

Pentecost

Objective: The students will be able to explain that 1) on Pentecost we recall the coming of the Holy Spirit, and 2) we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit at our Chrismation.

For the Catechist

The Feast of Pentecost is the climax of God's plan for our salvation, the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Church. We mention the Holy Spirit in our prayers and Liturgies, but we are not always aware of the Holy Spirit's constant indwelling. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we believe in God, we are moved to prayer, and we love one another and reach out in service. The Holy Spirit is the gift of the Father through Christ to the Church. The Holy Spirit is the life of the Church.

At this time of year the children are noticing and enjoying the new life in nature. They see the plants and flowers are starting to bloom, and they want to be outside playing in the green grass. Use their interest in nature and new growth to highlight the new life given to us by the Holy Spirit. This new life is shown through the flowers and greenery used throughout the church during this season. Through the Holy Spirit we continue to grow in our love of God. In our prayers we ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with His love.

Flowers and Greenery. To express the new life that we are given, some Eastern Churches use newly-budding branches to decorate churches and homes. These branches needed warmth, water and light to make new leaves, signs of surging life that is taking place in nature. The Holy Spirit surges in us and calls us to express this presence of light and life. Our good works are the visible signs of the Holy Spirit in us. The branches on our churches and houses are signs of our new life growing in Christ.

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: "Heavenly King"

Introduction: Discussion of new life.
Need: flowers or branches with buds, vase for them

Read Text Aloud: Have students read aloud. Use the questions in the teacher book to discuss the lesson.

Activity Tracks:

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity to reinforce the lesson (detailed on the pages that follow).

- *Basic:* Pentecost
- *Group:* The Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit
- *Craft:* Prayer Book

Closing: "Heavenly King"

Icon Packets:

Come Bless the Lord:
The Descent of the Holy Spirit

Teaching Pics:

Pentecost (F8)

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

The Icon of Pentecost

"The icon of Pentecost clearly shows the twelve apostles are seated in a semicircle with a place reserved for Christ who may be invisibly present in the center or represented in the Theotokos, who bore Him. This icon of the descent of the Holy Spirit reveals to us the mystery of unity and diversity in the Church, born on Pentecost, much as the Trinity icon opens the mystery of unity and diversity within the Godhead.

"The Apostles are gathered together in a deep inner unity in stark contrast to sin's division and confusion that reigned throughout all humanity. Pentecost is a reversal of the confusion of tongues deriving from the tower of Babel. There sin divided and scattered the people. Now humanity is united by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Each apostle retains his uniqueness and diversity (the tongues of fire separate to alight on each unique person); yet he is bound to the others in a single new body, the Church. Once again, God reaches out to each apostle as an individual, but never in an isolated manner. Only when they gathered together in a single room, did they receive the Holy Spirit" (*LLII* 39).

Decorating houses and churches

"The Jewish custom on this harvest feast was to decorate their homes and synagogues with greens, flowers, plants, etc. to recognize God's bounty. Early Christians adopted this custom to acknowledge His special generosity in giving us His Holy Spirit, that living water which has made the Church to blossom for our salvation.

"While this custom was once common among the Latins and Greeks as well as in the Middle East (St. John Chrysostom mentioned it in a homily), it is chiefly preserved today among the Slav Byzantines who decorate their homes and churches with greenery on this feast. The domestic church can celebrate Pentecost by decorating the house with plants or flowers for the occasion. Alternatively, you can offer them to the church to enhance the public celebration or present them to someone who would especially appreciate such a gift. In any case, be sure that the entire family is aware that these plants and flowers represent for us the life which comes from the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church" (*DC* 74).

Kingdom of Heaven

"The Gospel points to the reality that Christ Himself is the kingdom. Now, in the age of the Church, we may make the equally valid point that the Kingdom is equally the Spirit as it is Christ. St. Simeon the New Theologian identifies the Kingdom with the Spirit:

The 'kingdom of heaven' consists in partaking of the Holy Spirit, for this is what the saying 'The kingdom of heaven is within you' (Lk 17:21) means. So we must endeavor to receive the Holy Spirit within ourselves and to keep Him.

"The Spirit mediates the presence of God in the present age, the era of the Church. He actively leads and guides the Church and individual believers. By His power, Christ comes among us in the holy mysteries. Through the Holy Spirit, we become a priestly people, able to offer the 'sacrifice of praise' and to be formed into the living temple of God. 'The proof that you are sons is the fact that God has sent forth into our hearts the spirit of His Son which cries out, 'Abba!' ('Father!')' (Gal 4:6)" (*LLI* 58).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

Today we are going to pray to the Holy Spirit. We learned this prayer at the beginning of the year. Let's get out our prayer books. [Modify text according to your jurisdiction.] "Heavenly King..."

Introduction

[Have a flower, forsythia branch, or any branch with buds for each child.] Today I am giving you something I got from the garden. Does anyone have any of these in your garden at home? Are they blooming? What makes flowers bloom? (Sun and rain) Every spring I look forward to seeing these buds bloom. How do you feel when you see the flowers bloom? Do you go outside more in the spring? Let's put these branches in this vase I brought in, and we'll put the vase on the icon table. What is the name of the feast in this icon? (Pentecost)

Do we have any flowers or greens around our church for Pentecost? Where? (The priest's vestments, the Holy Table covers, some churches have branches attached to the front of the church) The Church uses flowers and greens on Pentecost Sunday as a sign of new life the Holy Spirit brought to us. On Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and gave them this New Life and gave the Church new life. Pentecost is the birthday of the Church! It is the day the Church began.

Last week we learned about the day Jesus went to heaven to live with God the Father. What is the name of that feast day? (Ascension) Before Jesus left the apostles, He promised to send the Holy Spirit. Pentecost is the celebration of the Holy Spirit coming to us. Pentecost is 10 days after Ascension Thursday. Does that sound long to wait? The apostles believed Jesus and waited. They were sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

Let's turn to our books.

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Pentecost



Jesus promised to send His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is called the Paraclete or Helper. We celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit on the 50th day after Easter. The feast is called Pentecost. The Holy Spirit fills our lives. This is why our Church prays to the Holy Spirit. We ask the Holy Spirit to be with us always and to help us in all we do.

The gift of the Holy Spirit shows that Jesus is with us always. Though we cannot see the Holy Spirit, we know that the Holy Spirit is present everywhere and fills all things. The Holy Spirit can be compared to the wind. We cannot see the wind, but it is there.

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Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type).

We ask the Holy Spirit to be with us always and to help us in all we do.

What did Jesus promise before He ascended into heaven? (To send the Holy Spirit) What is the feast day that celebrates the arrival of the Holy Spirit? (Pentecost) How many days were the apostles waiting after the Ascension? (10) How many days after Pascha is this? (50)

Let's read about Pentecost as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles:

When the day of Pentecost came it found them gathered in one place. Suddenly from up in the sky there came a noise like a strong, driving wind which was heard all through the house where they were seated. Tongues as of fire appeared, which parted and came to rest on each of them. All were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to express themselves in foreign tongues and make bold proclamation as the Spirit prompted them. (Act 2:1-4)

On Pentecost we kneel for the first time since Pascha. For 50 days we have been standing to celebrate the Resurrection. On Pentecost we kneel to ask the Holy Spirit to come upon us also. By kneeling we show we want to give ourselves to God. We ask the Spirit to live in us and lead us.

When we were christened, we received the gift of the Holy Spirit. We were anointed with a holy oil called chrism, and we were sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit. The Mystery of Chrismation filled us with the Holy Spirit and showed that we belong to God. The Spirit protects us from all evil. All of us baptized into the Church receive life from the Holy Spirit.



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All of us baptized into the Church receive life from the Holy Spirit.

What is the name of the Mystery through which we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? (Chrismation) What is the name of the oil that is used? (Chrism)

...greens and flowers on Pentecost as a sign of the Church's new life.

Pentecost is called the birthday for the Church. This is the day the Holy Spirit came to be with us and help us be the "body of Christ" on earth. Why do we celebrate this day? (The Holy Spirit came to be with us.) What do we display to remember our new life through the Holy Spirit? (Flowers and greens)

Let's review: *What do we recall on Pentecost? (The coming of the Holy Spirit) When do we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? (At our Chrismation)*

Our Church received new life from the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We can say Pentecost is the birthday of the Church. The Church uses greens and flowers on Pentecost as a sign of the Church's new life.

Another sign of the new life is found in some churches and homes on Pentecost. People place branches and green leaves on the outside and inside of the church and their homes. The branches and green leaves are signs of the new life in Christ brought by the Holy Spirit.



On Pentecost we recall the coming of the Holy Spirit. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit at our Chrismation.

Words to Remember:
Pentecost: The coming of the Holy Spirit to be with us always. Our Church celebrates the Feast of Pentecost on the 50th day after Pascha.
Paraclete: A word for the Holy Spirit. It means "Helper."
Chrism: The perfumed holy oil used in the Mystery of Chrismation.

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Activity Tracks

Basic: Pentecost
 [This worksheet is in the student text.]

Use the code to figure out the words on the worksheet.
 [Read the sentences aloud to help students who have problems with reading.]

Pentecost

Finish numbering the letters of the alphabet. Write the correct letters above each number on the lines provided. Then read the message about some events in the life of Jesus.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

1. ON HOLY THURSDAY JESUS
 15-14 8-15-12-25 20-8-21-18-19-4-1-25 10-5-19-21-19
 GAVE US THE EUCHARIST
 7-1-22-5 21-19 20-8-5 5-21-3-8-1-18-9-19-20.
2. JESUS DIED ON GOOD FRIDAY
 10-5-19-21-19 4-9-5-4 15-14 7-15-15-4 6-18-9-4-1-25
 TO SAVE US FROM SIN
 20-15 19-1-22-5 21-19 6-18-15-13 19-9-14.
3. GOD THE FATHER RAISED
 7-15-4 20-8-5 6-1-20-8-5-18 18-1-9-19-5-4
 JESUS FROM THE DEAD
 10-5-19-21-19 6-18-15-13 20-8-5 4-5-1-4
 ON EASTER
 15-14 5-1-19-20-5-18.
4. JESUS RETURNED TO THE
 10-5-19-21-19 18-5-20-18-14-5-4 20-15 20-8-5
 FATHER ON ASCENSION
 6-1-20-8-5-18 15-14 1-19-3-5-14-19-9-15-14.

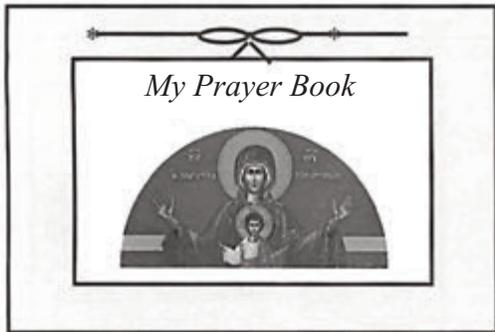
Group: The Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Materials: Piece of a brown paper bag, small amount of salad oil, paper towel or tissue, ball point pen

Today we are going to write and seal our names together as a sign of the whole Church living together in the Holy Spirit.

[Spread newspaper over the working area.] *Let's write our names with a ball point pen on the brown paper bag. We will pour a small amount of salad oil on the brown bag over the names. With a paper towel or tissue, absorb the excess oil. Look at our names—they are sealed by the oil. By sealing our names together, we are showing that the whole Church received the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

This New Life, the life of the Church, is a call to holiness. The Holy Spirit lives in us and help us to grow. We must be open to the Holy Spirit to help all of us grow as the Church.



Craft: Prayer Book

Materials: paper, clear contact paper or laminating sheets (you can buy these at a craft store), pens, stickers

[Have sample ready to show children. Place front cover on clear contact paper; place another piece of clear contact paper on top; smooth surface and cut close to the edges. Follow the same procedure for the back cover. (Follow the instructions included with the laminating sheets if you bought them.) Punch the two holes through the contact paper. Reassemble pages between the covers and insert the yarn.] *Today we are going to reinforce our prayer books that we made throughout the year. We are going to laminate the covers. Before we do that, you may decorate the front and back covers as you want. I hope you keep these prayer books in a special place to help you pray every day*

Closing:

Today we are going to pray to the Holy Spirit for our closing prayer. [Modify text according to your jurisdiction.] "Heavenly King"