

Sunday 31st May 2020 Marked the festival of **Pentecost**, commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus after his ascension from earth to heaven. Read about Pentecost below and answer the questions when you have finished.

Pentecost

Pentecost is a Christian celebration that occurs fifty days after Good Friday, when Christians believe Jesus was crucified. It is said to be the beginning of the Christian Church.

How Pentecost Came About

Jesus was crucified on Good Friday. Then, on Easter Sunday, He rose from the dead. For the next forty days, He met with the disciples, taught people about God's message of love and encouraged people to reflect on their behaviour so they would enter the kingdom of Heaven when they died.

After forty days, Jesus was on a mountainside talking to his disciples. He told them that they would have an important job to do, spreading God's message of love throughout the world. He told them that they would need strength to do this difficult job, and that they would receive a gift to give them that strength to carry it out.

Then, clouds came down over the mountain and Jesus ascended into Heaven, leaving the disciples bewildered by his words. They did not know what Jesus had meant.



The Gift of the Holy Spirit

For the next ten days, the disciples would gather together in private rooms to pray and talk about what Jesus might have meant. On the tenth day, they were together and there was a sudden sound of a mighty wind entering the room and filling the house they were in.

Tongues of fire appeared! They separated and then, a flame came to rest above each of the disciples' heads, but no one was burned! The disciples were amazed. They began to speak and found they were all talking in different languages! The disciples had been filled with the Holy Spirit and suddenly, they understood what the gift sent by God was!



Their excited voices travelled down to the streets below, where there were travellers from different countries passing through Jerusalem. The travellers realised they could understand the disciples in their own languages. They were astounded!

Peter, the disciple, came to speak to the crowd and said,



"Fellow Jews and people here in Jerusalem. Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead, so listen here. We have received the Holy Spirit, the gift from God. You too can receive the Holy Spirit. You must regret your sins, become baptised and ask for forgiveness. Then, you too can receive this wonderful gift!"

That day, three thousand people were baptised. The disciples began to travel the world, spreading God's message of love. The Christian Church had begun and the message of God's love began to spread throughout the world!

Did You Know?

During the Pentecost:

- the colour red is used in many Christian churches as a symbol of the flames that appeared on the disciples' heads;
- a dove represents the Holy Spirit, because when Jesus was baptised, a dove appeared, bringing the Holy Spirit to Jesus.



Questions

1. How could someone work out when Pentecost would be celebrated each year?

2. What marks the beginning of the Christian Church?

3. Why did Jesus encourage people to reflect on the way they lived?

4. Write two things that Jesus told the disciples about the job they were going to do.

5. Choose another word that closely matches the meaning of 'bewildered' in the fourth paragraph.

6. Identify two unusual things that happened when the Holy Spirit arrived.

- a) _____
- b) _____

7. What could the disciples do after the Holy Spirit had arrived?

- Talk to a crowd of people.
- Talk in one language.
- Talk in different languages.
- Never talk again.

8. Who spoke to the crowd of travellers?

- Jesus
- Peter
- the Holy Spirit
- the Jewish people

9. Identify and explain one symbol of Pentecost.

10. Write T for True or F for False beside the following statements. If a statement is false, rewrite it as a correct statement.

_____ Jesus spoke to his disciples on a mountainside, fifty days after his resurrection.

_____ Jesus told his disciples that they would need help to complete the job they were going to do.

_____ The disciples understood what the gift from God would be. They were excited.

_____ When the Holy Spirit arrived, the whole building was filled with a strong wind.

_____ The disciples could all speak in the same language after they were filled with the Holy Spirit.
