

The Mystery of Pentecost

taking childhood spirituality seriously

Godly Play ^{UK}



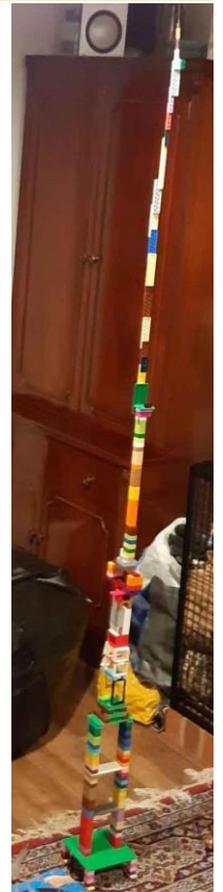
Look out for red!
The Godly Play Mystery of Pentecost story is kept in a red box.

I wonder how many red things you can see around you. I wonder why they are red.

The story begins with a great tower. The people who were building it started by working together, and the tower grew and grew. But then they forgot. As the tower got bigger and bigger, they thought they were cleverer and cleverer. They stopped working together, and they stopped talking to each other. Each builder began to build in their own way. And each builder began to talk in their own way. They didn't listen to each other. They couldn't listen to each other. So the great tower fell down! People who told the story called it the Tower of Babel. Maybe that is where we get our word 'babble', when people talk and talk but don't really make sense!

This is an ancient story, one that Jesus and his friends would have known. Sometimes people tell it at Pentecost. *Maybe we might wonder about that.*

*I wonder what is the biggest tower you ever built.
I wonder if you could build a tall tower today. What might you use?*



Jesus died on the cross but after that his friends kept seeing him, they couldn't let him go. There were eleven of them.

You can find their names in the Bible.

www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+6.12-16&version=NRSVA

There are 12 names in this list but the last name is Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus to the soldiers, so he is not there.

Maybe you could find 11 things to become the eleven men – eleven bricks or stones or leaves – anything would do. Keep a spare as well, you will need it!

Forty days after he first came to them like this, Jesus took the eleven up a mountain and said goodbye. What would they do now? They went to the great Temple in Jerusalem to pray. And they found a new friend, Matthias; so there were twelve of them again.

Ten days passed and it was the time of Pentecost, a special festival. The twelve were shut in a house together. They wondered what to do, when suddenly the Holy Spirit came: it was like the sound of a mighty wind, and they all felt as if they were on fire. When they went out, people wondered what was going on, for the twelve were speaking to everyone, and everyone understood, even if they came from other places, and spoke other languages.

Perhaps you could tell this story together. You could tell it inside – like the house where the twelve were shut in together. Or you could tell it outside, like the eleven on the mountain with Jesus. It doesn't matter where you go.

I wonder if you can make the sound of a mighty wind or the crackle of hot flames.

I wonder if you know anyone who can speak another language, or even two other languages, or even three...

I wonder what you liked best.

I wonder what was most important.

I wonder if you could tell this story to someone else.



Maybe instead of telling a story, you might prefer to look at this picture. It is called

Breaking Through

Perhaps you could look at it together.

I wonder what you see here.

I wonder what you like.

What might the artist be trying to say?

What do you understand by the title *Breaking Through*?

What happens if you put this picture alongside the story of Pentecost.

I wonder what response you would like to make?

Remember you can just sit or think quietly.

Some people like to have something in their hands so that the mind can wander. A simple repetitive action like sewing, knitting, simple weaving, doodling, gardening, going for a walk, might be helpful.

Some people think by using images and symbols. You can use some simple drawing materials... scrap paper and pencil, paints if you have them.

Other may like to write something. Don't worry about spelling... see where the writing goes...

Taking objects and placing them into some connection or arrangement can sometime help. Notice what you notice.

Looking at a Bible passage or story... Notice which words or phrases leap off the page and stay with those... What associations or connections come to you? How do they make you feel?

Remember to give yourself time. This time is for you. And nobody but you needs to comment on what you have done.

Pentecost: a variety of story and wondering

Peter Privett offers many ideas and possibilities

Some of these suggestions might be used with children and young people.
Others are for you, the adult who works alongside them.

Here is a menu. It might be that you use only one suggestion ... or none.

The format is the same ... **Story and Wondering, Response, Feast & Blessing**

STORY AND WONDERING

Spirit

I'm just wondering with older groups do you always have to have visual materials... or can you use the SPIRIT of Godly Play to explore religious and spiritual language.

So I wonder ...

- what you like about the SPIRIT of Godly Play
- what is important about the SPIRIT of Godly Play
- what is the SPIRIT of Godly Play LIKE..
- what is the essential SPIRIT of Godly Play ... in other words what could you leave out and have all the Godly Play you need

So here are some more things to wonder about Pentecost ...

Languages...

The list of languages in Acts 2 moves from East to West ...

The middle group moves from North to South ...

The final destination is Rome, the centre of political and empirical power.

Each person hears the gospel message in their own language ...

So I'm wondering ...

- What might this have to do with Godly Play?
- Godly Play has a belief in different language systems ... what are the implications for Pentecost.
- How might children's language systems inform our understanding of Godly Play.
- How might children and their language systems inform our insights of Pentecost.

Side by side stories.

Pentecost was a harvest festival 50 days after Passover.

Passover was a time to celebrate freedom from slavery, Pentecost a festival to remember the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

The Christian tradition has often made connections.

There is a Jewish tradition that claims at Mount Sinai the fire from the mountain turned into tongues of speech. It divided into 70 tongues of fire corresponding to the 70 nations of the world. Therefore each nation could hear the Law in their own language.

Christian tradition has often put the story of the Tower of Babel – Genesis 11 – alongside the story of Pentecost. The story tells that in the beginning there was one language, a sign of human pride and superiority. This is then broken into different languages that separate and divide. The first Creation Story has the *ruach* (a Jewish feminine noun for the spirit) of God brooding over the primal waters.

When placed alongside the story of Pentecost

- I wonder what connections you make.
- What other stories would you place alongside Pentecost...

Inside outside

The story of Pentecost moves from being inside to outside ... from speakers to hearers ...

I'm just wondering what this story might have to say to us today ...

Parable language.

The Pentecost story says that it was 'LIKE the rush of a mighty wind...' 'and there appeared to them tongues AS of fire.'

LIKE and AS are familiar words in parables language....

So I wonder...

- I wonder what the Holy Spirit is like.
- I wonder if you have anything in your house or garden that you could bring to show what the Holy Spirit is like.
- I wonder what else it might be.
- What is it like to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- What does it feel like to be near the Holy Spirit.
- I wonder if you know something like this.
- I wonder what the Holy Spirit might really be.

Dreams and visions

... I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams; yes and on my manservants and my maidservants in those days. I shall pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. (Acts 2.27: Peter quotes the Old Testament prophet, Joel 2.28 -29

I wonder what dreams and vision you have for the future....

- What inspires those dreams and visions....
- What do they look like...
- Who do they include...
- What might stop them from being fulfilled...
- Who or what might help them be fulfilled...

Spirit and Inspiration

This word comes from the Latin *inspirare* – to breathe...

Early written English uses of inspire give it the meaning 'to influence, move or guide (as to speech or action) through divine or supernatural agency or power' (Merriam Webster Dictionary).

The Greek word is *pneuma* again meaning, the wind, to breath, to blow.

In Ancient Greek medicine *pneuma* was the form of circulating air that enabled vital organs of the body to function.

So I wonder

- what inspires you ... what enables you to function
- who has been an influence in your life....
- what events have influenced you...
- what or who gives you energy...
- how might this inform your understanding of Holy Spirit.

- I wonder what you are wondering about.
- I wonder what your work will be.

RESPONSE

Those familiar with Godly Play will recognize these, but sometimes I forget. This is a reminder.

Remember you can just sit or think quietly... have something in their hands so that the mind can wander.

Some people think by using images and symbols. You can use some simple drawing materials

Other may like to write something.

Taking objects and placing them into some connection or arrangement ... or looking at a Bible passage or story...

Remember to give yourself time. This time is for you. And nobody but you needs to comment on what you have done.

FEAST

On one of our trainings somebody once compared this to the time spent in pub, hall or home after a funeral. A threshold time to transition all the strong emotions and feelings that have been experienced in church, crematorium or at the graveside. It's a sort of gradual coming back into the everyday, a different sort of spiritual work. This has completely changed my understanding of the feast time.

People doing live Zoom sessions have experience of chatting and sharing food together.

But if you don't Zoom and you are at home, the work might be simply reconnecting with other members of your household for a cup of coffee,

or juice, and a biscuit. Meeting together to just simply chat and reconnect.

If you are on your own, perhaps giving someone a phone call, Facetime or Zoom conversation does the job. Perhaps looking at pictures of friends or family or photos on your phone will do the job. Writing a letter, praying with the saints. The point is to move from seeing yourself as an individual to a reconnection with some sense of community.

The spiritual work is the movement and flow from a personal individual focus during response time to an experience of community and belonging.

*So I wonder what are the many different ways that we can Feast ...
It is about squash and biscuits but much more.*

BLESSING

Latin: *Bene diction* ... Good words

Greek: *eulogia* to speak well of ... it's where we get the word *eulogy* from.

Jerome Berryman defines it as: Calling out the good... a matter of life and death. It is about ethics... how we live our lives together

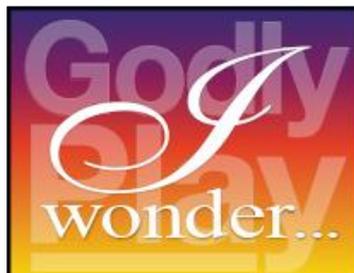
So I wonder

When have you felt blessed?
How did it make you feel?
What was important about it?
Where do you see blessing?

How might you know that this is blessing?
When do you bless?
How do you do it?
What is blessing really?

Based on Godly Play principles, this has been written by Peter Privett and Gill Ambrose, on behalf of Godly Play UK, especially for this time when we cannot meet. Use what you can and share generously!

www.godlyplay.uk
www.godlyplayfoundation.org
www.godlyplayscotland.co.uk



You can find the Mystery of Pentecost story in Volume 4 of *The Complete Guide to Godly Play* by Jerome Berryman.

*I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.
Even on male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.*

Joel 2.28-29