



Y5/6 Pentecost Pause Day: Cycle 1

Overview:

- Retell the story of Pentecost remembering the transformation of the disciples.
- Talk about the persecution of the early church. Why did this happen? Who gets persecuted today? Why? (Discuss Jews, gypsies, homosexuals etc in WW2? Discuss bullying?)
- How did Stephen respond to the persecution?
- How should we respond to persecution? What gives us the strength for this?

You will need:

- Pentecost jigsaw pictures 5/6ths hidden (see start of session 1)
- Bibles
- Art equipment as desired for session 2
- A prompt (as required) to assist the children in writing their gallery piece to explain their artwork.

Session 1

~ Before the lesson, download and print pictures relating to the Pentecost story. (Google images is a good starting point for this, either looking at 'Pentecost' or 'Holy Spirit'.) These may range from classical paintings to contemporary art images. Cut all the pictures up into 6 pieces, retain one piece and hide all the remaining pieces with at least a corner showing. Children each to be given a piece of a picture. *Ask them what the full image might be? How do the colours and sections of the image that they can see make them feel?* Continue the lesson by hunting round the room to collect the missing pieces to complete their picture puzzle.

~ Once completed, children may help their friends.

~ As a class, look together at the pictures. What theme connects them all? Discuss the images... *What questions can we ask about these images? Which do they like the best and why? Which tell a story? Does anyone know which story - use this as an opportunity for the class to try and retell the Pentecost events between them (in their first year of doing this material, you may need to read the events to the class from Acts 1 and 2 in a Children's Bible. Thereafter they should have knowledge from previous years)? Are any of the images difficult to understand? What emotions do the pictures bring? How would you explain what is happening in the story?*

~ *Does anyone know what happened to the early church in the weeks, months and years after Pentecost?* Children to use Bibles and look up Acts 2:42-47 (the group of early believers [who later became known as 'Christians'] continues to grow, and they pray and praise together, and share their belongings as a group) and 4:1-4 (where some Jews arrest the leading disciples because they find their preaching about Jesus offensive). If you were to read more of Acts, this picture would be repeated...that the disciples' teaching and lifestyles attract more and more followers but that this frustrates some Jews and the Roman authorities and so they also face persecution. *Discussion: what does 'persecution' mean? Can anyone think of any examples of people being persecuted? (Remind them of WW2 work if appropriate. Children may also know about more recent genocides in places such as The Balkans and Rwanda and ongoing persecution of Christians and other people of faith across the world).* For the early church, persecution meant being put in jail, being hounded out of towns, being beaten up and sometimes even killed.

~ *Discussion: why do people persecute other people?* See how many possible reasons you can come up with in small groups. In many ways persecution can be understood as extreme bullying. It may help the class to think about

why some people bully others. Record ideas on a shared mind map or similar.

~ During this time of group discussion encourage the children to think about any questions or personal reflections they may have about either persecution or bullying. These can be kept personal within the small group, or shared with the whole class. Remind the children about how to phrase their comments, if they are being made about others in the class. Can they talk about their own feelings and thinking rather than naming others in a nasty way?

Session 2

How can we represent persecution and its effects upon recipients?

Children to work collaboratively this session to prepare a piece of artwork representing persecution and both its effects on those who receive it and its effects and causes for those people doing the persecuting. To enable the children to create thought-provoking work, they may need some input here. The questions from session 3 might help to focus them as they come up with the idea for their work. There will be space in the afternoon to offer a comment on how persecution can be overcome and a time to write a gallery piece, explaining their work. This art could be either a 3D (clay /plasticine modelling...) or a 2D piece of work (collage, painting, charcoals/chalks...) Once the children are settled with their idea and their art is underway, read them the account of Stephen's stoning (Acts 6 and 7). This may read most easily from a Children's Bible. *Discussion: Who was Stephen? What happened to Stephen? Why did this happen? How did he react? Do you think his reaction was good - why/why not? Does anything surprise you about this account? How is Stephen an inspiration to Christians today who are facing difficult circumstances?*

Session 3

Allow class any finishing off time, as required from the morning.

Share artwork and ask children to explain what they wanted to communicate about persecution. What do they want their viewers to think and feel in response to their piece? Explain that in art galleries pieces of art are typically hung with a paragraph next to them explaining something key about the context and meaning of the work, sometimes mentioning something for the viewer to focus upon and think about. Using one of the morning pieces of art from the jigsaw challenge and prepare a paragraph of writing to accompany it as if it were being displayed in a gallery. Use this as a chance to model the writing form to the class. Ask the children to work to

create such a paragraph about their artwork. They might find the questions below to be a useful prompt for their work:

- *What does your artwork show?*
- *How have you tried to show the people in your picture and why?*
- *What are the characters in your work feeling?*
- *What is causing the various behaviours visible in the artwork?*
- *Which character do you feel the most sorrow for and why?*
- *How do you, the artist, feel about the situation you have shown?*

Draw the class back together. *Question: What can be done to overcome persecution?* In WW2 Denmark, like other invaded countries, was ordered by the Nazis to arrest and deport Jews. Here the resistance movement, and other Danes, were unusually successful in preventing the persecution of the Jews. They achieved this by helping a huge proportion of the Danish Jewish community escape to safety in Sweden. (More can be read under "Rescue of the Danish Jews" on Wikipedia.) This is one example of how people in the past have helped to defeat persecution. Another approach is to campaign on behalf of persecuted people and to be a voice for them. Amnesty International (amongst many other charities) does this. The children may have ideas of their own about what can be done. Allow them time to conclude their gallery piece of writing by offering a comment on how persecution can be overcome and the individual's role to play in it.

Conclude the afternoon by creating a still space within the classroom. Ask the children to focus upon someone's art that really speaks powerfully to them. The disciples needed God's power, made available to them by the coming of God the Holy Spirit, in order to be able to respond well to persecution. Give the class time to pray (in whatever form they are comfortable with - inside their heads, aloud with a friend, written on paper...) for:

- people around the world who are currently facing persecution.
- for strength for themselves to stick up for others who they may see being picked on.