

## Taking it all in

### Acts 2.1-21

The disciples find themselves in a large crowd made up of all sorts of people. Together they have a spiritual experience of the presence of God's Holy Spirit, described as being like wind and fire. Following this, they discover that, despite their differences, they can understand one another and feel united in a common purpose.

Now read Acts 2.1-21 see p.2 for text.

### A note on the passage

Many people were gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish Passover, a festival that recalls how Moses led the Israelites out of slavery and into the Promised Land. They realise that God is still active among them and has sent the Holy Spirit to lead them afresh into new ways of thinking and acting – something we too are invited to share in.



Does your faith spill over into everyday life? How can you share Jesus with others?

## WALK

Walk through a busy or crowded place and notice what a wonderful variety of human beings there are. They differ in height, build, colouring, fitness, ability and in many other ways – but all are made in the image of God. Give thanks to God for our wonderful diversity and for the things we have in common.

## Write DRAW



The people in today's reading had an uplifting experience. Write a list, or draw pictures of, things in life which make you feel happy or 'complete'. Notice which of these happen when you are alone, or when you are part of a large crowd, or perhaps in church, or at a large sporting event or concert or similar. How do other people encourage and enhance your experience?

## LISTEN and Sing

Listen to a recording of the song Kumbaya. As you sing, reflect that in your circle of friends and acquaintances there may be some who are happy, some celebrating, some sad or lonely or in need of prayer. Use this prayer through the week to help you to pray for others (adding a different name each day as you think about that person):

Loving God, thank you for all the people I know and meet, and for the differences which make each one of us special. Today I especially think about [...] because (say why the person is special to you). Thank you that we are members of one human family, united by your great love for us all. **Amen.**

## SPEECH!

Peter made a speech that was remembered for a long time. The Queen has made many speeches in 70 years, maybe you or your family can remember some occasions. She gives a message each year on Christmas Day on the television. She tries to convey something of how she sees what has been going on during the year. Sometimes it is very personal, like the one she gave on Christmas Day 2021 after Prince Philip, her husband, had died. If you were going to make a speech or give a message now, what would you include?



## BAKE

A good activity to do with children: make some fairy cakes.

**Ingredients:** 100g caster sugar, 100g soft butter or margarine, 100g self-raising flour, 2 eggs, mixing bowls, spoon, sieve, 12 paper cases, baking tray, cooling rack, oven gloves.

**Method:** Beat the sugar and butter together thoroughly. Add sifted flour. Beat the eggs in a separate bowl and add to the mixture. Mix well. (Optional: add chopped cherries, coconut, ginger, or dried fruit.) Spoon the mixture into the cases, place on the tray and bake at 180C/160C fan/gas 4 for 15-20 minutes. When they are cool, enjoy eating the fairy cakes while thinking about the many things that came together to make them good – just like the people in our world!

## Read **AND ACT**

Read the passage from Acts 2. Consider that it's possible to feel alone as well as 'together' in a large crowd. If you are in a gathering this week, look out for anyone who seems to be finding it difficult to join in. Try to talk to them and make them feel included in what is happening. Remember to be sensitive as they may wish to remain a little apart.

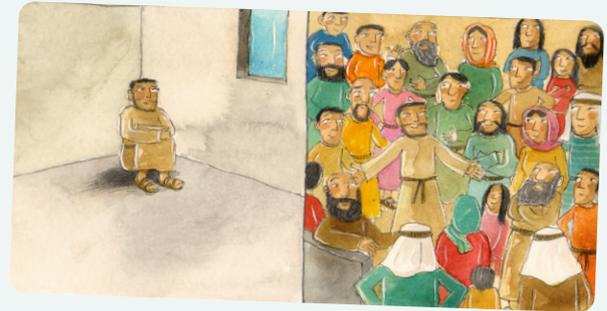
Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

**W**ith the sound of a whirlwind it came, rushing into the house where the followers of Jesus were gathered. There was a commotion and flames as the Holy Spirit came, resting on each of the disciples like a tongue of fire.

As it whooshed into the room, the Spirit filled them all with foreign languages, and the disciples spoke in words they didn't understand. Inspired, and with words gushing out of them, they went out into the streets.

It was the festival of Pentecost and Jerusalem was full of Jews from all over the world. When the disciples came out into the street, the crowds heard them speaking the message of Jesus in their own languages. They were amazed. 'How can this be?' they asked. 'All the followers of Jesus are from Galilee, but we can hear their message loud and clear in words we understand.'

Not everyone was impressed, though. Some listeners sneered, 'These people are drunk.' Peter, still filled to overflowing with the Spirit's power, stood up in front of all the people.



'We are not drunk,' he said. 'It's only nine in the morning. No, you are seeing and hearing what the prophet Joel spoke about in the Old Testament.'

Peter continued: 'Joel said, "God will pour his Spirit on all people; children will prophesy and adults will see holy visions. The Spirit is for everyone, men, women and children; there will be signs in heaven and on earth, and these will be the last days. Everyone who calls on the Lord's name shall be saved."'

Like a fiery whirlwind it came, and the Spirit breathed new life into the followers of Jesus.

Acts 2.1-21

## Did you know?

- The Holy Spirit had been promised to the disciples by Jesus, after he had risen from the dead and was about to go back to heaven.

- Pentecost is a Jewish festival, similar to a Harvest Festival.

## Acts 2.1-21 (NRSV)

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' All were amazed and perplexed, saying

to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'