

**2024 Children’s Time**

**April 1–May 19**

**Preparation**

Before worship, locate something you can share with the children that is a comfort object for you — a teddy bear you’ve had since childhood, a soft blanket you snuggle under, a comfortable sweatshirt you wear when you are sick, etc.

**Gathering**

Welcome, friends! I have something special to share with you today. It’s something that brings me comfort. (*Tell the children a little about the object and why it matters to you.*)

Lots of people have comfort objects — a special blanket, a stuffed animal — something that is familiar and helps us feel better, especially when we are alone. How about you? Who wants to tell me about what brings you comfort? (*Welcome any sharing and thank them.)*

There’s a story in the Bible where Jesus tells his friends that he is going to send them something (or someone) to bring them comfort after he is gone. He says, “When I’m gone, you won’t be all alone. God will send a friend, a helper, a comforter to be with you forever. The Holy Spirit will be with you. … I am coming to you.”

And that happened on the day of Pentecost! After Jesus died, rose again and had gone away, the Spirit came with a rush of wind and fire. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit! They knew they were not alone. They could tell other people about Jesus in different languages. They shared the good news, and it started to spread. The Spirit gave them courage and comfort. And ever since, followers of Jesus have been given that Holy Spirit as a gift from God.

The Holy Spirit comforts all of us and is with all of us. It’s like we all have the same blanket, teddy bear or special comfort object, and we have it always, wherever we go. Can you imagine how giant a blanket or teddy bear would have to be to reach everyone? The Holy Spirit does that all the time.

When we are together, like we are right now, we are connected by that Spirit in worship. When we share our gifts in service or mission, we are connected by the Spirit in love. When we give our gifts to the Pentecost Offering, we are helping youth and young adults in so many places, with that same Holy Spirit in them, grow in faith as they love and serve. Wherever we go — school, home, work, with friends or by ourselves, none of us are ever really alone — the Holy Spirit is always with us, and we are connected to God and to each other.

**Prayer**

I’m going to teach you a way to pray to help you remember that the Spirit is with you. Put your hands on your belly and take a breath in and out. Can you feel your breath move inside you as you breathe in and out? The Bible sometimes calls the Spirit “breath,” so when you breathe in like that, you can remember that the Spirit is with you always. Take another slow breath in and out while I pray for us.

“Dear God, you are as close to us as our breath. Thank you for the comfort and gift of the Holy Spirit. Help us remember that you are with us always as we grow in faith. Help us recognize that we are connected to one another, and to all your children through the same Spirit. Give us the courage to share your love and comfort with others. As we breathe in and out, we say thanks to you. Amen.”

*Prepared by the Rev. Julie Coffman Hester. Julie is a pastor and writer in North Carolina who has served all ages in faith formation for over 30 years. Her current ministry focuses on writing curriculum and resources, and teaching workshops on writing as a spiritual practice and writing through grief. You can find her at* [*juliehester.com*](https://juliehester.com/) *and subscribe to her writing prompts at* [*writingincompany.substack.com*](http://writingincompany.substack.com/)*.*

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*2024 Pentecost Offering Curriculum*