

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children

Pentecost (B)

Acts Reading: Acts 2:1-21

BACKGROUND

The focal scripture for Pentecost is Acts 2:1-21. Jesus had told them to wait. Wait until the “advocate” appeared. They had no clue who this advocate would be, but they trusted Jesus.

They were probably together to celebrate Shavu’ot, which was also called Pentecost because it occurred 50 days after Passover. Passover has brought physical freedom. At Shavu’ot people gratefully celebrated the “giving” of the Torah (the first five books found in our Bible), which brought freedom from idolatry.

On the Feast of Pentecost, “it” happened. The only account we have is provided by Luke in this Acts passage. We can probably identify with Luke’s reaching for the right words to describe what happened: “It was like ...” Yes. Wind. Fire. Now the disciples are not just speaking – they are communicating. Each person there understands. Now the disciples are ready to do the work Jesus gave them to do.

THEME

Pentecost

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Sheets of newsprint, one for each person. Felt markers, crayons, masking tape, glue sticks, and red and/or yellow flames cut from construction paper.

BEGINNING

Gather the children together in a circle and ask them how their week was or if any of them had surprising things happen to them.

OPENING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for the gift of the Holy Spirit who helped the disciples and who helps us. Amen.

THE STORY: ACTS 2:1-21

Read the story from a bible, or tell the story using these words or your own.

On the Feast of Pentecost, “it” happened. Suddenly they knew. They just knew that the advocate – the special helper Jesus had promised, was right there in the room with them.



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How did they know? When they tried to describe it, they said things like, well, it was like – well – like a wind. And suddenly it was like – well – like there were flames all around, dancing over our heads. Maybe they said: “Did you see THAT?” Or “What happened?” Or maybe they just stood there and said, “WOW.”

Very quickly they all started to talk at once, and the weird thing was that even people who could not understand their language understood every word they were saying. “Hey!” they said, “How come I can understand what they are saying when I only understand Greek?”

One by one, the disciples said to each other: “I get it! This is what Jesus promised us – now we can go tell everyone that God loves us. Jesus showed us what to do, and the Holy Spirit is here to help us do what we need to do.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What are some of the things Jesus had told the disciples to tell people?
- How do we know the disciples told people these things?
- I wonder what kinds of things are we invited to tell others?

ACT OUT THE STORY

Invite the children to act out the story, including parts for some inanimate elements like wind and doors. Have fun with it.

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY DISCIPLES

Working in pairs, fasten a sheet of paper on the wall for each person so there is about 6 inches or so above the top of the person’s head.

One person traces around the head and shoulders of the other on the sheet of paper. Then the second person traces the other’s head and shoulders. Each, then, draws eyes (eye glasses, where appropriate) nose, ears, mouth, and hair of the other person. Depending on the children’s skills, you may have to help them trace around their heads and shoulders.

Fasten a flame over each head. Enjoy the mural created by all the silhouettes.

GETTING CLOSURE

Begin by saying, “We celebrate our Church today. We celebrate the disciples who told the story to people, who then told the story to people and on down the years until someone told it to each of us – and so we are here today.”

Tell the group that you will thank God for the person seated next to you and that person can thank God for the person next to her/him, so it can go around the circle. Start by saying, “I am thankful God gave us (insert the name of the person sitting next to you.)”



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Then invite the next person to do the same until you have gone completely around the circle.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for the Holy Spirit who will go with each of us as we leave here today. Amen.