

Lesson Plans That Work: Intergenerational Lesson Plan

Pentecost (B)

New Testament: Acts 2:1-21

BACKGROUND

The focal scripture for Pentecost is the Book of 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 the writer 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.

BEFORE

Choose which of the following activities you will do with your group and be sure you have the supplies needed for each. Some of the activities will require gathering supplies before the day of the celebration.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

If possible, arrange the chairs in the shape of a pentagon (five sides). You may also cut pentagon-shaped nametags for each person. Be creative in what other things could be in the shape of a pentagon...

A Bible or the scripture printed out. Or simply tell the story in your own words. If you have access to a computer and projector, you could show the story as told with Legos. This is a slide show with the story: http://www.thebricktestament.com/acts_of_the_apostles/instant_fluency/ac_02_01-03.html or a YouTube Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ww-0sCm0ge4>

GATHERING

Ask the group what shape the chairs are arranged (in a pentagon). What other things are in the shape of a pentagon? Ask for volunteers to name five things they are glad exist. (You could start with a list like: chocolate, coffee, puppies, stars, the ocean, for example.)



PREVIEW

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Tell the group what you have planned for this session: beginning and ending in prayer, hearing and reflecting on today's passage with a few questions and selected activities. Let them know what time you expect to be finished and answer any questions.

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

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. 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? (God loves us. Forgive each other.)
- How do we know the disciples told people these things? (They told people who told people until it was written down and passed down to us here today.)
- What kinds of things are we invited to tell others? (All of the above)

ACT OUT THE STORY

Supplies Needed: “Flames” cut from red or yellow tissue paper or construction paper

If your group is small, act out the story, including parts for some inanimate elements like wind and doors. Have fun with it.

If your group is large, some of you can be the audience while the others plan a skit to show what happened.

While the “audience” awaits the performance, ask them to think of a time they waited and waited for something and it finally happened. Maybe it was first day of school. Could be it was getting a driver’s license? Ask for volunteers to share what they remembered.

When the “cast” is ready, enjoy the skit.

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY DISCIPLES

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

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.

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

PENTECOST ART BOOK

Supplies needed: Art and card stock or construction paper. Option: photograph paper.

Go to <http://www.textweek.com>, scroll down until you get to Pentecost. Click and then scroll down to images and movies and select the art pieces you want. To download the art, right-click on the one you want and click “e-mail.” When the box appears, click “show more options,” then click the bottom choice, “Large,” and e-mail the art to yourself. You will then be able to print it out. Note: Photograph paper provides better quality pictures.

Invite the group to produce a “book” of the art pieces to give to your Sunday School or to have available for people to look at.

PENTAGON TO GO SYMBOL

Supplies needed: A pentagon shape pre-cut from foam core or cardboard, felt markers or crayons.

Give each person a pentagon shape and ask them to imagine themselves in the center of the pentagon, surrounded on five sides. Discuss what the five sides are for each of us. God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are three of them. Each can choose what the other two might be (could be family, the Bible, Eucharist, church friends, etc.) What is chosen is not as important as noticing that we are surrounded by the five things. Ask each person to decorate their pentagon by drawing the words – or a symbol for each word – on each of the five sides and then decorate the pentagon as they choose. Suggest they take the shape home and find a place to put it where they see it often.

PENTA-CAKE

Supplies needed: Cake and optional Five Birthday type candles. Juice and perhaps coffee.

Depending on the size of your group, choose the following: (1) take a round cake and cut five sides using a pentagon pattern, or (2) using a sheet cake and a larger pentagon pattern cut the cake in the shape of a pentagon. Frost it. Light candles if appropriate and safe. Celebrate Pentecost with your penta-cake party. Sing “Happy Birthday,” substituting “dear Church” for “to you.”

CLOSING ACTIVITY

Supplies Needed: Chairs arranged as a pentagon, all seated holding something from one of today's activities.

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 pentagon.

CLOSING PRAYER

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