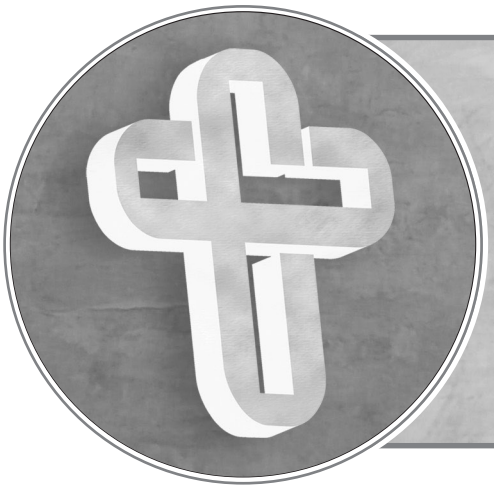


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JANUARY 10 2026

the promised gift

Scripture Story: Acts 2:1-39.
Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 4, 5.
Key Text: Acts 2:2-4.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The Holy Spirit is one of the greatest gifts that God offers us, but do we see Him as a gift worth receiving? Do we see the Holy Spirit as a force that works in evangelistic efforts, or perhaps as the voice of our conscience, but nothing more?

In Luke 11:13 Jesus makes the analogy of God as a father giving good gifts to his children. But when the punch line comes, Jesus doesn't say "This is how God will give you what you want"; He says, "This is how God will give you His Holy Spirit." It almost seems like a cop-out, doesn't it? How many other things do we want or need? Perhaps we want good grades, the ability to get into a good school, the gift of good friends, the ability to fit in. . . . So many things seem much more important in a teenager's life—even in an adult's life! It almost seems like the beautifully wrapped gift, opened to expose a bag of tube socks.

But that is only if we misunderstand who the Holy Spirit is and what He wants to do in our lives! The Holy Spirit is God Himself, and He wants to lead us into all good things. God created us with the needs and desires we have, and the Holy Spirit will show us how to fulfill those in a lasting, godly way. And when others see that we have something different, they will want to know what the difference is.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand the immense gift of the Holy Spirit in their own personal lives. *(Know)*
- Sense the love God has for them to offer them such a gift. *(Feel)*
- Choose to ask for the Holy Spirit's leading in their lives, and tell others why they have something so special. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Holy Spirit, Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs, No. 5

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He is as much a person as are the Father and the Son. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth (Gen. 1:1, 2; 2 Sam. 23:2; Ps. 51:11; Isa. 61:1; Luke 1:35; 4:18; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 5:3; 10:38; Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 12:7-11; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Peter 1:21).

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think?

section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Ask the students to think of the one person they love most in the world. With that one person in mind, ask them the following question: If money weren't an issue, what would the perfect gift for that person be, and why?

Look at each gift. How big is that gift? Is it lavish, such as a house or an airplane? Is it simple, such as a handwritten letter, or a family heirloom? Is it the gift of time? Why is the gift perfect for that person? How much thought must go into choosing that perfect gift?

God loves us infinitely more than we could ever love another person. How much more thought must have gone into the gift He offers us?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

"One of America's famous attractions of years gone by was the firefall of Yosemite National Park.

"On a summer evening tourists from around the world would gather below Glacier Point for the dramatic show. At precisely the stroke of nine a voice rang out across the waiting camp, 'Let the fire fall!'

"And 3,000 feet above the floor of the valley, a voice answered, 'The fire falls!'

"Flaming embers poured over the precipice into the darkness of the summer night. They cascaded down the sheer white granite of the mountain wall. No one who saw the firefall would ever forget it.

"Throughout Scripture, fire symbolizes the presence of God. When you encounter God's fiery presence, your life is changed forever. Moses entered the presence of God at the burning bush (Exodus 3:2-6). The high priest experienced the presence of God between the cherubim in the Most Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary (Exodus 25:22). Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, and the fire fell. First Kings 18:38 describes the scene with the words 'Then the fire of the Lord fell.' The fire of God's presence consumed Elijah's altar. The people fell on their faces and cried out, 'The Lord, He is God.'

"The fire of Pentecost transformed Peter into a powerful proclaimer of the gospel. More than 3,000 were baptized in one place in one day. The fire continued to fall on these early disciples until the 'word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly' (Acts 6:7, NKJV). The disciples turned the world upside down. The Spirit's power transformed not only them but their families, their friends, and their communities.

"God longs for His fire to fall again. He longs to consume the dross of sin in our hearts so the fire of His presence can light the world. He longs for the day when the world will be aflame with His love. It happened at Pentecost and it will happen again. Oh, God, let the fire fall!" (Mark Finley, *Solid Ground,* p. 75).

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Sometimes we don't know the value of the gift we have been given! It might seem ordinary or uninteresting. But the gift of the Holy Spirit is of inestimable value not only for our own spiritual lives but in our everyday lives and interactions with others. This is why we have to take seriously our prayer life. We need to plead with God for the gift of the Holy Spirit to be effective in our Christian lives and ministry.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- What was the physical sign of the Holy Spirit in this story? How would it have felt to see this happen?
- What miracle did the Holy Spirit perform? Why?
- What do you think the Holy Spirit did for them personally and individually?
- What was the reaction of the people watching? What would your reaction have been?

Use the following as other teachable passages that relate to today's story: Luke 3:21, 22; Luke 12:9-12; John 20:19-22.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

The Matthew Henry commentary sheds some light on this story:

He points out that this miracle happened during a feast day that brought Jews from countries far and near to celebrate. This would contribute to maximizing the gospel to all nations, since the miracle of the languages would be more public and its fame would spread sooner and farther.

The Feast of Pentecost, which was being cel-

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Independent Thinking

Teachers who make a difference are those who make learning engaging for their students. They make the content of the lesson come to life so much so that the students are drawn to the subject matter and they don't even realize that they are being taught. Make your objective to attract attention not to yourself but to Jesus and His Word shining through everything you say and teach.

This week, think about your role in the classroom. Do you allow the students to come to conclusions on their own? Do you give them the credit for their guided realizations?

ebrated in Jerusalem at the time of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, was a celebration of the law being given on Mount Sinai. Pentecost would now be a benchmark for the gospel as well. Passover took on a second importance with Jesus' death, and now Pentecost was experiencing the same "doubling up" of significance.

The tongues of fire that rested upon each of the followers of Christ were also highly symbolic. First of all, John the Baptist had declared that Jesus would baptize them with the Spirit and fire. This is an example of that: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit paired with the tongues of fire that appeared over their heads. We are reminded of God's appearance to Moses in the burning bush. It was there that He declared His name: I AM Who I AM. The law, celebrated at Pentecost, was given in fire on Mount Sinai. Even Ezekiel (in 1:13) had his mission confirmed with a vision of burning coals. Isaiah's mission was confirmed with a coal of fire touching his lips (Isaiah 6:7). Sin finally will be destroyed in a lake of fire, and the earth will be purified with fire. Our characters are said to be purified like metal in fire. Fire is a very important symbol both before and after Christ's ministry, showing the continuity of what Christ was teaching.

Matthew Henry makes a connection between the dividing of tongues at the Tower of Babel and the dividing of tongues of fire at Pentecost. He suggests that at the Tower of Babel the dividing of tongues separated people and made it difficult for the true worship of God to continue with those who had already set it aside. However, with the dividing of the tongues of fire at Pentecost (and with the subsequent miracle of languages) people from nations far and near were brought back together through the Holy Spirit.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Ask the students to think of one gift that God has given them. What do they do with that gift? With the blessing of the Holy Spirit, what limits are possible with that gift?

Teaching From the Lesson

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite students to share the Key Text *with the class if they have committed it to memory.*
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Acts of the Apostles. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

For example, perhaps one student enjoys writing. What do they do with that gift? Perhaps they write poetry, or contribute to the school paper. What could the Holy Spirit do with that gift if they would ask Him? Perhaps that student could become a great writer for God, given even more talent than they could imagine because of God's special blessing. Encourage the class to think big!

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The Holy Spirit was promised to us long, long ago. God has not forgotten His promise, and we can still claim that gift. The problem is that many people don't see the value in the gift of the Holy Spirit. It seems boring or theological. People don't see how it could fit into their lives. They don't see what the Holy Spirit is offering to them personally. He is not offering overblown church services with people falling down in a faint. He is offering courage, wisdom, discretion, contentment, and a sense of one's purpose on this earth.

The Holy Spirit is given to us to help us gain all those things we crave. The Holy Spirit will lead us into joy and contentment. He will also give us the courage to stand up and *say* where our happiness comes from. We don't need to preach. We just need to tell our own stories. There is no better sermon than a happy, successful young person saying "My life is different because of God."



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 4, 5.

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

JANUARY 10 2026

STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Acts 2:1-39.
Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 4, 5.

the promised gift



Photo by Colleen Cahill

keytext

"Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

(Acts 2:2-4, NIV)

flashlight

"It is not a conclusive evidence that a man is a Christian because he manifests spiritual ecstasy under extraordinary circumstances. Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 51).

what do you think?

In Luke 11:13 Jesus made the analogy of God being our Father.

1. He said if we know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more will God be willing to give us the Holy Spirit. How do you feel about this?
2. What does the Holy Spirit give you that you should care about?
3. What does the Holy Spirit have to offer to a teenager?
4. Why should you want the Holy Spirit?

did you know?

The same power that sus-tained the patriarchs, that gave Caleb and Joshua faith and courage, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God's faithful children in every succeeding age. It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that during the Dark Ages the Waldensian Christians helped to prepare the way for the Reformation. It was the same power that made successful the efforts of the noble men and women who pioneered the way for the establishment of modern missions and for the translation of the Bible into the languages and dialects of all nations and peoples.

"And today God is still using His church to make known His purpose in the earth."

—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 53.

INTO THE STORY

"When the day of Pente-cost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

"Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!' Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'

"Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'

"Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: '. . . God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'" Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.'

"When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'

"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.'"

(Acts 2:1-14, 32-39, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What did the Holy Spirit do for the disciples?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How did the people respond to Peter's sermon?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Do you think the disciples felt they had gained something personally from the Holy Spirit, or only something to use for helping others?

_____
_____
_____
_____

The people who witnessed the result of this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit had different reactions. What were they?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

If you had been a witness of this event, how would you have reacted?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What did Peter say the people needed to do in order to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? Why do you think that's important?

_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own" **(1 Corinthians 6:19, NIV).**

"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" **(Matthew 3:11, NIV).**

"Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people—where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them?" **(Isaiah 63:11, NIV).**

"And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" **(Romans 5:5, NIV).**

"His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied" **(Luke 1:67, NIV).**

further insight

"The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end."

—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 49

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Romans 5:5.

Why would you personally want the Holy Spirit? What benefit is there for you?

Romans 5:5 tells us that the Holy Spirit puts God's love into our hearts, giving us hope. What do you hope for in the future? What is your deepest desire?

Many people long for a loving, lasting relationship here on earth. We know that we can have that kind of relationship with God, but it doesn't take away our human need for companionship. When the Holy Spirit fills us with God's love, we are able to love others and experience healthier, closer, less selfish relationships. How can doing it God's way give us happiness that will last for the rest of our lives?

Sunday

Read Acts 2:14-21.

When God poured out the Holy Spirit, His people began to do amazing things! Those who saw them reacted in some very different ways. Some were shocked, and others mocked, "They're drunk!" People often make fun of things they don't understand. Have you ever been made fun of for being different? What should be your response as a Christian? See Peter's answer in today's reading.

Monday

Read Acts 2:2-4.

In the *Key Text* we see the Holy Spirit giving them the gift of speaking foreign languages. We don't always have the need for foreign languages in our day-to-day lives, but we do have the need to communicate with people we might otherwise not be able to connect with. Do you ever find it uncomfortable talking to older people? Are there groups of kids at school that you just "don't get"? People don't have to come from different countries to speak foreign languages to each other. The Holy Spirit is able to bridge those gaps and be a translator between people. God wants us to be able to understand each other and to connect with each other. How else can someone see God in you and want what you have? Ask God to give you the gift of "foreign languages" today!

Tuesday

Read 1 Peter 4:11.

Sometimes Christians make the mistake of believing that in order to truly be a Christian, they have to experience some sort of rapturous experience, falling down or speaking in an unknown language while in a trance. This couldn't be further from the truth! Being a Christian is a lot more "everyday life" than that. We have to believe in Jesus, love Him, and do our best to follow Him. In what "everyday" ways can you trust God today?

Wednesday

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19.

God has promised us the gift of the Holy Spirit. He gives us gifts that will fulfill our deepest desires and bring us lasting happiness. God knows them. God created you with particular needs, and He wants you to turn to Him to meet those needs. When God promises us the gift of the Holy Spirit, we should know that the Holy Spirit will both make us a blessing to others and bless us too! What are your deepest desires? Are you ready to see what God has been saving for you?

Thursday

Read Psalm 139:7-10.

Does the Holy Spirit work only in evangelistic events and at Bible studies? Is the Holy Spirit interested only in the unconverted, or is He interested in you too? What ways do you think the Holy Spirit would like to be involved in your everyday life?

Friday

Read Matthew 3:11.

After studying this week, how can you see the Holy Spirit working in your life? What more would you like to be able to do with His help? Your peace and your joy are a great witness of what God does for you. Are you brave enough to ask God for His Spirit and watch to see what amazing things He has in store? How can you be an example of an awesome experience with God to the people around you?

this week's reading*

The Acts of the Apostles (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 4, 5.

* Unlikely Leaders is a special adaptation of *The Acts of the Apostles* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.