

2025 | CHILDREN'S MESSAGE APRIL 21-JUNE 8

JoAnne Sharp, CCE

“Who likes birthday parties?!” (Pause for responses.)

“What do you usually get at a birthday party?” (Let them answer: *presents, cake, ice cream, treat bags.*)

“And what else happens at birthday parties?” (*Play games, watch movies, go bowling, etc.*)

When I was your age — yes, once upon a time, I was your age — we played a game called Pin the Tail on the Donkey. The goal was to get a paper “tail” as close as possible to the right spot on the donkey’s back. But there was a twist! You had to do it blindfolded. Sometimes an adult would even spin you around first, and you might not be facing the right way at all! I didn’t always enjoy being the one to play, but it was *so much fun* watching my friends try to find the right spot!

Are you wondering why I’m talking about birthday parties during the children’s message today? Well, it’s because Pentecost is coming soon! Pentecost is a special Sunday that is like the *church’s birthday*. It’s the day we celebrate the beginning of the church thousands of years ago.

Between today and Pentecost, we’ll be using these fun **coin boxes** to collect a special offering called the **Pentecost Offering**. People in Presbyterian churches like ours all over the United States will be collecting this offering. It helps support ministries that benefit youth and children.

One of those ministries is a big conference called **Presbyterian Youth Triennium**. It happens every three years, and this summer it will be in **Louisville, Kentucky**. [Share if your congregation is sending a delegation or joining with your presbytery to attend.] At Triennium, young people and their leaders come together for worship, learning, and fun. It’s all about helping people just a little older than you share their faith, ideas, and gifts with the church and the world.

Another cool thing about the Pentecost Offering is that part of it stays right here in our community! Some churches use it to help fund mission projects for younger kids. [Share how your church uses the retained portion in your community.] One church I know of uses their portion to create a weeklong mission experience for middle schoolers in their congregation. The tweens spend a week helping different organizations in their community. It gives them a chance to experience what it’s like to serve and care for others.

This year's Pentecost Offering focuses on **Acts 2:17**: *"I will pour out my Spirit on every kind of people."* Remember, after Jesus went to be with God, he told his followers to wait because something special was going to happen. That special something was **the Holy Spirit!** The Spirit came just like Jesus promised. And the best part? **Everyone gathered — including the children — received it!**

That means you are part of God's work, too! You can help spread the Good News of Jesus by helping other children and youth who need love and support. Over the next few weeks, we'll learn more about how we can do that together.

I'm so excited to see how we'll use our gifts and coins to help others through the Pentecost Offering! Let's get ready to celebrate the church's birthday and all the ways God is working in and through us.

Young friends, and friends sitting in the pews, let's pray together:

Good and wonderful God,

Thank you for sending your Spirit to be with us,
and for the many gifts we receive.

Encourage us over the coming weeks

to learn more about the ministries supported by the Pentecost Offering.

And all God's beloved children say ...

Amen.



QUESTIONS?

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