

FAITH @ HOME

Week of June 9, 2019

Pentecost

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: Acts 2:1-21

REFLECT: It is not always easy to understand what other people tell us. When we are busy or in a bad mood we might have trouble listening. Some people speak a language that we don't understand. God helped the disciples speak to other people even though they did not speak the same language. They told everyone that God loves them. God helped the people listen so they could learn how much God loves them.

The Holy Spirit is one way that God helps us listen to others. The Holy Spirit also helps us tell people how much God loves them and how much we love them. We can't see God and the Holy Spirit, but that doesn't mean they aren't there. They are like wind when it blows on you. You can feel the wind but you can't see it. But one day the disciples did see the Holy Spirit. They heard a loud sound like wind, and then the Holy Spirit appeared. It looked like fire shining a light on them. It meant that that God is always with us, helping us listen and love others.

RESPOND: Ask a grown up to light a candle. Turn off all the lights and sit together. Notice how the little light helps you see each other in the dark. It also moves a little if there is a breeze, even when you can't see the breeze.

Now talk about a time it was hard to talk to another person. Maybe someone at your school, a sibling, or a grown up. Why was it hard? How can you talk to them next time? What would you like to say to them?

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: JEREMIAH SIERRA



Jeremiah is currently the communications manager for Cities of Service, a nonprofit that works to change the way local government and residents work together. He has worked for a variety of other nonprofit organizations and Episcopal churches, most recently Trinity Church Wall Street, where he was the managing editor of the quarterly magazine. He has written for *Forward Day by Day* and other publications about faith. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife and three-year-old daughter.

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ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: Acts 2:1-4

REFLECT: During the Last Supper, Jesus tells his disciples about a special gift that God will send to them. But this gift doesn't come right away. Over the next three days, Jesus is crucified, buried, and then rises again on Easter. He spends time walking, talking, and breaking bread with the disciples, but still this gift awaits. Then Jesus ascends into heaven, leaving the disciples and returning to God the Father. Ten days after Jesus goes back into heaven, the disciples and other faithful followers gather for a special feast called Pentecost. Normally this is a time when people bring gifts to God, but on this special day, God keeps the promise and delivers the gift of the Holy Spirit. This gift was magnificent, flowing the breath of God in and through God's people on that Day of Pentecost and all through the centuries to today.

RESPOND: Pentecost is often regarded as the birthday of the Church—a day when God gave the people an incredible gift of the Holy Spirit. Ask an adult if you can celebrate the birthday of the Church in your home today. You might place a candle in a special dessert and maybe even sing "Happy Birthday" to the Church. Talk about the other gifts God has given you. Maybe you have the gift of intelligence or singing, athleticism or kindness. How can you use those gifts in a way that thanks God for giving them and shares God's love with others?

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: RICHELLE THOMPSON



Richelle Thompson lives in the beautiful bluegrass of Kentucky, near Cincinnati, with her husband, their two children, a horse, a cat, and two dogs. She serves as the deputy director and managing editor of Forward Movement, a ministry of the Episcopal Church and publisher of the daily devotional, *Forward Day by Day*.

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ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: John 14:8-17 (25-27)

REFLECT: As people of the Christian tradition, we have been given work to do. Jesus has taught us through his ministry that we are to radically love, care and be a witness of God's presence in the world. What keeps us going? What fuels us to do such good work? What keeps us on that way of love? Today in John's Gospel, Jesus tells the disciples that when He leaves, another "advocate" will come. This advocate is The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is what will keep us bound together as a people, and therefore bound together with Him. The Holy Spirit will be what touches hearts, what opens our eyes, and what moves our feet to continue in the ministry that Christ has taught us to lead. Leading the work of reconciliation, leading the work of peace, leading the work of justice leading the work of providing healing love and grace to the other.

RESPOND: So easily, we can walk through life without recognizing Christ's love around us. Not only are we those who share that love to the other, but we also are recipients of such love. Where have you witnessed Christ this week? Where have you witnessed Christ this day? Take time to reflect on these questions with your friends or family and here how during our lives, Christ is present through the power of the Holy Spirit.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: CHRISTOPHER DECATUR



Christopher is a seminarian at Virginia Theological Seminary and a postulant in The Diocese of Ohio for holy orders. Prior to seminary, Chris served at Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland, OH as the Associate Minister for Children, Youth, Family, Young Adult and Campus Ministries. Chris also has served as "The Chair of The Subcommittee for Racial Reconciliation and Justice for The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music." Chris comes from an undergraduate degree in Comparative Religion from Cleveland State University and years of studies and practicing of Early Childhood Education at both CSU and as a student at The Catholic University of America. Chris is currently serving as The Outreach Coordinator for The Center for The Ministry of Teaching at Virginia Theological Seminary and a Catechist for Baptized for Life: An Episcopal Discipleship Initiative.

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Pentecost

ADULT AND ADULT

READ: Acts 2:1-21

REFLECT: By reading Acts 1:5 we know the disciples are waiting in Jerusalem, as instructed by Jesus, to be “baptized with the Holy Spirit.” Reading this can fill us with wondering: what exactly does being “baptized by the Holy Spirit” mean? The disciples knew that John baptized with water--you got wet and were made new. But they did not know what the Holy Spirit would do. Was it a time of apprehension? And then it happens. Suddenly. Unannounced. The Holy Spirit appears to them first through their ears as the sound of a “rushing, violent wind filled the entire house.” No wind, just the sound of wind. As if the audio control is on full blast and you can’t escape the power of its volume. The Holy Spirit had their attention! We can wonder how they reacted: if they covered their ears, spoke words of surprise, or sat receptively in prayer. Then they see the Holy Spirit as a tongue of fire “appeared and rested on each of them.” There was no mistaking Jesus’ prophecy now!

The disciples were awake to that moment and the power of the Holy Spirit coming over them. It was only after their ears heard and their eyes saw – that the Holy Spirit then gave them the ability to speak in a language they did not know and had not learned, and to be understood by others. The Holy Spirit through the disciples spoke in many tongues and filled them with qualities they needed to continue sharing Jesus’ teachings in Jerusalem and beyond. “Blessed are your with eyes because they see and your ears because you hear.” (Matt 13:16)

RESPOND: A church motto once read, “The sign of God is that we shall be led where we did not intend to go.” Reflect back on your experiences. Were you led where you did not intend to go? With ears that hear and eyes that see, were any of these times signs of God?

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: JAN BERRY SCHROEDER



Jan works in several churches building family ministry programs. As a Shalem-trained Spiritual Director, she works with individuals and families on deepening their faith practices. As an emerging blogger, she lives beside an apple orchard with her husband and rescue dog and has discovered how apples grow – they hang!

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