

WE BELIEVE

On Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon the first disciples.

After his Resurrection, Jesus sent his apostles to preach in his name and to baptize those who believed in him. He promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide and help them.

The Holy Spirit would change their lives. Jesus promised, “you will receive power when the holy spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts of the Apostles 1:8).

After Christ ascended to his Father, the apostles returned to Jerusalem. Mary, the mother of Jesus, and some other disciples were there, too. It was during this time that the Holy Spirit came as Jesus had promised.


 Acts of the Apostles 2:1–47

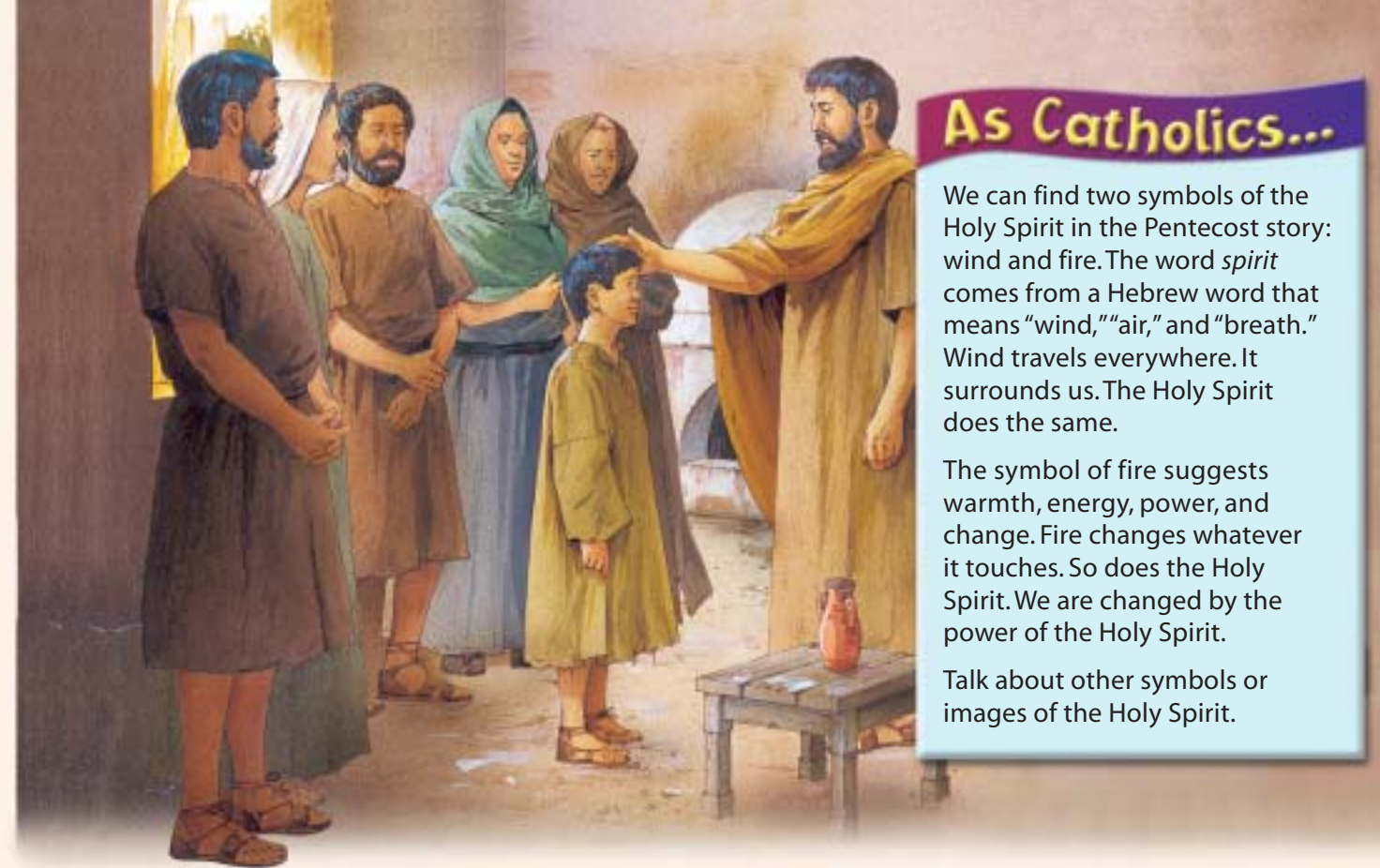
They were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.” (Acts of the Apostles 2:1–4)

The apostles went outside. Peter told the people that God the Father had indeed raised Jesus. He said that what they had just heard had been the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Each person heard this good news in his or her own language, and they were amazed. Peter told them to be sorry for their sins and to repent. He told them to be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. About three thousand people believed and became disciples that day.

Each year on Pentecost we celebrate in a special way the coming of the Holy Spirit. Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, we are all God’s workers in the world.

 In groups role-play the story of Pentecost as if it were happening today.



As Catholics...

We can find two symbols of the Holy Spirit in the Pentecost story: wind and fire. The word *spirit* comes from a Hebrew word that means “wind,” “air,” and “breath.” Wind travels everywhere. It surrounds us. The Holy Spirit does the same.

The symbol of fire suggests warmth, energy, power, and change. Fire changes whatever it touches. So does the Holy Spirit. We are changed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Talk about other symbols or images of the Holy Spirit.


Laying on of hands and anointing are signs of the Holy Spirit’s presence.

After Pentecost the Holy Spirit strengthened and guided the apostles. They gave witness to Christ and baptized many believers. The newly baptized received the strengthening power of the Holy Spirit when the apostles placed their hands on them. The laying on of hands was a sign of God’s blessing. By this action, authority and grace were given in God’s name.

The laying on of hands by the apostles was the beginning of the sacrament of Confirmation. As the Church grew, an anointing was joined to the laying on of hands. The word *anoint* means to apply oil to someone as a sign that God has chosen that person for a special mission. Like the laying on of hands, anointing is an ancient practice. Anointing was an important part of Jewish life during Jesus’ time.

The anointing that took place with the laying on of hands was a sign of the Holy Spirit’s presence and of the receiving of the Holy

Spirit. In time the anointing became the essential sign of the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Chrism, oil blessed by a bishop, was used in this anointing. Today in the sacrament of Confirmation, the anointing with oil is done as the celebrant lays his hand on the head of the one being confirmed.

 With a partner talk about the actions that are part of our worship. Illustrate one.