

# SHIFTING HISTORY

A Small Group Edge Night on Pentecost

## SMALL GROUP EDGE NIGHT AT A GLANCE



### Scripture

Acts 2:1-4, 37-47



### Catechism

731-732, 1287-1288

## GOAL

The goal of this Small Group Edge Night is for the youth to learn about the magnitude of the events of Pentecost in Scripture and why it is important for their lives today.

## ENGAGE

The youth play a fun game where they have to come up with what a history-shifting invention would do by having each person only say one word. The purpose of this game is to get the youth comfortable with their small group, have fun, and tie in the theme of the Small Group Edge Night.

## REFLECT

The core members discuss the following main ideas:

- Many times in His ministry, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit. After His Ascension into heaven, on the day of

Pentecost, He poured out the Holy Spirit upon His apostles.

- Pentecost began the new age of the Church, and the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaimed the love of Jesus.
- We are a part of this new age of the Church through our baptism and confirmation, and we also experience an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that empowers us to bring about new life.

## RESPOND

The youth are challenged to come up with a ten-word proclamation about the love of Jesus and then they pray for those who have shared the love of Jesus with them and those who need to hear about the love of Jesus. The small group time ends with the Come, Holy Spirit prayer. The purpose of this time is for the youth to understand that the Holy Spirit is within them and they are capable of bringing new life into the world through the words they speak.

## WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Share your proclamation of Jesus' love with one person this week.

## SUPPLIES

Each small group needs the following supplies:

- Paper
- Writing utensils

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## SMALL GROUP EDGE NIGHT OUTLINE

### ENGAGE

#### Introduction (10 min)

Welcome the youth, introduce any youth who are there for the first time, and begin in prayer. Give a brief overview of the Small Group Edge Night using the following as an example:

*At various times throughout history, there have been significant people, ideas, events, wars, inventions, etc. that have changed the course of human history. Even in the past year there have been events so significant that the world was never the same again. While the first things to come to mind might be things you learned about in your history classes or experienced during the global pandemic, there is one event that you might not automatically put in this category: Pentecost. Pentecost shifted history. When the Holy Spirit came down upon the apostles and Mary, the Mother of God, in the upper room, the world was never the same. They went forth from that room transformed, spreading the Gospel by boldly proclaiming Jesus' love and bringing about new life through miraculous works. From that point forward, Christianity spread throughout the entire world, changing the course of history.*

#### Prayer Assignment (5 min)

After beginning the small group in prayer, ask for one youth to volunteer to close the small group time in prayer at the end of the Small Group Edge Night. This prayer will be the Come, Holy Spirit prayer. By assigning this role at the beginning of the small group time, you give the youth time to prepare and prevent them from being put on the spot.



#### Hispanic Inculturation

Keep in mind that some Hispanic/Latino youth may have learned the Come Holy Spirit prayer in Spanish. Allow the youth to lead the prayer in Spanish if they are more comfortable. Alternatively, have printed copies of the prayer in English for the youth to read from or allow the youth to pull it up on their phone if needed.

#### Revolutionary Inventions (15 min)

1. The youth sit in a circle with the core member.
2. The core member begins the game by saying the phrase, "The invention that would shift history forever would..."
3. One at a time, the youth go around the circle and add to this phrase, but they are only allowed to say one word.
4. The youth continue going around the circle until they come up with what the history-shifting invention would do.
5. Play as many rounds as time allows.

### REFLECT

#### "Shifting History" Teaching Reflection (20 min)

Use the following as a guide for a time of reflection:

#### The Promise of the Holy Spirit

Jesus astounded many people with the miracles He performed and things He said, but there were also things He said that were mysterious and did not, at first, make sense. There were many times when Jesus told His followers about a counselor He would send who would be with them forever, a counselor whose

presence in their lives would be even better than Jesus' presence in their lives. (John 14:16, 16:7)

After Jesus' Resurrection, He spent 40 days with His apostles, but He would not remain with them physically forever — He would ascend into heaven. He revealed to His followers that He had to go to heaven in order for the Holy Spirit to come. Jesus said, "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7).

- Has there ever been a time in your life when you were confused by something a person said and it did not make sense until later? What was it like? (*E.g., you were given instructions to make dinner and it did not make sense until you tasted it, or you were given a math problem to do that did not make sense until you learned more about the formulas.*)
- What do you know about counselors? What did Jesus mean when He said He would send a counselor?

We can imagine that the apostles were confused or anxious when Jesus told them He would "go away." They likely wondered what He meant, not only literally but also what it would mean for their future. Jesus, however, did not leave them without directions. Before He ascended into heaven, He gave them a specific mission to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Jesus knew, however, that what He was asking them would be difficult. While He did not fully reveal what their future would look like, He gave the apostles specific instructions "not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father," the promise that they will "be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4-5). Believing in the promises of Jesus, after they watched Him ascend into heaven, they gathered together and waited for His promises to be revealed.

- Have you experienced a time when you felt like you had an impossible task before you? What did you do? Did anyone help you? Were you able to accomplish this difficult task?

## Shifting History

*Read Acts 2:1-4.*

This moment, when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles, shifted history. Countless faithful Jews made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for a celebration that is central to the Jewish faith, but when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles on this day, history was forever changed. This day would no longer be significant only for the Jewish faith; it would be forever marked as the day that Jesus' promise was fulfilled for His followers and the love of God was poured out upon His people. This day is called "Pentecost."

- What is your favorite holiday to celebrate? What do you do to celebrate?
- Have you ever gone to an event expecting it to be one way, but it turned out to be totally different? Explain.
- Has there ever been an event in your life where you knew that everything would change from that day forward? Explain. (*italics*) Be aware of any answers that could reveal or allude to abuse or harm and follow proper safe environment regulations for reporting.

Since Pentecost, the Church has had a lot of time to unpack who the Holy Spirit is and how He works. But even right after Pentecost is recounted in Scripture, we have insight into the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. If we look to Peter as our example, we can see how even in these first moments of being filled with the Holy Spirit something in him changed. If we think of the story of Peter, we remember that he is the one who denied Jesus three times during His passion for fear of what people would do to him for being a follower of Jesus. Then, we see Peter again after the Holy Spirit filled him with a new kind of courage. He was compelled to proclaim the good news of Jesus' love to the people who were gathered in Jerusalem. Because of the gift of the Holy Spirit, he was able to actually move forward in the mission Jesus had given to him to make disciples of all nations. The threat of being punished for being a follower of Jesus did not

change; rather, he changed.

- Name your favorite TV show where someone or something goes through a transformation.
- What stood out to you the most from Peter's life? Why?
- What is one way you can share the good news of Jesus' love with someone else?

### **A Part of the Movement**

Thousands of years ago, the streets of Jerusalem were bustling with people who were there for their traditional pilgrimage, and some of their lives were drastically changed. Not only were the followers of Jesus who were in the upper room transformed, but those who were outside the upper room when Peter came out proclaiming the truth of Jesus were also transformed.

*Read Acts 2:37-39.*

Through the proclamation of the apostles, people believed in Jesus and were baptized and received the Holy Spirit. As the numbers of Christians continued to increase, the Church continued to grow and the Holy Spirit continued to work. Today the Church continues to grow and the Holy Spirit continues to work. We still celebrate Pentecost every year because it marks a shift in history where God dwelt with His people in a new way, through the Holy Spirit and the Church.

- Have you ever witnessed an event, read a book, or seen a movie that transformed your outlook on life? Explain.
- How could hearing the good news of the love of Jesus change someone's life today?

While the first example of the transformative power of the Holy Spirit shows an increase in courage to go forth and proclaim the Good News, we also continue to see the power of the Holy Spirit unfold in incredible ways through the lives of the apostles. Using Peter again as an example, as he went out preaching,

people would bring those who were sick into the streets, hoping for Peter's shadow to fall upon them and heal them (Acts 5:15). Peter's shadow was healing people! Not even Jesus did that. But that is a part of the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised to us when He said, "He who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father" (John 14:12).

Jesus invited each apostle by name and called them to follow Him. He taught them, prayed with them, gave up His life for them, and poured out the Holy Spirit upon them. He does all of this for you, too. He calls you by name to follow Him, to learn from Him, to pray to Him, to accept His act of love of dying on the cross to save you, and to be open to the transformative power of the Holy Spirit which He offers to you. All of this is available to you through the Church, and the same Holy Spirit that led Peter to proclaim the Good News and heal the sick through his shadow dwells within you.

- Who are you most inspired by in the way they live their faith?
- When you think of the miracles Jesus performed, what comes to mind first? How do you think people would react if they saw you performing that same miracle?
- How do you need the Holy Spirit to work in your life? Where do you need new life either spiritually or physically?



### Hispanic Inculturation

Hispanic/Latino youth might be encouraged to know that, while the Holy Spirit was certainly powerful enough to create a common language that all those present at Pentecost could have adopted, He made it so everyone would hear the Gospel in their language. Note this point and ask: Are different languages spoken in your home or among your family members? How does this impact how you understand and relate to one another? How can the Holy Spirit help you grow in love for the way language shapes your reality and lived experience? Encourage the youth to be proud of their ability to speak and/or understand a second language, and affirm how the Holy Spirit has transformed this obstacle into a beautiful exposition of God's power to unite us in the midst of diversity.

## RESPOND

### Jesus' Love in Ten Words Activity (15 min)

Divide the youth into pairs, and give each pair a piece of paper and writing utensil. Challenge the pair to come up with a proclamation about the good news of the love of Jesus, but they can only use ten words (*e.g., Jesus loves you and wants to bring you new life, if you want to find true happiness follow Jesus, Jesus' love will change your life for the better, love saves us and love has saved us through Jesus*).

Once all the pairs have come up with a proclamation, invite them to share with the rest of the small group.



### Suggestions

If time allows, combine all of the proclamations and create one ten-word proclamation for the whole small group.

### Proclaiming Love Prayer (5 min)

Begin this time of prayer with the Sign of the Cross. Ask the youth to close their eyes and bring to mind one or two people who have shared the love of Jesus with them. Pause for a moment and then ask them to silently thank Jesus for these people.

Keeping their eyes shut, ask the youth to bring to mind one or two people in their life who do not know Jesus or may not understand how much He loves them. Lead the youth in a short prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to give them the courage to share their proclamation of the good news of the love of Jesus with those people. Remind the youth that their words have the power to bring new life in the lives of these people.

### Come, Holy Spirit Prayer (5 min)

End the Small Group Edge Night by allowing the youth who was chosen at the beginning of the small group time to close in prayer, using the Come, Holy Spirit prayer below. Following the prayer, give the youth their weekly challenge.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the Earth.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ, our Lord, amen.