

The Day of Pentecost

John 15-26-27; 16:4-11

In this passage Jesus tells the disciples that the Holy Spirit will come into their lives. Later, after the Resurrection, He did just that.

Today we celebrate the day on which the Spirit made Himself known through a special indwelling of the apostles. The crowds were able to hear the news about Jesus in their own languages. Peter, the denier of Christ, preached a most extraordinary sermon. Stubborn unbelievers accused the apostles of being drunk. Thousands came into the kingdom of God on that day. But, as awe inspiring as that day was, the Helper continues to work miracles just as magnificent in our own time.

Jesus called the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of truth”. Those things which we comprehend about God have been explained to us by Him, not by our own wisdom. He dwells within us throughout our lives, pointing us toward Jesus and inspiring us to be more like our Savior.

When there is an infant baptism during a Sunday morning service, do you ever find yourself wondering how much later the service might dismiss? If you do, don’t be particularly surprised. We get so used to having the Holy Spirit in our lives that we can sometimes forget the awesome gift that He bestows by His presence. Even an infant is graced by His presence. We cannot do or think anything or be mature enough to make ourselves worthy of God wanting to be such an intimate part of our lives. When each of us entered God’s kingdom, the Holy Spirit came into our lives to help, to grow, to inspire, to correct, to love, to heal you and me, His children. He keeps directing us toward the Savior to Whom He brought us in the beginning.

The first Christian Pentecost was a thrilling event for all the believers who were present. Every baptism at the front of the church is also an outpouring and indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of a life filled with the power and love of God.

Learn more about the Holy Spirit through a group Bible study!
A message from your Iowa District West Education Committee



The Day of Pentecost

John 15-26-27; 16:4-11

1. The Holy Spirit is called a “Counselor” (vs. 26). In what sense is He a Counselor?
2. The Holy Spirit is also called the “Spirit of truth” (vs. 13). Why is that an appropriate title for the Spirit?
3. According to vs. 26, what is the primary role of the Spirit?
4. According to vs. 7, what would be a blessing of Jesus’ departure?



5. Pentecost celebrates the work of the Holy Spirit in the church and in our personal lives. How has the Holy Spirit been active in your life?
6. To review the events of the first Pentecost read Acts 2. What would it have been like to be present in Jerusalem that day?

The Day of Pentecost

Joel 2:28-29

After the apostles preached Christ in the many languages of the people who were gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost, they were accused of being drunk! Peter pointed the accusers to God's prophecy through Joel, "...I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions..." (Acts 2:17)



Joel wasn't a contemporary of Jesus or of Peter. He probably began preaching around 835 B.C. A theme of Joel was that not only did God always intervene in the affairs of men, but He would one day intervene in a very special way. The Holy Spirit would dwell in all believers. In Joel's time, God spoke to His people through individuals whom He chose. Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Elijah, and Joel were some of the servants whom God chose to speak to the people. Like other prophets often did, Joel spoke to God's people during hard times, telling them that their constant rejection of

God was contributing to their disastrous situation. He also held out the hope, like other prophets, that one day God would restore His people and pour out upon them special blessings.

Jesus was God's greatest intervention upon the world. God became Man in Christ Jesus. His death accomplished our salvation and His resurrection was proof that all that He did and said was true! Jesus promised the disciples that the "Helper" would come after the Ascension. On that day of Pentecost in Jerusalem the Holy Spirit came upon all believers, taking up residence within each. He now "calls, gathers, sanctifies and enlightens" each person in his or her walk of faith.

Like other prophets, Joel didn't fully understand his own words, delivered on the behalf of God. He only knew that God would accomplish this wonderful miracle in His own time and in His own way. We are blessed to have seen so much more of God's work than Joel did. Those of us who see the words of Joel from *this side* of the cross can rejoice that his prophecy of the miracle of Pentecost was fulfilled by our ever-faithful and ever-loving God.

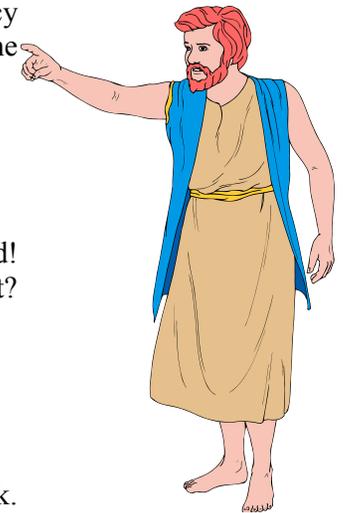
Discover more about Joel and other prophets in Bible study!

A message from your Iowa District West Education Committee

The Day of Pentecost

Joel 2:28-29

1. Which person of the Trinity dominates this text? Why is that especially appropriate on this Sunday?
2. Where in today's second lesson (Acts 2:1-21) do we find these words of prophecy repeated?
3. What is the significance of the prophecy that "all people" will experience the Spirit? Why is this exciting for us?
4. The prophecy of Joel has been fulfilled! When did you receive the Holy Spirit? How is your life blessed in the Spirit?
5. The book of Joel is a very short book. Skim the 3 chapters. What are some of the themes of the book?
6. Pentecost takes place _____ days after Easter.



The Day of Pentecost

Ezekiel 37:1-14



Ezekiel was confronted by a stack upon stack of dry human bones. When God asked, “..can these bones live?” what would have been your answer? In our human knowledge of the possible, bringing bones back to life isn’t feasible. God explained to the prophet that the vision had to do with His people who had lost all hope; who were alive and yet dead.

Jesus said that the Pharisees were like “...whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones...” (Matt 23:27). The Pharisees were

dead because they rejected Jesus belligerently seeking God on their own terms and power.

So we see two groups of dead people: those who are without hope and those who hope only in themselves. You could say that they are the people who feel the mire of sin sucking them down and those who think that sin does not exist in their lives. What is there that can heal them both?

In his vision Ezekiel said to God that only He could know the answer. God’s answer was that the bones could be brought back to life by His almighty power and by His Spirit. Only He can forgive and erase sin; only He can proclaim guilt or innocence. Both the hopeless and the arrogant are trapped and God is their only route of escape.

Neither can do anything to impress God. Everything is in His hands. Only through His word and His work can either be saved. The prophets brought the word in the Old Testament, Jesus was the Word in the New Testament, and we bring the word today. But the Person who does the work of salvation has never changed. Only Jesus’ death on the cross in our behalf could pay the price for both the hopeless and the arrogant. Only the Spirit dwelling within us can constantly enable us to joyfully follow our Lord and remind us of God’s gift given through His Son.

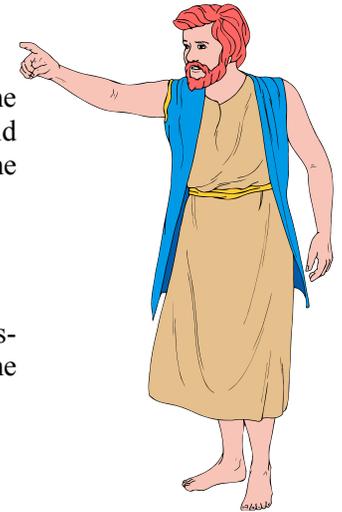
Ezekiel makes a great group Bible study!

A message from your Iowa District West Education Committee

The Day of Pentecost

Ezekiel 37:1-14

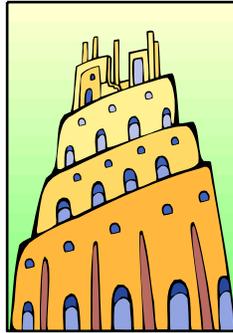
1. Pentecost celebrates the coming of the Spirit to the early New Testament church (Acts 2). How does this Ezekiel text emphasize the Spirit’s presence in the Old Testament?
2. With what title is the prophet repeatedly addressed (vs. 3, 9, 11)? Who is the Son of Man that we meet in the New Testament (Mark 2:28, 8:38; 14:62)?
3. Imagine that you are Ezekiel watching the dry bones become alive again. What did the prophet see? What might have been the thoughts of the prophet?
4. Ezekiel’s experience had a prophetic message. According to vs. 11-14 what was the application to Ezekiel’s audience?
5. The promise of vs. 14 comes to us also. When did God put his Spirit in you?
6. Are there any parts of your life or your church that are like dry bones? What hope does Ezekiel’s experience give you and your church? Celebrate on this Pentecost that the Holy Spirit continues to breathe life into us.



The Day of Pentecost

Genesis 11:1-9

In this passage from Genesis we see the origin of all the languages of the earth. Sound far-fetched? It really isn't. A number of years ago, experts on the languages of the world concluded that all of them stem from only three basic tongues. We can see from the story of Pentecost in Acts that by the time of the Pentecost event many more languages had developed even in the limited area of Palestine and the nations surrounding it.



A more telling feature of the story from Genesis may be the reason that the builders of the tower wandered from it confused and frustrated, unable to complete their plans. In this story, Moses tells us that men had begun to rely upon their own wisdom, build up their own pride, determine that they could reach and control heaven, even become gods themselves. That was the direction of man that God thwarted by confusing their communications.

We still attempt the same things as the tower-builders, but today we have professional translators to help us understand each other's plans, thwart each other's plans, and sometimes even plan our future together. The latter rarely lasts for long.

In the story from Acts that celebrates the first Pentecost preaching by Christians, we see a more wondrous plan than anything man has been able to come up with even in the almost 2,000 years since. On that day in Jerusalem, God presented His plan for the unity of all mankind and translated it into every tongue even as it was delivered; a plan that overcomes language barriers, racial barriers, and even the barrier created when man attempts to establish his own godhood.

The apostles preached Christ to all peoples on Pentecost. They preached God's plan for reuniting all of His people, both Jew and Gentile, in His eternal kingdom surrounded by His eternal love. What humans had not been able to do through their feeble tower, God had done through His own Son.

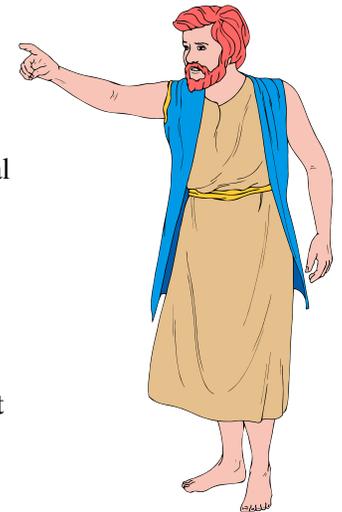
Discover more about Genesis and Pentecost in a Bible study!

A message from your Iowa District West Education Committee

The Day of Pentecost

Genesis 11:1-9

1. What is the context of the "world" of Genesis 11:1? (Refer especially to Genesis 9) What evidences of unity do we still see (and hear)?
2. How do we hear and see an egotistical and proud people in vs. 3-4?
3. How does God demonstrate that He is always and ultimately in charge?
4. Notice the reference to God in vs. 7 "let us." Is there any significance to the plural pronoun?
5. God's grace speaks to all languages and cultures. How do we see evidence of that in the Pentecost story of Acts 2?
6. God still uses us to bring the message of salvation to people of all scattered peoples of all languages. What evidences of our mission response do we see in our congregations, in our District and in our synodical world mission programs?



Day of Pentecost

Joel 2:28-29

In the early verses of Acts (Acts 1:4-5) that we read last week, Jesus promised the disciples that the Holy Spirit would come upon them. They went back into Jerusalem to pray and wait for the event, probably wondering just what was going to happen. When the day of Pentecost came Jesus had already ascended, and though He is ever-present in His followers, He also fulfilled His promise to the disciples that the Holy Spirit would come and dwell within believers in a special way.

In the days of Joel, hundreds of years before the day when Peter and the other disciples received the Holy Spirit, the old prophet foretold the Spirit's coming. He also foretold that it would not be just the first apostles and disciples who would experience this outpouring. All believers would know the presence of God within them.

The Spirit came at the perfect time. There were great crowds in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost, and the first tasks that the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to accomplish were fantastic. These men, who had been afraid to show their faces in public for fear of arrest and execution, were suddenly bold communicators of God's deeds to Jews from every part of the world.

Joel says that not only would the apostles be blessed by the Spirit, but other followers as well. Nor is the Holy Spirit content to fill and enlighten only the wealthy, or only the poor, or only the first believers. All believers of all times are equally loved and useful in the eyes of God. One does not need a particular personality or place in the world in order to know the presence of God. The Spirit brings the joy of Christ to all that He calls.

How blessed we are to know that no matter what challenges we face; no matter what tasks we are given; no matter what joy or sorrow fills us, God Himself is with us. He is not just with us in the church on Sunday; nor even just when we stop for a moment to pray. The Holy Spirit is in each of our lives every moment, calling us, guiding us, sending us, reminding us of God's great love for us through our resurrected Savior, Jesus Christ.

Learn more about the work of the Holy Spirit in a Bible study this week.

A message from your Iowa District West Education Committee

Day of Pentecost

Joel 2:28-29

1. What insect is used as God's means of judgment? (Joel 1:4-5)
To what are the insects compared in Joel 2:2?
2. What would happen "after" (2:28) God's judgment and Israel's repentance?
3. Read today's second lesson (Acts 2:1-21). Who repeats Joel's prophecy? In what context are the prophet's words repeated?

Family Table Talks:

4. How does Joel's prophecy illustrate that the Holy Spirit has always been at work? What other evidences of the Holy Spirit do we find in the Old Testament?
5. Review the Pentecost story together (Acts 2). What is your favorite part of the story? What effect did the Spirit's power have on the Jerusalem gathering?
6. How has the Holy Spirit been at work in your life? In your family? In your church? On this Day of Pentecost offer a prayer of thanks for the Spirit's continuing work in and through you.

Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:22-36

The people listening to Peter on Pentecost were in town to celebrate the completed harvest. They were happy, satisfied, and hoping for a little entertainment from this itinerant preacher. As they crowded in to hear, they were probably thinking that it should be an interesting follow-up to his apparently multi-lingual partners, and the topic seemed to be the teacher named Jesus of Nazareth. The crowd knew the story of the recent crucifixion since Jesus had been turning the whole of Palestine into a discussion concerning just who He might be. The man speaking this morning—they thought they had heard that he was a follower of Jesus and a fisherman. Odd—he sounded pretty intelligent for a common worker. As he began his sermon, they listened closely and heard him accusing them of his friend’s death. What?!

Though struck by the accusation, most listened, wondering how he could back up such a charge. Besides, if this man had actually traveled with Jesus, he might know some interesting stories. Peter’s sermon continued, telling the truth about Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God, and ending with the same accusation of murder. What a conclusion! If some of today’s Christians had been there, they might have shouted “Amen!” at the close of Peter’s summation. After all, we would often like to shout accusations at the world, condemning its sin and rebellion.

Peter’s words, however, were not for the purpose of condemnation. His accusation and his words about Jesus cut to the heart of many, especially those who had been talking and wondering about Jesus for a long time. Now, with the help of the Holy Spirit working through Peter’s words, they finally understood just who Jesus was. Their hearts fell, and they wanted nothing more than to be forgiven. Peter and his companions baptized thousands that day.

Accusation is never an end in itself. Peter did not hate the people who shouted for Jesus’ death. Rather he wanted to lead them to Jesus’ love. We have received that love and, like Peter, we also call out to others—not to condemn, but to let them know that there is hope. There is forgiveness in Christ.

Learn more about God’s mercy and love in a Bible study this week.
A message from your Iowa District West Education Committee

Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:22-36

1. Review Acts 2:1-13. What extraordinary events had preceded Peter’s Pentecost sermon?
2. What horrendous action had the “men of Israel” been part of? (vs. 23) What miraculous action was God part of? (vs. 24)
3. What was the connection between David and Jesus? What was the evidence that Jesus was greater than David?

For Family Reflection

4. Peter confronted his audience “You put him to death by nailing him to the cross.” (vs. 23). How are we also responsible for Jesus’ death?
5. The Holy Spirit came to the Pentecost audience in a dramatic way (wind and tongues of fire). How and when did the Holy Spirit come to you? What blessings does the Holy Spirit bring to your life?
6. What signs of Pentecost do you see in your church today? (Are there any special colors, songs or other evidences of the festival day?)

Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2:1-21

Jesus entered a Jerusalem crowded with people celebrating Passover. Now, the Pentecost celebration filled the city, and again God was about to make a proclamation. His gospel would not enter the world through a slow-moving osmosis—but through the excitement of thousands simultaneously sharing it around the world. They had come to celebrate the past but would go away celebrating a new joy in their hearts.

In a room in the city, Jesus' disciples gathered. Suddenly the Holy Spirit filled the room and the believers. Those who had been confused, wondering what God would do next, were suddenly sure. They were ready to preach the gospel. They had run from Jesus only weeks before out of fear of being associated with Him, but now the Holy Spirit, as Jesus had promised, filled them with understanding, courage, and the words to speak.

On this Sunday morning, some will talk about how great it must have been to see the Church grow back then. Some will sigh, saying that back then the Holy Spirit grew the Church in miraculous ways that we cannot expect to see now. But, in what way did the Holy Spirit work then that He does not work now? Yes, there was the miraculous rushing wind and tongues of fire, and the miracle of many languages spoken, but another, quieter, miracle happened.

As Peter preached, the crowds heard the gospel of Christ; the truth of the resurrection; the news of free salvation to all who believe. The Holy Spirit filled the hearts of those who heard and gifted them with faith. However, if that had been all that He did in their hearts, the gospel could not have filled the world in the next few decades. The apostles could not spread the news alone. They could personally tell only a few about Jesus. Thousands more were brought to the Cross through “lay people” who heard the news on Pentecost. These, also filled and enabled by the Holy Spirit, went and told the good news to everyone who would listen.

The Holy Spirit works the same today, in every one of us who believes in Christ as our Savior. He calls us to tell the good news. He enlightens us with the truth. He gathers us together and sends us forth to show others the kingdom of God.

Learn more about why we obey God in a Bible study this week.

A message from your Iowa District West Christian Education Committee

Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2:1-21

1. Reflect on the timeline of events. When had Jesus risen from the dead? When had He ascended? Why were the disciples waiting in Jerusalem? (Acts 1:4-5)
2. What was the Old Testament significance of Pentecost? (Leviticus 23:15-16; Deuteronomy 16:10; Exodus 23:16)
3. In what ways was the Pentecost event a physical phenomenon (sights, sounds, etc.)? In what ways was it a Spiritual event?
4. According to vs. 21 Who is the center of salvation? What is the Spirit's role in our salvation?

For Family Reflection

5. When did God's Spirit first descend on you? How is the Spirit evident in our lives? (Do we see tongues of fire and feel wind?)
6. Pentecost is a special day in the church. What color is dominant on Pentecost? In what other ways do we celebrate the Spirit's presence and power? How can the Holy Spirit be an important presence in our home?

Day of Pentecost

John 7:37-39

The Feast of Tabernacles annually celebrated the harvest. Thousands traveled to Jerusalem for the celebration. The last day of the feast was the only one when water from the Pool of Siloam was not brought and poured into a silver basin beside the altar of burnt offering. Jesus chose this day to reveal Himself as the Source of living water.

To one who does not know Jesus, living water is puzzling. The Samaritan woman, with whom Jesus had spoken earlier in His ministry, asked Him how He would carry such water. Since it would quench her thirst, she wanted to know how she could get it and no longer have to make the journey to the well with her jars.

Dwelling within us, the Holy Spirit fills us with living water and constantly encourages us to ask for more and more of it—this living water which brings joy, peace, truth, and faith into our hearts and minds constantly. The Spirit fills us with the living water of our relationship with Christ; the joy, assurance, confidence, faith, courage, and excitement in our lives, no matter what our external circumstance may be.

On Pentecost we celebrate a great outpouring of living water. Immediately after the Holy Spirit powerfully entered the disciples' lives, they went out to the crowds and the living water of life with Jesus began pouring out of them, as they told the world about their Lord and Master. They knew a peace and courage they never expected. They were empowered to share the risen Lord.

How is the living water flowing in your life? A free gift from our Lord, it still has to be constantly replenished. The Holy Spirit urges us to never set Jesus aside for "Sundays only" visitation, assuming that we can run our daily lives without the living water that the Samaritan woman so desperately, and wisely, searched out.

Learn more about the work of the Holy Spirit in a Bible study this week.

A message from your Iowa District West Christian Education Committee

Day of Pentecost

John 7:37-39

1. Today is Pentecost Sunday! How many days has it been since Easter Sunday? Read today's Epistle Lesson (Acts 2:1-21). What happened in Jerusalem on the Pentecost Day?
2. What did Jesus prophecy about this day in today's Gospel lesson? How were Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection important parts of the sequence to Pentecost?
3. Was the Pentecost event the first evidence of the Holy Spirit (vs. 39)? What was special about the Spirit's appearance at this time?
4. Read vs. 38-39. Is the Spirit's work ever independent of Jesus' work? What is the Spirit's role in our salvation?

For Family Reflection

5. When did you first receive the Holy Spirit? How does the Holy Spirit continue to work in your life? Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the Spirit's work in your life.
6. How was Pentecost Sunday celebrated in your church? What color was more evident? Why? How did you hear about the Spirit in the hymns and in the Scripture readings? How has the Spirit blessed your church?

The Day of Pentecost

John 15:26-27; 16:4-15

In this passage Jesus tells the disciples that the Holy Spirit will come into their lives. Later, after the Resurrection, He did just that.

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We cannot do or think anything or be mature enough to make ourselves worthy of God’s desire to be such an intimate part of our lives. When each of us entered God’s kingdom, the Holy Spirit came to live within us to help, to grow, to inspire, to correct, to love, to heal each of us, His children. He keeps directing us toward the Savior to whom He brought us in the beginning.

The first Christian Pentecost was a thrilling event for all the believers who were present. Every baptism is also an outpouring and indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of a life filled with the power and love of God.

Let God’s Word bless you in a special way this Pentecost season.

(A message from your Iowa District West Christian Education Committee)

The Day of Pentecost

John 15:26-27; 16:4-15

1. How many days after Easter does Pentecost take place? What other significant event happened ten days before Pentecost? What’s the significance of God’s timing of these events?
2. What names for the Holy Spirit do we find in these texts? What is the significance of these names?
3. What would be the role of the Holy Spirit according to vs. 8-11?

For Family Reflection

4. Review the Pentecost story from Acts, chapter 2. What happened on the Day of Pentecost? How were the disciples changed? How as the church changed? How was the world changed?
5. Review the Small Catechism explanation to the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed. What does it mean to believe in the Holy Spirit? What blessings does the Spirit bring to your life?
6. How is Pentecost observed in the church today? What signs and symbols of the Spirit do you see in your church? What liturgical color is associated with Pentecost?

Day of Pentecost

John 14:23-31

You probably hear these words every Sunday: “May the peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds...” How many times have you said in your heart, “If only it could be true” as you hear these assuring words? In today’s passage, Jesus speaks to the disciples about the peace that His presence can bring to our hearts.

As Jesus spoke to these men, what was their future? When Jesus said to them that they had no need to fear, He was preparing them to face His death. Yet, these men who believed that Jesus would overthrow their Roman oppressors, and restore Israel’s monarchy; who heard Jesus’ words of assurance, would cower in fear after His arrest and execution. They would believe themselves to be leaderless, hunted men. They had no idea that Jesus was about to return to them. Not until the resurrection did they begin to understand, a little.

After Jesus returned to them in His post-resurrection appearances, and after His ascension, the apostles courageously faced the ones who had executed Christ, preaching the gospel to the crowds.

If even the disciples could lose their confidence in Christ and experience fear, what is the key to knowing and keeping peace in one’s heart? The disciples’ fear came at a time when they believed that Jesus had left them. They forgot, or doubted, His promise that He would always be with them, even though they would not see Him.

Isn’t that when we also fall into fear? Sometimes we just drift in our faith until suddenly something happens that makes us realize that we can’t see Jesus. He is still there, but we have turned away, relying on our own power and wisdom.

Jesus never leaves us, even when we lose track of Him. We are like the toddler in a large store who wanders around wondering at the new sights in his world when he suddenly realizes that he doesn’t see Mom! He panics and turns to flee, only to run smack into Mom’s knees. Jesus is always there, offering us true peace. We just need to keep our lives focused on His presence.

Are you asking your friends to join you in Bible study?

(A message from your Iowa District West Christian Education Committee)

Day of Pentecost

John 14:23-31

1. Jesus prepares the disciples for some transitions in His life and theirs. What immediate transitions would be taking place after this time of teaching? (Glance ahead to John chapter 18 and following.) What transition would take place 40 days after Jesus’ resurrection? What transition would take place 50 days after Jesus’ resurrection?
2. Some contrasts are suggested in the text: When things look helpless who is the “Helper” (vs. 26)? What help does He bring?
3. When there is trouble (vs. 27) where do we find peace?
4. When the ruler of the world (vs. 30) wants to rule our life who can Rule our hearts and home?

For Family Reflection

5. How do we show our love for Jesus (vs. 23-24)? What are some specific actions that might show our love for Him?
6. Review the events of the first Pentecost (Acts 2). What happened in Jerusalem? What blessings did the church in Jerusalem experience? What blessings do we experience in our family and church because of Pentecost?