

Mission Together

Pentecost Liturgy: We are Church



Introduction for teachers

The Christian feast of Pentecost occurs on the seventh Sunday after Christ's resurrection and concludes the great season of Easter. In scripture, the period of fifty days between Easter Sunday and Pentecost is punctuated with Christ's appearances to the Apostles.

These appearances affirmed to the Apostles the reality of Christ's resurrection and helped them understand more clearly Christ's message of mercy and love. But despite the appearances, the Apostles remained clouded with anxiety and doubt. Without Christ's constant presence they were uncertain of their purpose and mission.

That was until God's Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles at Pentecost, enabling them to go out and spread the love and Good News of Christ with all. Because of this, Pentecost is regarded as the birth of the Church and its mission to the world.

Liturgy plan

Entrance hymn or recorded music

Our suggestions: 'Walk in the Light' or 'We are one in the Spirit'

Sign of the cross and lighting of a candle

Children's Introduction

Today we are remembering a special Christian feast day called Pentecost. Pentecost is sometimes called the birthday of the Church. Like all birthdays, it is a day to celebrate as a family: God's global family!

It can sound strange when we say that the Church has a birthday, because buildings don't have birthdays and mostly when we hear the word 'Church', we think of a building.

Pentecost reminds us that the Church is not just a building made with bricks; the Church is a community made with people - people who want to follow Jesus's example.

The first people who wanted to follow Jesus' example and share God's love were called Apostles.

The Apostles lived alongside Jesus and when Jesus was alive, they found it quite easy to follow him. Jesus showed them how to love and forgive. He also encouraged the Apostles when they made mistakes or became fearful.

But when Jesus died on the cross, the Apostles found it more difficult to follow his example. Although Jesus had visited them since he had risen from the tomb, it was not the same as before and the Apostles were unsure what they should do without Jesus, their friend and teacher. To encourage the Apostles, Jesus promised to send his Holy Spirit to be with them for ever.

The Bible reading we will hear now tells us about this special event. Listen very carefully to the reading. As you do try to imagine that you are in the room with the Apostles when the Holy Spirit arrived. Think about how you might have felt if you'd been there.



Mission Together

Pentecost Liturgy: We are Church



Bible reading – The Day of Pentecost Acts 2: 1-4 (adapted from the Jerusalem Bible)

For an interactive interpretation of this scripture see Appendix 1.

When Pentecost day came round, the Apostles had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like flames of fire; these flames came to rest above the head of each of them. The Apostles were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech.

The Word of the Lord.

Before the Holy Spirit arrived, the Apostles had hidden themselves in a room because they were feeling worried and sad. After Jesus sent the Holy Spirit, the Apostles no longer hid out of view. They gathered together in public spaces so that all could see and hear them pray together and pass on Jesus' teaching. And whenever the Apostles gathered, they would share what money or food they had.

Ask: Why do you think the Apostles shared what they had?

Answers: They cared for each other. To make sure that no one went hungry or struggled to live. Jesus asked them to care for and love others.

Ask: Why do we share what we have?

Answers: We want others to be happy. It feels good to share.

Jesus asks us to care for and love others too.

By gathering to share, pray, and preach about Jesus, the Apostles became a Church family. And their gatherings made such an impression on people, that soon others asked to join the Apostles and so the Church family became bigger. When the Apostles began travelling to share God's love in different countries, even more people wanted to hear about Jesus, and so the Church family became bigger still!

At Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, the Apostles were given a special gift that made it much easier for them to share the message of Jesus with others around the world. Can you remember what that gift was?

Answer: The gift of languages.

Ask: Why is this gift so important?

Answers: People are able to chat and get to know one another. They can listen and learn from each other. They can discuss difficulties and work through problems. They can become friends.

Today the Church is made up of billions of people around the world, all trying to share God's love as Jesus taught. And each person in that Church family is important, including you!

Optional Activities – We Are Church (Appendix 2) or Here is the Church (Appendix 3)

Mission Together Prayer

Sign of the cross

Closing hymn or recorded music – 'Walk in the Light' or 'We are one in the Spirit'



Mission Together Prayer

May all children
In the world
Share love
Share friendship and live
In the peace
Of God's love
Now and forever. Amen.

Mission Together

Appendix 1: The day of Pentecost (adapted from Acts 2: 1-4)



Interactive reading of 'The day of Pentecost'

This re-telling is designed to involve as many children as possible. Select up to four readers and invite twelve pupils to represent the Apostles. They Apostles are to stand together at the front of the hall / classroom and face their fellow pupils.

Provide each Apostle with a cut out flame attached to a drinking straw (Appendix 4). On the back of each flame is a greeting from a different language.

For this retelling you will need:

- Reading parts for pupils
- Cut out card flames (see Appendix 4)
- A marker pen
- Drinking straws
- Sticky tape

Reader 1

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles. When Pentecost day came round, the Apostles all gathered in one room. They were feeling sad and worried about how they would manage, because Jesus had now returned to God the Father in heaven.

Invite the Apostles to look sad and worried.

Reader 2

Suddenly the Apostles heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were gathered.

Invite all pupils to make a wooshing wind sound. Remind the pupils that the sound of the Holy Spirit filled the entire room, so their sound needs to be loud enough to fill the entire hall / classroom.

Reader 3

After the wind, something appeared to the Apostles that seemed like flames of fire. These flames hovered above the head of each of them.

At this point the Apostles should lift their flame above their head.

Reader 3

The Apostles were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech.

Ask the Apostles to turn their flames around. On the back of each is a greeting from a different language. Invite the Apostles to read out their greeting. They will need help with the pronunciation.

Reader 4

God sent the Holy Spirit to be with the Apostles at all times and to help them share his love with the world. Let us remember that like the Apostles, we too can ask the Holy Spirit to help us do the same. God's Holy Spirit is always there to encourage us, especially when we feel worried or afraid.

Mission Together

Appendix 2: We are Church - KS2 group activity



Introduction

Today we have learned that Pentecost is called the birthday of the Church. It is called this because after Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with the Apostles, they stopped hiding themselves away in secret. Instead they gathered together for all to see, to tell others about God's love, and to show how - when we pray and work together as God's Church family - we can build a better world for everyone.

Pentecost also reminds us that although the church buildings we gather in to pray are very special, what really builds the Church are the people who come to listen to God's word, pray, and follow Jesus' example.



The next activity will help us to remember that all of us, together, make up God's Church too.

We are Church - Activity for KS2

This activity requires close monitoring and plenty of space, preferably outside.

- Divide the class into groups of eight or ten pupils. Tell the children they have ten minutes to make a church using only their bodies.
- Before the time begins, ask the children to recall the key features of a church building e.g. the steeple, the door, the pews. Provide the groups with a few minutes to discuss together what their church will look like, who will stand where, etc.
- Tell the groups they are not allowed to climb on any chairs, tables, or other pupils! Also make children aware that this is not a race. There are no points or prizes for finishing first.
- Remind the pupils that the Apostles were successful in building the Church, because they worked together, and found a role and a place for everyone. Theirs is a good example to follow.
- When all groups have finished their task, ask each in turn what they enjoyed most about building their church and what is the greatest lesson they have learned from the process e.g. the importance of listening to other people's ideas
- If the children respond well to the activity and there is enough people to monitor, challenge the entire class to work together to make one church. Reiterate the rules and have a camera handy!

Conclude by asking the children to imagine undertaking this activity with all the pupils in the school, then all the children in the parish, then all the children in the town, the country, the world! This seems impossible, but when children help children by praying, sharing, and working with the charity **Mission Together**, we really do build the Church - like you have here today. Let's finish our time together with the **Mission Together** Prayer.

Mission Together

Appendix 3: Here is the Church – KS1 rhyming activity



Here is the Church – Activity for KS1

This traditional finger game and rhyming activity can help children remember that as important as it is to have a church building, what makes Church isn't bricks but the people inside it. The words are:

*'Here is the Church,
And here is the steeple
Open it wide and see all the people.
Here is the Parson
Climbing the stairs
Here he is saying his prayers.'*



'Here is the Church' combines words with hand actions, providing opportunity to increase a child's manual dexterity, coordination, and encourage imagination. There are many demonstrations on YouTube. We recommend 'Here Is the Church | Mother Goose Club Playhouse Kids Video' Or try a general Youtube search for: 'Here is the church. Here is the steeple'.

International greetings for the interactive re-telling 'The day of Pentecost' (Appendix 1).

Below is a list of greetings from different countries. Select those applicable to the age and ability of your pupils and copy the selected greetings and translation on a whiteboard. Allocate or ask pupils to write one greeting on the flame shape provided on Appendix 4.

CHINESE MANDARIN: *Nǐ hǎo ma* – Hello, how are you?

FILIPINO: *Magandang araw* – Good / Beautiful day!

HINDI: *Namaste* – Hello (literal translation is 'I bow to the divine in you').

CZECH: *Dobrý den* – Good day

GERMAN: *Guten Tag!* – I wish you a good day!

ITALIAN: *Ciao!* – Hello (also goodbye)!

ARABIC: *As-salamu alaykum* – Peace be upon you.

SOMALI: *Soo dhowow* – Welcome

SWAHILI: *Jambo!* – hello!

NATIVE SOUTH AMERICAN (QUECHUA): *Rimaykullayki* – Hello

EL SALVADOR : *Buenos días* – Good day

CREOLE (Haiti): *Alo* – Hello

YABEM (Papua New Guinea): *Bibic ngayam* – Good day!

YUGARA (Aborigini): *Gurumba bigi* – Good day

TONGAN: *Mālō e lelei* – Hello



Mission Together

Appendix 4: Tongues of flame



Teacher's instructions

This prop is used in the interactive re-telling 'The day of Pentecost' (Appendix 1).

- Photocopy the flame template below on thin card (preferably yellow or red). You will need one flame for each Apostle in your re-telling.
- Cut out your flame shapes.
- On the back of each flame, write an international greeting (see previous page for examples).
- Use sticky-tape to attach each flame to a wooden lollipop stick or paper drinking straw.
- Once made, refer to script (Appendix 1).

