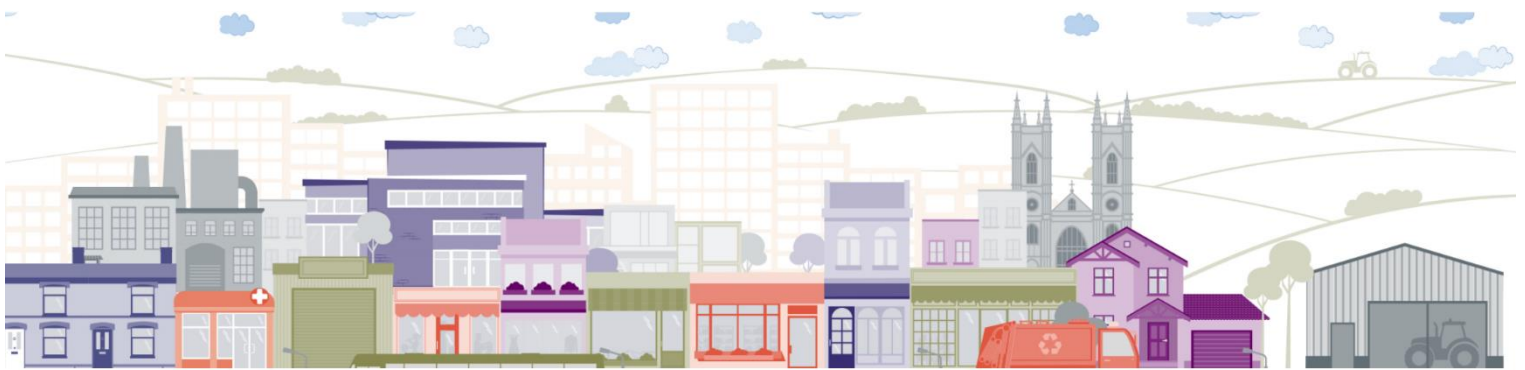


faith at home

Resources for Schools

PHASE: SECONDARY

Pentecost





KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus of the power of God available to those who believe. He wrote:

That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead...
(Ephesians 1:19)

The same power that rose Jesus from death, celebrated at Easter, is the power available to the believer by the Holy Spirit!

Pentecost today is the Christian celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit and is celebrated on the Sunday 50 days after Easter. It is one of most important and exciting events in world and church history – not only was the first Pentecost the birthday of the Church, but it was a time when there was a huge move from the Holy Spirit anointing individuals for a specific time and purpose, to His constant presence in the heart and life of every Christian believer.

At the first Pentecost the Holy Spirit came in power on the disciples and today we shall take a look at how this happened and the incredible after effects and growth of the Kingdom of God. Recognising that the Holy Spirit is still the same, still as powerful and dwells in us, is a cause for celebration!

BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:

The below bible passage explains the amazing events that happened that first Pentecost.

Acts 2:1-13

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine".

Gathering

Spend a few minutes together thinking about things that are powerful and things that are not very powerful and gather ideas together.

Encourage everyone to think really broadly, to share their idea and then everyone decided whether it is powerful or not very powerful. Then write them up on a board or screen under 'powerful' and 'not powerful'

Idea starters –

A Formula One car

A raindrop falling on your head

A freshly cut onion

Grief

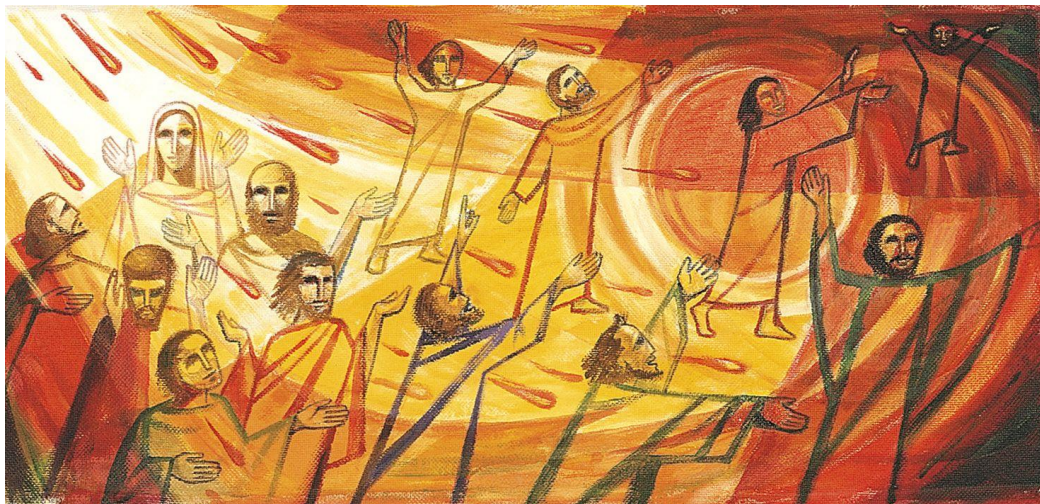
The smell of a rose

Britain's strongest man, lifting weights

Explain that today we are going to think about a person of the trinity (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit) who is able to both show gentleness, AND power both in the past, and today! This is the Holy Spirit.

Engagement

Read Acts 2:1-13 out once straight through, and then explain that we are going to gain eye witness reports, as if we were there at the time!



Split the group in half and explain that half are going to take the role disciples, and half the role of a crowd watching what was going on.

Ask them to think about what they can see, hear, physically feel and experience.

Read the passage out again slowly and purposefully and encourage everyone to open their eyes again. Discuss the scene from the disciples and then the crowd point of view. What had just happened? What might it have been like to be there? Encourage everyone to think creatively and to offer their suggestions.

Explain that from this day onwards, life was never the same for the disciples. At the first Pentecost most Christians believe that the Holy Spirit came in power on the disciples at the Pentecost feast and the resulting effects transformed the lives of those first Christians. They were empowered to start telling the good news about Jesus, healing and inspiring others to share their faith, not only in the Jewish world but to

all people to fulfil Jesus' command to go into the whole world to make disciples (close followers of Jesus). The Church was born!

This is not understood as just a historical event. Many Christians believe that this power is available today and helps them to discern what is the right thing to do, helps them to understand what God wants from them, helps them to flourish individually and as communities and transforms them into the people that God wants them to be changing families, communities and the world.

Response

Listen to the song 'King of Kings' by Hillsong, There are three versions here to choose from.

<https://youtu.be/Of5lcFWiEpg> or [\(64\) CHANDLER MOORE - King of Kings: Official Music Video - YouTube](#) or [\(64\) King Of Kings \(Live at Passion 2020\) - Hillsong Worship - YouTube](#)

Give the young people slips of paper containing the following short list of events described in the song and ask them to listen carefully and to tick them as each thing happens in the song to help them to understand where Pentecost comes in history

Trace the story!

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Despair and darkness | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Jesus born to a virgin to fulfil scripture | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Jesus being placed into a manger in a dirty stable | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Jesus' death on the cross | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The resurrection of Jesus on the third day | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The Church born when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Power and freedom for believers everywhere because of the love of God. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Finish by reading through this list again and by explaining that this worship song helps all of us to understand the events of history, and the difference that Pentecost made and continues to make today. These things help us to understand our place in the story too.

Sending

Think about the difference that a full tank of petrol has in a car, or a full stomach of food makes upon our day. We all need power to be able to flourish and to impact the individuals and communities around us. For the early believers, the power of the Holy Spirit enabled them to go and share the good news about Jesus.

Think as a group about a situation or a group of people in the local community, town or city where your school is. It could be an environmental cause, people living in debt and poverty, a local care home or any situation or group of people who simply need encouragement.

Decide as a group what you could do to impact the situation for the better. It might be writing letters, sending an encouraging email, recycling more at school, raising money for a cause that needs funds. We are sent to make a difference in the world around us!

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

Bible Project Video 'Pentecost'

Watch the Bible Project Video 'Pentecost' until at least 3minutes 25

<https://youtu.be/JQhkWmFJKnA>

Imagine what it must have been like to experience the Holy Spirit personally at or after Pentecost, and listen to the practical difference it made as the Church was born (meeting as faith families in homes, providing for the poor etc).

Many Christians today say they experience the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in these and lots of other different ways including environmental action, social justice projects, through the Bible, in sung and other worship.

Have you ever experienced a feeling of something speaking to you and moving you – to action, to change or to reflection?

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Scripture meditation

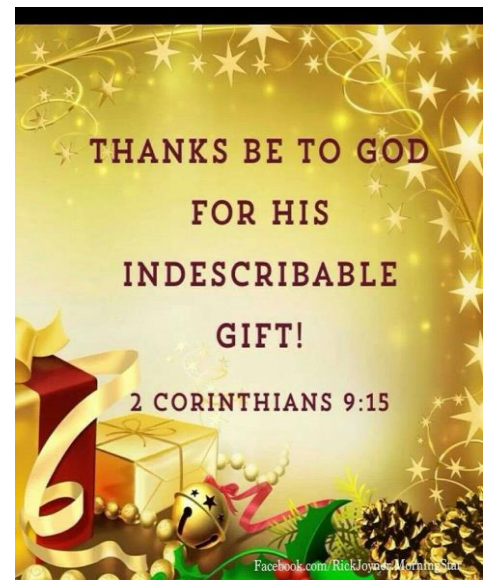
2 Corinthians 9:15 says:

'Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!'

Think about the best gift you have ever been given. What was it? Why was it so amazing? How did it bring you joy? The best gifts are not always the most expensive or flashy ones. Gifts given that were carefully thought about and matched to the person receiving the gift are usually the best ones.

What gift might this bible passage be talking about?
What gifts do you believe you have been blessed with?

Many Christians believe that the Holy Spirit who came to rest upon Christian believers at Pentecost is also a gift both then and now. It shows that God does not want them to have to battle on alone, but was left when Jesus ascended to take His place guiding, shaping and encouraging them. What a gift!



PRAYERS that can help us REFLECT:

Thy Kingdom Come Prayer Activities

Thy Kingdom Come is a National Church of England emphasis that happens every year between ascension and Pentecost. They have lots of practical ideas for prayers that Christians can use at home or at school.



If you are involved with a Church youth group or a Christin Union check out their practical youth prayer activity ideas here

<https://www.thykingdomcome.global/sites/default/files/2021-03/Bright%20Prayer%20Ideas%20for%20Families%20at%20Home.pdf>

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:

Discussion starters for groups:

How can we use what we have (Ideas, creativity, passion, power, finance, time) to address injustices in our local community? Make a firm plan to impact one issue, in a small or large way.

What difference can we make as young people when it feels like all the power in the world comes from rulers, governments and adults? What change would we like to make and who do we need to help us to make it?

1 Timothy 4:12 states 'Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity'. Do we feel like people or society looks down on young people? What does this verse suggest we can do to change this?

Do we know of examples of faith communities or organisations that make a real difference to all in society around them or all faiths and none? (you might like to bring out of discussion how schools and hospitals often had Christian roots in communities, how Langar (community kitchens of Gurdwaras) blesses communities, how foodbanks run with organisations such as the Trussell Trust and others)

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – OUR APPROACH

INVITATIONAL

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

INCLUSIVE

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...'

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

INSPIRING

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?