

Pentecost Youth sessions



Introduction

Thank you for using the Wycliffe Pentecost youth resource.

This Pentecost session plan is designed to help your youth leaders prepare for Pentecost Sunday and comprises four different session plans. Each one is a vital step, building up to reflecting on one of the many lessons we can learn from Pentecost.

The session plan is designed to work for school years 7–11. It has been designed for church youth groups who are looking at digging deeper into the Bible.

The plan can be tailored to suit your group's needs and experiences by choosing the appropriate questions.

Session structure (about 70 minutes)

- | **Icebreaker** – introduces the theme, builds friendship and brings fun (10–15 minutes)
- | **Leader's introduction** – introduces the theme for the session (1–2 minutes)
- | **Bible reading** (2 minutes)
- | **Small groups** – a time for the young people to dig deeper into Scripture, sharing thoughts and feelings about the passage and what that might mean for them today (25–30 minutes)
- | **Prayer** – a time for young people to grow in their prayer life by praying in response to what they have been hearing (15–20 minutes).

Session objectives

As you journey through each week's session with your group, you will read the account of Pentecost from Acts 2 and consider what God is saying to us through pouring out his Holy Spirit on the disciples. Each session builds on a separate idea of what this means for us.

The aim is for the final session on Pentecost to bring together all these points and consider what this means for the global Church, specifically reflecting on what it means for people who don't have the Bible in their language.

- | **Session 1** – for the young people to understand and believe the Holy Spirit can give them power to witness to Jesus

Pentecost: Youth sessions

- | **Session 2** – for the young people to know that the Holy Spirit will help them tell others about why and how God is amazing
- | **Session 3** – for the young people to understand that everyone can know Jesus and be saved
- | **Session 4** – for the young people to know and understand that God has no favourites.

We pray that you may find this resource useful and that it will challenge your young people to grow in their faith and build stronger friendships.

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,

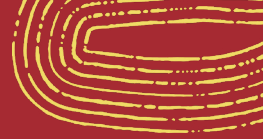


Neil Graham
Director for Churches
Wycliffe Bible Translators

Youth sessions – summary

Four sessions of youth content (school years 7–11) with an icebreaker, Bible passage and small-group discussion exploring:

1. How the Holy Spirit can give us power to witness to Jesus
2. That the Holy Spirit helps us tell others about our amazing God
3. How everyone can know Jesus and be saved
4. That God has no favourites – everyone can come to him through Jesus.



Session title: The Holy Spirit will give power to witness to Jesus

Bible verse:

Acts 1:1–11

Learning point:

The Holy Spirit will enable them to witness to their friends about Jesus

Leader's introduction (1–2 minutes):

Over the next few weeks we will be looking at Pentecost in Acts 1 and 2. Then we will jump into a story in Acts 10.

As we look at these stories we will all be challenged, in different ways, to respond to what we read and hear. We will all need to make some decisions too – these will be personal and yet can also have an impact on others. But before we dive into the story let's have some fun!

Icebreaker – Head shoulder knees power-up cup (10 minutes):

Label some paper cups with 'power up' on them. Each young person needs to find a partner and place the cup on the floor between them. Someone at the front shouts different body parts (head, shoulder or knee) and the young people must touch these with both of their hands. When the leader shouts 'cup' the young people try to grab the power-up cup before their partner. The losers of the round then drop out and sit and watch. The winners play each other in another round. Keep going until you have one winner left. See [this video](#) for an example.

Bible passage – Acts 1:1–11 (5 minutes, including video):

Before we read the story in Acts 1:1–11... can anyone remind us of where we are in the bigger story of the Bible? What has just taken place? Which Testament are we in? Who is the writer of Acts? Ask someone to write some answers on a large piece of paper (save this sheet for following weeks).

Watch [The Bible Project video](#) until the 1:00 minute mark for a quick setting of the scene and overview of Acts.

Read (5 minutes):

Acts 1:1–11

Ask for one, or several, volunteers to read the passage. The passage has different parts, which may be split between a few people.

Ask the group for initial thoughts, questions and comments. Write them on a board (or on Post-it notes stuck on a board or large sheet of paper). Before splitting into smaller groups, encourage the young people to keep their thoughts and comments coming as they can be written anytime during the session.



Pentecost: Youth session 1 (continued)

Some of the questions may be answered now (be sure to ask others in the room for answers they would like to suggest). Some answers may be discovered in the study.

Small groups (30 minutes):

Other questions to discuss:

Comprehension/setting the scene

- | Where are Jesus' disciples and what are they doing according to Luke? (Acts 1:3–4)
- | But what are Jesus' disciples expecting Jesus to do? (Acts 1:6)
- | Jesus answers their question and passes on some instructions for the disciples. What does he say to them? (Acts 1:7–8)

Exploration

Leader's notes:

Jesus' disciples seem very confused at this point. They thought life might mean Jesus as king on earth and peace reigning – none of this Roman occupation – but actually Jesus has something very different in mind! The disciples were going to receive some kind of power from God through the Holy Spirit, hitting the open road, in order to witness to others!

It wasn't the answer they were hoping for or an easy task to be given.

Questions for discussion

- | Does anyone know what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit, and his power? Can you think of an example of the Holy Spirit at work? (Give five minutes, in pairs, to talk and look up the following Bible verses: Genesis 1:1, Exodus 35:31, Judges 6:34, Acts 7:54–8:8, Timothy 1:7).
- | The Holy Spirit, and purpose of being a witness to Jesus, is given to every person who puts their trust in Jesus. If this is you, how do you feel about having a purpose to be a witness of Jesus to others? Ask each person to draw emojis on a sheet of paper to describe these feelings.
- | If you have tried to be a witness to others, how has it gone? What were the concerns, barriers, fears, anxieties, celebrations?
- | Has anyone experienced the power of the Holy Spirit helping you to be a witness? If so, what did that look like?
- | Share with the person next to you, from what you have heard, what would you like to pray about, or do differently, if anything?

Prayer (15 minutes):

Form a large circle, each person with their hands on the shoulders of those on each side of them. Ask the young people and leaders to name one person to whom they would like to be a good witness.

Go round again and if the young person would like to pray, ask them to pray for the person on their right, that they would know God's Holy Spirit and his power to help them to be a witness to Jesus.

Session title: God wants to have a personal relationship with people

Bible verse:

Acts 2:1–13

Learning point:

God wants to have a personal relationship with people

Icebreaker – Two truths, one lie (15 minutes):

Get all the young people to think of two true facts about themselves and one lie. Then go around the group, one at a time, letting them say all three points (make sure they don't say which are truths or lies). The aim is for the group to decide which one is the lie. Do this with the whole group.

Leader's introduction (1 minute):

Last week we began looking at Pentecost and considering how we can be witnesses through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Today we are continuing to look at Pentecost in Acts 2, but we are considering how God sending the Holy Spirit shows us that he wants to know people personally.

Small groups (30 minutes):

Read:

Acts 2:1–13

Other questions to discuss:

Comprehension/setting the scene

| As a group can you summarise the story including location, people and events in three sentences?

Exploration

Leader's notes:

Last week we began looking at Pentecost and considering how we are called to be witnesses and how we are helped through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Today we are continuing to look at Pentecost in Acts 2, but we are considering how God sending his Holy Spirit shows us that he wants to know people personally.

Questions for discussion

| What are the surprising things in this story which would be unusual if we saw them today?
Have you experienced anything like this before in a Christian or church setting?

Pentecost: Youth session 2 (continued)

- | Why do you think God gave the disciples the gift of speaking other languages and what does this tell us about God?
- | The disciples told people about the 'wonders of God'. We are not told what those wonders are but what do you imagine was said? In a group, on slips of paper write ten wonders which might have been declared, and put them where everyone can see.

Split the group into three if there are more than nine young people present. And ask them to read the case study and answer the question: how do you communicate that God wants to know your friend personally? (Which phrases, language, stories would you use to connect them with God? What would you like to avoid?) Gather the groups afterwards for feedback.

Case study 1

Tariq is a kind-hearted year 8 student and you are great friends with each other. He is part of the football team and he enjoys chess. He is hardworking like you. You hang out at weekends and have been to his house. He knows you're a Christian because he has invited you over on Sunday mornings, but you've told him this is when you go to church. He and his family are devout Muslims and welcome you into their home with open arms every time you visit.

Case study 2

Charlotte is in year 11. She is from a nice family and has a younger brother and older sister. Her mum and dad are unfamiliar with the Christian faith and would usually go to church only for weddings and funerals. Charlotte values friendship more than anything else and has plenty of friends. You are one of them. She is full of positivity and joy; according to Charlotte, life is for living!

Case study 3

Barney is in year 7. He was a timid boy but recently has been in trouble at school. He finds it difficult to listen to the teachers and prefers to make people laugh in class rather than work. You have discovered that Barney's dad recently left his mum. Barney thinks it was his fault that his dad left. Now he often feels he has to be the 'man of the house' because he has a younger sister and his mum is having another baby soon.

Case study 4

Marianna is in year 9. She has just arrived from Ukraine with her parents and an older brother. She has been at school just under a week and happens to be sitting next to you for most classes. She takes her school work seriously and often looks nervous. She struggles to speak English but she is desperate to have a friend and learn English.

Prayer (15 minutes):

Ask the young people to think of one person whom they would like to tell about God. Ask them to find a comfy space, listen to some Christian music and ask God to give them wisdom, words and power to share with the named person. At the end of the session ask if anyone would like to share what they think God was telling them. Ask them to make a note on their phone to remind them to pray for this person and look for opportunities to share Jesus with them.



Session title: Now everyone can be saved and receive the Holy Spirit

Bible verse:

Acts 2:14–33

Learning point:

Everyone can be saved and receive the Holy Spirit

Icebreaker – Signs (15 minutes): (refer to inclusion and exclusion)

Everyone sits in a circle. To play a round, choose one person to be the 'guesser.' Ask the guesser to close their eyes. Then ask the group to silently choose one person in the circle (randomly) to be the person who begins with a 'sign'. A 'sign' is a subtle action, like touching your ear, rubbing your hands together for a second, wrinkling your nose or raising both eyebrows.

The person who 'has' the sign is to 'pass' it on to any other player without being caught by the guesser. The sign is passed on from person to person.

The guesser constantly looks all around the circle, trying to detect any movements. The guesser is allowed three guesses. To guess, they point to one player and ask, 'do you have the sign?' If they are correct, the guesser wins the round and the person caught with the sign becomes the new guesser. If they make three wrong guesses, then the guesser loses the round.

Leader's introduction (2 minutes):

As the timeline shows, in the past few weeks looking at Acts we have seen people taken up in clouds, friendly fire and wind, and people miraculously speaking languages they have never known before. We read in the story that some onlookers were amazed by what they heard about God and some were puzzled and accused the disciples of being drunk.

Now we jump back into the story and Peter decides to explain to the onlookers what is going on and who is behind it all.

Small groups (20 minutes):

Read:

Acts 2:14–33 (The passage has a few sections and so you might want to share it between several readers.)

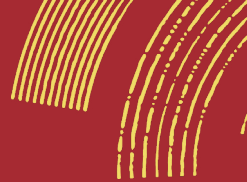
Other questions to discuss:

Comprehension/setting the scene

| Who is Peter talking to?



Pentecost: Youth session 3 (continued)



- | Peter wanted to communicate to the Jewish people about how everyone can now be saved. What phrases and ideas did he use to make sure that what he communicated landed well?
- | Can you name the different types of people who, according to Joel, can receive the Holy Spirit?
- | Peter not only wants to communicate that there is access to Jesus for everyone but also what is in Acts 2:22–32.

Exploration

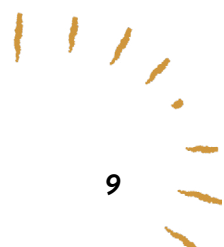
Questions for discussion

- | Have you personally been ghosted or cancelled?
- | Have you ever seen someone being included or excluded from something? Can you describe that?
- | What kinds of people or marginalised groups might be surprised that Jesus wants a personal relationship with them and that they can be 'saved'?
- | How would you answer your friend if they said, 'Surely Jesus wouldn't want anything to do with terrorists or trans people?' and 'How can someone who has never heard of Jesus, or can't understand the gospel, be saved?'

Prayer (15–20 minutes):

Set up a few prayer stations around the room and ask the young people to move about to pray.

- | **Map:** have a map or a globe, which the group can gather around to pray that people of all nations would be saved by Jesus, through mission and miraculous wonders.
- | **Graffiti wall:** allow the young people to write, or draw, praise on a large sheet of paper about what they have learned or heard from God during this session: God has saved them, God wants everyone to be saved, Jesus is for everyone, and so on.
- | **Candles:** young people light a tea light and pray, asking the Holy Spirit to be at work in them, giving them courage to tell others about Jesus and how they can be included in God's family.



Pentecost: Youth session 4

Session title: God wants all people to know he has no favourites

Bible verse:

Acts 10

Learning point:

God wants all people to know he has no favourites, he loves them and wants a relationship with them

Icebreaker – Guess the language (7 minutes):

Gather the group into teams of three people. Teams play this [online quiz](#). Give a prize to the winners.

Leader's introduction (5 minutes):

Can anyone summarise the past few weeks in a couple of sentences?

So far we've been learning about how God wants us to be witnesses to Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, God wants a personal relationship with people and that everyone can be saved by Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit for themselves. But we may be asking how can everyone hear about Jesus and be saved?

Pentecost is an example of how God wants the message of Jesus to be available to all people.

Our last session is looking at Acts 10. The continuation of the work of the Apostles and the Holy Spirit and highlighting the fact that God has no favourites!

Have you ever been a favourite or know someone who is? How does that make you feel and think? Or maybe you have favourites: people, food, places.

Small groups (25 minutes):

Watch:

[Peter and Cornelius \(Kingdom Videos\)](#)

Read:

Acts 10 (focusing on verses 30–48)

Other questions to discuss:

Comprehension/setting the scene

- | Who are the main characters in the story?
- | What are the unusual things going on in the story, can you see the similarities in Acts 2, if so what are they?

Pentecost: Youth session 4 (continued)

Exploration

Questions for discussion

- | Have your friends ever thought that God has favourites? If so why? And if not, why not?
- | How does Peter come to the conclusion 'I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism, but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.'
- | Are there ways in which we act and speak that give the impression that God does have favourites? How can that be changed to help people understand he has no favourites and he wants everyone to be saved?
- | The Holy Spirit and Peter were a dream team! The Holy Spirit was at work in Peter miraculously and Peter is bold to do what he is prompted to and share about Jesus. Have you ever wondered how you and the Holy Spirit can work together to help others come to know Jesus and be filled with the Holy Spirit? What might that look like?

Prayer (20 minutes):

Give each person a comic strip template of four parts or they can draw their own. Label each section with the following:

- | Head (think differently)
- | Heart (feel differently)
- | Hand (do differently)
- | Prayer

Ask the young people to fill in the sections with a drawing or sentence of how they want to think differently, feel differently and do things differently because of what they have learned in the past few weeks. They can write a prayer in the fourth section.

Ensure there is time for them to share with the whole group what God has been saying to them and what they want to do differently in future.

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Translators

PO Box 1643, Oxford OX4 9PB
0300 303 1111
hello@wycliffe.org.uk
wycliffe.org.uk