#### Lesson 2:

#### Beginning of the Church

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

Acts 2

MEMORY WORK:

Mark 16:15

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

When I am old enough, and understand what sin, repentance, forgiveness, and a Christian’s responsibilities are, I need to be willing to obey what God tells me in the Bible, change my life (repent), and be baptized.

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| **LESSON STARTS HERE** |

INTRODUCTION:

Today we are going to study about something that is very important! We are going to learn about when the Church first started. We know that the Church is made up of people. It’s not a building. The Church means those who are saved or Christians. We can learn about how this happened in Acts chapter two.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Jesus only had about three years on Earth to teach people what they needed to do to be pleasing to God. He had chosen certain men (the apostles) to carry on His work after His death. He told them to be prepared for the coming of His Church, the “kingdom of Heaven” or “kingdom of God” (Matthew 16:18,19; Mark 9:1). After Jesus was resurrected, He spent about 40 days appearing to many different people, including the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:5-7). He took advantage of this time to teach the apostles more about the Church and their part in helping others become part of it (by becoming Christians). Before Jesus went back to heaven (i.e., ascended), He told them they should stay in Jerusalem (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,12) and wait for special powers from the Holy Spirit (miraculous powers that would confirm the Word they spoke, just as they had for Jesus; Mark 16:20) that would help them convince others He was the Son of God. Then Jesus told the apostles that they should go to many different places in the world and preach the good news about Him to **everyone**. [The apostles would not fully understand the concept of “everyone” until divine intervention occurred for the sake of Cornelius in Acts 10.]
2. After Jesus’ ascension, the eleven remaining apostles (Judas having betrayed Jesus and killed himself) and some other disciples (including His mother Mary and His brothers) went to an upper room in Jerusalem to wait as He had told them to do. It may well have been the same upper room where He and the apostles ate their last supper together. They prayed about choosing someone to take Judas’ place. Then they chose Matthias.
3. On the Day of Pentecost, some very strange things happened:
	* A sound **like** a great rushing wind filled the house where they were.
	* The noise, **heard** by many in the city, was followed by something **seen** by everyone: “**tongues as of [like] fire**” that “rested” (“sat,” NASB) on each of the apostles.
	* The apostles were “filled with” (enabled by) the Holy Spirit in a miraculous way, and they began to speak to the crowd in languages they had not been taught, languages which everyone in the crowd (from about 17 countries) **heard** and **understood**. This was yet another miracle to prove that the words of the apostles were from God, Himself.

**NOTES:** The word “cloven” used in the KJV to describe the “tongues” which rested on the apostles’ heads is correctly translated in the NASB as “distributing themselves.” The word comes from a Greek word meaning “to cut in pieces as a butcher does meat.” With that in mind, it seems that a “fire-like appearance presented itself at first, as it were, in a single body, and then suddenly parted in this direction and that, so that a portion of it rested on each of those present” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. III, p. 21).

Many in the crowd would have spoken Aramaic, in addition to the languages of their respective countries. Many were from widespread parts of the Roman Empire, and Greek was the accepted language of the Empire. It would not have surprised the multitudes to hear the apostles speak in Aramaic or Greek, but to hear their own languages so far from home—all at the same time—was astonishing.

**RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS:** See the article titled “[**Modern-Day**](http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=11&amp;article=1399&amp;topic=293)[**Miracles, Tongue-Speaking, and Holy Spirit Baptism: A Refutation**](http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=11&amp;article=1399&amp;topic=293)” by Dave Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for an in depth study of New Testament miracles and their duration in the Christian age.

**NOTE:** The ability to do miracles, like speaking in languages (tongues) that a person has not studied, could be passed on when the apostles laid their hands on others. When the apostles died, and those on whom they had laid their hands died, miracles ceased. The Word was being written down and passed on. So the miracles eventually would not be needed to confirm the message. Besides the direct gift from God to the apostles in Acts two, the only other instance of God directly giving miraculous powers to anyone in the New Testament is to Cornelius and his household in Acts 10. (There is no direct indication that they were able to pass on the ability to do miracles.) Cornelius and his household received special gifts simply to verify, to prove, that Gentiles should be accepted without reservation into the Church.

1. All of this happened on the Day of **Pentecost.** The apostles went outside the house and saw thousands of people who had gathered because of the loud noise they had heard. (Thousands of Jews had come from many different parts of the world to celebrate Pentecost and to worship God. Many had come for the **Passover** and stayed in town for the next feast because travel was so difficult and time-consuming.) So the apostles had a ready-made audience.

**HISTORICAL NOTE: Passover** was the most important feast of the year for Jews because it was a time to remember their ancestors’ escape from slavery, under the leadership of Moses. It was a one day feast [the 14th day of Nisan or Abib (the first month on the Jewish calendar, i.e., mid-April)], followed by seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. **Pentecost** was celebrated on the 6th day of Sivan [June], 50 days after the Passover. [“Pentecost” means 50th.] It is also called the Feast of Harvests because it falls during the wheat harvest.

1. Most of the people who heard them speak in their own languages were excited and amazed, but some accused them of being drunk! Peter spoke up and assured the crowd that they were not drunk. After all, it was only 9:00 in the morning. Then he began to use Old Testament prophecies from Joel and the Psalms to tell the Jews that the man Jesus, who had been crucified seven weeks before, really was the Messiah for whom they had waited so long. Weeks before, Peter had been afraid to even say that he knew Jesus. But on that day, he stood bravely before thousands and told them that **they were responsible** for Jesus’ death! He assured them that Jesus did not remain in the tomb though; God had raised Him from the dead.

Peter wanted to make the people feel sorry for what they had done so that they would accept responsibility for their actions and change their lives. Many in the crowd believed Peter’s message which had been confirmed with miracles and were convinced they really had been responsible for the crucifixion of the Son of God. They asked him, “What shall we do?” Peter took advantage of that question to tell them to repent (change their thinking and proceed to change their actions as well) and be baptized for the remission (forgiveness, wiping away) of their sins. [Before His ascension, Jesus told the apostles to preach that very message in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15- 16, and Luke 24:46-47.] That day—the Day of Pentecost—about 3,000 believed Peter’s message and were baptized into Christ. They were the first Christians [although the word “Christian” isn’t used until Acts 11:26].

1. Can you imagine how excited the apostles were? Every day after that they went to the Temple area to teach other Jews about the Savior, Jesus Christ. God gave them the ability to perform miracles to further confirm their message (2:43). “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (2:47). In a short time, there were many thousands of Christians in Jerusalem.

**RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS:** See the article titled “[**‘Calling on the**](http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=11&amp;article=775)[**Name of the Lord’**](http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=11&amp;article=775)” by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion of the meaning and misunderstandings about the phrase as it is used in Acts 2:21. See also “[**One Question, Three Different Answers**](http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=11&amp;article=646)” by Eric Lyons for a study of the different answers that are given in the New Testament to the question, “What must I do to be saved?”

**YOUNGER CHILDREN: MAY WANT TO SAVE THE REMAINDER OF THE LESSON FOR WEDNESDAY NIGHT**

1. When you are old enough to understand what sin, forgiveness, repentance, and Christian responsibilities are, you can become a Christian in the same way those people (and many more) did 2,000 years ago. God has given us the same instructions in the New Testament:

**Hear**: Before we can obey, we have to know what God wants us to do. We listen to preachers, teachers, and parents; and we read the New Testament for ourselves (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 2:15).

**Believe**: We must believe that Jesus is God’s Son and our Savior (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:37; Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24).

**Repent**: We must change the way we think about sin and decide to change the way we live (Acts 17:30; 3:19; Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10)

**Confess**: We must be willing to say with our mouths that we believe that Jesus is God’s Son (Romans 10:9-10).

**Be baptized**: Baptism is a burial/immersion with Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Acts 8:38; John 3:23), not having water sprinkled or poured over my head. Baptism washes away our sins and saves us (1 Peter 3:21; Acts 2:38; 22:16). Baptism clothes us with Christ (Galatians 3:27), and is the point at which we have officially chosen to submit to the authority of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20). Being baptized makes us Christians and a part of Jesus’ Church (His family, His body; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:47). [No person or group of people have the right

to “vote us into the Church.” Jesus alone has the right to make us part of His body (Acts

2:47). The Church is not a group that we can “join” like a club.]

1. **Obey God**: We must do all these things and continue to do those things God expects of us as Christians and not do those things He has told us not to do (Revelation 2:10). We do them because we love our Heavenly Father and because He told us to (John 14:15)!

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL VISUALS (note disclaimers):

##### Betty Lukens’ felt pieces

* ABeka Flash-a-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book;)
* Free Bible Images – Saved on flash drive. Can be presented on classroom tv. Script included in lesson file.

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS:

**“HERE’S THE CHURCH** **BUILDING”**

Here’s the Church building. (all fingers linked together backward, facing palms) Here’s the steeple. (take two index fingers out of double fist and put fingertips together)

Open the door, and there’s the Church—the people!

(Completely unfold double fist, with fingers still linked together)

**“PLAN OF SALVATION” (****[Click to Hear](http://www.apcurriculum.com/dcirfol/75song.mp3))**

Author: Unknown\* (Tune: “Pop Goes the Weasel”)

Hear, Believe, Repent, Confess, Be Baptized in the Wa-ter;

Rise up again to walk with Christ, and Live like you ought to!

### SUNDAY

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* B is for Beginning of the Church Page for NT Binders
* Pentecost in Pictures Cube – Template and detailed instructions for this activity are in the lesson file. For time, copy onto cardstock on pre-cut. Let students color the pictures then show them how to fold it into a cube. Use clear packaging tape to hold together. Make sure the students can tell the story in order.
* Salvation Gift Card – Template and detailed instructions are in the lesson file. Emphasize how salvation is a gift from God. We accept that gift in baptism.

### WEDNESDAY NIGHT

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson. (See [Review Questions](http://www.apcurriculum.com/dcirfol/4-24-32RQ.pdf) for example questions.)
2. When you are old enough to understand what sin, forgiveness, repentance, and Christian responsibilities are, you can become a Christian in the same way those people (and many more) did 2,000 years ago. God has given us the same instructions in the New Testament:

**Hear**: Before we can obey, we have to know what God wants us to do. We listen to preachers, teachers, and parents; and we read the New Testament for ourselves (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 2:15).

**Believe**: We must believe that Jesus is God’s Son and our Savior (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:37; Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24).

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**Confess**: We must be willing to say with our mouths that we believe that Jesus is God’s Son (Romans 10:9-10).

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**Obey God**: We must do all these things and continue to do those things God expects of us as Christians and not do those things He has told us not to do (Revelation 2:10). We do them because we love our Heavenly Father and because He told us to (John 14:15)

Explain that “the Church **of** Christ” means the church that **belongs to** Christ. That is not the name of just another religious group. The Church is **His** people. (With YOUNGER CHILDREN use examples of things that belong to each of them and ask questions like, “Who does this Bible belong to? It’s Joe’s Bible, or the Bible of Joe.” “Who does this purse belong to?” etc.)

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* Tongues of Fire Headbands – Template and detailed instructions are in the lesson file. Use tissue paper or red/orange/yellow construction paper torn into pieces on the flame.
* Acts Coloring Pages – in lesson file

### Review Questions

1. What strange things happened on the day of Pentecost?
	1. A sound like a rushing wind filled the place where the apostles were, and tongues of fire rested on each of the apostles’ heads.
2. What happened to the apostles?
	1. They were filled with the Holy Spirit.
3. What were they able to do as a result?
	1. They could perform miracles just like Jesus did.
4. What happened when the apostles started speaking to the crowd that was gathered around them?
	1. They started speaking in different languages so everyone there could understand the message they were speaking.
5. Which apostle’s sermon is recorded, in which he explained that they were not drunk, but were telling them about Jesus?
	1. Peter
6. What did Peter tell the people about Jesus?
	1. He told them all about their history going all the way back to Moses, how Jesus was the promised Messiah, and how they had all had a part in crucifying Him.
7. What did the people ask of Peter?
	1. What must we do to be saved?
8. What did Peter tell them?
	1. They should repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins.
9. How many were saved on the day of Pentecost?
	1. About 3,000
10. What are the steps of salvation?
	1. Hear, Believe, Repent, Confess, Be Baptized
11. Where did Jesus tell the apostles they were to spread the Gospel?
	1. Everywhere

Additional Notes / Activities Performed & Curriculum Feed Back

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