

Middle School Sunday School Lessons by

rfour.org

Year 3: Session 8 – Post-Crucifixion

Class 24: Acts 2:1-21, 41, 44-47 – Pentecost

CONCEPTS that will be covered in the lesson

- Highlight the ups and downs of the journey the disciples experience on their way to Pentecost
- Emphasize the celebratory and “big deal” nature of Pentecost
- Note how the process of being a disciples concludes for the disciples in the Pentecost story, but also starts over – a reminder that the process is repeatable and available for us to experience as well.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Some way to play and show movie clip on rfour.org site for this lesson (from *How To Train Your Dragon*)
- List of MadGab words located at end of lesson
- *Optional:* It’s hard to find one these days, but the original electronic game of “Catch Phrase” is a very fun substitute for the MadGab activity. The game is simple: Get your team to guess the phrase using any words you want other than the phrase you are trying to get them to guess. The lesson is written for MadGab because I can’t provide the Catch Phrase game, but if you have it, I recommend using that activity instead. The follow-up questions and comments would be pretty similar: *Communication is difficult and we just experienced that difficulty first-hand*

THE LESSON

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION

- For the opening question for today’s class, one of the teachers will ask the question and then to give you some time to think of an answer; the teacher asking the question will answer first.
- Once the teacher answers the question, we’ll go around the circle.
- When it’s your turn, start with your name and then answer the question to the best of your ability.
- **Here’s this week’s question:** *What is an activity where you think a good team can do **more** or do **better** than a great individual?*

TELL

- A quick review of the two previous stories that we've discussed:
 - Resurrected Jesus appeared to TEAM Disciples, but Thomas wasn't with TEAM Disciples and therefore missed out on resurrection. But – he got a second chance. So, resurrection is a team event and there's not just one chance to understand it.
 - Then we read the ascension story, where Resurrected Jesus has prepared TEAM Disciples to receive God's Holy Spirit, but before they reach this pivotal and important event, Resurrected Jesus *leaves* (by floating away). We discussed that Resurrected Jesus did this so that the disciples will learn to trust that what Jesus taught them is actually within them.
- So, after all that, we've finally arrived to the moment when the disciples receive God's Holy Spirit.
- We call this story "Pentecost." It is a Jewish holiday (that commemorates Moses receiving the 10 commandments). *Pentecost* means 50 days – meaning "50 days after Passover."
- To get started, we're going to watch a movie clip that I think captures the spirit of the Pentecost story, but maybe not in an obvious way at first.
- The video clip is from the movie, "How To Train Your Dragon" (one of the greatest movies ever made, imho, and the soundtrack is fantastic in this clip so **PLAY IT LOUD!!!**)
- The clip begins with a boy name Hiccup riding on a dragon named Toothless for the first time.
- Toothless, the dragon, is missing a tail fin.
- Hiccup, the boy, constructed a wooden fin as a replacement.
- Hiccup needs to control the fin for Toothless to fly in a controlled manner (otherwise he flies in circles and crashes).
- The video we're going to watch is their first flight together now that Hiccup has figured out that he has to control the wooden fin and how to do it.
- He even wrote instructions for himself that he'll refer to mid-flight.
- Let's see what happens.

WATCH MOVIE CLIP

ASK

- At the beginning of the clip, did the replacement fin work? Was Toothless able to fly? (yes)
- Also at the beginning of the clip, was Hiccup very sure of himself? (not really; he kept checking his "cheat sheet")
- When Hiccup messed up and separated from Toothless, could either one of them fly at that point? (no)
- Once Hiccup and Toothless reunited, did Hiccup need his instructions anymore? (no, he got rid of them and trusted himself and Toothless)
- What do you think -- are Toothless and Hiccup a good team? (overall seems like yes – they both get to fly when they are a team; however Hiccup made some mistakes which put both of them in danger, but Hiccup improved pretty quickly)

TELL / TRANSITION TO SCRIPTURE READING

- One of the ways this video clip pairs well with today's story is because of how the two individuals working together as a team are greater than they are as individuals.
- As individuals, neither one of them can fly.
- But as a team, **both** of them can fly.
- And when they *do* fly, it is a celebrative, exciting, amazing event
- Which is the same type of feeling I want you associate with today's scripture story.

- Today's story should be read as a feel-good, inspirational, team-based, triumph against all-odds type of story.
- Let's see what happens.

READ Acts 1:13-14; 2:1-17, 41, 44-47 (*recommend class reads it out loud; one person per verse*)

13 When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. **14** All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. 5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7 Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." 12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." 14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. 16 No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 17 "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

41 So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

44 All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

ASK (*answers are in parenthesis*)

- Is there anything you find interesting or weird about this story? [to teachers: *You don't necessarily need to answer what they notice or have questions about – sometimes just agree with a, "yep, that's interesting" or a, "Yeah, I find that to be weird, too" works*]
- In 1:14 and 2:1, who was gathered and what were they doing? (the disciples and women – including Jesus' mom. They were all together and they were praying)
- It's tough to tell, from what we just read, but the disciples have been together and praying for about 10 days since Jesus ascended – so, what *finally* happens, then, in verses 2:2-4? (they receive the Holy Spirit)

- In the description of receiving the Holy Spirit (tongue of fire, violent wind), does receiving the Holy Spirit seem like a mild event? (No, not really – quite wild, actually – almost like flying on the back of a dragon)
- What are the disciples able to do because of the Holy Spirit in verse 4 and 6? (the disciples are understood by everyone regardless of what language the listeners speak)
- What are the responses of the people in verse 12 and 13 (they were amazed, perplexed – but others were like, “They’re drunk!”)
- Does that seem similar to how the crowd and/or Pharisees often responded to Jesus? (I think so)
- Verse 41: How many people decide to follow the disciples? (3000)
- Verse 44 – 46: What do the disciples do after they receive the Holy Spirit (pretty much what they were doing before: Staying together, praying, worshiping, and sharing what they have with each other)
- Verse 47: What is the result of the disciples’ actions? (*the Lord added to their number and those who were being saved* – in other words, the disciples were suddenly teachers who had students. The disciples are now repeating the process that Jesus did with them!)

TELL

- When thinking about Jesus, we often think that Jesus could do what he did because of his birth story and his DNA.
- And because of his birth story, you might think no one can reach the same level of Jesus.
- To offer another perspective, I want to share with you Jesus’ own words to his disciples.
 - In John 14:12, Jesus tells his disciples, *Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.*
- Jesus had high hopes for his disciples.
- And in today’s story, we start to see Jesus’ hopes for his disciples be realized.
- We see the disciples (finally!) receive God’s Holy Spirit, just like Jesus received God’s Holy Spirit after he was baptized.
- And then we see the disciples get their own disciples, just like Jesus had his own disciples.
- This is why I hope you take the celebrative, inspirational, and exciting feeling that the movie clip tries to convey and then apply those same inspirational feelings to today’s Bible story.
- Because today’s scripture story is a really. big. deal!
- Pentecost is the cumulative and successful result of Jesus’ work with the disciples.
- Which is amazing when we think about who the disciples are.
- They were not superstars, they were not the best of the best – they were just regular people.
- But, they chose to follow Jesus. They chose to learn from him. Yes, they argued with each other and with Jesus. Yes, they made mistakes. And then they lost Jesus to the Pharisees and Romans and the cross. But then they got him back! But then they lost him again in the Ascension story.
- It is this journey, then, of great ups and great downs, from Palm Sunday to crucifixion to Resurrection to Ascension, from humble beginnings to the mount of transfiguration that forges the disciples into a team that is ready to fly, that is ready for Pentecost.
- Because, once Jesus ascended, the disciples knew, on that last downward trip towards Pentecost, that they no longer needed to keep consulting a manual.
- Just like Hiccup and Toothless at the end of the movie clip, the disciples were finally ready to really *fly*.

- They were ready to fly because they no longer doubted anything that Jesus told them; everything he had ever told them had come true.
- Which means they were ready for this next thing that he had told them would happen. They were ready for Pentecost.
- And because the disciples were ready for Pentecost, they were also ready to continue Jesus' ministry.
- In that way, then, *who* Jesus was lived on in his disciples.
- Throughout the book of Acts, then, we see the disciples (which means "student") become apostles (which means "sent out"). And while they are out and about as apostles, they do just about everything that Jesus did.
- And, if the disciples can do what Jesus did, and have disciples who learn to do what the disciples did, who then have disciples who learn to do what their teachers did...the idea is that *we* can choose to be disciples and learn what the original disciples learned and do what the original disciples did.
- The same path the disciples took is available for us to take, too.
- Should we accept that invitation, one of the powers that we receive when we pay attention to God, follow Jesus, and receive God's Holy Spirit, is one of the powers that we see in the Pentecost story: The ability to communicate with others.
- This is no easy thing.

TRANSITION TO ACTIVITY

- Speaking and listening (i.e. communication) in *general* can be difficult – even when we all speak the same language.
- So as a fun way to experience this frustration of communication difficulty, we're going to do a listening activity together as a light-hearted way to close out today's lesson.

EXPLAIN ACTIVITY

- The activity is based on a game called Madgab, where words that seem to not make sense at first, start to make sense if said (fast or slow) enough to form a phrase that **does** make sense to us.
- We'll do this as a group, since the disciples better understood Jesus AND received God's Holy Spirit as a group.
- One of the teachers will be the all-time reader.

DO Mad Gab from the Bible ACTIVITY (teacher says the phrase on the left – correct answer is on the right)

That Went Eighth Herds Some	The Twenty Third Psalm
Thief Amen	The Famine
Age Are Of Fun Knee	A Jar of Honey
Prints Up Ease	Prince of Peace
Hole Leap Lace	Holy Place
Falls Stock Trends	False Doctrines
Chair Up Him	Cherubim
The Horn Sin Yours Hides	Thorns in your sides
Thief Urge Gin Merry	The Virgin mary
Thick Old Dunk Halves	The Golden Calves
Mice Al Vase Shuns Clothes Sat Tanned	My salvation is close at hand
Sink Prays Says Stew Harking	Sing praises to our King

Tee Antique Riced	The antichrist
Cohen Duel Ike Wise	Go and do likewise
My Kill Land Is Sane Jills	Michael and his angels
Yore In Hair It Hence	Your inheritance
Thick Crews Of Fiction	The crucifixion
Jay Cope End Die Sick	Jacob and Isaac
Cods Egret Twist Dumb	God's secret Wisdom
Fray Grunt Doff Ring	Fragrant offering
Key Pay Tie Train Honest Hung	keep a tight reign on his tongue
Thief Filet Ming Push	the flaming bush
Spear Achoo Help Less Sings	Spiritual blessings
Fair Rocking Guff He Chipped	Pharaoh, King of Egypt
Sack Eye Yes Tacks Call Hector	Zacchaeus Tax Collector
Caw Dove Fish Rail	God of Israel
Thief Eighth Full Whole He Won	The faithful holy one
Deal Avarice Firm Eve Hill	Deliver us from evil
Knot Can Thud Orville Bee Oh Pinned	Knock and the door will be opened
Ace Tone Pill Oh	A stone pillow

Just for fun Mad Gab

Essay Madder Rough Act	as a matter of fact
Prey Tee Womb Anne	pretty woman
Dutch Egg Cousin Theme Ale	the check is in the mail
Knee Go She Ate	negotiate
Tube Row Tacked Ant Surf	to protect and serve
Toe Tall Gun Few Shun	total confusion
Peal Oaf Height	pillow fight
Eighty Part Mints Tore	a department store

ASK/TELL

- Did you correctly guess every phrase?
- No, you didn't. Sometimes you did well and sometimes you struggled.
- The same experience happens as a disciples – there are ups and downs as a disciple.
- Today's story reminds us, that these down times are actually quite helpful, strangely, as it is the surviving of those down times that helps forge an internal trust in both God and yourself.
- And the results of choosing to be a disciple and sticking with it in the best and worst of times are demonstrated in today's scripture story: The disciples are starting to fulfill Jesus' words that they will do better and greater things than he.
- And that's the good news for today.

CLOSING PRAYER