of the Christian message, empowering all Christians to share their faith and invite others to experience God's love and salvation.

Psalms 104 invites us to reflect on the wonders of the natural world and recognize God's hand in all that exists.

1 Corinthians 12 speaks to us of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the unity we share as members of the Body of Christ. We have diverse gifts and talents, but we are all united by the same Spirit and called to work together for the common good.

John 20:19 In this passage, Jesus appears to His disciples on the evening of the Resurrection, offering them peace and the Holy Spirit. The key moment occurs when Jesus breathes on them, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." This establishes the Sacrament of Reconciliation, giving the disciples the power to forgive sins through the Holy Spirit, enabling them to be ministers of God's mercy.

⁴ The Greek name for the Jewish Feast of Weeks, deriving from its occurrence 50 days after Passover (Acts 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8).

Leader's Reflection Questions

- † How can I strive to cultivate inner peace through prayer, reflection, and reconciliation with others?
- † How do I share the Gospel with others, in word and deed?

Key Messages for Children

- † Pentecost is the Church's birthday. It's the day the Holy Spirit came to Jesus' friends, the Apostles, and gave them the courage to start spreading Jesus' message to the whole world.
- † On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit helped the Apostles speak in different languages so everyone could understand them. This means the Holy Spirit helps us share God's love with everyone, even if they are different from us. It helps us talk about our faith and be friends with people from all over the world.
- † When we are confirmed, we receive special gifts from the Holy Spirit, like wisdom, understanding, courage, and love. These gifts help us live like Jesus and make the world a better place.
- † The Holy Spirit helps us to recognize when we've done something wrong and inspires us to say sorry. Jesus gave the Apostles the power to forgive sins in his name. He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Just as the Holy Spirit brought peace and unity to the Apostles, it also brings peace to our hearts when we seek forgiveness.

The Liturgy

Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

Priest: Today is Pentecost—the birthday of the Church. Go with your leaders to listen about the Holy Spirit.

When most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the place of the celebration. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the location of the celebration, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

Welcome.

The leaders assist the children in sitting and preparing. **Begin with the Sign of the Cross.** Help the children think and connect their actions as they touch their foreheads, shoulders, and stomachs. The leader may say the following prayer in these or similar words.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray (silent pause).

**God our Father,
let the Spirit you sent on your Church
continue to work through us.**

**We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever.**

Amen.

Invite the children to listen to the readings. Proclaiming all the readings is unnecessary; however, the Gospel is required.

First Reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

When Pentecost ⁵ came,
the followers of Jesus were all together in one place. ⁶
Suddenly, from heaven, the sound like a violent wind ⁷ filled the entire house.
Divided tongues, ⁸ as of fire, appeared among them,
and a tongue rested on each of them.
All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit
and began to speak in other languages,
as the Spirit gave them ability.
Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.
At this sound, the crowd gathered and was confused,
because each one heard them speaking in their own languages.
Amazed and astonished, they asked,
"Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?
And how is it that we hear, each of us,
in our own language speaking
about God's deeds of power."

The word of the Lord.

At the end of the reading, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "The word of the Lord."

Children: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

⁵ The Greek name for the Jewish Feast of Weeks, deriving from its occurrence 50 days after Passover (Acts 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8).

⁶ Probably the Upper Room: Jesus ate the Passover supper in an upper room with his disciples (Mk 14:15; Lk 22:12).

⁷ The violent wind at Pentecost in Acts 2:2 can be seen as a parallel to the wind in Genesis.

⁸ The tongues of fire are a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

Responsorial Psalm

R. Lord, send out your Spirit,
and renew the face of the earth.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.

O Lord, how manifold are your works!
the earth is full of your creatures. **R.**

When you take away their breath,
they die and return to their dust.

When you send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the earth. **R.**

May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works.

May my meditation be pleasing to him,
for I rejoice in the Lord. **R.**

Second Reading

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters:

No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;

and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;

and there are varieties of activities,

but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

For just as the body is one and has many members,

and all the members of the body, though many, are one body,

so it is with Christ.

For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body

— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free —

and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

The word of the Lord.

At the end of the reading, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "The word of the Lord."

Children: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

Gospel

The children stand for the Gospel, which the leader proclaims. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

It was evening on the day Jesus rose from the dead,⁹
the first day of the week,
and the doors of the house where the disciples had met¹⁰
were locked because they were afraid.¹¹

Jesus came and stood among them and said,
"Peace be with you."¹²

After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again,

"Peace be with you.

As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

When he had said this,

he breathed on them and said to them,

"Receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them;

if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

At the end of the Gospel, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "The Gospel of the Lord."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Children: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

⁹ The first Easter Sunday.

¹⁰ Probably the Upper Room: Jesus ate the Passover supper in an upper room with his disciples (Mk 14:15; Lk 22:12).

¹¹ Actual text says: "For fear of the Jews."

¹² "Peace be with you." Commonly used as a greeting.

Reflection

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions.

An excellent place to begin is the question:

Tips for Asking Questions:

- Use simple language.
- Give children time to think and answer.
- Be encouraging and positive.
- Don't be afraid to rephrase the question if they don't understand.
- Listen carefully to their answers and affirm their efforts.
- Relate the questions to their everyday experiences.
- Make it a conversation, not an interrogation!

What did you hear?

What did the followers of Jesus hear and see?

The wind and fire were signs of the Holy Spirit coming to them. The Holy Spirit is God's special power and love that helps us.

Why were the visitors surprised?

The Holy Spirit helped them speak in different languages so everyone could understand God's message. This shows that God wants everyone, everywhere, to know about him.

What did Jesus say when he appeared to his followers? ("Peace be with you.")

Jesus wants us to have peace in our hearts. The Holy Spirit helps us to be kind and loving to each other.

Jesus gave his followers the power to forgive sins. This means that God wants us to forgive each other when we make mistakes. The Holy Spirit helps us to say sorry and to forgive others.

How do you feel when someone says that they are sorry to you?

Does it make you feel better when you do something that you shouldn't have and say that you are sorry?

So, on Pentecost, we celebrate the Holy Spirit coming to help us, to give us peace, and to help us share God's love with everyone!

Alternate Reflection as an explanation.

A long, long time ago, Jesus had friends called disciples. Jesus loved them very much, but he had to return to his Father in Heaven. The disciples were sad!

Before he left, Jesus promised them something special. He said, "I will send you a helper, the Holy Spirit! He will give you courage!"

The disciples didn't know what that meant, but they trusted Jesus. So, they all stayed together in a room, praying and waiting.

One day, on a special Jewish holiday called Pentecost, something amazing happened! Suddenly, there was a sound like a super-strong wind blowing through the room! It wasn't a scary wind, but a happy, exciting wind!

Then, they saw something even more amazing! It looked like little flames of fire were dancing above their heads! But they didn't get burned. These were special Holy Spirit flames!

Suddenly, the disciples could talk in all sorts of different languages! They could speak to people from all over the world, even if they had never learned those languages before! It was like magic, but it was really the Holy Spirit's superpower!

Outside, lots of people were visiting Jerusalem. They heard the disciples talking and were very surprised! "Wow!" they said. These people are talking in my language! And they're telling amazing stories about God!"

Peter, one of Jesus' friends, stood up and told everyone about Jesus and how much God loves them. And guess what? Lots of people believed in Jesus that day! It was the very first birthday of the Church!

Even though we don't see flames of fire or hear a super-strong wind, the Holy Spirit is still with us today! He helps us be kind, love each other, and tell others about Jesus.

Like the disciples, we all have special gifts and talents. Maybe you're good at singing, drawing, or helping others. The Holy Spirit helps us use those gifts to make the world a better place and to show everyone how much God loves them!

So, on Pentecost, we celebrate the Holy Spirit, God's special presence in our lives, who helps us to be like Jesus and to share his love with everyone!

Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: We believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who gave his life for us?

All: We believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: We believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. The leader may need to repeat and paraphrase the petition and conclude it with the cue for the response: we pray. All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

Leader: Let us pray to God, asking for his help. The response is: Lord, hear our prayer **R.**

Lector: For the Church, that the Holy Spirit will guide us to share God's love with everyone. We pray to the Lord. **R.**

Lector: For our families, that the Holy Spirit will help us to be kind and loving to each other. We pray to the Lord. **R.**

Lector: For all the people in the world, that the Holy Spirit will bring peace to everyone. We pray to the Lord. **R.**

Lector: For ourselves, that the Holy Spirit will help us to be good and to follow Jesus. We pray to the Lord. **R.**

Lector: For those who are sick: that they may feel Jesus' healing touch and be made well again. We pray to the Lord. **R.**

Lector: For those who have died: that they may be with Jesus in Heaven, enjoying eternal happiness. We pray to the Lord. **R.**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: Dear God, thank you for hearing our prayers. Help us to be open to the Holy Spirit and to share your love with everyone. We ask this through Jesus, your Son. Amen.

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and think about what they have heard and are now doing. Be mindful of children having difficulty finding their families.