



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

LESSONS FROM THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR *The Day of Pentecost*

Summary of Today's Story

On the Jewish day of Pentecost, followers of Jesus, who were from Galilee, were gathered together. Suddenly, a noise came from the sky like a strong wind blowing and tongues of fire touched each person there. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages so that people from every country in the world could understand them, each in their own native language.

All of those present were amazed that they could, in the hearers' languages, hear the Galileans talk about what God has done.

Where You'll Find Today's Story

In the Bible

We recommend the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*.

Acts 2:1-11

In Children's Bibles

If you plan to use a children's Bible for storytelling, write the page numbers of today's story in the space below.

In Our Sunday Lectionary

Today's story is told in church on the following Sundays:

Year A: Day of Pentecost

Year B: Day of Pentecost

Year C: Day of Pentecost



Weaving Our Story with the Biblical Story

We finally can hear God speaking to us. This event, the coming of

the Holy Spirit, is the reversal of what happened at the Tower of Babel. There our languages became confused so that we could no longer understand one another, not only spoiling our attempt to reach heaven by our own efforts and pride, but also alienating us from each other and God.

Now, God has sent God's Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ, to bring us back to God. As the apostles gather to celebrate the Jewish feast of Pentecost, they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Here at this Jewish celebration, God's promise to Israel made at Mount Sinai—as recorded in the story of the people receiving the Ten Commandments—is fulfilled. With the coming of the Holy Spirit as told in Acts, all peoples of the earth are offered the new covenant and the gift of God's grace.

At Sinai, God appeared in the form of fire and smoke. Here at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit appears in the shape of tongues of fire.

This event is celebrated in the church as the birth of the Church, the beginning of the preaching that will carry the Good News of God in Christ to all nations of the earth. This preaching will untangle the confusion of languages that began at the Tower of Babel. That alienation has now been reversed by God.

Note: As the teacher, it would be a good idea for you to read the rest of chapter 2 in Acts to find out what the followers of Jesus were saying in these “foreign tongues.” After the coming of the Holy Spirit, Peter—the bumbling fisherman—stood up and witnessed for Jesus just as Jesus had commanded the disciples to do. Peter's preaching was amazing and “many of them believed his message and were baptized, and about three thousand people were added to the group that day” (Acts 2:41).



The Episcopal Thread

The Day of Pentecost is one of the Principal Feasts in the Church and always takes place on a Sunday. Often in the Episcopal Church, this day is celebrated with a church service filled with symbols of the Holy Spirit. Adorned with red balloons, red roses, flying kites and banners, even real doves, the church takes on a festive and joyful air. The lesson from Acts is sometimes read in a foreign language, bringing to life the experience of the disciples and people in the passage.

As a Trinitarian church, the Episcopal Church sees the Holy Spirit daily in the presence of God that sustains us. The Holy Spirit is invoked at baptism: “You are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism...” (BCP, p. 308); at confirmation: “... and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more...” (BCP, p. 418); in the consecration of bread and wine at Eucharist and of oil for chrism and for anointing; in the anointing for healing; and in the ordination of a deacon, priest and bishop.



Gathering

As the children enter the classroom, engage them in a simple activity that relates to

today's lesson. For the younger children, you might set out pictures to color, play dough and a story box and let them choose their activity. On page 8, you'll find a Gathering Activity handout to use if you wish.

As another option, you might have the younger children make simple "tongues of flame" to wave during the storytelling time. Set out streamers, ribbons or strips of construction paper, craft sticks and tape. To make the "flames," children tape the streamers to the sticks.

For older children, you might offer a brief fellowship time, during which they can renew friendships, share news and just be together. This time will help them build community and relationships, which is important in Christian life.

You might also have a few books available on a table for the children to look through during this time. These may be books related to the lesson, children's Bible stories, pictorial books on the Holy Land or fictional stories related to Christian life.

After all the children have arrived and had a few minutes of activity or fellowship time, gather them together and say a simple opening prayer, such as:

- We thank you, God, for bringing us together today, to learn about how you love us and are with us each day. Help us to learn to know you and to do as you command, to be witnesses for you always. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*



Telling the Story

The story of the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost is a great story to tell around a "campfire." Read aloud the story from a children's Bible or,

better yet, tell the story in your own words. Tell it in the present tense to make the story come alive. For other ways to enhance the story, see pages 2-3 in the Appendix, also available to download.

If the children made "tongues of flame" during Gathering time, invite them to wave their "flames" at the appropriate time.

Let children know that we celebrate Pentecost not only as the coming of the Holy Spirit but also as "the birthday of the Church."

There is no need at this time to discuss the story or to explain its meaning. For now, let the story settle into the hearts and minds of the children. Later, while having snacks or doing an activity, you can bring up the story again and invite the children to talk about it.



Prayer

Set up a small worship center in your classroom.

Materials

- small table with a cloth to cover it
- 2 candles or a single large Christ candle
- matches
- Bible
- cross
- optional: flowers (real, fake or handmade by the children)*

Have the children set up a simple altar with the materials listed above. Invite them to place on the altar any drawings or crafts that they created during Gathering time. Then light the candles.

Read one or two verses from today's scripture to help the children connect the story that they just heard with the Bible. If working with older children, you might expand the reading to several verses.

Suggestions for the reading:

For younger children: Acts 2:4

For older children: Acts 2:1-4

Help familiarize the children with our liturgy by doing the reading as it is done in church. Read as follows:

Reader: A reading from the book of Acts. (Read the selected passage.)

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and join in prayer. Say a brief prayer yourself then invite prayers from each child in the circle:

- Invite prayers of thanks for God's work in our lives during the past week. Encourage the children to notice God's active role in their lives in concrete ways: a turn of the heart from anger to forgiveness; a movement toward love; comfort from somebody else, help when sick.
- Welcome prayers for those who are sick or needy or in any kind of trouble. Children may offer prayers for themselves, for family members or friends, or for those whom they do not know, such as the hungry and the homeless.
- Ask if anyone has had a birthday or celebrated a special day during the past week and give thanks for these special times.
- End the prayer time by praying together the Lord's Prayer.

Carefully extinguish the candles.



Sharing

Pass out snacks and say a simple grace, such as:

Give us grateful hearts, O Lord, for all your gifts, and make us mindful of the needs of others, in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

Or:

May God—the one who comes to us—bless our meal and help us to see his coming in every single moment of our lives. *Amen.*

—adapted from *One Hundred Table Graces*, p. 73
(NY: Bell Tower, 1992)

Or have one of the children lead the class in a table grace learned from home, camp or elsewhere.

This is a good time, while sharing a snack, to begin to discuss the story that was just told. Review the story of the Tower of Babel and invite the children to compare it with the Pentecost story. You might also have the children imagine the experience of the Pentecost from the perspective of the followers of Jesus and from the perspective of the hearers.

Remind the children that the Holy Spirit is one of the persons of God and is a gift from God to us. As Jesus ascended into heaven, he promised that the Holy Spirit would be sent to us to sustain us and guide us and give us the ways to proclaim the message of God to others.



Memorization

There is no new memorization for this lesson. If any of the children are still working on memorizing previously assigned passages, gently encourage them to finish at this time.



Weaving Our Faith

As the class draws to a close, take a few minutes to help the children summarize the story and say what they learned today by asking questions such as:

- What happened in our story today?
- What do we call the day on which this happened?
- What was amazing about this event?

Encourage the children to remember key words or phrases from today's story such as: *Holy Spirit, Pentecost, wind and fire.*



Closing Prayer

Before the children leave, say a closing prayer to send them into the church worship service or back to their homes with God's love and blessing. The prayer can be very simple, such as this one:

- Dear God, we thank you for this day and for your sending your Holy Spirit to us. Help us to see the Holy Spirit in our lives this week in whatever we do, in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

End the class with a dismissal that is used in church, such as:

- Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

The children respond:

- Thanks be to God.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

GATHERING ACTIVITY: THE HOLY SPIRIT

When the Holy Spirit came to the disciples, it looked like tongues of fire resting on them. Put a tongue of fire above this child's head, either with marker or crayon, or with pieces of colored paper.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

HOLY SPIRIT DOVES for Primary, Elementary

Children make doves, representing the form in which the Holy Spirit descended from heaven.

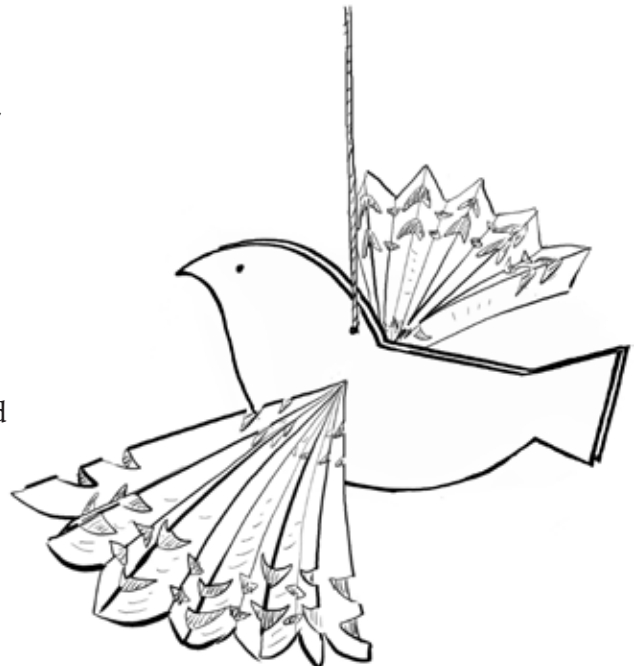
Materials:

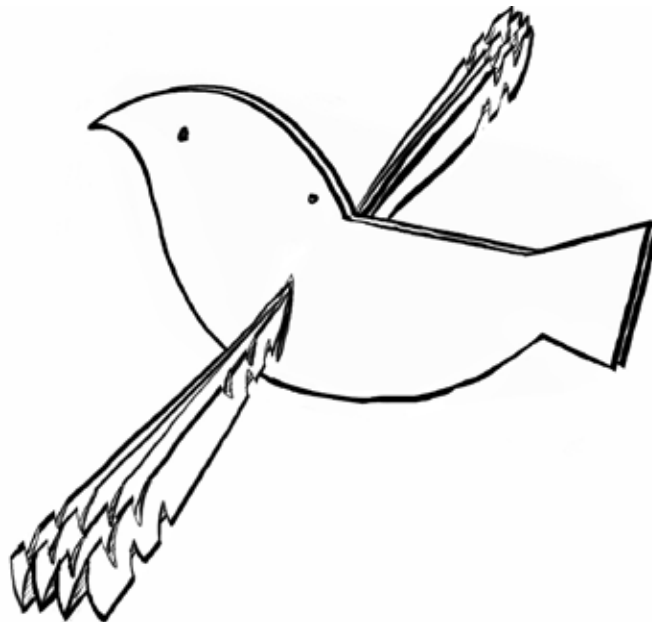
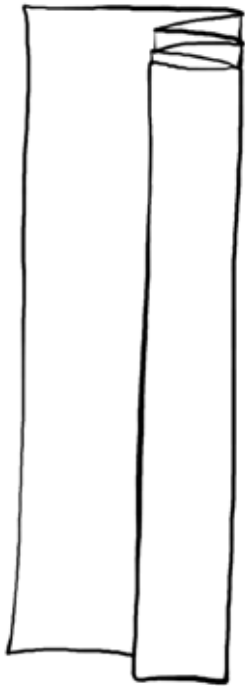
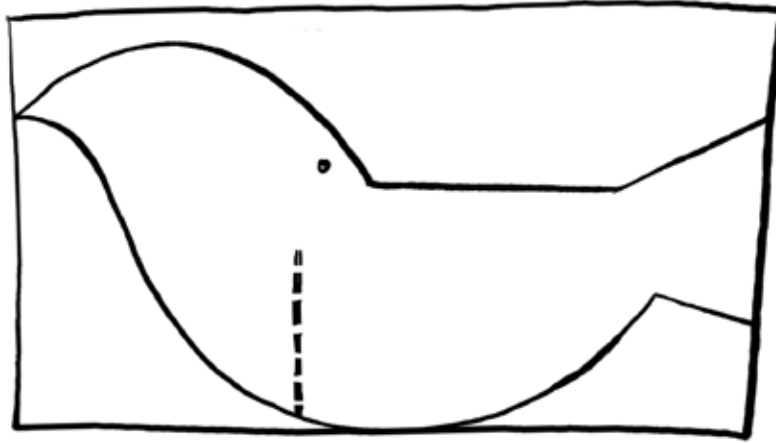
- white construction paper, 1 per child
- white tissue paper
- pencils
- scissors
- hole punch
- stapler
- ribbon or string
- copies of the bird pattern (p. 11)

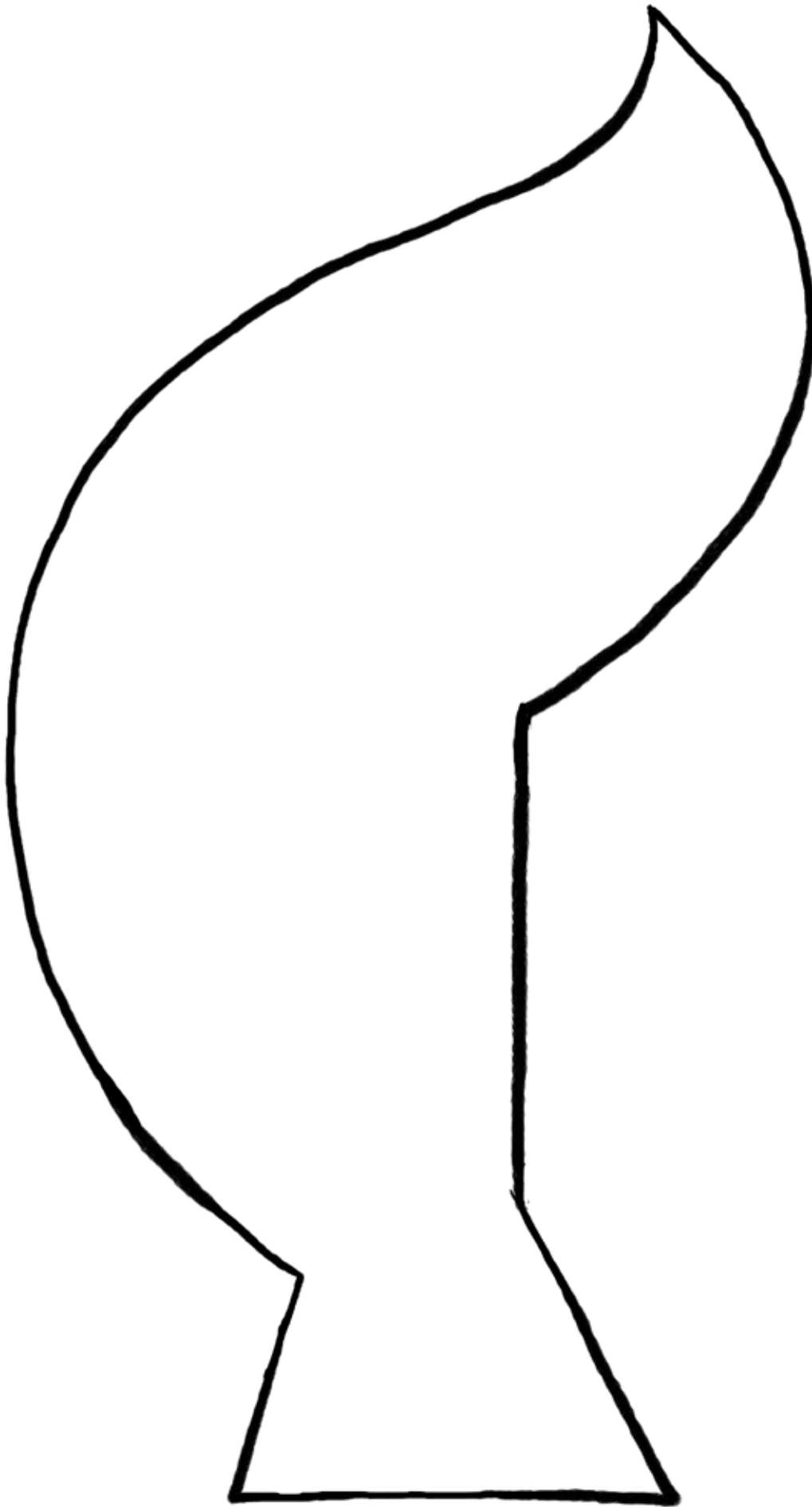
Directions:

Distribute a piece of construction paper to each child and invite them to make a dove, which represents the Holy Spirit. It may be helpful for you to model the making and have children follow your example.

1. Draw or trace the bird's body (p. 11) on the construction paper, then cut it out.
2. Cut a slit in the bottom of the bird. Make a small hole above the slit with a hole punch.
3. Cut a tissue paper square approximately twice the size of the bird's body.
4. Fold the tissue paper square back and forth, accordion-style. Make the folds small and about the same size.
5. To make the wings, staple the folded tissue paper in the middle. Cut away a corner at each end to make the ends pointed. Then cut out shapes on the sides, like you would with a snowflake.
6. Open the paper to form wings like a fan.
7. Insert the wings into the slit.
8. Thread the ribbon or string through the hole, tie and hang.









WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

RAINBOW RIBBON WINDSOCKS for Primary, Elementary

Children make bright-colored windsocks, reminiscent of the mighty rushing wind that accompanied the arrival of the Holy Spirit.

Materials:

- poster board of various colors, 1 per child
- bright-colored ribbons of various colors, several per child
- stapler
- markers, glitter pens, ribbons or other decorative materials
- scissors
- hole punch
- string or nylon thread

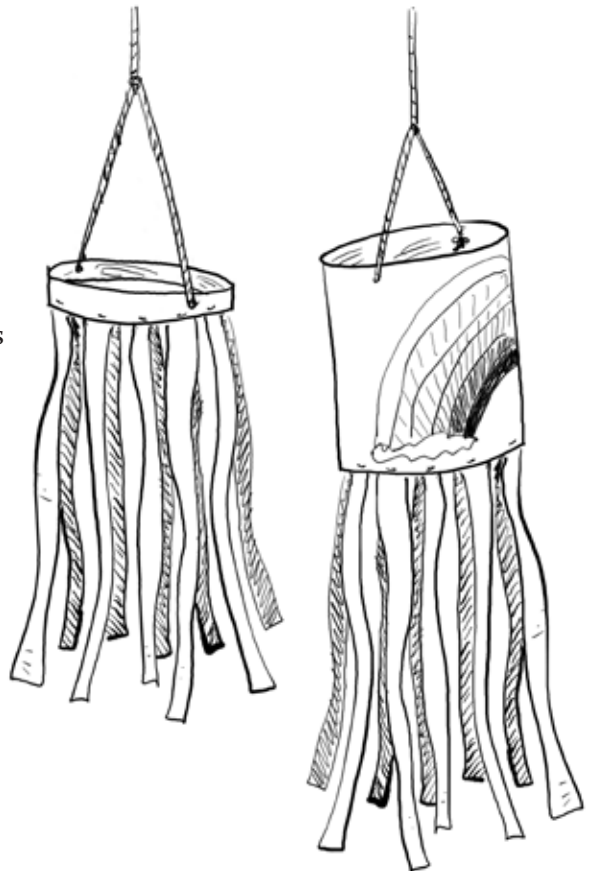
Preparation:

Cut a strip of poster board for each child. Size may vary, from 6" x 16" to 12" x 20". You may also wish to cut several long ribbon streamers for each child prior to class.

Directions:

Distribute a strip of poster board to each child and invite them to make a colorful windsock.

1. Decorate the poster board with markers, glitter pens, ribbons or other decorative materials. Glue the strip together at the ends to make a hoop.
2. Give (or cut, if you haven't already) several long ribbon streamers of various colors to each child.
3. Staple the ribbons to the strip. If it's wide, staple them to the bottom, near the edge.
4. Punch two holes at the top of the hoop and tie string or nylon thread for hanging.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

WIND CATCHERS for Preschool

Children make simple wind catchers.

Materials:

- light cardboard (file folders, poster board)
- scissors
- markers or crayons
- crepe paper streamers in assorted bright colors, or thick ribbons
- stapler
- optional:* decorative items: glitter, ribbon, etc.

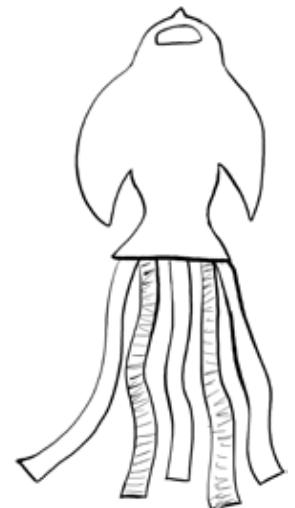
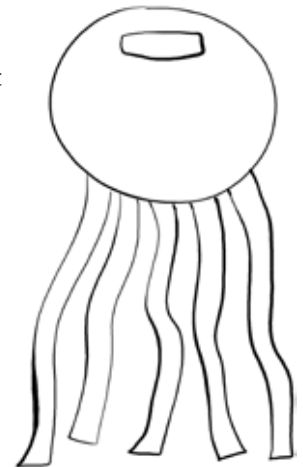
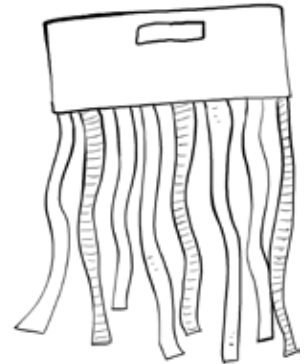
Preparation:

For each child, cut a rectangle from light cardboard, approximately 12" x 6". Then cut out a handle near the top.

Directions:

Distribute the cardboard with handle to each child and invite them to make a wind catcher.

1. Tell the children to decorate their windcatchers however they'd like. You may give them suggestions, based on what they've learned in the lesson.
2. When finished, cut and staple several crepe paper streamers or ribbons to one side.
3. Show the children how they can hold the windcatcher and run, with the streamers trailing behind.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

EDIBLE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

for Preschool, Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Children make and bake cookies resembling stained glass windows.

Materials:

butter cookie dough
frosting of several colors
cookie sheets
oven
optional: food coloring, various colors

Preparation:

Read the directions on the dough and frosting and be aware of any instructions that require advance preparation.

Directions:

Invite the children to bake some stained glass window cookies. Help the younger children as needed.

1. Tell the children they're going to make, bake and decorate cookies that look like a window. Show them how to shape the dough into a large cookie that's square, rectangular, round or arched.
2. Bake the cookies.
3. Let the cookies cool, and then frost them using various colors to make a design or picture of the child's choosing.
4. Eat and enjoy!

Variation:

Instead of colored frosting, use food coloring to make several batches of cookie dough in various colors. Let the child choose which colors he or she wants, and then have them design a stained glass window. For example, they could make a rainbow, flower, abstract design or something else. Bake the cookies and enjoy!



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

DOVE TISSUE MOSAICS for Primary, Elementary

Children make tissue-paper doves.

Materials:

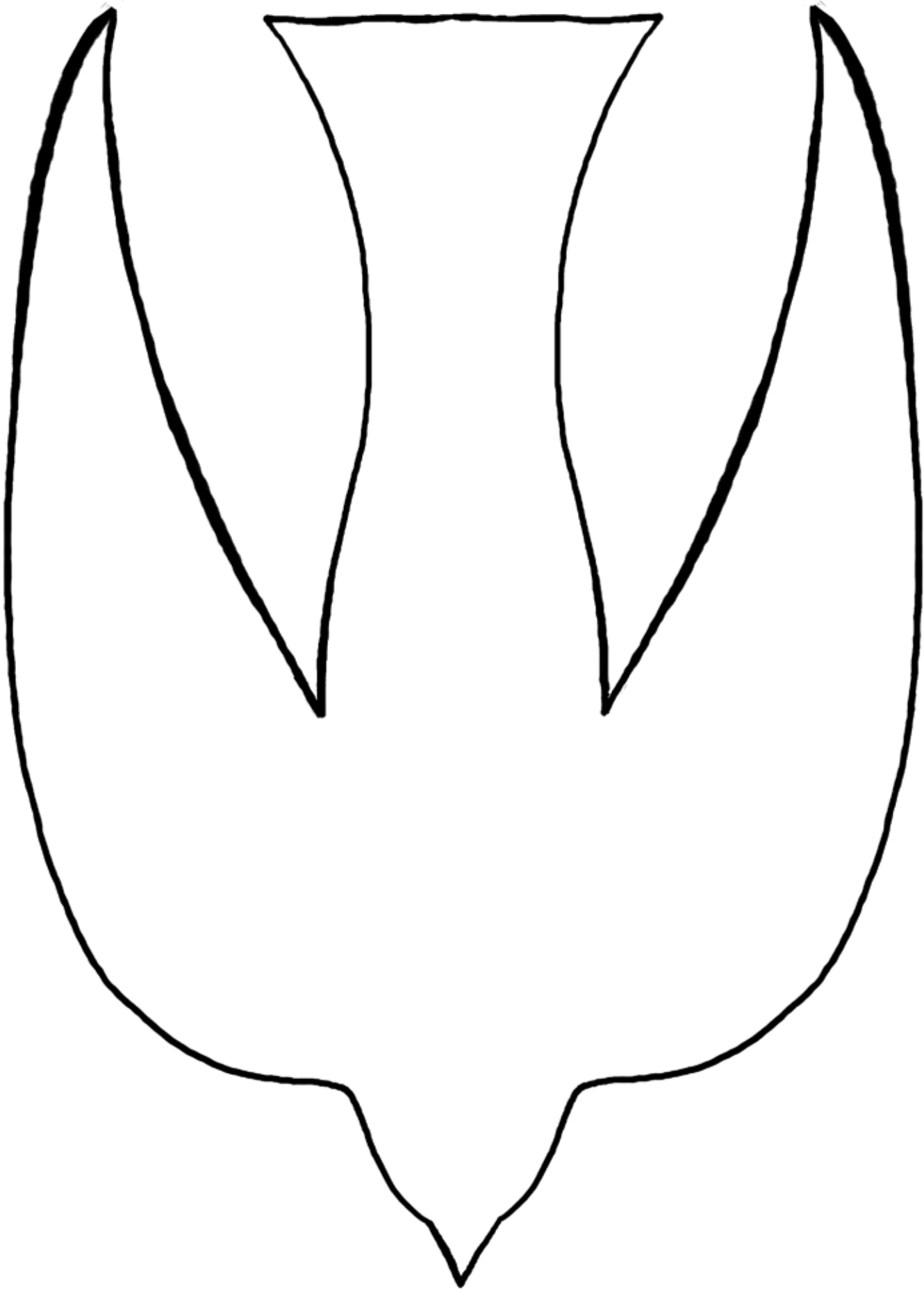
- white tissue paper
- dark blue or black tissue paper (small amount)
- dove pattern (p. 16), 1 per child
- white poster board or construction paper
- large piece of construction paper, dark blue or other colors
- pencils
- glue, in a small bowl for dipping

Preparation:

Cut the white tissue paper into 1" squares. You only need one small square of black or dark blue tissue per child.

Directions:

1. Cut out the dove pattern. Trace it onto the white poster board or construction paper. Cut out this dove.
2. Glue the dove onto the large, colored construction paper.
3. Press the eraser side of the pencil into the white tissue paper squares and scrunch the paper. This makes a fluffy, flower-like square.
4. Keeping the tissue wrapped around the pencil, dip the tissue lightly into the bowl of glue. Then press the tissue onto the dove.
5. Continue in this way until the dove has been filled with white, fluffy tissue squares.
6. Use one square of dark tissue paper to make the eye and glue on the dove.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

PENTECOST DIORAMAS for Intermediate

Children create scenes of Pentecost.

Materials:

- medium- to large-size, shallow box (a large cereal box will do), 1 per child
- dove patterns (p. 18)
- white poster board
- thin red and gold metallic ribbons
- tape
- paper clips
- seashells
- blue tissue paper
- markers or pens
- hole punch



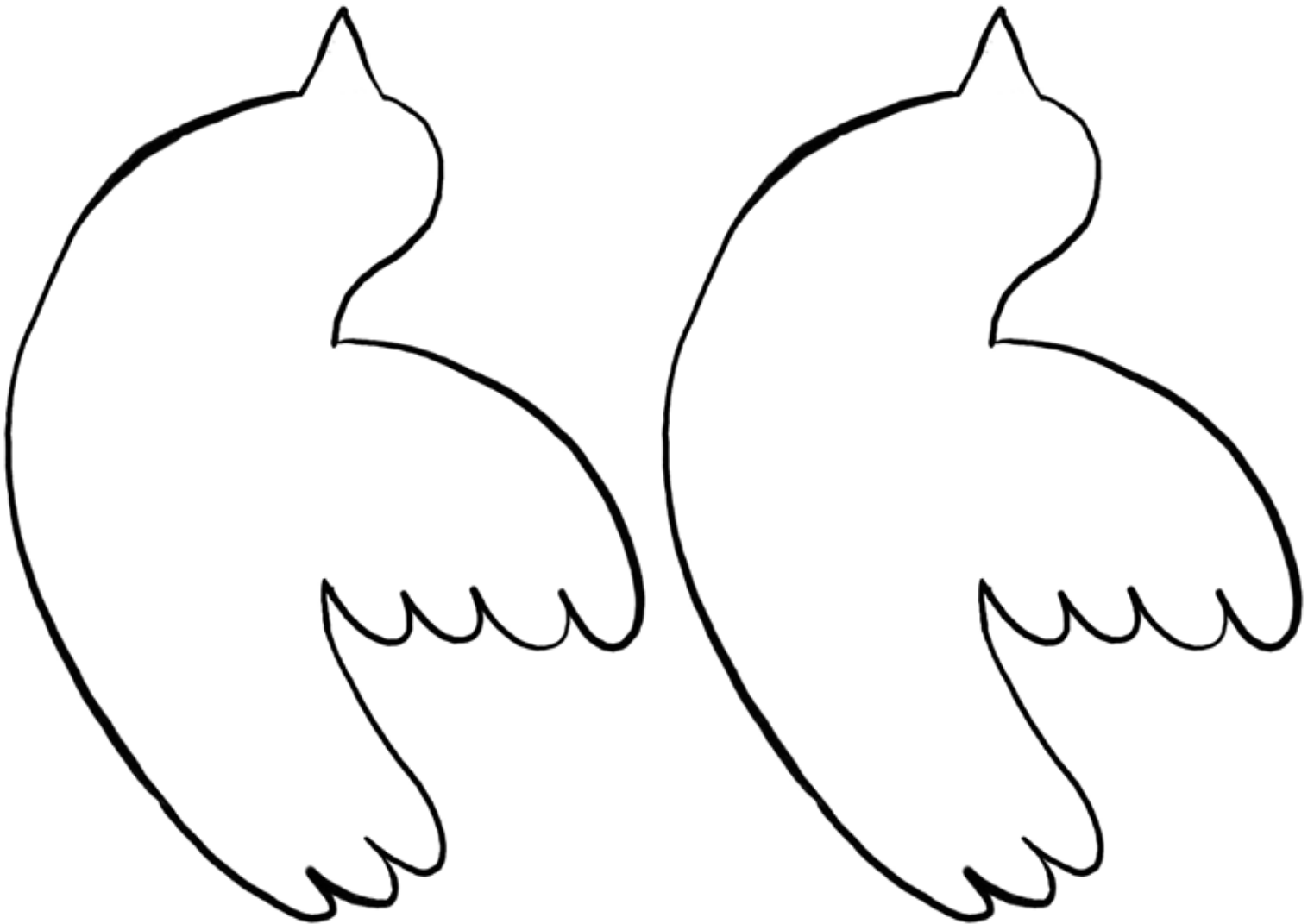
Preparation:

Using the dove patterns on page 18, copy and cut out doves from white poster board, 2-3 for each child.

Directions:

Distribute the doves to each child and invite them to make a Pentecost diorama or scene.

1. Set the box on its side so that it's wider than tall, and shallow from front to back. Cut one side out, leaving a 1" margin on the cut side, so that a three-sided box remains.
2. Punch a hole at the top of each dove. Partially unfold a paper clip and attach the dove to one end.
3. Make a hole in the top of the box. Partially unfold a paper clip and hang it from the inside top of the box.
4. Hang the dove from the paper clip. Do the same with the remaining doves.
5. Cut the ribbons approximately 3"-4" long and tape a bunch of them together, mixing the red and the gold, to make a tassel, representing the flames at Pentecost. Each child should have at least 2-3 tassels.
6. Hang the tassels from the inside top of the box with paper clips, just as with the doves.
7. Crumple up some blue tissue paper and place it at the bottom of the scene to represent the water of baptism.
8. Place seashells, also symbols of baptism, randomly in the water.
9. Across the top of the box, write *Come, Holy Spirit, Come*.





WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

WIND CHIMES for Intermediate

Children make wind chimes.

Materials:

nylon string
sturdy paper or plastic plate
items for chimes: metal juice can lids, sea shells or other objects
scissors
glitter, paint or other decorative materials
hammer and nail
beads, 2 per child

Directions:

Invite each child to make a wind chime. Offer these directions:

1. Make a hole in the center of the plate. Thread the nylon string through the hole for hanging. String a bead on both sides of the plate, and then tie knots to hold them in place. The two beads will keep the thread from slipping through.
2. Make additional holes in the plate for attaching chimes. Hole placement should be close enough that the chimes will make contact with each other when the wind blows.
3. If desired, decorate the chimes with glitter or other materials.
4. Using a hammer and nail, make a hole in each of the chimes.
5. String the nylon through the chimes and through the holes in the plate to attach.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

PENTECOST PARTY

for Preschool, Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Children create party invitations and throw a Pentecost party.

Materials:

white paper
markers
red balloons
tape
party food
optional: items to make party favors

Preparation:

Obtain red balloons and food/snacks for the party.

Directions:

Give each child a piece of paper to make an invitation. Invite children to join in celebrating the birth of the Church with a Pentecost party! Help younger children as needed.

1. Prepare birthday party invitations using the paper and markers. Let each child make an invitation, inviting everyone to celebrate Pentecost, the birthday of the church.
2. Have children blow up the balloons. If desired, you could tape the balloons to tables, backs of chairs or the wall.
3. Put out party food and balloons and enjoy the party!

Variation:

Allow children to make up games to play at this party. Young children will enjoy singing “Happy Birthday” to the church. You may also want to make party favors, which could be given to the church’s homebound afterward.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

PINWHEELS for Preschool

Children make colorful pinwheels.

Materials:

- colorful paper (origami paper works well)
- markers or crayons
- short pins
- penny
- pencil
- pencils with eraser, 1 per child

Directions:

1. Use a square sheet of paper.
2. In pencil, draw diagonal lines connecting the corners of the paper. Draw a penny-sized circle where the lines cross.
3. If using plain paper, decorate the paper as desired.
4. Cut on the lines, stopping at the circle.
5. Bend every other corner to the center of the circle.
6. Put a pin through the four corners and center of the paper, into the eraser-end of a pencil.
7. Show the children how the pinwheel will spin when blown or in the wind.

