



Vision and Commitment 2018
A year to focus on discipleship

Every day, in
everything
&
everywhere

Discipleship Series Children - Getting Together (Gathering)

Aim

- To understand that church is where we gather together in one spirit, pray with and encourage each other.
- To understand that gathering together helps us understand not only each other, but what God wants us to do as his disciples.
- To understand that God wants us to support each other in order to be what God wants us to be.

Preparation

- Print out the picture of a fire (Appendix 1) on A4 - you may want a couple of pictures depending on how many children you have.
- Holy Spirit experiment ingredients: Bicarbonate of soda (baking soda), white vinegar, food colouring, eye droppers (less than 60p each in Boots) and baking tray.
- White A4 card - enough for three pieces per child.
- Red, yellow and orange colouring pens or crayons.
- Lolly sticks, coloured envelopes (no bigger than A5), A4 coloured card, glue (see Appendix 2).
- Coloured pens.
- Pack of balloons.
- Beach towels.
- Mini packets of Haribo sweets (check with parents about allergies and suitability of eating sweets).
- Sellotape.
- Box of Lego bricks - doesn't matter what size bricks, enough for one for each child and to build something together.

Background for leaders

Read Acts 2:1-18.

Acts is sometimes called the fifth gospel. It is a continuation of the gospel of Luke. The book of Acts records the birth of the church.





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Picture yourself among the disciples:

A sound roars from the sky without warning, the roar of a violent wind, and the whole house where you are gathered reverberates with the sound. Then a flame appears, dividing into smaller flames and spreading from one person to the next. All the people present are filled with the Holy Spirit and begin speaking in languages they've never spoken, as the Spirit empowers them.

Because of the holy festival, there are devout Jews staying as pilgrims in Jerusalem from every nation under the sun. They are amazed because each of them can hear the groups speaking in their native languages.

As the title of this session suggests, 'getting together' within the church community means that there needs to be a common thread that joins us all, the Holy Spirit.

As a disciple, meeting together is one of the key elements to enable us to go out into our communities and show Jesus Christ. It is not just meeting together in one place it is also in one spirit, the Holy Spirit. Praying together, encouraging each other, holding each other accountable. It sounds simple but the challenge is that church life can become so busy that these elements are pushed to the edge of our time together instead of being the centre. Church is, and can be, such a powerful place of encouragement, equipping and enabling us to live out our lives as disciples.

Icebreakers

What's the Same!

Ask the children to sit in a circle and choose one child to leave the room. The group decides on one similarity that some of the children share, e.g. some are wearing red, some have blue eyes, some have blonde hair, some have short hair. Once they have decided on one criteria, the children matching the description remain standing and the others sit down. The other child re-enters the room. Looking at the children standing, they have to decide what is the same about them - they have three chances to guess. Another child takes a turn and a new criteria is chosen.

Explore that we are all different, but when we come to church there is one thing that is the same about us, we are all at church. When we get together in church to worship God and to spend time together, it helps us stay connected. We strengthen and support each other. It is important to talk about what the Holy Spirit is doing in our lives and how the Holy Spirit has helped us this week.





Lesson

We are going to explore what happened to the disciples in the upper room after Jesus left them and went up to heaven. So let's look at what happened just before that.

As we read in the beginning of Acts, Jesus appeared to them many times during the 40 days after the resurrection. Jesus spoke constantly of the Kingdom of God and instructed his disciples to stay in Jerusalem to receive what he called 'the promise of the Father', the Holy Spirit.

So they were all gathered in the upper room.

How many people do you think were up there? (There were about 120 people.)

The room was believed to be in one of the disciple's homes, so I wondered how big the room might have been?

Let's read from Acts 2 and see what happens.

After reading the Bible passage help the children think deeper about what took place by asking some wondering questions.

- I wonder what the disciples thought while they were waiting?
- I wonder what they thought when they heard the roaring wind?
- I wonder how they felt when they heard the wind and felt the room shake?

Do you know what a tongue of fire looks like? How many of you have looked at a real fire? *Point out the different tongues of fire on the picture in Appendix 1.*

- I wonder what it felt like when a tongue of fire touched the disciples?
- I wonder how they felt when they were filled with the Holy Spirit?

Once the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit they wanted to tell everyone about Jesus and the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus had talked so much about. They did this together, supporting each other. The Holy Spirit helped them and by meeting together and praying together they were able to encourage each other and ask each other questions - that's just like us at church.

The disciples would go and tell people about Jesus, creating new believers. Then they would go back and meet together, sharing all their stories, praying, listening to what God had to say to them. Then they would go back out to their homes and communities doing their best to live like Jesus, that's just like us at church.





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Activities

Experiment

Please refer to the list of ingredients found under 'Preparation.'

Mix some food colouring into white vinegar to colour it (use different colours). Keep each colour of vinegar in a separate cup. Cover the bottom of a baking tray with a layer of bicarbonate soda. Drop a drop of coloured vinegar onto the soda and watch the explosion.

Talk about the power of the Holy Spirit and how it can transform our lives if we pray for it to come.

Tongues of fire

Give each child enough card to draw round their hand with their fingers spread out, three times. Colour in each hand with fiery colours - yellow, red and orange. Cut out the hands. When they have finished, each child keeps one hand and gives two away so each child ends up with three hands of different sizes. Make a tongue of fire by sticking the hands on top of each other, fanning the fingers slightly.

This is to represent the tongues of fire that touched each disciple. Explain today that we too can be touched by the Holy Spirit when we pray and ask the Lord to fill us with his Holy Spirit. When we gather together at church we can help support each other to listen to the Holy Spirit, just as the disciple in the upper room.

Craft

Please refer to Appendix 2 to see how the craft looks when completed.

Give the children one coloured envelope, one coloured piece of A4 card, and five to six lolly sticks.

Draw a door on the envelope. The children can design their envelope to look like their church with a cross or name. Stick the address side of the envelope to the bottom of the card. Lift the envelope flap and glue it down, making a house shape. Ask the children to draw faces and hair at the top of each lolly stick, and to draw on some clothes. They could draw their family and friends on each lolly stick or maybe someone they know who they would like to invite to church.

Glue the lolly sticks into the envelope.

Write on the top of the card Psalm 122:1 (NLT) 'Let us go to the House of the Lord.'

Ask the children to think of all the people that are there to support us as we learn what it is to be a disciple of Jesus. Ask the questions below:

- I wonder how can we all support each other?





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- I wonder what it would be like if we did not have a church where we can meet together?
- I wonder how we can invite people to know Jesus and come to church with us?

Game

Have the children each hold the edge of the beach towel, standing apart so that the towel is taut. Then ask the children to shake the towel. Encourage them to continue to shake it as you add balloons one at a time. See how many balloons they can keep on the towel before they start to fall or bounce off.

Sometimes when we come to church we only think about what we want to receive from Jesus or ask Jesus for - sometimes we come only thinking about ourselves. When this happens we are like the towel, doing our own thing and forgetting about all the other people in our church - the balloons.

Now ask the children to keep the towel still and try and use it as a basket to see how many balloons we can keep on the towel now.

Haribo height

Before the children arrive, tape some Haribo packets onto the wall, high enough so kids would need to stand on a chair to reach them.

Make sure you have enough adults to monitor this game.

Tell the children the object of the game is to reach the sweets without the help of furniture or other people.

Let the children try and grab the sweets. Once they have given up, have them form groups of three and challenge them to all work together to reach the sweets, e.g. two kids can make a step by locking their hands together and lifting the third person high enough to reach the sweets for all three.

Explain that coming together at church is important but we need to remember to support each other. Then we can all do the different jobs that Jesus has asked us to do as his disciples. We don't have to do it on our own.

Worship

Sing or play tracks of the following songs (all available on YouTube).

- *Fill me up Lord* by Vineyard UK
- *God You're Good to Me* by Vineyard UK
- *Create in Me* by Rend Collective





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Prayers and Response

Lego Prayers

Ask the children to take one piece of Lego each. Guide them through this:

- Hold your brick - pray for yourself. Thank God for the things he has given you. Ask him to bless you and to help you to bless others.
- Count the bumps on your brick - For each bump on your brick, pray for a person, friend or family member. Ask God to bless them this week.
- Find someone who has a different colour brick to you - thank God for making each person special. Thank him for the things that are different but special about other people. Pray that we will learn how to celebrate and understand people who are different to us.
- Find someone with the same number of bumps on their brick as you - Thank God for families and friends and all who care for us. Pray that he will help us to be friends to those who are lonely.
- Swap your brick with someone - Thank God for the person you swapped with, ask God to bless them this week.
- Put all of the bricks together and build a structure or tower with them - thank God for the church and the communities we live in. Pray that he will help us to include others and to help people know that they are loved and valued.





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Appendix 1





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Appendix 2

**'Let us go to the House of the Lord'
(Psalm 122:1)**

