



Metro Lutheran
Positive Parenting
May 2010

A SPIRITED LIFE WITH CHILDREN

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
Send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.
With One Voice, #775

This month, our congregations will celebrate Pentecost. This marks the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit, the power from on high to fill His disciples. This Spirit descended on Jesus at His baptism, empowering Jesus to do all God called Him to do. This same Spirit now gives Jesus' followers the power to do what we are called to do - "Go, make disciples."

As a child, the Holy Spirit baffled me. No one talked to me about it or helped me to understand. I made up something to fill the void. The Holy Spirit became a religious version of Casper, the friendly ghost. A mere 23 years of teaching Lutheran confirmation gave me a whole new appreciation of this member of the Trinity, one I want to share with my children and yours.

Telling the story: The story of the first Pentecost is in Acts 2. After Jesus' ascension, His followers were all together in one place, when "suddenly from heaven, there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind ... 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." Acts 2: 1-4. All that happened so that Jesus' other followers could tell about Jesus in the languages of all of the people gathered in Jerusalem. That day, about 3,000 persons became believers.

Looking for Pentecost: This year, Pentecost Sunday will be on May 23rd. The color on the paraments (the cloth on the altar, pulpit, and lectern) and pastors' stoles is red, for the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost is also the name of the longest season of the Church year, focusing on the Church. The color is now green, reminding us of the growth the Holy Spirit brings to the Church.

Living Pentecost: So, what does this have to do with each of us, with our families? Baptism is our personal Pentecost, linking us to the Church. In baptism, God names and claims us, giving us forgiveness of sins and eternal life. God also gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit, calling to us every day of our lives - to connect us with God, to believe, to follow Jesus, to use the gifts we have been given to serve others and to build up the Church, the body of Christ. So, the Holy Spirit is present in all of our life together.

As a Christian, a parent, and a parent educator, it makes me cringe when people want to "break the spirit" of children. Our children come to us, filled with the Spirit, to do all God will call them to do. Cherish and nurture the Spirit in each one. How? Here are some ideas:

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

1. Buy bandanas in liturgical colors - red, green, white, purple, and blue. Using the color you see in your sanctuary, spread it in the center of the table where you eat. Place a candle on it. Light the candle, remembering that is Jesus is the light of the world.
2. Place a bowl of water on the table. Ask your family, "How have you remembered your baptism today?" Make the sign of the cross on each beloved forehead, using their name and the words, "Child of God, you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit, and marked with the cross of Christ forever" or "Jesus loves you, and so do I!"
3. When there is a wind, go out in it as a family. Talk about the power of the wind; talk about the power of the Spirit.
4. As a family, talk about where you have seen the work of the Holy Spirit, those implausible times when you know it is God's work, not yours, that has made the difference.
5. When you don't know how to pray for your own deep needs, for others, or for situations, entrust it to the Holy Spirit, who will "intercede with sighs too deep for words." Romans 8:26