

Pentecost Intergenerational Program

"Solidarity Through the Spirit"

Learning Objectives

The Pentecost learning session guides learners of all ages to...

- Explore and understand the meaning of the Christian feast of Pentecost, including the role of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the development of solidarity among diverse groups of people.
- Compare and contrast the Christian feast of Pentecost with its Jewish roots in the harvest festival of the Old Testament and in the Tower of Babel story.
- Apply the unifying power of the Holy Spirit, celebrated in the feast of Pentecost and in the Sacrament of Confirmation, to the harmful divisions within humanity.

Catechism Connection

696, 731-32, 767, 1076, 1287, 2623

Background Readings

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Washington, DC: USCC Publishing, 1997.

Catholic Updates:

Who Is the Holy Spirit?, Elizabeth Johnson, C0695

The Holy Spirit: Yesterday and Today, Jack Wintz, O.F.M., C0580

How the Spirit Guides the Church, William H. Shannon, C0601

Books:

A Once-And-Coming Spirit at Pentecost, Raymond E. Brown, Liturgical Press, 1994.

The Mystery of Pentecost, Raniero Cantalamessa and Glen S. Davis, Liturgical Press, 2001.

Fruits and Gifts of the Spirit, Thomas Keating, Lantern Books, 2000.

Potential Uses

Preparation for:

- The Feast of Pentecost
- Some material can be used to prepare for a parish celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation

Session Resources

Before the Session

Environment

- You will be setting the environment during the All Ages Learning Experience.

Home Kit

Home Activities at Generations of Faith Online

1. The Fire of the Holy Spirit
2. Gifts of the Holy Spirit
3. Pentecost Sequence Table Prayer
4. Pentecost Windssock
5. Pouring the Spirit Scripture Reflection

People of Faith – Generations Learning Together Magazines (Harcourt Religion)

Professing Our Faith – Volume 5, The Holy Spirit

Prayer Resources

Haas, David. *Increase Our Faith – Parish Prayer Services for Whole Community Catechesis*. (Three Volumes: Year A, B, C) Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2004, 2005, 2006.

McCann, Deborah. *Let Us Gather – Prayer Services for Catholic Schools and Assemblies*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2002.

Materials for the Session

Gathering

- Name tags
- Community building activities

All Ages Opening Learning Experience

- Opening Prayer Service
- Bible
- Colored strips of paper (40 per table – see preparation notes)
- Glue stick, staplers, or tape to create a paper chain (enough for each table)
- Masking tape (2-4 rolls)

In-Depth Learning Experience

- Candles (one per table)
- Matches (one set per table)
- Handout: *Vision Flame* (two per table)
- Handout: *Vision Flame Activity* (one per table)

- Newsprint and marker
- List of age-specific words and phrases (see preparation for Tower of Babel)
- Wooden blocks or paper cups (24 per table)
- Posterboard (one per family with children)
- Markers for families with children
- Pencils for adult and teen tables
- Handout: *Tower Contest Discussion Questions* (one per table)
- Handout: *The Tower of Babel*
- Handout: *Babel Discussion Questions* (one per table)
- Handout: *The Pentecost Story*
- Colored construction or office paper (enough for all participants to use a few sheets)
- Scissors (three or four pairs at each table)
- Glue or glue sticks (three or four per table)
- Handout: *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (one for every other person)
- Paper and pencils at each adult table
- Bibles (one per adult without children)

Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application

Closing

- Closing Prayer Service

Session at a Glance

Part One: Gathering (5 minutes)

Part Two: All Ages Learning Experience (20 minutes)

Pentecost Paper Chain

Part Three: In-Depth Learning Experience (90 minutes)

Choose a Learning Group Format

- Whole Group Format
- Age Group Format
- Learning Activity Centers

Learning Plan

1. Who Is the Holy Spirit?
2. Solidarity
3. Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Part Four: Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application (15 minutes)

Part 5. Closing Prayer Service (15 minutes)

Part 1

Gathering (45 minutes)

1. Registration and Hospitality

- Welcome people and ask them to sign in for the program.
- Ask people to make a name tag.
- Distribute the Home Kit for the session, including any handouts participants will need for the session. (You can also distribute handouts for the In-Depth Learning program at the beginning of the activity.)
- Invite people to share a meal; depending on time of day, the program may end with a meal instead.

Welcome

Welcome the participants to the program and introduce the theme of the session.

2. Group Formation

In the Whole Group Format, organize people into intergenerational small groups of approximately eight people OR organize table groups of families with children, adolescents, and adults. If you organize into intergenerational groups, participants will remain with their group for the entire program. Ask all members of the same family to sit together in these intergenerational groups. Each group should have as many of the following categories as possible: family (parents, children, teens), young adults, adults without children, and older adults. If members of the same family are intergenerational – children, teens, parents, and grandparents – keep them together in one group.

3. Opening Prayer Service

Preparation

Choose a Pentecost hymn to include in this prayer service, along with the Gospel reading from the Pentecost event you are preparing for. Assign reading parts.

Invite everyone into a moment of silent reflection before you begin the prayer.

Leader: Opening Prayer

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 or use live music if possible. It is best to choose a song that the parish will use in the Pentecost liturgy.

Reading

1 Corinthians 12:3-7

Litany

Our response to the litany will be:

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.

Leader: Closing Prayer

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 in us 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.

All

Amen.

Part 2

All Ages Learning Experience: Pentecost Paper Chain (30 minutes)

Preparation

- Cut out strips of copy paper so that there will be enough for each table to have 40 strips that are 2" wide x 11" long. Five or six strips at each table should be skin tones such as pink, tan, black, yellow; the rest should be red.

Materials

- Colored strips of paper (40 per table – see preparation note above)
- Glue stick, staplers, or tape to create paper chains (enough for each table)
- Masking tape (2-4 rolls)

Activity Plan

1. [spoken text] Help participants to understand the context of the Pentecost story in Acts using these or similar words: *Pentecost recalls the event that took place after Jesus died, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven. Pentecost was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and disciples of Jesus which gave them the courage and other gifts they needed to continue the ministry of Jesus on Earth. The word Pentecost means "the fiftieth," and we celebrate Pentecost fifty days after Easter Sunday.*
2. Familiarize participants with the details of the Pentecost story in one of the following ways:
 - a) Do a dramatic reading of Acts 2:1-11. Prepare a group ahead of time to be the disciples gathered together in a room as you begin the reading. When you get to the part about the strong, driving wind, turn on several box fans which will blow wind on the disciples. After the wind dies down, continue the reading. When you read the part about the tongues of fire, each disciple can tape a construction paper flame to his/her forehead. Then they can strike courageous poses that suggest they are preaching to another group of actors who are holding signs with the names of the nations mentioned in the Pentecost story. Finish the reading while the actors hold this pose.

OR
 - b) Show a video that depicts the Pentecost scene from Acts.
3. [spoken text] Use these or similar words to introduce this activity: *Pentecost is often called the birthday of the Church. What you just witnessed was a recreation of the first act of public ministry performed by the disciples of Jesus after he died, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven. This was the Church on the day of her birth. We're going to take some time to decorate this room to create a festive spirit as we prepare as a parish to celebrate the birth of Christianity. We'll use our decorations as part of our learning later in the program.*

4. Distribute colored strips of paper and glue, tape or staplers to each table.
5. Invite participants to make paper chains with the supplies at their tables. Each table will end up with a forty-link chain.
6. Connect all the chains together and drape them around the perimeter of the room.
7. [spoken text] Proceed to the in-depth learning experiences, which will unpack the meaning of the paper chain, by sharing with the participants in these or your own words: *As we continue our learning to explore the meaning of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit, I invite you to ponder the meaning of the paper chains decorating our gathering space. At the end of the learning session, I will be inviting you to share with your learning groups the significance of the paper chains. Let us now continue with our learning session!*

Part 3

In-Depth Learning Experiences (90 minutes)

Whole Group Format

This format guides the entire assembly through each of the learning experiences.

You might choose this format if you have:

- a large physical space with good acoustics/sound system and furniture to comfortably accommodate the learners
- a competent large group facilitator/master of ceremonies able to provide clear directions and to manage the dynamics and energy of a large group
- a group of catechists who feel comfortable moving through the assembly offering assistance, or a large enough team of table leader catechists to have one catechist work with each table group
- a learning topic that lends itself to everyone learning the same thing as the same time, but in different ways, in the same space

Facilitation Tips for This Format

Guide small groups through each of the activities at the same time.

- Organize people into table groups based on age groupings: families with children (grades 1-5), middle school adolescents, high school adolescents, young adults, and adults.
- The lead facilitator guides the entire group through each of the learning experiences. All presentations and activity instructions are given to the whole group.
- The age-appropriate learning activities within each learning experience are conducted in table groups.
- Where needed, catechists and small group leaders facilitate the work of the table groups.

Whole Group Format Outline (90 Minutes)

Learning Plan Outline

Learning Experience One (30 minutes)
Who Is the Holy Spirit? (All Ages)

Learning Experience Two (30 minutes)
Solidarity (All Ages)

Learning Experience Three (30 minutes)
Gifts of the Holy Spirit (All Ages)

Age Group Format

This format provides for three separate parallel learning programs. Though age groups are separated, each one is focusing on the same topic.

You might choose this format if you have:

- an adequate number of meeting spaces for the various groups to gather
- an adequate number of competent facilitators and catechists to work with each group
- a topic that is best explored through age-specific learning

Facilitation Tips for This Format

- Organize participants into three or more parallel learning groups: families with children (grades 1-5), adolescents (grades 6-12), and adults.
- If there is a large number of adolescents, divide them into two groups: middle school and high school.

Organize separate groups for young adults, adults, and older adults. Or you can give the adults their own choice for forming small groups.

- Direct the adolescents and adults into small groups. Give them all the handouts and learning materials needed for the learning experiences.
- Guide the families with children into table groups of two or more families. Give each table all the handouts and learning materials necessary for the learning experiences. A facilitator at each table might guide all of the families through each learning experience, while catechists move from table to table assisting.

Age Group Format Outline

The In-Depth Learning Plan can be utilized for break-out groups of families with children, adolescents, and adults.

Families with Children

The lesson plan is designed for table groups of two or more families. Make sure each table has the supplies, instructions, and learning materials necessary to do the activities. A facilitator guides the families through each activity. Catechists move from table to table assisting.

Learning Experience One (30 minutes)
Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Learning Experience Two (30 minutes)
Solidarity

Learning Experience Three (30 minutes)
Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Adolescents

Learning Plan Outline

Learning Experience One (30 minutes)
Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Learning Experience Two (30 minutes)
Solidarity

Learning Experience Three (30 minutes)
Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Young Adults and Adults

Learning Plan Outline

Learning Experience One (30 minutes)
Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Learning Experience Two (30 minutes)
Solidarity

Learning Experience Three (30 minutes)
Gifts of the Holy Spirit
OR

Learning Experience Four (30 minutes)
The Pentecost Harvest

Learning Experience: Who is the Holy Spirit? (30 Minutes)

Whole Group: Adults, Adolescents, Families with children

Age Group: Adults, Adolescents, Families with children

Materials

- Candles (one per table)
- Matches (one set per table)
- Handout: *Vision Flame* (two per table)
- Scissors (two per table)
- Handout : *Vision Flame Activity* (one per table)

Preparation

- Provide a small candle and matches for each table. Do not put the matches on the table; rather, give the matches to an adult who is sitting at the table. Instruct that adult not to allow the children to hold the matches.
- Duplicate copies of the handout *Vision Flame* onto yellow and orange paper (enough for one of each color per table, two handouts in total).
- Duplicate copies of the handout *Vision Flame Activity* (one per table).

Activity Plan

1. [spoken text] Introduce this learning experience with these or similar words:
The Feast of Pentecost and the Sacrament of Confirmation provide us with two opportunities to focus our attention on the divine person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes many appearances throughout the Bible. There are a couple of descriptions of the Holy Spirit that surface in the Bible over and over again. The Holy Spirit is described as fire and breath or wind. In this part of our session, we will learn about the Holy Spirit expressed as fire and the Holy Spirit expressed as breath or wind.
2. [spoken text] *The Holy Spirit is like fire.* Invite an adult participant at each table to light the candle on the table.
3. Ask the participants to identify the first thing that we all did when the candle at our table was lit. Most likely, everyone looked at the flame – if only for a second. [spoken text] Share the following with the participants, using your own words or the text provided: *A lit candle has an effect on our vision. We are naturally drawn to look at it. Light in general provides vision. We would be able to see nothing without light. The Holy Spirit is like a burning light that provides vision for us. Without vision, we cannot know which way to go. The prophet Joel provides one of our readings about the Holy Spirit for the Pentecost vigil. Joel speaks for God and says, "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions."*

The Holy Spirit inspires prophecy, dreams and visions. We dream up our visions for our world and prophets are people who speak those visions. Notice how both old and young people help to shape the vision.

Now we are going to add some new pieces to our paper chain. We are going to create some flames of vision inspired by the Holy Spirit.

4. Distribute the handout *Vision Flame Activity* (one per table) and the scissors for each group if they do not already have them. Invite them to follow the instructions on the handout to guide themselves through the *Vision Flame Activity*.
5. Each table using the *Vision Flame Activity* Handout will accomplish the following tasks for this activity:

Suggestion: The activity could have a bit of humor added to it by providing large toy sunglasses for the visionaries to wear as they prophesy.

- a) 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.
- b) 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.*
- c) 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?*
- d) 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.
- e) Identify the oldest person at the table.
- f) 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.*
- g) 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?*
- h) 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.

6. Invite two participants from each table to read the vision statements to the large group, and then attach them to any red link in the paper chain. Note: If any of the vision statements mention racial harmony, you will have found an opportune moment to point out the flesh tones of the links in the paper chain. The Holy Spirit is the source of unity that can create racial harmony.
7. [spoken text] *The Holy Spirit is breath or wind. This is literally what the word spirit means: breath or wind. There's a very curious reference to breath in the gospel reading for Pentecost Sunday. I'll read the gospel, and you can listen for the breath reference. Children, I invite you to raise your hands when you hear the reference to breathing.*
8. Read John 20:19-23. Stop reading when the hands go up. Read that line again.
9. Invite them to listen very closely to the next words of Jesus, and then continue to slowly read the rest of the reading.
10. Invite the participants to tell you what they heard about breath and what followed the reference to breath. (Jesus breathed on the disciples, he told them to receive the Holy Spirit, and finally he talked to them about forgiveness.)
11. [spoken text] Share the following using the text provided or in your own words: *Does anyone remember how the Holy Spirit arrived in the house where the disciples were staying in the Acts reading that we did earlier? (The Spirit arrived in the form of a strong, driving wind.) Breath and wind are signs of the Spirit's presence. Sometimes that Spirit is strong and can almost knock your socks off like a driving wind that moves you into action; other times that Spirit arrives in your life like the breath of a friend's whisper and moves you to compassion and forgiveness. Either way, the Holy Spirit is as present to us as the wind that we all share as it moves all around us and as close to us as the breath that moves inside of us and carries life to every part of our bodies.*
12. *As we conclude this learning activity and move on to the next, let us keep in mind our breathing, that it may remind us of the Spirit moving within us.*

Learning Experience: Solidarity (30 Minutes)

Whole Group: Adults, Adolescents, Families with children

Age Group: Adults, Adolescents, Families with children

Materials

- Newsprint and markers
- List of age-specific words and phrases (see preparation)
- Wooden blocks or paper cups (24 per table)
- Posterboard (one per family with children)
- Markers for families with children
- Pencils for adult and teen tables
- Handout: *Tower Contest Discussion Questions* (one per table)
- Handout: *The Tower of Babel* (one copy)
- Handout: *Babel Discussion Questions* (one per table)
- Handout: *The Pentecost Story* (one copy)

Preparation

- Make a list of words or phrases used by the particular age groups in your parish that would not be understood by one or more of the other age groups. For example, older people might refer to gasoline as high test or blue jeans as dungarees. Teens have many terms that are incomprehensible to older people, and the lingo changes from year to year. Conduct some research with a few teens to gather a list of slang terms that are in current usage. Don't forget to include abbreviations or acronyms used in computer correspondence. At the time of this writing TTYL (talk to you later) and LOL (laugh out loud) are two common email acronyms. Do your best to make a list for every age group in your parish.
- Hang a poster with the following words on the wall: Solidarity – “We are all really responsible for all.” – Pope John Paul II

Activity Plan

1. [spoken text] Introduce this learning experience with these or similar words: *Solidarity is one of the principle themes of Catholic social teaching. What is Catholic social teaching? Catholic social teaching is our way of expressing our communal belief that the societies of the world should be organized in a way that promotes justice and the dignity of every person according to God's will. In other words, Catholic social teaching helps us to create good communities in which care is provided for all. Solidarity, a theme of Catholic social teaching, is the belief that we are called to care about all people equally. Pope John Paul II said that solidarity is “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all” (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, no. 38). While “taking care of our own” is important and indeed essential, solidarity calls us to care for others with the same enthusiasm as we care for our own. As the pope said, “...we are all really responsible for all.” The theme of solidarity shines through the Pentecost readings.*

2. [spoken text] Ask the following question: *What usually prevents a person from the U.S. from understanding a person from China? There are many possible answers, but a difference in language is one of the most basic inhibitors to mutual understanding. If you don't speak the same language, it's very difficult to understand each other. Language is the symbol of solidarity or lack of solidarity in the Pentecost readings.*
3. Randomly write words or phrases on newsprint from the list of age group phrases and slang that you prepared earlier. After you write each word or phrase, ask for a show of hands from people who know what the word or phrase means. Invite someone to explain the meaning. Facilitate a discussion about how people who all speak a common language can sometimes misunderstand each other's use of the language because of slang terminology.

Recommended Alternative: Show video clips from television shows or movies that show people using these words or phrases. Stop the clips for discussion about the meanings of the words or phrases.

4. [spoken text] Raise the following question: *What divisions in our community do these slang differences represent?*

The differences represent the differences in the age groups. They represent that we do not always understand people who are a different age from us, and our misunderstandings usually run deeper than just misunderstandings of words.

5. Distribute blocks or cups to each table.
6. Tell participants that you are having a contest to see which table group can build the tallest tower with the blocks (or cups) that are on the table. Each person at the table takes a turn adding a block (or cup) to the structure.
7. Give participants five minutes to build their tower, and then call time. Identify the tallest tower (measure if you have to) and declare a winner.
8. Invite the groups to discuss the following questions using the handout provided at their tables:
 - How did we cooperate or fail to cooperate at our table?
 - How did we feel about each other during the contest?
 - How did we feel about the people at the other tables during the contest?
 - How did pride play a role in our work?
 - How was unity or solidarity fostered by this contest?
 - How was division fostered by this contest?
9. Invite participants to share some of their responses with the larger group.
10. Tell participants that there is a story from the Old Testament about a tower that shows how pride, competition and a lack of faith in God's spirit can cause division (see handout *The Tower of Babel*).

Suggestion: Rather than just reading the story, assign a talented storyteller in your parish to tell the story by heart with feeling and expression. Teens who participate in speech and debate clubs at school are usually very good at this kind of thing. It is important for the storyteller to emphasize the language themes in the story as well as the reason for building the tower (verse 4).

11. Invite participants to discuss the following questions using the handout provided at their tables:
 - What were language and community like before the tower was constructed?
 - Why did the people build the tower?
 - Why would the people want to “make a name” for themselves?
 - What did the people mean when they expressed their fear of being scattered if they did not build the tower?
 - How is the sin of pride expressed in this story?
 - How is trust lacking in this story?
 - 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.

12. Invite participants to share the results of their discussion with the larger group.
13. [spoken text] Transition to the Pentecost story in Acts using these or similar words:
The Tower of Babel is a story about humanity falling from a state of unity to a state of division because of their lack of trust in and obedience of God. The sin of pride caused them to seek security from outside threats through their own efforts. This caused deep divisions in the human community. We continue to suffer from these divisions in our world today. Different cultures tend to be suspicious and fearful of each other due to lack of understanding. The Pentecost story, which we will now explore, gives us an idea of how we can overcome the deep divisions in the human community that are caused by sin manifested in fear, suspicion and lack of understanding between different cultures.
14. Read the Pentecost story (Acts 2:1-12). You will not need to present this story in dramatic form because you already did this earlier during the all-ages learning experience.
15. Invite participants to discuss the following questions at their tables (families with children can depict their answers on the second half of their poster):
 - What were languages like at the beginning of the Pentecost story?
 - How did the disciples of Jesus experience the Holy Spirit?
 - What did the disciples do after they experienced the power of the Holy Spirit?
 - What risks do you think are associated with their behavior?
 - How are trust and courage expressed in this story?
 - How are understanding and solidarity a part of this story?

- How would you compare the pattern of this story line with the pattern of the story line in the Tower of Babel story?
 - What lessons can differing cultures draw from these two stories?
16. [spoken text] Conclude this learning experience with these or similar words: *The Tower of Babel is another way of telling the story about Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit. Things are good at the beginning of the story, and then human beings place their trust in themselves rather than God. This results in terrible divisions among human beings. The Pentecost story has an opposite pattern: it moves from divisions between people to unity and understanding. It's a story about the building of solidarity. The power of the Holy Spirit brings courage and understanding between peoples who are very different from each other. The Holy Spirit is the source of solidarity between diverse peoples. Pentecost teaches us many things. One of the very important lessons of Pentecost is that we will not have unity and understanding (solidarity) in the human community until we place our trust in God's Holy Spirit, rather than in human solutions to the problems that divide us.*

Learning Experience: Gifts of the Holy Spirit (30 Minutes)

Whole Group: Adults, Adolescents, Families with children

Age Group: Families with children, Adolescents

Materials

- Colored construction or office paper (enough for all participants to use a few sheets)
- Scissors (three or four pairs at each table)
- Glue or glue sticks (three or four per table)
- Handout *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (one for every other person)

Preparation

- Photocopy the handout *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*. You will need one handout for every two participants. After you have copied them, divide them into seven equal stacks. Highlight a particular gift for each stack so that you end up with a Wisdom stack, an Understanding stack, a Right Judgment stack, etc.

Activity Plan

1. [spoken text] Introduce this learning experience with these or similar words: *There is a sequence that we read before the Gospel proclamation on the feast of Pentecost. The sequence is a hymn of joy in praise of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In the sequence, we pray that the Holy Spirit will release upon the faithful the seven traditional gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgment, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence and Wonder and Awe in God's Presence (a.k.a. Fear of the Lord). These gifts, based on Isaiah 11:1-2, are mentioned by name in the Rite of Confirmation. We'll now take some time to explore the meaning of these gifts and we'll add them to our birthday-of-the-Church decorations.*
2. Distribute the handout *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (one handout per every two participants). Do not distribute more than one handout with the same highlighted gift to a table. Each table will end up with three or four different highlighted gifts depending upon how many participants are at the table.
3. Invite participants to break up into pairs (young children should be paired with adults as much as possible). Each pair will have one handout. Tell them that the highlighted gift on the handout is the gift with which they will be working.
4. Distribute craft supplies. Do not distribute writing tools (pens, markers, pencils, etc.).
5. Participants will design an ornament with the craft supplies; it will hang from the paper chain in the room. The ornament should have a symbolic representation of the meaning of the highlighted gift on the handout. The pairs will need to discuss the meaning of the gift before they design and construct their ornament.

6. Redistribute the groups so that all persons with similar gifts are in the same group. Invite them to share the meaning of their ornaments.
7. Redistribute the groups again so that each group has two representative ornaments for each of the seven gifts. Invite them to teach each other about the gifts based upon the meaning of their ornaments.
8. Allow participants time to hang their ornaments on a section of the paper chain. You may fasten the ornaments with tape, staples, string, etc.
9. [spoken text] Close this learning experience with these or similar words: *Please bow your heads and pray with me as I recite the last two stanzas of the sequence for Pentecost:*

*On the faithful, who adore
And confess you, evermore
In your sev'nfold gift descend;*

*Give them virtue's sure reward;
Give them your salvation, Lord;
Give them joys that never end. Amen. Alleluia.*

Learning Experience: The Pentecost Harvest (30 Minutes)

Age Group: Adults

Materials

- Paper and pencils at each table
- Newsprint and marker
- Bibles (one per person)

Activity Plan

1. [spoken text] Introduce this learning experience with these or similar words:
The Christian feast of Pentecost is based upon Acts 2:1-11. It is important to note that this is not the original Pentecost feast. We can tell that this is the case easily by noting that the disciples were gathered on the feast of Pentecost. In other words, it was already a Jewish feast before the Christian Church even existed. The original Jewish Pentecost was a festival for the grain harvest in springtime. It began on the day of the barley harvest, lasted for seven weeks and culminated with the first offerings from the wheat harvest. Pentecost is a word that comes from a Greek word meaning the fiftieth. The first offering of the wheat harvest occurred fifty days after the barley harvest. Later in history, the Jewish feast of Pentecost came to be associated with the giving of the law to Moses at Mt. Sinai, and it is still celebrated by Jews fifty days after Passover, which commemorates the time when the Jews left slavery in Egypt under Moses' leadership. Originally it was a grain harvest festival; today it is a festival that commemorates the "harvest" of God's law. In this learning experience we will study the original setting for Pentecost, the harvest festival, and consider what we can draw from its meaning in order to help us better understand the meaning of Christian Pentecost. Before we begin our study of Jewish Pentecost, it will be helpful to review what we know about Christian Pentecost.
2. Invite each table to make a list of everything they know about the feast of Pentecost.
3. Invite a representative from each table to share the contents of their list.
4. Record on newsprint the essential elements of the Christian feast of Pentecost as you hear them being reported by the table groups.
5. Distribute a Bible to each participant.
6. Invite half of the participants to read Leviticus 23:15-22. Invite the other half of the participants to read Deuteronomy 16:9-12.
7. Give each group some time to explore their reading using the following discussion questions (Handout: *Pentecost Harvest Discussion Questions*):
 - How are the fifty days of Pentecost determined?
 - Share with each other what you know about grain harvesting, processing grain into flour and turning flour into bread.

- What does your reading say about the offering of the harvest or bread?
 - What does your reading say specifically about the festival in terms of who is invited, what is done, what is forbidden, etc.?
 - What divine concern is the author trying to express in the last verse of the reading?
 - How would God express this concern in today's world?
 - 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?
8. After each group has finished exploring its reading, facilitate an open discussion about the final question above. Invite representatives from each table to share their table's insights.
9. [spoken text] Close this learning experience with these or similar words: *The Christian feast of Pentecost is a way that the Church can gather in the bountiful harvest of Easter blessings. Our Church was born upon the heels of resurrection. We are called to gather diverse human beings into one Eucharistic community – a community that is bread for the world both physically and spiritually. We offer the bread of the Pentecost harvest to God first, and by God's command, to the poorest among us.*

Part 4

Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application (15 minutes)

Advanced Preparation

- Determine what each group will bring back to the large group or to their small group to share as a result of their learning.
- Determine how each group will share their reports or projects so that they “teach” the other groups about the event and theme.

Home Kit

Develop a Pentecost Home Kit that *extends* and *expands* the learning that has taken place through the intergenerational learning program. It should *engage* families and individuals in living their faith at home through traditions and celebrations, rituals, symbols, prayers, service projects, learning activities, and enrichment activities. Include specific activities on the event that you have selected as a focus for the session. These additional activities can include learning activities about the event, Scripture readings, table rituals, prayers, and so on.

Use a variety of design formats for your activities, such as a prayer card, stand-up card, poster, placemat, newsletter, booklet, magnet, bookmark, and artwork.

Included with this session are the following home activities:

- The Fire of the Holy Spirit
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Pentecost Sequence Table Prayer
- Pentecost Windssock
- Pouring the Spirit Scripture Reflection

1. Whole Group Sharing and Reflection

The whole group sharing experience provides an opportunity for each age group to share something they have learned with the entire group. If the session has been conducted in intergenerational groups ask participants to remain with their group. If the session was conducted in the age group format, ask people to rejoin their intergenerational groups from the All Ages Learning Experience OR ask family members to rejoin their own family and individual adolescent and adult participants to stay with their age groups from the In-Depth Learning Experience.

First, ask the participants to share what they learned in a small group setting or by inviting participants or groups, representing families, teens, and adults, to share projects or reflections with the entire group.

[spoken text] Second, invite responses to the following questions from the large group:

- What do you look forward to experiencing at the Pentecost celebrations this year?
- Why do you think Pentecost is an important Catholic feast?
- What does the paper chain decorating the room have to do with Pentecost?
- What is one thing you learned about Pentecost that you did not know before?

Review the Home Kit for the event containing prayers, rituals, service projects, family enrichment, and learning activities. Guide everyone in developing an individual or family action plan for living at home using the Home Kit and planning for participation in the sacrament.

2. Reflection—Application Strategies

Prepare strategies and activities to guide individuals and families in *reflecting* on the meaning of their learning and their participation in the Church event and in *applying* their learning to daily living as a Catholic. The goal is to help people apply the beliefs and practices to their daily life, and report or “publish” their learning with others in the parish community.

Reflection and application activities and strategies can be included with the Home Kit. You can also include a time for feedback in your next intergenerational learning program

There is a variety of formats for reflection—application activities. Reflection tools include unfinished sentences, reflection questions, learning journals, and structured reflection activities. Application tools include action plans, practice plans, “to do” lists, and resolutions.

Art and media strategies can also be used to express reflection and application. Consider activities such as bumper stickers, picture collages, “recipe for living” cards, posters, photos, and projects to create and bring back to Sunday Mass or the next intergenerational learning program.

Reflection:

- How did the prayers and the readings from the Pentecost liturgy touch your heart?
- What do you remember most vividly about the Pentecost liturgy?

Application:

- How did your experience of Pentecost change you?
- How are you challenged to work for greater unity or solidarity within the human race?
- How can you work for that unity in your own community or in your own family?

Provide parishioners with ways to share their reflections and life applications. Publish some of their reflections and applications on a parish bulletin board or in a parish publication such as the website or the weekly bulletin or newsletter. You may also give them opportunities to share these reflections and applications at the next intergenerational catechetical session.

Part 5

Closing Prayer Service (10 minutes)

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.

Closing Prayer Service

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.

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.

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.