

Pentecost Small group plan



Introduction

Thank you so much for considering using the Wycliffe Pentecost small group resource.

This session plan is designed to follow on from the Wycliffe Pentecost Sunday talk, with discussions and thoughts which are based on it. However, you can use this plan on its own and consider Pentecost from a different perspective.

If you want to use this plan without listening to the Wycliffe Pentecost Sunday talk, we recommend that you read the sermon notes – which you will find at wycliffe.org.uk/pentecost-resources – in order to understand the perspective from which these questions are coming.

We are offering these resources free of charge, but if you would like to make a donation or take up an offering, you can find all the information you need at wycliffe.org.uk/church-giving.

Thank you so much for considering using the Wycliffe Pentecost resources. I pray that you and your church find them a blessing and an encouragement to you this Pentecost.

God bless,



Neil Graham
Director for Churches
Wycliffe Bible Translators

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Thought:

On Sunday we explored what the coming of the Holy Spirit at the start of Acts meant at the time and what it continues to mean today.

The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost has so much to teach us today about the 'wonders of God' both in our own lives and in our calling, as followers of Jesus, to reach others for him.

Bible reading:

Acts 1:4–8

Questions:

- | What did Jesus tell the disciples about the Holy Spirit?
- | How does what Jesus said to the disciples shape your understanding of what it means to be a witness for Jesus?
- | What does it mean for you to be a witness for Jesus in Jerusalem (locally), in Judea and Samaria (nationally) and to the ends of the earth (internationally)?

Thought:

When the Holy Spirit came, as Jesus promised, he gave the disciples power from beyond themselves to declare the 'wonders of God'.

Like the disciples, our heart's desire should be for all people to hear for themselves the wonders of what God has done in Jesus. So we speak of Jesus here in our local environments, and we stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are today declaring the wonders of God in the thousands of languages they speak around the world.

Bible reading:

Acts 2:1–13

Questions:

- | What was the immediate impact of the coming of the Spirit?
- | Why do you think everyone heard the disciples speak in their own language?
- | We're not told exactly which 'wonders of God' the disciples were proclaiming – so what 'wonders of God' do you think they declared?
- | What does it mean for you to declare the 'wonders of God' in your life?

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Thought:

Peter stood up and preached his wonderful sermon to the crowd, to explain very clearly how the Old Testament prophecies were now coming true: the Old Testament promised that one day God would pour out his Spirit (Acts 2:18) and on that day everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (v21). That day has now arrived. Jesus was raised from the dead, proving he is the Messiah as foretold by David, and he has now ascended to the right hand of God and has poured out the Spirit (v33). Therefore, since the ascended Jesus has poured out the Spirit, now is the time to call on his name and receive salvation and the promised gift of the Spirit.

What Peter said had a huge impact on the crowd and led to many people coming to know Jesus.

Bible reading:

Acts 2:14–18 and 36–41

Questions:

- | How does Peter answer the crowd's question: 'What does this mean?' (v12)?
- | What was the effect of what Peter told the crowd?
- | What does Peter's teaching mean for us today, as we seek to be Jesus' witnesses?

Thought:

At Wycliffe Bible Translators we work with local partners, striving and praying to see a world where everyone can know Jesus through the Bible. This means we see close up the impact on people who are not able to hear God speak through the Bible in their own language. But we also have the privilege of seeing the transformation when people do hear God speak in their language for the first time through the Bible.

When people receive the Bible in their own language it communicates the characteristics of God. One pastor expressed it like this when he received the Bible in his language:

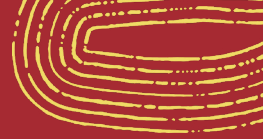
'God speaks my language. Lord, having your word in our very own language is just like having you here in our own midst. It's like Jesus is one of us. He's a family member. He's inside the house, inside our hearts. God is not a foreigner anymore.'

And another said:

'Getting our spiritual food from the Spanish Bible is like trying to eat soup with a fork. We can get a little taste, but cannot get nourished. Using the Quechua Scriptures is like eating soup with a spoon – we can really get well-nourished.'

Both of these reactions express how, when people hear God speak in their language, they see and know him differently. They see he is entering into their

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family, drawing close to them so they can know him personally and talking to them in a way which is easy for them to understand.

At Wycliffe we are seeing more people receive the Bible in their own language. However, 1 in 5 people still don't have the Bible in their language. This means that these 1 in 5 people cannot experience the characteristics of God because the only Bible they have is in a language which is not their own.

Questions:

- | How would your life be different if you didn't have the Bible in your language?
- | How would this affect your knowledge of God and your relationship with him?

Closing thought:

As you go into this week, we want to help inspire you.

First, we want to encourage you to ask God for opportunities to share the gospel with the people around you.

Second, we often struggle to be witnesses for Jesus. However, he doesn't expect us to do this in our own strength, but in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, we would like to encourage you to consider one or both of the following. First, to pray for Bible translators around the world, who sacrifice so much so that their communities will one day be able to read and understand the gospel in their language. Second, to consider partnering with Bible translators today, by giving financially to Wycliffe's work and helping to create a world where everyone can know Jesus through the Bible.

Find out more at wycliffe.org.uk.

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