



part 1 of 2—

# Children and the Holy Spirit

by David Boyd

Director, National Children's Ministries Agency

One day as I was driving through Indiana with a friend, that friend commented about the row after row of corn and wheat in the huge harvest fields of the Midwest. To me, having grown up in the Midwest, seeing these endless fields was a common sight. But to my friend, this was a new sight. These fields reminded me that farmers have long since learned the formula of "what you sow is what you'll reap."

## Pass It On

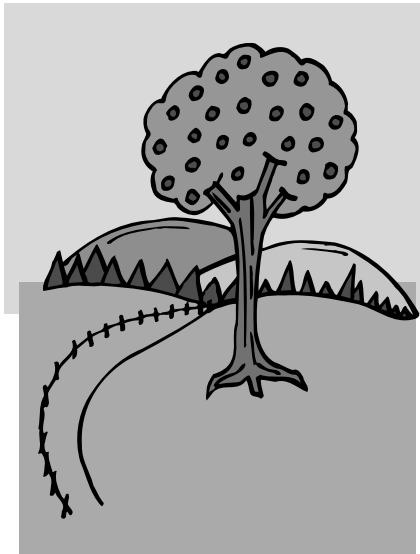
The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a major part of our Pentecostal heritage. It was the foundation on which the Assemblies of God was founded. Yet, I fear that this next generation is losing out because the Holy Spirit is taking a backseat in many children's ministries. If this next generation is to be Pentecostal, then we, as leaders, need to teach them and make sure that this heritage is passed on.

I'm challenging all of you, as leaders in children's ministry, to make the Holy Spirit a part of your teaching and a part of your services. Allow the Holy Spirit to move. Allow time for children to be filled. Encourage them to pray in tongues and to be used in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We MUST

be committed to passing on to the next generation the heritage of the Holy Spirit. It is our responsibility.

## Plant the Seeds

On that note, let me encourage you as children's leaders to plant the seeds of hunger for the baptism in the Holy Spirit in the



hearts of your children. I know that in every service or class that you teach, children hear the message of salvation and have the opportunity to respond. But do they hear about the great gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that God has for each of them? Do they hear that this gift will give them the boldness to stand up for Jesus? Do they hear

about speaking in tongues, which will help them as they pray?

It's easy to bypass this special gift from God with the day-to-day preparations of lessons for your children. But let me encourage you, I have found that when you regularly give the children a taste of the Holy Spirit when you teach, they will build up a desire to be filled. That desire will become something they fervently pray about. Those fervent prayers will be answered by God as He baptizes your children in the Holy Spirit.

Let me tell you about Judy, the sixth grade boys' Sunday School teacher at a church I used to attend. Judy purposed in her heart to see every one of her sixth grade boys filled with the Holy Spirit by the time they left her class. Year after year, class after class, sixth grade boys were being filled with the Holy Spirit. Some of them were filled in her classroom. Others were filled in children's church or in the adult sanctuary on a Sunday night. As she prayed and planted the seeds, God gave the harvest.

## Planting Tips

How do you plant the seeds of hunger for the Holy Spirit in children? Here are some suggestions:

🔥 Teach the children that the Holy Spirit is God, that He is the third member of the Trinity, and that He has a purpose and a job to do.

🔥 The Holy Spirit is given to us as a free gift (Acts 1:4) in order to give us power to live for God and to be witnesses. (See Acts 1:4; 2:4.)

🔥 Speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence that you

have been filled with the Holy Spirit. (See Acts 2:4.)

🔥 Utilize tongues as a prayer language during times of prayer. Explain to the children that God understands our prayer language and directs us to pray in tongues when we don't know how to pray. (See 1 Corinthians 14.)

A good verse to use at this time is Romans 8:26, which says, "The Spirit helps us in our

weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express."

🔥 Answer children's questions as they come. They will ask about how they can learn to speak in tongues. You can explain to them that it happens when they receive the free gift God has for them.

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### Questions for Further Study—

1. What are some ways you can pass on your Pentecostal heritage to the children you serve?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. List ways you can plant the seeds of hunger for the baptism in the hearts of children.

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As kids are exposed to the Holy Spirit, and as they ask questions and hear the answers, they will begin to want to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

## Just Ask

Instruct children to ask God to fill them with the Holy Spirit. They don't have to understand it fully to receive. Some will receive it long before you begin to teach entire lessons about it.

## Teach It

Once a hunger for the Holy Spirit has begun to grow in the hearts of your kids, begin to teach the children each week about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Some resources are listed at the end of this article.)

## Invite Testimonies

Have testimonies of how and when various people were baptized in the Holy Spirit. These testimonies could be from yourself, other children, or other adults you bring into class or children's church.

## Make Time for Prayer

Begin to have special prayer times during class so the children can seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

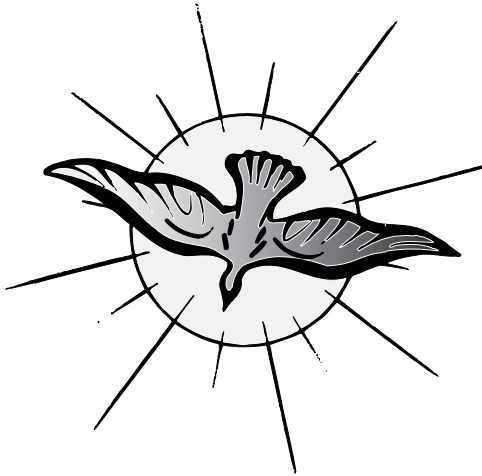
## Invite God

Ask God to fill your children

with the Holy Spirit. Ask Him for wisdom and direction. Invite His presence into your class or children's church.

## Don't Coax

Never coax children. Never have them "repeat after you." Allow God to fill the children one at a time, in His time.



## Encourage Worship and Prayer

During prayer times, encourage children to worship God. Worship seems to accompany the baptism.

Encourage children who have been filled to pray for others using the new prayer languages God has provided.

## Children Can Lead the Way

When your children seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit, they are learning to pray, worship, seek God, feel His presence, and receive His power. This can create a powerful spirit that spreads to the entire congregation as the children lead the way into a new outpouring of God's presence upon your church. Remember Acts 2:39 says, "The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." God wants the children to receive this free gift. Plant those seeds! Watch God bring in the harvest!

## Resources

### Young Explorers Children's Church Curriculum

*Super Sleuth: Lessons on the Holy Spirit* (item #58-0113)

*Route 66: Lessons in Bible Doctrine*, Lesson 9 (item #58-0115)

To order, call GPH at 1-800-641-4310

### Booklets by David and Mary Boyd

*The Infilling of the Holy Spirit* and *Why We Need the Holy Spirit*. To order, send an e-mail to: [bgmc@ag.org](mailto:bgmc@ag.org).

