

A REALLY EXCITING DAY

An intergenerational Pentecost worship celebration

THEME

We celebrate the Holy Spirit coming with power.

Bible Basis

Acts 2:1-39

NOTES

PENTECOST

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

Pentecost is considered the birthday of the church and the anniversary of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost is **A REALLY EXCITING DAY**, and this worship service is intended to be a really exciting celebration for people of all ages.

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP

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.

USING THE RESOURCE

Read through all the material. Discuss it with your planning team. You may use the whole service, or adapt it, or choose only the parts that will be appropriate in your situation.

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.

You may print text from these notes in a worship booklet or on OHTs or Powerpoint for use in conducting **A REALLY EXCITING DAY** celebration!

Use of music and other copyright elements is not covered in this permission.

CONTENTS

This packet contains

NOTES about preparing the service

OUTLINE of the service

THE SERVICE 'script' of what to say and what do do for each part of the service.

RED

RED is an acronym for **REALLY EXCITING DAY**.

Pentecost is a time of red — the color of fire and zeal, passion and heat, the Spirit burning within us.

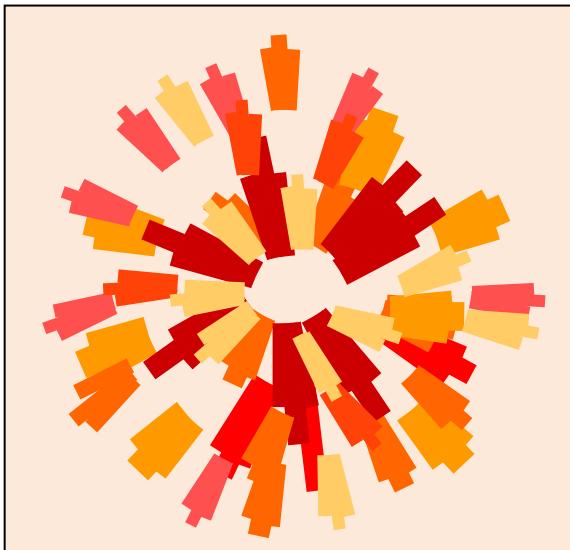
Red represents flames of fire — not the fire that destroys, but the kind of fire that warms, energizes, excites, empowers; the fire which the disciples experienced when the Holy Spirit came to them on the first Pentecost.

Incorporate the colour red into your celebration in as many ways as you can, eg

- Encourage worshippers to wear red clothing or accessories.
- Give each worshiper a red-orange paper flames to pin on or a red ribbon to tie on their wrists. This gives them something to take home as a remembrance and a prompt for talking about the worship

- Decorate the sanctuary with red flowers. Consider adding red balloons or red streamers.
- If you use an overhead or digital projector use red for the background or the words.
- If you follow the worship with a snack, try something red, eg biscuits with red frosting or the more healthy alternative of savory biscuits with tomato slices. Consider red cordial or cranberry juice.

THE FLAME BANNER



This activity is designed to involve people of all ages in creating a symbol of Pentecost.

The way you do this activity will depend on the physical layout of your worship area, the size of your congregation and your practice.

If you can arrange seating in a circle or semi-circle around the banner, the activity can be incorporated in the worship celebration itself. If your seating is in rows, the banner can be created by people as they arrive at the service and put on display during the worship.

These same factors will determine the actual size of the banner or poster.

If your congregation consists mainly of older people, you will want to work on a table to make your banner; if it consists mainly of families with young children, you may want to do it on the floor.

Have a practice of the technique with your fabric and paint BEFORE you involve the whole congregation in the activity.

For your background, use white or cream coloured fabric, stretched artists canvas or poster paper.

If you are using fabric, tape the fabric over cardboard to keep it flat and firm.

Mix up different shades of red paint in shallow bowls, ie

- basic red coloured paint
- red mixed with some yellow, orange or white
- yellow, mixed with some red
- red mixed with some blue, black or brown.

Put a sponge in each bowl of paint. This will help prevent spills and will keep people from putting their hands right into the paint.

Put the bowls in the centre of your banner cloth or poster paper.

Each person puts the pads of three fingers on a sponge filled with paint. They then make a splash mark on the cloth or paper starting from near the centre and pulling towards the outside.

Be sure to provide wet wipes or paper towels for cleaning fingers!

MUSIC

The entire congregation sings most of the songs, but you may want to have a small group (a family, a Sunday school class, your church choir) perform one musical item.

Your regular instrumentalists (organist, band) lead/accompany singing.

Traditional hymns as well as more contemporary songs (and songs written especially for children) can be included in this all-age celebration

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

Some hymns to consider are:

- Away with our fears (TAHB 314)
- Breathe on me, breath of God (TAHB 320)
- Filled with the Spirit's power (TAHB 328)
- God sends us his Spirit (TAHB 324)
- Holy Spirit, Lord of grace (TAHB 312)
- Spirit of the living God (TAHB 318)

TAHB = The Australian Hymn Book

More contemporary possibilities:

- Come, Spirit come (AOVK 93)
- Dance with the Spirit (AOVK 94)
- Dreams and visions (AOV2 61)
- How shall I call you?
- 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) (I'm God's Child, p 50)
- Left all alone (story) (Sing to Jesus 174)
- I stand to praise you (Light the fire in my heart again) Bill Maxwell © 1987 Bloodsmith Music
- May the hope of God (benediction) (AOVK 99)
- Pentecost prayer (All together 99)
- Pentecost song (AOVK 96)

- ◆ Shine, Jesus, shine (AOV2 59)
- ◆ Spirit of God in the clear running water (All Together Again 105)
- ◆ The Great Southland (AOV2 159)
- ◆ The wind was loud (story) (Sing to Jesus 176)

AOVK = As One Voice for Kids

AOV2 = As One Voice Vol 2

SERMON

The brief sermon suggested in **A REALLY EXCITING DAY** revolves around the banner and should be suitable for the attention span and understanding of (almost) all ages.

SKETCH

A short sketch along the lines of the old TV game show *Family Feud* is suggested as a way of linking the service with something that will be familiar to many people, providing a bit of fun and active involvement, and helping people focus on a list of concepts.

The game is played (by a 'cast' of people chosen specifically for the game).

In order to do this game, you must have do a survey of the whole congregation — or the first 100 people — as they arrive and have the results tallied as quickly as possible.

Before the service tee up a compeer and two family groups of four people each to play the game by guessing what people have nominated as their favourite red thing.

Model the game on the television show. Make your version as simple or as detailed as you wish.

For more about the game, Google 'family feud game' or go to
http://www.ehow.com/how_2312412_play-family-feud-game.html

WORSHIP LEADERS

The service can involve just one or a number of leaders. They are indicated in the script as

- ◆ **WL Worship Leader** (or leaders), provides all the commentary and serves as host (or compeer) leading worshippers through the service. The role of Worship Leader can be taken by a minister and/or lay person.
- ◆ **Reader** (or readers) read Bible texts throughout the service. The reader may stand at a lectern, hold a Bible conspicuously so that people will readily realise what comes from the Bible, in contrast to the words of the Worship Leader.
- ◆ **Prayer Leader** (or leaders) who read prayers. Several people of different ages can share any of the roles.

PRACTICE

Although a worship service is not a performance, the role of the leaders in helping people worship is critical.

Because this service is different from your usual worship pattern, a rehearsal is necessary. A complete a walk-through will pinpoint any logistical problems, allow the worship leader/s to fine-tune instructions and ensure that the service itself runs smoothly.

Some churches find it best to have this rehearsal in conjunction with the band or choir practice for the service.

THE RED SERVICE OUTLINE

ADD YOUR OWN PLANNING NOTES

- 1 ARRIVAL _____
2. WELCOME & INVOCATION _____
- 3 OPENING PRAYER _____
4. SONG _____
5. INTRODUCING THE THEME _____
6. BIBLE READING _____
7. CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION _____
8. SONG _____
9. BANNER MAKING _____
10. SERMON / EXPLAIN THE BANNER _____
11. SONG _____
12. STATEMENT OF BELIEF: EIGHT TOP TRUTHS ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT _____
13. OFFERING _____
14. SONG _____
15. PRAYER _____
16. BLESSING _____
17. ANNOUNCEMENTS _____
18. SONG _____

THE RED SERVICE

(Spoken 'script' is in plain type, comments and instructions are in italic.)

1. ARRIVAL

The hospitality team greets each person as they arrive. They also give out any books or papers needed for the worship service.

They may pin a paper flame on each worshipper or tie a red ribbon on the wrist of each worshipper.

If you are using the 'Family Feud' option: survey of the whole congregation — or the first 100 people — as they arrive. Give each person a slip of paper on which to write 'my favourite red thing'. They give these secretly to a teller, who compiles a list of the things mentioned, in the order of frequency. This will provide the 'survey' results that are used in Family Feud sketch.

The music team/instrumentalists may play music that will be used in the service.

2. WELCOME & INVOCATION

WL: Are you **RED**y to celebrate?

I hope so.

Today is **A REALLY EXCITING DAY** — what you might call a **RED**-letter day in the life of the church.

On this Sunday we remember how — at Pentecost — the Holy Spirit came to Jesus' followers, like **RED** flames of fire.

We're going to hear that really exciting story and find out what it means for us today.

Let us ask God for his Spirit now.

3 OPENING PRAYER

PRAYER LEADER: O God, our Father, help us to experience what the Holy Spirit can do for us. Give us your Spirit to enlighten our minds, to purify our hearts and to strengthen our lives; so that by the help of your Spirit we may do, and be, and become, what is impossible for us by ourselves; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

4. SONG

WL (or song leader) introduces the first song: Are you **RED**y to sing?

The congregation sings a song or hymn of the Holy Spirit, eg 'How shall I call you?'

5. INTRODUCING THE THEME

The 'Family Feud' sketch

Actors who have prepared the sketch, present a round of a family-feud type competition, trying to guess what people have identified as their favourite red things. Keep the game spontaneous. The contestants should not see the list before the game begins.

WL leads applause. Thanks, to our families and our excellent game show host.

If you don't use the game, name some red things that you can see in the church and resume here:

Hasn't God has created a world full of wonderful **RED** things!

There's another **RED** thing we think of especially on this **REALLY EXCITING DAY**. It's the red flames that are part of the story of the first Pentecost. It was fifty days after Jesus came back to life at Easter, and ten days after he left his friends and went away into heaven.

Let's hear what happened.

6. BIBLE READING

If possible, display an illustration of the Pentecost event (on overhead or digital projector) as a reader reads the story directly from a contemporary translation of the Bible.

Alternatively you could have children come forward and listen as someone reads the story from a good, illustrated children's Bible.

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

7. CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

WL: Peter said that the promise that our sins will be forgiven is for us and for our children. We are to turn back to God.

Let's do that now.

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

CONGREGATION 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 live each day the way you want us to. Amen.

WL: 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.

8. SONG

WL (or song leader) introduces the next song.

The congregation sings a song or hymn, preferably one that retells the Pentecost story, eg of the Holy Spirit, eg 'The Wind Was Loud'.

During the singing of this song, you may have a banner procession. See below.

9. BANNER MAKING

If the banner was made before the service, bring it forward now and display it, either hanging it on the wall or, if people can see it, laying it out on the floor. You may have the banner carried in during the preceding song.

OR

If you have chosen to make the banner during the service, now is the time. During the preceding song, bring in all the needed equipment.

WL: I hope you're **REDy** to do something new. We're going to create some art — a **RED** Pentecost banner/poster — right here in church.

Explain the procedure for families and individuals coming to the work area.

You may have several helpers standing by at different sides of the table/banner to show people what to do, and to help with the clean-up.

While people are working:

- the music group can be playing music that is used in the service
- or play a CD with Pentecost music
- or a song leader can lead people (particularly children) who are not actively painting in singing and doing the actions to: 'If the Spirit is in you, clap your hands' (as for the traditional 'If you're happy and you know it, ...')

When the painting is completed, remove all the painting equipment and place the banner where everyone can see it.

10. SERMON / EXPLAIN THE BANNER

Minister/Worship Leader: admires the banner and congratulates the group on their artistic efforts. Then interprets the banner along these lines:

The centre core represents the emptiness Jesus' friends felt when Jesus left them — even though they had his wonderful promises. We, too, sometimes feel an emptiness in our God-space, even when we know God's stories and promises.

The only way to fill up that emptiness is for the Holy Spirit to come to us. [Like the paint bowls that were in the centre of our banner while we worked.] In our story, the Spirit came to Jesus' followers as flames of fire on their heads.

The Spirit comes to us today through God's Word in the Bible, through the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion and through the love, help and guidance we receive within the church. These things are not flames that sit on our heads, but they create a warmth and certainty in our hearts.

When we have that warmth within us, the Spirit encourages us to go out [Like our flames that reach out from the spirit centre to the outside.] We serve others, help them, and tell them about Jesus and his Spirit.

11. SONG

WL (or song leader) introduces the next song.

The congregation sings a Pentecost song or hymn, eg 'Breathe on me, Breath of God'.

12. EIGHT TOP TRUTHS ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

WL: Well, we've read the Bible story of the **REALLY EXCITING DAY** of Pentecost.

We've made a beautiful **RED** Pentecost banner.

But, one question remains: Who (or what) is this Holy Spirit that came at Pentecost?

To find the answer, we did not survey 100 people at random. We surveyed just one person — Jesus Christ — to find out what we need to know about the Holy Spirit.

We can find Jesus' answers about the Holy Spirit in the Bible.

READER: shows a 'red letter Bible'. I have a Bible here that is known as a **RED** letter Bible, because in this Bible Jesus' own words are written in red. I'll be reading Jesus' words.

WL: Here are Jesus' top eight answers about the Holy Spirit:

Display these eight points in the same way you displayed the answers in the Family Feud game; or list them on overhead or digital projector, revealing one at a time.

The congregation read the key statements from the screen. Alternatively, the worship leader can ask different groups to read each statement, eg teenagers, senior citizens, primary school children, men, women . . .

Reader/s read the Bible portions.

1

WL: Jesus says . . .

CONGREGATION: The Holy Spirit is invisible.

READER: The Spirit is like the wind that blows wherever it wants to. You can hear the wind, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. (John 3:8)

2

WL: And Jesus says . . .

CONG: The Holy Spirit helps us worship.

READER: Even now the true worshipers are being led by the Spirit to worship the Father according to the truth. (John 4:23)

3

WL: The Bible says . . .

CONG: The Holy Spirit gives life.

READER: The Spirit is the one who gives life! Human strength can do nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are from that life-giving Spirit. (John 6:63)

4

WL: And Jesus says . . .

CONG: The Holy Spirit is always with us.

READER: the Spirit . . . is with you and will keep on living in you. (John 14:17)

5

WL: Jesus says . . .

CONG: The Holy Spirit helps us know Jesus.

READER: The Spirit will help you and will tell you about me. (John 15:26)

6

WL: The Bible says . . .

CONG: The Holy Spirit helps us know the truth.

READER: The Spirit shows what is true and will come and guide you into the full truth. (John 16:13)

7

WL: And Jesus says:

CONGREGATION: The Holy Spirit makes us powerful.

READER: But the Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power. (Acts 1:8)

8

WL: Jesus says:

CONG: The Holy Spirit comes from Jesus

READER: I will send you the Spirit who comes from the Father and shows what is true. The Spirit will help you and will tell you about me. (John 15:26)

WL: These are just the top eight. Bible tells us much more than this about the Spirit.

[If you have done the Family Feud option] I'd like you to turn to someone beside. Tell them which of these you would have picked — if you were on a Family Feud quiz — as your number one answer to the question: Who or what is the Holy Spirit?

13. OFFERING

Introduce and collect an offering in your usual manner.

As the offering is collected . . .

14. OFFERING SONG

WL (or song leader) introduces the next song. The congregation sings a Pentecost song or hymn, eg 'God sends us his Spirit'.

15. PRAYER

WL: 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 can 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, which they read from a screen or worship bulletin.

PRAYER :

O Holy Spirit, giver of light and life,
give us

 thoughts
 higher than our own thoughts,
 and prayers
 better than our own prayers
 and powers
 beyond our own powers,

so that we may live good and loving lives,
after the perfect image of our Lord and
Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Based on 'A prayer of the Spirit' from *Daily Prayer* by E M-White and G W Briggs)

16. BLESSING

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

17. ANNOUNCEMENTS

WL or congregational leader makes any necessary, brief announcements.

WL: I'd like to encourage you to take your red flame (or ribbon) home as a memento of this **RED** worship. Use it as a reminder to think and talk to one another about the Holy Spirit in your own lives: When has God's Spirit . . .

- ❖ comforted you?
- ❖ helped you to pray and worship?
- ❖ helped you know Jesus?
- ❖ helped you know the truth and right from wrong?
- ❖ given you strength beyond their own strength or courage to do things for God that you couldn't do on your own?

18. CLOSING SONG

WL: (or song leader) introduces the final song: Let' sing one more song as we get **REDY** to go out into God's colourful world to enjoy the rest of this **REALY EXCITING DAY.**

The congregation sings a Pentecost song or hymn, eg 'Light the Fire in my heart again.

19. AFTER THE SERVICE

Offer worshippers a cup of coffee or tea and a snack (a **RED** one, if possible).

You might offer families (and individuals) the opportunity to have their photos taken with the banner. Take photos with a digital camera and print them out right away, or have them available the following week on a card which lists the eight 'truths about the Holy Spirit'.