

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, whom Christ the head pours out on his members, builds, animates, and sanctifies the Church. She is the Sacrament of the Holy Trinity's communion with the human race. [CCC 747]

In celebrating the feast of Pentecost, we are recalling the most significant event in the history of the Church. On this day, the Church is born and Jesus' message of salvation begins to be broadcast to the world.

The gift of the Holy Spirit, symbolised in the wind and the tongues of fire, sets the Apostles' hearts on fire, and they are liberated to carry out the mission Jesus gave them.

This same Spirit is present in the Church today and through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation we are given the gifts the Apostles received to carry out our part in the bearing of the message of salvation. This message is that God loves each of us personally and unconditionally and wishes each of us to be with God forever.

Just as the early community made up of the Apostles, Mary the Mother of Jesus, and other followers of Jesus prepared for the coming of the Spirit, by spending their time in prayer, so people who are preparing for the reception of these Sacraments should make opportunities in their lives to do the same.

The Holy Spirit will always be present in the Church to guide it. This was the promise Jesus gave to the Apostles and we can see the influence of the Spirit over the two thousand years of the Church's history. While there have been many times when the Church has been floundering and the cause of scandal, holy men and women have appeared to bring the Church back to the original message given by Jesus and reinforced by the coming of the Holy Spirit on the first Pentecost Sunday.

The mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit is brought to completion in the Church, which is the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

[CCC 737]

ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE IN THIS LESSON

Acts 1:7-9; 2:1-11 | *The Coming of the Holy Spirit*

The day of 'Pentecost' ('the fiftieth day'), is the name used by Greek-speaking Jews for the harvest festival, the 'Feast of Weeks', celebrating the conclusion of the grain harvest.

The fifty days were counted from the day after the Sabbath following the Passover and the eating of the unleavened bread [Leviticus 23:15-16]. At least from the time of the fall of the temple in 70AD, Pentecost also celebrated the gift of the Commandments at Mount Sinai in the third month after the Hebrews left Egypt.

So on the day of Pentecost, the disciples were still together, gathered in prayer [see Acts 1:14], awaiting the Baptism of the Holy Spirit promised them by Jesus [see Acts 1:5]. 'Suddenly from heaven' the gift is given [see Acts 1:2]. Moses ascended Mount Sinai in response to God's call [Exodus 19:20], and returned with the Commandments, sharing with the assembled people what he had received. So it is that Jesus, 'taken up into heaven' [see Acts 1:2], now gives to his assembled disciples the Spirit which he has received from the Father.

Inspired by the Spirit, they were able to speak 'in other languages'. The gift given here is reversing the divisions brought about by human pride at Babel [see Genesis 11:7-9]. The words of the Spirit transcend the boundaries of human languages and bring together into a communion of love all the peoples of the earth [see Acts 10:45, 19:6].

*Acts of the Apostles. Verse by Verse Commentary.
Michael Fallon MSC. Chevalier Press. 2003.*

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MAIN TEACHING AND LEARNING POINTS

- Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen his followers.
- On Pentecost Sunday, the faith community the Church, celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit.

PENTECOST

On Pentecost Sunday, the faith community the Church, celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, after the resurrection of Jesus, as he had promised. We recall that the Apostles became filled with the Holy Spirit and received the strength and courage to go out and to proclaim the Good News to all people.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit that worked wonders through the Apostles at Pentecost, continues to guide the Church today in carrying out its mission.

Pentecost is known as the birthday of the Church. The priest wears red vestments as a reminder of the Holy Spirit which appeared like tongues of fire at Pentecost.

GOD'S WORD

Acts 1:7-9; 2:1-11 | *The Coming of the Holy Spirit*

Parent: *A reading from the Acts of the Apostles*

Jesus said to them, 'The times and occasions are set by my Father's own authority, and it is not for you to know when they will be. But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' After saying this, he was taken up to heaven as they watched him, and a cloud hid him from their sight...

When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers were gathered together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire which spread out and touched every person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

There were Jews living in Jerusalem, religious men who had come from every country in the world. When they heard this noise, a large crowd gathered. They were all excited, because each of them heard the believers talking in his own language.

In amazement and wonder they exclaimed, 'These people who are talking like this are Galileans! How is it, then, that all of us hear them speaking in our own native languages? We are from Parthia, Media, and Elam; from Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia; from Pontus and Asia, from Phrygia and Pamphylia, from Egypt and the regions of Libya near Cyrene. Some of us are from Rome, both Jews and Gentiles converted to Judaism, and some of us are from Crete and Arabia – yet all of us hear them speaking in our own languages about the great things that God has done!'

The Word of the Lord.

Child responds: *Thanks be to God.*

FOCUS QUESTIONS

Ask your child the following questions to help them reflect on the Scripture.

- **What did Jesus promise the disciples?**
- **Where was Jesus taken after he had spoken to the disciples?**
- **What did the believers hear on the day of Pentecost?**
- **What did the believers see?**
- **What happened when the tongues of fire touched each person?**
- **What effect did the Holy Spirit have on them?**
- **What was the reaction of the crowd when they heard the believers speaking in their own language?**
- **What were the believers speaking about to the crowd?**
- **What do you think this story reveals to us?**

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Parent	Let us pray:
All	Holy Spirit, give us your guidance and your strength. Holy Spirit, give us your guidance and your strength.
Child	Open the hearts of all people to come to know you.
All	Holy Spirit, give us your guidance and your strength.
Child	Renew our faith community, the Church,
All	Holy Spirit, give us your guidance and your strength.
Child	May our Church be a place of prayer and worship.
All	Holy Spirit, give us your guidance and your strength.
Child	May our Church be a place of peace and friendship.
All	Holy Spirit, give us your guidance and your strength.
Child	May our Church be a safe and caring place.
All	Holy Spirit, give us your guidance and your strength.
Child	May our Church be a place of justice where all are treated fairly.
All	Holy Spirit, give us your guidance and your strength.
Child	May our Church be filled with people of compassion.
All	Holy Spirit, give us your guidance and your strength.
Child	May our Church be filled with people of faith.
All	Holy Spirit, give us your guidance and your strength.
Parent	Holy Spirit, give us your guidance and your strength.
All	Amen.



Design a Symbol of Pentecost

Inside the oval shape, design a symbol that you feel represents the meaning of Pentecost. You might include flames, a dove, wind, arms reaching up, or the colours red, orange or yellow.

