

THE CHURCH STARTS TO GROW

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

GROW CHURCH PREACH GOSPEL CREATION

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Acts 2:1-41

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children know that the Holy Spirit helps the Church grow.

MEMORY VERSE

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Elementary children understand the concept of growth because they are growing rapidly. It is common for them to notice changes in their bodies, and that the clothes that they wear get too small at any moment.

What many of them may not understand is the way in which the church grows. Some may relate it to a contest to see who invites the most friends to the group. These activities contribute to the numerical growth of a church and sometimes the spiritual results are lasting. But, the key to the growth of the church is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Understanding how the Holy Spirit helps in the growth of the church will not be an easy concept to assimilate for your children. However, they can begin to understand the following ideas:

- The Holy Spirit gives courage and power to Christians to talk to others about Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit helps people who are not Christians to understand the Good News and wish to be part of God’s family.

Some elementary-aged children are prepared to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but they must learn that he can work through children to achieve God’s purposes.

Through this lesson, they will better understand the work of the Holy Spirit, and desire to be part of God’s work on earth.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Acts 2:1-41. It was the dawn of the day of Pentecost, which was celebrated 50 days after the Passover. The disciples were together, just as Jesus had commanded them. However, that day began in an unusual way: "Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting." (v. 2).

The Holy Spirit descended with power and filled the house where they were gathered. Instantly, their lives were completely transformed and consecrated. All were filled with the power of the Spirit of God! The Bible explains that tongues of fire appeared and settled on each one of the disciples. And they began to proclaim the good news of salvation in the languages of visitors in Jerusalem.

After these demonstrations, Peter preached a powerful message and 3,000 people converted to Jesus. For many, this message marks the beginning of the Church of Jesus Christ; but this would not have been possible if Peter had not received the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Remember that Peter denied Jesus three times. He also tried to persuade Jesus not to go to the cross. Now Peter had stood boldly to preach the message of salvation. Without a doubt, he could not have done it if he had not experienced that transformation in his life.

It is wonderful to see that the Holy Spirit not only acted in the apostles, but in those who heard the message. They "were sorry of heart, and said to Peter and the other apostles: 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'" (V. 37). It was only through the intervention of the Holy Spirit that the Church began to grow so explosively.

The Holy Spirit today continues to work in the Church, making it grow so that many will not be lost, but will come to repent of their sins. The Church does not grow through strategies or evangelism plans. It only does so through the Holy Spirit who operates in the life of the believer and even drawing the unconverted to God.

Help your children seek the filling of the Holy Spirit at this early age. Do not believe that God cannot use them because they are children. Many families convert to the Lord because the children start going to church, and then they bring their parents and siblings. Pray for your children. They can be instruments of God through the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Our church

Prepare a large piece of poster board, crayons and other materials to decorate the drawing.

Place the materials on a table, and have your children draw a picture of their church. If there are many children, divide them into small groups and ask each group to make a different drawing.

As they work, talk with them about the people who make up the local church: the pastor, teachers, children, youth, etc. Tell them that each person is important for the growth of the Church, but that in today's session they will learn about someone who brings blessing and growth to churches.

TEACH THE LESSON

The Church begins to grow

"Dear friend!" exclaimed a young man, "what a joy it is to see you! How I wished you could come this year!"

"Shalom," replied the friend, "peace be with you and your family. I just arrived from Rome to celebrate the feast of Pentecost. The trip is long, but I did not want to miss the celebration. Let's go eat something and, meanwhile, we'll talk about the old days."

Throughout the city of Jerusalem, voices and laughter of old friends who were reunited could be heard.

Many people had traveled hundreds of kilometers from other places to attend the Pentecost celebration. For many Jews, this was the favorite celebration of the whole year.

It had been only ten days since Jesus had ascended to heaven. Do you remember what he told his disciples to do? (Wait in Jerusalem until God sends them the promise of the Holy Spirit to empower them.)

Now, on the day of Pentecost, 120 followers of Jesus were gathered. In that group were Peter and the other disciples, and many other people who loved Jesus. Suddenly, they heard something.

“Listen!” one of the believers exclaimed. “Listen to that wind!”

Suddenly, the wind began to blow even stronger, and something special happened. Flames of fire that looked like tongues descended from heaven, and a bright light filled the room. The believers saw that the tongues of fire remained on them, but did not hurt them. Then, all who were there were filled with the Holy Spirit. Their hearts were filled with love and joy.

From that moment on, Jesus’ followers wanted all people to feel that joy and love. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, they began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit empowered them. Filled with emotion, they rushed out of the house, praising God. They were no longer afraid to talk about Jesus. The Holy Spirit gave them the power and courage to speak.

The people who had come to celebrate Pentecost heard the noise and commotion, so they approached with curiosity. And seeing they were amazed because, even though they came from many different countries, they all understood what the disciples were saying.”

“What is happening?” they asked each other. “These men are from Galilee, but they are speaking in our languages. What does that mean?”

Then Peter stood up for all to see, and began to preach:

“Jews and all who live in Jerusalem let me explain what is happening. Listen carefully to what I have to tell you. Long ago God promised to send the Holy Spirit. The prophet Joel told us about that promise. And today God has fulfilled his promise, and the Holy Spirit has come.”

Then, Peter spoke to them about Jesus: “God sent Jesus of Nazareth to us. He was a very special man. He did many miracles to prove that God had sent him. Everyone knows it because it happened here, among you. Even so, you allowed perverse men to kill him on a cross. Those bad men believed that they had killed Jesus, but that had been God’s plan for a long time. He knew all of that would happen. However, God resurrected Jesus, and we witnessed that amazing event. Do you understand me? Jesus of Nazareth, the man they nailed to the cross, is our Lord and Savior.”

When the people heard that, the Holy Spirit helped them recognize that they had disobeyed God. Then they realized they needed to repent of their sins.

“Brothers, what should we do?” they asked with sadness and concern.

“Each of you must repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins are forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,” Peter told them.

That day 3,000 people believed in Jesus Christ. Through the influence of the Holy Spirit, they asked God to forgive them for being disobedient. And the Holy Spirit came into their lives. Then the Church began to grow, just as God had planned.

CONNECT THE LESSON

The Holy Spirit helps the Church grow

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #176-A and #176-B, and allow time for the children to draw some ways in which the Holy Spirit helps the Church grow. If they have difficulty doing so, give them some ideas or discuss the subject.

Ask them to observe the differences between the early churches and the current churches. Remind them that, although the situation and time are different, we have the same mission: to make Christlike disciples in the nations.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

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Use Student Activity Sheet #176-B for the children to review the memory verse. Ask them to look for Mark 16:15 in their Bibles, and fill in the blanks. Hand out the Verse of the Month Club cards for them to take home and study the verse during the week.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Get together to pray, thanking God for sending the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Intercede for each other, and also remember the sick and needy.

Encourage

Encourage the children to help you clean the room and put away the materials before you say goodbye.

Invite

Say something interesting about the next session so the children will want to attend. Encourage them to invite friends.