



Diocese of Chichester Schools Department

DEPARTING AND STARTING

Collective Worship Resources
for Ascension and Pentecost



CONTENTS

PAGE	ITEM
3	Foreword by Jeremy Taylor
4	Introduction and Overview
	Ascension
5	1 – Farewell?
8	2 – Heaven’s Above?
	Pentecost
10	3 – Happy Birthday!
12	4 – Water, Wind and Fire
15	5 – The Dove from Above

FOREWORD by Jeremy Taylor

Many schools in the diocese enjoyed using the previous worship outlines we published last year for *Holy Week and Easter* and for *Advent and Epiphany*; they are still available in the diocesan schools' website: www.diochi.org.uk/schools-worship. This year we have commissioned Adam Earle, the headteacher of West Hoathly CEP School, to produce some more material for use for Ascension Day and around Pentecost – the time in the year when we celebrate the birth of the Christian church and the start of its worldwide expansion.

It's my sense that we are less effective in celebrating these two festivals than some of the others in the Christian calendar. In the past this may have been because Pentecost usually fell in the half term break. This is no longer always the case. And they are vital! To understand how Christianity broke out of being confined to one small geographical area and to the people of one tiny religious group and spread to become the largest and most widespread faith in the world, we need to know how this explosion began. The events that lead to them follow on 40 to 50 days after Jesus' death and resurrection. In this period he has appeared to his disciples on several occasions and in various places. Now he is to leave them, so that the Spirit of God can come upon them (John 16.6). The Spirit that will empower and transform them. The challenge in enabling our pupils to understand and relate to these events is their frankly supernatural nature, a feature that runs against the spirit of our own age. My hope is that church schools will be thoroughly counter-cultural in this. Let's challenge the secularist assumptions of much educational thinking. They are after all just as much belief positions, not demonstrable, evidenced certainties. A spiritual world view has much more validity – so let's proclaim it.

To help schools in this, the Diocesan Board of Education has commissioned a further set of 5 outlines for collective worship, written by Adam Earle, one of the headteachers in the diocese. He has an established track record not just in writing and leading outstanding acts of worship himself, but also in producing materials that other schools can use to enrich their worship. His outlines are flexible, practical and (where appropriate) fun; they make use of a wide range of music (both for listening and for singing); they provide good 'hooks' to grasp the attention of children; and they make good use of some of the huge range of liturgical resources now available in the Church of England (under the *Common Worship* banner) in a way that will create better links between what children experience in school and in their parish churches. We are again very grateful to Adam for sharing his expertise more widely.

I hope many schools will make use of this material. Adapt it to suit your own situation (especially in secondary schools). Involve clergy and other Christian visitors to schools in its delivery. Share some of the ideas and material with those who lead worship in the churches your school has links with. Evaluate the impact it has on everyone in the school community: pupils, staff, parents and so on. And please feed back your experiences to the Schools Department at Diocesan Church House (on 01273 425687 or schools@diochi.org.uk); we would welcome any comments you have to make in the light of your experience of using the outlines. The comments we received from schools about the earlier materials were very helpful to us in planning this third set, and we are already thinking of what we should do next!

Jeremy Taylor
Diocesan Director of Education

INTRODUCTION and OVERVIEW

The themes of Ascension and Pentecost at first seem obvious; it's only when you start to unpack them and consider what is relevant and appropriate for the children in our schools that the challenge begins. These acts of worship, which should, as usual, be prepared and followed with the expert eye of the leader in knowing their audience, adapted as necessary. They are offered as a resource to help children reflect a little on these two key events in the Christian calendar.

Ascension

Of all the elements of the incarnation story this is perhaps one of the most difficult to grasp. All the others take place very much in the physical domain, even the resurrection and subsequent appearances of Jesus can be accommodated in the human thought frame but then God disturbs us with a very visual demonstration of Christ's reality by raising him up to heaven in full view of his onlookers. Rather than ignoring the questions that this poses e.g. why were the disciples not greatly saddened by Christ's departure, what does this event tell us about his nature and the nature of heaven, I have attempted to address these at least in part.

1. Faced by the reality of the resurrection, and Jesus' promises fulfilled it seems that when he departs from them, into heaven, commissioning them to spread the good news and promising the Holy Spirit, they are not upset but, knowing his word to be true up until that point, they worship and praise God.
2. "Where is heaven and what is it like?" could be a challenging series for worship in the most theologically minded community, but the ascension presents the problem – why did Jesus rise up into the sky? The people of the day believed that heaven was a geographical location above the sky. Our human explorations have proved this not to be the case. So where is it and why up? Jesus' ascension demonstrates, to the disciples, that he had returned to heaven, but heaven is all around and within God's people – we strive for heaven here and now.

Pentecost

To make matters more complicated we then come to the gift of the Holy Spirit. Invisibility makes this easier to accommodate but, like the wind, we see not the Spirit himself but the impact of his action, in the world and the people of God. We consider Pentecost as a new beginning, consider the symbolism that the Church has employed for generations to try and explain the inexplicable (like Jesus himself we use analogy) and then apply that understanding to a particular prayerful act – asking for God's Spirit to work in our world, to bring peace.

3. For many, Pentecost is very much the birthday of the World Wide Church. Jesus' own ministry was largely confined to the Jews with a small national region. Now the message was heard by visitors from much further afield and the world wide mission of spreading the good news began.
4. Symbols are important and we reflect here on three apparently incompatible ideas used to explain the working of the Holy Spirit.
5. It is good to relate something very familiar to something less familiar so we focus on the idea of God's transforming Spirit, praying for peace in a troubled world.

Useful Sources

- As in previous sets I have included appropriate liturgical elements drawn from Common Worship and the Common Worship: Times and Seasons publication, both of which are available, in their entirety, to be downloaded from the Church of England Common Worship website.
- I mention, in a couple of places, the Taizé website: www.taize.fr (select the English version). Here you can download music, words and play simple accompaniments for many Taizé songs. Follow the Prayer and Song link, then "Learning the Songs" to access an alphabetical list.

Enjoy worshipping together!

Adam J. Earle
Headteacher – West Hoathly CE Primary School

1 - Farewell? (Ascension)

Theme: Praise and Thanksgiving

Resources: A small suitcase or bag and several "essential" items that you cannot be without e.g. chocolate rations, lipstick

The liturgical colour for Ascension is White – you may wish to use a cloth of this colour on the worship table. A candle may also be lit to mark the beginning of the time of worship and extinguished at the end

Music for Listening: God is gone up with a triumphant shout (Gerald Finzi)

Suggested Song(s): Fill your hearts with joy and gladness
God is love, his the care

Opening:

- Children enter quietly with appropriate music playing.
- Greet the children.
- Use the following opening sentences:

V: God has gone up with a shout,
R: **the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.**

V: In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
R: **Amen.**

Engagement:

- Begin by saying the following and gesturing appropriately as you do so, as if you are planning to leave...
Salam (Arabic), Sayonara (Japanese), Auf Wiedersehen (German), Arrivederci (Italian), Au Revoir (French), Adios (Spanish), Alvida (Hindi), Do svidan'ya (Russian), Hwyl fawr (Welsh), zai jian (Chinese).

(Alternatively, if you have children whose home language may not be English and you feel it is appropriate, invite a number of children to say farewell or goodbye in other languages).
- Reveal the case and begin to pack the essential items explaining why you have included them. Getting ready to go away can be a difficult time, hoping that you have remembered everything, etc.
- Ask the children to think about times when people they know have gone away, perhaps special people, what was the most difficult part to deal with? Explain that the hardest thing is probably saying goodbye to the people you are leaving behind. Thinking about how they will be once you are gone, how they will manage.
- Very often that time of parting can be a time of uncertainty and sadness.

Development:

- At Easter time we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. The time that he rose again from the dead, when the disciples found the tomb empty, his body gone and later they met with the risen Jesus.
-

-
- The Bible tells us that, after the resurrection, Jesus met with the disciples many times but eventually the time came for Jesus to return to heaven, to go back to the place he came from.
 - Now you may have expected this to be a very sad moment for the disciples. Their wonderful leader, teacher, guide, the friend and master they loved so very much was going to be leaving them.
 - Jesus took his disciples, his special friends to a quiet place near the town of Bethany. Then he was taken up out of their sight.
-

Bible Reading:

- Listen to what Luke says about this very special moment which we find right at the end of Luke's gospel. How do the disciples react when Jesus is taken away into heaven?
 - Luke 24.50-53
 - Why was the disciples' reaction a bit odd – not what you might have expected?
 - Why do you think this was?
-

Reflection and Prayer:

The focus of the prayers on this occasion should be praise and thanksgiving. A selection from the following ideas could be used:

- The disciples spent their time in the temple praising God. What words might we use to praise God? Gather ideas from the children and then read these out, interspersed by short periods of silence, asking the children to reflect on the words they hear. They may, silently, say some particular prayers of thanks and praise of their own.
- Use the words of the "Gloria" given below, perhaps with different children reading them out or use a sung version (the parish church may use a particular simple version).

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

- Other simple forms of the Gloria may be sung; Taizé is a useful source of these. (See the **Taizé Website** to download words, music and accompaniments – see introductory notes).
-

-
- The prayers could conclude with this collect for Ascension:

Risen Christ,
you have raised our human nature to the throne of heaven:
help us to seek and serve you,
that we may join you at the Father's side,
where you reign with the Spirit in glory,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Conclusion (May be said together or by the leader):

- **The Grace**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all, evermore. **Amen.**

2 – Heaven’s Above? (Ascension)

Theme: Heaven is all around, we can be part of God’s kingdom and share the good news

Resources: A large map of the World or a globe
(Optional) A step ladder
A pair of binoculars

The liturgical colour for Ascension is White – you may wish to use a cloth of this colour on the worship table. A candle may also be lit to mark the beginning of the time of worship and extinguished at the end

Music for Listening: God is gone up with a triumphant shout (Gerald Finzi)

Suggested Song(s): Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
Go, tell it on the mountain

Opening:

- Children enter quietly with appropriate music playing.
- Greet the children.
- Use the following opening sentences:

V: God has gone up with a shout,
R: **the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.**

V: In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
R: **Amen.**

Engagement:

- Stand at the front of the hall staring upwards as if you are looking at something fascinating on or above the ceiling.
 - Look at the children and say, “Well I can’t see it myself, I need to take a closer look.”
 - If using, fetch the step ladder, place it at the front (with assistance) climb up it and again look at the ceiling.
 - Fetch the binoculars, climb the ladder and examine the same point on the ceiling.
 - Each time shrug and say, “Well, that’s no better I still can’t see it!”
 - Now go and examine the globe or map carefully, all round and explain that you can’t see it there either.
 - Can anyone guess what I’m looking for? I’m looking for heaven.
-

Bible Reading:

- Yesterday we heard how Jesus ascended into heaven, leaving his disciples, hidden from their sight. Listen to another account of that event and think about what the disciples were thinking and doing.
 - Acts 1.6-11
-

Development:

- Where is heaven?
- Jesus was taken up into the sky, or so it seems. The disciples stood staring upwards. But is heaven above the sky?
- The people at the time of Jesus certainly thought so, and it was entirely right for Jesus to ascend into the sky, before being hidden by the cloud, showing them that he was returning to heaven.
- But if I got into a spaceship now and went straight up would I reach heaven? A lot of our space explorations have shown that heaven is not a place above the clouds.
- (Scientists have calculated that if Jesus ascended vertically from the Earth (in Israel), travelling at a speed sufficient to break free from the Earth's gravitational pull and continuing at that same constant speed, he would just (two thousand years later) have reached the edge of our Solar System).
- So if heaven isn't up, where is it?
- Think about the men in white robes who appeared and spoke to the disciples. They said, "Why are you looking up into the sky?"
- Heaven is all around us, above us, below us, beside us and within us. We can all be part of God's family, his heavenly kingdom.
- Jesus called his disciples to share his love, the good news with others and spread the news throughout the earth. He also promised his Holy Spirit would come with power to fill them. Heaven on earth.
- What could we do to help make this world a more heavenly place?

Reflection and Prayer:

The main focus for prayer and reflection today is making the world a heavenly place.

- Different children may read the biddings and all join in the response.

Father God, help us to share your love with all the people we encounter day by day, showing care, kindness and respect to everyone.

V: Lord, Your kingdom come.

R: **Your will be done.**

Living Lord, help us to share your peace in this world, bringing an end to war and mistrust, teach us all to live in peace with one another.

V: Lord, Your kingdom come.

R: **Your will be done.**

Almighty God, help us to live as you have shown us, doing good and defending what is right.

V: Lord, Your kingdom come.

R: **Your will be done.**

- Conclude with **The Lord's Prayer.**

Conclusion:

- May the almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. **Amen.**
-

3 – Happy Birthday! (Pentecost)

Theme: Celebrating the “birthday” of the world wide family of God

Resources: A “birthday” cake with candles, matches to light, a birthday card, a big birthday badge with a number on it

The liturgical colour for Pentecost is Red, you may wish to use a cloth of this colour to cover the worship table

Music for Listening: Come Holy Ghost (Plainsong), Come Holy Spirit (Taizé)

Suggested Song(s): All over the world the Spirit is moving
The Spirit lives to set us free (Walk in the Light)
Give me oil in my lamp

Opening:

- Greet the children.
- Use the following opening sentences:

V: The Lord is here,
R: **his Spirit is with us.**

V: Let us worship the Lord.
R: **Thanks be to God.**

Engagement:

- Begin by placing the birthday cake on the table without comment, add the candles (do not light them), place the card and badge in view.
- Start to sing “Happy Birthday” (encourage the children and other staff to join in) but stop suddenly when reaching the line “happy birthday dear... ”
- Ask, whose birthday it is at this time of year.
- There may be some children who will be celebrating their birthdays, if so, invite them to the front. Explain that they share their birthday with another special birthday.
- Ask what a birthday is – a time when we celebrate the birth of a person or people, a new beginning, it’s a very exciting time.

Development:

- At this time of year the Church, all around the world, celebrates a sort of birthday, the day on which the Holy Spirit was given – the day of Pentecost.
-

Bible Reading:

- Listen to the account of what happened from the Bible.
 - Acts 2.1-4
 - As this is read, and the flames are mentioned, light the candles on the birthday cake.
-

Development Continued:

- From that moment the disciples were changed people, they had the power of the Holy Spirit within them and they were filled with courage. They went outside and started telling people all about Jesus and the good news that he had come to set people free from all the wrong things they had done.
- As it was an important festival time there were thousands of visitors in Jerusalem from many different parts of the world – the miracle was that they all understood what the disciples were saying.
- So that was a “birthday” moment for the world wide family of God, the church. From then on the disciples travelled further and further from Jerusalem to share the good news about Jesus and the church began to grow and grow.

Reflection and Prayer:

- Watch the flames of the candles on the birthday cake and think about the celebrations we enjoy, especially think about what is being celebrated – a new beginning.
- Ask some children to prepare simple prayers for God’s family around the world – those who are in the midst of war, those who suffer for their faith, those who work to bring God’s love to others etc.
- The Collect for Pentecost:

Holy Spirit, sent by the Father,
ignite in us your holy fire;
strengthen your children with the gift of faith,
revive your Church with the breath of love,
and renew the face of the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Conclusion (May be said together or by the leader):

- **The Grace**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all, evermore. **Amen.**

4 – Water, Wind and Fire

Theme: Symbols of the Holy Spirit

Resources: A candle, a glass of water and a small electric fan

The liturgical colour for Pentecost is Red, you may wish to use a cloth of this colour to cover the worship table

Music for Listening: Come Holy Ghost (Plainsong), Come Holy Spirit (Taizé)

Suggested Song(s): Lord the light of your love (Shine Jesus, Shine)
You've gotta move when the Spirit says move

Opening:

- Greet the children.
- Use the following opening sentences:

V: The Lord is here,
R: **his Spirit is with us.**

V: Let us worship the Lord.
R: **Thanks be to God.**

Engagement:

- Ask for a volunteer (or pre-arrange) to play "Scissors, Paper, Stone".
- Stone = clenched fist, Scissors = snipping index and middle finger, Paper = flat hand.
- Stone blunts Scissors, Scissors cut paper, Paper wraps stone.
- Play a few games and discuss how the items are incompatible.
- Three things that don't really go together.

Development

- At this time we are thinking about the time when God sent his Holy Spirit to his people, the season of Pentecost. Today we are thinking about a few of the symbols of the Holy Spirit.
-

Bible Reading:

- Listen to the reading from the Bible that remind us of the day of Pentecost. Think about the ways in which the Holy Spirit is described.
 - Acts 2.1–4
 - A violent wind and flames or tongues of fire.
-

Development Continued:

- Sometimes the Holy Spirit is also said to be like flowing water.
-

-
- Water, Wind and Fire – they don't seem to go together either. We could almost make up our own "Scissors, paper, stone" game with them. Wind fans the fire, water puts the fire out, water is whipped up by the wind.
 - But all of these are symbols, representing the way in which the Holy Spirit works in God's people.
 - Show the three items as you explain – present some or all of the following ideas (asking children for their ideas as well).

Water

We use water for washing – the Holy Spirit washes away the wrong things in the lives of God's people and transforms people to be more like Jesus (The Fruit of the Spirit).

We drink water to prevent us from feeling thirsty – the Holy Spirit helps God's people to feel satisfied i.e. not thirsting for God but filled by his presence.

Wind

Breath – this keeps us going at all times – the Holy Spirit is like the spiritual breath that keeps God's people going even when they face difficult times and challenges.

Wind – blows wherever it wants, is unpredictable – God's people don't always understand the way in which God works but learn to trust that he knows what is best. (God moves in a mysterious way).

Power – The wind is used to provide power and propulsion (you could demonstrate this!) – for God's people the Holy Spirit provides courage and inspiration to do God's work, caring and sharing with others.

Fire

Burning up rubbish – the Holy Spirit helps God's people to sort out what matters in life, to get rid of the rubbish (unimportant things) and focus on what is good and right.

Purification – the refiner's fire heats precious metals to a very high temperature where the impurities are driven off and the pure metal can be tapped. The Holy Spirit transforms God's people for good.

Light – fire brings light so we can see the hazards and obstacles in our way. The Holy Spirit shows God's people what is right and wrong.

Warmth – fire brings warmth and comfort. The Holy Spirit brings comfort and assurance to God's people.

Reflection and Prayer:

- Ask the children to look at the three objects/symbols again.
- (Children may read the following);

Holy Spirit – Fire of God – bring light and truth to the world. Teach your people what is good and right.

Holy Spirit – River of Life – bring refreshment and hope to a thirsty world. Teach your people to live lives of service and love towards others.

Holy Spirit – Breath of Heaven - bring strength to the poor and unjustly treated in our world. Teach your people to care for those in need.

Amen.

Conclusion:

- V: Inspired by God Spirit's, go in the light and peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.
R: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**
-

5 – The Dove From Above

Theme: The Spirit of Peace

Resources: A large picture of a dove, a globe or world map
Paper dove outlines, tissue paper, feathers etc, (for prayer response)
A Candle, large bowl or basket (for prayer response)
(Optional) News bulletin music

The liturgical colour for Pentecost is Red, you may wish to use a cloth of this colour to cover the worship table

Music for Listening: A song for peace or gentle classical music

Suggested Song(s): Spirit of God, as strong as the wind
Spirit of peace

Opening:

- Greet the children.
- Use the following opening sentences:

V: The Lord is here,
R: **his Spirit is with us.**

V: Let us worship the Lord.
R: **Thanks be to God.**

Engagement:

- Sit at a table in front of the children, play the news music if available, and tap papers as if preparing to read the news.
- Read the following:

Good morning/afternoon, here is the news. Today nothing bad has happened whatsoever. All existing wars have come to an end and no new wars have started.

There has been an end to all world poverty, all children are now well fed, nothing has gone to waste, no-one is sick, everyone is very happy indeed.

The police throughout the world have informed us that there have been no crimes, no burglaries, no murders and people are being kind and supportive towards one another.

Traffic news – there have been no road accidents, there are no traffic jams and all drivers have said that they are calm and content on their journeys.

Education – all children have, today, done exactly what they were asked, none of them have got into trouble and every single one has got all their sums correct.

The environment – the leaders of the nations have found a solution to global warming and the reduction of CO₂ emissions. The Ozone layer has been repaired and a clean, safe and cheap alternative to fossil fuels has been found.

Finally no little kittens have got stuck in trees and Mrs Amelia Friend has one first prize in a delicious jam competition!

That is the news, what a wonderful world and long may it continue!

Development:

- If only the news could really be like that, if only the world could be a happier, friendlier, more peaceful place.
- Of course we know that things aren't all rosy and wonderful like that, it was a bit of wishful thinking but the Bible talks of a time in the future when all bad things will come to an end and all things will be made new.
- In the meantime God's people pray that God's Spirit will be at work in the world, in the hearts and minds of people to change the world for good and bring peace to all people.

Bible Reading:

- John's Gospel is different from the other three and gives a slightly different view of some of the events in Jesus' life. Listen to how he tells of Jesus giving his Spirit to the disciples.
- John 20.19-23

Development Continued:

- "Peace be with you" - the words of Jesus when he gave his Spirit to his disciples.
- Show the symbol of a dove.
- Another symbol which people often use to represent the Holy Spirit is the symbol of a dove, descending from heaven.
- For many people the dove is a powerful symbol of peace.

Reflection and Prayer:

- Today in our time for thinking and praying we are going to ask for God's peace in our world, a world where there is so much fighting and fear.
- Place the map or globe in a central position at the front. Ask the children to sit in silence for a minute or so and think about peace – perhaps asking God to bring an end to war and fear in our world.
- Either sing a simple repetitive song for peace e.g. a Taizé piece (See notes) or play some peaceful music.
- Ask the children, a few at a time to bring forward a dove outline or feather shape and lay it down around the globe. This could be done as the conclusion, as they leave the hall or a few children representing the others could do so.

Conclusion:

- Some words from the gospel of John:

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it me afraid. (John 14.27)

Amen.
