

**Salvation to the Ends of the Earth**  
**A Curriculum for Orthodox Christian Sunday Church Schools**  
*Antiochian Orthodox Christian Education Ministry*

Feedback on this lesson plan is welcome and encouraged [HERE](#).

Title of Lesson:	Lesson Number:	Key Verse(s)	Grade Level
The Birthday of the Church	2	“And suddenly there came from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.” Acts 2:2	PreK K-1st Grade 2nd-3rd Grade ✓ <b>4th-6th Grade</b> Junior High Senior High

*Lesson Length: 30 minutes (main) + 15 minutes (extension)*


**Key Ideas in this Lesson:**

- The day of Pentecost marks the official “birthday” of the Church.
- Pentecost is when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and gave them the gift of speaking in various languages.
- Pentecost is an event in history that happened long ago, but the Holy Spirit is still alive and well today.
- We are called to continue the work of the Apostles and continue spreading the Word of God by shining our light to others.

**Key Vocabulary in this Lesson:**

- Pentecost - The Birthday of the Church; celebrated 50 days after Pascha; a commemoration of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, giving them the gift of tongues (ability to speak in other languages) and the inner fire required to spread the Gospel throughout the world
- Evangelize - to preach the Christian Gospel

**To prepare for this lesson, you will need:**

Audio/Visual	Printed Materials	Craft/Activity Materials
Computer, tablet, or phone to display:  The song “Follower of Jesus” by Gigi Shadid: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5AkG0RGFak">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5AkG0RGFak</a>   (Optional) The song “Birthday of the	Bible  Icon of the Feast of Pentecost included in this lesson packet, one copy printed in color  “Christ is Risen” handout, one per student or one copy in strips for distribution  Map of the world, one for every 3-4 students  Actions of the Believers worksheet, one per student	Birthday candles or electric candles if available.

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Church by Gigi Shadid:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=td2UaTzLa2I>



Instructional video with hand motions to the song "Birthday of the Church":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MgxjbKk-Bk>



Troparion of Pentecost:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lq1xILZdOvY>



**Opening Prayer:**

Open with prayer. Suggestions for opening include **The Lord's Prayer** or the **Prayer Before Reading Scripture**. "Illumine our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, with the pure light of Your divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Your gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Your blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto You. For You are the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father, Who is from everlasting, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen".

**Opening Activity: (5 mins)**

Start by asking the students to share the day and month of their birthdays. Write their names and birthdays on the board. If available, give each student a small birthday candle (or an electric candle). Carefully light each candle and then have students sing the Happy Birthday song together. They can insert into the song their own names or the name of the student whose birthday is closest to today's date. Have students carefully blow out their candles and return them to the teacher.

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Explain that today we will learn about a very special birthday 'party' that happened a long time ago. The 12 Apostles were there!

Ask the students if they can recall the names of the 12 Apostles. Refer to the "Followers of Jesus" song that was included in the previous lesson. Write the names on the board and play the song as a reminder.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5AkG0RGFak>



**Lesson Instruction: (20 mins)**

*A. Initial part of the lesson*

Ask:

1. Did you know that the Church has a birthday, too?

Display the icon of Pentecost.

Ask:

1. What do you notice? (Allow time for responses and write them on the board.)
2. What do you wonder? (Allow time for responses and write them on the board.)

Explain the various parts of the icon to the students. Be sure to mention:

- The old man at the bottom is "Cosmos". He represents the world. (The Apostles were "sent" to preach the Gospel to all the ends of the earth.)
- There is a flame of fire above each head to represent the Holy Spirit. (Like candles on a birthday cake. Fire can spread, just like we want the Word of God to spread. "Let your light so shine so that others may see your good work and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16.)
- Originally, there were 12 Apostles. (Refer to the Apostles' names that are written on the board.)
- Pentecost is celebrated 50 days after Pascha each year.

Remind students that in the previous lesson, they were introduced to the Book of Acts which was written by St. Luke the Evangelist, almost like a Part II of his Gospel. We learned that:

- Jesus instructed His apostles to go to all parts of the earth to spread the news about Him.
- We are called to be like the Apostles to help spread the news and grow the Church community. That is what it means to evangelize.

*B. Second part*

Prepare to read the story of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21.) To engage the students, call on individuals to "act out" the story as you read it aloud. The story will come to life when students are actively participating in the reading.

Some suggestions:

- Ask the students to make "mighty wind" sounds when you read verse 2.
- Pass back the birthday candles to be used when you get to verse 3.
- Act confused in verse 12 when the people ask, "Whatever could this mean?"
- Have someone to play the part of Peter in verse 14.
- As described in verse 21, raise your faces to the sky to call out to the Lord.

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**C. Third part**

After engaging the students in the Bible story, talk about how amazing it must have been to be able to suddenly speak in a different language. Ask if anyone in the room can speak another language. Distribute the map handout and show the students how many countries there are in the world. Share the amazing facts that there are 195 recognized countries in the world with over 7,000 different languages spoken!

Ask the students if they have ever heard parts of our church services spoken and sung in different languages? Recall that at Pascha, we often joyfully shout the Paschal greeting, "Christ is Risen!", in several different languages.

Pass out the Christ is Risen handout or strips to 12 students (representing the Apostles) and have them proclaim it in the language provided. Remind students that we, too, are called to spread the Gospel by living a life in Christ and keeping His commandments.

The Holy Spirit dwells in us, too, just like in those 12 men. The Spirit is alive today as much as it was way back then. Now, it's OUR turn!

**Closing Activity: (5 mins)**

Hand out the Actions of the Believers graphic organizer to each student.

Say: In the Book of Acts, we will continue to learn how the Holy Spirit inspired and gave courage to the Apostles to spread the Gospel of Christ. As the Church began, believers began to become inspired by the Holy Spirit and changed how they behaved in the world.

In pairs, read this paragraph together. Highlight or underline the actions of the believers. Then, in the notes column on the handout, jot down thoughts or ideas of how these actions connect to our actions as Orthodox Christians today.

Students work for 5 minutes in pairs or small groups. If there is time, invite students to share what they noticed and the connections they made to the Orthodox Church today.

**To extend this lesson for additional time...**

Additional activity idea:

1. *Play the Troparion of Pentecost* and talk about what it means to be a "Fisher of Men." Have one student pretend to be a fisherman who reels in their classmates from their seats and up to the front of the room. Liken it to how Christ called His disciples to follow Him.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lq1xILZdOvY>



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**Background Resources for Teachers:**

- Music with Gigi Lesson on Pentecost: Music with Gigi #10  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzlJsukEn9c&t=113s>



- Teachers may find General Teaching Strategies and Classroom Considerations included in the back of this packet to be a beneficial resource while preparing for this lesson.



# Pentecost

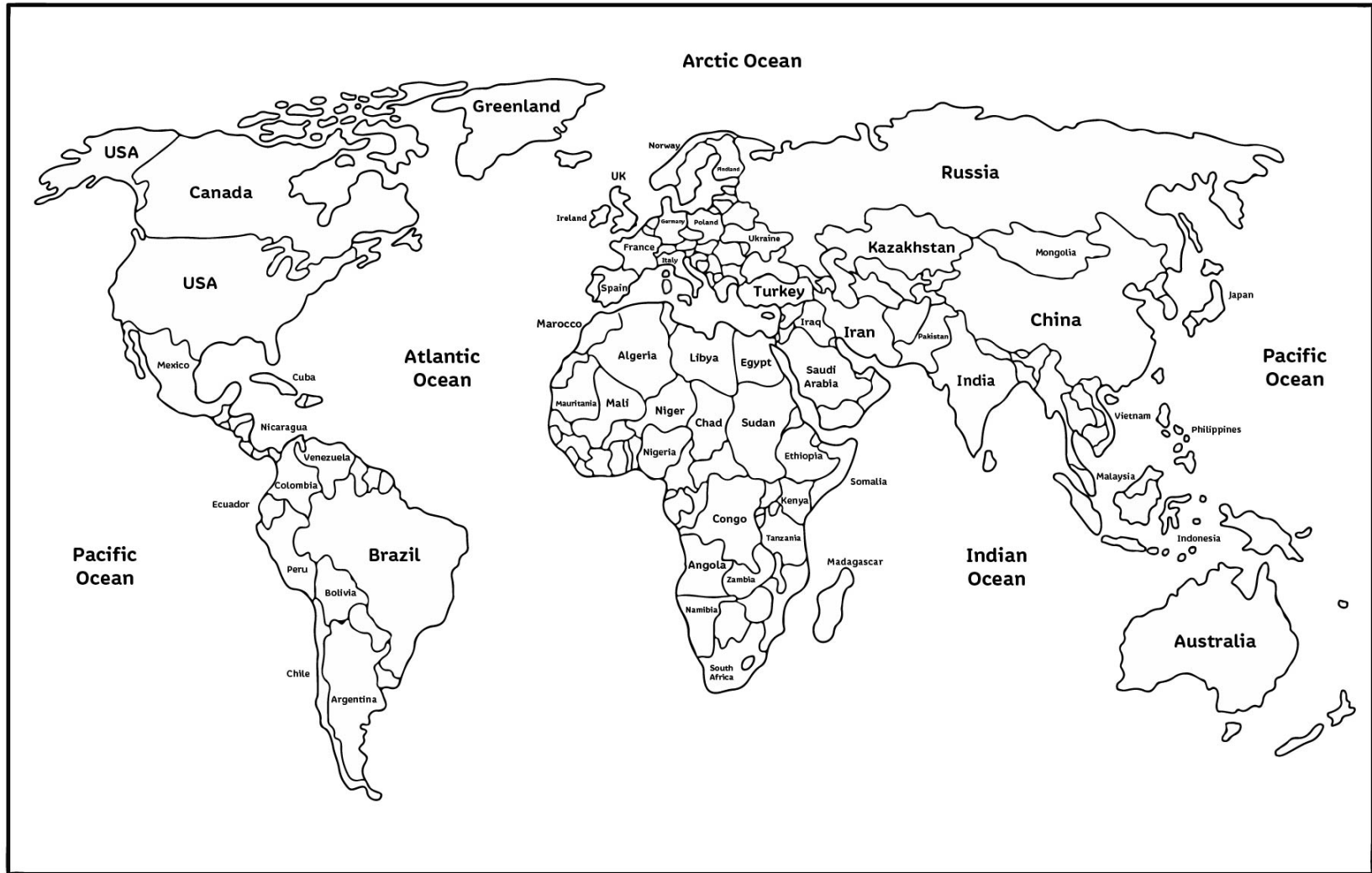


## Pentecost

Jesus' friends were gathered together to pray. They heard the sound of blowing wind. The sound filled the room, and the Holy Spirit came down from heaven. Tongues of fire were above them. They were able to speak different languages and share the good news of Jesus Christ with everyone. That day is when the Church began, so Pentecost is the birthday of the Church!



# World Map





# **Christ is Risen!**

**Arabic:** Al Maseeh Qam! – Haqqan Qam!

**Coptic:** Pikhirstof aftonf! – Khen o methni aftonf!

**English:** Christ is Risen! – Indeed, He is Risen!

**French:** Le Christ est Ressuscité! – Vraiment est Resucitée!

**German:** Kristus ist auferstanden! Sicherlich ist auferstanden!

**Georgian:** Kriste aghsdga! – Cheshmaritad aghsdga!

**Greek:** Christos Anesti! – Alithos Anesti!

**Italian:** Cristo è risorto! – È veramente risorto!

**Portuguese:** Christo Ressuscitou! – Em Verdade Ressuscitou!

**Romanian:** Hristus a Înviat! – Adevârat a Înviat

**Slavonic:** Christos Voskrese! – Voistinu Voskrese!

**Spanish:** Cristo ha resucitado! – Verdaderamente ha resucitado!



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Directions

- Together, take turns reading verses from the paragraph below.
- As you read, underline the actions of the believers and how they changed after receiving baptism.
- Then, fill out the table below. Write a few actions of the believers on one side and make a connection to how we still display these actions in the Orthodox Church today.

### **The Fellowship of the Believers, Acts 2:42-47**

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The Believers' Actions after Baptism	Make a Connection to Our Actions in Today's Orthodox Church
<b>Example:</b> "All the believers were together."	We value community and welcoming others into the Orthodox Church today. We attend lessons, liturgy, and Church events.