

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Pentecost
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Background: We begin the season with two Feast days: Pentecost, followed by Trinity Sunday. Then we move on to the long season known as Ordinary Time, which runs through Christ the King Sunday. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others. Our theme for this lengthy season is “Blessed is the Ordinary.”

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

The church is born at Pentecost. The promised Advocate comes and those who cowered in fear now burst forth from their prisons with a message that can be understood in any language. The message: God is for everyone and anyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. We are still unpacking this message today as we peek out from the prisons we find ourselves hiding within.

Theme: Come Holy Spirit

Before Class: You will need supplies to make bubbles, either purchased bottles or home-made bubble liquid. To make homemade bubbles, combine 1 cup of dishwashing liquid, 1/3 cup white corn syrup, and 2 cups of water. Create bubble wands by forming chenille stems into wands. If you must remain inside, you may choose to cover the floor with newspapers. If you will also be working with older children, be sure to read both lesson plans.

Beginning: Tell the children they are going to hear a story about a special wind and then they are going to go play with wind.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for wind that blows away yucky air and makes our hair dance around our faces. Thank you for the special wind you sent to the friends of Jesus and you send to us also. Amen.

The Story: Acts 2: 1-21 If you have access to a computer and projector, you could show the story as told with Legos. This is a slide show with the story: http://www.thebricktestament.com/acts_of_the_apostles/instant_fluency/ac02_01-03.html or a YouTube Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ww-0sCm0ge4>.

If the older children are going to tell the story, move directly to the craft and tell the children they will hear the wind story later from the older children. If you are telling the young children the story, tell it something like this:

This story happened after Jesus was killed. His friends were afraid. They had all gone to the room where they had supper with Jesus. They closed the doors, and shut the windows, and just

sat there. They were very scared. They thought someone might come to hurt them. And they were very sad, because they missed their friend, Jesus.

While they were sitting there, all of a sudden a wind blew into the room. It blew open the doors and blew through the windows. "Wow!" they all said. Then they all felt much stronger, and much better. As they looked around at each other, everybody looked so excited and bright that it looked like they had bright flames over their heads. They ran outside and started telling people what had happened. Some of the people outside could not speak the language Jesus' friends knew, but everyone could understand what they were saying.

Here is one of the things they were saying: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Bubbles in the Wind: This activity is best enjoyed outside where bubbles will hurt nothing and children can run. If outside is not an option, you may need to cover the floor with newspaper before you begin this activity.

Invite the children to help you make bubbles. Blow some bubbles first and ask them what they notice about what happens to the bubble. (It gets bigger when you are blowing on the liquid, it floats away, the wind carries it, etc.) The wind in our story blew through the room with the disciples and reminded them of God's presence with them. In the wind, they could feel the Holy Spirit.

Invite the children to make bubbles with you. If you have individual bottles of bubbles for the children, give each child a bottle. If you are using homemade bubbles, show the children how to fashion wands out of the chenille stems. Pour the liquid into a large shallow pan. Especially if you can go outside, you might want to experiment with larger wands using wire coat hangers or even large slotted kitchen spoons.

If older children are joining you, be sure you have sufficient wands for them. And you may want to double the recipe. Even if older children are NOT joining you, if older ones are around after class, you can be sure they will want to make bubbles, too.

Getting Closure: Gather the children in a circle and ask them to tell you something they like about bubbles, about wind and about running free.

Closing Prayer: While still in a circle, say, "Thank you, God, for bubbles, for wind, and for the freedom to run and play. Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Pentecost
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Background: We begin the season with two Feast days: Pentecost, followed by Trinity Sunday. Then we move on to the long season known as Ordinary Time, which runs through Christ the King Sunday. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others. Our theme for this lengthy season is “Blessed is the Ordinary.”

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

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Theme: Come Holy Spirit

Before Class: You will need sidewalk chalk (or if it is not available, simple colored chalk will do). OR If you are not going to be able to go outside and write on the sidewalk, you will need: calculator paper rolls and felt markers or crayons and tape to hang up the children's work where all can see. If you are including younger children in this lesson, be sure to read the lesson for young children. Other supplies: copies of the scripture or Bibles for each child, an electric fan, bubbles (see Younger Children Lesson Plan) and red tissue paper for flames.

Beginning: Greet the children and explain what is going to happen. If the young children are included, explain that the older children will prepare the story and the younger children will share their craft. If you have only older children, explain that you will tell them the story and then invite them to act it out. Tell them to be listening for words to later share with the rest of the church.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for helping Jesus’ friends not to give up. Thank you that they waited in that room – just like Jesus had told them to do – until the Holy Spirit came to them. Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to us, too. Amen.

The Story: Acts 2: 1-21 If the children like to read, they could read the passage. It is quite long, so you could also simply tell the story. If you have access to a computer and projector, you could show the story as told with Legos. This is a slide show with the story: http://www.thebricktestament.com/acts_of_the_apostles/instant_fluency/ac02_01-03.html or a YouTube Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ww-0sCm0ge4>.

Or tell parts, and let the children read parts. Here is a suggested way:

Jesus' friends are huddled in the room where they had supper with Jesus. He had told them to go wait there until the Holy Spirit came and gave them the power they needed. They had no idea what to expect. It probably never occurred to them that the Holy Spirit would literally BLOW IN! A wind filled the room. And the wind filled them with excitement. They looked around at each other – so very excited that they were just sure they saw tongues of flame over each other's heads.

Then, they went racing outside to tell everyone what had happened. At first the people outside thought they were crazy – or even drunk! But then the people outside realized that they could understand these friends of Jesus – even though they did not speak their language.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what it was like to be there on this day?
- Why were the disciples hunkered down in this room? (They were afraid they were next. Some children may remember that during the Easter season we had stories of the disciples huddling in this room when Jesus came to them.)
- What did the disciples see when the wind came rushing in? (Acts 2, verse 3)
- What did Peter say to the crowd? (Verse 21)
- I wonder what you would say or do if you were present?

Act it Out: Act out this passage. You will need disciples, even one or two, and a crowd – one or two will do. Or you could do it in two parts: first all the disciples check out the flames on each other's heads, and then the crowd outside tries to figure out what is going on. Different children could learn the phrase in Spanish, French, or some other language. An electric fan might be a good prop for the wind blowing. Do the play in the classroom. Or, invite the younger children to see the play.

Getting Closure: Say again, in English, Acts 2:21: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." If you and the children will be going outside with chalk, take a Bible with you so the children can copy this verse or another part of the story on the sidewalk. People will see the verse in chalk as they leave church.

If you are not going to be able to go outside, invite the children to write the words of Acts 2:21 on strips of calculator paper and tape the strips where the adults will see them when then come out of church. Each child can make a strip – write in English, or one of the other languages if they prefer. If younger children are joining you, they could write the words "Jesus" or "Love." Then all can make bubbles.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for disciples who wait for the wind of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for he Holy Spirit here with us today. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Pentecost
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Background: We begin the season with two Feast days: Pentecost, followed by Trinity Sunday. Then we move on to the long season known as Ordinary Time, which runs through Christ the King Sunday. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others. Our theme for this lengthy season is “Blessed is the Ordinary.”

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

The church is born at Pentecost. The promised Advocate comes and those who cowered in fear now burst forth from their prisons with a message that can be understood in any language. The message: God is for everyone and anyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. We are still unpacking this message today as we peek out from the prisons we find ourselves hiding within.

Theme: Come Holy Spirit

Before: Check in with the teachers of the young and the older children so you know what they will be doing today. Adults can then look for what the children have done.

Beginning: If your church has special plans for this day, be sure to incorporate them into your lesson. In some churches, this Sunday may be known as Whitsunday or the birthday of our church. Pentecost is considered one of the primary days for baptism, so there may be baptisms scheduled.

Opening prayer: Thank you, God, for being here in our midst – during our feasts, fasts, and ordinary times. Thank you for the wind of the Spirit blowing through the cobwebs of our lives. Thank you for our time together today. Amen.

The Scripture: Acts 2:1-21 In addition to the Gospel appointed for today, we also have the Acts passage that describes Pentecost as experienced by the disciples. Ask for volunteers to read verses 1-4, verses 5-13 (note: there are lots of proper names of countries people may not be familiar with.), and verses 14-21.

Reflection Questions:

Try to put yourself in the position of the disciples in this story.

- What words might describe how they must have felt, their fears and exhaustion?
- What words might describe their elation at the energy the Spirit brought in the wind?
- I wonder what it would have been like to be present on this day?

Share experiences of trying to convey your faith to someone who did not believe and who responded as if you were speaking a foreign language. Then share experiences when the person you were conveying your faith to was able to understand you in their own "language." What do you think made the difference?

Second Scripture: John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15. Explain what you will be doing: One person will be asked to read this passage in its entirety. Then you will allow a moment or two of silence. Then ask a second person to read the entire passage, this time the listeners jotting down words or concepts, or feelings they noticed. Allow another moment or two of silence.

Reflection Questions:

- Share words heard in the reading and in the silence.
- Consider various words we have to describe this third person of the Trinity (Advocate, Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost, Comforter, wind). Which one(s) resonate for this group?
- Jesus spoke these words to the disciples before the crucifixion. Consider how they might have "understood" what he was saying then – and what these words might have meant to the disciples after Pentecost.
- When do we believe we receive access to the Holy Spirit? Perhaps someone will want to share a time when they knew it was the Spirit praying through them with words they would not have been able to come up with otherwise.

Getting Closure: Consider how we may need to balance being called to share the good news in other languages while still respecting the right of others to their own faith path.

Closing Prayer: Come Holy Spirit. We know you have already blown into our space and into our hearts. Help us to bend to your power so you can use us, and our lives, for your purposes. Amen.

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