

PENTECOST

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: ACTS 1:15-2:12

*The promised Holy Spirit is poured out.*

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

The disciples replaced Judas the Betrayer – Peter addressed about 120 believers and explained that a witness had to be chosen to replace Judas since he had betrayed Jesus and killed himself. Peter laid down the requirements: He had to be a man who was with them from the time of John's baptism through the Ascension. Two men were chosen who filled these requirements. Rather than make the final choice through debate, they prayed for God's will, cast lots, and allowed the sovereignty of God to guide the choice.

The Holy Spirit is poured out – On the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover was celebrated and about ten days after Jesus ascended into heaven, the waiting for the Holy Spirit ended. As the Holy Spirit was poured out, a wind from heaven came and filled the whole house. They saw what looked like tongues of fire settle upon each one of them. All of them, not just the twelve, began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

The assembly was amazed – The people from various nations heard the disciples speaking in their own language. They could not understand how the disciples, Galileans, could do this.

Those who mocked heard only a loud babble of foreign languages they could not understand. They wrongly assumed drunkenness. And this crowd may have included those who had already turned against Jesus and had called for His crucifixion.

This event marked a major development in God's salvation plan for man. It signaled that the gospel was for all peoples and all tongues. God was now going to take initiative by His Spirit, through the followers of Jesus, to reveal Himself to people outside of Israel. From this point on, people did not have to identify with the nation of Israel and learn the Jewish tongue to know God. He was now speaking by His Spirit, through his disciples, to the whole world in order to reach every tribe and tongue.

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WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

In the Old Testament the feast of Pentecost was called the Feast of the Harvest or First Fruits (see Exodus 23:16). In Numbers 28:26-30 the offerings for this day are described. Bulls, lambs, and a goat were offered, in addition to the regular offering, to make atonement.

Now that Jesus has been sacrificed, no goat for atonement needs to be killed. The promised blessing to Abraham was about to be fulfilled. The Gospel can be spread from the very first believers to people of every tribe, language, and nation!

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

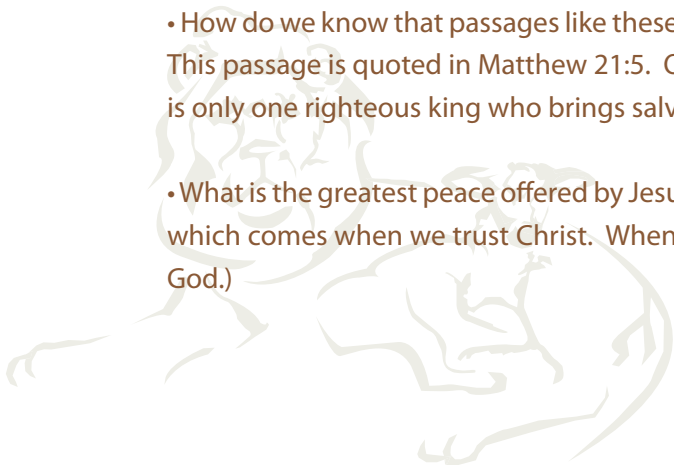
Bible Passage: Zechariah 9:10,11

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Jesus is the promised king. He will proclaim peace to the nations. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). At the outpouring of the Spirit we see further evidence that the kingdom will go to all nations, as men from all over the world heard the disciples speaking in their own language!

Questions for reflection:

- How do we know that passages like these point to Jesus? (Often they are quoted in the New Testament. This passage is quoted in Matthew 21:5. Other times we can tell by the description. For instance, there is only one righteous king who brings salvation.)
- What is the greatest peace offered by Jesus? (The greatest peace offered is the freedom from judgment, which comes when we trust Christ. When we believe, our sins are taken away and we have peace with God.)



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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY**BE A DOER OF THE WORD**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

PLOT THE COUNTRIES**Supplies:**

Bible map copies for each student with all the countries listed

Read through the passage and have the students find each country. Then have them draw a straight line from the dot representing the country back to Jerusalem. When they are done it will look like the spokes of a wheel going in almost every direction. Talk about how this shows just how the Gospel will spread. Look up the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:14 and talk about how God's mission was to reach the world.



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CHOOSING LOTS FOR A CHOCOLATE BAR

Supplies:

one chocolate bar and six straws (one of which is cut shorter by ½ inch)

Read the story of the choosing of Matthias to replace Judas. Then tell the children you are going to choose lots with them to see who God wants to have the candy bar.

We should not make important life decisions this way but, in spite of our cultured sensibilities, it is biblical! Our culture uses a form of “casting lots” each time they flip a coin in a football game. They might call it chance, but as Christians we know God is in control of all things – even the casting of a lot or the flipping of a coin.

Divide the class into groups of six and have each group pick a straw. Take these finalists and have them each choose a straw to determine the “winning group.”

Read Proverbs 16:33 and ask the following questions:

What does God’s control over the lot tell us about God? (God is in control of everything, even those things which would seem to be accidental or by chance.)

Should we use the lot to make our decisions? (No. Even though God works through the lot, it is wiser to use the other means God has given us such as reading His word, listening to wise counsel, and following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We should never use the lot to determine our behavior. It would be unwise if you use the lot to determine whether or not you steal someone’s bike. God’s word already clearly speaks to that issue.)

Why did the disciples use the lot to determine Judas’ replacement? (They did not rely on the lot alone. Peter laid out very specific criteria. It is very likely that they could not tell which of the two men would be better. They were both fully qualified. Some, perhaps, suggested one man while others suggested the other. That is when the lot was brought in to allow the sovereignty of God to make the choice.)



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TALK ABOUT THE PROMISE

Supplies:

Abraham costume

This exercise is designed to connect Pentecost to the larger work of God.

Have a man dress up as Abraham and interview him. Here are some questions to ask, along with possible answers:

Teacher: "Abraham, can I call you Abe?"

Abraham: "No, I would prefer Abraham. God named me you know."

Teacher: "Well, Abraham, we are reading the book of Acts where the Holy Spirit came down upon the disciples and wondered what you think of all that taking place?"

Abraham: "Well, it is just a continuation of my story or, I should say, God's Story."

Teacher: "What do you mean?"

Abraham: "Well, when God first revealed himself to me, he said that I would be the father of many nations. That is why he gave me the name Abraham. You know it means the Father of a Multitude."

Teacher: "So how does your name factor in here?"

Abraham: "Simple! At Pentecost, Jewish converts had gathered from all over the world for the feast. When the Holy Spirit fell, the disciples spoke in other tongues. Each man present heard them speak in their own language. Do you see? People of every nation were blessed by what they said. That is the promise. It is being fulfilled!"

Teacher: "So, you are saying that the promise given to you is being fulfilled through the ministry of Jesus?"

Abraham: "Exactly! He is my great, great, great, great and so on grandson. I'll bet you can't say that. I'm mighty proud of that fellow, uh, I mean my Lord."

Teacher: "Well Abraham, thanks for helping us understand how the whole Bible connects."

Abraham: "You are welcome. Hope to see you soon in heaven. I mean when you die, oh forget it. I hope you don't die for a while."



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PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

Supplies:

pencil and paper

Draw a picture of the Holy Spirit falling upon the disciples as described in scripture

FOR THE OLDER GRADES

WHAT IS THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR?

Supplies:

white board

Have the children look up the following scriptures to see what they teach about the Holy Spirit and what His ministry brings to us.

Luke 24:49

John 14:26

Acts 1:8

Romans 5:5

Romans 15:13

1 Corinthians 6:9

Ephesians 1:13,14

2 Timothy 1:14

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Galatians 5:22,23

1 John 5:6

1 John 4:13



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A LITTLE BIT MORE

The death of Judas – Judas did not purchase the field where he was buried directly. The blood money he was paid for betraying Jesus was used to purchase the field. Compare Peter's account with that of Matthew:

"When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money." So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day." Matthew 27:3-8

As for the description of Judas' body bursting open, most commentators suggest that after hanging himself, when his body finally fell down, it burst open due to decay.

