

June 9, 2024



Bible Passage: Acts 1:1–11; 2
(Ascension and Gift of the Holy Spirit)

God's Spirit Unifies

Remember Verse

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

LESSON OVERVIEW

CONNECT//
10 minutes



Secret Handshake

SUPPLIES

- None

GATHER//
30 minutes



Remember Verse

Game: Toe Scramble
Relay

SUPPLIES

- Index cards (34)
- Marker

Storytelling

SUPPLIES

- Optional: Investigate Questions*
- Bibles
- Disposable tablecloths (1–2, blue)
- Lamps (2–3)
- Crepe paper streamers (1 roll of red and 1 roll of orange)
- Globe or world map

- Flashlights (2–3)
- Empty box wrapped to look like a gift
- Scissors

Discussion Questions

RESPOND//
15 minutes



Letters to the Global
Church

SUPPLIES

- Photos, letters, and information about missionaries supported by your church (or other missionaries)
- Paper (1 sheet per child)
- Pens
- Optional: envelopes (1 per child)

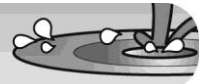
(Optional) Strong
Cereal

SUPPLIES

- Fortified cereal (1 large box, must contain high level of iron)
- Neodymium magnet (1 large or several small)

- Resealable plastic bags (1 per child, snack-sized)
- Rolling pin (3–4)
- Disposable plate (1 per child)

BLESS//
5 minutes



SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards*
- At Home Weekly: Lesson 2*
- Bible
- Construction paper (1 sheet, red)
- Scissors
- Marker

Further Resources

To help you plan and lead:

Customizable copy of Lesson 1 2018–19 Scope and Sequence TruStory How It Works Small Group Enhancement

At Home Weekly: Lesson 1

The weekly for the next lesson—to be sent home for preteaching by parents—is found in BLESS.

LEADER PREP

Each week you'll find a list of resources along with encouraging articles that help you prepare your heart to present the lesson.

Inspire *Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives*

As my wife and I celebrated our nine-year anniversary, we reflected on the ways God had shown up in our lives over the years. We remembered a time early in our marriage when I was about to make a job change. I was excited about the transition, but my wife was on the opposite page. In fact, her words were “absolutely not!” Both of us had valid points, and we were stuck.

My wife asked if we could commit this decision to prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to bring the two of us to a place of unity. Though I knew this was the right thing to do, I also thought, *Yeah, right—that’s going to happen. There’s no way I’m changing my mind, and I definitely know my Italian-blooded wife won’t be changing her mind.*

After that night we didn’t speak about the decision for weeks. As I prayed, I continued to feel more clarity—as well as more anxiety about my wife’s feelings about the matter as we hadn’t discussed it since. A month later, I finally asked her about it. To my surprise, she responded with a huge smile and said, “I think we should take it!” She explained how the Holy Spirit had not only changed her mind but had also given her peace and joy about this decision. Everything He’d been confirming to me He’d been confirming to her. God had spoken, and we were able to move forward in unity.

This simple yet profound experience has served as an anchor in our marriage—a time when God modeled His faithfulness and care by providing unity where there had been none. To this day we’re convinced that this change came about only because of God’s Spirit.

Kit Rae

ROCKHARBOR Church

Equip *Offers perspective and context to the lesson’s Bible passage*

The day of Pentecost was the day the church was born. On this day, the Holy Spirit unified believers into one body. One of the most significant aspects of Pentecost was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the world.

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was active—empowering believers for service. But these believers weren’t indwelt by the Holy Spirit. God’s Spirit dwelled *with* His people in the temple, but the Holy Spirit couldn’t live *within* His people because the sin issue hadn’t been dealt with. Even though they were God’s people, they still had sinful hearts. Jesus said in John 14:17 that the Holy Spirit would be *inside* them.

In the old covenant, God required people to worship Him at the temple. But, as Jesus told the woman at the well, a time would come when this would change (John 4:21–23). And at Pentecost, God poured out His Spirit upon the world so that believers could be indwelt by Him. Because Jesus had paid the price for sin, the hearts of believers became suitable residences for His presence. Paul explains that we’re now the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16), and the Spirit now dwells in us.

This outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost was a unique event in history. It wasn’t simply an empowering for service. It was the inauguration of a new age—a new era in the outworking of God’s plan. God had dwelt with His people (the Jewish people) in a specific location because they were a nation among other nations. But in the new covenant era, God’s people were called out from many nations, so the location of His presence had to change. He now dwells in His people as His temple, and this unifies us in a powerful way. As we see in Acts 1—2, the early church gives us a wonderful model of what this unity should look like.

Support *Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word*

It's often difficult to reconcile a divide between people. Only God's Spirit can truly unify us. Throughout Scripture we find example after example of David's distress in the book of Psalms. David often felt betrayed, lost, and alone, yet he could experience unity with God and others through God's Spirit. Take a few minutes to read Psalm 4:1, 6–8. If you're in a place where you're experiencing an unbridgeable gap between yourself and someone you care about, take time to ask God's Spirit to bring unity. Maybe craft a letter or a poem, or simply a list of your experiences, trusting that God hears you and will bring you the wisdom and peace you need to act. As you take a moment to bring your concerns before God, pray: "Holy Spirit, make me a person who longs for the kind of unity that only You can provide."

CONNECT//10 minutes



Children develop relationships with their leaders and one another through simple activities and conversation starters.

Secret Handshake

Today invite your kids to pair up and create their own special handshakes.

SUPPLIES

- None

RELATE

CONNECT QUESTION: Welcome and greet children. Open your time by asking this question: **If you could speak another language, which language would you choose?**

Secret handshakes give friends a fun and unique way to communicate with each other. They're not just a good way to greet a friend; they also create a special bond between friends.

Today invite your kids to pair up and create their own special handshakes. Give each pair a few minutes to come up with something unique and practice it together. As they work on their handshake, have the kids talk about other unique greetings besides handshakes that they've witnessed. Once the pairs finalize their handshakes, have them take turns demonstrating those handshakes for the whole class.

GATHER//30 minutes



Children experience and learn more about God through prayer, storytelling from The Big God Story, an investigation into God's Word, and creative ways to memorize Scripture.

Remember Verse

Each week children will spend time memorizing a portion of Scripture together. The Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

Game: Toe Scramble Relay

SUPPLIES

- Index cards (34)
- Marker

PREPARE AHEAD

Write two words of the verse per card (use the Scripture reference as one word). Make two sets of cards and mix up each set so the verse is not in order.

RELATE

Divide your class into two teams, and have the teams line up on opposite walls of the room. Place the two sets of index cards in the middle of the room in two different piles; assign each pile to a team. Have the children remove their socks and shoes. At your signal, one child from each team will go to her pile of cards and pick up a card using only her toes. Then she will walk back to her team while still holding the card between her toes. Then the next child will go, and so on, until all of the team's cards have been collected. Once a team has all of the cards, the kids will work together to put the verse in order. The first team to get the verse in the correct order wins!

Storytelling

Bible Passage: Acts 1:1–11; 2

Storytelling Technique: Objects and Actions

God's Spirit Unifies

SUPPLIES

- Optional: Investigate Questions (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Disposable tablecloths (1–2, blue)
- Lamps (2–3)
- Crepe paper streamers (1 roll of red and 1 roll of orange)
- Globe or world map
- Flashlights (2–3)
- Empty box wrapped to look like a gift
- Scissors

PREPARE AHEAD

Cut the blue tablecloths into strips, with each strip about a foot wide. Tear the crepe paper streamers into sections about three feet long. Plug in the lamps in various spots around the room. Turn them off for now.

RELATE

Ask one child to sit next to each lamp. Also ask a child to hold each flashlight. Give another child the box wrapped like a gift. Hand other children strips of the blue tablecloth and ask them to hold them still until your cue. Give other children red and orange sections of crepe paper streamers. Make sure each child has something to do or hold. Have each group of children (lamps, flashlights, tablecloth strips, etc.) sit in a different area of the room.

We had a fun time this morning coming up with secret handshakes to communicate with each other. How important do you think it is to be able to communicate with someone in a way they understand? Interact with responses. **Before we go any further, let's welcome God here with us today.** Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to His followers. For 40 days Jesus taught His disciples more about Scripture and proved that He really had risen from the dead! Recently we heard the Great Commission that Jesus gave His disciples to go and tell others that Jesus is the Good News. Today we're going to hear more about the gift that God gives all believers to help bring them together.

Invite the kids to open their Bibles to Acts 1:4. **One day Jesus was eating with His disciples and said, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about."** Ask child with gift to hold it up and then sit in the middle of the room. **What gift did Jesus promise to send?** Invite responses. **Yes. The gift Jesus promised was the Holy Spirit. God would come to be with the disciples and help them live for Him.**

Hmm ... before we keep going through today's portion of The Big God Story, I need some more light. Invite kids sitting near lamps to turn them on and then sit in the middle of the room. **What gives the lamps the power to provide light? Right—electricity! Now, who's holding a flashlight?** Invite kids holding flashlights to point them at the ceiling and turn them on and off repeatedly and then also sit in the middle of the room. **We know electricity gives power to lamps, and batteries give power to flashlights. Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit gives us the power we need to live a life of faith as we trust and obey God (Acts 1:8).**

But the Holy Spirit is so much more than just power. The Holy Spirit is God! Just like the Father is God and His Son, Jesus, is God, the Holy Spirit is God. He loves us, strengthens us, and guides us. He is the Spirit of God. Jesus told the disciples that once they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, they would receive power and share the good news of Jesus with the whole world! After Jesus told them all this, He went up into heaven.

The disciples obeyed Jesus and stayed in Jerusalem to wait for the Holy Spirit. It was late spring and time to celebrate Pentecost—a holiday that celebrates the many ways God provided for His people's needs. Jewish people from all over the world came to Jerusalem for Pentecost. Hold up the globe or world map. Who can tell me where we are on this globe? Invite a volunteer to come up and point out your location. Then point out Israel. **This is**

where Israel is in relation to where are today. The people visiting Jerusalem that day all had something in common: They were Jewish and worshipped the one true God.

Invite children to turn to Acts 2:1 and place their finger on the word “Pentecost.” Read Acts 2:1–4. **During Pentecost, the people gathered in one place. Suddenly there was a sound like a great, rushing wind. Can you hear it?** Invite kids holding strips of tablecloth to stand up and wave their strips like the wind. Then have them sit in the center of the room. **The sound filled the whole place. Then the people saw what looked like tongues of fire resting on each of them!** Invite kids holding streamers to wave them in the air and then sit in the middle of the room. **These signs showed that Jesus’ promise had come true—the Holy Spirit had come to the believers! Filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, the believers stood up and spoke praises to God, and people from different countries heard those praises in their own languages. Amazing!**

Hold up globe and point to locations as you mention them. **Jews from around the world—people from Egypt, Asia, Libya, Rome, and many other places—were surprised to hear others speaking about God in their own languages. When Peter spoke to the people about God, each person heard the message in the language he could understand. Wow! Peter told the people who Jesus was—God’s Son who had died for their sins.**

Read Acts 2:38–39 as kids follow along. **Thousands of people turned from their sins, were baptized, and were filled with the Holy Spirit that day. God’s Spirit gave the new believers unity. What is unity?** Invite responses. **Yes, unity happens when two or more people join together and agree on something. We weren’t united at the beginning of our Storytelling time—we were all sitting in different places around the room. But eventually we became united as we all began to sit together. This is what the Holy Spirit does—He unifies believers!**

As God’s Spirit unified the believers in Acts, they modeled what it looks like to love Jesus together. They ate together, learned about God together, and shared their food and clothes with one another. These first believers started to share about Jesus until the message reached the whole world. Hold up globe or world map. **Just think, you and I are right here** (point out your location), **and the first believers were over here** (point out Israel). **Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the believers were unified and worked together to share Jesus’ message, which is why we know about it today!**

Have children turn to John 13:34–35 and follow along as you read. **God asks believers to be united and to love one another. The only way Jesus’ disciples could do this, and the only way we can do this today, is through the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. God sent the Holy Spirit to live in us so that we can live for Him. Through God’s Spirit we can model what it looks like to love God and love each other. We can pray that God’s Spirit would help us love one another, care for each other, and learn to appreciate our differences. Next week we’ll hear how the church grew as more and more people believed that God is Truth. Tell a story of a time when God’s Spirit brought His church together in unity.**

Discussion Questions

- **What did Jesus tell the disciples to do?** Acts 1:4
- **What happened when the Holy Spirit came?** Acts 2:4
- **How do you think this helped unite the believers?**
- **Why do you think so many people believed in Jesus that day?**
- **In what ways have you seen the power of the Holy Spirit in your life?**

RESPOND//15 minutes



Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond to God through creative activities and games.

Letters to the Global Church

Children are given time to write letters to missionaries around the world.

SUPPLIES

- Photos, letters, and information about missionaries supported by your church (or other missionaries)
- Paper (1 sheet per child)
- Pens
- Optional: envelopes (1 per child)

PREPARE AHEAD

If your church supports missionaries, gather some information about them to share with your class. If possible, get actual photos of the missionaries or print copies of letters or emails they've written to your church. Alternatively, look up prayer needs for other countries at operationworld.org. If you plan to have children write to missionaries overseas, get parental permission first.

RELATE

The early church gives us a model of what it looks like to be unified by the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit filled the believers on the day of Pentecost, people from all over the world began to hear God's message in their own languages. Though they came from different places and cultural backgrounds, the Holy Spirit unified them (Acts 2:44–47).

God's Spirit still unifies His people today. We may be very different from other believers in the way we look or talk, or even in the type of songs we sing. But no matter how many differences we have, the Holy Spirit still brings us together. Read Psalm 133:1. **What are some ways we as believers can continue to be unified?** Invite responses. **Without the Holy Spirit, it's impossible for us to be unified as believers. Let's spend some time thanking God for unifying us through His Holy Spirit.** Invite children to pray together individually or in groups.

God's Spirit unifies those of us here today. The Holy Spirit also unifies us with believers all over the world. One way we can help believers far from us is to pray for them.

Spend time sharing photos and letters from missionaries supported by your church or other missionaries. Then point out the supplies and invite your kids to write simple prayers to God, either for the missionaries affiliated with your church or for the church around the world. Your children could also write letters to missionaries or missions organizations. Encourage the children to pray for the specific needs of the missionaries and for unity for all believers in the world.

(Optional) Strong Cereal

Today kids will experiment with the force of magnetism by trying to pull out iron from breakfast cereal.

SUPPLIES

- Fortified cereal (1 large box, must contain high level of iron)
- Neodymium magnet (1 large or several small)
- Resealable plastic bags (1 per child, snack-sized)
- Rolling pin (3–4)
- Disposable plate (1 per child)

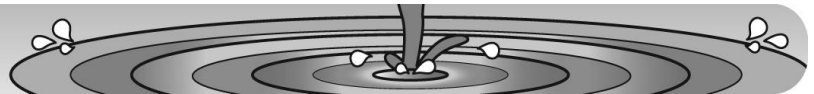
PREPARE AHEAD

Put the cereal in the individual plastic bags.

RELATE

The early church modeled what it looks like for believers to be unified by the Holy Spirit. People from different walks of life were drawn together by the Spirit inside of them. Magnets have a similar force that draws metal to them. Today lead your kids in an experiment in which they'll see how the force of magnetism is so strong it can even pull out the iron from their breakfast cereal. Have the children use a rolling pin to crush the cereal in their plastic bag until it becomes like powder. Then have them pour the finely crushed cereal onto a disposable plate. Have them use the neodymium magnet(s) to touch the magnet end to the cereal powder. The iron from the cereal should adhere to the bottom of the magnet! Periodically clean off the magnet so each child can experience this phenomenon.

BLESS// 5 minutes



Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- At Home Weekly: Lesson 2 (see Resources)
- Bible
- Construction paper (1 sheet, red)
- Scissors
- Marker

PREPARE AHEAD

Cut a large piece of construction paper into a heart. On the heart, write "God's Holy Spirit" in big letters.

RELATE

Invite the children to place their palms on the giant heart as you read Philippians 2:1–2 over the group. (It's okay if the children place their palms on top of one another.)

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

Then have everyone join hands as you read the blessing over them:

May you feel the comfort and joy that comes from being unified with other believers through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Send home Remember Verse cards and the At Home Weekly with your kids.