

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Adults

Pentecost (B)

New Testament: Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

BACKGROUND

We begin the season with two Feast days: Pentecost, followed by Trinity Sunday. Then we move on to the long season known as Ordinary Time, which runs through Christ the King Sunday. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others. Our theme for this lengthy season is “Blessed is the Ordinary.”

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK’S GOSPEL

The church is born at Pentecost. The promised Advocate comes and those who cowered in fear now burst forth from their prisons with a message that can be understood in any language. The message: God is for everyone and anyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. We are still unpacking this message today as we peek out from the prisons we find ourselves hiding within.

THEME

Come Holy Spirit

BEFORE CLASS

Check in with the teachers of the young and the older children so you know what they will be doing today. Adults can then look for what the children have done.

BEGINNING

If your church has special plans for this day, be sure to incorporate them into your lesson. In some churches, this Sunday may be known as Whitsunday or the birthday of our church. Pentecost is considered one of the primary days for baptism, so there may be baptisms scheduled.

OPENING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for being here in our midst – during our feasts, fasts, and ordinary times. Thank you for the wind of the Spirit blowing through the cobwebs of our lives. Thank you for our time together today. Amen.

THE STORY: ACTS 2:1-21

In addition to the Gospel appointed for today, we also have the Acts passage that describes Pentecost as experienced by the disciples. Ask for volunteers to read verses 1-4, verses 5-13 (note: there are lots of proper names of countries people may not be familiar with.), and verses 14-21.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Try to put yourself in the position of the disciples in this story.

- What words might describe how they must have felt, their fears and exhaustion?
- What words might describe their elation at the energy the Spirit brought in the wind?
- I wonder what it would have been like to be present on this day?

Share experiences of trying to convey your faith to someone who did not believe and who responded as if you were speaking a foreign language. Then share experiences when the person you were conveying your faith to was able to understand you in their own "language." What do you think made the difference?

THE STORY: JOHN 15:26-27, 16:4b-15

Explain what you will be doing: One person will be asked to read this passage in its entirety. Then you will allow a moment or two of silence. Then ask a second person to read the entire passage, this time the listeners jotting down words or concepts, or feelings they noticed. Allow another moment or two of silence.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Share words heard in the reading and in the silence.
- Consider various words we have to describe this third person of the Trinity (Advocate, Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost, Comforter, wind). Which one(s) resonate for this group?
- Jesus spoke these words to the disciples before the crucifixion. Consider how they might have "understood" what he was saying then – and what these words might have meant to the disciples after Pentecost.
- When do we believe we receive access to the Holy Spirit? Perhaps someone will want to share a time when they knew it was the Spirit praying through them with words they would not have been able to come up with otherwise.

GETTING CLOSURE

Consider how we may need to balance being called to share the good news in other languages while still respecting the right of others to their own faith path.

CLOSING PRAYER

Come Holy Spirit. We know you have already blown into our space and into our hearts. Help us to bend to your power so you can use us, and our lives, for your purposes. Amen.