

# June 9, 2024

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



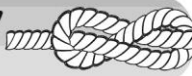
## God's Spirit Unifies

### 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



Body Language

**SUPPLIES**

- None

**GATHER//**  
30 minutes



Remember Verse

Game: Toe Scramble  
Relay

**SUPPLIES**

- Index cards (34)
- Marker

Storytelling

**SUPPLIES**

- Optional: Investigate Questions\*

- Bibles
- Globe or world map

Discussion Questions

**RESPOND//**  
15 minutes



Prayers for Unity

**SUPPLIES**

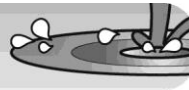
- Whiteboard
- Dry erase markers

(Optional) Magnet Race

**SUPPLIES**

- Identical tall plastic vases (2)
- Water
- Neodymium magnet (small)
- Paper clips (20)
- Timer

**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.*

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## **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**

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## **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.

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**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.*

## Body Language

In today's CONNECT time, students will have a conversation using only body language.

### SUPPLIES

- None

### RELATE

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

**Though people typically use words to communicate with each other, people also commonly communicate with body language.** Invite your fifth and sixth graders to discuss some ways they regularly communicate without words. For example, waving at someone usually means saying, "Hello." Shaking someone's hand expresses being glad to see him or meet him for the first time. Shrugging shoulders communicates confusion or not knowing an answer. Break your group into pairs and encourage each pair to have a conversation using only body language. You might suggest the children try to share a story about something that happened in the past week, or they could simply strike a pose. Make sure each child gets a chance to communicate with his partner by using body language.

**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: Actions**

**God's Spirit Unifies**

## SUPPLIES

- Optional: Investigate Questions (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Globe or world map

## RELATE

Divide the kids into two groups—boys and girls. Then divide the girls into another group based on whether they have light or dark hair. Do the same with the boys' group so you have four groups total. Have each group sit in a different corner of the room. If possible, stand in the center of the room as you storytell today.

**After Jesus returned to heaven, the disciples may have wondered how they could go on without Him. But today's portion of The Big God Story shows that God had a plan to unify His people. God sent His Holy Spirit to bring unity to the church as it was just beginning. Because of the power of the Holy Spirit, the early church was able to be unified and to work together to bring the message of Jesus to the world. What does *unity* mean?**

Invite responses. **Unity happens when two or more people join together and agree on something. Today we're going to learn how the early church experienced unity through the power of the Holy Spirit. Before we get started, let's pray together.** 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 He 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 He is the Good News. Today we're going to hear about the gift that God gives all believers to help bring them together—to unify them.**

Invite kids to turn to Acts 1:4 and follow along in their Bibles. **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." What is the gift Jesus promised? Invite responses. Yes. The gift Jesus promised was the Holy Spirit. God would come to be with the disciples and to help them live for Him. 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 of this, He went up into heaven. Have groups stay seated but scoot toward the center of the room about a foot.**

**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. What are some of your favorite holidays? Invite children from each group to respond. Then, using globe or world map, point out your location and location of Israel. This is where Israel is in relation to where we are today. The people visiting Jerusalem that day all had something in common: They were Jewish and worshipped the one true God.**

Invite a volunteer to read Acts 2:1–4 as everyone follows along. **During Pentecost, the people gathered in one place. Suddenly there was a sound like a great, rushing wind. Encourage one group to work together to make the sound of rushing wind. The sound filled the whole place. Then the people saw what looked like tongues of fire resting on each of them! Have kids from another group make the sound of a crackling fire. These signs showed that Jesus' promise had come true—the Holy Spirit had come to 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! Have groups scoot toward center of the room about two feet more.**

**Jews from around the world—Egypt, Asia, Libya, Rome, and other places—were shocked to hear the believers talking about God in their own languages. Do any of you know any other languages? Invite children to respond. If a few know other languages, invite them to say a few phrases. Just imagine—it would be like people from China and Mexico and France hearing you speak to them about God in their own languages!**

Invite a volunteer to read Acts 2:38–39. **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 come to die for their sins. Thousands of people turned from their sins, were baptized, and were filled with the Holy Spirit.** Have all groups stand up and take a few steps forward. They should be nearing the center of the room. **The believers formed a new community. They weren’t just unified by being Jewish—they were unified by Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.**

Have all groups come together in the center of the room. Encourage kids to mingle so they’re no longer in separate groups. **We weren’t unified at the beginning of our Storytelling time—we were all sitting in different places around the room. But eventually we became unified as we all came together. This is what the Holy Spirit does—He unifies believers!** Ask the mingled group to sit down together.

**As God 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 Jesus until the message reached the whole world.**

Invite a volunteer to read John 13:34–35 as kids follow along. **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 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.** Tell a story of a time when God’s Spirit brought His church together in unity.

## Developmentally Speaking

Sharing your own faith stories with your fifth and sixth graders helps form their beliefs and values. It also gives the children new ways to relate to you.

### 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 unify the believers?**
- **Why do you think so many people believed in Jesus that day?**
- **How can we have unity with other people who love Jesus?**
- **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.*

## Prayers for Unity

Students will pray for unity in their local churches and in the global world.

### SUPPLIES

- Whiteboard
- Dry erase markers

### SET UP

On the whiteboard, draw three concentric circles. On the center circle write “Church,” on a side circle write “Neighborhood,” and on the third circle write “World.”

### RELATE

**The early church shows us 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 that we sing. But no matter how many differences we have, the Holy Spirit**

**still brings us together.** Read Philippians 2:1–4. **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.**

Invite your kids to look at the circles on the whiteboard. Beginning with the center circle that says “Church,” invite your kids to brainstorm some ways they could pray for unity in their church. As they come up with words or ideas, write them in the circle. Then ask the kids to think of ways they could pray for other churches in their neighborhood and write what they say. Finally, move to the third circle and ask for ways they could pray for churches in the world. When the kids finish brainstorming, invite them to spend a few minutes praying for their local church, churches in their neighborhood, and the global church.

## (Optional) Magnet Race

In this activity, kids will experiment with the power of magnetism.

### SUPPLIES

- Identical tall plastic vases (2)
- Water
- Neodymium magnet (small)
- Paper clips (20)
- Timer

### SET UP

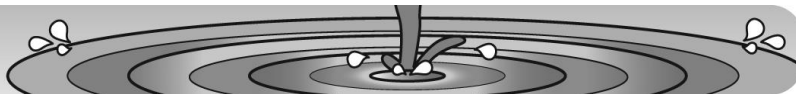
Fill the vases with equal amounts of water and drop 10 paper clips in each one. Be sure the magnet is strong enough to work through the thickness of the vase.

### 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. Invite your kids to play a game that tests the power of magnets.

To play, choose two students to race each other. Give each student a vase and a magnet. Set a timer to one minute, and then have the kids use their magnets to try to draw paper clips from the vase. They can push the magnets along the side of the vase and try to move the paper clips out of the vase. After a minute, yell, “Stop!” and see who retrieved the most paper clips. Then choose two more kids to race in another round. Play several rounds, and end with a final round between the two children who got the most paper clips.

**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 students to place their palms on the giant heart as you read Philippians 2:1–2 over the group. (It’s okay if the kids 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.