

YEAR LEVEL	5 & 6
TITLE	Pentecost – Celebrating the Spirit
STRAND	TRINITY
SUGGESTED DURATION	5 weeks
ENDURING QUESTIONS	<p>Who is God?</p> <p>Is God alive in me?</p> <p>How does the Holy Spirit lead me in my life?</p>



## Unit Focus

This unit explores the liturgical celebration of Pentecost as the coming of the Spirit to the followers of Jesus. Students will develop an understanding of fire, wind and tongues as the symbols of Pentecost taken from the Old Testament. The students will develop an understanding of the promise Jesus made to his disciples to send the Holy Spirit to help them carry on His mission.

## Achievement Standards

By the end of Year 6 students should be able to:

***Describe the Church as being empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a sign of hope, reconciliation and service to the world.***

## Unit Outcomes

By the end of the unit students should be able to:

- 1. Identify the meaning of the feast of Pentecost.***
- 2. Identify the role the Holy Spirit played in the lives of early Christians.***
- 3. Describe the ways in which the Holy Spirit is active in today's world.***

## Key Understandings for Students

- Pentecost comes from the Greek word, 'fiftieth.'
- Pentecost is celebrated on the 50th day after Easter.
- The origin of the time of Pentecost in the liturgical calendar seems to be linked with the Jewish Feast of Weeks.
- Pentecost celebrates the coming of the spirit to the followers of Jesus.
- The historical Jesus has departed but his presence is alive through the energy of the Spirit.
- Symbols of Christian Pentecost are:
  - Fire: sign of God's presence.

- Wind: Breath of God- *Ruah*- a creative force.
- Tongues: Speaking so that people of different languages can understand.
- The Spirit empowers people of every race and culture to understand the Good News.

## Student Context

By Years 5 and 6, children see themselves as members of a community that extends well beyond their family and immediate surroundings. They have some understanding of the notion of other times, other places and other kinds of societies. They enjoy stories of past and present events. Children will be able to identify with introductory historical concepts and symbols found in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.

Students should be able to use the processes of inquiry with more precision as they reflect on what they have learnt. In practical terms, they can gather and organise evidence from print materials, compare, summarise and present conclusions. It is important to remember that students need to be able to master the tasks set for them.

## Theological Background for Teachers

- The word 'Pentecost' means fiftieth day from the Passover. Counting the Sundays at each end of the seven weeks, it is the fiftieth day from Easter.
- The origin of the time of Pentecost in the liturgical calendar seems to be linked with the Jewish Feast of Weeks (Shavuot). In Exodus 23:16 we read of the harvest feast which commemorated bringing to a close the harvest season. In Jewish rituals this feast gradually began to be regarded as a festival for giving thanks for the giving of the Law and a renewal of the covenant. The synagogue is decorated with harvest symbols such as plants, wheat and flowers. Prayers were recited as thanksgiving for the law and the covenant made to Abraham, Noah and Moses on behalf of the Hebrew people.
- Later Christians included in their worship the Old Testament reading from (Numbers 11:24-30), the incident of the Spirit resting upon the seventy elders of Israel when they were wandering in the wilderness with Moses.
- The Hebrew people used the word '*Ruah*' to describe the *Spirit*, a word meaning spirit and breath. They identified the Spirit as the life-giving breath of God. The same spirit is active in the Church today.
- With Pentecost came a special outpouring of the Spirit, as the fruit of Christ's death and Resurrection.
- The experience of the Holy Spirit is described as being *like the rush of a mighty wind* and *as of fire, distributed and resting on each of them (Acts 2)*.
- The Spirit empowers and teaches the disciples, reveals to the church the mysteries of God, inspires prophecy, is the giver of wisdom, encouragement, joy, hope and love.

## Scripture

### Acts 2:1-4 Pentecost

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

### **Acts 2:42-47 Life Among the Believers**

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

## **Major Assessment Task**

Assessment tasks for this unit may include:

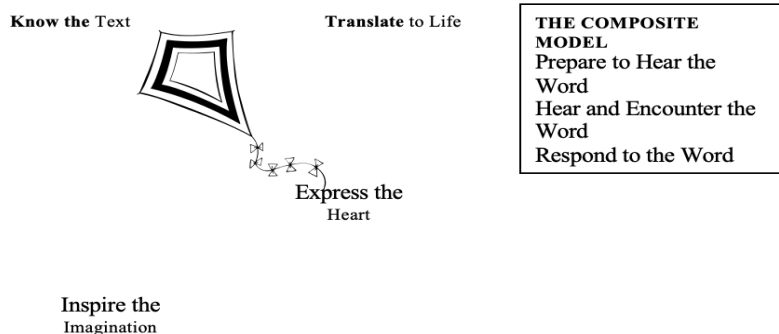
- Create a Billboard that tells the story of Pentecost.
- Develop a Concept map entitled 'Pentecost and the Spirit' that covers the history and symbols of Pentecost. (Include the Scripture references)
- Use the information from the Concept Map to design the Billboard.  
Include:
  - 5 or more facts about Pentecost
  - draw the symbols of Pentecost
  - give an example of how the Holy Spirit works in the world today.

## **Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences**

### **Focusing Activity**

Read *The Sea Breeze Hotel*. Discuss the concept of wind – the power, the feel, the invisibility, etc. How did the wind change the fortunes of the hotel? How did Sam and his family feel at the start of the story? At the end? Is the story one of hope?

- Display the word 'SPIRIT' in large letters on a poster. Brainstorm or use a Mindmap to identify what we mean by the word 'Spirit' using discussion of school spirit, team spirit, love of country, the spirit of a person shown in what he/she does and so forth.
- Open Acts 2:1-12 using the KITE method. (Teaching Strategies) Retell the story of Pentecost using a collage of words and symbols. The KITE methodology and the Composite Model as summarised below:



- Imagine being one of the people gathered in the upper room awaiting the gift of the Holy Spirit. Write an account of the event from a personal perspective.
- Using the kites made earlier, students write their reflection about how the Spirit acted in the disciples and turned their lives around into something new and hope-filled.
- Create a Liquid Picture of Acts 2:1-4.
- Read Acts 2:42-47. Find out how the Holy Spirit was at work in this early Christian community. Be a reporter and write an article for a newspaper describing the actions of the Christian community. Name the fruits of the Spirit evident in the way they lived.
- How do Christians carry out the mission of Jesus in our world? How do we see the Holy Spirit working in our world today?
- Research people who have lived, or are living, Spirit Filled Lives as in Acts 2:42-47. For example: Thomas Barnardo, Mother Teresa, Oscar Romero. ( Here is an opportunity to add people who students may see as Spirit filled people in their local community)

## Prayer and Ritual

Read Acts 2:42-47. Students reflect on the images found in the text.

Draw the image on a flame shape and write a few words about the image.

Place the images around a prayer focus of candles.

Have a silent time for students to consider all the images drawn, whilst listening to quiet music. Conclude with a prayer:

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

**Response:** And kindle in them the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

**Response:** And you will renew the face of the earth.

## Resources

[\*A Time of Jubilee\* \(Stead, 1997\)](#) and/or [\*Teaching Scripture: The Gospel of Mark\* \(Carswell, 2001\)](#)