

Super Sundays!

Once-a-month parish events

*By
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**Dedicated
with love
to
the Parish Family
of
The Episcopal Church of the Annunciation
Luling, Texas**

Why Super Sundays?

Let's get real. What we'd like to happen and what really happens is often very different. For families where both parents work and school and sports and other activities compete for limited time, we must face the reality that often a traditional Sunday School or ongoing weekly structured educational program especially in a small congregation with only a handful of students, does not fit into the life patterns and time commitments that we and our families face.

Rather than giving up, or getting mad, or being stymied, one parish came up with a program called **Super Sundays** (or **Wonderful Wednesdays** or **Terrific Tuesdays!**) Designed as *monthly* events, each **Super Sunday** included presentation, worship and a common meal/party. A sample year's schedule is included with this program.

The first year of **Super Sundays** is an overview of the Church Year, presenting the seasons of the year as they occur and filling in with Saints' Day observances. A second year might look at the sacraments or a topic that appealed to your congregation.

Two sets of lessons are included for each Sunday. The ones labeled "child" are intended for preschool through second or third grade, the lessons labeled "youth" are for upper elementary and middle school. If you have too few students to divide into more than one group and adults are involved as well, then use some questions and activities from both lesson plans. The activities may be done intergenerationally with the children and older youth or adults in teams.

Although **Super Sunday** might lead to

weekly or biweekly classes, that is not a necessary goal. In some situations, a once-a-month event is all that can be sustained because of inclement weather, geographical distances or, frankly, a low level of commitment. In other churches, the church may gather monthly for a celebratory event and then individual families may do "home schooling" of their children with the help of plans and resources provided by the church for the other weeks of the month.

Three helpful ways to do this might be:

- a. Using *The Seedlings Curriculum* lesson plans. Photocopy a set for each family.
- b. Making use of books and other published resources which tie into the theme for the month (i.e. Advent: make Jesse Tree to decorate each night; build and use Advent wreath, have a procession of the figures when setting up the family creche -- All Saints: select some saints to read about)
- c. Using *Creative Christian Education* as the basis for weekly activities.

It is important to promote and inform the parish about **Super Sunday**. Make it special: send invitations, put an article in the local newspaper, announce it in your newsletter. In the case of the parish that pioneered Super Sundays, it became the focus of other special events, such as baptisms, dedication of memorials, and pageants. The attendance went up 40-60% for **Super Sundays**. It is very often the case that when children are participating in a church event, the parents and relatives will attend.

Resources to use with Super Sunday

- Anderson, Raymond and Georgene. *The Jesse Tree*. Fortress Press, 1966.
- de Paola, Tomie, *Francis: The Poor Man of Assisi*. New York: Holiday House, 1982.
- Fogle, Jeanne, *Seasons of God's Love: The Church Year*. Philadelphia: Geneva Press, 1988. \$6.95.
- Hanchey, Howard, *Creative Christian Education*. Morehouse, 1986.
- Hymnal 1982*. Church Hymnal Corporation
- Lesser Feasts and Fasts*. Church Hymnal Corporation
- Mathson, Patricia, *Burlap and Butterflies: 101 Religious Education Activities for Christian Holidays*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1987.
- My Church Family*. Augsburg
- Post, W. Elwood, *Saints, Signs and Symbols*. Morehouse.
- Scott, Lesbia, *I Sing a Song of the Saints of God*. Morehouse. \$6.95.
- Veal, David, *Saints Galore*. Cincinnati: Forward Movement

Basic lesson outline

1. **Gathering of the whole group.** Introduction to topic. Announcements. Singing
2. You can stay in an **intergenerational group** or **divide into learning groups** if you have enough to make this workable: **children, youth, and adults**
3. **Present lesson, story, background** by reading a passage from the Bible, a suggested story book or by telling a story. (We have included lesson plans for the children and youth learning groups. The adults may either work with the children or spend some time together with a presentation or discussion of the day's topic led by the priest or an adult teacher.)
4. **Discussion time:** We have included a few questions to start you but don't stop with them. Let the children ask whatever questions they may have.
5. **Activity (ies):** We have given you several options for activities which can be done in separate groups or intergenerationally.
6. **Reassemble:** Sing something to draw everyone back together.
7. **Worship service:** You have used the lesson time as the service of the Word so that it is permissible to proceed to the Offertory and Communion if a priest is available.
8. **Party, meal, celebration**

The Church Year

The Church Year is a fact of our church life that we often take for granted. The changing colors of the hangings and vestments, the mood of the music, the seasonal names on the bulletins are all a part of the background of our weekly church life.

From time to time it is important to bring the church year to the forefront and see how its themes have something to say to our daily lives. The purpose of this year of Super Sunday events is to give a parish family a chance to take some time to look at and make their own connections with the Church Year seasons.

We have suggested some activities to do as part of the learning time. Some may be familiar and traditional customs for your family and parish. Others may be new to you. Feel free to use or omit whatever will make this time the most meaningful to you.

We never stop learning. Our life as Christians is a daily experience in learning how to live as God would have us do. The Church Year reminds us of the important events in Christ's life as well as a particular doctrine.

For example, Easter is the major feast day that celebrates the Resurrection of our Lord. It is also a time when we celebrate Christ's victory over death that we share with

him through our baptism. The resurrection frees us from the fear of meaninglessness after death and from the control that sin and evil can have over our lives.

Time seems to govern our lives in ways that no other factor quite does. Not only does it seem to be in short supply and so often overwhelm us, but it all goes so quickly.

The Church Year can be seen as a way to make time holy, that is to make a statement that our lives are lived in the presence of God and that each day is a precious gift from God to live and use as an offering to Him. The Church Year is a way that we can celebrate as a church family. Our liturgical celebrations are a way that we can sacramentalize the holy nature of all of time.

We hope that these Super Sundays will be the springboard for the incorporation of the Church year into the lives of our church families at home, so that the themes and customs will also be something that can enrich our family lives and activities in a real sense.

SUPER SUNDAYS

SAMPLE PLANNING SCHEDULE

Theme: The Church Year-- Making Time Holy
When: First Sunday of each Month (September - May)
Schedule: 9:30 - 10:30 Classes
 10:30 Worship
 11:45 Party or meal
Who: Everybody!
 Adult Class: led by _____
 Youth (5th grade and up): led by _____
 Children (4 and up) led by _____
 Nursery: led by _____

Date	Theme	Food	TEACHERS		
			Children	Youth	Helper
Sept.	The Church Year	Potluck lunch			
Oct	St. Francis Day	Pizza party			
Nov	All Saints' Day	Halloween costume party			
Dec	Advent	Decorate for holidays			
Jan	Epiphany	Pizza party			
Feb	Our Parish Family	Valentine party			
Mar	Lent	Potluck lunch			
Apr	Easter Day	Egg hunt			
May	Pentecost	Picnic or birthday party for church			

Worship and Meal Suggestions

Super Sundays are more than just the learning time. They include the worship services that day and a meal or party that celebrates the theme of the day. We hope that the parish family will look forward with some anticipation to Super Sunday each month and that they will make a special effort to be present and to invite friends and family.

Worship

The worship time is most likely held at the usual time for Sunday services. This set of Super Sunday lessons is based on the Church Year so that the lectionary provides the framework for the liturgy. It is helpful to include some reference to the experience and learnings from the presentation/lesson time during the homily and announcements, but the Super Sunday model does not require that the liturgy be radically changed.

You may choose to try some different ways to worship on Super Sundays. Our October Super Sunday service was held outside because it included the blessing of a statue and garden area in the front of the church building. We used folk music instead of traditional organ music. It looked like a revival at the Episcopal Church!

A baptismal renewal service could easily be incorporated into the worship service for All Saints, Epiphany, Pentecost whether or not you have any candidates for baptism.

Meal/Party Time

The main purpose for this part of Super Sunday is fellowship, to enjoy being together as a parish family. It does not have to be an elaborate occasion; we do not want to make a lot of additional work for anyone. The planning schedule included with this curriculum includes ideas for the meal/party time. This can be modified to the needs and customs of your congregation.

Pot luck lunches after church, holiday parties, pizza ordered from a local pizzeria, and picnics are just some of the possibilities that can be incorporated into a Super Sunday.

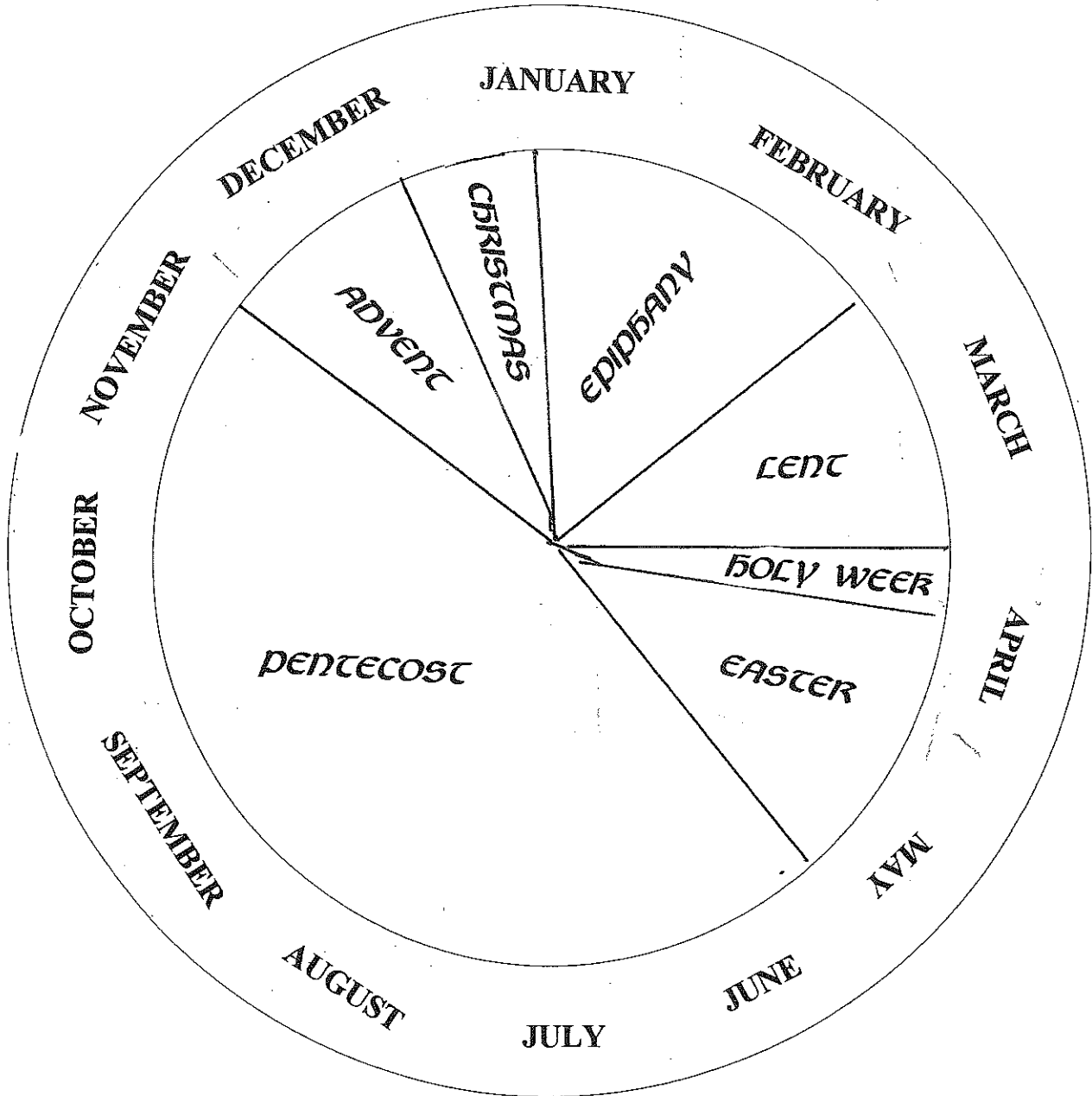
Super Sunday can also be a chance to celebrate the variety of our cultural background as Episcopalians. These can be easily incorporated into your celebration. Since we are in the Southwest, we used the Posada, Los Tres Magos (Three Kings Day), Fiesta as well as Carnival/Mardi Gras.

Other fun parties can be centered around the themes of rally day, St. Francis pet blessing, All Saints Day costume party, Pentecost birthday party where everyone comes dressed in red.

Music

Just a word about music... Use hymns, songs, a variety of styles and instruments. Have fun with it. Stress involvement, not performance.

Chart of the Church Year



The Church Year: Seasons of God's Love

Goals:

- The children will be introduced to the year's plan for Super Sundays
- The children will begin a study of the Church Year: seasons and saints day
- The children will participate in a creative activity to demonstrate their familiarity with the symbols of the seasons

Materials needed:

- Chart of the Church Year
- Seasons of God's Love*
- Church calendar showing colors
- Book of Common Prayer

Outline of the class session

1. When you gather the students, you might talk about the use of seasons in the calendar year (spring, summer, winter, fall) and how they give a structure or form to a year. Seasons also help us to mark the passing of time as well as to remind us of important occasions (the day each year that we were born or married, harvest festivals, etc.) Ask the children to list others.

Then tell them that we are going to begin to learn about the **Church Year** which are the days and seasons that help us in our worship and study about God, Jesus and the Church. The Church Year gives us a way to relive the life of Christ through our worship.

Tell them that we are going to have a special monthly event as a church family to which they are encouraged to invite friends.

2. Read *Seasons of God's Love*.

3. Questions for discussion:

- Why do people like to celebrate? What sort of things do we celebrate?
- What is your favorite holiday? Why? Does your family have special customs or activities that you look forward to?
- Do you have a favorite Church Year season? Why?

4. Show the children the chart of the Church Year. Explain that the Church Year is divided into 2 parts with roughly the first half of the year until Pentecost Sunday focused on the **major events in the life of Christ**; and the second half of the year on the **ministry of Jesus**.

Tell the children that there are special church year colors (**red, white, green and purple**). Use the church calendar to show how these colors are found throughout the

year and that each is used to remind us of an important idea about our faith. Ask them to look at the hangings in the church and guess what season we are celebrating (Pentecost).

- red:** symbol of blood, fire, Holy Spirit
- white:** purity, joy, celebration
- green:** life, growth
- purple:** sadness, royalty, penitence

5. Explain the meaning of **feast or saints days**: that they are special days in the Church Year that help us to remember important events in the life of Christ (birth, resurrection, ascension.) as well as the lives of important people in the Church (Saints like Francis, Patrick.) Some of these feasts have roots in Jewish festivals (like Passover and Easter). You may wish to tell the students that there is a calendar in the Prayer Book (p. 15-33) which lists the feasts and saints days.

6. Choose one or more activities:

- Have them color the Church Year chart included with this curriculum
- Have each child make a mobile using symbols for each season found in symbols book.
- Make mini banners for each major Church Year season. These could be 8 1/2 x 11 or 11x14. They may be made from felt, burlap or other plain fabric and decorated with fabric pens, glitter, appliqued fabric.
- Make invitations to next month's Super Sunday to send to other parish families and friends.

7. End with a prayer giving thanks for the times of celebration and remembering that are the Church Year.

The Church Year: Seasons of God's Love

Goals:

- The students will be introduced to the year's plan for Super Sundays
- The students will begin a study of the Church Year: seasons and saints day
- The students will participate in a creative activity to demonstrate their familiarity with the symbols of the seasons

Materials needed:

- Chart of the Church Year
- Church calendar showing colors
- Book of Common Prayer

Outline of the class session

1. When you gather the students, you might talk about the use of seasons in the calendar year (spring, summer, winter, fall) and how they give a structure or form to a year. Seasons also help us to mark the passing of time as well as to remind us of important occasions (the day each year that we were born or married, harvest festivals, etc.) Ask the students to list others.

Then tell them that we are going to begin to learn about the **Church Year** which are the days and seasons that help us in our worship and study about God, Jesus and the Church. The Church Year gives us a way to relive the life of Christ through our worship.

Tell them that we are going to have a special monthly event as a church family to which they are encouraged to invite friends.

2. Look at the chart of the Church Year and the section in the Book of Common Prayer entitled "Proper Liturgies for Special Days." pp. 263-295. Look briefly through the services. Tell the students that these services come from ancient rites that have been revived in recent years to become part of our yearly worship. How are these dramatic = like a play and how are they different?

3. Questions for discussion:

- Why do people like to celebrate? What sort of things do we celebrate?
- What is your favorite holiday? Why? Does your family have special customs or activities that you look forward to?
- Do you have a favorite Church Year season? Why?

4. Show the students the chart of the Church year. Explain that the Church Year is divided into 2 parts with roughly the first half of the year until Pentecost Sunday focused on the major **events in the life of Christ**; and the second half of the year on the **ministry of Jesus**.

Tell the students that there are special Church Year colors (**red, white, green and purple**). Use the church calendar to show how these colors are found throughout the year and that each is used to remind us of an important idea about our faith. Ask them to look at the hangings in the church and guess what season we are celebrating (Pentecost).

red: symbol of blood, fire, Holy Spirit
white: purity, joy, celebration
green: life, growth
purple: sadness, royalty, penitence

5. Explain the meaning of **feast or saints days**: that they are special days in the Church Year that help us to remember important events in the life of Christ (birth, resurrection, ascension..) as well as the lives of important people in the Church (Saints like Francis, Patrick.) Some of these feasts have roots in Jewish festivals (like Passover and Easter). You may wish to tell the students that there is a calendar in the Prayer Book (p. 15-33) which lists the feasts and saints days.

6. **Choose one or more activities:**

■ Begin plans to make a banner for your church or classroom which will show the changing of the church seasons. This will need a basic background to which you can attach with velcro symbols for each season as it occurs.

■ Have each child make a mobile using the symbols for each season found in a symbols book.

■ Make invitation for next month's Super

Sunday for the church families and friends who are not present.

7. End with a prayer giving thanks for the times of celebration and remembering that are the Church Year.

St. Francis Day

Goals:

- The children will review the concept of the Church Year: seasons and saints day
- The children will be introduced to the story of St. Francis
- The children will participate in a creative activity to demonstrate their familiarity with the symbols that we associate with St. Francis

Materials needed:

- Francis, the Poor Man of Assisi*
- chart of the Church Year
- craft materials (see below)
- Hymnal 1982

Outline of the class session

1. Review very briefly the concept of the Church Year as seasons and days that help us in our worship and study about God, Jesus and the Church. The Church Year gives us a way to relive the life of Christ through our worship.

Explain the meaning of **feast or saints days**: that they are special days in the Church Year that help us to remember important events in the life of Christ (birth, resurrection, ascension.) as well as the lives of important people in the Church (saints like Francis, Patrick.). You may wish to tell the students about a calendar in the Prayer Book (pp.15-33) listing the feasts and saints days.

2. Today we are going to learn something about a saint named Francis who lived in the 1200s in Italy. His feast day is October 4th. He is known most for his love of animals but his life was much more significant than that. He founded a monastic order now called the Franciscans. He and his followers cared for all God's creatures, especially the poor and neglected. He also wrote some beautiful

songs and prayers. We will be singing one at this morning's service. Another is the Cantic of the Sun. Give the students a copy of it (Hymnal 406/407).

3. Read *Francis the Poor Man of Assisi* by Tomie dePaola. This is a long book, so you may want to read selected parts

4. Questions for discussion:

- What kind of life did Francis live when he was very young?
- What happened to change him?
- What did Francis love the most? (God, then the poor and the animals)

5. Choose one or more activities:

- Make a bird feeder using a pine cone or toilet paper roll, peanut butter and birdseed. Coat the cone or roll with peanut butter and attach a string or piece of yarn on one end. Hang in a tree and watch the birds feast!
- Design and build a small model church with small stones and pebbles. Talk about how hard it would be to do this with large rocks!
- Tell the class one of your favorite parts of the St. Francis story.

6. End with a prayer giving thanks for the life of St. Francis and for the poor and the sick for whom he cared.

St. Francis Day

Goals:

The students will review the concept of the Church year: seasons and saints day
The students will be introduced to the story of St. Francis
The students will participate in a creative activity to demonstrate their familiarity with the symbols that we associate with St. Francis

Materials needed:

Lesser Feasts and Fasts
Hymnal 1982
chart of the Church Year
craft materials (see below)

Outline of the class session

1. Review very briefly the concept of the Church Year as seasons and days that help us in our worship and study about God, Jesus and the Church.

Explain the meaning of **feast or saints days**: that they are special days in the Church Year that help us to remember important events in the life of Christ (birth, resurrection, ascension.) as well as the lives of important people in the Church (saints like Francis, Patrick.) You may wish to tell the students about a calendar in the Prayer Book (pp.15-33) listing the feasts and saints days.

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can be found in the Hymnal, #406/407.

3. Have the students read aloud the story of St. Francis from *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* or *Francis: The Poor Man of Assisi*.

4. Questions for discussion:

- What kind of life did Francis live when he was very young? What changed him?
- What did Francis love the most? (God, then the poor and the animals)
- Do you think that Francis was happier before he gave up his rich life or after? Why do you think?
- How can we be a little more like St. Francis? Would we want to be?

5. Choose one or more activities:

- Make an illustrated poster of the St. Francis prayer, found on p. 833 of the Book of Common Prayer.
- Do a choral reading of the Cantic to the Sun.
- Build a small model church with small stones and pebbles. Talk about how hard it would be to do this with large rocks!

6. End with a prayer giving thanks for the life of St. Francis and for the poor and the sick for whom he cared.

All Saints Day

Goals:

- The children will review the concept of the Church Year: seasons and saints days
- The children will be introduced to the idea that all Christians, living and dead, are saints
- The children will do an activity to help them think of themselves as a saint

Materials needed:

- I sing a song of the saints of God*
- posterboard
- markers
- symbols book such as *Saints, Signs and Symbols*
- dressup clothes

Outline of the class session

1. Review very briefly the concept of the Church Year as seasons and days that help us in our worship and study about God, Jesus and the Church. The Church Year gives us a way to relive the life of Christ through our worship.

Explain the meaning of **feast or saints days**: that they are special days in the Church Year that help us to remember important events in the life of Christ (birth, resurrection, ascension.) as well as the lives of important people in the Church (saints like Francis, Patrick.) You may wish to tell the students about a calendar in the Prayer Book (pp.15-33) listing the feasts and saints days.

2. Today we are going to learn something about All Saints Day. It is the day in the Christian year that we celebrate the lives of all Christians, those of us who are alive and those who are dead. All Saints Day is celebrated on November 1st (Halloween is All Hallows Eve and was originally a pagan festival; later it was a time when people dressed as famous saints).

3. Read *I Sing a Song of the Saints of God*.

4. Questions for discussion:

- What is a saint? How can we be a saint today?
- Do you think that it is easier or harder to be a saint today than long ago? Explain your answer.
- What does it mean to you to be a Christian? How do you take your faith seriously?

5. Choose one or more activities:

- Make a list of the saints that you know, living and dead. Then tell how you decided to include them on your list (being a Christian). What special lesson about following Jesus Christ does each one teach you?
- Make a shield for yourself out of posterboard. Show the students the shields in *Saints, Signs and Symbols* and tell them that each of them may have a symbol just as the early saints did. Help them to decide on an appropriate symbol for themselves.
- Write a short litany for saints, including famous and personal ones.
- Dress up as one of your favorite saints.

6. End with a prayer giving thanks for all who have been part of the Christian Church through the centuries.

All Saints Day

Goals:

- The students will review the concept of the Church Year: seasons and saints day
- The students will be introduced to the idea that all Christians, living and dead, are saints
- The students will do an activity to help them think of themselves as a saint

Materials needed:

Saints Galore
posterboard
markers
symbols book such as *Saints, Signs
and Symbols*

Outline of the class session

1. Review very briefly the concept of the Church Year as seasons and days that help us in our worship and study about God, Jesus and the Church. The Church Year gives us a way to relive the life of Christ through our worship.

Explain the meaning of **feast or saints days**: that they are special days in the Church Year that help us to remember important events in the life of Christ (birth, resurrection, ascension.) as well as the lives of important people in the Church (Saints like Francis, Patrick.) You may wish to tell the students about the calendar in the Prayer Book (p.15-33) listing the feasts and saints days.

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3. Read "All Saints Day" in *Saints Galore*.

4. Questions for discussion:

- What is a saint? How can we be a saint today?
- Do you think that it is easier or harder to be a saint today than long ago? Explain your answer.
- What does it mean to you to be a Christian? How do you take your faith seriously?

5. Choose one or more activities:

- Make a list of the saints that you know, living and dead. Then tell how you decided to include them on your list (being a Christian) . What special lesson about following Jesus Christ does each one teach you?
- Make a shield for yourself out of posterboard. Show the students the shields in *Saints, Signs and Symbols* and tell them that each of them may have a symbols just as the early saints did. Help them to decide on an appropriate symbol for themselves.
- Write a short litany for saints, including famous and personal ones.

6. End with a prayer giving thanks for all who have been part of the Christian Church through the centuries.

Advent: A Time of Waiting

Goals:

- The children will review the concept of the Church Year and its seasons.
- The children will be able to tell how one or more themes relate to Advent
- The children will participate in one or more creative activities to demonstrate their understanding of the themes/symbols of Advent.

Materials needed:

- Church Year chart
- craft supplies
- The Jesse Tree*

Outline of the class session

1. If necessary, review very briefly the concept of the Church Year as seasons and days that help us in our worship and study about God, Jesus and the Church. Talk about seasons that are part of our lives: fall, winter, spring and summer. Explain that the Church also has seasons and that today we are studying about the first season in the Church Year, Advent.

Advent came about fairly early in the Church, about the 6th century and was sometimes called "Little Lent" because it was intended to be a time of preparation, study and penitence.

One of the main themes of Advent is expectation of the *coming of Christ*. This happens in three different ways: (1) He came to earth nearly 2000 years ago, (2) He comes into our hearts today and (3) He will come again at the end of time to judge and complete history.

Advent is a time when we prepare our hearts and homes for Christ. That means that we keep Him in mind as we prepare for Christmas.

2. Have the students read the account of the annunciation (Luke 1:26-56) or the story of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-25, 57-80, 3:1-22 and Matthew 14: 1-12.)

3. Questions for discussion:

- Who is Jesus? Why is he so special?
- What does it mean to expect something? Can you tell about a time that you expected something to come or to happen?
- What are some of the promises that God has fulfilled for his people? What are some that are yet to be fulfilled? What part do we have to play in their happening?
- What is a season? How can you tell when they change in nature? in the church?

4. Choose one or more activities:

- Make Advent wreaths or an Advent log (drill 4 1/2" holes in top of a log). Decorate with greens. Insert 3 purple and 1 rose candle to use for the 4 weeks of Advent.
- Collect food and toys for needy and make plans to deliver them as a group to a collection center.
- Listen to selected parts of the Messiah, especially passages from Isaiah.
- Use *The Jesse Tree* as patterns for making ornaments for a parish Jesse Tree.

5. End with prayer of thanks for the gift of Christ into our lives.

Advent: A Time of Waiting

Goals:

- The students will review the concept of the Church Year and its seasons.
- The students will be able to tell how one or more themes relate to Advent
- The students will participate in one or more creative activities to demonstrate their understanding of the themes/symbols of Advent.

Materials needed:

- a chart or calendar of the Church Year which shows the order of the seasons and associated colors
- craft supplies

Outline of the class session

1. If necessary, review very briefly the concept of the Church Year as seasons and days that help us in our worship and study about God, Jesus and the Church. Talk about seasons that are part of our lives: fall, winter, spring and summer. Explain that the Church also has seasons and that today we are studying about the first season in the Church Year, Advent.

Advent came about fairly early in the Church, about the 6th century and was sometimes called "Little Lent" because it was intended to be a time of preparation, study and penitence.

One of the main themes of Advent is expectation of the *coming of Christ*. This happens in three different ways: (1) He came to earth nearly 2000 years ago, (2) He comes into our hearts today, and (3) He will come again at the end of time to judge and complete history.

2. Have the students read one of the

accounts of the annunciation or the story of John the Baptist.

3. Questions for discussion:

- Who is Jesus? Why is he so special?
- What does it mean to expect something? Can you tell about a time that you expected something to come or to happen?
- What is a season? How can you tell when they change in nature? in the church?

4. Choose one or more activities:

- Make Advent wreaths or Advent logs (see children's lesson plan)
- Collect food and toys for needy and make plans to deliver them
- Listen to selected parts of the Messiah, especially passages from Isaiah
- Rewrite the *Song of Zechariah (Benedictus)* in contemporary language [Luke 1:68-79, BCP, p. 50 or 92.]
- Take part in a posada. This is a procession which re-enacts Mary and Joseph's search for shelter in Bethlehem. You may carry small figures or people may dress as the Holy couple. The procession goes from door to door asking to be let in and turned away until finally someone takes them in. At this house a party is held!

5. End with prayer of thanks for the gift of Christ into our lives.

Epiphany: Telling the World about Jesus

Goals:

The children will be able to put the season of Epiphany in its place in the Church Year
The children will be familiar with one or two themes associated with Epiphany: baptism
and the sharing of the gospel to the whole world

Materials needed:

party supplies
pageant costumes

Outline of the Class Session:

1. The season of Epiphany begins on January 6th, the Feast of the Epiphany. It commemorates the visit of the three magi or wise men or kings to the infant Jesus. Epiphany is sometimes called the Feast of Lights because *epiphany* means manifestation and light drives away darkness and shows forth light.

One of the main symbol for Epiphany is a star because it was their study of the heavens and the stars that led the magi to the stable in Bethlehem.

Baptism is another important theme during Epiphany. The Sunday after the Feast of Epiphany is the Baptism of our Lord. It is also a time to think about the meaning of our own baptisms and to celebrate with others who are newly baptized.

2. Read together Matthew 2:10-12 and the accounts of Jesus' baptism Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13.

3. Questions for discussion:

- How can we show forth the Light of Christ in our world? at school? at home? at church?
- The magi came a long way to see an infant king? How do you think they reacted to him? What kind of men were they?
- How do you celebrate Epiphany?

4. Choose one or more activities:

- Plan and perform an informal Epiphany pageant during the worship service. This could be scenes that accompany a narrative reading of the Christmas-Epiphany story.
- Plan and make an unexpected gift of love for someone to whom you would ordinarily not give a gift (just like the wise men did) This can be for an individual in the parish such as a shut in or a food or clothing collection.
- Make a list of gifts you would give Baby Jesus. Is there one that you could give Him now?
- Plan a three Kings day celebration with pinata, ethnic foods, candy, and small gifts, Magi cake with small surprises baked inside

5. End with prayer for God's guidance in showing forth his love to the world .

Epiphany: Telling the World about Jesus

Goals:

The students will be able to put the season of Epiphany in its place in the Church Year
The students will be familiar with one or two themes associated with Epiphany: baptism and the sharing of the gospel to the whole world

Materials needed:

party supplies
pageant costumes

Outline of the Class Session:

1. The season of Epiphany begins on January 6th, the Feast of the Epiphany. It commemorates the visit of the three magi or wise men or kings to the infant Jesus. Epiphany is sometimes called the Feast of Lights because epiphany means manifestation and light drives away darkness and shows forth light.

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Baptism is another important theme during Epiphany. The Sunday after the Feast of Epiphany is the Baptism of our Lord. It is also a time to think about the meaning of our own baptisms and to celebrate with others who are newly baptized.

2. Read Matthew 2:10-12 and the accounts of Jesus' baptism Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13.. Talk about how these stories of the baptism are similar and how they are different.

3. Questions for discussion:

- How can we show forth the Light of Christ in our world? at school? at home? at church?
- The magi came a long way to see an infant king? How do you think they reacted to him? What kind of men were they?
- How do you celebrate Epiphany?

4. Choose one or more activities:

- Make origami stars.
 - Plan and perform an informal Epiphany pageant during the worship service. This could be scenes that accompany a narrative reading of the Christmas-Epiphany story.
 - Plan and make an unexpected gift of love for someone to whom you would ordinarily not give a gift (just like the wise men) This can be for an individual in the parish such as a shut in or a food or clothing collection.
 - Make a list of gifts you would give Baby Jesus. Is there one that you could give Him now?
 - Plan a three Kings day celebration with pinata, ethnic foods, candy, and small gifts, Magi cake with small surprises baked inside
5. End with prayer for God's guidance in showing forth his love to the world .

Our Parish Family

Goals:

The children will be introduced to the idea of the Church as a family
The children will participate in an activity to become more familiar with their church building and their church family

Materials needed:

clipboards and pencils
parish pictorial directory
My Church Family

Outline of the class session

1. Our lesson this month is related to the holiday we call St. Valentine's Day. This celebration has very vague Christian connections. According to *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*, the custom of sending valentines may have arisen from the old idea that birds begin to pair on that date or a more remote pagan reference. So we have chosen to focus on love which is the basis of our life together in Christ and as a church family.

The local congregation which most of us call our church is the unit of the church to which each member of the Church belong. It in turn is a part of the diocese to which all the other congregations in a certain geographic area belong.

2. Read *My Church Family*.

Look at pictures of members of your church if you have a parish directory.

Invite a long-time member of your church to come and tell stories about its history and interesting members from the past.

3. **Questions for discussion:**

■ What does it mean to be a family? Are all families the same? What is the same and what

is different?

■ When we talk about the church family, what do we mean? How is our church family like our own family? What activities are similar? What are different?

■ Which members of your parish family have been here a long time and which ones are new?

■ Where did your church get its name? Is it from its location, a saint or an event in the life of Christ? How many buildings has it had?

4. **Choose one or more activities:**

■ Put together a scavenger hunt with about 10-15 items to locate in and around your church building.

■ Make a book about your parish family.

■ Make paper bag puppets of people in your church family. Use them to tell about a event in your church life.

■ Visit the church office and look at old registers and pictures of your church. Make a church family tree.

■ Make placemats to use if your group plans a mardi gras/pancake supper for Shrove Tuesday

5. End with a prayer giving thanks for your church family, for those who are part of your life today and those who have gone before us to make our lives in this place possible.

Our Parish Family

Goals:

The students will be introduced to the idea of the Church as a family
The students will participate in an activity to become more familiar with their church building and church family

Materials needed:

clipboards and pencils
parish pictorial directory

Outline of the class session

1. Our lesson this month is related to the holiday we call St. Valentine's Day. This celebration has very vague Christian connections. According to *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*, the custom of sending valentines may have arisen from the old idea that birds begin to pair on that date or a more remote pagan reference. So, we have chosen to focus on love which is the basis of our life together in Christ and as a church family.

The local congregation which most of us call our church is the unit of the church to which each member of the Church belong. It in turn is a part of the diocese to which all the other congregations in a certain geographic area belong.

2. Read I Corinthians 12:12-26. Talk about what part each one of us plays in our parish family.

Look at pictures of members of your church if you have a parish directory.

Invite a long-time member of your church to come and tell stories about its history and interesting members from the past.

3. Questions for discussion:

■ What does it mean to be a family? Are all

families the same? What is the same and what is different?

■ When we talk about the church family, what do we mean? How is our church family like our own family? What activities are similar? What are different?

■ Which members of your parish family have been here a long time and which ones are new?

■ Where did your church get its name? Is it from its location, a saint or an event in the life of Christ? How many buildings has it had?

4. Choose one or more activities:

■ Put together a scavenger hunt with about 15-25 items or locales in and around your church building.

■ Make a video of the different ministries in the church

■ Make a parish scrapbook or story collection with interviews of some of your senior members.

■ Plan a Mardi Gras celebration on Shrove Tuesday in conjunction with a Pancake Supper.

5. End with a prayer giving thanks for your church family, for those who are part of your life today and those who have gone before us to make our lives in this place possible.

Lent: A Season For Growth

Goals:

The children will be introduced to Lent as a time to prepare for Easter in their hearts and their homes

The children will hear the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness

Materials needed:

pretzels ingredients
hot cross buns ingredients
scraps of wood
paper placemats, markers, magazines,
scissors, glue

Outline of the class session:

1. Talk with the children about the season of Lent and how it includes the 40 weekdays before Easter. This Super Sunday may not come at the very beginning of Lent depending upon the calendar so that it may begin our observance of Lent or give it a boost and emphasis in the midst of this season.

Lent is traditionally a time for prayer fasting and spiritual growth. It used to be the time when a person prepared for baptism of Easter Eve. Now it is most often a time that a Christian renews a relationship with Christ.

The 40 days of Lent represent the time that Jesus spend in the wilderness before he began his active ministry. It is a reminder of the need that each of us has as Christians to spend time alone in prayer and thought about how God wants us to live our lives.

2. Ask an altar guild member to take you through the sacristy and nave/sanctuary and point out the items that are used to observe Lent as a church family.

3. Questions for discussion:

■ Why is it important for us to have time alone with God in prayer and meditation? Do you do that often?

■ When you hear the story of Jesus' temptation, how do you think he handled the Devil? How would you have reacted to the offers?

■ Does you family have special customs to observe Lent? If so, what are they? What about your church family? Can you tell about some of them?

4. Choose one or more activities:

■ Have the students plant bean seeds into small pots to take home Talk about how the seed will change to become a plant = have a new body. This is similar to the image used in the Bible (I Corinthians)

■ Make pretzels. This is an old tradition to remind us of arms and hands folded in prayer

■ Make placemats for a potluck meal.

■ Bake hot cross buns to serve for coffee

hour.

5. Read together the collect for Ash Wednesday from the Prayer Book, p. 217.

Recipes:

Pretzels

1 pkg. yeast
1 1/4 c warm water
1 tsp. salt
1 T. sugar
1/4 cup melted butter
1/4 cup wheat germ
3 3/4 cups flour
1 egg
coarse salt, sesame or poppy seeds

Dissolve yeast in water. Add the next 5 ingredients in the order given. Knead dough until smooth, adding flour as necessary. Roll dough into long, pencil-thin rope. Put lightly beaten egg in shallow bowl. In another bowl, put coarse salt. Take 8 " lengths of dough and dip one side into egg and then into salt, sesame or poppy seeds.. Place on heavily greased cookie sheet with salt side up. Bend into "little arms" or crosses. Bake at 425 until well browned.

Hot Cross Buns

2 pkgs active dry yeast
1/3 cup water
1/3 cup milk, scalded
1/2 cup salad oil
1/3 cup sugar
3/4 tsp. salt
3 1/2 to 4 cups sifted flour
1 tsp. cinnamon
3 eggs
2/3 cup currants or raisins, citrons
1 slightly beaten egg white
sifted confectioner's sugar

Dissolve yeast in warm water. Stir in milk, salad oil, sugar and salt; cool to lukewarm. Sift together 1 cup flour and cinnamon; stir into milk mixture. Add eggs, beat well. Stir in yeast and currants/raisins. Add remaining flour to make a soft dough. Cover with damp cloth. Let rise in warm place until double (about 1 1/2 hours). Punch down and roll out to 1/2" thickness on floured surface. Cut in rounds with 2 1/2" biscuit cutter. Place on greased cookie sheet about 1 1/2" apart. Cover and let rise until double (1 hour). Cut shallow cross in each bun with scissors, and brush top with egg white. Bake at 350 degrees F for 12-15 minutes. Frost with confectioners sugar or white frosting.

Lent: A Season For Growth

Goals:

The students will be introduced to Lent as a time to prepare for Easter in their hearts and their homes

The students will hear the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness

Materials needed:

pretzel ingredients

hot cross buns ingredients

Outline of the class session:

1. Talk with the students about the season of Lent and how it includes the 40 weekdays before Easter. This Super Sunday may not come at the very beginning of Lent depending upon the calendar so that it may begin our observance of Lent or give it a boost and emphasis in the midst of this season.

Lent is traditionally a time for prayer fasting and spiritual growth. It used to be the time when a person prepared for baptism of Easter Eve. Now it is most often a time that a Christian renews a relationship with Christ.

The 40 days of Lent represent the time that Jesus spend in the wilderness before he began his active ministry. It is a reminder of the need that each of us has as Christians to spend time alone in prayer and thought about how God wants us to live our lives.

2. Ask an altar guild member to take you through the sacristy and nave/sanctuary and point out the items that are used to observe

Lent as a church family.

3. Questions for discussion:

■ Why is it important for us to have time alone with God in prayer and meditation. Do you do that often?

■ When you hear the story of Jesus' temptation, how do you think he handled the Devil? How would you have reacted to the offers?

■ Does you family have special customs to observe Lent? If so, what are they? What about your church family? Can you tell about some of them?

4. Choose one or more activities:

■ A journal is a good place to work on our Christian journey of faith and our relationship with God. Make a notebook to use as a journal and decorate it with symbols that are meaningful to you.

■ Make pretzels: tradition to remind us of arms and hands folded in prayer

■ Plan fundraiser for outreach for needy

■ Bake hot cross buns to serve for coffee hour.

■ Go through Bible and look for symbols

of Lent and Holy Week especially in lessons for those times.

5. Read together the collect for Ash Wednesday from the Prayer Book, p. 217.

Recipes:

Pretzels

1 pkg. yeast
1 1/4 c warm water
1 tsp. salt
1 T. sugar
1/4 cup melted butter
1/4 cup wheat germ
3 3/4 cups flour
1 egg
coarse salt, sesame or poppy seeds

Dissolve yeast in water. Add the next ingredients in the order given. Knead dough until smooth, adding flour as necessary. Roll dough into long, pencil-thin rope. Put lightly beaten egg in shallow bowl. In another bowl, put coarse salt. Take 8" lengths of dough and dip one side into egg and then into salt or sesame or poppy seeds. Place on heavily greased cookie sheet with salt side up. Bend into "little arms" or crosses. Bake at 425 until well browned.

Hot Cross Buns

2 pkgs active dry yeast
1/3 cup water
1/3 cup milk, scalded
1/2 cup salad oil
1/3 cup sugar
3/4 tsp. salt
3 1/2 to 4 cups sifted flour
1 tsp. cinnamon
3 eggs
2/3 cup currants or raisins, citrons
1 slightly beaten egg white
sifted confectioner's sugar

Dissolve yeast in warm water. Stir in milk, salad oil, sugar and salt; cool to lukewarm. Sift together 1 cup flour and cinnamon; stir into milk mixture. Add eggs, beat well. Stir in yeast and currants/raisins. Add remaining flour to make a soft dough. Cover with damp cloth. Let rise in warm place until double. (about 1 1/2 hours). Punch down and roll out to 1/2" thickness on floured surface. Cut in rounds with 2 1/2" biscuit cutter. Place on greased cookie sheet about 1 1/2" apart. Cover and let rise until double (1 hour). Cut shallow cross in each bun with scissors, and brush top with egg white. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 12-15 minutes. Frost with confectioners sugar or white frosting.

Easter Day: The Feast of the Resurrection

Goals:

The children will be introduced to the idea of the new life that we have in Christ which we celebrate at Easter

The children will participate in one or more creative activities to demonstrate their familiarity with the symbols of Easter

Materials needed:

for egg tree: decorated empty eggshells, thread, needle, tree branch, flower pot with clay in which to "plant" branch

What is your favorite custom? Why?

■ Why do you think Christmas and Easter hold so much excitement for us and for our church life?

Outline of the class session:

1. The season of Easter lasts for 50 days from Easter Sunday through the Ascension. It is the most important celebration for Christians as it is the time when we proclaim the risen Christ and the hope and promise of eternal life that He has given us.

There are many symbols associated with Easter: rabbits, eggs, flowers, firecrackers, butterflies, but the cross is the most important symbol for Christians. It tells the world that Christ has overcome death and sin and brought a new and eternal life to those who share in His baptism.

2. Questions for discussion:

■ We celebrate a new life in Christ at Easter. When our loved ones die, what difference does it make to us that we are Christians?

■ What do you like best about Easter?

3. Choose one or more activities:

■ Make an egg tree with a branch "planted" in a pot with clay in the base. Use blown eggs with thread through one end.

■ Cascarones are part of the Hispanic culture. To make them, poke a hole in both ends of a raw egg. Blow out the inside. Cut off the top quarter of the egg and fill with confetti. Cover with a square of tissue paper glued to the edges.

■ Make an Easter garden scene with small plants, a large rock that looks like a cave and small figures of the biblical characters.

■ Make Easter cards and take to nursing home residents

■ Plan and perform an informal Easter pageant to go along with the account of the resurrection.

4. End with a prayer thanking God for His gift of new life in Christ.

Easter Day: The Feast of the Resurrection

Goals:

The students will be introduced to the idea of the new life that we have in Christ which we celebrate at Easter

The students will participate in one or more creative activities to demonstrate their familiarity with the symbols of Easter

Materials needed:

for candles: thick candles, pressed plant materials, paraffin or candle stubs, small pan, 1/2" soft paintbrush

for egg tree: decorated empty eggshells, thread, needle, tree branch, flower pot, clay

Outline of the class session:

1. The season of Easter lasts for 50 days from Easter Sunday through the Ascension. It is the most important celebration for Christians as it is the time when we proclaim the risen Christ and the hope and promise of eternal life that He has given us.

There are many symbols associated with Easter: rabbits, eggs, flowers, firecrackers, butterflies, but the cross is the most important symbol for Christians. It tells the world that Christ has overcome death and the and brought an new and eternal life to those who share in His baptism.

2. Questions for discussion:

■ We celebrate a new life in Christ at Easter. When our loved ones die, what difference does it make that we are Christians?

■ What do you like best about Easter?

What is your favorite custom? Why?

■ Why do you think Christmas and Easter hold so much excitement for us and for our church life?

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■ Make an Easter garden scene with small plants, a large rock that looks like a cave and small figures of the biblical characters.

■ Decorate candles with pressed flowers. Melt paraffin or candle stubs. Design and arrange pressed flowers and leaves on candle. Hold in place while "painting" in place with melted wax. Add and "paint" pressed flowers on the bottom 2/3 of the candle.

4. End with a prayer thanking God for His gift of new life in Christ.

Pentecost: The Gift of God's Spirit

Goals:

The children will be introduced to Pentecost as the birthday of the church

The children will begin to have some understanding of the Holy Spirit

Materials needed:

paper

pencils or sticks

Outline of the class session:

1. You may want to begin this session which ends the year of Super Sunday celebrations with a quick review of the past year and its seasons and feast days that your parish family has commemorated together. This is a good time for the students to tell about their favorite times.

Pentecost comes 50 days after Easter and the day of Pentecost is the last feast day that commemorates an event in the life of Christ. Pentecost is also the name of a Jewish festival which was first a harvest time and then came to be the celebration of the giving of the commandments at Sinai.

The disciples were observing this feast when they were given the gift of the Holy Spirit, which fulfilled Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit to help and guide his followers. We often call Pentecost the birthday of the Church because from this event which we can read about in Acts 2, the Church began to grow and take on an organic nature as the body of Christ. Jesus' followers were filled

with new hope and courage. Pentecost is often popular time for baptisms.

There are several symbols associated with Pentecost: descending dove, tongues of flames, the number 7 to represent the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (Is. 11:2), and wind.

2. Questions for discussion:

■ What would you do if flames of fire came down on your head? Do you think that this is mystical?

■ Why do we call Pentecost the birthday of the Church? What is a birthday?

■ Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide us. Can you tell how this has happened in your life? Who do you think the Holy Spirit is? How do you experience the Holy Spirit?

■ Which is your favorite Church Year season?

3. Choose one or more activities:

■ Help with preparation for the birthday party after the worship service

■ Dress in white or red

■ Learn some common phrases in 3 or 4 languages

- Make pinwheels(Take a square of paper and slit the corners, pull 1/2 of each corner to the center, pin to a stick or pencil), blow bubbles, fly kites and other activities that use wind
- Make greeting cards for family or shut-ins with symbols of Pentecost.

4. End with prayer asking for the power of God's Holy Spirit in our lives today.

Pentecost: The Gift of God's Spirit

Goals:

The children will be introduced to Pentecost as the birthday of the church

The children will begin to have some understanding of the Holy Spirit

Materials needed:

paper

pencils or small sticks

Outline of the class session:

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■ Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide us. Can you tell how this has happened in your life? Who do you think the Holy Spirit is? How do you experience the Holy Spirit?

■ Which is your favorite Church Year season?

■ How do you think that the Holy Spirit is like wind? (energy, source of life, invisible) like fire? (strong, power, light, warmth)

3. Choose one or more activities:

■ Help with preparation for the birthday party after the worship service

■ Dress in white or red

- Learn some common phrases in 3 or 4 languages
 - Make pinwheels (Take a square of paper and slit the corners, pull 1/2 of each corner to the center, pin to a stick or pencil), blow bubbles, fly kites and do other activities that use wind.
 - Make greeting cards for family or shut-ins with symbols of Pentecost.
4. End with prayer asking for the power of God's Holy Spirit in our lives today.