

Joyful Catholic Families
Lesson #9 – Happy Birthday Church!
(Pentecost)

Before class decorate the room for a party: balloons, streamers, “Happy Birthday” sign

Liturgical Year:

What color of vestment/chasuble did Father wear this morning? (white)
Why did he wear white? (It is the Easter season.)

On _____, we will be celebrating the last Sunday of the Easter season.

- What color of vestment do you think Father will wear? (red)
- What do you think we will be celebrating the last Sunday of the Easter season? (Pentecost)
- What is Pentecost?
 - Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he ascended (rose up) into heaven.
 - Before Jesus rose up into heaven, he told Mary and the Apostles to go to Jerusalem and wait in prayer for the Holy Spirit.
 - Pentecost is the day the Holy Spirit came down on Mary and the Apostles.
- When the Holy Spirit came down on Mary and the Apostles, it was the beginning of our Catholic Church
 - So, Pentecost is the Church’s birthday!
 - Today we are going to celebrate the Church’s birthday -- a little early.

Make “Happy Birthday, Church” hats:

(Go to [this post](#) for PDF and more information.)

- For a party, we each need a birthday hat. (Show the hat)
 - The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost like flames of fire so that is why our hats have flames on them.
- Hand out bags with supplies for the hats.
 - Color the words, "Happy Birthday, Church!"
 - Cut out the flames -- one flame of each color per child.
 - Glue the orange flame onto the red flame.
 - Glue the yellow flame on to the orange flame.
 - Cut the head band on the black lines.
 - Tape the 3 strips of cardstock together in a long line with the "Happy Birthday, Church!" one in the middle.
 - Tape the flame to the head band -- above the word, "birthday". Tape on the front and the back.
 - Fit the head band to the child's head. Cut off any excess paper strip and tape.

Cupcakes as Birthday Cakes:

Each child frosts and decorates a cupcake.

- I use whip topping for the frosting because it is easy for the children to spread.
- The children put sprinkles on the whip topping.

Each child puts a candle in his/her cupcake (the kind that relights when it is blown out).

Explain: The Church is people.

- We can have a building but without the people, there is no Church.
- We are the Church.
- We sing Happy Birthday to us!

Sing:

Happy birthday to us.

Happy birthday to us.

Happy birthday, dear Church.

Happy birthday to us.

After the children have blown out their candles several times, place the candles in a bowl/glass of water.

Ask: Why do we use candles that relight when we celebrate Pentecost, when we celebrate the Church's birthday?

- Because God promised the Holy Spirit will be with us always.
- The flame of the candle was there, even when we thought it was gone.
- The Holy Spirit is with the Church, even when we don't know it is there.
- No matter what we do, the Holy Spirit will still be with the Church.

Read story about Pentecost:

(Go [to Lambsongs](#) for the PDF of "Holy Spirit Comes b&w Big Book" or in color "Holy Spirit Comes Col Big Book".)

Holy Spirit as Wind:

- Our head bands remind us the Holy Spirit came like what at Pentecost? (flames of fire)
- The Bible also tells us that the Holy Spirit sounded like a strong wind at Pentecost.
- Can we see the wind? (No)
- How do we know the wind is there? (we can feel it; we can see what it does to things)
- Sometimes the wind is very soft and we have to really pay attention to feel the wind.
- The same is true of the Holy Spirit.
- We can't see the Holy Spirit but we can see what the Holy Spirit does.

Birthday Blowouts:

- Give each child a blowout
([This is what I use](#) but I buy them locally. I use the kind that does not make noise.)
- Let's pretend the Holy Spirit is talking to us. The voice of the Holy Spirit is not usually a voice we can hear. It is often a feeling we have.
- Let's pretend that the Spirit is speaking very softly to us. How would that look with our blowouts? (blow softly)
- Now the Spirit is speaking loudly to us...(blow hard)
- The Spirit is speaking to us over a long time...(blow softly and slowly)
- The Spirit is telling us something that we need to do quickly....(blow fast and hard)
- Blow out 3 times,...Repeat the above.

Pin the flame on an apostle:

(Before class tape the "apostle" to a wall. I like to use many "apostles" so that there are only 2 kids using each "apostle".)

(Go to [this post](#) for the PDF.)

- The Holy Spirit came like what? (strong wind and flames of fire)
- The flames were above the apostles' heads.
 - The Holy Spirit is like a flame in our hearts that won't go out.
 - The Holy Spirit keeps us burning with love for Jesus.
- Give each child a "flame" and a blindfold.
- (without blindfolds) Try to put the flame above the apostle's head
- (adjust height of apostle sheets, if too high for some of the kids)
- That was easy. Now try with a blindfold on.
(Some children may be able to see under the bottom of the blindfold, especially if they want to. I just ignore it when they do peek.)
- Now try after being turned around
- Now try standing back further...

Streamers:

(Go to [this post](#) to see how to make the streamers out of plastic tablecloths and shower curtain rings. I did not glue the streamers in place -- just pull the knots tight.)

Give each child a streamer.

When the apostles and Mary were praying together in the upper room, the Holy Spirit came and it sounded like wind.

Let's see if you can make it sound like wind in this room. (swish streamers through air)

- A quiet wind...
- A loud wind...
- A straight wind...
- A happy-day wind...
- A soft wind
- A strong wind
- A short wind
- A long wind

Play some music and the children can dance to it with their streamers.

Parachute:

(I purchased a parachute but you can also use a sheet.)

- All the children grab hold of the parachute.
- Explain:
 - On the 40th day of Easter we celebrate the Ascension -- when Jesus rose into Heaven.
 - When I say the word "Ascension", everyone raise the parachute up.
 - On the 50th day of Easter we celebrate Pentecost – the birthday of the church – the day the Holy Spirit came down on Mary and the apostles.
 - When I say "Pentecost", everyone pull the parachute down to the ground.
 - Say "Ascension" and "Pentecost" several times with the children raising and lowering the parachute.
- Put Easter eggs or balls on the parachute.
 - Let's see how long we can keep the eggs/balls on the parachute
 - After a while say, "Now see how fast you can get the balls off of the parachute."
 - Children pick up balls and put back on parachute.
 - Repeat.

Happy Birthday:

Sing Happy Birthday again using blow outs or streamers.

Hand out Stickers: Give each child a sticker as they leave.

Supplies:

Nametags & Permanent markers
Prayers for prayer rings
Home lessons
Snack
Plates, napkins, water & glasses
Stickers (for each child at the end of class)

Decorate room: balloons, crepe paper, happy birthday sign

“Happy Birthday, Church!” hats: (could put all pieces in plastic bags to prevent losing pieces)

- headbands
- paper flame parts
- scissors
- tape

Cupcakes
Whip topping
Small spatulas to spread whip topping
Toppings for cupcakes
Candles that relight
Candles to light the children’s candles from
Matches
Bowls/glasses of water to put candles in after using them

“Holy Spirit Comes” story

Birthday blow outs

Pin the Flame on the Apostle game – one for every two children -- tape to wall before class

Flames with blue tape rings on them – one for each child

Blue painters’ tape

Blindfolds: I use the thin foam sheets from Dollar tree and cut into thirds (4 inches x 8 inches).

- Put a piece of clear tape where the pipe cleaner will be stuck through.
- Stick a pipe cleaner through the foam sheet at each end (about ½” from the edge so it doesn’t pull through)
- Twist the pipe cleaner to secure it.



Streamers made from shower rings and strips of plastic tablecloths – one per child

Parachute