

GENERATIONS IN FAITH TOGETHER



PENTECOST ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

Help your students experience the unpredictability of the movement of the Spirit with these hands-on ideas.

The beginning of the church season of Pentecost offers an opportunity to invite youth to think about their understanding of how God's spirit is at work in the world and in their lives. Pentecost has its origins in an ancient Jewish observance (also known as the "festival of weeks") which traditionally took place 50 days after Passover.

The festival marked the end of the spring harvest and was time when the Jewish people renewed their commitment to the covenant with God and offered up the first fruits of their harvest and the first-born of their flocks as sacrifice.

It is during this celebration that the author of Acts places a group of disciples, women and men, in an upper room in Jerusalem, waiting for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. And then it comes, and it is as if the room is filled with the roar of rushing wind. This metaphor of rushing wind is no random choice on the part of the writer of Acts.

Throughout scripture, wind is synonymous with Spirit. In fact, the Hebrew word for "spirit" ("ruach") also means "wind." And the Greek word for "wind" ("pnuma") also means "spirit." And of course, in Genesis, God breathes life/spirit into the nostrils of the first human.

Wind and spirit are of the same nature: unpredictable, powerful, often unexpected and sometimes nothing more than a gentle whisper. Both can gather or scatter. Perhaps most importantly, neither can be contained.

Balloons



ACTION

Blow up red balloons, but don't tie them. Use permanent markers to write on prayers or the gifts of the Spirit that they possess or that they see in the group. On cue, have everyone release their balloons and enjoy the moment of mayhem as they fly all over the room.

REFLECT

Reflect on how this might be like the movement of God's Spirit.

Kites



ACTION

Make or purchase paper kites. Use markers to decorate them with prayers or gifts of the Spirit. Head outdoors and have fun flying the kites.

REFLECT

Brainstorm how the movement of the kites (and their attempts to control that movement) is like our experience of the Spirit.

Paper airplanes



ACTION

Make your favourite paper airplanes and then go outdoors and let them fly!

REFLECT

Talk about the different styles and flight paths of the airplanes and how they can be like the diversity of gifts we possess and the way the Spirit works through them.

Music



ACTION

Have a moment of unplanned and unpredictable spontaneous music-making. If you have handbells or chimes, give each person one and have them begin to ring, working together until the sounds blend into something harmonious.

REFLECT

Reflect on how this is like allowing the Spirit to work through the diversity of the gifts we have to share. (If you don't have bells on hand, get really creative and head to the church kitchen and grab pots, pans, wooden spoons, etc.).

Art



ACTION

Create a completely unplanned piece of community art. Pass out a variety of materials: markers, crayons, acrylic paint, watercolours, ink pads and stamps, finger paint, and so on. Lay out a large sheet of paper or piece of canvas and challenge the group to work together to create a mural depicting the movement of God's Spirit without any pre-planning. Just jump in and do it! You could try to play different styles of music as they work and encourage them to let the music influence their art. For added impact, do this in silence (no talking).

REFLECT

Reflect on the experience of what was created without the need for planning and verbal communication. How is the final product different than it might have been if you'd started with a sketch or everyone had the same design in mind?

Wind



ACTION

Cut strips of fabric and invite youth to use markers to decorate them with words and images representing the gifts that help them participate in God's mission of love and peace. Next, tie the strips of cloth to the grille on the front of a fan and turn it on.

REFLECT

As your new kinetic sculpture flutters away, reflect on how it represents the themes of Pentecost.

Trust walk



ACTION

Try an old fashioned trust walk. Divide the group into pairs, 'Blindfold one person and have the other person lead them on a random walk'?

REFLECT

Reflect on the experience and what it would mean for us to just trust the movement of God's Spirit in the work of the Church.

Ideas sourced from:
<http://www.rethinkingyouthministry.com/2010/05/pentecost-ideas-for-youth-ministry.html>