



SESSION

1

# Ascension and Pentecost



**MEETING AIM**

To discover who the Holy Spirit is and how he helps us.



**BIBLE PASSAGE**

Acts 1:1-11; 2:1-42



**BACKGROUND**

All too often we leave the story of Jesus' life on Earth at the point of resurrection and fail to explain what happens next. This session is designed to explore, in an age-appropriate way, the story of Jesus' ascension into heaven and the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Through this session, we will explore how the Holy Spirit was promised as the helper, how he helped the first disciples and how he continues to help us today.

**+ CIRCLE TIME**



As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and welcome parents to join you for this time, if appropriate. Encourage the children to share their stories and news from the week and celebrate special events that have taken place, such as birthdays. Ask the children to think about some of the people who help us, such as teachers, doctors and parents, and some of the different things they do to help.

**+ DRESSING UP**



**You will need:** dressing-up outfits for people who help us; a selection of appropriate props

Show the children the different dressing-up outfits and props, and encourage them to play together. Depending on the resources you have available, you could set up a particular scenario, such as a hospital where doctors and nurses work to help sick patients, or provide a wider selection, perhaps including the police, teachers or the fire brigade, which children can choose from to create their own role-play situations.

Play together with the children, encouraging them to talk about the people who help us, and the things they do for us, while they play.

**+ BIBLE STORY**



**You will need:** a number of play figures to represent the disciples and Jesus; a small box; fiery coloured ribbons

Gather the children together and give each child a fiery coloured ribbon. Explain that you are going to need the children to use the ribbons at the appropriate part of the story, but for now they should put them down in front of them.

**Say:** After Jesus rose from the dead, he spent some time with his followers again, until one day he told them it was time for him to go away. *Set out the play figures.*

"Don't worry," he said, "the Holy Spirit will come and will give you great power, helping you to tell the whole world about me and all the things I have done while I have been with you here on Earth."

After he had said this, Jesus was taken up into heaven on a cloud! The disciples watched and watched until they couldn't see him anymore. *Remove the Jesus play figure.*

When this had happened, Jesus' disciples returned to the town. They were very confused about what they had seen, and probably a bit scared. But Jesus had promised to send them a helper, so they waited together for the helper to come. *Place the box over the figures to represent the building they were gathered in.*

Suddenly, there was a loud noise like a blowing wind, and something that looked like a fiery flame came and sat on the head of each of the disciples. *Encourage the children to wave their ribbons over the top of the box and add appropriate sound effects, before removing the box.*

The Holy Spirit had come, just as Jesus had promised them. He had come to be the helper Jesus had promised. The Holy Spirit made them feel brave and strong, and helped the disciples explain all about Jesus to many, many people. He even helped them speak in different languages so that everyone who heard them could understand! *Move the play figures out from the centre to represent the gospel message spreading.*

Many people decided to follow Jesus that day and the Holy Spirit also became their helper. The Holy Spirit still promises to be with us, helping us follow Jesus and giving us the power to tell other people about him.

**+ CHATTING TOGETHER**



Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- What is your favourite part of this story?
- How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus left them?
- How do you think the disciples felt when the Holy Spirit came?
- Is there anything you want to ask God about this story?

**+ CREATIVE RESPONSE**



**You will need:** play dough in assorted colours

Ask the children to think about the different ways the Holy Spirit helped the first disciples, and how he helps us today. Encourage them to use the play dough to create a picture or model that represents one of their ideas. Allow the children to work independently or with others as they choose, and encourage them to talk as they do so. Chat about how the Holy Spirit is the helper. Try to keep the language simple and age-appropriate, but if the children choose to explore further ideas or ask questions, follow their lead to explore more about the Holy Spirit together.

**+ PRAYER**



As you gather the children to pray, remind them that we understand God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and we will remember this in our prayer today:

*Father God, thank you that you give us the Holy Spirit.*

*Lord Jesus, thank you for everything you did for us, living and dying on this Earth.*

*Holy Spirit, thank you that you help us to follow God, giving us power to tell others about Jesus.*

*Amen.*

If appropriate, you may also wish to pray specifically for any prayer requests the children may have, particularly with regards to the themes explored in this session.