

May 17 Lesson

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

Items to gather:

- Index cards (34)
- Globe or photo of globe
- Pencils or pens
- Markers or colored pencils
- Single-hole punches (1 for every 3–4 children)
- Scissors (1 pair per child)
- Yarn (approx. 12', longer for larger groups)
- Neodymium magnet (small)
- Paper clips (at least 1 box)
- Bible
- Construction paper (1 sheet, red)
- Scissors

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



Global Greetings

Your family will greet each other in different languages and discuss people they know who speak another language.

RELATE

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

People all over the world speak many different languages. Each language has its own unique way to greet others and say, "Hello." Today let's learn how to greet each other in some different languages.

Teach your children different ways you know other languages say hello, if you don't know any maybe find a youtube video to all watch together about how people say hello in other languages. Then practice greeting each other in another language. Share about someone you know who speaks another language or comes from a different culture. Then have the children share about another person who speaks another language or comes from a different culture that they might know.

GATHER//30 minutes



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 family 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. 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

God's Spirit Unifies

RELATE

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 to unify them.

Watch the storytelling video and then go over the discussion questions:

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?**
- **What are some ways you can have unity with other people who love Jesus?**

RESPOND//15 minutes



Craft: Joining in Prayer

Children are given the opportunity to pray for missionaries around the world.

SUPPLIES

- Globe or photo of globe
- Pencils or pens
- Markers or colored pencils
- Single-hole punches (1 for every 3–4 children)
- Scissors (1 pair per child)
- Yarn (approx. 12', longer for larger groups)

PREPARE AHEAD

Look up prayer needs for other countries at operationworld.org.

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. Show the globe and invite each child to draw their own globe and write inside their Globe outline in dark pen or marker the name of a place they would like to pray for. Give each child a few minutes to color his globe, making sure the name of the place can still be seen. When the children finish, have them cut out their globes and punch a hole at the top of each one. Then help the kids thread the yarn through the holes as a way to show that they're unifying their prayers for these places. Hang the globe banner in your room to remind your kids to pray for the church around the world.

Game: Magnetic Chain

In this activity, kids will experiment with the power of magnetism and drawing metals together.

SUPPLIES

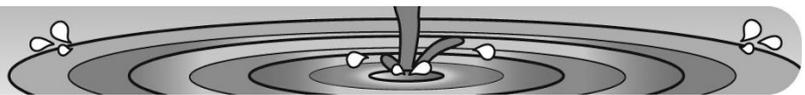
- Neodymium magnet (small)
- Paper clips (at least 1 box)

RELATE

When the Holy Spirit came upon the believers at Pentecost, He unified and drew together people from all over the world. Today lead your children in an experiment in which they see how the power of magnetism can draw metals together.

First, ask one person to hold the neodymium magnet and bring a paper clip near it. Because the paper clip is made of metal, it will be attracted to the magnet and connect to it. Then have all the kids take turns adding one paper clip at a time to create a chain of paper clips and see how long the chain gets! You might also have the kids take turns to see who can make the longest paper clip chain on their own with the magnet.

BLESS// 5 minutes



SUPPLIES

- 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 the children 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.