

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Pentecost
Intergenerational Lesson Plan

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21

Background

The focal scripture for Pentecost is Acts 2:1-21. Jesus had told the disciples to wait until the advocate appeared. They were quite puzzled about what to expect in this advocate, but they trusted Jesus, and they waited. The disciples had learned that there was empowerment in their spending time together, praying, and sharing their concerns.

They were probably together to celebrate Shavu'ot which was also called Pentecost because it occurred 50 days after Passover. Passover had brought physical freedom; at Shavu'ot people gratefully brought branches of their very first harvest and celebrated the “giving” of the Torah (the first five books found in our Bible), which brought freedom from idolatry.

On the Feast of Pentecost, the disciples experienced the Holy Spirit. We can probably identify with Luke's (the author of Acts) reaching for the right words to describe what happened: “It was like . . .” Yes. Well, like wind. Like . . . well, fire. Suddenly, the disciples were not just speaking — they were communicating. Each person listening to them understood what they were saying. Now the disciples were ready to do the work they had been given to do.

Before

Choose which of the following activities you will do with your group, so you will have the supplies needed for each. Instead of the French translation used in the telling of the story, feel free to substitute a different translation. Here is the Joel 2:28 passage Peter quotes (Acts 2:17) translated into Spanish and Dakota:

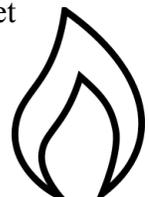
En los postreros días – dice Dios,
derramaré mi Espíritu sobre toda carne.

Unkan anpetu ihankeya kin en,(Wakantanka eya,) mitaniya kin wicacehpi owasin
awicawakastan kta; unkan nicinksipi nicunksipi ko wokcanpi kta, qa koska
nitawapi kin wowanyake kin wanyakapi kta, qa wicahinca nitawapi kin
wowihamde ihamnanpi kta ce.

For additional translations, ask parishioners who speak different languages, or look at <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/>

Option: Pentecost could be considered the birthday of the church. In England it is called Whitsunday, and a fancy white cake is served. You might choose to bring a white sheet cake, some red icing, invite the group to decorate the cake, and then, of course, eat it.

You may choose to cut flames like this one out of red or yellow paper to give to each person as they come into the room.



Intergenerational Lesson Plan

Gathering: Ask people to choose a seat in the circle, and if they do not know the name of the person sitting next to them to introduce themselves and ask that person's name. Begin by introducing yourself, and the person to your right. Ask that person to restate their name and then introduce the person on his/her right. Go around the circle until each person has been recognized.

Supplies Needed:

nametags
markers
Chairs arranged in a circle

Preview: Tell the group what you have planned for this session: Beginning and ending in prayer, hearing and reflecting on today's passage with a few questions and selected activities. Let them know what time you expect to be finished and answer any questions.

Opening Prayer: Thank you God, for assuring us that whenever we gather together in your name, the Holy Spirit is right here with us. Amen.

The Story: **Acts 2: 1-21.** You may choose to narrate this passage and invite persons to read the part of the crowd and Peter. If you choose to have people help with the story, you may want to call some of the participants ahead of time to see if they can read part of the passage in a different language. Or you may want to simply tell the story, using this as a guide:

Supplies Needed:

Copies of the Bible or the passage, which can be found at the end of this lesson, or tell the story as described.

People had come from many places to celebrate Pentecost. Most had come bringing some of their very first harvest of the year: grain tied up in little bundles, branches of grapes, handfuls of olives.

The disciples were all in town and had probably gathered in that same room where they had been with Jesus. Perhaps they were sharing a meal, maybe they were chatting, or perhaps they were praying when suddenly – as in **SUDDENLY** – they knew that they were in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Luke tells us it was like . . . well, like a blast of wind that blew through the room. And it was, well, like tongues of fire — all over the place. And when the disciples started to talk, everyone could understand what they were saying, even people who did not speak this language. “How could this be?” people asked. “I speak only Spanish” (or French, or Portuguese, or Dakota, or whatever) “yet I could understand what they were saying!”

Peter got up and said: “This is just as the Prophet Joel said would happen:

Voici ce qui arrivera dans les derniers jours, dit Dieu:
Je répandrai de mon Esprit sur tout home;”

That's how those who speak French heard Peter. Here is how it would sound to us:

In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.

Questions:

The disciples had discovered benefits in spending time together. What are some benefits when we decide to work together? (Some things people may notice: the work load is shared so it's easier for all, we can get a lot done, we can help others who need help — and it can be fun.)

Luke heard what had happened on Pentecost. Maybe he was there. But it was still hard to describe. Here are some things that may be hard to describe; who can describe them?

- the feeling when you discover that you know how to ride your bike,
- you have figured out how to tie your shoes,
- you can “do stuff” on your computer,
- you have learned a new language

What was the work the disciples had been given to do? (Go. Tell all people that the Holy Spirit is here, helping people do the work they have been given to do.)

What signs do we have that they got their work done? (Now, some 2000 years later, there are people to tell us the story.)

What might be the work the Holy Spirit is helping us to do? (Follow Jesus; tell others about Jesus; help each other, etc.)

Pentecost Streamers or Pinwheels:

Invite each person to make a Pentecost streamer or pinwheel. When you are done, you can all go outside or stand in front of a fan and witness the power of wind.

Streamers: Take long strips of paper (like adding machine paper, crepe paper, or streamers) and let each person draw or write about their image of the Holy Spirit, wind, flames, etc.

Once they have created the streamer, attach it to a pencil or popsicle stick so you can hold it up in the wind or in front of a fan to demonstrate the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Pinwheels: You can either buy pinwheels and invite the group to decorate and play with them, or you can create our own pinwheels. There are many patterns that can be found on the internet. For most, you will need paper, scissors, pencils, markers, and fasteners.

Our Pentecost Portrait: Invite each person to find a spot for themselves on the paper and sketch themselves doing something they do. (Riding a bicycle, making bread, sitting in school, working at a computer, etc.) If they choose, each can draw a bright flame over their head. When all have finished find a place to hang the mural so all can enjoy it.

Supplies Needed:

Materials for streamers (addition tape, long pieces of fabric, crepe paper or streamer paper)
Markers
Pinwheels or materials to make pinwheels

Supplies Needed:

A long sheet of paper, such as freezer paper and crayons or felt markers.
You can download few images that might help people imagine simple sketches.

Pentecost in Art: Gather several pieces of artwork. A good source is <http://www.textweek.com/art/pentecost.htm>.

Supplies Needed:

Art work: One Internet site is:
<http://www.textweek.com>

Note: Select the artwork you want. To download the art, right click on the one you want, click e-mail. Then when the box appears, click show more options, then click the bottom choice: “Large” and e-mail it to yourself. Print the art in color preferably.

The group can evaluate the art, assigning each piece a designation of their choice: Most interesting, Most original, Most traditional, Most Holy Spiritish, (or whatever the group comes up with).

Post the art where members of the congregation will be able to see it.

Happy Birthday, Dear Church: Show the group the cake and the red icing and invite them to decorate it with flame shapes to become a Pentecost Cake. (If you have too large a group for all to put hands on, ask for volunteers to write new words to the Happy Birthday song to sing as a blessing of the cake before it is consumed.)

Supplies needed:

A cake with white icing, red icing to fashion flames on the cake, paper plates, forks, napkins, juice, and cups.

Gather in a circle, have the song writers teach the song to the rest of the group. Sing the song and cut and eat the cake.

Closing Activity: Ask the group to sit on chairs arranged in a circle. Give each person a flame. Ask each person to think of something they are trying to do; knowing the Holy Spirit is here to help them do it.

Supplies Needed:

The flames you made – one for each person.

Tell the group that if anyone wants to volunteer anything, they may, but no one has to respond out loud.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Help us to stop and take a breath when we are getting so busy we forget we have this help. Help us enjoy your wind as a reminder of you moving through our lives. Amen.

Acts 2:1-21 (Optional)

2 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?’ ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.’ ¹²All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ ¹³But others sneered and said, ‘They are filled with new wine.’

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: ‘Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. ¹⁵Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. ¹⁶No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ “In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

¹⁸ Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

²⁰ The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.

²¹ Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

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