



Older Children's (5th–8th Grade) Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- Investigate how the disciples and followers of Jesus experienced Pentecost,
- Consider how the Spirit inspired God's people during Pentecost and still calls us to share faith today, and
- Discover how God has called young adults in the Young Adult Volunteer program to serve across the world.

Resources and Equipment

- Bibles for participants—recommend Common English Bible (CEB) translation
- Older Children Activity Sheet (with a question sheet for each group)
- For the Spirit Sends activity:
 - A large world map that can lie flat on a table or on the floor (as large as you can find, or print one on large paper)
 - Straws (one per participant)
 - Flame shapes cut from red, yellow, or orange tissue paper
 - Computer, tablet, or phone with internet access
- For the Spirit Candles activity:
 - Glass votive candleholders (1 per participant)
 - Votive candles (1 per participant)
 - Red, yellow, and orange tissue paper, ripped into small pieces (about ½" to 1")
 - Decoupage glue
 - Small plate/cup for glue
 - Paintbrushes (1 per participant)
 - Permanent marker

GATHER (30 MINUTES)

Opening Prayer

As children gather, open them in prayer using this prayer or one of your own creation.

Dear God, thank you for your Spirit that calls us together here today. You call people young and old to share your Spirit in this world. Help us to listen for the ways your Spirit is calling us to grow in faith and tell others of your amazing love. Amen.

The Story of Pentecost

We are going to hear a story about Pentecost, a special day that we celebrate today! Today is Pentecost, the

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day we celebrate God's gift of the Holy Spirit for God's people. Our Bible story today is about the very first Pentecost. The believers had all gathered and God sent the Holy Spirit to be with them. And some amazing things happened! Let's investigate what happened when the Holy Spirit came to Jesus' followers.

Invite participants to open their Bibles to Acts 2.

This is a long story, so let's take it in sections.

In the beginning of our story, the believers are gathered. This is after Jesus died, was raised, and then ascended into heaven. The believers are left wondering what's next. It must have been a very confusing, scary time.

Invite a participant to read Acts 2:1-4

Wow... A lot happened in just those four verses. What happened to those who were gathered? What symbols of the Spirit do we see in these verses?

Invite a participant to read Acts 2:5-13

Look at all the nationalities represented here. I wonder how they understood one another in their native languages?

Summarize Acts 2:14-35 by reading the following:

In this next section, Peter begins to preach to the crowd as they search for meaning in what has just happened.

Peter told the crowd that Jesus' authority was proven through the miracles, signs, and wonders God performed through Jesus.

Jesus was betrayed according to God's plan and was killed by wicked men who crucified him.

But God raised Jesus and freed him from death. And the believers were all witnesses to this.

Jesus was raised to the right hand of God, received the Holy Spirit, and poured out the Holy Spirit...This is what you have just seen and heard take place among you.

Therefore, let all know that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ.

Invite a participant to read Acts 2:37-41

What did Peter say they should do? Who is the promise of the Holy Spirit for? How many were baptized because of Peter's message?

News Report

Let's look at the story further by considering it as if it were a news report with a reporter interviewing those present that day.

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Follow the instructions on the Older Children's Activity Sheet to take an in-depth look at the Pentecost story.

Telling the Good News

Just as Peter told the gathered crowd all about God's work through Jesus and 3,000 people were baptized, let's read one more Bible passage and see who else is called to tell others about God.

Invite participants to turn to Psalm 71:17–19, preferably from the Common English Bible (CEB) translation, and ask for a volunteer to read the verses.

Let's look more closely at these verses:

- What ages are able to learn about God and tell others about God? (*young, old, and everyone in between!*)
 - *What are ways you learn about God? What experiences in your life help you know more about God and how God calls you to live?*
- What does the writer say we are to proclaim and tell? (*God's wondrous deeds, strength, righteousness—making things right, and awesome things*)

Learning about God and telling others about God, building a life of faith, is something we do all of our lives.

EXPLORE (25 minutes)

There are two activities below, though depending on the length of your class, you probably will only have time for one of them. The parachute games from the Younger Children's Activity Sheet could be used in addition to the activities described below.

The Spirit Sends: Young Adult Volunteers

Today in worship we will receive the Pentecost Offering. The money collected through this offering supports children, youth, and young adults. Part of the money collected will go to an organization in our town that impacts children and youth. We're going to learn about one of the programs our money supports through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A). One day maybe you will participate in this program!

Young Adult Volunteers, YAVs, live and serve for a year either in the United States or in another country. During this time, they work with the community and share God's love with the people.

We just learned in Psalm 71 that growing in faith is a lifelong journey. Let's learn a little about how the Spirit is working through Young Adult Volunteers across the world.

Lay out the world map, straws, and one tissue paper flame shape in the middle of the map.

The Spirit calls Young Adult Volunteers to spend a year in service to others. Let's blow the flame with our straw, see where it ends up on the map, and then learn about YAVs who serve in that area of the world.

Once the flame lands on an area on the map, pull up the YAV website on a computer, tablet, or phone (<https://>

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(<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/yav/>) and research together about YAVs in that area. Check out the sections on the website “where can I serve?” and “meet current YAVs”.

Once you've learned a bit about that area's YAVs, blow the flame on the map again, and research another YAV in the area the flame lands on. Continue until your group has learned about several locations/YAVs.

Spirit Candles

Invite each child to choose a sheet of red, yellow, or orange paper.

Young Adult Volunteers are living out God's call to serve others and proclaim God's goodness to the world. You and I are called to do the same thing in our own community.

Today we're going to make a candleholder that can remind us of the Spirit's call to each of us. As you create this candleholder using tissue paper the color of flames, discuss how you will carry out God's call to tell others about God's amazing love.

Spirit Candle Instructions:

- 1) Give each participant a glass candleholder.
- 2) Ask participants to write their name in permanent marker on the bottom of the candleholder.
- 3) Pour some Mod Podge into a plate or small cup.
- 4) Using a paintbrush, paint an area of the candleholder with a thin layer of decoupage glue, but be sure not to paint the bottom of the candleholder or on the inside.
- 5) Lay small pieces of the colored tissue paper on the glue, making sure to cover the area with the tissue paper.
- 6) Paint over the tissue paper with a thin layer of decoupage glue so that the tissue paper lays flat against the candleholder.
- 7) Continue adding a thin layer of decoupage glue around the rest of the candleholder, adding more tissue paper and painting on top of the paper to seal it.
- 8) When finished, add a tea light candle to the inside and allow to dry for 1–2 hours.

CLOSE (5 minutes)

Closing Prayer

Gather around the map again with the straw and the tissue paper flames. Blow the flames and wherever they stop, pray for children and youth in those areas.

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