

Handouts for Pentecost Session

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Opening Prayer Service

Opening Prayer

Leader

Lord God, you send your Spirit into the Church and into the world like a mighty wind and a blazing fire. Give us the gifts we need to help us soar on the wind of the Spirit and light the world on fire with love for you. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song

Play an appropriate song with a Holy Spirit/Pentecost theme on a CD/cassette player or use live music if possible. It is best to choose a song that you will use in the upcoming Pentecost liturgy. Use a song that you will be using for your Pentecost liturgy.

Reading

1 Corinthians 12:3-7

Litany

Leader

Our response to the intercessions will be:
Come, Holy Spirit.

All

Come Holy Spirit.

Leader

The Holy Spirit is the source of all of our diverse gifts, and so we pray with open hearts...

All

Come, Holy Spirit.

Leader

The Holy Spirit rushed upon the disciples of Jesus like a driving wind. May the breath of God blow into our lives. We pray with open hearts...

All

Come, Holy Spirit.

Leader

The Spirit rested like tongues of fire upon Jesus' followers and ignited their tongues to proclaim the great vision of God's promises to all of creation. Fire us with your love. We pray with open hearts...

All

Come, Holy Spirit.

Leader

The Holy Spirit inspires and challenges each of us to share our gifts with the world every day of our lives, and so we pray with open hearts...

All

Come Holy Spirit.

Closing Prayer

Leader

The Holy Spirit gave birth to the Church on Pentecost and sent her out to proclaim a unified faith in a divided world. May our annual celebration of the Church's birthday at Pentecost renew us in our commitment to continue the ministry of unity and solidarity in the midst of diversity, a ministry that belongs in a special way to all who call themselves Christian. We pray this prayer to the Father, through Jesus Christ, and in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Vision Flame Activity

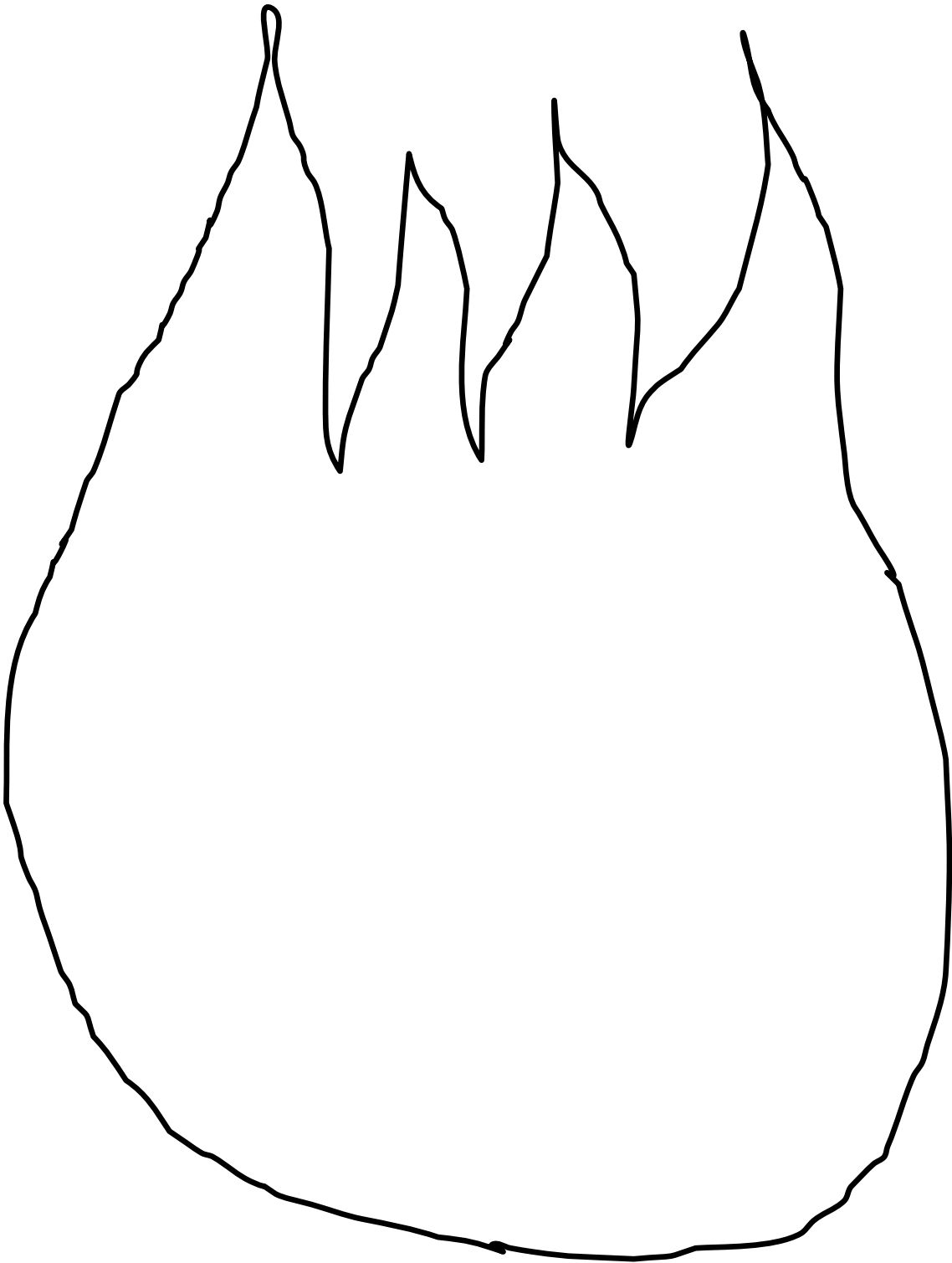
Identify the youngest person at the table. If the youngest person at the table is too young to speak, you may move on to the next youngest person.

- Invite all persons at your table to gently place one hand on the youngest person's shoulders, then pray the following prayer over the youngest person: *We ask the Holy Spirit to come upon you and inspire you to be our prophet. May you see visions, dream dreams, and tell us with courage what you see.*
- Invite the youngest person at the table to answer the following question: *If you could see the world as perfect, what is one important thing you would see that you don't see in our world today?*
- All other members of the table group may comment on the vision to develop it into a statement. Write the statement on one of the flames, then cut out the flame.

Identify the oldest person at the table.

- Invite all persons at your table to gently place one hand on the oldest person's shoulders, then pray the following prayer: *We ask the Holy Spirit to come upon you and inspire you to be our prophet. May you see visions, dream dreams, and tell us with courage what you see.*
- Invite the oldest person at the table to answer the following question: *If you could see the world as perfect, what is one important thing you would see that you don't see in our world today?*
- All other members of the table group may comment on the vision to develop it into a statement. Write the statement on one of the flames, then cut out the flame.

Vision Flame



Tower Contest Discussion Questions

Invite the groups to discuss the following questions at their tables:

1. How did we cooperate or fail to cooperate at our table?
2. How did we feel about each other during the contest?
3. How did we feel about the people at the other tables during the contest?
4. How did pride play a role in our work?
5. How was unity or solidarity fostered by this contest?
6. How was division fostered by this contest?

The Tower of Babel

Genesis 11:1-9

1 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.

2 And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.

3 And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.

4 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

5 The LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built.

6 And the LORD said, "Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.

7 Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech."

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.

9 Therefore it was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Babel Discussion Questions

Invite the groups to discuss the following questions at their tables:

1. What were language and community like before the tower was constructed?
2. Why did the people build the tower?
3. Why would the people want to “make a name” for themselves?
4. What did the people mean when they expressed their fear of being scattered if they did not build the tower?
5. How is the sin of pride expressed in this story?
6. How is trust lacking in this story?
7. What were language, community and solidarity like at the end of this story?

Suggestion: Families with children may be invited to make a poster depicting their answers to these discussion questions. They should depict their answers to these questions on one half of the poster. Later, they will complete the poster with answers to questions about the Pentecost story in Acts.

The Pentecost Story

Acts 2:1-12

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

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.

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

4 All 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.

6 And 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?"

8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?"

9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretans and Arabs--in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power."

12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

Pentecost Discussion Questions

Invite participants to discuss the following questions at their tables (families with children can depict their answers on the second half of their poster if they created one during the Tower of Babel Discussion):

1. What were languages like at the beginning of the Pentecost story?
2. How did the disciples of Jesus experience the Holy Spirit?
3. What did the disciples do after they experienced the power of the Holy Spirit?
4. What risks do you think are associated with their behavior?
5. How are trust and courage expressed in this story?
6. How are understanding and solidarity a part of this story?
7. How would you compare the pattern of this story line with the pattern of the story line in the Tower of Babel story?
8. What lessons can diverse cultures draw from these two stories?

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1. Wisdom

The wise person has the ability to penetrate the mind of God and see as God sees.

2. Understanding

The understanding person can detect the presence of God in daily activities.

3. Right Judgment

The person with right judgment confidently knows the difference between right and wrong.

4. Courage

The courageous person is not afraid to do what is right.

5. Knowledge

The person with knowledge possesses a profound awareness of the dynamics of loving relationships.

6. Reverence

The reverent person loves and obeys God the way a young child loves and obeys a parent.

7. Wonder & Awe in God's presence (also known as the Fear of the Lord)

The person who is filled with wonder and awe marvels at the greatness of God's creation and appreciates the deep mystery of God. Wonder and awe inspire religious worship.

The list of gifts is based on Isaiah 11:1-2. In most Bibles you will only see six gifts listed because the Fear of the Lord is mentioned twice. The Greek version of the Old Testament translates the second "Fear" as Reverence or Piety.

Pentecost Harvest

Discussion Questions

1. How are the fifty days of Pentecost determined (when do they start, and so on)?
2. Share with each other what you know about grain harvesting, processing grain into flour and turning flour into bread.
3. What does your reading say about the offering of the harvest or bread?
4. What does your reading say specifically about the festival in terms of who is invited, what is done, what is forbidden, etc.?
5. What divine concern is the author trying to express in the last verse of the reading?
6. How would God express this concern in today's world?
7. If Christian Pentecost is about the beginnings of the Church, the unity of diverse peoples, and a closing of the fifty-day Easter season among other things, how does this Jewish feast of Pentecost connect with or relate to the Christian feast of Pentecost?

Closing Prayer Service

Preparation

Invite a musician to prepare *Holy Spirit* by Bob Hurd for this closing service. It is #116 in the *Spirit and Song* hymnal. There may be other appropriate songs that invite reflection on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Prayer

Leader

On the eve of Pentecost, the Church prays that the Holy Spirit will unify all of the races and nations on Earth. All of the races and nations on Earth are represented in the skin-colored links in our Pentecost paper chain. May this chain be a reminder to us that we cannot achieve racial and international peace and solidarity unless we receive and share the great gifts of the Holy Spirit. And so we close our session with a prayerful meditation upon those gifts.

Litany

Music Ministry

Musicians begin playing *Holy Spirit* by Bob Hurd and the song leader invites participants to join in the refrain. Music continues as the readers begin and does not stop until prayers for all gifts are complete.

Reader One

We pray for the gift of wisdom. The wise person has the ability to penetrate the mind of God and see as God sees.

Music Ministry

Song leader sings verse 1 and then invites all participants to sing the refrain.

Reader Two

We pray for the gift of understanding. The understanding person can detect the presence of God in daily activities.

Music Ministry

Song leader sings verse 4 and then invites all participants to sing the refrain.

Reader Three

We pray for the gift of right judgment. The person with right judgment confidently knows the difference between right and wrong.

Music Ministry

Song leader sings verse 2 and then invites all participants to sing the refrain.

Reader Four

We pray for the gift of courage. The courageous person is not afraid to do what is right.

Music Ministry

Song leader sings verse 5 and then invites all participants to sing the refrain.

Reader Five

We pray for the gift of knowledge. The person with knowledge possesses a profound awareness of the dynamics of loving relationships.

Music Ministry

Song leader sings verse 3 and then invites all participants to sing the refrain.

Reader Six

We pray for the gift of reverence. The reverent person loves and obeys God the way a young child loves and obeys a parent.

Music Ministry

Song leader sings verse 6 and then invites all participants to sing the refrain.

Reader Seven

We pray for the gift of wonder and awe in God's presence. The person who is filled with wonder and awe marvels at the greatness of God's creation and appreciates the deep mystery of God. Wonder and awe inspire religious worship.

Music Ministry

Song leader sings verse 2 and then invites all participants to sing the refrain. End music.

Closing Prayer

Leader

The gifts of the Holy Spirit, poured out upon the disciples at Pentecost and continually poured out upon us each day, give us what we need to create solidarity among the races and nations on Earth. May we never fear to dream wondrous dreams and to proclaim lofty visions of peace for the world. Let us pray that we will open wide the doors of our hearts as we prepare for the rush of the Holy Spirit upon us this Pentecost. May almighty God bless us: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All

Amen.