

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Pentecost Sunday
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: John 14:8-17 (25-27)

We remain Easter people, now with the wind of the Holy Spirit in our sails. Our task for the months ahead in this season of Ordinary Time, which extends to the end of November, is to look at what Jesus so tenaciously taught his disciples and see what is in these teachings for us as we carry out the work we have been given to do. Jesus promised his disciples a helper, an Advocate, who would stand with them making the work possible. This same helper, the Holy Spirit, hovers over us still eager to quench the fire of fear and replace it with the powerful energy of love.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

In today's Gospel passage we find Jesus gently preparing his disciples for the coming of the Advocate who will continue the teaching Jesus has begun and reminding them of all they had done together. In today's passage from Acts the disciples are waiting huddled in the upper room fearing that the authorities would come and get them before the Advocate showed up. What might they have been expecting? Sure enough, God remains true to form: God is a surprise. What they get is a wind that blows into the room, chases away the cobwebs of fuzzy thinking, and fills the disciples with fire. How is that same wind blowing in our lives as we look at the work we have been given to do?

Theme: The wind of the Holy Spirit blows with us

Before Class: If you are privileged to have people in your church who speak another language, ask them for these opening sentences at the Eucharist in their language. Here they are in English, French, and Spanish.

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Le Seigneur soit avec vous. Et avec ton esprit.

El Señor sea con ustedes. Y con tu espíritu.

Make sufficient copies of the translations so that each child has one, even if several children have the same translation.

If you are doing the “streamer” activity in the Getting Closure section, you will need white streamers (crepe paper, strips of white fabric, or adding machine tape will work great), markers, tape, and a pencil or other object onto which they can tape their streamer.

Beginning: Ask the children to tell you how they would describe the wind. If we cannot see it, how do we know it is there? Wind can cause weather problems yet wind can be beneficial. Can they think of times it is a big help? (Blowing the ice off our roads and sidewalks, bringing a breeze to a hot day, powering wind mills that make electricity, etc.) Tell them we have a story today about a different kind of wind.

Opening Prayer: Thank you Jesus, for sending the Holy Spirit to blow in our lives so we may feel your presence. Amen.

The Story: John 14: 8-17, 25-27 One way to approach this story is to ask the children to find Acts 2: 1-21 in their Bibles, place a bookmark at that passage, and then find John 14. Ask for three different readers to read verses 25, 26 and 27. Keeping the Bible open, ask the children what they have heard, guiding their discussion with these questions:

What does Jesus say the Advocate, or Counselor, or the Holy Spirit will do? (Verse 25: help them remember all that Jesus has taught them and help them continue to learn.)

What does Jesus say about being afraid? (Things will scare us, but we don't need to BE afraid because of the peace that Jesus gives to us.)

Acts 2: 1 – 12: This is a long passage and has such difficult words to pronounce, invite the children to follow along with you in their Bibles as you read it. Stop regularly to be sure the children understand what they are hearing.

Questions:

After verse 1: What would the Day of Pentecost have meant to these disciples? (Pentecost was 50 days after the Passover in Jewish tradition — maybe they noticed that it has been 50 days since the Resurrection.)

After verse 4: Ask the children if they can think of a time they were with a group of people and suddenly someone gets a great idea and everyone gets excited at the idea? Have they ever seen a cartoon figure with a light bulb over their head to signify they had just had a great idea? How might that compare with the image of the “divided tongues of fire” the disciples saw?

After verse 11: If you think the children in your class have had experiences of being with people of another culture, ask them if they have ever been with people who were speaking a different language, but could still figure out what they were talking about? And if you do not think they could answer that, offer an experience of your own or a situation that you can express. (For example, a group of people who speak different languages all snuggling with an adorable puppy) Have they ever listened to music they did not “understand” but that they liked anyway?

Ask the children to offer things they know work — but they cannot explain how they work. You might say that you know your computer works, but you could not describe how it works, or how aspirin makes your headache go away. What else do we know is true that we cannot exactly explain?

Invite the children to put into their own words what Jesus is saying here. Offer to scribe what they come up with.

Activity: YouTube Video. Of course, there was not internet at the time of the first Pentecost, but we can pretend. Give each child one of the translations, help them to pronounce the words on

their sheet. Make sure that at least two children have a copy of each translation. Invite the children to stand around in a circle, reading their translation simultaneously.

Ask for a volunteer to be a reporter covering the scene who will interview the children. The volunteer may want to ask them how come they can speak in a language no one knew they knew, what happened in that room, etc.

Getting Closure: Suggest to the children that they be on the lookout for times the Holy Spirit blows into their lives when it sneaks up on them, and helps them do something hard. Sometimes we only notice afterwards.

If you have time, you can have them write or draw these stories on to streamers that can then blow in the wind. Give each child a long piece of streamer, markers, and a pencil (to tape the streamer on to so they can hold it up in the wind.) Once they have created their streamer, tape it on to the pencil and if you have time, go outside and see them blowing in the wind!

If you do not have time to create the streamers, tell them they can tell us about it next week, if they want, but the important thing is to notice, enjoy, and be grateful.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for sending the Holy Spirit to help us and as we leave this place, help us remember to look for the Holy Spirit throughout our lives. Amen.

John 14: 8-17

8 Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’⁹Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”?’¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.¹²Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.¹³I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.¹⁴If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

¹⁵ ‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments.¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever.¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

²⁵ ‘I have said these things to you while I am still with you.²⁶But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

Acts 2:1-21 (Optional)

²When 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.³ Divided 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.⁷ Amazed 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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