



Younger Children's (K-4th Grade) Lesson Plan

Lesson Objectives

Children will:

- Consider how the Spirit inspired God's people during Pentecost and still calls us today,
- Discover who should tell of God's good deeds in Psalm 71,
- Discern who they will tell about God's love and what they will tell, and
- Learn about the ministries supported through the Pentecost Offering.

Resources and Equipment

- Children's storybook Bible with the Pentecost story or a children's book that tells the Pentecost story. Suggestions:
 - *The Day When God Made Church* by Rebekah McLeod Hutto
 - *Children of God Storybook Bible* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu
 - *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible* by Elizabeth Caldwell and Carol Wehrheim
 - *The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones
- Bible—recommend Common English Bible (CEB) translation
- Parachute—inexpensive children's game parachutes can be purchased online; or check with local schools/day cares; or if you have a small group, use a round tablecloth or a large sheet.
- Younger Children Activity Sheet (for the leader only)
- A variety of balls—3–8 (the larger the parachute, the more balls needed)
- Construction paper or cardstock—red, yellow, and orange (1 sheet per every 2 children)
- Scissors
- Glue
- If using the handprint flame banner in worship:
 - Dowel rod
 - Felt/fabric cut and glued around the dowel rod to create a banner
- If using the handprint flame banner as a poster
 - sheet of newsprint/poster board

GATHER (20 MINUTES)

Opening Prayer

As children gather, open in prayer using this prayer or one you create on your own:

Dear God, thank you for your Spirit that calls us together here today. 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! In this story, the

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disciples were all gathered and God sent the Holy Spirit to be with them. Some amazing things happened! Let's read to see what happened when the Holy Spirit came to Jesus' followers.

The story of Pentecost in Acts, chapter 2 is a very long Scripture reading. With children this age, it's best to read it from a storybook Bible.

Summarize the story together after reading it:

- What happened when the disciples gathered together? *(There were a rush of wind and tongues of fire, they were filled with the Spirit, they could understand each other.)*
- When others gathered around, what were they surprised about? *(They could understand each other even though they spoke different languages.)*
- Peter told the gathered crowd all about Jesus, and 3,000 people were gathered into God's community that day.

A crowd of 3,000 people! That's a lot! That many people decided to follow Jesus that day because of what Peter told them about Jesus.

Let's read one more Bible passage and see who else is called to tell others about Jesus.

Invite children to turn to Psalm 71:17-19, preferably from the Common English Bible (CEB) translation, and ask a child 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 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 are things we do all of our lives.

EXPLORE (35 minutes)

Parachute Games (25 minutes)

Parachutes are a fun thing to play with when we talk about God's Spirit. What about a parachute reminds you of the Spirit? *(wind, rush of air)*

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 community that impacts children and youth. We're going to learn about two of the programs our money supports through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). One day maybe you will participate in one of these programs!

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

The Presbyterian Youth Triennium is another ministry supported by the Pentecost Offering. Every three years, youth from all over the country (and from other countries as global partners!) gather for a week-long youth conference where they worship, study the Bible, pray, and play together. It's an important week of growth in faith.

Our parachute games will help us think about these ministries and how they relate to the Psalm 71 verse about God's amazing power and the Acts 2 verse of the Spirit coming to God's people and sending them out to share God's love.

Using the Younger Children Activity Sheet, play the parachute games and relate these games back to the Scripture readings.

Handprint Flame Banner (10 minutes)

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

I wonder why our paper choices are red, yellow, and orange. What do we think of when we see those colors? *(fire)*

Who remembers what fire has to do with our story today? *(Fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit descended on the disciples' heads as tongues of fire.)*

As we learned today from our Psalms verse, God's Spirit calls each one of us to tell others about how amazing God is—from when we are young to when we are old: our age doesn't matter!

Each of us is going to trace and cut out our handprint.

Help younger children who might need more assistance with the tracing and cutting.

Your handprints look great! Now I'd like you to think about this: who might the Spirit be calling you to share God with? WHO will you tell?

Write that name down on your handprint somewhere (be sure to leave room for writing something else too). If you have lots of people you want to share God with, write their names on the fingers of your handprints.

Psalm 71 says we are to proclaim God's wondrous deeds and tell of God's strength and how God has done awesome things. You've thought of the person in your life that you want to share God with. Now think about WHAT you will tell them about God. Write down a few words with the message you would want to share about who God is and what is so wonderful about God.

Assist any younger children with spelling/writing.

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Let’s share our handprints with one another. What types of things will you say to others about God?

Now here’s the challenge—let’s each do this during the next week and come back next week and talk about what it was like to share God with someone else.

As we finish today, we’re going to glue all of our handprints together to create one big flame. When we do this, we see the power of the Spirit working through each of us . . . all of us out in this world sharing about God’s amazing love!

Help children glue their handprints onto the fabric banner or newsprint poster.

CLOSE (5 minutes)

Invite the children to gather around the parachute again to close in prayer.

Closing Prayer—Parachute Prayer

As we close in prayer together, you’re invited to share your prayer with the group. It can be someone you want to pray for, something you want to thank God for, a praise to God, or a concern you have. One person will call out a prayer as the parachute lifts up. As it’s coming down, we’ll all say together, “We pray to you, God.” Then the next person who has a prayer to share can call it out as we raise the parachute again. We’ll keep going until all who wish to share have shared their prayer. As we do this, imagine the wind that comes from the parachute is the Holy Spirit, lifting up our prayers.

These materials were written by Jenna Campbell, a Certified Christian Educator serving as the Director of Children and Youth Ministry at First Presbyterian Church in Stillwater, Oklahoma.