

Dummy. Chicken. Sissy. Ugly. Naughty. Stupid. Bad. How many of you kids have ever had someone call you one of those names? Raise your hands so we can all see them. Can you remember how it felt? Like when they said you were ugly what you really were ugly? Or a dummy that you really are dumb?

You all know the little saying, Sticks and stones ~~can~~ may ~~break~~ my bones ^{names} but ~~wounds~~ can never hurt me. Sometimes that is true. People call us names and they bounce off of us like we are protected ~~by~~ like armor. But sometimes those words go right into our ears and go up into our minds and they get stuck there. It's like we can hear them over and over. So even when there is no one of calling you a dummy, you feel like a dummy because that word that got stuck in your head. Or though no one is saying ~~in~~ you are naughty, you carry that word naughty that your teacher or mother yelled at you around inside of you and you feel like you are a ~~naughty~~ ^{bad} person. ^{The saying about sticks and stones isn't quite true. A blow or bruise, stay for a few days and then fade away, but the words that get stuck inside hurt over and over and over again.}

A long long time ago, nearly two thousand years ago, God decided to do something about all those bad words that get stuck in our minds, and down here, where we feel, in our hearts. And not just the words but all kinds of bad feelings too, like hate, and greed and envy, especially envy when we wish we were like someone else instead of the person we are whom God made us to be. God wanted to take out all these bad feelings and put in good words and good feelings instead, like love and peace and joy and friendship. And so God became one of us, a person named Jesus.

Now I think most of you know what happened to Jesus. He died on the cross. And God made him alive again by raising him up on Easter. And then God did something that Jesus' followers and friends could not understand, God took Jesus away from us again. God took Jesus back to be with him in heaven again.

~~But~~ God had a reason for going it. As long as Jesus was a person on

earth, he could only be in one place at a time. ~~But~~ But God wanted Jesus everywhere. So he took the spirit of Jesus and sent him down to earth on a day called Pentecost. And that Spirit looked like tongues of fire that rested on the heads of the followers of Jesus. And those tongues put words into the mouths of Jesus followers and the Spirit of Jesus himself in their hearts.

Now with the Spirit of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God started filling up the hearts and the minds of those who followed Jesus. He wanted them to be so full of Jesus spirit that there would be no room for all the bad words and the bad feelings.

~~And so~~ when you were baptized, God planted that same Holy Spirit, Jesus Spirit, in you. Instead of the mean things that people say about you, he wants you to remember how much he loves you. Instead of keeping feelings of stupid or bad or chicken inside of you, he wants you to know that you are so special that Jesus Spirit is in you. God is in you, God made you the special person you are, ~~God is planted with the person he has made you to be.~~

And God wants the good he has put in you to come out of you in your words. God wants your words that you speak to your friends and brothers and sisters and moms and dads to be words of kindness, and love, and sharing. Not words that hurt, but words that make them smile and sparkle and stand up tall.

Today is Pentecost, the day when Jesus first sent his Spirit to live in the hearts of his people. It is a happy day, for now that same spirit lives in you and in me.