

# SABBATH SCHOOL

## Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

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Level 5 • Unit 8 • Week 4

### PENTECOST

[Editor's note to teacher: The lessons of Unit 8 contain a great deal of information. You are not expected to present it in its entirety. We chose not to change what the writer had included, but just inform you that you may concentrate on those areas you feel would be helpful to your class without feeling the need to cover all the material.]

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

To explain the meaning of Pentecost and to show that the giving of the Holy Spirit is the next progressive step and adds to the meaning of the first two festivals.

#### **ATTENTION GETTER:**

Say: Almost seven weeks have passed since the time machine set down near Jerusalem, the morning before Passover. You and David have become close friends. The owner of the large house has given you work and a small room behind the servants quarters and you thank him for his generosity and kindness.

As each day slips by, you become more and more anxious to return to the "present," but you dare not go near your time machine because of the Roman soldiers, who seem to be always watching everyone. Suddenly you are chilled by the thought that someone may have found your machine or maybe the earthquake that happened when Christ died damaged it. How would you ever return to the present? Perhaps David would help you get past the Roman soldiers and far enough out of the city so that you could slip unnoticed into the woods. From there, you could go alone and David would not have to know about the time machine.

That evening, you explain to David that you need his help to get to that deserted area of woods several miles outside the city.

"Tomorrow is Pentecost—some call it the Feast of Firstfruits. I will be going with my parents to hear the disciples speak," said David.

“Could we go after sunset? You would only need to guide me to that side road that is not traveled often,” you ask, hoping he would say yes.

David thought a bit and then said, “People from all parts of the known world will be here for Pentecost. There will be Parthians, Medes and Elamites. Some will have traveled from as far away as Egypt, Rome and Asia. There will be so many people that the soldiers won’t be able to watch everyone. Yes, I’ll take you.”

Just as the sun begins to set, David comes out of the servants’ quarters and motions to you, “Let’s go,” he whispers.

After you and David have left the city behind and are nearing the side road, you begin to tell him that you must leave Jerusalem and return to your home. “I will always remember your friendship and your help. Thank your parents and everyone else for me for their kindness.”

“Perhaps you will return one day,” David says with hope in his voice.

“I hope we will see each other again someday,” you say.

You give each other a bear hug, turn in opposite directions and hurry on your separate ways. The moon casts enough light for you to read your compass, which you had carefully kept hidden. After what seemed like an eternity, you see the mound of underbrush that you used to cover the time machine. Hurriedly, you remove the underbrush and climb aboard. You take special care to press all the right buttons and numbers but nothing happens. You begin to panic and then a light starts flashing a message—“THE WAY.” What is the way? What does it mean? Finally you think to ask God for His help in understanding the message so you can return home.

Thoughts about the Ten Commandments come to your mind. Another light begins to flash a message. It says: “LIST GOD’S TEN COMMANDMENTS IN ORDER. THIS WILL GUIDE YOU IN ‘THE WAY’ YOU SHOULD GO.”

Say: Before we can return to the “present,” let’s list the Ten Commandments in order. What is the First Commandment, the Second, etc.

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make unto you any graven image, nor bow down to them nor serve them.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet.

Say: After we list the Ten Commandments, the time machine begins to slowly lift. Once it clears the trees, it takes off. Just like before, you see a whole panorama of events. Nations rising and waning, Columbus discovering America, men signing the Declaration of Independence and finally the time machine returns you to the exact moment you left. No one missed you, but you had a difficult time explaining the clothes you were wearing.

## **BIBLE LESSON:**

### **WHAT IS A FIRSTFRUIT?**

Jesus used the physical harvest seasons that the people knew and understood to explain the deeper spiritual meaning of the Holy Days. During the Days of Unleavened Bread, on the night after the weekly Sabbath, they were to cut a small handful of barley and bring it to the priest to be accepted by God the Father. Only after God accepted the small handful of barley called the wavesheaf could the spring harvest begin. Then the harvest continued, and seven weeks later (50 days starting with the day the wavesheaf was offered) there was another harvest festival. It was sometimes called the Feast of Weeks (we call it Pentecost). But it also pictured the first harvest—a larger group of firstfruits.

The small handful of barley or wavesheaf that the priest waved before God pictured the resurrected Christ, being accepted of God. Christ was the very first human to be actually born of God. He was the first of the firstfruits in God's spiritual harvest. Those people who have received God's Holy Spirit and have kept His word are the spiritual firstfruits being harvested by God pictured by Pentecost. The physical harvesting of crops is likened to the spiritual harvesting of those people who have been called and chosen by God.

What is a firstfruit? Who is the first of the firstfruits?

### **HOW TO BECOME A FIRSTFRUIT**

When God calls you and gives you a measure of understanding of His truth, you should build upon that truth. Study your Bible and prove those truths that you have been taught so it will make a deeper impression on your mind. You will be less likely to forget them. When tempted to do something that you know is wrong, pray and ask God to give you the strength to do what is right. Take care not to get overly involved in the things of this world. Put God first and allow Him to guide you in following His righteous way. Act on each truth that you learn and make these truths a part of your life. Obedience to God's Commandments will mature you spiritually and will become evident by the fruit you bear. The good works or fruit you bear should be above and beyond the minimum requirement of obeying God's Commandments. Continue in making your calling sure by going on to the next step, which is repentance.

### **REPENTANCE AND BAPTISM**

Act 2:38 "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Learning and understanding God's truth brings about awareness that our actions and attitudes are con-

trary to God's way. The ways of human nature do not bring happiness—only God's way will do that. The realization of having broken God's laws brings repentance or sorrow for misdeeds. It is impossible to keep from breaking God's spiritual laws without God's help.

His help comes through His Holy Spirit—the next step in becoming a firstfruit. The complete immersion into water which represents the “grave” is a deep spiritual symbolism of burying the “old self.” Then comes the resurrection of the “new self” symbolized by being taken out of the water. Then there will be a laying on of hands by one of God's ministers asking God to bless you with a downpayment of His Holy Spirit.

What are the steps Christians must go through before they receive God's Holy Spirit?

#### THE VALUE OF BEING A FIRSTFRUIT

Pentecost or the Feast of Firstfruits pictures the first part of the spiritual harvests. Those who have God's Holy Spirit and understand His master plan are God's firstfruits. He has made His wonderful truths plain to them. Since God is not dealing with the rest of the world at this time, they will not be spared from the terrible times to come.

#### GOD GIVES HIS HOLY SPIRIT AND ESTABLISHES HIS CHURCH

When the Day of Pentecost A.D. 31 came, the disciples met together in one place. Suddenly the rushing sound of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. What seemed to be tongues of fire, separated and came to rest on each of the disciples. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Because it was the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven were staying in Jerusalem. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in wonder because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

“How can this be?” they asked. “Aren't these speakers from Galilee? How can each of us be hearing them in our own language? We come from many countries from different parts of the world. We are from Parthia, Media and Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia and Asia. Many of us have traveled from Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene and Rome to observe this Feast of Pentecost.”

“What does this mean?” they asked one another.

Then Peter stood up with the 11 apostles, and in a loud voice, he addressed the crowd: “Men and brethren, listen carefully and I will explain this to you. The prophet Joel spoke centuries before concerning this. He said, ‘In the last days,’ God says, ‘I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams: and also on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy.’”

## WHY DO WE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Each of the seven festivals progressively builds upon the preceding one. The first step in God's plan of salvation is the Passover and it serves to remind us that Jesus paid for our sins with His life. The second step, the Days of Unleavened Bread, reminds us to quit sinning in our actions and attitudes and obey God's laws. Pentecost is the third step and it pictures God giving His Holy Spirit to those who have truly repented and are trying to obey His laws to the best of their ability. God's Holy Spirit is needed because it leads us into even more of God's truth and gives us the desire and power to be obedient to God's laws.

Human nature seeks to do the easy and convenient thing, ignoring what God says is right and good for us. God's Holy Spirit gives us the spiritual power and strength to override the weakness of our human nature. Without God's Holy Spirit we can do nothing.

### LESSON APPLICATION:

Say: God gave us the Ten Commandments so we would learn how to live in peace with our fellow man. Many people have no knowledge about God's Ten Commandments. Let's for a moment try to envision what life would be like if everyone obeyed just one of God's laws. Give your thoughts on what your life and the life of others would be like.

1. What if no one lied? What do you think this world would be like?
2. What if no one stole? How would this world be changed?
3. What if people had respect for life and did not murder? Wouldn't that end a lot of heartache?
4. What if everyone honored their father and mother?
5. What if everyone obeyed the First Commandment "You shall have no other gods before Me"? What effect would that have on society?

### MUSIC:

Teacher's choice from the United Church of God hymnal.

### MEMORY VERSE:

1 Corinthians 15:23 "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming."

# *family activity*

**THE POINT:**

This week's lesson has been about Pentecost, the feast that pictures the firstfruits of God's harvest.

**FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:**

Take turns with your son or daughter reading Exodus 20:1-17 about the Ten Commandments. According to Jewish tradition God gave the Ten Commandments on the first Pentecost in the wilderness.

Also read Acts 2:1-12 and 36-39 which is about God giving His Holy Spirit to those who have repented and are baptized. Discuss with your child about God giving His Holy Spirit to help us obey His laws and why it was necessary.

**MEMORY VERSE:**

1 Corinthians 15:23 "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming."