

St. John's Church School
Pentecost or Whitsunday

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Pentecost (or Whitsunday) is one of the **great days of the Church's Year.**

- **Q.** What are the others?
- **A.** Easter and Christmas
- **Q.** What do they commemorate?
- **A.** Resurrection and Birth of Christ

The Lesson: What does Pentecost commemorate?

This day is fifty days after Easter (that is what Pentecost means) – forty days after Jesus rose from the dead ... he ascended into heaven, was taken up into glory, sat down at God's right hand.

Before he left, however, he told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Promised Gift of the Holy Ghost, by whose strength they would be able to preach the Gospel to all nations. For ten days the disciples were "with one accord in prayer" for God's promised gift – common prayer!

On the tenth day, the fiftieth day, the Holy Ghost came down upon them and filled them. There was a Sound of a mighty rushing wind – invisible but very, very strong (think tornado, hurricane, storm, wind.) Tongues of flame appeared on top of each of their heads – the light and the fire illuminates mind to know truth, enkindles heart to love truth, burns away what is not true.

They began to speak in other tongues (languages) – the praises of God and of his grace in Jesus Christ. A big crowd of pilgrims from all nations who were in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost were astonished because they heard the disciples speaking the praises of God in the native languages of the pilgrims.

A miracle is a sign that the Holy Ghost was given to the Church to publish and proclaim the Gospel in all of the world. The Holy Spirit gives the knowledge of truth in Jesus, and love and obedience to God's commandments – of courage and strength against all fear.

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What does Ghost/Spirit mean? Ghost does not mean he is dead! Ghost and Spirit are two different ways of saying the same word – which is “wind” or “breath” of God – ghost is related to gust, Spirit to inspire/expire – the Ghost because he is almighty and invisible, like a gust of wind; the Spirit because he is invisible and gives life—he inspires, like breath.

Q. Why is he called the Holy Ghost/Spirit, when the Father is Holy, the Son is Holy, and God is a Spirit?

A. Because the Holy Ghost is the fountain of holiness – he makes us holy – and the Holy Spirit gives us spiritual life.

Symbols of Holy Ghost:

Water –because in Baptism we are reborn as the children of God and washed from our sins by the Holy Spirit – because he is a well of everlasting life (John 7:39), a river of life that never stops flowing (Rev. 22.)

Fire –gives light to mind (to know truth of Christ), warms heart to love (Christ), and burns away (purifies) all that is wrong.

Wind—because he is almighty and invisible, like a storm wind (tornado, hurricane), and because he stirs things up! ‘

Breath—because he gives life.

Oil—for anointing, just as men were anointed for the work of prophet, priest, and king, so Jesus was anointed (Christos) with the Holy Ghost for the work of salvation, and we are anointed with the Spirit of Christ when we are made Christians (anointed ones.)

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Hand—Jesus lays on hands as a sign of God's favour and power to heal and bless – apostles do so also – Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as “the finger of God” – writing God's law in our hearts, and casting out demons.

Dove—The dove sent forth at end of the flood was sign of peace returning to the world washed clean of wickedness. The Holy Spirit comes down upon Jesus in form of a dove at his baptism – sign of God's blessing upon hearts made clean by baptism.

Activity:

Art and Special Event planned by the Special Event Committee