

The Mystery of Pentecost

Something strange happened on Pentecost that had to do with “tongues” of fire and speaking so that no matter what “tongues” others spoke, they could understand what was meant. This strange event reminds us of the earlier day when communication was fractured so that what before had been understandable was now *babel*, a confusion of tongues. That is why this lesson begins with the Tower of Babel, from Genesis 11:1-9. This presentation also draws on stories found in Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:5-14 and Acts 2:1-12.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense *relives*—the experience of today’s lesson. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today’s story?

Just listen. This is *not* a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or her own creative response. Again, your role is not

to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to *listen* in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

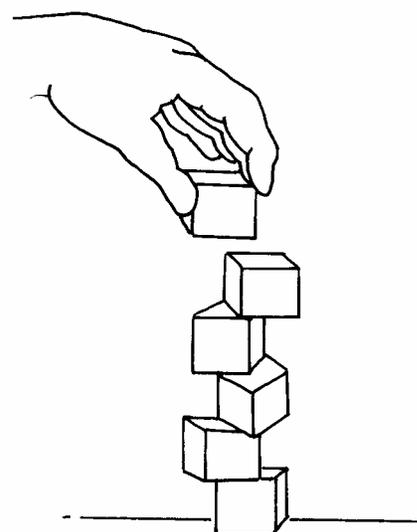
Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today’s presentation offered below. Whether you read the lesson or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today’s lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the presentation can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying “Amen.”

The Presentation

There was once a great tower. Everyone working on the tower spoke the same language and worked together.

But as the tower grew taller and taller, they began to talk in different ways.

The tower came close to God, but the people forgot why they were building it. They grew so proud of themselves that they began to think they were greater builders than God. Each group thought it was better than any of the others. They stopped working together.



Wondering

- **I wonder** what part of this story you like best?
- **I wonder** what the most important part of the story could be?
- **I wonder** where you are in the story? What part of the story is about you?

A huge noise replaced their talking. It made no sense. Everyone was babbling.

Soon the tower fell down, so it was called the Tower of Babel. The language of the people of the earth was shattered. It broke into splinters. Each one was beautiful, but it was broken.

Thousands of years passed. Then Jesus died on the cross, but somehow he was still with the people around him as he is with us today. They kept seeing him, and they couldn't let him go. Then one day something amazing happened.

The disciples were in Jerusalem. There are only eleven disciples because Judas had already killed himself.

Jesus took them outside of Jerusalem to a Mountain called Olivet, or as far as Bethany.

Jesus then went up, and soon the Holy Spirit would come down.

The eleven disciples went back into the city. They were full of joy and went to the temple to pray. They then went to the upper room and, with God's help, decided that Matthias would take Judas' place.

On Sunday the Twelve were together again. Suddenly there was a sound like a mighty wind rushing. It was the Holy Spirit. They became so full of its power that they seemed to be on fire. Their tongues burned in their mouths. They were so excited that people wondered what was going on, but no matter what language they spoke, they knew the Holy Spirit was there.

Godly Play An Ethic of Blessing

In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. Today we look at the third of three key concepts that children teach us about God: *an ethic of blessing guides our actions and development.*

Blessing is a matter of life and death. Human children will not survive without a long period of nourishing relationships. The *kind* of relationship is as important as the *fact* of relationship. Jesus has shown us the quality needed for such relationships. It has the property of blessing. A blessing affirms a

person and yet calls forth the best in him or her.

Jesus is indignant when the disciples prevent the children from coming to him for a blessing (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 1:13-16; Luke 18:15-17). This is violent language, but even more violent is the language of the millstone statements (Matthew 18:6-9; Mark 9:42-48; Luke 17:1-2). It is better to be drowned than to cause a little one to stumble (to not be blessed). Such language suggests (to say the least) that Jesus considers the matter of blessing and not causing the little ones to stumble a matter of life and death.