

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A –Pentecost
Lesson Plans for Older Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21

The word Pentecost comes from the Greek meaning fiftieth day. This was the Greek name for the Hebrew Feast of Weeks, which took place fifty days after Passover. The Hebrew festival commemorated the calling of the Hebrew people into covenant with God at Mount Sinai. The new Christians kept this name because this was the same day the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles. The church saw this as the beginning of a new covenant relationship between the followers of Jesus and God. This new relationship is summarized by the prophet Jeremiah, “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.” (Jeremiah 31:33)

A Notation for this week’s Scripture

Most biblical scholars agree The Book of Acts is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. This book contains the stories of the early church and the work of the disciples. Today’s lesson is the Pentecost story, the second most important feast of the church after Easter. Following the instructions of Jesus, the disciples are waiting together in Jerusalem. Jesus had promised to send His Spirit to be with them. The Spirit entered the room like a mighty rush of wind and settled like a tongue of fire on the head of each disciple. This was the gift of encouragement and boldness the apostles needed to begin their mission of evangelism. Pentecost is considered the birthday of the church because three thousand new souls accepted Jesus as their savior that day.

Theme: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Before:

You will need copies of the Acts Script found below and of The Lord Be With You Translations. You will also need large or individual world maps, Map of Bible Lands [optional], push pins, paper or plastic bowls, spoons, salt, glitter or powdered tempera paint in red orange and yellow. Something you can make believe is a microphone. Before class begins, cut up the Translations, hang up the map or make photocopies of smaller maps.

Beginning:

Greet each child as he/she arrives with the phrase, “The Lord be with you” in different languages. (See The Lord Be With You Translation Sheet.) Have each identify his/her family’s place of origin either with a push pins (They will need more than one pin or sticker) on the large map or coloring in the place on an individual map. Let each choose a language strip.

Gather in a circle when you are ready to begin an ask,” What language does God speak?” In today’s story listen for how God makes himself understood by all people.

Opening Prayer: Holy Spirit we pray that you come into our hearts to make us strong and brave. Give us the skills and gifts we need so that we may do God’s work here on earth. Amen.

The Story: Acts 2:1-21

Invite children to read the parts of the readers found in the script below. If you don't have enough readers for all the parts, simply invite people to read more than once.

Reflection Questions

- What do we know about those who were Jesus' disciples? What kind of work did they do before they began to follow Jesus? (fishermen, tax collectors, etc.)
- What was the mission, or job that Jesus gave them to do? (Spread the Good News around the world. Make new followers.)
- What skills, gifts or talents would they need to succeed at this? (Boldness, ability to communicate with others, ability to withstand hardship and persecution.)
- How were they able to get these abilities? (The power and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.)
- Have you ever faced a big challenge? How did you prepare?
- Have you ever felt the power of God's Holy Spirit in you? Have you ever felt God changing or transforming your life?

Drama Activity

Eye Witness Report: Choose an on the scene reporter or news team. Have them interview the disciples about the appearance of the Holy Spirit. Ask people in the crowd where they are from and what and how they heard. You might brainstorm news questions in advance with the class so that the other characters can be thinking about their responses. Assign other parts. Discuss reactions to the role-play for new insights.

Art Option

Flames

Mix equal parts of salt and powdered tempura paint or glitter in a bowl. Draw the outline of a flame with a line of glue. Put a spoon of one color on the paper and slide it over the glue. Shake the excess back into the bowl. Continue with as many flames and colors as you wish on the same paper. When the flames are dry the students can write inside the flames the words for gifts and abilities they feel they need to do God's work.

Extra Time Option

Name and locate the historic places from the Acts reading on a Bible map. Discuss the size of the known world at the time.

Getting Closure:

Have the children help put all supplies away. Return to the circle. Each child in turn reads his/her foreign language greeting of "The Lord be with you." The other children respond, "And also with you."

Closing Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for sending us the gift of the Holy Spirit who gives us gifts and courage to do your work. Help us to reach out in peace and understanding to all your beloved children around the world. Amen.

The Lord Be With You Translations

English: The Lord be with you.

Spanish: El Señor esté con vosotros.

French: Le Seigneur soit avec vous.

Italian: IL Signore sia con voi.

Japanese: Omo wa anata totomoni ora reru.

Chinese: Zhǔ yǔ nǐ tóng zài.

Filipino: Ang Panginoon ay sumainyo.

Vietnamese: Chúa ở cùng bạn.

German: Der Herr sei mit euch.

Swahili: Bwana awe nanyi.

Portuguese: O Senhor esteja com você.

Swedish: Herren vare med dig.

Polish: Pan z wami.

Hindi: BhagaTuhan bersama.

Indonesian: Andavāna āpakē sātha hō.

Greek O Kýrios na eínai mazí sask.

Albanian: Zoti qoftë me ju.

Haitian Creole: Seyè a la avèk nou.

All translations are from Google Translate. If you have access to a computer in class, audio translation also provided.

Acts 2:1-21

Reader 1: When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place.

Reader 2: And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

Reader 3: Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.

Readers 1, 2, 3: All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Reader 4: Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.

Reader 5: And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked,

Readers 4, 5: "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs-- in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power."

Readers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5: All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

Reader 1: But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them,

Reader 6: "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

Reader 7: In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,

Readers 1-7: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

Reader 8: and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

Reader 9: Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit;

Readers 1-9: and they shall prophesy.

Reader 10: And I will show portents in the heaven above

Reader 11: and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

Reader 11: The sun shall be turned to darkness

Reader 12: and the moon to blood,

Readers 7-12: before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

Readers 1-12: Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' "

Lesson written by Trudy Ardizzone, 2011

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