

Middle School Sunday School Lessons by



Year 3: Session 8 – Post-Crucifixion

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

CONCEPTS that will be covered in the lesson

In the form of questions that will be discussed with offered answers (in the lesson):

- What is the process that the disciples go through before they receive God's Holy Spirit?
- What's the big deal about God's Holy Spirit? What does God's Holy Spirit "do" for the disciples?

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Movie clip (from rfour.org)
- TV and equipment needed to play movie clip

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:** *If you were suddenly granted the choice of one superhero power, what would you choose?*

TELL

- A quick review of the two previous stories that we've discussed:
 - Resurrected Jesus appears to TEAM Disciples, but Thomas wasn't with TEAM Disciples and therefore missed out on resurrection. But – he got a second chance. Also, we discussed how resurrection is a team event.
 - Resurrection Jesus has prepared TEAM Disciples to receive God's Holy Spirit, but before they do, Resurrected Jesus must leave (by floating away). Resurrected Jesus does this so that the disciples will learn to trust that what Jesus taught them is actually within them.

- The disciples receiving God’s Holy Spirit is the story we’re going to read about today.
- We call this story “Pentecost.” It is a Jewish holiday (that commemorates Moses receiving the 10 commandments). Pentecost means 50 days – 50 days after Passover.
- To get started, we’re going to watch a movie clip that captures the spirit of the Pentecost story, but in a superhero sort of way.
- The video clip is from a movie called “Captain America.” The scene we’re going to watch is before Captain America has his power that makes him Captain America.
- Let’s see how he gets his power. (note: there are subtitles because one of the scientist’s accents makes him a little bit hard to understand – and what he says is somewhat important to the clip)

WATCH MOVIE CLIP

ASK

- What did “Captain America” look like at the start of the clip? (a little skinny person)
- And what did he look like at that end of the movie clip? (a tall strong person)
- What gave Captain America his power? (injections and vara-rays or something)
- Was the transformation quick and easy? (sort of – it went quickly enough, but sounded like it hurt)
- Although the transformation was quick and somewhat easy, do you think there was a lot of time and preparation that went into making that one moment happen? (yes, probably took years of preparation)

TELL / TRANSITION TO SCRIPTURE READING

- In this movie clip we see that Captain America does not become Captain America by himself.
- Something (chemicals and rays) makes him more than he was on his own.
- In the Jesus story, we often believe that Jesus can do what he does because of his birth story.
- But, he doesn’t do any of his cool things until after he’s baptized. When he’s baptized, he then receives God’s Holy Spirit.
- He then calls disciples to follow him. And he teaches them about God, God’s Holy Spirit, and prayer.
- In today’s story, the disciples (finally!) receive God’s Holy Spirit, just like Jesus did when he was baptized.
- 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)

- 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)
- Tangential question: Remember the story of Jesus and Nicodemus talking about the Holy Spirit? Jesus is telling Nicodemus that he is able to do what he does because he's "born from above." Jesus then says this to Nicodemus (John 3:8) --*The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.* Sounds a bit like what's happening in today's story, doesn't it?
- 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!")
- Seems pretty much like how the crowd would often respond to Jesus, doesn't it?
- 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

A few things to note here:

- Just like with Captain America in the movie clip, Pentecost seems to be a quick and somewhat easy transformation for the disciples: Do a little prayin' and boom! Suddenly, you're taller (like in the movie) and can speak foreign languages (like in the Pentecost story!)
 - But that's only a little bit of the story. You must **NOT** forget all the stories that proceed Pentecost: There's a lot of learning and life experience that has to happen for the disciples while they follow Jesus that finally get them to this point: Including the really rough period where Jesus is arrested, they run away in fear, and then he's dead. And then there's the resurrection experience, as well as staying together and praying for 10 days *after* Jesus leaves them for a second time. There is a WHOLE lot that happens for the disciples before they are able/ready to receive God's Holy Spirit.
- We didn't cover too many stories about the disciples this year, but Peter's transformation (as well as the support from the other disciples – vv 14 *Peter stood with the 11*) in this story is just as extreme as Captain America's transformation in the movie clip. It is (in my opinion), by far and away, the single most amazing miracle in the Bible. Because what you see here is an insecure, ADHD-type, mostly uneducated, culturally unsophisticated *kid* turn into the de facto leader of a small group of people (the disciples) who eventually become the Church (Pentecost is considered the birth of the Church, btw). Just look at Peter, standing up there and speaking to the crowd *in Jerusalem* (i.e. *a kid from the sticks is talking to the sophisticated, world-traveling, educated folks in the big city*) after being accused of being drunk. He radiates with a confidence and clarity we've NEVER seen from him. Compare this Peter with the Peter who says to Jesus "Go away from me for I am a sinful man." Or the Peter who Jesus has to call "Satan" to get his attention (because Peter's mind was on human things, not divine things). Or the Peter who denies knowing Jesus in the courtyard after Jesus is arrested. Or the Peter who sinks into the sea. Or the Peter who interrupts Jesus, Elijah and Moses in the Transfiguration story. This is what following Jesus and receiving God's Holy Spirit can do to a person: Completely transform them.
- The progressive nature of the disciples' journey ("members of the crowd" to "students of Jesus" to "Jesus-like teachers with their own students") lets us know that this is a repeatable journey that can still be traveled. Today, even. By us, even.
- Throughout the book of Acts, 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 (no feeding of the 5000 and no resurrection, BUT there are healings, Paul brings a kid back from the dead, there's casting out of unclean spirits, and tons of arguing with the Pharisees. Regarding no (physical) resurrection in Acts – the transformation of the disciples, Peter and Paul especially, is the *essence* of the resurrection story: New life). This being said, one of the greatest powers that we receive when we pay attention to God, follow Jesus and receive God's Holy Spirit is the power that we see in the Pentecost story: Communicating to others with confidence and clarity about God. 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.

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 it help to have the whole group listening instead of just one person? (yes because different people understood the phrases)
- Although it is a silly activity, it does help us to see how hearing and understanding can be and is a difficult task.
- Which also means, from the other end of communicating, that it can be very difficult to speak in a way that others can understand.
- One of the things the Pentecost story tells us is that when we go through the process of being disciples of Jesus, including the being together and praying together, then we get better at communicating to others about God

CLOSING PRAYER