

A NOTE TO PARENTS

There is a joke about a missionary who was teaching a class on the Trinity. The class looked more and more puzzled, till finally one member stood up, folded his hands, and bowed respectfully. "Please," he said, "Honorable Father, very good. Honorable Son, good also. Honorable Bird, we do not understand at all."

I remember praying very hard, at the age of twelve or thirteen, for an understanding of the Holy Spirit. Like the missionary Bible class members, I had powerful mental images of God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. But on the Holy Spirit, I drew a complete blank.

What I did not realize then, is that in the very act of praying, I was working intimately and powerfully by and with the Holy Spirit. We do not have clear and emotionally affecting mental images of the Spirit, because the Spirit is the very power working within us that enables us to image and love the Father and the Son. The Spirit is the voice of prayer, praying through us when we turn with love and longing to our Creator and beg to be made new in the image of Jesus. The Spirit is, one might say, the electrical current that enables us to turn on the television set where we see the image of God in Christ; the Spirit is what connects us to each other and to God, so that a movement of atoms in my brain becomes living speech, understandable to you. Without the Spirit, we would all be in unending solitary confinement, locked within ourselves.

The Pentecostal images of fire, wind, and speech are all forces that move, invisibly, to animate and set in motion. The other image for the Spirit, a dove, combines the idea of arrow-like flight with a deep sense of benediction and peace. But these are not the only ways we can approach the Giver of Life. Try drawing pictures with your child of times when you have felt very close to God. Your picture need not be realistic: just something that reminds you of the feeling that you got from the experience. The picture itself, and the act of telling about it, become images of the Spirit, who is always seeking to open our lips and our hearts.

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*They were all filled with the HOLY SPIRIT,
and began to tell the good news
in many languages!*

ACTS 2:4



TODAY IS PENTECOST.

After Jesus went away to be with God, his friends stayed together.

They waited and prayed. Suddenly, they felt a powerful wind!



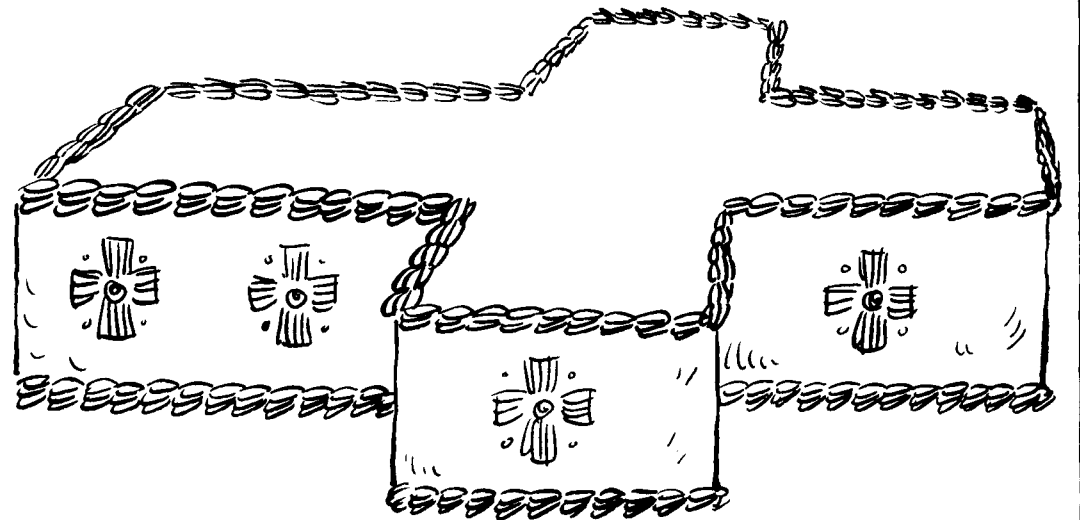
They saw sparks of fire on each other's heads! God's Spirit had come to them.

They were filled with love and power. They spread the Good News far and wide.



Jesus promised his friends that he would not abandon them when he went back to God. His power and love would be inside them all the time. They would be able to teach many different kinds of people about God's love. They would be the beginning of God's CHURCH.

PENTECOST is the day when this began to come true. We call it "the birthday of the Church."



God's Church is nearly 2000 years old. How many candles can you draw on its birthday cake?