



ALL AGE WORSHIP FOR PENTECOST

AND COUNTING

19 May 2013

DAY 50

Pentecost is a major festival of the Christian Church. The name Pentecost comes from the Greek *pentekoste*, meaning fifty. Pentecost is celebrated 50 days after Easter. It marks the completion of Christ's redemptive work and the fulfilment of Jesus' promise to send the Spirit.

... and we are still counting

Pentecost also marks the start of the work of Christ's church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a work that continues today.

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP

The Holy Spirit operates within the whole church — people of all ages — enabling them to love, serve and worship Christ Jesus.

Intergenerational (or all-age) worship takes seriously the idea that people of all ages worship together in the body of Christ.

Worshippers, young, old and in-between can also be involved in planning worship, inviting people to worship, and leading worship.

Carefully planned intergenerational worship incorporates several of the senses, plus elements of activity, surprise, fun and awe.

Intergenerational worship is everybody together — in the same space at the same time — not something that excludes part of the church body.

ALL AGE CELEBRATION

'Shouldn't our worship this Sunday be one giant birthday celebration, an explosion of colour and sound, a rushing of wind and fire with powerful Gospel preaching (Acts 2), bright, thankful, joyous music (Ephesians 5:18-20), grateful praises for the hope of eternal life and renewal of all creation, beginning with our own lives (Romans 8), earnest prayers and creative, self-denying efforts for assisting the needy with Spirit-inspired love (Acts 4:32-35)?' (from Internetmonk)

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USING THE RESOURCE

Read through all the material. Discuss it with your planning team. You may use any parts of the resource that will be appropriate in your situation — or use the entire model service.

These notes have been prepared by the Children and Family Ministry Team of the Uniting Church SA to help congregations plan worship involving children and families.

You may make as many copies of the notes as needed for your worship planners.

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For more all-age worship resources see:
<http://sa.uca.org.au/cfm/ministry-leaders/resources/all-age-worship/>

BIBLE TEXTS

The Revised Common Lectionary texts for Pentecost Sunday 2013 are:

- Acts 2:1-21 (The coming of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of Peter's speech — heard by many language groups)
or
- Genesis 11:1-9 (The tower of Babel and the confusion of languages)
- Psalm 104:24-34, 35b (The Holy Spirit's role in creation)
- Romans 8:14-17 (Slaves to the one you obey)
- John 14:8-17, (25-27) (Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit)

PLANNING

It's good to have an intergenerational team to plan an intergenerational worship event. A special team of at least three people, representing the youngest, the middle and the oldest thirds of the congregation can work with the pastor/minister/priest or lay ministry team.

The team may also draw on people who have abilities in the areas of hospitality, music, drama, visual arts and technology.

Planning as an *intergenerational* team can be a valuable experience for all involved.

Suggested planning steps:

1. Begin with prayer, and trust God's Spirit to guide your planning.
2. Look through these notes to see how they can help in planning the service God is leading you to hold.
3. Use your regular worship plan together with these notes and other resources to develop a worship outline.
4. Flesh out the outline, considering your own people, traditions and facilities.
5. Work with worship leaders to plan details: who does what, when and how.

INVITATION AND ADVERTISING

Pentecost is not a term or a celebration that is recognised outside of the church. The term 'Pentecost' is not a drawcard to your community.

At this time of the year they are just over the celebration of Mothers Day (see 'Mothers Day Keys', our All age worship resource for Mothers day). It's autumn and the footy season locally. It's AFL round 8, with Port at Carlton and Adelaide Crows playing St Kilda at AAMI Stadium, both on Sunday afternoon. And children may be looking towards the Come Out Festival later in the week.

So . . .

The first people to notify about your service are the members of your congregation. Begin early to let them in on the excitement of what is being planned. Encourage them to catch the vision of a deliberately multi-generational Pentecost experience.

Make an effort to invite people who already have contact with your church through your playgroup or groups using your church, baptised children and family members. Invite them to come and see what church is like when it is done intergenerationally.

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is the responsibility of all members of the congregation.

Those people who invite and bring other people to the service have the primary responsibility for looking after their special guests.

A designated **HOSPITALITY TEAM** may have special responsibility for:

- being aware of the safety aspects of the worship space, eg location of alternate exits, location of first aid equipment, identity of people with first aid training
 - greeting people as they arrive
 - helping people to get settled
- Pay special attention to the very young, the very old and people with physical disabilities. Seat them where they will be able to see/hear, but not feel conspicuous
- being alert to needs of people during the service, and assisting as required.

Your hospitality team (also your planning team) need to be aware of the people who may feel marginalized by an all-age approach to worship: some teens and young adults, singles, families with no children, people who are experiencing family problems and people who come to worship on their own. These same people may discover that, when encouraged to do so, they enjoy the experience of relating to people of different ages.

WORSHIP SPACE & VISUALS

A clean, tidy and attractive worship area can help guests and regular worshipers feel that this is an inviting place to be.

Many people who worship with you (young and old) are visual thinkers; they take in information and express themselves more easily with images than with words. So make sure that you provide imagery that they can respond to. Involve people with artistic talent and your technology team in creating memorable visual impact for all worshipers.

You may have seasonal paraments, banners or other decorations that you always use for Pentecost. Check them out and see if they need refurbishing.

See page 6 for more ideas about decorating for a Pentecost celebration.

MUSIC

Many people who worship with you (young and old) take in information and express themselves more easily with music than in other ways. So make sure that you provide music that they can respond to.

Your regular instrumentalists (organist, band) lead/accompany congregational singing. They may also perform a musical item. Remember that visitors may not be familiar with — or comfortable with — this practice. Invite people to sing when they are comfortable doing so, or just to listen.

Small congregations, or congregations that do not have strong musical leadership, may choose to have the congregation sing with CDs or other electronic music.

You can find the inspiration of God's Spirit in the writing and singing of any worship song. Pentecost is a time to select worship songs that focus specifically on the work of the Spirit and the event of Pentecost.

For all-age worship, select both standard hymns that are familiar to older worshipers (and worth passing on to younger generations) as well as contemporary songs and songs written especially for children.

Some hymns to consider are:

- Breathe on me, breath of God (Hatach)
- Come, Spirit blest, Creator come — (Latin 9th century)
- Come Holy Spirit our souls inspire (Veni, creator Spiritus)
- Come, Spirit of God, holy Lord — Luther
- Filled with the Spirit's power — Peacey
- Lord God, the Spirit blest — Montgomery
- Spirit of life, O Spirit of God — Niedling
- Spirit of truth, essential God — Wesley

Some contemporary possibilities:

- Beautiful Lord, wonderful Saviour — Zschech
- Day by Day (I am carried) — Bullock
- Father welcomes — Mann
- God sends his Spirit — Colvin (Ghana Fold melody)
- Here I am waiting (Eagle's wings) — Morgan
- Holy Spirit, come — Bullock
- Holy Spirit rain down — Fragar
- I believe the promise — Fragar
- I stand to praise you (Light the fire in my heart again) — Maxwell
- I'm pressing forward (Born again) — Bullock
- I've found a friend — Fragar
- May our homes be filled with dancing — Morgan
- Holy Spirit — Bullock
- Pentecost prayer — Mann
- Refresh my heart — Bullock
- Spirit of God in the clear running water — Winter
- Spirit of the living God — Iverson
- There's a Spirit in the Air — Wren
- The Holy Spirit is here (Church on fire) — Fragar
- The Great Southland — Bullock

Songs with children in mind

- Dance with the Spirit — Strathdee
- If the Spirit is in you, clap your hands (as for the traditional 'If you're happy and you know it'. Children's action song)
- Fruit of the Spirit — Williams
- I'm gonna move when Jesus says move — Boucher (use the folk song version . . . when the Spirit says . . .)
- I've got peace like a river (Find actions for this traditional song at <http://kiboomukidssongs.com/ive-got-peace-like-a-river-song-and-lyrics/>)
- Left all alone (the Pentecost story) — Wright
- Pentecost song (the Pentecost story) — Burland
- Send your Holy Spirit — Strathdee
- The wind was loud (the Pentecost story) — Lavin

SOMETHING TO DO

Many people who worship with you (young and old) are kinaesthetic thinkers; they take in information, process it and express themselves more easily when they are moving or touching, handling or manipulating concrete objects. So make sure that you provide something to do. This may be as simple as holding a hymnal or Bible, or making notes.

The sample service has some movement of people and active involvement for many people.

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

Some people who worship with you are relational thinkers; they take in information and express themselves more easily when they have a chance to talk it over with another person. Find ways of allowing this to happen in your service. You may make some aspects of the service (the prayers, for example) conversational or by provide 'talk about it' spots.

The sample service has some brainstorming activities. To do this is to trust that God's Spirit is at work within the all-age gathering, working through the experience and knowledge of older people and the enthusiasm and fresh viewpoint of younger people.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Hopefully every worship service gives people something to think about. But often so many words and ideas follow on in quick succession, that people do not really have the time (or encouragement) to ponder.

Some people who worship with you (young and old) are interpersonal thinkers; they process information through quiet, self-guided contemplation.

Try to include some quiet space in your service to allow these people to consider the ideas they encounter.

SOMETHING TO COUNT

Some people who worship with you are logical/mathematically thinkers; they process information more easily when they can see patterns and systems.

This kind of thinking is catered for, to some extent, in the process of locating numbered hymns and Bible passages.

Day 50 and counting sample service is an experiment in incorporating mathematical thinking.

SOMETHING TO TAKE HOME

People are more likely to remember and talk about your Pentecost message if you provide them with something tangible to take home with them as a discussion starter or memento.

In the sample service it may be a balloon.

WORSHIP LEADERS

The minister, a lay person or a pair of people serves as the overall worship leader for the service. Worshipers (particularly guests) will

recognise this person as the host/compeer who is responsible for the overall flow of the service.

Several other people (of different ages) can each lead different segments of worship.

For example, the sample service may have

- a hospitality team
- a music team: instrumentalists and vocalists with a song leader
- a technology/projectionist team
- a volunteer helpers team who help with balloons and other activities
- a worship leader
- Count von Count (name thanks to Sesame Street, but without the 'Dracula' persona) a person who leads the counting activities
- a Bible reader or readers
- a prayer leader or leaders.

SERMON

An all age worship service does not require two or more sermons for people of different ages. There is a single all-age sermon — short, generally a simple application of the overall theme of the service, and (where possible) incorporating visuals and actions.

If the sermon is for 'adults only', provide a theme-related activity for children to do during the sermon, preferably sitting with their families in the worship area.

If children undertake a separate activity, allow a time for them to share what they have done with the older worshipers.

Where the teaching is done elsewhere or in some other way, there may not need to be a sermon within the worship.

The sample service suggests a 'brainstorming' approach, trusting that the Spirit will guide the presenter in pulling together thoughts suggested by the worshipers.

The lectionary readings or any of the texts (or a combination of texts) from the section 'Holy Spirit in the Scriptures' (page 7–10) could be the basis of a sermon.

UPSIZING & DOWNSIZING

Day 50 and counting can be used in large or small congregations and can be adapted for use in a home setting.

Each planning group will need to adapt the ideas to suit their own particular situation: the number of people and the size and layout of the facilities.

REHEARSAL

If the Pentecost worship you are planning is different from your usual worship pattern or if it

involves people who do not normally lead worship, you will need a rehearsal.

A complete walk-through will pinpoint any logistical problems, allow the worship leader/s to fine-tune instructions for the worshipers and ensure that the service itself runs smoothly.

Use rehearsal time as an opportunity to pray together as a worship leadership team.

- Praise God for the opportunity to worship and lead worship.
- Thank God's Spirit for bringing you together as a team and giving you the abilities needed to lead all-age worship.
- Ask God's Spirit to guide you and all who worship with you.
- Ask the Spirit to use what you do as worship leaders to bring people closer to Jesus and to grow in their faith.

PENTECOST TRADITIONS

PENTECOST SYMBOLS

- **Flames and wind** — refers to the Pentecost event and the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Pomegranate** – the Pentecost-red fruit is a round orb, packed with many seeds, said to represent the church.
- **Sevens** — refers to the seven gifts of the Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, inward strength, knowledge, godliness, reverence. (Isaiah 11:2,3, cf 1 Cor12).
- **Nines** — refers to the nine 'fruit' of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)
- **Dove** — refers to the visible form the Spirit took at Jesus baptism (Luke 3: 21,22)

RED

Pentecost is a time of red — the colour of fire and zeal, passion and heat, the Spirit burning within us. Red represents flames of fire — not the fire that destroys, but the kind of fire that warms, energizes, excites, empowers; the fire which the disciples experienced when the Holy Spirit came to them on the first Pentecost.

Red can be incorporated in a Pentecost celebration in many ways.

- Red hangings on church furniture
- Red stole for minister/pastor
- Red altar flowers, eg seven red roses, or extra red-flowering plants,
- Red candles
- Red clothes for worship leaders/musicians
- Red clothing or accessories for worshipers – they may be encouraged to wear red or

they may be given a red flower, ribbon or badge as they arrive.

- Red background or the words on projected slides.
- Red 'gifts' for worshipers
- Red banners, streamers, balloons as decoration.

WORSHIP TRADITIONS

This festival day is a popular date for baptism, and confirmations.

- Blowing trumpets to recall the sound of the mighty wind.
- Saying prayers or reading Bible passages in different languages.

OTHER TRADITIONS

The feast is also called Whit Sunday, Whitsun, especially in England, where the following Monday was traditionally a holiday, with parades and fairs.

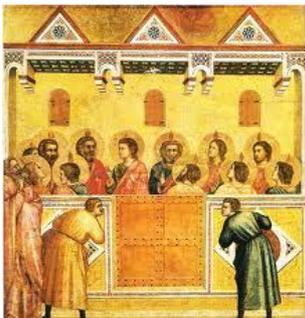
Birthday parties for the Christian Church are often held on Pentecost, incorporating games and food with a Pentecost theme.

- Balloons, streamers, flags, kites, pinwheels — items that include a wind factor may be used.
- Birthday cake with candles. Before the cake is cut, children blow out the candles "with a mighty rushing wind"!

Spirit Challenge: Remembering that 'the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline'. (2 Timothy 1:7) — undertake a challenge to make a difference in your community, to speak to people about your faith, to speak up for people who need a voice.

ART

The story of the coming of the Holy Spirit has been a subject of artists through the ages, eg



Giotto (1266 –1337)



El Greco (1541 –1614)



He Qui (contemporary)

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SCRIPTURE

Selected passages

While Pentecost is identified as the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Christian Church, the Bible speaks of the work of the Spirit before that time as well as after.

The word 'spirit' is found over 500 times in the NIRB (New International Reader's Bible) translation. The term is used for both good and evil spirits:

- Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

It is used for personal spirits and the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God. A convention in this translation is to use 'Spirit' (upper case S) when referring specifically to God's Spirit and 'spirit' (lower case s) when referring to any other spirit. Thus:

- Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. (Psalm 51:10-12)
- Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. (John 3:6)
- The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. (Romans 8:16)
- For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 2:11)

OLD TESTAMENT

God's Spirit was at work in creation:

- Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. (Genesis 1:2)

God's Spirit inspired and was evident in the work of individuals

- (The Israelites) Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them, (Isaiah 63:11)
- (Bezziel, craftsman) And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— (Exodus 31:3)
- (Moses) When the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took some of the power of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When

the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. (Numbers 11:25)

- (Caleb) But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it. (Numbers 14:24)
- (Balaam) When Balaam looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came on him. (Numbers 24:2)
- (Joshua) So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him. (Numbers 27:18)
- (Othniel) The Spirit of the Lord came on him, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war. (Judges 3:10)
- (Gideon) Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. (Judges 5:34)
- (Samson) Then the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him. (Judges 14:19)
- (King Saul) When he and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he joined in their prophesying. (1 Samuel 10:10)
- (King David) So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. (1 Samuel 16:13)
- (Daniel/Beltshazzar) "This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Beltshazzar, tell me what it means, for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you." (Daniel 4:18)
- (Elijah and Elisha) When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha. . . "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," (2 Kings 2:9)
- (Isaiah). . . And now the Sovereign Lord has sent me, endowed with his Spirit. (Isaiah 48:16)
- (Micah) But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might . . . (Micah 3:8)
- (Zechariah) Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. (2 Chronicles 14:20)

People recognised and praised the Spirit

- (Elihu, Job's comforter) The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life. (Job 33:4)
- Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground. (Psalm 143:10)
- The human spirit is the lamp of the Lord that sheds light on one's inmost being. (Proverbs 31:27)
- Lord, by such things people live; and my spirit finds life in them too. You restored me to health and let me live. (Isaiah 38:16)
- 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty. (Zechariah 4:6)

Prophets spoke of a special relationship of the Messiah and the Spirit

- The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord— (Isaiah 11:2)
- Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. (Isaiah 42:1)

Prophets spoke of an 'outpouring' of the Holy Spirit

- And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. (Joel 2:18)

NEW TESTAMENT

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND JESUS

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit

- This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18)
- The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

Jesus' would baptise with the Holy Spirit

- [John said] "I baptize you with water for repentance. But . . . he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. (Matthew 3:11, cf Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33)

The Holy Spirit came to Jesus at his baptism

- As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. (Matthew 3:16 , cf Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22, John 1:32)

The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness

- Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Matthew 4:1, cf Mark 1:12, Luke 4:1)

Jesus worked by God's Spirit

- But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Matthew 12:28)
- Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. (Luke 4:14)
- Quoting prophecy: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me . . ." (Luke 4:18)
- At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth . . ." (Luke 10:21)
- . . . until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. (Acts 1:2)
- He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. (1 Peter 3:18)

Jesus promised the Spirit to his followers

- Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. (Mark 13:11)
- For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say. (Luke 12:12)
- Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. . ." (John 3:5)
- Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth. . . God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth. (John 4:23,24)
- "If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— (John 14:15)
- "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. (John 15:26)
- "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come

to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7).

- For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 1:5)
- And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (John 20:22)
- Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost (Acts 2)

- But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)
- Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

The book of the Bible known as 'The Acts of the Apostles' is sometimes referred to as the **Acts of the Holy Spirit**

- Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! . . . (Acts 4:8)
- After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. (Acts 4:31)
- Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them. (Acts 6:3)
- They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. (Acts 6:5)
- But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. (Acts 7:55)
- When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, (Acts 8:15)
- The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." (Acts 8:29)
- Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, . . . has

sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 9:17)

- Then the church . . . enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers. (Acts 9:31)
- While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2)
- And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:52)
- Paul and his companions travelled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. (Acts 16:6)

Teaching about the Spirit / through the Spirit — in the letters

- Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. (Romans 8:5)
- You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. (Romans 8:9)
- And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. (Romans 8:11)
- In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. (Romans 8:26)

Gifts of the Spirit: There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and

to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

- For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. (Galatians 5:5)
- For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. (Galatians 5:17)

Fruit of the Spirit: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22,23)

- I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. (Ephesians 1:17)
- Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:18-20)
- Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:17)
- And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. (Ephesians 6:18)
- For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, (Colossians 1:9)

- . . . our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. (1 Thessalonians 1:4-6)
 - But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as first fruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:13)
 - For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7)
 - . . . He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:5)
 - For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)
 - . . . And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. (1 John 3:24)
 - This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, (1 John 4:2)
 - Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (Revelation 3:6)
- A blessing:** May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

THE PENTECOST STORY

A PLAN FOR A DRAMATIC READING OF Acts 2:1-21

All readers read clearly and with feeling.

Optional beginning

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

COUNT: Do you know how many 'all' is?

NARRATOR: It doesn't say here in Acts, chapter 2.

COUNT: But if you do a bit of research, you can find out. Acts, chapter 1, verse 15 says: 'a group numbering about 120'. That's how many the 'all' is. That's about [a comparison to the worshiping congregation, eg the same number of people we have here today.]

NARRATOR continues, repeating first speech, emphasizing the 'all'.

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

TECH TEAM may show a picture of the coming of the Holy Spirit as tongues of fire.

NARRATOR 1: Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

TECH TEAM may show a picture of a crowd of listeners.

NARRATOR 2: Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.

And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked,

CROWD 1: 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?'

Up to seven different voices (and different languages or accents) read the following list of geographic locations.

Or the **TECH TEAM** could put the names on screen one at a time for the congregation to read (possibly superimposed over a map, if they get really creative)

Or the **COUNT** could interrupt here, saying
'There are lots of language groups here. Let's count them.' The **COUNT** holds up fingers (his own and a **HELPER'S**) and says numbers as each name is read:
Parthians —1 to Arabs — 15

VOICE: Parthians, Medes, Elamites,

VOICE: residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia,

VOICE: Pontus and Asia,

VOICE: Phrygia and Pamphylia,

VOICE: Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene,

VOICE: visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,

VOICE: Cretans and Arabs—

CROWD 2: in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.'

TECH TEAM may show a picture of a crowd of listeners.

NARRATOR 1: All were amazed and perplexed . . .

CROWD 1: 'What does this mean?'

NARRATOR 1: But others sneered . . .

CROWD 2: 'They are filled with new wine.'

NARRATOR 2: But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them,

PETER: 'People of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning.

No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

PETER moves to the lectern and reads the Joel prophecy.

ALL OTHER READERS turn so they can see and listen to him.

PETER: 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

READERS respond to the mention of sons, daughters, etc, by pointing to one another.

PETER: Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. . . .

Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

NARRATOR 1: Peter went on to tell the people about Jesus.

NARRATOR 2: And everyone heard him in a language they could understand.

NARRATOR 1: Those who accepted his message were baptized.

NARRATOR 2: And about 3000 people were added to their number that day.

Optional ending

COUNT: Three thousand. That's a lot of people. It's as many as . . . [a number that will be recognisable to the group, eg the capacity of Adelaide netball arena or six Airbus loads.



SAMPLE SERVICE

AND COUNTING

PREPARING BALLOONS

Do this in a foyer, hall or courtyard. A team of **VOLUNTEERS** works with worshipers, as they arrive, to prepare 50 red balloons.

Write the numbers 1-50 on un-inflated balloons with texta. As people blow up their balloons, they will see the written number grow. Provide lengths of ribbon that people can tie on their inflated balloons.

If you have 50 or more worshipers, give one balloon each to 50 people (or families). If you have less than 50 worshipers, divide the balloons among the worshipers.

The 50 balloons are taken into the worship area and held during the opening parts of the service.

NOTES:

1. Have some spare balloons — just in case.
2. You could use paper cut-out balloon shapes rather than real balloons.
3. Plan how you will gather the balloons to display at the front of the church. (See #5 below)
4. Don't use helium in these balloons. The symbolism of breath/wind/air is part of the Pentecost image.

1. ENTRY

The **HOSPITALITY TEAM** greets each person as they come into the worship area. They also give out any books or papers needed for the worship service.

The **MUSIC TEAM** may play music that will be used in the service.

2. WELCOME & INVOCATION

WORSHIP LEADER: *Welcome to worship at (name of church).*

Today is not an ordinary Sunday, it is the special Sunday in the year when we celebrate the birthday of the Church — with balloons and songs and stories and food.

There's something in the air today. Do you feel it?

I hope so.

It's God's Spirit among us — helping us celebrate, helping us know that God is here among us and that God is worthy of our worship.

Let's thank God for his Spirit now.

3 OPENING PRAYER

PRAYER LEADER: *God, our Father, thank you for bringing us together through your Holy Spirit. Help us to experience what the Holy Spirit can do with us. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

4. SONG

WORSHIP LEADER (or **SONG LEADER**) introduces the first song.

TECH TEAM may display words of the song.

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing *Spirit of the living God* (Iverson) or another hymn calling on the Holy Spirit.

People with balloons can hold them up and sway them with the music.

5. COUNT UP TO PENTECOST

WORSHIP LEADER: *After Jesus came back to life on the day we call Easter Sunday, he spent time with his friends, talking with them, eating with them, showing them that he truly was alive, and helping them to re-evaluate all that he had taught them before — in the light of his death and his new life.*

Jesus also told them that he would be leaving them on earth; that he was preparing a place for them — and all believers in Heaven. He promised that when he left, he would send them a new Counsellor.

COUNT: *Jesus spent a long time with them. Let's count the days:*

As the COUNT (alone or with the group echoing the numbers) says a number, the person who has the balloon with that number brings it forward and gives it to one of the COUNT'S HELPERS.

The HELPER ties seven balloons together into one bunch and fastens it to the altar or other furniture at the front of the church or to a pot or basket.

Or have the HELPERS standing in different parts of the worship space where the bunches of balloons can be displayed.

TECH TEAM may display numbers on screen similar to the old countdown to the start of a film in a movie theatre.

Keep this moving as quickly and smoothly as possible.

*One (Easter is Day #1) 2,3,4,5,6,7 (one week)
That's the first week Jesus spent with his friends after he came to new life).*

Eight, 9,10,11,12,13,14 (the second week)

Fifteen, 16,17,18,18,20, 21 (the third week)

Twenty-two, 23,24,25,26,27,28 (the fourth week, almost a whole month)

Twenty-nine, 30,31,32,33,34,35 (week five)

Thirty-six, 37, 38, 39, 40

TECH TEAM may display a picture of Jesus' ascension.

WORSHIP LEADER: *Time out, please.*

After 40 days Jesus . . . went from his friends to be with his Father in heaven.

His friends were alone, they weren't sure what to do without their leader and friend.

More days went by.

COUNT: . . . 41,42, (week six)

Forty-three, 44,45,46,47,48 49 (week seven.

Seven weeks is a week of weeks!

Fifty!

(COUNT holds up the 50 balloon.)

WORSHIP LEADER (indicating the first balloon):

The day we call Easter, when Jesus came to life, was also the Hebrew festival of Passover. That's when lots of people gathered in the city of Jerusalem to remember how God had saved them from slavery in Egypt.

(Take the 50 balloon from the Count)

Fifty days, a week of weeks, after the Passover, the Hebrew people had another celebration, Shavuot (or Pentecost) the day when they remembered how God had given his Law to their ancestors.

The people came to Jerusalem again from lots of different places and spoke lots of different languages.

Let's hear what happened that day.

6. BIBLE READING

Acts 2:1-4, 12-21, 37-39

Option 1: A group of readers present the story using the readers' theatre version on page 11.

Option 2: Children come forward and listen to the story read from a good, illustrated children's Bible. When you get to the sound of the mighty wind, invite everyone to make wind sounds.

Option 3: A reader reads the story directly from a contemporary translation of the Bible.

7. SONG

WORSHIP LEADER (or SONG LEADER) introduces the next song.

TECH TEAM may display words of the song.

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing a song or hymn that retells the Pentecost story, eg *The Wind Was Loud* (Lavrín)

Invite younger people who cannot read the words to make 'wooooo' wind sounds to accompany the singing.

8. HOLY SPIRIT

WORSHIP LEADER: *When Peter was preaching on the first Pentecost, he said that God was pouring out his Holy Spirit on young and old, on men and women.*

That's all of us.

And that with the power of the Holy Spirit we would all do great things.

I have a big question now. What is this 'Holy Spirit'?

What is 'holy'? What is 'Spirit'?

Let's talk about it.

I'd like the people on this side of the church to think about words that mean 'holy' and the people on that side of the church to think about words that mean 'Spirit'.

Please gather in groups of 5 or 6 people. HELPERS will give each group a piece of card and a thick texta or crayon.

You have about four minutes to think and talk.

Allow time as HELPERS distribute materials.

After three minutes in which people to form groups and chat:

WORSHIP LEADER: Now it's time to choose your best word for 'Spirit' or your best word for 'Holy' and write it on your card.

Then I'd like the youngest person in each group to bring your card up to me. If the youngest needs help, that's OK.

As people come forward with their words, the WORSHIP LEADER, affirms each word as a good word to help us understand the Holy Spirit.

Group several pairs of words and say a word or two about their significance for understanding the Holy Spirit.



Stand the word cards around the front of the church where they can be seen and have people return to their seats.

9. COUNTING BIRTHDAYS

WORSHIP LEADER: The Holy Spirit (add some phrases from the previous activity) came to the Church 50 days after Easter. The Holy Spirit has been at work in the church ever since, year after year.

COUNT (Holding up fingers and counting): So we keep on counting. One year, two years, three years, 4,5,6,7, (continue counting; use helpers fingers)

WORSHIP LEADER speaks over the counting: We don't have time to count all the years that the Spirit has been working in Jesus' church. We don't know exactly how many birthdays the church is celebrating in 2013.

COUNT: But the number should be getting up towards 2000. That's a big number of years! And it's not finished yet.

10. CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

WORSHIP LEADER: When Peter was preaching, he said that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Let's do that now, as God's Spirit prompts us.

You may have the following confession printed out for the congregation to read or a PRAYER LEADER can read it.

CONGREGATION AND/OR PRAYER LEADER:

Dear God, we admit that too often we turn our backs on you and ignore the teaching and prompting of your Holy Spirit. Forgive us for this and renew your Spirit in us so that we may live each day the way you want us to. Amen.

WORSHIP LEADER: The Bible tells us that if we turn back to God our sins will be forgiven. The Bible also tells us that if we pray for God's Spirit, we will receive it. Your prayer has already been answered.

11. SONG

WORSHIP LEADER (or SONG LEADER) introduces the next song.

TECH TEAM may display words of the song.

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing *Refresh my heart* (Bullock) or another song about the work of the Holy Spirit.

12. COMMUNION

If you wish to have Holy Communion as part of your Pentecost observance, use your regular Communion liturgy, adding the comment that Communion is one of the ways the Holy Spirit works in the church to bring people closer to Jesus and to strengthen their faith.

You may encourage quiet meditation during the distribution of elements.

TECH TEAM may display the following words for people to think about during the distribution of elements in Communion:

Encourage anyone who wants to do so to draw their interpretation of the passage.

HELPERS with paper and textas may circulate through the congregation.

All who are led by the Spirit of God
are children of God.
(Romans 8:14)

12a. MEDITATION

If you do not have communion, allow a few minutes for quiet meditation or discussion about the verse.

13. SERMON/DISCUSSION

WORSHIP LEADER explains that this is the time to share people's responses to the Bible text (Romans 8:14).

In a small congregation the sharing can be done with the whole congregation. In a larger congregation, the sharing can be done in small groups, eg families or 5-6 people.

PRESENTER (WORSHIP LEADER OR PREACHER) asks people to brainstorm ways the Holy Spirit is like the air in your balloons.

For each suggestion the **COUNT** says: That's one way, takes the balloon with number 1 and gives it to the person who made the suggestion. That's 2 ways . . .

TECH TEAM may display the suggestions on the screen.

HOLY SPIRIT <> AIR IN BALLOON
Can't see it
Can see what it does
Changes people Changes balloons
Needed for growth
Sputter out when it's gone.

When you have collected a reasonable list, the **PRESENTER** has the responsibility of tying together what has been said, emphasising that 'God's Spirit is working among us here and now'.

14. ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP LEADER or a congregational leader makes any necessary, brief announcements, including explanations of

- activities on offer after the worship service
- how your offering is to be used.

15. OFFERING

Introduce and collect an offering in your usual manner.

As the offering is collected . . .

16. OFFERING SONG

WORSHIP LEADER (or **SONG LEADER**) introduces the next song.

TECH TEAM may display words of the song.

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing *I'm gonna move, when the Spirit says move*. Conclude with the verse: 'I'm gonna pray when the Spirit says pray'.

17. PRAYER

WORSHIP LEADER: The Bible also tells us the the Holy Spirit helps us to pray — even when we don't know what to pray and when we can't find the words to say what we mean. Let's pray now.

PRAYER LEADERS lead the congregation in petitions for yourselves, your community and the world.

Conclude with the congregation praying following prayer and/or the Lord's Prayer,

TECH TEAM can display the words of the prayers.

PRAYER ALTERNATIVE

(based on Bruce Prewer)

COUNT: Our prayer has eight parts. Each part says something different about God's Pentecost Spirit. I'm going to silently count the prayers on my fingers. You may like to do the same.

TECH TEAM can display the words of the prayer and congregational responses.

[1] Spirit of creation, we pray for people who try to work with you to care for the earth and its creatures.

May they have your wisdom and your resilient determination.

[2] Spirit of new creation, we pray for the re-birth of individuals, communities and nations.

May they be ready to be born into your new age.

[3] Spirit of good counsel, we pray for counsellors in schools and workplaces, in social work and family therapy.

May they have insight and compassion.

[4] Spirit of advocacy, we pray for all those who stand up and speak up for people who are weak, deprived, exploited, oppressed, abused, and accused.

May they find joy in small victories and have boldness to expose major wrongs.

[5] Spirit of truth, we pray for your churches which hold in trust the treasure of the Gospel for the enrichment of the nations.

*May we preach and exhibit not ourselves,
but Christ Jesus and his abundant grace.*

[6] Spirit of comfort, we pray for people who are hurt or disillusioned, suffering, diseased, lonely, afraid, neglected, betrayed, or heartbroken.

*May they know your Spirit's warm love,
and comforting arms.*

[7] Spirit of forgiveness, we pray for people who live with shame, or anger or a desire for revenge.

*May they find freedom in your full
forgiveness.*

[8] Holy Spirit, choirmaster of life, please join our energies into one big song of love and praise. Through Christ Jesus, our Saviour.

Amen!

18. CLOSING SONG

WORSHIP LEADER (or SONG LEADER) introduces the next song.

TECH TEAM may display words of the song.

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing a Pentecost song or hymn, eg *May our homes be filled with dancing* (Morgan).
Improvise dance moves or signs to use with the song.

16. BLESSING

WORSHIP LEADER: The blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be on us now and never leave us. Amen.

19. AFTER THE SERVICE

The COUNT and HELPERS may distribute balloons at the door as people leave the service OR at the door as people leave the after-worship party. Give each family or child a balloon. If you have more than 50 families worshipping with you have extra balloons.

Continue the Birthday Party for the church.

Games

- Balloon magic (rub to make magnets)
See also
<http://www.education.com/magazine/article/10-activities-do-with-balloons/>
- Balloon toss
- Balloon rockets
- Balloon volleyball
- Balloon cricket
- Make and blow windmills

Snacks

Have one big birthday cake with candles to share, and/or

- *cupcakes or meringues with strawberry flames*
- *red-hot triangular corn chips*
- *watermelon and/or cantaloupe slices cut as flames*
- *seven/nine-fruit salad*
- *popcorn — watch the effect of the hot air in the popcorn maker on the corn*
- *coffee, tea, cordial, tomato (or V-8 juice)*

Think red, but avoid artificial red food colouring.

Have red table coverings and flame-orange serviettes.