



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CHURCH! (PENTECOST)

## PREPARATION

- + Service Sheet outline or slide presentation with songs, prayers...
- + Make or buy a birthday cake to share at snack time or after the service
- + Bubbles, balloons or party bags for take home gift
- + Kite:
  - ▶ coloured paper cut into diamond shapes and strips
  - ▶ crayons and/or stickers
  - ▶ straws
  - ▶ sticky tape
  - ▶ string
- + Happy Birthday Cakes/Biscuits:
  - ▶ paper plates
  - ▶ small buns or biscuits
  - ▶ icing – orange or yellow
  - ▶ sweets
- + A variety of musical instruments





## INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Pentecost is now the name of the Christian festival (sometimes called Whit Sunday) that falls on the seventh Sunday after Easter, when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit as promised by Jesus in John 14 and as outlined in Acts 2. It is often referred to as the birthday of the Church.

For the Jews of the Old Testament and of Jesus' time, Pentecost was a day to celebrate the end of the grain harvest, and the people would bring special offerings as a way of thanking God for the weather and for helping them to get a good crop for that year. The disciples would have come together that day to thank God too, but something very special happened this time as they were gathered.

Traditional symbols used to represent the coming of the Holy Spirit include doves, fire and wind, and these can be used to help children understand the story.

## WELCOME

Welcome Song – select from the Song Bank

## BIBLE READING/THOUGHT

**Story – God sends the Holy Spirit.**

Take a few minutes to practise the following actions and sounds together:

- \* For the wind, blow softly, but then make a louder noise for the strong wind.
- \* Using one hand, wiggle your fingers to look like the flames of fire.

Share the Bible story adapted from Acts 2 using the actions.

All of Jesus' friends were praying together in Jerusalem. (*Put your hands together, as people do when they pray.*)

All of a sudden they could hear a sound like a loud wind around them. (*Make the wind sounds, gradually getting louder,*)

After that they saw something strange that looked just like flames dancing on the tops of their heads! (*Use one hand above your head and wiggle your fingers.*)

Something amazing was happening. All the people there realised that Jesus' special helper, the Holy Spirit, was with them. (*All say, 'The Holy Spirit is here! Hooray!'*)

Jesus' friends went outside and began to tell all the people that Jesus loved them.

Jesus' friends all agreed, 'This is a very special day!' Just as he had promised, Jesus had sent the Holy Spirit to help them. The Holy Spirit helps us too – to live like Jesus, and to tell people how much God loves them.

'If you love me, show it by doing what I've told you. I will talk to the Father and he'll provide you another Friend so that you will always have someone with you. This Friend is the Spirit of Truth'

JOHN 14:15-16 MSG

## THEME SONG

### 'The Holy Spirit Song'

Tune: '*Here we go round the mulberry bush*'

Jesus promised a helper would come,  
Helper would come, helper would come.  
Jesus promised a helper would come,  
On Holy Spirit Day.

A sound like wind came filling the room... On Holy Spirit Day.

A special fire touched their heads... On Holy Spirit Day.

The Holy Spirit has come to stay... On Holy Spirit Day.

## PRAYER

The Holy Spirit sounded like wind.

The wind is all around us.

Thank you that the Holy Spirit is all around us too.

The Holy Spirit looked like fire.

Fire keeps us warm and gives us light.

Thank you that the Holy Spirit helps us too.

Amen

Jesus' friends felt afraid and lonely. (*Curl up*)

Jesus' friends had been told to wait for his help. (*Look around*)

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with his friends always. (*Begin to stand up*)

The Holy Spirit made them happy and helped them share God's love. (*Stretch arms up high*)

The Holy Spirit is with me every day too! (*Clap hands*)

Amen.



## ACTIVITY/GAMES

1. Kites:
  - ▶ Decorate the diamond-shaped paper.
  - ▶ Tape two drinking straws in a cross.
  - ▶ Tape the diamond piece of paper over the cross.
  - ▶ Decorate the tail by sticking coloured strips of paper with sticky tape.
  - ▶ Tape the string of the kite.
2. Happy Birthday Cakes/Biscuits:
  - ▶ Make sure everyone has washed their hands before food preparation.
  - ▶ Place the cake or biscuit on a paper plate and cover with orange or yellow icing.
  - ▶ Decorate with sweets.
3. For other ideas see: [www.pinterest.com/AFMYorkshire/pentecost-crafts-for-toddler-groups-or-messy-church](http://www.pinterest.com/AFMYorkshire/pentecost-crafts-for-toddler-groups-or-messy-church)

## INSTRUMENT SONGS

### 'Church Birthday Song'

Tune: 'If you're happy and you know it'

It's the Birthday of the Church, clap your hands!  
It's the Birthday of the Church, clap your hands!  
Happy Birthday to the Church, Happy Birthday to the Church,  
It's the Birthday of the Church, clap your hands!  
  
It's the Birthday of the Church, bang the drums!...  
  
It's the Birthday of the Church, ring the bells!...  
  
It's the Birthday of the Church, shout hooray!...

2. Select from the Song Bank

## ADDITIONAL SONGS

- ♫ Sing 'Happy Birthday to you' to the Church.
- ♫ SASB 315 'All over the world the Spirit is moving'

## CLOSING

Closing song or prayer – select from resources

You could give each child a pot of bubbles, a balloon or a party bag as a take-home gift.