

Note: Prior to Christianity, Pentecost was one of three Jewish feasts that required the adult men of Israel to travel to Jerusalem. (Deut 16:16) It was a harvest festival celebrated 50 days after Passover, when the first loaves of bread from the spring wheat crop were dedicated as a firstfruits offering to the Lord. For Christians, Pentecost celebrates the new law of the Spirit written on the hearts of believers in Christ.

1. When the disciples were all gathered together, what were the three signs of the Holy Spirit's presence in the room? (Acts 2:2-3)
2. What gifts did the Holy Spirit give the disciples that day? (Acts 2:4; CCC 731-736) What gifts do we receive from the Holy Spirit at Baptism and Confirmation, and are there differences? (CCC 1830, 1831, see Handout Pentecost: The Holy Spirit—Gifts, Fruits, and Charisms)
3. *Reflection:* In the story of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9), God used multiple languages to confuse and scatter the family of man. Here, in Acts 2:4-11, the Spirit uses multiple languages to communicate the gospel and gather together the family of God. Would you have been “amazed and confused” if you were in the crowd and heard Peter speaking in English? (Acts 2:6)
4. Why would much of Peter's Pentecost speech to the crowd include quotations from the prophet Joel (2:17-21), and from David's psalms (2:25-28 and 2:34-35)?
5. Peter asserts that everything that happened to Jesus, including his suffering and death, happened “according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.” Why do you think it was important for Peter to emphasize this point? (Acts 2:22-23)
6. Peter quotes a prophetic vision that King David had about the incorruptibility of God's “Holy One” (Acts 2:25-28), which he applies to the necessity for Jesus' resurrection. Why do you think this is important?
7. Verse 32 is probably the most important statement in Peter's speech, in which Peter asserts that the resurrected Jesus now sits at the right hand of God. What words of David from Jewish Scripture gives Peter the authority to make this bold assertion? (Acts 2:34-35)
8. In one sentence, Peter gives the essence of the Good News, which is also what he was commissioned to do by Jesus at the Ascension. (Acts 2:18) Describe the four elements of the Good News according to Peter. (Acts 2:38)
9. Luke describes the communal life and family life of the first Christian community in Jerusalem.
 - a. What are the four elements of their communal life? (Acts 2:42)
 - b. What did it mean to “have all things in common”? (Acts 2:44-45)
 - c. Did these new believers see themselves as faithful Jews? (Acts 2:46)
 - d. What did each family do at home to express their identity as believers? (Acts 2:46-47)
10. *Reflection:* Many of the first 3000 baptized converts came from different parts of the world. (Acts 2:5-11) If they stayed in Jerusalem long enough—even for a week—to learn more about Christ's teaching and celebrating Eucharist, do you think they went home and continued practicing the celebration of Eucharist?