

The Light and Languages of Pentecost

How do Friends experience the fire of the Holy Spirit? What questions and images do we offer in religious education to contemplate the inner Light? How does Pentecost help us to come close to these ideas? The Bible describes God as “a consuming fire” in Hebrews 12:29, so it is not surprising that fire often appears as a symbol of God’s presence. Pentecost was absent from my own religious education in an un-programmed Friends meeting, and it was through work in an Episcopal church that I came close to this story and found how it resonated for me as a Quaker.



Certainly, the story of Pentecost can be explored with children using resources like a good children’s Bible. Other lesson activities are offered at the end of this piece. I had the experience of sharing the Godly Play® story “The Mystery of Pentecost,”¹ and it opened for me the experience of the Holy Spirit as fire, which felt deeply connected to images of Light.

The picture above is the story as I was led to share it, which is an adaptation of the materials called for in the Godly Play story. I omitted the six wooden blocks used to represent the Tower of Babel, and rather than use the shields symbolizing the twelve apostles, used People of God figures (which still felt symbolic, rather than historical). Rather than center the story on language (reaching back to Babel and then speaking in different tongues at Pentecost), I chose to center the story on the Holy Spirit and some ways that presence has been experienced in the Bible, including the flame above the heads of the disciples. The image of the dove we encounter when Jesus is baptized becomes another example of encounter with the Holy Spirit’s presence and blessing. I added both the flame used in many of the Faith & Play™ stories along with the dove (which in a Godly Play room is with the baptism story materials; Friends will find a dove in materials for the Faith & Play story “Let Your Life Speak”). Adding these images — of the Holy Spirit both coming close and being present — to the language of the story felt right and created for me a sense of connection between the start of Jesus’ earthly ministry and its ongoing presence.

I love the question posed in the Background for this story in the Godly Play volume: “Can God’s presence be communicated in words?” After the apostles’ experience at Pentecost, they are filled with the Holy Spirit and impelled to speak the word of God boldly (Acts 4:31). As illustrated by the strips of dark brown felt radiating from the center, the

¹ Berryman, The Complete Guide to Godly Play: Volume 4, p. 120-125

apostles go out into the world to share the story of how Jesus somehow was still with the people — and he is also still with us, through the words and images of the stories he told and were told about him.

The Pentecost story helps us come close to another idea that has become important to me as a Friend — that our shared faith is communicated every day in diverse tongues and different ways of practice. Attending the FWCC World Plenary in Peru in January 2016 was a deep spiritual experience, and the morning worship led by Friends from across the globe, offered in many different language and styles, was powerful. The Bible verse, “My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?” (John 14:2) had new meaning for me, after being among Friends from all over the world. Our practice of the Quaker faith might dwell in different rooms and be shared in various languages, but we are spiritually gathered under one roof as a world family of Friends.

I wonder how we can explore with children images of the Holy Spirit and their experience of the Light within?

I wonder how the story of Pentecost can help us explore the world family of Friends and the diffusion Quakerism?

Ideas for an experiential and creative exploration the fire and wind of Pentecost:

- After hearing the story, give children an opportunity to try “Red Hots” or other cinnamon candy. They can feel the “fire” on their own tongues!
- Make head bands with flames on the front — tongues of fire to wear, like in the story.
- Create “Holy Spirit” wind socks using colors related to flame (red, orange, yellow) and use construction paper and tissue streamers. A great wind filled the upper chamber!
- FWCC has a wonderful map that shows Friends around the world — explore where Quakers live and what languages are represented across the globe. You can download the map here: fwccamericas.org/find_friends/images/new%20map/fwc-c_map_v3_11.06.07.pdf
- Explore the Lord’s Prayer in different language (see next two pages).

PRACTICE FOR PENTECOSTI

Say the Lord's Prayer in different language!

English

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Italian

Padre nostro, che sei nei cieli,
sia santificato il tuo nome,
venga il tuo regno;
sia fatta la tua volontà,
come in cielo così in terra.
Dacci oggi il nostro pane quotidiano.
E rimetti a noi i nostri debiti
come noi li rimettiamo ai nostri debitori.
E non ci indurre in tentazione,
ma liberaci dal male.
Tuo è il regno,
tua è la Potenza e la Gloria
nei secoli dei secoli. Amen.

German

Vater unser im Himmel,
geheiligt werde dein Name.
Dein Reich komme.
Dein Wille geschehe,
wie im Himmel so auf Erden.
Unser tägliches Brot gib uns heute.
Und vergib uns unsere Schuld,
wie auch wir vergeben unsern Schuldigern.
Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung,
sondern erlöse uns von dem Bösen.
Denn Dein ist das Reich,
und die Kraft und die Herrlichkeit
in Ewigkeit. Amen.

French

Notre Père, qui es aux cieux,
que ton Nom soit sanctifié,
que ton règne vienne.
Que ta volonté soit faite
Sur la terre comme au ciel.
Donne-nous aujourd'hui notre pain
de ce jour.
Pardonne-nous nos offenses,
Comme nous pardonnons aussi
à ceux qui nous ont offensés.
Et ne nous soumetts pas à la tentation,
mais délivre-nous du mal.
Car c'est à toi qu'appartiennent le règne,
la puissance et la gloire.
dans les siècles des siècles. Amen.

Portuguese

Pai nosso, que estás nos céus,
santificado seja o teu Nome;
venha o teu reino;
seja feita a tua vontade,
assim na terra como no céu.
O pão nosso de cada dia nos dá hoje;
perdoa-nos as nossas ofensas,
assim como nós perdoamos
a quem nós tem ofendido;
não nos deixes cair em tentação
e livra-nos do mal.
Porque teu é o reino, o poder e a glória,
agora e para sempre. Amém.

Spanish

Padre nuestro que estás en el cielo,
santificado sea tu Nombre,
venga tu reino,
hágase tu voluntad,
en la tierra como en el cielo.
Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día.
Perdona nuestras ofensas,
como también nosotros perdonamos
a los que nos ofenden.
No nos dejes caer en tentación
y libramos del mal.
Porque tuyo es el reino,
tuyo es el poder,
y tuya es la gloria,
ahora y por siempre. Amén.

The Lord's Prayer in Hebrew:

Shir la-ma-alos, esō aynai el	שִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת, אֲשָׁא עֵינַי אֶל
he-hōrim, may-ayin yōvo ez-ri.	הַהָרִים, מֵאֵין יָבֹא עֲזָרִי:
Ez-ri may-im adonōy, osay	עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְיָ, עֲשֵׂה
shōma-yim vō-ōretz. Al yi-tayn	שְׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ: אַל יִתֵּן
la-mot rag-lechō, al yōnum	לְמוֹט רַגְלֶךָ, אַל יָנוּם
shom'rechō. Hinay lo yōnum v'lo	שְׁמֶרְךָ: הִנֵּה לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא
yishōn shomayr yisrō-ayl.	יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל:
Adonōy shom-rechō, adonōy	יְיָ שְׁמֶרְךָ, יְיָ
tzil'chō al yad y'minechō.	צִלֵּךְ עַל יַד יְמִינֶךָ:
Yomōm ha-shemesh lo ya-kekōh,	יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא יִכָּכֶה,
v'yōray-ach ba-lōylōh. Adonōy	וַיִּרַח בַּלַּיְלָה: יְיָ
yish-mōr'chō mi-kōl rō, yishmor es	יִשְׁמָרְךָ מִכָּל רָע, יִשְׁמֹר אֶת
naf-shechō. Adonōy yish-mōr	נַפְשֶׁךָ: יְיָ יִשְׁמֹר
tzays'chō uvo-echō may-atōh	צֵאתְךָ וּבֹאֶךָ, מֵעַתָּה
v'ad olōm	וְעַד עוֹלָם:

SWAHILI.

(Zanzibar.)

بَابِ يَتُ وَلِي مَبْفُونِ • جَيْنَ لَكَ لِتَكَاتِ • وَفَلَمْ وَكَ وَجَرِ • وَبِنْدَالُ
 لَتِنْدِيكَ كَمَ مَبْفُونِ نَكَتِكَ نَشِ فَفِيُو • لِيُو تُوْبِ شَكُولِ شِيْتُ
 تَنَشَحَاجِي • نَوِ تُسَمِّحَ مَدِيْنِ يَسِيْتُ كَمَ نَسِ تُلْفِيُو سَمِّحَ وَدِيْنِ وَيْتُ •
 نَوِ وَسْتَبْلِكَ كَتِكَ كُجَرِيُو تُوْكُو نَشَرِ • آمِيْنِ •

BABA yetu, ulioko mbinguni, litakate jina lako. Ufalme wako uje ;
 upendalo litendeke kama mbinguni, vivyo katika inchi. Utupe leo
 chakula utunachoihtajia. Tusamehe deni zetu, kama tuwasamehevyo
 wawiwao na sisi. Usitulete katika nyonda, lakini utuokoe maovuni.
 Hakika yako wewe ni ufaume, na nguvu, na heshima hatta milele.
 Amina.