

ASCENSION AND PENTECOST

“... THE HOLY SPIRIT
WILL TEACH YOU...”



*Orthodox
Spiritual Resources
for
Ascension and Pentecost*

COMMISSION ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
ROMANIAN ORTHODOX EPISCOPATE
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ASCENSION / PENTECOST

PREFACE

After publishing a resource booklet on The Bible, on The Nativity Through Epiphany and another on Easter Lent Through the Resurrection, the Commission on Religious Education had requests for a similar booklet on Ascension and Pentecost.

Thus, church school teachers, AROY members and other interested persons will now have resource materials for the most important church seasons of the year. Being primarily completed for our church schools, besides the basic information, we have tried to include as many teaching aids, ideas and projects as possible.

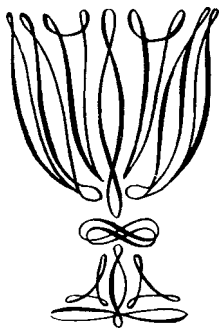
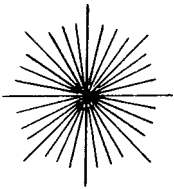
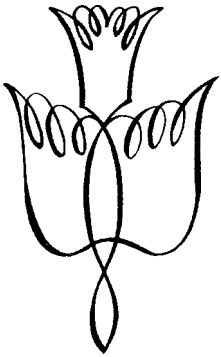
Church school teachers can also come up with their own projects and activities. Should Pentecost come after church school lets out, the material should be covered prior to that.

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Did You Know....



1. Great Vespers on Easter Sunday is known as "Second Resurrection" or "Second Easter," since the service is almost the same as Easter Matins.
2. The Gospel is read in many languages at the Easter Vesper service to denote that it should be preached to all peoples.
3. The week after Easter is known as "Bright Week" or "Week of Lights." The lights in church are kept bright -- to symbolize that the resurrected Christ is the light of the world and that the empty tomb was filled with light.
4. From Easter to the following Sunday (of St. Thomas), the doors of the sanctuary are kept open to signify that Christ has opened the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven through his Resurrection.
5. There is no fasting on any day during "Bright Week," which the Church considers as one continuous Feast Day of rejoicing.
6. To emphasize the joy of the Resurrection, there is no kneeling from Easter to Pentecost. The faithful start to kneel again only after the special Kneeling Service on Pentecost Day.
7. The special Paschal hymns are sung at all services instead of the regular hymns from Easter to Ascension.
8. The salutation of the faithful up to Ascension Day is: "Christ is risen" to which the response "Truly He is risen" is given.

9. Funeral services during Bright Week differ greatly from the regular funeral service in that the joyful hymns of the Resurrection are sung and the priest is vested in light vestments.
10. In some churches, a bread stamped with the seal of the Cross or the Resurrection, known as Artos, is consecrated, carried in procession, broken and distributed as antidoron at the Saturday of St. Thomas.
11. The first Sunday after Easter is known as St. Thomas Sunday and also as Renewal Sunday, because the Resurrection Service is repeated and renewed.
12. On the Friday after Easter, the service of the Life-Giving Fountain of the Resurrection commemorates the consecration of the church built on the spot of that fountain in Constantinople.
13. Eating of fish is permitted on the Wednesdays and Fridays from St. Thomas Sunday to Pentecost.
14. Pentecost is known as "Holy Spirit Sunday," since there is a special Kneeling Service of the Invocation of the Holy Spirit.
15. At the Pentecost Service, some people hold flowers and the church is decorated with green branches to symbolize renewal of life through the Holy Spirit, as the greens are tokens of renewal of nature in the spring. Straw is sometimes spread on the floor and as people walk over it, the rustling symbolizes the breath of the Holy Spirit.
16. There is no fasting during the week after Pentecost.
17. The Sunday after Pentecost is known as All-Saints Sunday to commemorate those saints who have no special Saint Day and whose names are known only to God.
18. The moveable services end with All-Saints Sunday (the Sunday after Pentecost).

40 DAYS AFTER EASTER: ASCENSION

50 DAYS AFTER EASTER: PENTECOST

SUNDAYS AND FEAST DAYS FROM THE RESURRECTION THROUGH PENTECOST

The time between the Resurrection and Pentecost is always the same and the Sundays have fixed names relating to the Gospel read on such and such a Sunday after the Resurrection, except the 6th. Their order:

1. St. Thomas Sunday
2. Sunday of the Ointment Bearing Women
3. Sunday of the Paralytic
Wednesday, "Mid-Pentecost"
4. Sunday of the Samaritan Woman
5. Sunday of the Man Born Blind
Wednesday Before Ascension (closes the Resurrection season)
Ascension (always on a Thursday)
6. Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 1st Council of Nicea
Friday before Pentecost (closes the Ascension Feast)
Saturday Before Pentecost - "Saturday of the Dead"
7. Pentecost Sunday

ST. THOMAS SUNDAY: *St. John 20, 19-end*

On the Sunday following the Resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples. He came and entered miraculously and showed them his wounds. Then he ate with them, thus showing that he was not a ghost nor a phantom, but that he was truly resurrected from the dead.

Thomas, one of the twelve, was not there on that occasion and he did not believe the others when they told him that Jesus had come and stood among them. Thus, Christ came on the following Sunday, or eight days later, and called Thomas to himself by touching the sacred wounds. This Thomas did and cried out in worship: "My Lord and my God!"

This is a fitting subject for the first Sunday after the Resurrection. Many people have heard but have not seen the risen body of Christ. Still, it is not necessary to touch physically but to be spiritually moved by God's presence and the truth of his promise that all men will be resurrected on the day God appoints...either to eternal joy with God or to eternal torment

without God. It is in this manner of teaching the importance of faith in the Resurrection that St. Peter wrote in his first letter: "You did not see him (Christ), yet you loved him; and still without seeing him, you are already filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because you believe; and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls." (1st P.1:8)

SUNDAY OF THE OINTMENT BEARING WOMEN: St. Mark 15:43-16:8

Many Jews believed that Jesus was the Messiah or Christ and they followed him throughout his ministry, listening, assisting, and giving witness. Among these are the seven women called the "Ointment Bearers," because they went to anoint the dead body of our Lord after he was laid in the tomb. They are:

Mary of Magdala (Magdalene)
Mary, the mother of James and Joses, wife of Cleofas
Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod Antipas' steward
Salome, mother of the sons of Zebedee
Susanna
Mary and Martha, sisters of Lazarus(who was raised from the dead)

In addition to these pious women we remember Joseph and Nicodemus, the secret disciples of Christ. Joseph was a wealthy man of the city of Rama or Arimathea and a member of the Privy Council of Jerusalem. After the crucifixion, he was courageous enough to go to Pilate to beg for the body of Christ so that it could be properly buried. We must remember that Jesus died the death of a despised criminal and this action of Joseph, a rich man, was indeed bold. The garden in which the tomb was hewn belonged to Joseph. The tomb was his own, as there was no time to carve out a second one for Christ as the entire crucifixion happened very rapidly and in great emotion. (Mt. 27:60)

Nicodemus lived in Jerusalem and was a leader of one of the sects of the Pharisees. He was a learned man in the Law and Scripture. He had "secret" encounters with Christ and came to believe in him.

Both these men took the body of Christ off the cross and with the women hastily anointed it, intending to complete the unction on the day after the Sabbath or Lord's Day, on which day such works were not allowed.

The Winding Sheet or Epitaf shows these women and men in the act of love and final respect to the body of Jesus. It would be a good thing to point this out to the students.

SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC: *St. John 5:1-15*

Near one of the gates of Jerusalem, the Sheep Gate, because of the sheep and animals which passed through it on their way to be sacrificed in the Temple, there was also a pool known as the Sheep Pool. Many people stayed under the porch which was built over this water. They waited for the waters to be agitated, a sign that the guardian angel of the pool was present. The first person into the waters was usually cured.

Near this activity sat a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years. At the Passover in the Year 32, Christ came by and seeing the man cured him, not lowering him into the waters, but by the word he spoke.

This teaches that Christ is more powerful than the guardian angel, because he is higher than the angels; he is God. Also, that as God he does not need to use objects such as the waters to heal. His word is effective enough. The Gospel is read at this point after the Resurrection to remind us that God created man and came to save him from illnesses and death which came about from man's disobedience to God. We are reminded that God, the creator, is thus also the healer and savior of man in all and every infirmity and state of life.

Jesus cured the man on a Sabbath or the Lord's Day, and this was a point of contention for the leaders of the Jews.

WEDNESDAY: "MID-PENTECOST": *St. John 7:14-31*

This feast is halfway between the Resurrection and Pentecost. It follows the Sunday of the Paralytic as a continuation of the historical event. The Gospel begins by saying: "When the festival was half over, Jesus went to the Temple and began to teach." After Christ had healed the Paralytic on a Sabbath, the Pharisees and Scribes wanted to kill him for not observing the Law. Jesus points out that they are disobedient to the law and that healing a man is not breaking the Sabbath. That Christ, uneducated as he appeared to the schooled leaders of the Jews, should try to teach them and interpret the Law only infuriated them more.

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN: *John 4:5-42*

The Samaritans were not Jews but were pagans who believed in some of the Hebrew teachings but continued to worship idols. The Jews rejected them and would have nothing to do with them. Christ, seeking a drink of water from a Samaritan woman, extends to these people the invitation to believe in the fullness of the true religion and that he is the Messiah.

The woman was an outcast of her own people as she was an adulteress, and this is why she came alone at the hottest time of the day to get water. Usually, drawing water was a delightful task to the women, because they exchanged news and shared with one another. The outcast woman had to come alone under the heat, and thus it was an odious chore for her.

Christ, often called the "Fountain of Life" and other names referring to refreshing water, promised her relief from her present miserable life if she believed in him. She, like the ointment bearing women, took the good news of Christ's presence in the world to her fellow citizens and was, thus, a type of "evangelist."

This encounter and invitation is in contrast to the encounter and temptation of Eve in Paradise. As Eve was tempted and gave in to her tempter, the serpent-devil, so the Samaritan accepted the word of God and gained Paradise.

This woman was converted and baptized. Her name is St. Fotine(February 26) and with her five sisters and two sons, she preached the Gospel and suffered martyrdom during the Neronian persecution. Her sisters are Anatole, Foto, Fotes, Paraskiva and Kyriake. Her sons are Fotinus and Josef.

SUNDAY OF THE MAN BORN BLIND : St. John 9 :1-38

In this healing, again taking place on a Sabbath, Jesus heals a man blind from birth. By spitting on the ground and forming a clay, Jesus dabbed this on the man's eyes and told him to wash in the Pool of Siloam.

Jesus sent him to wash his eyes in the pool, not because the waters had special healing properties but because he wished to test the faith of the man and his obedience. Also, he wanted others to observe the miracle and to know what had happened and to witness it.

Later, this man was taken before the authorities because he broke the Law on a Sabbath by washing and because he was healed by Jesus on the Lord's Day. The man was rejected by his parents, who feared the authorities, and thus he stood up alone and confessed the name of his healer. He debated with the teachers of the Law and in his simple way preached the Gospel. He was approached by Jesus, who told him that he was sent by God, and the man worshipped Jesus.



Wednesday before Ascension (closes the Resurrection season)

From the Resurrection until this day, many hymns have been repeated daily to keep us in the joy of the Resurrection. On this day we cease singing these hymns, such as "Christ is Risen," and we prepare for Pentecost.

ASCENSION: St. Luke, 24:36-end

See "Meaning and Importance of the Ascension."

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS

The holy fathers remembered on this day are the 318 bishops who gathered in the city of Nicea in Bithynia (now in Turkey) to defend the true Faith. The year was 325.

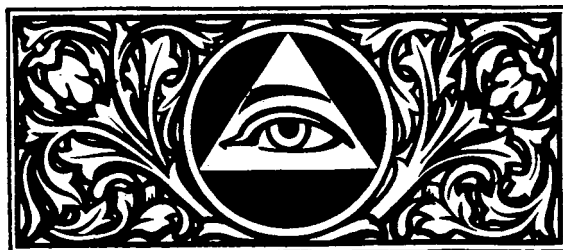
It was called by Constantin the Great, the emperor who is also a saint. He called it to bring peace to the empire, for the Church was torn by the teaching of the heretic Arius. People took sides and chaos resulted, because there was no clear and defined teaching about the natures of Jesus Christ.

Arius said that Christ was not truly God. Thus, the holy fathers in this First Ecumenical Council taught that Jesus Christ is equal to the Father; he is true God of true God, as we say today in the Creed. These fathers taught the true or orthodox Faith. In the Second Ecumenical Council it was taught that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are both equal to the Father, being God.

This feast is for the glorification of God and his praise and to honor and laud the fathers of the councils for establishing firmly the Orthodox Faith.

FRIDAY BEFORE PENTECOST (close of the Feast of the Ascension)

On this day, we sing the hymns of the Feast of the Ascension for a final time. The preparation for Pentecost is heightened.



SATURDAY BEFORE PENTECOST: *St. John, 5:24-30*

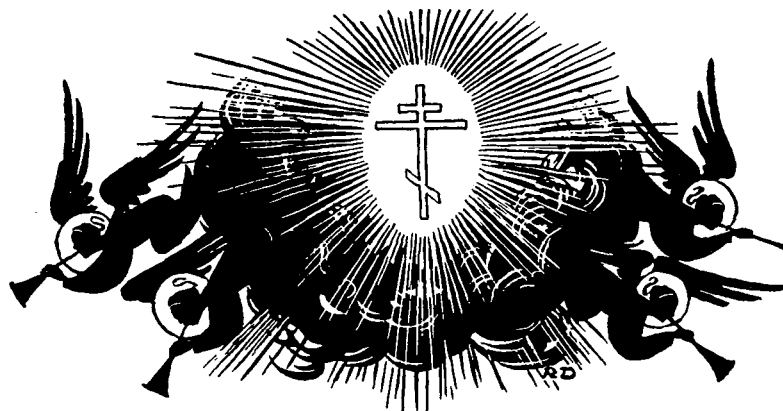
On this day we have a memorial for all those who have fallen asleep in the Lord since all ages.

One of the ancient directives of the Apostles is that we should hold memorial services at regular periods. The Church remembers all those asleep in the Lord, petitioning God to be compassionate on sinners. She does this in confidence of God's great mercy.

Also, in remembering the dead, we, too, are reminded of death. We are or should be moved to remorse and repent.

PENTECOST

See "Meaning and Importance of Pentecost."





THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF THE ASCENSION

For forty days after his resurrection, Jesus remained on earth. Filled with the glory or honor of his divinity he appeared to his disciples at various times and places. By eating and drinking with his followers and conversing with them about the Kingdom of God, Jesus assured them that he was truly alive in his risen and glorified body. When we speak of Christ's glorified body, we refer to its honor, splendor, majesty and visible radiance. Christ's risen and glorified body gave off rays of bright light. The glorification of Jesus refers to his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven.

On the fortieth day after his resurrection, he told his followers to remain in Jerusalem because in a few days they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. (*See Acts 1:1-12 and Luke 24:13-53*) Christ ascends to Heaven and sends the Holy Spirit to the world. The Spirit comes to reconcile and reunite the world with God. Christ's body is in Heaven and his Spirit is here on earth. Ascension is a sign of the coming of the Spirit and a symbol of Pentecost.

The time span of forty days is sometimes used symbolically in the Bible to indicate a time period signifying an appropriate amount of time of completeness. Ascension falls on the fortieth day after the Resurrection. On this day Jesus appeared to his disciples and gave them his last commandment--to preach the Kingdom of God and the repentance and forgiveness of sins in

his name to all nations, beginning with Jerusalem. Then he led them out of Jerusalem toward Bethany to the Mount of Olives. He lifted his hands and blessed them. As his disciples were looking on, he was lifted up, or ascended, and a cloud took him out of sight. While they were looking up, two men (angels) in white robes appeared and said to them: "Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into Heaven, this same Jesus, will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there."

The Ascension is, therefore, also a sign and symbol of the Second Coming. Christ will return to the earth in the same manner as he left it. When the risen Lord returns again in glory, God's will for mankind will be accomplished or fulfilled.

On this day Jesus completed his earthly mission of bringing salvation to all people and physically was lifted up from this world into Heaven. The meaning and the fullness of Christ's resurrection is given in the ascension. Having completed his mission in this world as the Savior, he returned to the Father in Heaven who had sent him into the world. In ascending to the Father he raises earth to Heaven with him.

The Symbol of Faith, or the Creed, which summarizes the important doctrines and teachings of the Church, contains the words: "And ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father." The importance and meaning of this feast is that Jesus glorified, or honored, our fallen and sinful humanity when he returned to the Father. In Jesus, who is perfect God and perfect man, man is reunited with God. At his birth Jesus took on human nature. Through his Ascension he deified this human nature, or made it divine, by taking his human body to heaven with him and giving it a place of honor at the right hand of the Father. With Christ man's nature also ascends. Through Christ man becomes a "partaker of divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4) When Christ became man he took on human nature and we share our human nature with him. It is through Christ who is perfect God and perfect man that we "partake of divine nature." When we say that Christ is sitting at the right hand of the Father, we mean that man has been restored to communion with God because Christ gives his humanity, which he shares with us, a permanent place of honor in Heaven. Christ honors us by putting us close to the Father.

On Ascension Day the Church does not merely commemorate an historical event in the life of Christ. On this day the Church also celebrates Christ's physical departure from the world and his glorification with God the Father. We celebrate with the same great joy the apostles had when they were promised that the Holy Spirit would come to bear witness to the presence of Christ in the Church. Ascension Day is joyful, not only because Christ is glorified but also because we are glorified with him. We are joyful because he goes to "prepare a place" for us and because he is forever present before the Father to intercede for us.



One of the fruits of the Ascension is the existence of the Church. Ascension leads us to the day of Pentecost, the day of the coming of the Spirit and the founding of the Church. It is in the Church that man's nature ascends to Heaven. In the Church, through acquisition of the Spirit and participation in the sacraments and the liturgical life of the Church, the ascension to Heaven continues.



Ascension of Jesus Christ

"... HE PARTED FROM THEM
AND WAS TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN."

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR ASCENSION

Vespers: *Isaiah 2:2-3*
 Isaiah 62:10 to end; 63:1-3; 7-9
 Zechariah 14:1; 8-11

Liturgy: *Acts 1:1-12*
 Luke 24:36-53

HYMNS FOR ASCENSION

Tropar: Tone 4

You ascended in glory, Christ our God, making the disciples joyful by the promise of the Holy Spirit. And this blessing convinced them that you are the Son of God, the Savior of the World!

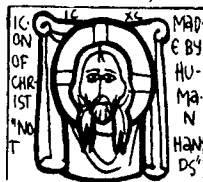
Kontak: Tone 6

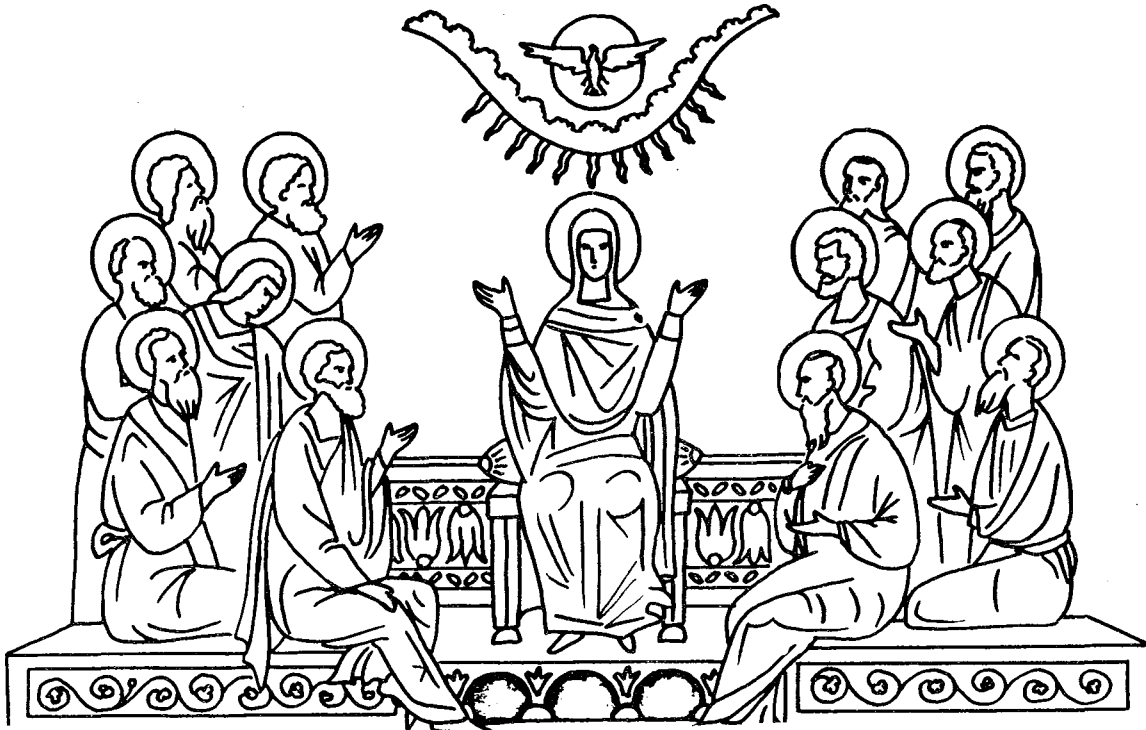
Having fulfilled the plan of salvation concerning us and joining the earthly to the heavenly, you ascended in glory, O Christ our God, not being separated from us but remaining close by. Therefore you cry out to those who love you: I am with you and no one can overcome you.

Hymn to the Birthgiver of God:

O my soul! Praise Christ the giver of life who has ascended from earth to heaven!

We faithful with one accord bless you, O Mother of God, who are above our understanding and beyond our explaining, who gave birth in an expressible manner in time to the timeless one!





MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF PENTECOST

The account of the day of Pentecost in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles begins: "When Pentecost day came round, they had all met in one room..." The word Pentecost refers to a Jewish feast which lasted fifty days and ended on the day of Pentecost. In Greek Pentecost means fifty. The Pentecost of the Jewish people begins at Passover time when the harvest is completed. For this reason Pentecost is also called the Feast of the First-Fruits. The first day of the Pentecost season is called the Feast of Sheaves while the last day is called the Feast of Weeks because it occurs seven weeks after the beginning of the feast. This harvest season was a very joyful one for the Jewish people. Because the first Christians were Jews, they celebrated many feasts in common with the Jews just as Christ did. However, it soon became clear that the Christian Pentecost season took on a new meaning.

For the earliest Christians, Pentecost referred to the entire seven week period following the Christian Pascha (or Passover) which is commonly referred to as Good Friday and Easter. The Paschal feast celebrated the incarnation (taking on human flesh) of Christ, the death, the resurrection, the ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost meant the entire Paschal season. The content of Pentecost is Christ's resurrection and, therefore, the entire seven weeks between the day of the Resurrection and the day of Pentecost is a period of rest and great joy. There is no fasting during the week after Easter and Pentecost and we stand while praying as a sign of the Resurrection and journey toward the future life.

Christ's resurrection can be considered as the first fruit of our salvation since Christ died and rose from the dead in order to bring us eternal life. Christ is the first-born among the dead. Just as in the Old Testament Pentecost was a feast of the first-fruits, so in the New Testament Pentecost is also a feast of the first-fruits.

For the Jewish people the number fifty was a very significant number. It was considered a symbol of the remission or cancellation of debts. While the Jews associated the number fifty with the forgiveness of debts, the early Christians associated Pentecost (which means fifty) with the forgiveness of sins. At the Vespers of Pentecost Sunday evening, three long prayers are read, at which time the faithful kneel for the first time since Holy Week. Many of these prayers deal with the forgiveness of sins.

Fifty is also a sign of the Resurrection. One of the early names for Pentecost was the Great Sunday. In this sense Pentecost is also associated with the resurrection in the future life. The days of Pentecost are a symbol of eternal life.

In the Fourth Century (the 300's) the Church found it necessary to separate the Pentecost season into separate feasts. At this time Christ's Resurrection was assigned a special day for its celebration, as was the Ascension forty days later, and Pentecost which began to be celebrated on the fiftieth day after Resurrection. This change occurred partly under the influence of pilgrimages to Jerusalem which tended to emphasize historical events and partly out of the need of the Church to replace pagan feasts with Christian ones and to emphasize the teachings of the Church. Therefore, it was at this time that Pentecost began to mean more, especially the last day of the Paschal--or Easter--period.

The Pentecost of the Christians, of course, is marked by the gift of the Holy Spirit and by the calling of all nations into the Church. (*See Acts 2:1-13*) On the first Pentecost day the apostles spoke a universal language, which symbolized and anticipated the worldwide mission of the apostles. The unity which was lost at the building of the Tower of Babel, when there was a confusion of languages, was restored on Pentecost Day with this universal language. The Holy Spirit unites the Church.

For the Jews of Christ's time, the Jewish feast of Pentecost also celebrated God's giving of the Law (The Ten Commandments) to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Church, of course, looked upon the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost as the coming of the "new law." The Holy Spirit, whom Christ said would come (*John 14:26, 15:26; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5*) did come on the Day of Pentecost and continues to be present in the Church even today. Because the Holy Spirit descended on Christ's apostles on this day, Pentecost Day is called the birthday of the Church. From this day forward the Church has been guided in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost—Birthday of the Church



Pentecost is 50 days after Christ's Resurrection, the year 33 A.D. The Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles. St. Luke relates it as follows: "And when the days of Pentecost were drawing to a close, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a violent wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as of fire, which settled upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in foreign tongues, even as the Holy Spirit prompted them to speak." (*Acts 2, 1-4*)

These simple people were transformed. Something had happened. They were no more fearful as during the trying days before Calvary and after. They were full of courage and enthusiasm. They had a supernatural vitality.

The Bible says they spoke in "tongues." They preached Christ to the people who had assembled in Jerusalem in their own language. They defended the teaching of Christ before the Jews, who had crucified him just a few weeks before.

People stood up and took notice. They began to realize that Christ was truly the Messiah.

On the day of Pentecost, through their fervent preaching and the miracle performed at the gates of the Temple, which was crowded with pilgrims, 3,000 persons accepted Christ. This was the nucleus of the first organized Church.

These pilgrims returned to their homes enthused and very much moved. They became the first missionaries. Small Christian communities started to spring up in the most unexpected places -- and in far-off places. The Mustard seed was planted...and it was growing into something big.

The Apostles fanned out from Jerusalem to spread the good news of Christ. St. Thomas reached as far as India. St. Andrew preached in what today are Romania and Russia. St. Mark went to Ethiopia. The other Apostles preached throughout Asia Minor.

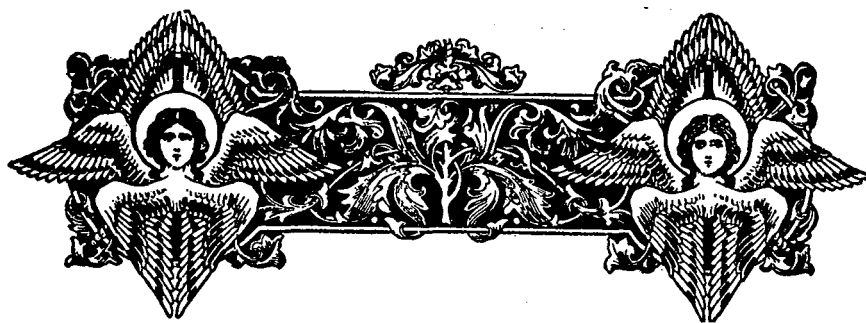
Converts were being made daily in great numbers. Among them was Saul, who became St. Paul. He undertook the most extensive missionary journeys. He electrified the people. He founded many communities. He wrote epistles. He clarified doubts. The whole Mediterranean basin was under his sway. The Jews, Greeks and Romans were taken aback. The Christians were making themselves known. Many of them died martyrs' deaths.

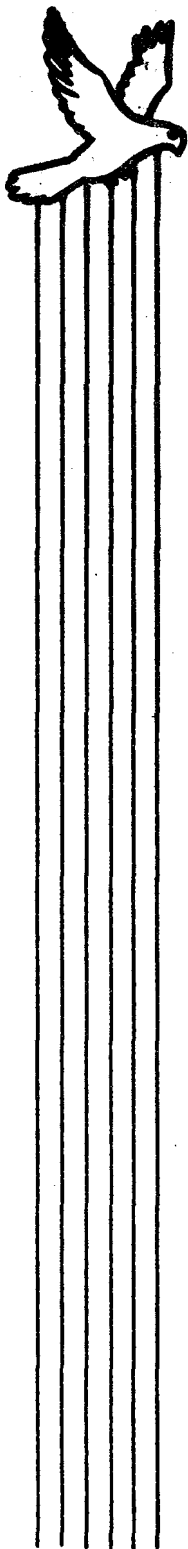
Finally, Emperor Constantin became Christian in the 4th Century and Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Christianity was carried to the barbarian people -- and beyond the confines of the Empire. St. Augustine evangelized England; St. Patrick, Ireland; Saints Methodius and Cyril, the Slavs; and so many others.

Beyond these missionary apostles stands an army of martyrs--men and women--who were thrown to the animals, tortured, burned at the stake, crucified, stabbed, stoned, spat on, who suffered all kinds of bodily torture, but never flinched, never forsook their faith, never quivered, never complained. They, too, were filled with the Holy Spirit, as were the Apostles on Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit -- Christ -- still is at the Head of the Church. It still performs miracles as it did on Pentecost! And no other Church has more reverence and love for the Holy Spirit than the Orthodox Church.





SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR PENTECOST "

Vespers: *Numbers 11:16-17; 24-29*
 Joel 2:23 to end
 Ezekiel 36:24-28

Liturgy: *Acts 2:1-11*
 John 7:37-52; 8:12

HYMNS FOR PENTECOST

Tropar: Tone 8

*Blessed are you, O Christ God, who have revealed
the fisherman to be most wise, by sending the
Holy Spirit down on them. You drew the world in-
to your net through them. O Lover of mankind,
glory to you!*

Kontak: Tone 8

*When the Most High came down and confused the
tongues of men, he divided the nations. But when
he distributed the tongues of fire, he called all
to unity. Therefore, with one voice we glorify
the all-holy Spirit!*

Hymn to the Birthgiver of God

*Rejoice, O queen and Mother! Glory of virgins!
No mouth, however clear and eloquent, can worth-
ily praise you! And every mind is overawed in
seeking to know your birthgiving. Therefore,
with one mind, we glorify you!*

The Holy Spirit (Pentecost)

Pentecost commemorates the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

Before ascending into Heaven (which event is commemorated on the 40th day after Easter), Jesus Christ promised that "I will pray to the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever...the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit... shall teach you all things."
(John 14, 16, 26)



Ever since, the Church has commemorated the event on Pentecost, which coincided with the ancient Jewish festival called the "Feast of Weeks."

That it was celebrated by the first Christians we have indications in the New Testament itself (*1 Corinthians 16,8; Acts 20, 16*) but Tertulian (*De Bapt. XIX*) indicates that the festival had already been established by the 2nd Century. The Apostolic Constitutions (V, xx, 17) say that Pentecost lasted on week.

In the early Church, many catechumens were baptized during this period. The Sunday is also known as the Sunday of the Holy Trinity, since with the descent of the Holy Spirit the Holy Trinity was made manifest.

The Orthodox Church has always given the Holy Spirit the importance it deserves as the third Person of the Holy Trinity.

The Orthodox Church has preserved the ancient teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, as is attested in John 15, 26-27 and formulated in the Nicaeo-Constantinopolitan Creed of the 4th Century. In a local Synod at Toledo (589) and Aix-la-Chapelle (809), the Western Church introduced the "Filioque" clause in the Creed, which caused much theological discussion and was one of the reasons of the schism in 1054. This teaching was also retained by the Reformers. The Orthodox Church has always denied the validity and truth of the "Filioque" teaching.

On Pentecost, a special Service invoking the Holy Spirit is officiated, while the congregation kneels. This is the first time the congregation is supposed to kneel after Easter.

The Orthodox Church has retained the "epeclesis" (invocation of the Holy Spirit) to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ during the Holy Liturgy. All meetings are also opened with the calling of the Holy Spirit to "come and abide among us and cleanse us from every stain and save our souls."



The Holy Trinity

The Monday following Pentecost Sunday is Holy Trinity. These two days are inevitably welded to each other. On Pentecost the final revelation was granted, man would from now on worship God in fuller and more complete understanding, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, One God in Three Persons.

This is a great mystery, and the central doctrine of the Christian Church. It cannot be known to us by unaided human reason, revelation such as that given us through the prophets and by the Lord Christ and the Holy Spirit is indispensable to our comprehension. Nor when it is thus revealed to us can it be conclusively demonstrated by pure reason, for it is above reason. At the same time this mystery is not contrary to reason nor incompatible with rational thought.

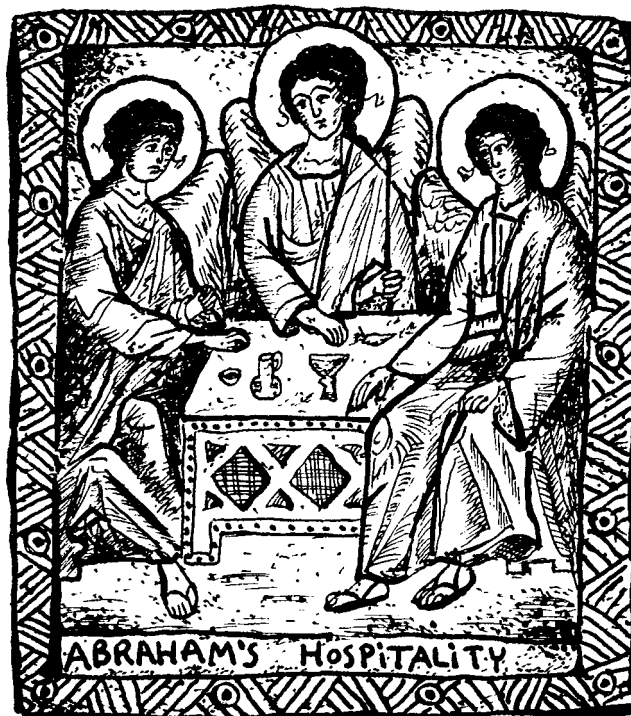
God is infinite; therefore, we--you and I--with our finite minds and finite conceptions cannot comprehend God in His plenitude. But God can reveal Himself to His Church as a whole and even to us individually. We are able to know God, for Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom those hast sent." (*John 17:5*) Knowledge of God, therefore, is not impossible to us; on the contrary, it should be the aim of our lives to come ever closer to Him and know Him better, although in this world we shall never attain full understanding.



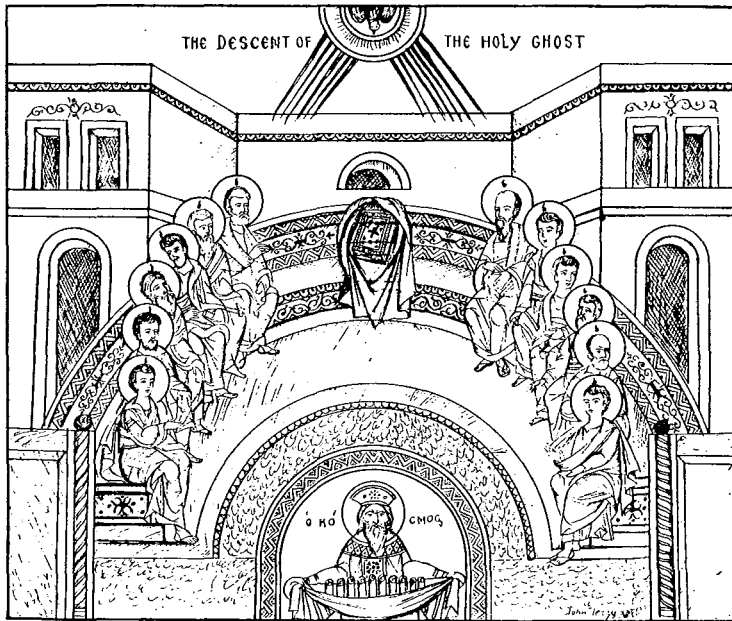
When we say God, we always mean Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If we do not, then our very starting point is faulty, we are building our house of faith on unsure foundations and the building is sure to sag at some point.

Let us take as a simile three lamps lighting up a room; they are individual lamps, yet the light they give is one light which cannot be singled into component parts. Even so in the Holy Trinity, there are Three Persons, but One Love. Therefore, the Christian claim that God is Love and that God is Trinity is not beyond rational thought nor is it beyond our comprehension that God is personal.

The Holy Trinity is ever with us, especially in our prayers. Each time we make the sign of the cross, blessing ourselves, we venerate the Trinity, we praise it at each doxology when we say: Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.



THE HOLY TRINITY: THEME OF PENTECOST



The icon representing the Holy Trinity is the one representing the scene of the three men enjoying the hospitality of Abraham under the oak at Mambre (*Gen. 18*). It shows the three men as having wings, signifying that they belong to the heavenly realm.

The event is historical and shows this first appearance of God to man and thus signifying the beginning of the promise of redemption.

The fulfillment of this promise is on Pentecost, when the entire revelation of the Holy Trinity is manifested. Thus, the icon of the "Hospitality of Abraham" ties together the Old and New Testaments.

Sometimes it is understood that the three angelic figures are meant to be the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. Others consider it to represent Christ and two angels. But there is little difference since the three or one represent the entire Trinity.

The painting, sometimes seen, of the Christ, an old man representing God the Father and a dove, is incorrect and was forbidden by the various Church Councils.

Because the Holy Trinity cannot be entirely known and to be shown in some way, the three angelic figures continue to be the best and true icon of the Holy Trinity.

OTHER NAMES FOR PENTECOST SUNDAY



PENTECOST, DAY OF BAPTISM

On the eve of the feast day of Pentecost, catechumens were baptized. The first date for baptism was the eve of the Pascha and the second, the eve of Pentecost. The English call it "Whitsunday" (White Sunday) because of the fact that the newly baptized appeared in white garments for the services of the day.

FLOWERS AND SPRING GREENS

The Indo-European races held a full spring festival at which time they decorated their homes and places of worship with flowers and greens. This is the origin of "May Day," the "May Pole," "May Queen," and such other customs of spring, less known in the United States than in England and Europe.

Some of this celebration was lavished on the Sunday of Pentecost. We decorate the churches and homes with spring flowers and leaves. This is the origin of the Romanian name "Duminica Rusalii." It comes from the Latin word "Roasatum," roses; Pascha Roasatum, Feast of Roses.





THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PENTECOST

The promise of Christ to send the Holy Spirit to abide in the church was visibly fulfilled on the last day of the feast of Pentecost, Sunday of Pentecost. Thus, another name given to this Sunday by the Romanians is "Duminica Pogorarea Duhului Sfânt," Descent of the Holy Spirit.

PENTECOST, TRINITY DAY

The Church celebrates not only the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, but also the full revelation of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In several of the special hymns for Pentecost Sunday, many references are made to the worship of the Trinity.

PENTECOST



Attention, All Teachers!

We are presenting a special article on the open classroom by Mrs. Laurence Lazar, who uses the idea so successfully in the Akron church school. It has been enjoyable and interesting, both to the teachers and students.

Some of our parishes with small church schools have asked for help in this respect. This may be a good way to combine various age groups with one or more teachers. It can be adapted to suit your own needs. If you try it, it might prove to be exciting and interesting -- as a new way to present the concept of Pentecost to the students.

Mrs. Vasile Hategan

PENTECOST

A Suggested Lesson Approach
by

Preoteasa Anita Lazar

Introductory Notes:

With the Ascension of Christ, Gregory the Theologian tells us, "the works of Christ while in the flesh finish, or rather, the works relating to His physical sojourn on earth; and the works of the Spirit commence."

Thus, with Pentecost begins the fulfillment of God the Father's promise -- the sending of His Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. Christ is no longer bodily present on earth as He was prior to and immediately following the Resurrection. He has now ascended to heaven. But He does not leave His people abandoned. He sends the Holy Spirit to continue the work which He has begun, by descending upon the Apostles and disciples and "inspiring" them in a very real and literal sense-- by "breathing into them LIFE."

In the Orthodox Church we have adopted an Old Testament custom during the season of Pentecost: the decorating of our churches and homes with green, growing things -- branches, plants and flowers. Thus, we express symbolically with these decorations the power of the Holy Spirit, as reviving, renewing, and giving life and blossom to all things.

In the Old Testament, the feast of Pentecost was a celebration commemorating the giving of the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. After the Ascension of Christ, God makes a new Covenant (a promise, a relationship) with the "New Israel" -- the Church. The grace of the law-giving Holy Spirit takes the place of the Law of Sinai.



Pentecost has been called the Baptism of the Church by fires,
as foretold by John the Baptist, the Forerunner:

*"I baptize you with water for repentance,
but he who is coming after me is mightier
than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to
carry; He will baptize you with the Holy
Spirit and with fire...."*

(Matthew 3:11)

Consider for a moment the simple properties of the fire image itself. The consuming heat, the power, the intensity, the purgative aspects, etc. All of these properties can certainly be related to the actuality of "tongues of fire" and the resulting effect of the Holy Spirit's descent upon the disciples.

In Pentecost we also see the fulfillment of the revelation concerning the Holy Trinity. Through the gifts of the Holy Spirit our hearts are opened as well as the "eyes" of our mind. We come to realize the full impact of Christ's sojourn on earth, of His teachings and commandments and their meanings for our lives, as well as our subsequent responsibilities. "On fire for Christ" becomes a very real and meaningful statement of being. The Apostles no longer cower in the upper room, fearful of arrest and death. They are now ready -- through the power of the Holy Spirit endowed with the necessary understanding -- to go forth and preach the Risen Christ to all men.

And, finally, Pentecost is also a call to unity. As God dispersed the proud and wicked at Babel by confusing their tongues (languages as well as actual speech), so now, through the Holy Spirit, the Apostles are given the gift to heal that confusion. They can be understood by men of all nations! (Acts 2:5-12)

Before concluding these brief remarks on significant aspects of the great feast of Pentecost, it is important also to refer to the descent of the Holy Spirit as separate tongues of fire, as depicted in many icons of the Church. These separate tongues point out not only the individuality, the "person"-ality of the Holy Spirit's descent, but also the diversity of the gifts which the Holy Spirit bestows. If we look carefully at the icon of the Descent of the Holy Spirit we will note that every figure is different in some way. No two are identical. For, as St. Paul elaborates in I Corinthians 11:1-31:



"... there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good...."

Lesson Planning:

The preceding Introductory Notes were intended, first of all, as background information for the church school teacher. Secondly, however, the notes were intended to present certain basic aspects or concepts which will be focused on in planning the lesson for Pentecost. These are the basic ideas that you, as teachers, are trying to get across to your children.

The suggested activity cards which follow are intended for use in an "open classroom" situation, i.e., in classrooms which have all together children ranging in ages from 5 to 13 years old (ages are roughly estimated). They are based on the idea that children learn differently at different stages in their development. Learning progresses from the very limited, concrete, tangible experiences of the youngest child to the development of an ability to make generalizations based on previous experiences and, finally, to the ability to think in abstract terms, understand concepts, etc. Therefore, the activity cards for the younger children are geared to their own experiences -- to things they can see, touch, and personally experience. It is useless to expect a small child to understand any allusions to the life-giving Holy Spirit, unless he first understands how things grow, what it means to live, etc.

It is important that we keep in mind two basic premises of this type of program. First, not all concepts will be able to be covered at every level -- obviously due to the limitations of time, teachers, and students themselves, as well as the basic subject matter. And, secondly, the program is intended to be a continuing one. That is, next year, when it is "time" to study Pentecost again, each child will have progressed to a higher level of learning and understanding and will not, therefore, be unnecessarily repeating material he has already mastered. He will "move on" to other concepts and/or approaches.

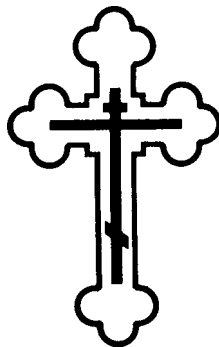
Let us begin, then, with the lesson itself.

Before allowing the children to proceed on their own with their activity cards, the teacher must provide the framework within which they will be working. That is, he/she must give some sort of general presentation to introduce the topic of the day's lesson -- Pentecost -- and to be sure that each child has a grasp of what they are basically going to study and learn about.

The first thing the teacher will want to make certain of is that each child knows the STORY of Pentecost itself: What happened that day, to whom, what resulted, and so forth. This, of course, might be done in a number of ways: by showing a filmstrip or film or slides (all previewed first!), by reading the account directly from Scripture (or from a child's Bible, etc.), by preparing a puppet show, etc. The possibilities are limitless. Just be sure the children have that general framework regarding the feast as a starting point for further study. And don't forget to display the icon of the Descent of the Holy Spirit. You'll find no better "visual aid!"

Once you have completed your general presentation, distribute the activity cards in whatever manner is most workable for you and your classroom. (You might set up activity centers for different cards or give each child his or her card personally, or let each student choose his own, etc.). Please keep in mind, however, that the younger children will need more supervision and assistance than the older students. Hopefully, there will be at least two or three teachers in the room, able to move about and lend assistance, clarification, and so forth, whenever and wherever necessary.

The major portion of the lesson time should be allotted to independent, individual work. The teacher, however, should allow for at least 10-15 minutes at the end of class for a general "wrap-up" and/or summary of the day's activities. This can be handled in a number of ways: by the traditional question/answer method, by having each child display his activity to the others and explain what he or she learned, by asking each student to look at the work of another child and try to explain what the project was intended to convey, etc. Again, the teacher must know both his or her students and subject matter. YOU must know what concepts you were hoping to get across to the children, as well as how much each child is capable of "handling." And the amount of time you choose to spend on the particular lesson is also up to you. You might use only one class period, or you might extend the study of Pentecost over two, three or more weeks. It all depends on what you want the children to understand and how much they are able to grasp without becoming frustrated or bored.



LEVEL I

Suggested Activities:

NOTE: Ages given for each level are rough estimates. Allow for overlapping.

(pre-school - 7 years)

Concepts being emphasized:

- * Basic story of Pentecost
 - * Talents: What are they? Who has them? How can they be used in a special way for God?
 - * LIFE: What things are necessary for life? How and why are plants and growing things used to decorate the church?
1. Group project: Using stick puppets, retell the story of Pentecost.
 2. A talent is something you can do very well. Perhaps you have a talent for singing or for playing baseball or for coloring pictures. Draw a picture of yourself which shows how you make use of your talent or talents.
 - * Perhaps you could also draw pictures of your family or friends, showing the talents they have, too!
 - * Are your Mommy and Daddy proud of you when you make good use of your talents? Why? Do you think God is proud of you, too? Why? How might you use your talents in a special way for God?
 3. Plant some seeds and help them grow into a plant. What things will you have to remember to do? What will happen if you don't do these things?

(OPTIONAL: Plant seeds in two different pots. Take good care of one of the pots. Give it plenty of water and sunshine and plant food. Maybe even talk to it or play music! Ignore the other pot. Do not give it any water or sunshine or attention. What happened to the two pots? Why?)

4. If you had lots and lots of pretty plants and flowers, how would you decorate your church to show God how much you love Him? Draw a picture to show your plan.



LEVEL II

(7-10 years)

Concepts being emphasized:

- * "Many tongues"
- * Properties of fire
- * Talents: What are they? How must we use them? Etc.

1. Read the story of the Tower of Babel (*Genesis 11:1-9*). Use the Holy Bible and/or the Arch Book, "The Silly Sky-scraper." Then read *Acts 2:5-12* -- the story of how the Apostles reacted after the Holy Spirit came down upon them.

Compare and/or contrast the two stories. Both show God's power. In what ways? Which shows separation? Which shows unification, or being brought together?

2. Make a poster showing all the things that FIRE does and that fire can be used for. Try to think of as many different things as you can. (Hint: heating, cooking, and so forth). Draw pictures or cut pictures and articles from magazines, newspapers, etc.

Why do you think God chose FIRE to show the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles?

3. Using a large box, make a diorama showing the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles.
4. Read the parable of the Talents in the Holy Bible (*Matthew 25: 14-30*). If the story is still not clear to you, read the Arch Book entitled "Eight Bags of Gold."

What does this story teach us about the gifts which God has given to each of us?

LEVEL III

(11-13+ years)

Concepts being emphasized:

- * Idea of SPIRIT: Old and New Testament interpretation
- * FIRE as symbol
- * Greenery as symbol

1. In the CONCORDANCE for your Bible (Concordance is a reference book listing subjects of the Bible and giving listings of parts of Scripture which refer to that subject), look up the references for SPIRIT. List the different images or ways that the idea of SPIRIT is presented. Then write a short essay applying those images to the Holy Spirit.
2. The Holy Spirit revives, renews and gives life and blossom to all things. Look up the underlined words you don't understand in the dictionary. Then write a sentence ~~for each word~~ to show you know its meaning.

After you are sure what the above words mean, choose one of the following activities to do:

- a) Write a short essay showing how the power of the Holy Spirit revives, renews and gives life and blossom to all things.
 - b) Make a collage of magazine pictures and titles showing the meanings of the underlined words. Be sure to try to relate them to the Holy Spirit.
 - c) Make a collage using magazine pictures and titles showing the effects of the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Using the radio script on pp 8-9 of The Young Church, Number 1, as a guide, write your own radio or television script about the events which took place on Pentecost. Be sure to read the account carefully from the Bible first (*Acts 2*). And be sure to include all the important details as realistically as you can.



4. Read The Young Church, Number 1, from cover to cover. Work the Crossword Puzzle on page 11. Perhaps you could try making up your own puzzle or game based on the articles you have read.

Pick out your favorite article(s). Be prepared to explain it (them) to the other students. Why did you pick that particular article?

5. Prepare a slide presentation on the symbols of Pentecost. You may use already prepared slides from the file and/or take some of your own. Write a script to accompany your presentation. Be sure to include the use of the color green for vestments. Churches decorated with branches, greenery and flowers, various aspects of fire, and so forth.

Concluding Remarks;

As stated previously, the above-listed activities are intended solely as initial guides -- "starting points" -- to get the wheels of creativity and inspiration in motion. Some may not be at all suitable for the particular group you teach in the church school. Perhaps you feel, knowing your students on a first-hand basis, that students might benefit by doing activities from a different level than the one they would ordinarily work in.

Once again, it must be reiterated: FLEXIBILITY is the key. Without distorting or destroying the basic concepts which you are seeking to convey to your students you must still be able to adapt activities accordingly. Don't stop with those listed in this brief article. Only you know what materials are available to you in your particular parish: books, magazines, speakers, filmstrips, movies, projectors, overheads, and so forth.

Be sure only to keep two things in mind. First, the teacher **MUST BE PREPARED**. He or she must be familiar (thoroughly familiar) with the content and concepts you are trying to get across. Only then will you be able to adapt activities on a moment's notice to fit your particular class on a particular day. And, second, the activity cards are NOT intended purely as a kind of "busy work" (to be substituted as a variation to "Hang Man!"). The activity cards are meant to be a teaching/learning opportunity. They focus on the particular concept(s)

vital to the understanding of the lesson (which, in this case, happens to be the Feast of Pentecost). Teachers should move freely about the classroom to help, question, check, motivate, and so forth. You want to be certain that learning is taking place and that what is being learned is what you had intended.

This type of "open classroom" structure is not intended as a "breaktime" for teachers to rest and do nothing. If anything, it will demand more of each teacher in terms of preparation, student contact, initiative, and so forth.

And, finally, it should be pointed out (if it is not already self-evident) that although the preceding lesson was geared toward an open classroom set-up, parts of it are most certainly adaptable for use in a regular "one-grade-level" classroom. Once again, the crucial factor is content. Whatever methods are employed, the important thing is to help the children learn the basic concepts pertinent to this great feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles.

*Make love your aim, and earnestly desire
the spiritual gifts....since you are eager
for manifestations of the Spirit, strive
to excel in building up the Church.*

I Corinthians 14: 1,12



O Heavenly King

Not too slow

Tone 6

O Heav-en-ly King, the Com-fer-ter, the Spir-it of Truth
 who art ev'rywhere and fill-est all things. Treasury of
 Bless - ings, and Giv - er of Life: Come and a-bide
 in us, and cleanse us from ev'ry im-pur-i-ty,
 and save our souls, O Good One.



Impărate cresc.

Lento

Im-pă-ra-le ce - resc,
 Mân-gă-ie to-ru-le, Du-bul

A-de-vă-ru-lui, ca-re-le pre-lu-

tin-de-ne-a ești și toa-te le'm-pli-

poco a poco cresc.
nesti, vis-ti e-rul bu-nă-lă-ți-lor

și dă-lă-to-ru-le de vi-

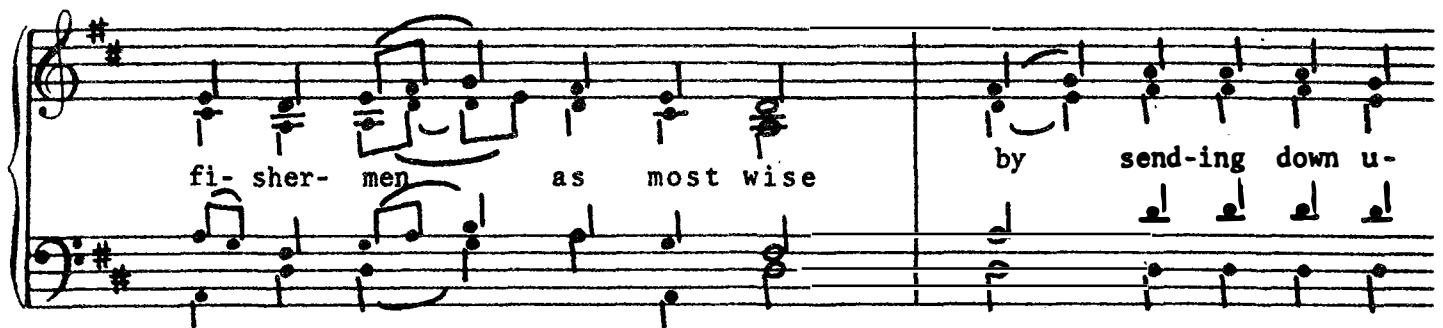
a-ță, vi-no și te să-lăș-lu-

ie-ște in-tru noi si ne cu-ră-
 le-ște pre noi de lă-că spur-că-ciu-
 nea și măn-lu-ie-ște bu-nu-le
 su-fle-te-le noas-tre. A-
 min, a min.

più mosso
mf
più mosso
sfz dolce
sfz dolce
ff
ppp



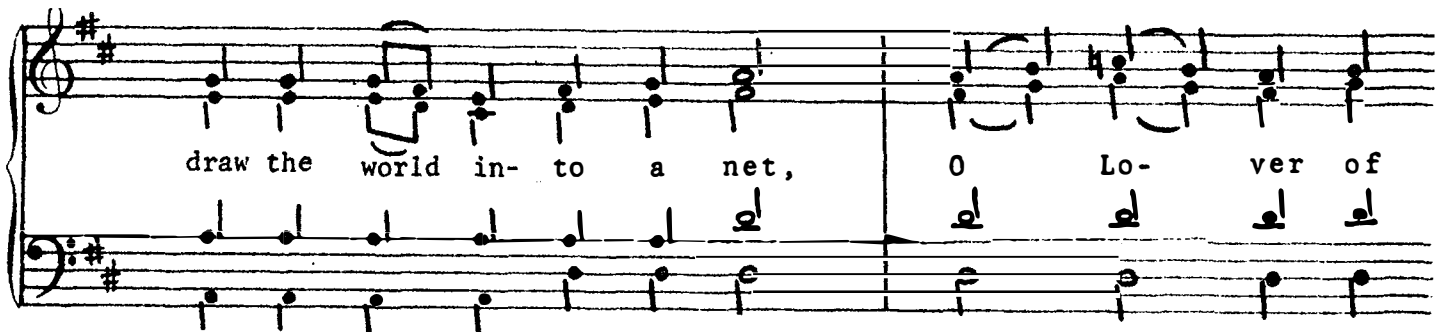
Bles-sed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast re-vealed the



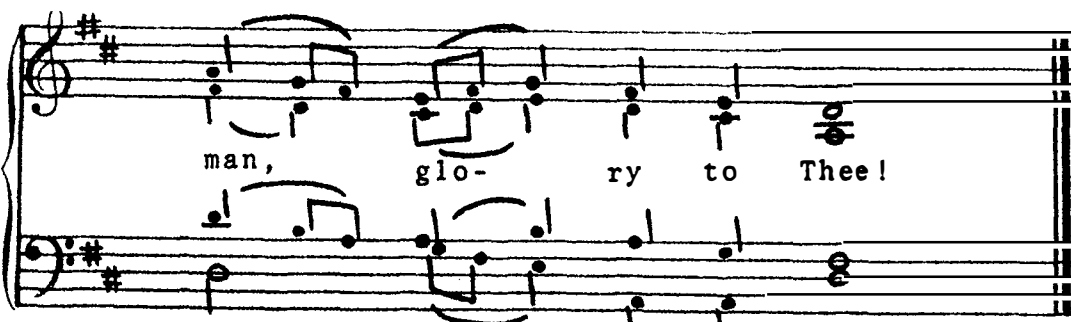
fi-she- men as most wise by send-ing down u-



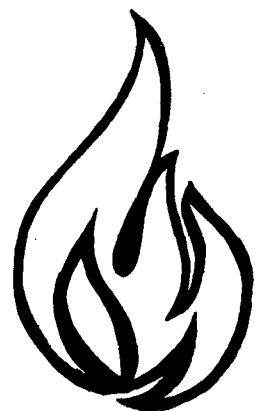
pon them the Ho- ly Spi- rit. Through them Thou didst



draw the world in- to a net, O Lo- ver of



man, glo- ry to Thee!





Troparul Pogorîrii Duhului Sfânt *(După melodia bis. din Ardeal)*

Se poate cânta cu $\frac{1}{2}$
 treaptă mai sus.

T. Popovici

108 *Toate vocile în unison*

Moderat

Bi- ne ești cu- vâ- tat, Hris- toa- se Dum- ne-
 ze- ul nos- tru, ce- la ce prea în- te-
 ze- ul nos- tru, ce- la ce prea în- te-
 lești vâ- nă- tori ai a- ră- tat,
 lești vâ- nă- tori ai a- ră- tat,

tri- mi- tân- du- le lor Du- hul cel prea Sfânt

tri- mi- tân- du- le lor Du- hul cel prea Sfânt

și prin trăn- șii lu- mea ai vâ- nat,

și prin trăn- șii lu- mea ai vâ- nat,

iu- bi- to- ru- le de oa- meni, mă- ri- re

iu- bi- to- ru- le de oa- meni, mă- ri- re

ti- e.

ti- e.



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