Lesson Plans that Work

Year C – Pentecost

Intergenerational Lesson Plan (adapted for use at home)

**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.

**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:

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 Espirit 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.

*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 Espírito 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/*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/)

**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.)

**Activity**

**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*](http://www.textweek.com/art/pentecost.htm)*.*

*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.

**Closing Activity:** Ask everyone 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.

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.

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