

## PENTECOST SUNDAY

YEAR A

### PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God of all people,  
thank you for your gift  
of the Holy Spirit to us  
and the whole church.  
Through the power  
of your Spirit,  
may we tell the whole world  
about Jesus;  
forgive those who have hurt us,  
as we have been forgiven;  
and live a happy life,  
doing all that you want us to do.  
We pray this prayer  
through Jesus, your Son,  
who lives with you  
and the Holy Spirit.

### FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The mission of the church is to do the work of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus breathed into his disciples his own life, the Holy Spirit. By the power of that Spirit, the church is born. The followers of Jesus are now to do what his death and Resurrection was all about—forgive. Peace is the greeting of the risen Lord, and peace is his continued presence in the church.

This Spirit comes upon the disciples with power. In the name of Jesus, in every language, they are empowered to preach about “the great things God has done.”

### REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Before the first reading, remind the children of the first reading for Ascension. Reread to them the center part of the reading. Begin with, “One day when Jesus was with the disciples. . .” And end with, “. . . and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and all over the world.”

Now invite the children to listen to today’s first reading.

### FIRST READING: Acts 2:1-8, 11b

*This is a reading from the Acts of the Apostles.*

On the day of Pentecost,  
the believers were gathered together  
in one room.

All of a sudden they heard a sound  
like a strong wind  
that seemed to fill the whole house.  
Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire  
coming and resting on each one of them.  
They were all filled with the Holy Spirit,  
and immediately they started to speak  
in other languages.

At that time, there were visitors in Jerusalem  
who had come from all over the world.

They were amazed  
because they heard the believers  
speaking in so many languages.

They said,

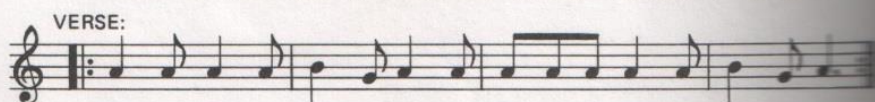
“How are they able to speak like this?  
Aren’t all of these people from Galilee?  
Yet we can all hear them  
telling in our own languages  
about the great things God has done.”

*The Word of the Lord.*

### RESPONSE: Psalm 104



Send us your Spir - it, O Lord, and re - new the face of the earth!



May your glo - ry last for - ev - er. May you re - joice in all we do!

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



## GOSPEL: John 20:19-23

*This is a reading from the Gospel of John.*

In the evening,  
the disciples were gathered in a room.  
They had locked the doors  
because they were afraid of the people  
who had crucified Jesus.  
Jesus came and stood in the room  
and said,

"Peace be with you!"

Then he showed them  
his hands and his side.  
The disciples were filled with joy  
when they saw the Lord.  
Jesus said again,

"Peace be with you!"

Then he breathed on the disciples  
and said to them,

"I give you the Holy Spirit.  
If you forgive the sins of anyone,  
they are forgiven.  
If you do not forgive them,  
they are not forgiven."

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

After the first reading, ask the children how Jesus kept the promise that he had made. Ask them what it seemed like to the disciples when they received the Holy Spirit. It is important to help them understand that the Holy Spirit is not "strong wind" and "tongues of fire." These are images used to describe an event which cannot really be put into words. We often do this. We say things such as, "She is like a cute little kitten." Or we say, "She is as strong as a rock." We are using metaphors to help us express more a feeling or a quality than a physical presence.

The disciples were able to preach with clarity, and so, later, when writing this account, they described the event as receiving "tongues of fire." We don't know what the event was like. We know only that they received the power of the Holy Spirit to do Christ's work, especially of preaching and healing.

Ask the children (as we have before) what words are said at the Christian baptism—"I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Help them to understand that we, too, have received the Holy Spirit. Ask them what the disciples did when they received the Holy Spirit. The stress here should not be on speaking other languages but on telling about the great things God has done.

Ask the children how we can do this today, because we, too, have the Holy Spirit. Ask them to give some examples of how they can tell about the great things God has done:

- What great things today?
- Whom can we tell?

After the Gospel, ask the children what else Jesus gave us the power to do besides telling the great things God has done. Explore ways in which they can forgive others. Help them to see that if we truly forgive someone, that person "feels" the power of the freedom of being forgiven. If we refuse this, that person "feels" the burden of not being forgiven. We have the power of the Holy Spirit to free people by being forgiving. Help them to see that when we live this way, as we pray in the Psalm refrain, "the face of the earth will be like new."