



TO THE CHURCH

ALL AGE WORSHIP FOR PENTECOST

Pentecost is a major festival of the Church year. It comes fifty days after Easter and commemorates the coming of the Holy Spirit to Jesus' disciples, giving them power and authority to establish Jesus' church.

Red (symbolising joy and the fire of the Holy Spirit) is the colour of Pentecost. Red decorations are used in churches.

Worship leaders and people of the congregation may wear red clothing.

The Scripture may be read in multiple languages recalling Pentecost when the Gospel was heard by listeners from many different places in their own language.

Baptisms and confirmations are commonly held on Pentecost.

TRADITIONAL BIBLE READINGS FOR PENTECOST (A)

Acts 2:1–21: The Holy Spirit comes to Jesus' disciples as wind and fire

Psalms 104:24–34, 35b: Created through God's Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:3b–13: The Spirit's gifts

John 20:19–23: Jesus tells his disciples 'receive the Holy Spirit'

A PARTY WITH A PURPOSE

This worship resource is about holding a party: a party with a purpose.

The purpose of this Pentecost Party is

- to be the church that was born at Pentecost
- to worship the God of Pentecost
- to recall the events of the birth of the church
- to remember and celebrate who we are — as the church
- to enjoy being together as God's family.

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Pentecost is the birthday of the whole Church. This may be a good opportunity for two or more small congregations of different denominations to plan a joint event.



PLANNING THE PARTY

USING THIS RESOURCE

These notes have been prepared by the Children and Family Team of the Uniting Church SA to help congregations plan a special all-age worship celebration for Pentecost Sunday.

You may use any of the ideas in the resource or the entire sample service.

You may make as many copies of the notes as needed for your worship planners and leaders. The use of music and other copyright elements is not covered in this permission.

If you use the resource, we would appreciate your letting us know what you do. Send a brief email to children@sa.uca.org.au

You can find more all-age worship resources on our web site <http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au/childrens-ministry/all-age-worship.html>

ALL-AGE WORSHIP

All-age (intergenerational) worship is, first and foremost, worship — an encounter between God and God's people: a dialogue in which God speaks and people respond, both in the worship service and in their lives.

Intentionally *intergenerational* worship

- allows this dialogue to take place through several of the senses, through movement and activity
- focuses on a single theme and connects that theme with the lives of the worshipers. It reinforces the theme by exploring it in several different ways
- provides worshipers (young, old and in-between) with an experience and thoughts they can remember and talk about in their homes. It may provide resources to support that conversation
- encourages interaction and dialogue among people of the various generations represented in the worshiping community
- differs from worship that is planned by adults for adults, and differs from worship for children alone that is planned either by adults or by children
- takes seriously the understanding that people of all ages worship together in the body of Christ. People of all ages can also plan worship, invite people to worship, and lead worship

All-age worship recognises and values the children present in worship and 'the child within' each adult.

PARTY PLANNERS

All-age worship is best planned by an intergenerational team, working with the pastor/minister/priest or lay ministry team. If possible the team should consist of at least three people: one representing the youngest, one the middle and one the oldest third of the congregation.

The team may also draw on people (young and old) who have special abilities, eg in areas of hospitality, music, drama, visual arts and technology.

Participating in the planning of an all-age worship event as a cross-generational team can — in itself — be a valuable experience.

Suggested planning steps:

1. Begin with prayer, and trust God's Spirit to guide your planning.
2. Browse through these notes for background information and ideas.
3. Brainstorm what a Pentecost Party might be like for your congregation.
4. Examine your usual worship format: consider how your Pentecost Party ideas can fit into the worship format.
5. Develop a party plan in outline form.
6. Work with worship leaders to develop an action plan for preparing the service and a worship order for the service itself. Clarify who does what, when and how.

PARTY INVITATIONS

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 celebrating the birthday of the church with a Pentecost Worship Party.

Decide who else you will invite to your party. You may choose to target a specific group, eg:

- families of people who have been baptised in your church in the past five years
- families who participate in your playgroup, or sports club or other activities related to your church
- neighbours who live in close proximity with the church but are not members
- residents of a seniors facility near your church.

Create a party invitation to give to your target group/s. Include the same (or similar) invitation with your newsletter or other announcements for the congregation.

PARTY HOSTS

As for all worship, God is the host of your Pentecost Party. We worship God at God's invitation.

We can also think of specific people acting as hosts for this party: the party organisers, the hospitality team and the worship leaders.

A team of **PARTY ORGANISERS** may include people of all ages, possibly family groups. They are the behind-the-scenes people who are responsible for things like:

- food preparation and service
- room set-up and decorations
- party favours and other supplies.

A **HOSPITALITY TEAM** may include people of all ages, possibly family groups. Their responsibility is to ensure the comfort of guests. This may involve:

- being aware of the safety features of the venue, 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 (possibly showing them to seats, introducing them to someone sitting near them, telling them where to find toilets and other facilities)
- paying special attention to the very young, the very old and people with handicaps. Seat them where they will be able to see/hear, but not feel conspicuous.
- keeping alert to needs of people during the service, and assisting as required
- following up on visitors after the service, particularly those who indicate a special need or interest.

People of different ages can be part of a team of **WORSHIP LEADERS**. The responsibility may be divided among,

- a master of ceremonies who is responsible for connecting with the people and leading them through the less formal parts of the event
- a formal worship leader — This may be the minister/priest/pastor who leads the formal aspects of worship.
- a song leader and musicians who lead the singing and may present one or more 'performance' items and/or musical background music.

Two or more people may share any of these roles.

PARTY VENUE

Your Pentecost Party is worship, and you may hold it in your worship space.

You may also consider using a hall (your own or a borrowed venue) that may give you more flexibility in seating, fewer constraints about decorating and direct access to catering facilities.

PARTY TIME

This is a Pentecost Party, so it will most likely be held on Pentecost Sunday.

That's 12 June in 2011. In your planning, take into consideration that this year we celebrate the birthday of the Church the day before we celebrate the birthday of the Queen.

Your Pentecost Party will probably begin at your regular worship time, but it may extend longer than ordinary worship.

If you have more than one service on a Sunday you might replace just one of them with a party.

You may have the party Friday, Saturday or Sunday evening, when you don't ordinarily have worship. However, that may give the false impression that the Pentecost Party is not 'worship'. It would also require organising a more traditional worship in addition to the Pentecost Party.

PARTY FOOD

Your party may feature a full birthday meal, or you may simply provide snacks.

Be sure to have a birthday cake.

PARTY DECORATION

As you plan decorations, think RED and think BIRTHDAY PARTY. Use balloons, streamers, banners, flowers — anything that will enhance the birthday party atmosphere. Be careful with candles, especially if young children are involved.

Any special decorations you use should be underpinned by a basically clean, tidy space.

PARTY ACTIVITIES

Party activities generally include eating, chatting, playing games, exchanging gifts, and perhaps dancing and singing.

The Sample Service works many of these party activities into a worship format. It includes almost all the elements of traditional liturgical worship, but the sequence is different (following the Pentecost story from Acts) and they are done in party style.

PARTY MUSIC

Both worship and parties generally feature music in one form or another.

Think about party music: dance music, disc jockeys, background music, sing-alongs, and karaoke. Consider replacing staid hymn singing with a more party-like approach.

Regardless of how you present music, you'll want to choose music that will appeal to the various age groups at your party.

Traditional Pentecost hymns, eg

- *Breathe on me, breath of God* (E Hatch)
- *Come Holy Spirit, God and Lord* (Luther)
- *Spirit of faith, come down* (C Wesley)
- *Spirit of God, unseen as the wind* (MV Old tune *Skye Boat Song*)

'60s and 70's gospel songs, eg

- *They'll know we are Christians by our love* (*One in the Spirit*) (Scholtes & Arends)
- *We are Family* (J & C Owens)
- *We are the church* (Avery & March)

Contemporary songs, eg

- *Breathe on me, breath of God* (Fisher)
- *Dreams and visions* (Tanner)
- *God of tempest God of whirlwind* (Jeff Whitmill) tune: *Guide me O thou great Jehovah*
- *Holy Spirit, rain down* (Fragar, Hillsong)
- *On Pentecost they gathered* (Jane Parker Huber) tune: Mendelssohn's 'Munich'

Children's songs, eg

- *Pentecost: the Holy Spirit comes* (Holmes)
- *Move when the Spirit say move* (Boucher)
- *Wind and Fire* (J Foster)
tune: Frère Jacques
Flames of Fire (X2)
Mighty Wind (X2)
The Holy Spirit's coming (X2)
with his power (X2)

Songs from other cultures

If people who worship with you have different cultural backgrounds, invite them to teach or perform Pentecost/Spirit songs in their own language.

- *Come O Holy Spirit / Wa Wa Wa Emimimo* (Nigeria) Sing it in its original language as a reminder that our faith is universal.

And, of course

- *Happy Birthday to you* (consider adding your own Pentecost Birthday verse)

Your regular church musicians or a group specially formed for the Pentecost Party will organise and lead the music.

PARTY SPEECHES

Many parties include speeches that

- express appreciation to the people who have made the event happen
- explain the reason for the celebration
- tell stories relevant to the occasion.

The worship message in the Pentecost Party can do those things. It may be delivered by one speaker or by several people.

REHEARSAL

God and your party guests deserve a Pentecost worship experience that is the best you can make it.

This requires time for planning and for 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 organisers and worship leaders and to remind one another of the awesome privilege and task you have in leading worship.

CAUTION

To minimise confusion for children and people with limited church background, avoid

- using the term Holy 'Ghost'
- using both the dove and the flame as symbols for the Holy Spirit. The dove's significance only comes clear when someone knows the account of Jesus' baptism.

UNITING CHURCH LOGO

Despite the previous caution

- if there is a logo of the Uniting Church on display where you hold your Pentecost Party, take the opportunity to draw people's attention to the significance of the symbol.

The dove with wings of flame symbolises the Holy Spirit, which empowers and guides us to be Jesus' witnesses. See more at <http://www.uca.org.au>

- If there is a 'Uniting Church. **Uniting People.**' banner on display, draw people's attention to the significance of the symbol: church = people.



THE PENTECOST STORY

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost (Acts 2 NIRV, modified)

Read the story with four different voices: Story Teller 1, Story Teller 2, Peter, Joel.

Illustrate the story with pictures on PowerPoint slides or posters.

PART 1

SLIDE: 'The Pentecost Story' this stays behind all added pictures

STORY TELLER 1 (v 1-4): When the day of Pentecost came, the believers all gathered in one place.

Suddenly a sound came from heaven. It was like a strong wind blowing. It filled the whole house where they were sitting.

SLIDE: Picture of the disciples, wind, flames of fire

They saw something that looked like tongues of fire. The flames separated and settled on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.

They began to speak in languages they had not known before. The Spirit gave them the ability to do this.

SLIDE: Picture of the Pentecost crowd

STORY TELLER 2 (v 5-8, 11-13): Godly Jews from every country in the world were staying in Jerusalem. A crowd came together when they heard the sound. They were bewildered because they each heard the believers speaking in their own language.

The crowd was really amazed. They asked, 'Aren't all these people from Galilee? Why, then, do we each hear them speaking in our own native language . . . '

[insert mother languages of people in your community or languages other than English that children are learning in school, eg: English, Spanish, Sudanese, Korean.]

They were amazed and bewildered.

STORY TELLER 1: 'What does this mean?'

STORY TELLER 2 But some people in the crowd made fun of the believers.

STORY TELLER 1 'They've had too much wine!' they said.

PART 2

SLIDE: Picture of Peter preaching

STORY TELLER 1 (v 14a): Then Peter stood up with the Eleven. In a loud voice he spoke to the crowd.

PETER (v 14b- paraphrased): My friends, let me explain this to you. You think these people are drunk. But they aren't. It's only nine o'clock in the morning!

No, what's happening here is what the prophet Joel predicted. Listen:

SLIDE: Picture of scroll

JOEL: God says 'In the last days, I will pour out my Holy Spirit on all people, young and old.'

STORY TELLER 2 (v 15-17 adapted) [to the congregation]:

Those of you here who are sons or daughters, please stand up.
[People stand.]

JOEL: God says that through the power of God's Spirit, you will prophesy.
Be seated.

STORY TELLER 2: Those of you here who are young people, please stand up.
[Young people stand.]

JOEL: God says that through the power of God's Spirit, you will see visions.
Be seated.

STORY TELLER 2: Those of you here who are old people, please stand up.
[Old people stand.]

JOEL: God says that through the power of God's Spirit, you will dream dreams.
Be seated.

JOEL (v 18, 21): God says, 'In those days I will pour out my Spirit on those who serve me, both men and women.

'I will show wonders in the heavens above. I will show miraculous signs on the earth below.

'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

PART 3

SLIDE: Picture of Jesus

PETER (v 22-24,32,33,36): Listen to this! Jesus of Nazareth was a man who had God's approval. God did miracles, wonders and signs among you through Jesus. You yourselves know this.

Long ago God planned that Jesus would be handed over to you. With the help of evil people, you men of Israel put Jesus to death. You nailed him to the cross.

But God raised him from the dead. God set him free from the suffering of death. It wasn't possible for death to keep its hold on Jesus.

So be sure of this, all you people of Israel. You nailed Jesus to the cross. But God has made him both Lord and Christ.

SLIDE: Peter's words

PART 4

SLIDE: Picture of Peter preaching

STORY TELLER 1 (v 37): When the people heard this, their hearts were filled with shame. They said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what should we do?'

PETER (v 38,39): All of you must turn away from your sins and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Then your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children. It is also for all who are far away. It is for all whom the Lord our God will choose.

PART 5

SLIDE: Picture of the Pentecost crowd

STORY TELLER 2 (v 41,42): Those who accepted his message were baptised. About 3,000 people joined the believers that day. Every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

SLIDE: Picture of a baptism

PART 6

SLIDE: Church at Jerusalem

STORY TELLER 2 (v 43-47): Here's what the church was like when it was first born.

STORY TELLER 1: The believers studied what the apostles taught.

Everyone felt that God was near. The apostles did many wonders and miraculous signs.

STORY TELLER 2: All the believers were together. They shared life together. They shared everything they had. They sold what they owned. They gave each other everything they needed.

STORY TELLER 1: In their homes they ate together. And they prayed.

Their hearts were glad and honest and true. They praised God.

They were respected by all the people.

THE SPIRIT'S GIFTS TO THE CHURCH

1 CORINTHIANS 12:3-13

In keeping with the birthday party theme of the service, you can present the Epistle reading about gifts — as gifts,

Prepare large, gift-wrapped parcels. If you are using the Sample Service, you will need one for each table.

In each parcel place a rolled or folded poster-size paper with one statement about the Holy Spirit's gifts to the church.

The chart below gives some examples of how to divide up the verses, eg

- If you have 15 tables, make 15 parcels, each with one of the statements listed.
- If you have 5 tables, make 5 parcels, each with one of the numbered statements. Use statements marked 'Intro' and 'Con', as part of the introductory and concluding remarks to the activity.
- If you have more than 15 tables, make doubles of some items.
- If you have less than 5 tables, give some tables more than one parcel.

Write the numbers both on the outside of the parcel and on the chart to ensure that they are read in the correct order.

15	12	9	5	
1	Intro	Int	Intro	Without the help of the Holy Spirit no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord'.
2	Int	Intro	Int	There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given by the same Spirit.
3	1	Intro	Int	There are different ways to serve. But they all come from the same Lord.
4	2	Intro	Int	There are different ways to work. But the same God makes it possible for all of us to have all those different things.
5	3	Intro	Int	The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all.
6	4	1	1a	To some people the Spirit gives the message of wisdom.
7	5	2	1b	To others the same Spirit gives the message of knowledge.
8	6	3	2a	To others the same Spirit gives faith.
9	7	4	3a	To others that one Spirit gives gifts of healing.
10	8	5	3b	To others he gives the power to do miracles.
11	9	6	4a	To others he gives the ability to prophesy.
12	10	7	4b	To others he gives the ability to tell the spirits apart.
13	11	8	5a	To others he gives the ability to speak in different kinds of languages they had not known before.
14	12	9	5b	And to still others he gives the ability to explain what was said in different languages.
15	Con	Con	Con	All of the gifts are produced by one and the same Spirit. He gives them to each person, just as he decides.

PASS THE PARCEL ALTERNATIVE:

An alternative is do this activity as a pass-the-parcel game. Statement #15 is at the core of the parcel with each of the others wrapped around it until #1 is on the outside.

People then unwrap and read the statements in sequence 1-15.

PENTCOST PARTY SUGGESTIONS



Fire in the Sky

(a poem by Robin Jensen)

It was Pentecost...

A rushing wind...

Tongues of fire appeared in the sky
and came to rest on the disciples.

They were filled with the Holy Spirit...

Then Peter preached to a curious crowd.

They were amazed and perplexed
by the unexpected eloquence
from a simple fisherman.

He stood firm as a rock
and used words like a net.

This man who thrice denied Jesus
was drawing in new believers.

Now that's fishing!



TEN POPULAR PENTECOST IDEAS

1. Everyone wears red.
2. Display traditional Pentecost paintings and mages; or create your own.
3. Use red, yellow and orange flags, pennants, banners, streamers, fabric or paper strips —
anything that will wave easily. Hang them in doorways and from the ceiling. Give them to people to wave.
4. Use red balloons without helium. Hang them from the ceiling in a net. At the end of the worship service, release the net and let the balloons drift down.
5. Use red balloons with helium. Attach them to the ends of pews in the church. Write messages on them and release them outside after the service. (Note: there are concerns here about littering and interference with air traffic).
6. Before or after the service, children (and adults who are game) play parachute games with a red or orange parachute.
7. Use kites. Make red or orange kites before the service. Fly them afterward.
8. During the service have people throughout the congregation read part of the Scripture, simultaneously in different languages. Or say the Lord's Prayer in different languages.
9. During the service conduct an interview with an actor as an 'eyewitness' of the events of Pentecost.
10. Make and serve special snacks, eg
 - savoury biscuits decorated with flames made of strips of yellow cheese and red capsicum
 - birthday cupcakes, each with a candle
 - popcorn, made on the spot. Watch how the kernels explode in the hot air
 - marshmallows toasted at an after-service bonfire



Pentecost by El Greco

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(Note: Be cautious about using red food colouring.)



TO THE CHURCH

SAMPLE SERVICE

This service is worship in a party format.

Some things that might ordinarily be a part of after-worship fellowship are included within the service itself. Therefore it is longer than a usual worship service might be. Suggested wording for some parts of the service is in *italics*.

SET UP

The service is held in a hall that can be set up and decorated for a community party.

The room is decorated for a birthday party with red streamers and balloons.

There is a 'head table' for the worship leaders. A screen for PowerPoint is at one side of the head table. Musicians and instruments are at the other side of the head table.

Unless the hall is quite small, amplification is provided for worship leaders and musicians.

People are seated at tables arranged around the room. Make sure as many people as possible can see the head table and the screen without turning around.

The sample service assumes the ability to use PowerPoint or similar projection, but it can be adapted to a low-tech environment.

Each table is covered with white paper tablecloths. On each table:

- red crayons, textas and coloured pencils so people can decorate their own tablecloth
- a potted red flower (eg a geranium)
- a bowl of fruit (bite-size, finger-food-size)
- a stack of red or party design serviettes
- a sealed bag of party blowers — the kind with the paper tube that unrolls when blown up (preferably red)
- a pitcher of water and red plastic cups. Hot coffee and tea are available at a servery, but not set out on the tables

You may have tea-light candles in red holders, but avoid taller candles that may be a hazard if children are present.

1. ARRIVAL

MUSIC TEAM (MUSIC): As people arrive, background music is playing.

HOSPITALITY TEAM (HOSPITALITY): Members of the hospitality team

- welcome people
- help them find places at tables. Where possible seat families together, seat singles and couples with a family. If youngsters want to sit with friends rather than families, encourage friends to sit at a table where there is at least one parent
- suggest that people use the red crayons and pencils to decorate their tablecloth
- invite adults to get hot drinks at the servery.

2. WELCOME

MUSIC: Loud drum roll or piano chords to get people's attention.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (MC): *It's party time!*

We're here today to remember the day when the Christian church was born. On that day people were gathered in a room much like this. A mighty wind blew through the room.

Let's make the sound of a mighty wind. Take your blowers. [Show your own] When I give the signal, everyone blow your blower. Stop when I stop and you see me hold up my blower and you hear the drum (or piano) make this sound:

MUSIC: Demonstrate the loud drum roll or piano chords.

MC: *Ready now. Blow!*

After no more than 20 seconds:

MC holds up a blower and

MUSIC gives the stop signal.

WORSHIP LEADER (WL): *God's Spirit came to the people in that room long ago as a mighty wind. God's Spirit is with us here today, to help us know and worship our Heavenly Father and his Son Jesus.*

3. SONG

MUSIC: *Let's sing about that. But first, let's look at the words of this old hymn ('Blessed Jesus at your word', Australian Hymn Book #352)*

SLIDE: words of song.

If you are using PowerPoint, highlight words as they are discussed.

The song is about our heavenly Father, about Jesus and about the Holy Spirit and how they are all linked together in one God. It's also about us.

Let's find/highlight the words about God.

Let's find/highlight the words about us.

As you work through the song, explain unfamiliar words, eg 'deepest darkness shrouded', 'impart'.

MUSIC: *let's sing.*

4. THE PENTECOST STORY (PART 1)

Acts 2:1–13 (Holy Spirit comes to disciples)

MC: *We're celebrating the birthday of the Church. I'd like to invite [Name of reader/s] to read the story of how the church was born.*

READERS read the first part of the Pentecost Story (page 5).

TECH shows slides to accompany the story.

After the reading:

MC: *That's how it started, folks — with a mighty wind. Let's make the mighty wind sound again with our blowers. Wait to start until my signal. Stop when you hear the music and see me hold up my blower. Ready. Blow!*

After about 20 seconds:

MC holds up a blower and

MUSIC gives the stop signal.

5. THE PENTECOST STORY (PART 2)

Acts 2:14-21 (Peter recalls Joel's prophecy)

MC: *There's more to our birthday story.*

READERS read the second part of the Pentecost Story (page 5).

TECH shows slides to accompany the story.

After the reading:

MC: *So, you see, we are all part of the Pentecost story.*

6. SONG

MUSIC: *Let's sing about our dreams and visions.*

Lead the congregation in singing *Dreams and visions* or another Pentecost song.

SLIDE: words of song.

7. THE PENTECOST STORY (PART 3)

Acts 2:22-38 (Peter preaches about Jesus)

MC: *Peter had more to say on the day the church was born.*

READERS read the third part of the Pentecost Story (page 6).

TECH shows slides to accompany the story.

After the reading:

8. STATEMENT OF FAITH

WL: *Jesus was at the heart of the Pentecost story. Jesus is at the heart of the Christian church. We still believe what Peter preached about Jesus.*

We'll get Peter's words up on the screen and you can read them with me.

WL leads the reading, fairly slowly, pausing between each paragraph.

SLIDE: Peter's words

Jesus of Nazareth was a man who had God's approval.

God did miracles, wonders and signs through Jesus.

Long ago God planned that Jesus would be handed over to be put to death on a cross.

But God raised Jesus from the dead.

God set Jesus free from the suffering of death.

It wasn't possible for death to keep its hold on Jesus.

God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ.

(Acts 2:22–24)

MC: *That's worth celebrating with another mighty wind. Remember to start when I say 'blow' and stop when I hold up my blower and you hear the stop sound.*

Ready now. Blow!

After no more than 10 seconds:

MC holds up a blower and

MUSIC gives the stop signal.

9. THE PENTECOST STORY (PART 4)

Acts 2:37-39 (Peter tells people 'what to do')

MC: [Name of Readers], will you continue the story.

READERS read the fourth part of the Pentecost Story (page 6).

TECH shows slides to accompany the story.

After the reading:

10. CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

WL: Peter said that all of us must turn away from our sins. We do that in the church today by admitting to God that we do not live up to God's standards.

Sin is turning our back on God and what God wants for us. Sin is hurting ourselves and other people by things we think, things we say and things we do.

I invite you to turn around and face the back of the room. I'll suggest some things for you to think about quietly to yourself. You may close your eyes if you wish.

WL slowly and quietly leads people in reflection.

Think about: When have I hurt someone by something I did? By something I did not do?

Think about: When have I hurt someone by something I have said?

Think about: When have I hurt someone by something I have thought?

Pause.

WL: If you want to turn away from those hurtful things, turn around and face me.

I can assure you of the same thing Peter said when the church was born: 'If you turn away from your sins; your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you and your children.'

If your children or good friends are here, you may want to confirm that promise with a hug or high 5.

Pause for hugs.

11. SONG

MUSIC leads congregation in singing *I am forgiven* or another song about forgiveness.

SLIDE: words of song.

12. THE PENTECOST STORY (PART 5)

Acts 2:41,47 (3000 baptised)

MC: The story of the birth of the church keeps going.

READERS read the fifth part of the Pentecost Story (page 6).

TECH shows slides to accompany the story.

13. BAPTISM

If there is a baptism today . . .

the **MINISTER/PASTOR/PRIEST** conducts the baptism using your usual form, adjusting to some extent to the circumstances and the informality of this service.

If there is no baptism today . . .

TECH shows a photo of a recent baptism in your church.

SLIDE: Baptism picture.

WL: People are still coming into the church through baptism today. Have any of you here been baptised?

At your tables, you can talk for a few minutes. Tell one another about your baptism experience.

14. BAPTISM SONG

While people are talking in small groups,

MUSIC can begin playing softly the tune of a Baptism song.

After a few minutes:

MUSIC: let's sing.

MUSIC leads the singing of a baptism song, eg *I am baptised — O blessed day* (AC Mueller)

SLIDE: words of song.

15. THE PENTECOST STORY (PART 6)

Acts 2:42-47 (The church at Jerusalem)

MC: What is this church that was born at Pentecost?

READERS read the sixth part of the Pentecost Story (page 6).

TECH shows slides to accompany the story.

After the reading:

16. MESSAGE: THE CHURCH TODAY

WL: That's what the church looked like when it was first born. Like all living things, the church grew: from 3000 people to many, many more people until now about one third of the people on earth are part of the church.

As it grew, the church changed in some ways and it stayed the same in many ways.

WL/MINISTER/PASTOR/PRIEST examines briefly what the church is like today, using the outline from Acts 2:42-47:

- Study God's word at home and in church
- Feel God's presence
- Recognise wonders and signs
- Share life together; help one another
- Break bread in Holy Communion
- Pray and praise
- Glad and honest hearts.

SLIDE: If possible, project photos from your congregational life illustrating the message.

17. SONG

MUSIC leads the congregation in singing a song about the church.

Consider doing 'We are the church' Karaoke style, inviting people who want to take part to come to the microphone with the musicians.

SLIDE: words of song.

18. BIRTHDAY CAKE

MC: *Eating together has been a characteristic of the church from the beginning.*

Today we have a birthday cake to eat together.

PARTY ORGANISERS bring in a large decorated birthday cake and place it on the head table. Have as many candles as there are tables. (2000 candles is a bit too much to handle!)

They may carry the cake around the room so that everyone can have a good look.

MC: *I'd like the youngest person at each table to come up here to the cake and bring someone older with them.*

OLDER PEOPLE light the candles.

WL: can remind people that at Pentecost there were flames on people's heads like the flames on these candles.

MUSIC: *Let's all stand and sing 'Happy Birthday to you; happy birthday Christian Church'.*

MUSIC: leads the congregation in singing.

MC: *Now, we need the youngsters here to make a mighty wind and blow out the candles.*

YOUNGER PEOPLE blow out the candles.

ORGANISERS cut the cake into as many large pieces as there are tables and places those pieces on plates. Give the older people knives.

TABLE REPS take the cake piece to their table, cut it and serve it to the people at their table.

While people are eating:

ORGANISERS may take around refills of water and/or coffee and tea.

MUSIC plays instrumental versions of any of the music used in the service.

If you have sufficient floor space, consider: including some dance-style music and inviting/encouraging people to dance after they have had their cake. This may be individuals dancing as they choose, or an organised circle dance or a game like statues.

19. BIRTHDAY PRESENTS

1 Corinthians 12:3–13

MC: *You can't have a birthday party without presents.*

WL: *The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to the church, not just on its birthday, but all the time.*

ORGANISERS bring out wrapped parcels and take one to each table (see page 7 for more information).

MC: *Will each table please appoint two people to unwrap your parcel.*

TABLE REPS unwrap parcels.

MUSIC may provide instrumental background music.

MC: *Good. Now listen carefully as I explain what we're going to do with those posters.*

[Name of Worship Leader] will tell us a bit about the gifts. Then I will call out numbers. When I call your number, I'll need three people from your table to come up here: two to hold up the poster and the third to read it out nice and loud and clear.

WL: introduces the reading and may read the introductory statements (page 7).

MC: *1. Gift number 1.*

TABLE 1 REPS show and read their poster.

If you have space, they may attach the poster to the wall with blu-tack. Otherwise they leave it by the head table.

Continue for all tables.

20. THANK YOU PRAYER

MC: *When you receive a present for your birthday — or any other time — you say thank you to the person who gave you the gift.*

We've just looked at some of God's gifts to you as part of the church. God has given you other gifts as well.

Take a few minutes to think of some other things you would like to thank God for. Write or draw them on your tablecloth.

While people work:

MUSIC may provide some instrumental background music.

MC: *When I say 'Thank you, God, for . . .' I'd like everyone here to call out the most important thing you want to thank God for. It may get a bit noisy. But that's OK. God can hear each one of you in the confusion.*

Are you ready?

Dear God, please give us a spirit of thankfulness. We thank you, God, for . . .

PEOPLE: call out their thank-you prayer.

MC: *Great. Let's do that again. You can call out the same thing or something else you have drawn or written.*

Ready.

We thank you, God, for . . .

PEOPLE: call out their thank-yous.

21. ANNOUNCEMENTS

MC: *This congregation, here at (name of town or suburb) is one part of a great big church all over the world. Here are some things that this congregation wants you to know about:*

MC (or a congregational leader) makes any necessary brief announcements. Include

- invitation to further activities and services of the congregation

- explanation of the way the offering will be used to do the work of the church. Assure visitors that they are not expected to give an offering.

22. OFFERING

MC: *You are the church. As part of the church you receive God's gifts to the church (indicate the Spirit gifts posters).*

But you can also give your gifts to help the church. Now is the time you can give your offerings: your money gift.

Explain how the offering will be collected, eg one person at each table collects the offering gifts from the table in a paper serviette. Gather the serviette into a pouch and take it to a gift basket on the head table.

MUSIC: plays an instrumental reprise of any songs used in the service.

23. PRAYERS

WL: places a hand on the gift basket. *Let's pray:*

Dear God, please use us and these gifts of money to help your church care for other people. Amen.

MC: *You did so well as tables sharing thank you prayers. I'm asking you to help again. This time think about people who need help. You can write their names or draw pictures on your tablecloth.*

While people work:

MUSIC may provide some instrumental background music.

MC: *Let's pray together. When I say 'we ask you to take care of . . .' call out one of the people you want to pray for. It may get a bit noisy. But that's OK. God can hear each one of you in the confusion.*

Are you ready?

Dear God, please give us a spirit of compassion and helpfulness. We especially ask you to help and take care of . . .

PEOPLE: call out their prayers.

MC: *Great. Let's do that again. You can call out the same person or someone else you have drawn or written.*

Ready.

Dear God, we especially ask you to help and take care of . . .

PEOPLE: call out their prayers.

WL: *One of the ways God answers prayers is through us — his church. When we ask God to help someone, he may ask us right back: What can you do?*

MC: *So we have one more job for you. At your tables, think about all the people you have just prayed for. Choose just one of them whom you can care for with a visit and a gift — that flower on your table.*

We don't have flowers enough for everyone you prayed for, so you are going to have to choose.

After you choose, decide who from your table will visit them to give them the flower and tell them about this Birthday Party for the church.

MUSIC may provide some instrumental background music for a minute or two while people decide.

24. A TAKE-HOME GIFT

Ephesians 3:20,21 (The Message)

MC: *That brings us almost to the end of our birthday party for the church. God has a gift for you to take home with you. It's a message from his book the Bible.*

Please hold out your hands as if you are ready for God to put the present in your hands.

WORSHIP LEADER: *Here it is:*

(reading from a Bible): God can do anything, you know — far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

SLIDE: the following words

MC: *Do you still have your blowers? Please read the rest with me. When we get to the end of each line, give your blower just one quick blow.*

Glory to God in the church!	[blow]
Glory to God in Jesus!	[blow]
Glory down all the generations!	[blow]
Glory through all millennia!	[blow]
Oh, yeah!	[longer blow]

[MC & MUSIC may use the same signal as used earlier in the service to enc the blowing.)

25. GOOD BYE SONG

MUSIC: Sing with us

Lead congregation is singing a joyful end-of-service song, eg *Let's go out.*

SLIDE: words of song