

Pentecost

Pentecost is a Christian celebration, recognised fifty days after Good Friday, when Christians believe Jesus was crucified. It is considered to be the time of the birthday, or beginning, of the Christian Church.

How Pentecost Came About

Jesus was crucified on Good Friday, and then, on Sunday, He was resurrected from the dead. He walked among the people on Earth for the next forty days. He conversed with the disciples, taught people about God's message of love and encouraged people to reflect on their behaviour in order to enter the kingdom of Heaven.

After forty days, Jesus was on a mountainside talking to his disciples. He told them that He was soon to leave them and they would have an important job to do, spreading the word of God to everyone. He told them that they would need strength to do this difficult job and said that they would receive a gift to give them that strength and assist them with their job.

The clouds descended over the mountain and Jesus ascended into Heaven, leaving the disciples bewildered by his words. What gift was he talking about? When would it arrive? How would they know what it was? Their minds were full of unanswered questions.



The Gift of the Holy Spirit

For the next ten days, the disciples would gather together in private rooms, discuss their fears, worries and future and also pray. On the tenth day, they were together in a room. Suddenly, there was an almighty sound of a violent wind entering the room and filling the house they were in. What was going on?



Tongues of fire appeared, separated, and then a flame came to rest above each of the disciples' heads, but no one was burned!

The disciples were thoroughly astonished and in bewilderment, they looked from one to another. Then, they began to speak and realised that 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 many travellers from different countries passing through Jerusalem. The travellers realised they could understand the voices in their own languages. They were astounded!

“These people from Galilee are speaking our language. How can this be?” they asked each other.

Peter, one of the disciples, came to speak to the now growing crowd, and said,



“Fellow Jews and people here in Jerusalem. You who had Jesus crucified, and who heard of his resurrection, listen here. We have received the Holy Spirit, the gift from God. You too can receive the Holy Spirit. You must repent of your sins, become baptised and ask for forgiveness. Then, you too can receive this wonderful gift!”

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



Did You Know?

During Pentecost, the colour red is used in many Christian churches as a symbol of the flames that appeared on the disciples’ heads. A dove is representative of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was baptised by his cousin John, a dove appeared, bringing the Holy Spirit to Jesus.

Questions

1. Explain two things Jesus did after his resurrection.

2. What were the disciples going to do after Jesus had left them?

3. Find and copy one word which means 'help'.

4. Look at the paragraph beginning "The clouds descended..."

What impression do you get about how the disciples were feeling?

5. The disciples met to discuss their fears. Why do you think they had fears?

6. Tick the correct box for each statement in the table.

	True	False
Flames of fire settled on the top of each of the disciples' heads.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The disciples realised they could speak the same language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The gift of the Holy Spirit arrived quietly and calmly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The arrival of the Holy Spirit left the disciples shocked and amazed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The people on the streets understood what the disciples were saying, even though they were from Galilee.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. For those statements that are false, write them correctly.

8. Why did Peter speak to the travellers in the streets?

9. Why would the arrival of the gift of the Holy Spirit help the disciples to do their job?

Explain in detail.

10. Why is Pentecost recognised as the time of birth of the Christian Church?

11. Write three things you have learned about Pentecost.