

Pentecost Service opening worship idea

Presented in Blackwood UCA June 1999

Contributed by Sarah Agnew

Prelude: (optional)

As the people enter, they come to the front, bringing gifts of food as for a feast. *This puts Pentecost in its historical setting, representing the feast of weeks or first fruits, during which festival the first Pentecost happened. Donations of food can be given to a local charity.* As the time to start approaches, the people move to their seats, and wait expectantly.



Wind music or sound of rushing wind – CD or tape

We used Michael Gettel's *The Art of Nature*, track 9: *Crosswind* (Narada Media 1995. It was purchased through Koorong Books). The track plays for 48 seconds before the dance starts.

Dance – children:

1. Representing a sudden rush of violent wind, which filled the place where all were gathered during the first Pentecost (Acts chapter 2), the door bursts open and the children run through the church with a long stream of blue or white material*, followed by others with smaller pieces of material. The sound of rushing wind/music continues throughout this part of the dance.

The dancers swirl to the central worship area and around the altar. (On the *Crosswind* track, this first sequence lasted for about 8 seconds.)

* You will need 2 children per strip, one at each end. We also stapled strips of crepe paper streamers in bunches on each corner to help give a rushing wind sound. The children wrapped their hands around the material corners and the streamer bunches to keep them secure.

2. The blue disperses**, to be replaced by flecks of red, orange and yellow, representing the flames of the Holy Spirit.*** The music changes as the colours change, to be more like fire, flickering and mysterious. The change-over music takes about 10 seconds. The flame dancers should start slowly, and pick up the tempo as the music tempo increases. Flames dance for further 20 seconds until the music suddenly explodes, at which point they head off out into the congregation.

** We only had a small number of dancers, so we hid the flames under the communion table and as the music died down, the dancers subsided to the floor, dropped the blue strips and picked up the flames. You could, however, use a second set of dancers to rise up with the flames as the wind dancers lie down.

*** For flames we used squares of material about the size of a man's hanky, with red, yellow and orange streamers stapled to 3 corners. The dancers held onto the fourth corner.

Other dancers, who have remained seated in the pews up till now, emerge with red, orange and yellow material on their hands, and as the main dancers move into the congregation, they use the material and their hands to represent dancing flames among the people. They should "dance" the flames above the heads of the people around them. On the *Crosswind* track, this section lasted for about 20 seconds. The main dancers should be back out the front by the end of this section.

As the music fades, they twirl and fall gracefully like flames dying, out the front or in the seats.

As the music fades and the dancers drop, the worship leader comes out the front.



3. Call to Worship: Acts 2: 1-3
Dancers freeze when the worship leader's voice calls the people to worship. Once the singing has started they move to their seats.

Songs:

Two songs of praise, preferably on the theme of fire, spirit, e.g.

- **Pentecost: the Holy Spirit Comes** (Gerry Holmes, **God Gives.. Book 4**, no.19)
- **Spirit of God** (Sr Miriam Therese Winter, **New Journeys Song Book** no 133); **ATA 105**
- **Come Now Holy Spirit** (Steve Heron, **God Gives.. Book 4**, no.18)

Prayers of praise and thanksgiving:

in different languages
(eyes open)

Use languages relevant to your community.

At Blackwood we had people who could write or translate a simple prayer into French, pidgin (PNG), Japanese and in sign language, but your community will have its own collection of nationalities to draw on. People can write their own, or you can get them to translate the same simple prayer into each language. You can have each prayer repeated in English, e.g.

- Lord God, we worship you.
- Lord Jesus, we love you.
- Holy Spirit, awaken us.
- Thankyou, God, for all good things.
- Thankyou, Jesus, for loving us.
- Thankyou, Holy Spirit, for being our guide, friend and helper.

Another way would be for each translator to take one sentence, so that the prayer is spoken in a succession of different languages.

Each sentence could be reproduced on the OHP for those who like to see what the language looks like.

Bible Reading: Acts 2: 4-13

Use a modern translation like *The Message* to help it come alive.

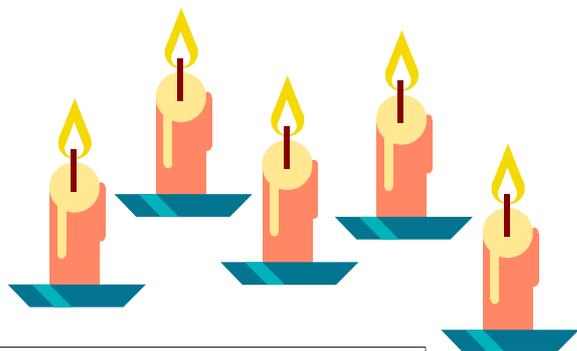
Prayer of Confession – responsive:

You will need candles and matches to relight the candles in each verse. How many people and candles you use will depend on your circumstances, your physical environment and set-up, and the number of people you have available.

You can use 2 people at the front of the worship area, or you can use 5 pairs of people scattered among the people – one pair for each verse: a mix of parents, children, young adults and 'oldies' to represent a good mix of church people. One reads, the other blows out and re-lights the candle.

The prayer needs to be on the OHP, and the readers need to pause in the right places to give the other person time to blow out and relight their candle.

At * the candles are blown out; at # the candles are re-lit. So, the leader should pause at the end of the first line while the candle is blown out, and make a longer pause after the words "Then Christ brings his light ..." while the candle is relit. The words "into our lives" then become the cue for the congregation to say their response together.



Opening dance sequence, prayers of confession and benediction © Sarah Agnew 1999

Leader 1: *Let us remember the times when we have sneered at what we do not understand.*

We did not feed our neighbour *
(blow candle out)
We blow out the candle's flame
when we are greedy.
Then Christ brings his light #
into our lives,

All: *And we are forgiven.*

Leader 2: We did not clothe our neighbour *
We blow out the candle's flame
when we don't share what we have.
Then Christ brings his light #
into our lives,

All: *And we are forgiven.*

Leader 3: We did not comfort our neighbour *
We blow out the candle's flame
when we focus on our own lives.
Then Christ brings his light #
into our lives

All: *And we are forgiven.*

Leader 4: We did not share your love with our neighbour *
We blow out the candle's flame
when we show hate instead of love.
Then Christ brings his light #
into our lives

All: *And we are forgiven.*

Leader 5: We did not forgive our neighbour *
We blow out the candle's flame
when we don't say sorry, or accept
others when they do.
Then Christ brings his light #
into our lives

All: *And we are forgiven. Amen.*

Other Suggestions:

Songs:

- *Spirit, spirit of gentleness* (Jim Manley) ATE
- *Dreams and Visions* ATE (a good one to follow Bible Reading: **Acts 2: 14-21** if you use it)

Songs particularly for children:

- *Holy Spirit – just right* (Mandy Treagus, **KUCA Camp Out Celebrates - 20 Songs for 20 years**)
- *That Spirit Touch* (David MacGregor, **KUCA News** April/May 2000)

Prayers for others:

Allow for spontaneous/ on-the-spot congregational input and/or participation, times of silent prayer or a congregational response.

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Lord's Prayer:

If people know it in other languages, have everyone say it together in the language they know. If there are only a few people who know it in another language, give them each a microphone to speak in as everyone else says it in English.

Benediction:

All: *May God light the fire in our hearts,
May Christ be the light in our eyes,
and may the Holy Spirit keep the
flames always burning bright. Amen*

Children's Activity:

The children could make flames to hand out to the members of the congregation as they leave:
Glue or tape strips of crepe paper to pop-sticks.