



On fire!

Jesus had left his friends and gone to be with his Father.
But he didn't leave his friends alone for long!

Activity time

Try these activities and see if you can start guessing what might happen in our story today. If you can't get exactly these materials, just see what you can find around the house instead!

1 Bunting

You will need: pencil or pen; card; paper or fabric; collage bits and bobs in red, orange and yellow; scissors; glue; string or wool; stapler

(If you want to make proper bunting, there are many online sets of instructions and videos. Here, we're just making something temporary and quick.) Make a triangle template – take a square of card and fold it in half, then cut from the fold to the top corner and open it out. Use this to draw round paper or fabric for as much bunting as you need. Decorate each triangle with coloured scraps and patterns on a fire or flame theme. Staple them to the string and hang up the cheerful finished bunting.

Talk about the exciting, party feel to this time of year, when we celebrate the birthday of the church! Jesus' first disciples were praying when they saw something like flames above everyone's heads and knew it was Jesus' Holy Spirit coming to be with them and fill them up to make them more like Jesus.

2 Paint splatter flames

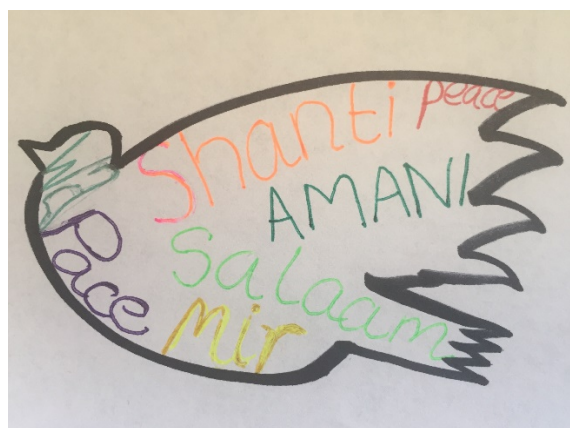


You will need: drinking straws; runny red, orange and yellow paint; paper; pens; glitter and glue (optional)

Draw a person's head at the bottom of the paper. Then put a teaspoon of runny paint above the head and blow through the straw so the paint splatters up the paper and makes a flame shape. Add a dollop of a different colour and blow again until your wildfire looks very cool. Add glitter if you want to.

Talk about the first Christians seeing the Holy Spirit of Jesus come to them as 'something like flames' resting on each other's heads, and hearing the sound of a mighty wind in the room where they were praying. What noise did your breath make as you blew down the straw? What do you think God's breath sounds like?

3 Peace be with you



You will need: the words and actions for 'hello' and 'peace' in different languages (from ideas.brf.org.uk/speaking-tongues); paper; coloured pens

If you have enough people to divide into two teams, see how many of these words and actions you can learn in five minutes, then 'test' the other team and see which team can remember most. Turn the words for peace into a piece of art shaped like a dove – another symbol for the Holy Spirit.

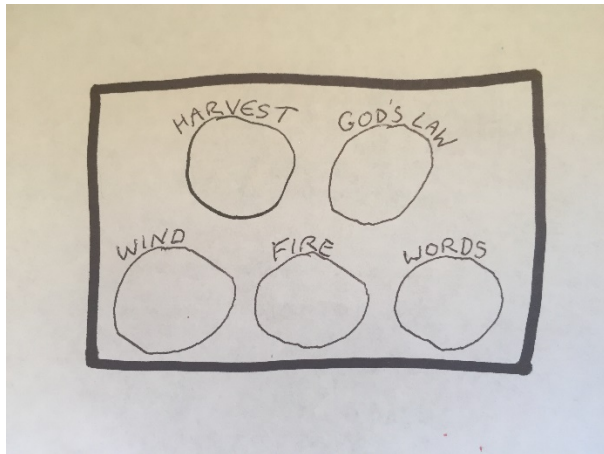
Talk about how amazing it must have been on that first day when the Holy Spirit came, to be able to speak and understand other languages! It have brought people together in a new and different way.

Celebration

This is adapted from ideas.brf.org.uk/power-high.

You could listen to the Taize chant [Veni, Sancte Spiritus](#) (Come, Holy Spirit) while you gather together. It's very peaceful.

Give everybody pens or crayons. Sketch out a piece of paper with a wide border and five circles on. Give each circle a title: Harvest, God's Law, Wind, Fire and Words. It should look a bit like this:



Tell the story of Pentecost ([Acts 2:1-13](#)) as follows, inviting everyone to add drawings and patterns to the paper as the story progresses.

It was the Festival of Shavuot or Pentecost, the festival when Jews would come from all over the world to Jerusalem to celebrate together. *(Inside the border around the edge of the sheet of paper, draw adults and children of all races and colours smiling and running in towards the centre.)*

What were they celebrating? It was the harvest festival – the time they would bring offerings of the first fruit of the crops to God and decorate the houses with flowers, very much like we do in church in the autumn. *(In the Harvest circle, draw as many sorts of fruits and vegetables and grain as your group can think of.)*

Shavuot was also the festival to celebrate the time God gave Moses the law – the ten commandments. Can you remember them? *(In the 'God's Law' circle, write as many of the ten commandments as you can remember and check out the rest in [Exodus 20](#).)*

On this particular Shavuot or Pentecost festival, the one after Jesus had died and come back to life and gone to be with God, his disciples were together in a house in Jerusalem. Suddenly, there was a noise like a strong wind from heaven and it filled the whole house. *(Fill the wind circle with swirls of colour for the wind.)*

As well as the wind, something like flames of fire separated and came to rest on each person there. *(Fill the fire circle with flames.)*

They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages. People who heard them were amazed to hear them speaking every one of their own languages. *(Fill the words circle with as many foreign words as you know. [This page](#) has some words for praising God if you get stuck.)*

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, told the crowds who Jesus was, and about 3,000 people started to believe in Jesus that very day. *(This might be enough for your household, so just move on to the prayer, but if you want to talk more about the story, keep going.)*

Use the pictures on your sheet of paper to help the group make connections across the Bible.

How can we move in and out of these five circles?

- Harvest: Why do you think God chose a harvest festival to give them his Holy Spirit?
Talk about the fruits of the Spirit from [Galatians 5:22-23](#) and write or draw these fruits in a bigger circle around the harvest circle.
- Law: Why do you think God chose the time they remembered God's law to give them his Holy Spirit?
Talk about [Jeremiah 31:33](#): the way God now puts his law into our hearts, helps us keep it and makes us want to keep it as his Holy Spirit changes us to make us more like Jesus. Draw hearts around the law circle.
- Wind: Where else do we hear about wind in the Bible?
Talk about the breath of God or [God's Spirit](#) hovering over the waters of creation. With Pentecost, God is breathing on us and making us into his new creation. Draw the world and other symbols of creation around the wind circle.
- Fire: Where else do we read of fire in the Bible?
Talk about the [fiery pillar](#) of God that guided the Hebrews across the desert. That guiding light is put into our hearts so we know which way God wants us to go. Draw signposts or arrows round the fiery circle.
- Languages: When in the Bible did languages tear people apart?
Talk about the [Tower of Babel](#) and how the Holy Spirit brings different people and races together again. Draw lines from each of the characters drawn in the border to the foreign words circle.

Ask everyone to pick out what they find most fascinating about the Holy Spirit, from all the pictures on the sheet of paper.

Prayer

You could play [this video](#) of a short traditional Catholic prayer welcoming the Holy Spirit, or simply pray it together:

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

You could say the [Lord's Prayer](#) and the [Messy Grace](#).

Mealtime

You might be able to have a pudding that you set fire to, like Crepes Suzettes or Christmas pudding, but do let a responsible adult supervise this! Or could you ice fairy cakes with flame shapes?