

THE CHURCH: A GLORIOUS BIRTH

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

CHURCH POWER TRANSFORM CHANGE PENTECOST

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Acts 2:1-47

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To realize that the arrival of the Holy Spirit transformed or changed the disciples' lives and guided the birth of the church

MEMORY VERSE

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Growing up attending church is not enough to be a Christian. An experience that transforms the heart is necessary. The presence of the Holy Spirit, which gives us the power to live and witness effectively for Christ, is essential. This lesson will teach the preadolescents that God sent the Holy Spirit to empower Christians to live a life worthy of the Gospel. For the continuity of the Church, members need to be filled with the Holy Spirit and be trained by him. It is through the power of the Spirit that the Church survives and grows. Preadolescents need the help of the Holy Spirit to live as Christians. They're already part of the Church. They can be counted among leaders in the future. This lesson will help them grasp and understand the importance of the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

The events of the day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2, are important for our understanding of how the Church should be and what it should do. As we read these 47 verses, we'll notice at least seven significant ideas:

Believers waited for the Holy Spirit. About 120 of them were in a room, in the upper part of a house, known as the “upper room,” where “They all joined together constantly in prayer” (Acts 1:14). They expected God to fulfill his promise to send the Holy Spirit and restore the kingdom of Israel at a time determined by him. Only God can provide what the Church needs. Human efforts can never replace the Holy Spirit.

The first gift of the Holy Spirit was the ability to present the Gospel in other languages. They were immediately able to communicate the Good News in different languages, although they had never spoken them before. Even today, the Church communicates the Gospel in a way that’s understood by all.

Some of the people who heard the believers talking misunderstood them. When the Gospel was proclaimed in different languages at the same time, those present were perplexed. The truth of the Gospel is always a threat to an egocentric, selfish lifestyle. These troubled people found an explanation for what was happening: they said that the disciples were drunk, because they did not believe in the Holy Spirit. Today Christianity is also rejected in similar ways.

Peter’s sermon reveals the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Peter was the least likely candidate to be the first preacher. He who had denied knowing the Lord now humbly proclaims the truth that Jesus is the expected Messiah for all. Only God can make such a big change.

The Holy Spirit is for all people. Peter and the believers of the early Church were not the only ones to receive this power. “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39). Two thousand years is not too much time or distance, that is, we’re also included in that promise.

All Christians are called to be ministers, trained by the Holy Spirit. The 120 who were together in the upper room proclaimed the Gospel on that day and in the following years. It was the Holy Spirit who prepared the Church to preach the Gospel in public, to attract a crowd, and say something worthy of being heard. Today, it is also the Holy Spirit who gives believers a variety of gifts for ministry. Some people, who are called to preach and teach, equip other people to develop the ministries given by God.

The Holy Spirit creates a community. A careful reading of Acts 2:41-47 reveals how the first believers lived their lives together. They were not a group of individuals demanding their rights. Rather, they show us that “community” is the central idea of the book of Acts, and the Holy Spirit of God is the main actor in this work.

This chapter of Acts is an early look at the Church. Although this Pentecost was something spectacular and unrepeatable, it reveals what the normal church experience should be like. Wind and fire were unexpected and somewhat abnormal, and the languages used that day were those of visitors in Jerusalem. But the fact that the Holy Spirit brought new life, fellowship, worship, freedom, humility, and power must be a vital part of the Church--always.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Important words

Write the words “power” and “Pentecost” plus their meaning on poster board to place on a mural.

Power: in the New Testament, it is seen in the people of authority and powerful actions. Jesus Christ had and has the power to forgive sins. The disciples and the Church had and have the power to proclaim the Gospel.

Pentecost: a religious festival dating from the Old Testament. It was celebrated 50 days after the Passover (Easter for Christians). We Christians celebrate it as the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the day the early Church was born. In the Old Testament it was a celebration that showed joy and gratitude for the abundant harvest.

Let’s generate power

Give the group Student Activity Sheet #401-A (Generate). Ask them to follow the instructions to fill in the keyword at the bottom of the page. (Answers: Batteries, Fire, Wind, Water, Electricity. What do each of these generate? POWER)

Say: “Power is what the Holy Spirit gave the first Christians to preach the Word of God. That power was the key to the strength that the first disciples felt. Remember the story of Peter, a scared man who denied the Lord. After receiving power from God’s Holy Spirit, he was someone full of the power of the Spirit who preached the Good News to the crowds.”

Clay Churches

Look for some significant facts that happened when your church was organized. Find out names of believers and pastors of those times, for example, and try to find some photos.

In the group, write on the board the words “Church,” capital “C,” and “church” in lower case “c.”

Ask the students if they know the difference in the meaning of those two words. Then explain that the word “church” in lower

case “c” refers to local congregations (and their worship places) anywhere in the world. It is a small or large group of believers in a certain place, such as your local church. The word “Church” capitalized refers to Christians (the Church), to all who believe in Jesus Christ, even including those who have already died. Every Christian who believes in Christ and is saved, from every denomination, is part of the body of Christ: the Church.

Give a piece of modeling clay or Play-Doh (look for recipes in teacher resources) to each student and say: “Think about what you already know about the local church and about the Church, the body of Christ. Then with your clay, make a symbol that describes these churches.” (Possible symbols: globe, a cross, one or more people, a dove, a building, etc.) Generate enthusiasm in them to be creative in their designs.

Once they’re done, have them show their drawings to the group and explain why they chose that symbol and what it means to them. Give an explanation about the history of your church and allow time for questions.

Then say: “Today we’ll learn how the Church (capitalized) was born.”

TEACH THE LESSON

Power at Pentecost

Pass out Student Activity Sheet #401-B and #401-C that have the Bible reading and the activity that follows (Before & After). Choose volunteers for each part to read and dramatize Acts 2 with lots of expression and enthusiasm. Remember that Peter was an emotional and enthusiastic man and showed great authority.

When they finish reading, guide the students to the “Before and After” activity. Provide time for them to look at the Bible quotes for how they were before Pentecost and how they acted after the Holy Spirit was poured out on them.

CONNECT THE LESSON

The Church: Mural

You’ll need the following supplies: colored poster paper to make the mural with a contrasting border; photo, drawing, or silhouette of a church building; scissors; glue; masking tape; pictures of the students when they were babies; your own baby picture; signs with the important words of each lesson; etc. Ask students for their help to assemble the mural. Two or three of them who like to draw can make the church and place it in the center of the mural. On one side reserve a place for important words. Inside the outline of the church, paste the photos of your students, your photo, and the figures of the apostles. In each lesson you can add pictures according to the teaching.

Explain: “This month we’ll learn how the early Church began to take its first baby steps and how God, through his Holy Spirit, was moving in every aspect. Since we’ll talk about a baby church, we’ll put up our pictures of when we were little.”

Give the students colored paper or poster board to make a beautiful background that they’ll place behind the photos. Let them trim their edges and put up their photos. Write the name of each child on their photo.

Help is here!

Give the group Student Activity Sheet #401-D (Help Is Here!). They must follow the instructions in crossing out specific letters to find the appropriate words. Say: “These are some of the ways in which the Holy Spirit helps us to do what God asks of us. Find the words and write them on the lines provided.” Help the students who do not know the meaning of some words. Give examples. They are: 1. courage, 2. bravery, 3. understanding, 4. faith, 5. strength, 6. direction, 7. determination, 8. power, 9. patience, and 10. testimony.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Divide the text into two parts. The first part will be learned during the first two sessions and the second in the remaining two.

First part: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...”

Second part: "... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

At the time of memorization, write the first part of the text on the board. Repeat it with the students several times. Divide into two groups. Then give a blank sheet of paper to each group and pencils to each child. The first child will write the first word of the text, immediately pass the paper to the next person, who will do the same with the second word and so on. The team that finishes first writing the text correctly will be the winner. Prepare some prizes for students who learn it by memory. In the first part of the text there are 25 words. In the second part there are 24 words, plus the reference.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Finish this session with a prayer and an appropriate challenge. Pray together that God may guide you as a teacher to help students be part of the Church today. Pray that they feel love and concern for their church as if it were their second home. Pray that they can grow up loving their church in such a way that they want to be involved and be a part of the ministry.

Encourage

Encourage students to ask the Lord to help them serve in the areas that they wish in age appropriate tasks: involving them in choirs, in reading the Word of God, in collecting offerings, in welcoming people as they arrive at church, in cleaning, etc. Also encourage them to say "Yes" if they are recognizing God's call some kind of full-time local Christian ministry or to missionary service.

Invite

Also, encourage the group to attend the next session and to invite others.