

A Good Shepherd Story of Jesus

Pentecost

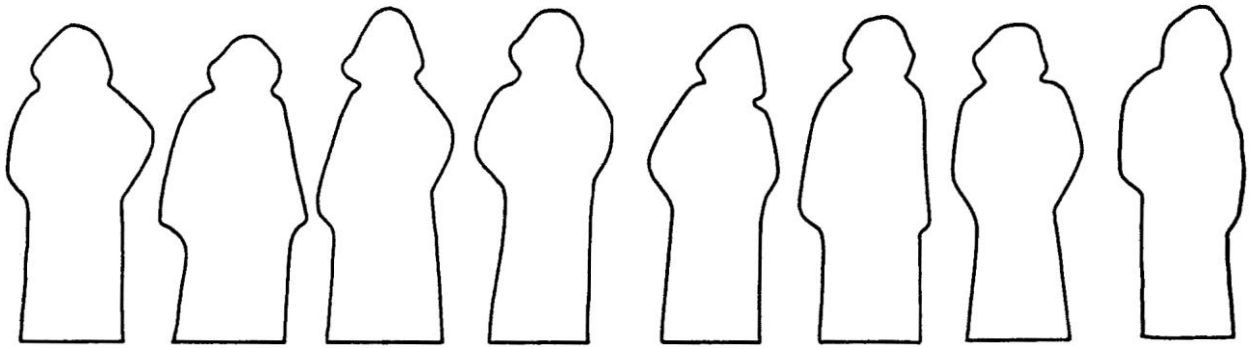
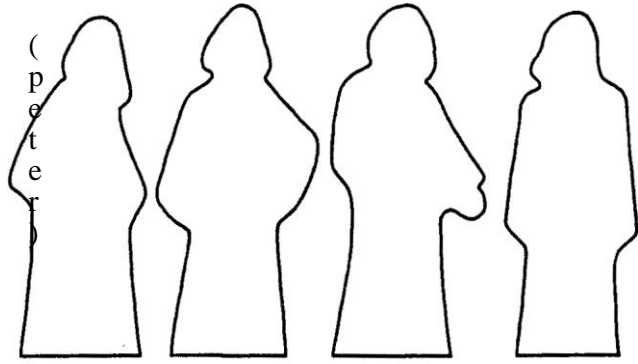
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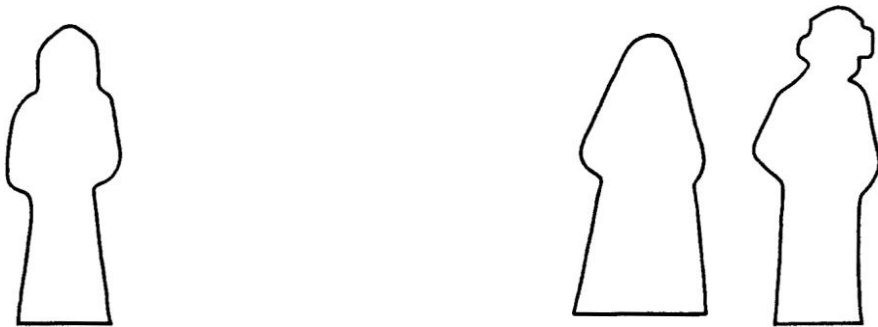
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PENTECOST ... MATERIALS

- medium wicker basket to hold:
 - 12 wooden disciple figures
 - 3 wooden onlooker figures
 - an envelope containing:
 - 2 felt flames



Disciples



Onlookers

PENTECOST ACTS 2

ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the story from its shelf. Return to the circle and sit down, placing the story basket beside you.

Allow 10-15 seconds of silence as you reverently touch one or more of the wooden figures to center yourself and the children.

Lift both of your arms up over your head.

Place the disciples in a group in the center front of the storytelling area.

Touch the disciples gently.

Move both arms in large sweeping motions as though being blown by wind.

Remove the felt flames from the envelope and hold them over two of the disciples. After doing the same with all the disciples, lay the flames amongst the group of disciples.

Speak very reverently and softly.

Touch your lips with one finger.

Place the three onlookers at points to the front and both sides of the storytelling area away from the group of disciples.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

All the words to this story are inside of me. Will you please make silence with me so I can find all the words to this story?

After Easter Jesus went back into heaven.

The disciples went back to Jerusalem to wait.

Jesus had promised them a special helper.

The disciples were all together in one place when there came a sound like a strong wind.

The sound of the wind filled the whole house they were in.

Then flames of fire appeared and rested on each of the disciples.

The Holy Spirit had come.

All of the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in strange languages.

Everywhere else in the city there were faithful people of God.

Bring onlooker figures near the disciples.

Touch your ear with one finger and look amazed.

Move one disciple figure slightly away from the others.

Touch the palms of your hands as you talk about Jesus.

Smile and hold up both palms In amazement.

Raise your eyebrows as you speak.

Move your arm in a sweeping gesture from left to right.

When they heard the sound they came together and were surprised.

Each person heard the words the disciples said being spoken in their own language.

Some of the people thought the disciples were drunk.

But Peter stood up and spoke to all the people.

He reminded them of the words from the prophets.

Some of those words were, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh "

Then Peter told the people that Jesus was the Son of God.

He told them that Jesus had promised to send the Holy Spirit and that's what happened!

Then the people asked, "What shall we do?"

The disciples said, "Be sorry for what you've done wrong, and be baptized. Then the promises of God will be yours, too."

That day thousands of people were baptized.

They stayed together after that, sharing their food and praising God.

And each day more and more people heard the wonderful good news about Jesus.

WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder if the disciples could feel the wind, too, or if they just heard it?

I wonder if the disciples were afraid of the fire that was on each of them?

I wonder how they sounded when they spoke in so many languages?

After speaking, place the three wooden onlooker figures in the basket. Next, put the flames back in their envelope and place it in the basket. Finally, place all the wooden disciple figures back in the basket.

After speaking, stand and carry the basket back to its shelf. Return to the circle and sit down in your spot.

Dismiss the children to their work ONLY after everyone has chosen their work for the day.

Watch carefully how I put these materials away so you will know how to use them if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

Watch carefully where I return this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

I wonder what you will make your work today? Let's go around and choose what we will each do.

PENTECOST ••• TEACHER HELPS

As you begin this story, one or more of the children may notice that there are again twelve disciples. Some of them will remember that after Judas' betrayal and death the number of the disciples was eleven. I would encourage you to share with them that after the ascension of Jesus and before Pentecost the disciples selected another man to fill the place of Judas. His name was Matthias and the story of his selection can be found in Acts 1: 15-26.

The day of Pentecost is really the feast of Pentecost or the feast of Weeks:

"At the end of the grain harvest the priest offered two loaves of bread made from the new flour, along with animal sacrifices. This took place fifty days (or seven weeks plus one day) after Passover and the start of the harvest. This festival later came to be known as 'Pentecost' from the Greek word meaning 'fiftieth'. It was

a time of great rejoicing and thanksgiving for God's gift at harvest." (The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible, Pat Alexander, Batavia: Lion Publishing, 1986, p.120)

So we can see that this was originally a time of thanksgiving and celebration for the Jewish people. A later addition was given after the fall of the temple in AD 70. At that point the feast of Weeks or Pentecost commemorated the giving of the law. (Rylaarsdam, J. C., "Feast of Weeks", The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Vol. 4, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962, pp. 827-828) Jesus then would have celebrated it as a feast of thanksgiving and rejoicing.

For Christians the day has taken on new meaning. We now celebrate Pentecost as the birthday of the church, the time when the new church of the followers of Christ began. The coming of the Holy Spirit is one of the most difficult concepts to teach to young children. That's because we are dealing with spirit, not with flesh and bone. Even the ways the Holy Spirit was made manifest are difficult to explain to the children. It all sounds wonderfully magic and a little spooky. Fire is frightening to children and yet we talk of tongues of fire above each of the disciples. We speak, too, of the sound of wind and yet the story does not mention wind blowing. And then there are the strange languages the disciples begin to speak.

This special empowering of Jesus' disciples was promised and anticipated and yet strange. The disciples had no idea how the comforter would come. It would be much easier to teach if the Holy Spirit were a concrete person sent to explain that which Jesus did not explain and to cheer on and organize the disciples as they began to spread the good news of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Instead, we have this strange "power" that cannot be boxed or simply understood. The closest I've come to helping children understand the power of the Holy Spirit is to ask them to recall the Star Wars saga where Luke begins to understand the "force" that can be with him and help him. Phrases such as, "The disciples now felt stronger and more sure of themselves", or "The disciples now were not so afraid to go and tell about Jesus", can also be helpful. I suggest you read all of Peter's sermon in the second chapter of Acts to make yourself comfortable with the story of Pentecost.

In the wondering questions I've dealt first with both the fire and the wind. Some children may liken the sound of the wind at Pentecost to a strong wind that blows about their house that they can hear, but that doesn't blow on them. Yet others will need to make the wind one that could be felt as well as heard. Remember that many of these understandings of children are stepping stones to a more mature understanding later. Children do not emerge as full-blown theologians any more than they emerge with perfect penmanship when they first start to form their letters and numbers.

The question about fire allows the children to express any fears they may have about fire or that they may believe the disciples had. There will also be children who will understand that the disciples knew this fire was not the kind that would burn their skin.

The final question about how the disciples sounded when they spoke so many languages is one that is intended to create a picture in the children's minds of many puzzled people looking at each other. It must have been a cacophony as the many voices and languages were heard by each separate person.

The worship cloth on your worship shelf should be red if you tell this story on Pentecost Sunday. It's also fun to have birthday cake on this special day to celebrate the birthday of the church.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

At Pentecost the disciples experienced a wonderful freedom from fear. The sound of wind and the sight of tongues of fire were two signs of the Holy Spirit being with them. Exodus is an Old Testament book that talks a lot about freedom. Read Exodus 14:21-22 and Exodus 40:38 to find times when wind and fire were used to show the people of God that God was with them.

Think of a time when you have felt so happy, so good about something that you had to tell someone. What was it about? That's how the disciples felt, only more so.

Think of the situation that scares you more than anything else. Your life could even be at stake. Now, imagine that fear being taken away. If you don't have to be afraid, what could you do with your life? Is fear ever helpful? Is God's spirit ever in us when we're afraid?