

Stronger Together

in Faith

**WORLD
WEEKEND
OF PRAYER**

4 - 5 JUNE 2022

PRAYER RESOURCE

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. (Acts 2: 46a)

This year, the World Weekend of Prayer falls on the weekend of Pentecost. Fifty days after Easter, we celebrate and remember the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples of Jesus and, outward and onward, to all believers. **The gift to give us power and strength together is available to us today.**

The Covid pandemic has shaken us. It is still shaking the world. The devastation, grief and fragility of families and communities is ongoing.

How can our World Weekend of Prayer, with children at the heart of the action, strengthen our faith together? Let's confront our fragility, led by the children, the power of prayer and renewed in-filling of the Holy Spirit.

Surely it is worth learning from what happened at the first Pentecost, a small band of 120 believers feeling under threat and insecure.



'Pentecost' by Natacha Verny

How was it that they became 3,120 in one day and then saw daily additions to their number? How was it that the Kingdom of God grew daily, caring for "anyone who had need"? (Acts 2: 35)

Fuelled by the inspiration of the World Weekend of Prayer can we grow stronger together in faith and impact children in our ravaged communities in a miraculous way?

Dimensions of Pentecost

Acts 2 and especially verses 1-13 and 36-47

Here are 12 dimensions of the Pentecost story to strengthen us to move forward together in faith in these Covid years. Select and highlight 4-5 that best suit your circumstances.

1. Living under threat

The disciples and followers of Jesus were fearful of persecution and threats from the religious authorities in Jerusalem. They needed to support each other. Children, their families and communities have equally been under enormous pressure through these times.

Ask children and young people what frightens you?

2. Praying together

We learn in Acts 1:14, the followers of Jesus all joined together constantly in prayer. That's what we need to do across our networks with children in the lead.

Ask children and young people what should we pray for?

3. Encouraging each other

There is strength when we come together in one place (physically or online). We can encourage each other, just as the small band of followers of Jesus was able to do.

Children and young people say something to the person next to you to encourage them.

4. Waiting and sitting still

Jesus told the disciples to wait. 'Do not leave Jerusalem,' (Acts 1:4) he had told them. They were obedient. They sat and waited as Jesus told them. This is a good discipline that we can echo over the weekend of prayer. It's good to be busy in action, but it is also good to sit with the Lord and wait before we move out. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still. (Exodus 14:14)

When can waiting and being still be a good thing?

5. Remembering Jesus' promise

It's good for children to remember that Jesus loves them. He has promised to watch over them. The disciples also had to remember Jesus' promise: "in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:5)

Make a list of promises Jesus has made.

6. Spirit anointing

At Pentecost first there was a roar like wind: "a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven." Then, "they saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them." There have been many occasions when the Spirit has fallen on a group of people. Let's be bold in expectation as children join together for prayer.

Children first, share any experiences of the Spirit helping you.

7. Courageous action

What was the impact of Pentecost? How was this fearful band of followers of Jesus transformed? They spoke out in all sorts of languages: miraculous power. That's what we need today and it is available! "The Spirit enabled them" (Acts 2:4).

What could we do together as young people in our communities?



8. Doubters and opposition

Even as our children, young people and city-wide networks are led into bold action such as promoting the Good Treatment Campaign, there will be opposition. The disciples encountered disbelief and scoffers, "Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'" (Acts 2: 13)

Have you been made fun of because you go to church or have come to this meeting?

9. Impact: 3,000 new believers

Despite the obstacles, see what the Spirit enabled boldness brought that day: 3,000 new believers. Wow! Would that each event at our 2022 prayer weekend bring 3,000 more believers committed to action to transform lives of our children and young people in our communities. Believe it's possible!

What big dream for change can be realised from our prayer meeting?

10. Sacrificial sharing with anyone in need

It was not just about meetings and speaking out boldly, there was meaningful social action. "They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need," Acts 2: 45. Let's be generous! Do stuff!

As a group of children and young people what could we do together to make a difference to those in need?

11. Praising God together

When we see what God can do through the power of the Holy Spirit through the World Weekend of Prayer, let's not forget to praise God. It seems in church life it is so much easier for people to come together to ask but not to thank! "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts," (Acts 2:46)

When can we meet again as children and young people to praise God for the amazing things we expect Him to do through us in the next week?

12. Expansion of God's Kingdom – everyday

Let's mirror the elements of Pentecost. Let's seek a real and continuous revival in the faith and well-being of our communities. Then we shall see change and expansion every day, just as occurred through the days after Pentecost. Believe it is possible as we embrace being strong together in faith.

Ask children and young people how we can get more young people involved in our work?

Activity ideas

Roaring wind

Each child needs an empty soft drinks bottle, the smaller the neck the better. Sit spaced out silently in a circle. Wait. One by one start to blow across the top of the empty drinks bottle until everybody is blowing, to make the sound of a roaring wind.

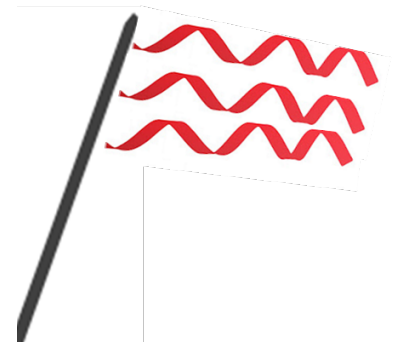
Experiment with partially filling some of the bottles with water to make different sounds. If you have a favourite song about the Holy Spirit, try to replicate the first few notes. To make more of a public statement, repeat this activity in a safe public outdoor space. (Respect any Covid-safe rules.)



Flames of fire and power to speak

Get some strips of red cloth to represent flames. Make a flag with the strips of red cloth as the 'flag'. Or make a longer streamer. Children sit spaced out. Each child takes it in turn to go round the outside of the circle of children waving the flag eventually 'landing' the 'flames' on one of the children they chose.

The child waving lays the flag by the child sitting. The sitting child now says 'Praise God' in another language used in your country or a nearby country. You need to have chosen as many languages as children in the group and have a prepared card with the phonetic writing of 'Praise God' in each different language. (Practice before.)



The child that spoke picks up the flag and repeats the action, choosing somebody else for the 'flames' to fall upon. When all the children have had a go at saying 'Praise God' all join together to say 'Praise God' in the different languages at the same time.

3,000 join the team

Make a large piece of plain paper, e.g. stick 4 sheets of A1 flip chart pages together (total size ~ 2.5m x 3.7m). Old packing paper will do: as long as you can draw on it. The young people and children work as a team to draw a map of the neighbourhood of where they live.

You will also need some containers like buckets. Go out and find many very small stones. Now get 13 plastic cups or mugs. Each container must be able to contain up to 250 of the small stones. Mark one cup 'Before Pentecost'. Two children can count out 120 small stones for this cup or container. Place on the map at the point (e.g. church building) where you are meeting. Now mark the other 12 cups or containers 'After Pentecost'. Work in teams to fill each cup with 250 small stones. How many stones in total do you have in the 12 cups? (3,000)



This is the time to pray. Just like Pentecost you are asking Jesus to multiply the number of people (children and adults) who are working to improve the situation for children and young people in this part of the city to 3,000. After everyone has had a chance to pray, pour out each of the 12 cups in turn and scatter the stones across the map.

Now pray again and praise God for what He is already doing in answer to your prayers to change the situation for children and young people in the neighbourhood.

Testimonies from 2021

INDIA

Hope was rekindled in a 12-year-old boy in Asha Forum Bangalore, India. He previously feared stepping out and was told by his family that the entire village would be wiped off due to Covid. He cried and prayed for children.

He specifically prayed for the vaccine in their locality, and in two weeks, the government had a vaccine clinic in their village.



CAMBODIA

A young girl who led a prayer session in Cambodia, testified that she felt valued and respected by others and especially adults.

Similarly, another girl expressed that she felt happy when the entire church held a special day to pray for children, showing that people value, love, respect and care for children as children are the next generation leaders.



Prayer requests from around the world

Print out a world map and ask children and young people to choose a location in another country where they would like to focus their prayers. If you have a smartphone and can afford internet access you could even check out the Wiki information about that city. Pray for both your city and this other one.

The idea is to link two cities together in prayer: strong together in faith.

Prayer points for the children and young people in that city could be inspired by testimonies like these:

- I have lost my Mum (Dad or grandparent). They caught Covid and died.
- My Dad (Mum) lost his (her) job due to Covid lockdown and still hasn't got work.
- We often have only one small meal a day – there is no money for food.
- Covid meant we lost our home and we had to move back to the village: I miss my friends.
- We weren't able to go to school for a long time. Now I find it hard to do the lessons.
- There was violence in my home. I had to run away. I sleep on the streets where I can, but there are gangs and it is dangerous.
- There are men who come by our slum and offer you lots of money. But I know it's only a trick and they want you to do bad things for them.
- My Mum caught Covid and was very ill. She is still not very well as she has always been poorly. She needs medicines but we can't afford to buy any. What can I do?

LET'S GET MORE THAN 1 MILLION PEOPLE TO SAY THIS PRAYER:
Lord, strengthen our faith together to change our cities for the better for our children and young people.

The World Weekend of Prayer campaign is a global initiative held over the first weekend of June every year, uniting hundreds of thousands of adults and children globally. It is organised by Viva, a charity dedicated to changing more children's lives to fulfil their God-given potential in 38 community networks worldwide. Find out more at www.viva.org