



a Kendall Hunt Company

Pentecost Sunday, Year A, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

Acts 2:1-11

John 20:19-23

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Come Holy Spirit,

guide us and give us the strength to witness to Christ throughout the world.

Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The topic for today is the Holy Spirit. To begin, light a candle in the center of the room. Provide small candles for each person. Invite the young people to come forward and light their candle and then form a circle in the center of the room. Quietly call attention to the glowing flame. Discuss:

- What are some qualities of fire?
- Why do we light candles in Church?
- Why is fire a symbol of the Holy Spirit?

Allow time for discussion. On Pentecost the Church celebrates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through signs of wind and fire.

Listening to the Word of God

In the first reading from Acts of the Apostles, listen to how the Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples.



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Read Acts 2:1-11.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- How does the Holy Spirit come upon the disciples?
- How are the symbols of wind and fire used to describe the outpouring of the Spirit?
- What does the Spirit enable the disciples to do?

In the gospel today, listen to how Jesus gives the disciples the gift of the Spirit.

Read John 20:19-23.

Allow for silence.

- Why are the disciples behind locked doors?
- How does Jesus give the Spirit to his disciples?
- What does Jesus command?

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Scripture Background

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings using the Catechist Background section.

Today's feast of Pentecost celebrates the sending of the Spirit upon the Church. On the fiftieth day of Easter, the Church celebrates its birth. On the feast of Pentecost the Easter season comes to a close.

The first reading from Acts tells about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through signs of wind and fire. All the disciples are gathered together in one place when suddenly a loud sound like wind fills the room and tongues like fire come to rest on each disciple. The Holy Spirit enables the disciples to speak in languages they never knew before. The crowd understands what the disciples are speaking about the wonders of God. Today's first reading shows how the gift of the Spirit enables the good news to be proclaimed in such a way that the entire world can understand.

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In today's Gospel passage we find the disciples gathered in fear behind locked doors. Suddenly, Jesus appears to his friends and breathes new life into them. Jesus gives the Holy Spirit by the action of breathing on the disciples, which recalls God's act of creation. The gift of the Spirit changes the hearts of the disciples. Their fear is changed to joyful conviction, and they are empowered to go forth and forgive the sins of others.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- What do we celebrate on the feast of Pentecost?
- Why are the hearts of Jesus' followers changed from fear to joy?
- How does the Holy Spirit help you to change?

[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the Gospel in Life.]

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

The Holy Spirit

The Catholic Church teaches that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit in both Hebrew and Christian scriptures is given many names, such as "Spirit of God," "Breath of God," "Paraclete," and "Advocate." Every Sunday, Catholics who gather at Mass declare their belief in the Holy Spirit by proclaiming: "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets" (*Roman Missal*, Profession of Faith).

The Holy Spirit was given to the disciples, and God sends the Holy Spirit to us too. The Holy Spirit kindles faith in the hearts of believers. The gift of the Spirit helps us to proclaim the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection. The Spirit strengthens believers to be good and loving people. The gift of the Holy Spirit helps us to spread the love of God throughout the world.

We believe that the Holy Spirit brings the gifts of healing, unity, and love into the world. We believe that the Spirit is a teacher and advocate who guides those who pray. And yet, the Holy Spirit can be a source of challenge and surprise. Scripture refers to tongues of fire and



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the driving wind of Pentecost, which shook the apostles and changed them. Some changes—and movements in the Church throughout history have claimed a basis in the Holy Spirit.

- What are some names given to the Holy Spirit?
- What signs of the Holy Spirit do you see at work in the Church today?
- How does the Holy Spirit give you strength and guidance?

The Gospel in Life

How can you open your heart to the gift of the Spirit this week?

Connecting to Faith First® Legacy Edition

At Home Family Guide, theme 5

Junior High, Mystery of God, chapter 12

Junior High, Morality, chapter 6

Junior High, Church History, chapters 1 and 7

