

SABBATH SCHOOL

Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

Level 2 • Unit 8 • Week 4

PENTECOST—HOW THE CHURCH BEGAN

OBJECTIVE:

To explain what the Church is, how it began and how you can become part of it and share in its blessings.

ATTENTION GETTER:

Say: Today we are going to learn about the Church of God. The people in the Church of God are said to be part of a body. God's Spirit is able to spiritually unite us as one people.

Ask: Do you know what spirit is?

Say: It is an essence that you and I, as humans, cannot see. God, Jesus and angels are spirit beings that you cannot see. God's Holy Spirit is a power. You might compare it to electricity. You cannot see it, but you know it is there because of what that great power can do. It can work from great distances, and can be present over a large area. God's Holy Spirit is also like the wind, which, though it cannot be seen, has great power, and can have an effect on people and objects.

Although most of the time we cannot see electricity, sometimes we do see it in a spark, or lightning.

God the Father gave Jesus, as a man, His Holy Spirit. (Refer to Matthew 3:16 and Acts 10:38.) Having the fullness of the Holy Spirit gave Him the power to live perfectly and carry out God's work (Ephesians 3:19; 4:13).

BIBLE LESSON:

Say: Now we will learn how humans can become a part of the spiritual Body of Christ—part of His Church—the Church of God. God the Father called people to receive the power of His Holy Spirit through Jesus. They then become part of Christ's Body, the Church. (Note to teacher: Be sure to explain at some point in the lesson that children are a part of the Church because their parents are members. Later they will have the opportunity to be baptized themselves.)

People become part of the Church and a part of Christ's spiritual Body, when they do certain things and when God does certain things.

- They must begin to know and love God.
- They must be sorry for not always obeying God's commandments.
- They must be baptized in water, to show that they know that death comes from sin, and that because Jesus died for us the bad things we have done can be washed away (Romans 6:3-6).
- They must have hands laid on their heads by a minister of the Church who will pray that God will give His Holy Spirit to them.
- Only those who have repented of sin and have had their sins taken away can receive the Holy Spirit.
- God does not like sin. Sin and His Holy Spirit cannot live together.

Jesus can share the Holy Spirit with the people that God the Father calls. He can do this, because the Holy Spirit is like love, and can be given endlessly. Receiving that Holy Spirit makes the person who receives it a part of Jesus' spiritual Body.

People become members of Christ's Body by having His invisible Holy Spirit in them. In Ephesians 5:30 it says, "We are members of His body."

Ask: Have you ever played "Simon Says"?

Say: Today we will play it a little differently. Instead of saying "Simon Says," we will say, "Christ says." We will pretend that Christ tells us to do certain actions. If I say "Christ says" to do something, you should do it. Will I tell you that Christ says to do anything that is bad? No! Don't do the action if it's not something Christ says to do.

You will play the part of the Church, the Body of Christ. You will hear me and do what I say that Jesus asks you. God's Holy Spirit helps us do the right thing, but we must listen carefully!

ACTIVITY

Christ says, "Smile while you gather together on the Sabbath day."

(Children should smile as they move their feet.)

Christ says, "Clap your hands because you are happy to love God."

(Children should clap their hands and smile.)

Christ says, "Turn to the scripture the minister reads during the sermon."

(Children should pretend to turn to a scripture.)

I say, "Hit your friend!"

Oops! No! Christ didn't say that!

Say: The Holy Spirit can help us think of the right things to do if we have a desire to follow God.

Ask: In the game "Simon Says" what happens when you do not do what Simon says, or you do something Simon does not say to do?

Say: You are out of the game.

Ask: How do you think you could be outside of the Church of God?

Say: You know God's Spirit is helping you if you do what God says. You want to keep His commandments (John 14:21-26).

So, if you do not do what Christ says, you are not listening to the Holy Spirit, and you are not behaving like one who is a part of Christ's spiritual Body.

God may then try to help us think about repenting. If we feel badly that we have sinned, then we can ask God to forgive us. The Holy Spirit can help us tell God we are sorry. Even though we are not baptized, the Holy Spirit will still help us until we are old enough to be baptized.

Ask: How did God's Church get started?

Say: It was on the Feast of Pentecost. All the people who were following Jesus Christ, and doing what He told them to do, were in one place. Suddenly there came a loud sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then divided tongues, that looked like fire, sat upon the heads of the disciples. When this appeared, it meant that God's Holy Spirit, His power, was put into them. They became the first members of the New Testament Church of God (Acts 2:1-4).

When the people had the power of the Holy Spirit they were given help to do what God wanted them to do. They could know God the Father and Jesus Christ (John 14:16-17). They could tell others about God.

Many other people were added to the Church that day (Acts 2:37-41). When these people saw what happened to the disciples of Jesus, they wanted to be part of His Church, too. They asked, "What should we do?" They were told (1) to change their bad ways, (2) to be baptized in the name of Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and (3) to accept the fact that Jesus' death could clean them of bad things they did. Then they would receive the Holy Spirit also. That very day 3,000 people were baptized and became part of the Church. More were added later, and more are being added now.

Being part of the Church is a blessing, because the members of the spiritual Body of Christ will enter the kingdom of God with Jesus, and will have everlasting life. It is also a blessing now, because we can be part of a godly family that worships God and does good things (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 John 1:3, 7).

We learned in a previous lesson, that we show God the Father that we want to continue to be a part of Christ's spiritual Body when we take the Passover, which is a symbol of His body and blood.

LESSON APPLICATION:

Ask: Why did tongues of fire appear on the disciples' heads on Pentecost?

Say: It is because God was showing that His Holy Spirit had power and that each individual can share in that same Spirit.

MUSIC:

Think about when we played the game "Christ Says." If we made mistakes, we were put out of the game. But now, if we are truly sorry for our mistakes, Jesus will put them away. By His death He paid for our mistakes and sins. So let's sing this song together.

Sing the following to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell."

The people in the Church,
The people in the Church,
Yes, yes, the Spirit guides
The people in the Church,

God builds His Church.
God builds His Church.
Yes, yes, He truly does,
God builds His Church.

The Church stands as one.
The Church stands as one.
Yes, yes, the Spirit guides
The people of the Church.

MEMORY VERSE:

Ephesians 1:22-23 "He...gave Him [Jesus] to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

family activity

THE POINT:

We learned what the Church is, how it began and how it is a blessing. We learned how God gives His Holy Spirit to people so they can be part of His Church.

ASK ME...

- What can we think about to learn what the Holy Spirit is? [electricity, wind]
- What does the Church represent? [the Body of Christ]
- What does God's Spirit help you to do? [obey God]

FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:

When you see a windstorm, talk about how wind can remind us of God's power, the Holy Spirit.

Jewish tradition says that the Ten Commandments were given to the children of Israel on the Pentecost. Read Exodus 19-20 or a Bible story based on it.

Review the Ten Commandments. Talk about how God's Holy Spirit gives us the power to obey God's law.

MEMORY VERSE:

Ephesians 1:22-23 "He...gave Him [Jesus] to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."