



CHRISTIAN FORMATION PENTECOST RESOURCES

The Season After Pentecost

We continue to be green - for some time to come! However, during this long green season, we have many causes for celebrations.

The return to regular school year programming is called many things in our church, from Rally Day to Ministry Fair and Celebration, to Aloha Sunday!

The summer provides a good rest time, a time to try new programs and ways of doing things with less stress and less structure. Now we return to the comfortable scheduling, perhaps with some new ideas.

We often refer to this time of the year as Ordinary Time, a time in which we actually live - the inbetween time between the first Pentecost and the second coming of Christ. We also refer to this time of the year as the growing season. Just like plants, we are putting down our roots - our roots of faith.

In our Gospel story each week we hear of Jesus' teachings, his miracles, his healing the sick. We walk with Jesus and the disciples to Jerusalem. We learn what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

There are a number of holy days during this long green, growing season. Along with the disciples Peter and Paul, James, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon, Jude and Andrew, we celebrate Francis of Assisi, Hilda, Leo the Great and Augustine of Hippo. We also celebrate the feast of St. Mary the Virgin on August 15, Holy Cross Day on September 14, and St. Michael and All Angels on September 29, along with the feast of the Transfiguration on August 6 and All Saints' Day, November 1.

We have a rich heritage and no end to the stories and lessons and activities we can enjoy during this growing season.

Late Pentecost at Church

St. Michael & All Angels - September 29

The word “angel” means messenger. These beautiful messengers have been depicted in Christian art in many different ways. Of the many angels mentioned in the Bible, we only know the names of these four. Michael is the angel who through the Devil out of heaven. Gabriel brought the good news of Jesus’ birth to Mary. Uriel acted as a heavenly interpreter of Ezra’s visions. He is often thought to be the angel with sword at the gate of Eden. Raphael, the angel of healing, appears in the book of Tobit as a companion to Tobit’s son Tobias on his journey to Nineveh.

There are marvelous hymns in the 1982 Hymnal for angels.

St. Francis - October 4

St. Francis is one of our most beloved saints. He also can be a wonderful evangelism tool. A St. Francis blessing of the pets event will please the pet lovers in your parish and even your community or neighborhood. Experience shows that the event is as much loved by the elderly as the young children. A sample liturgy is available in Spanish and English at www.epicenter.org> Christian Formation> Resources for Congregations.

Other ideas for observing the day might include asking for donations of pet food for the local animal shelter and inviting police, fire dogs and service animals to the blessing. You might also offer to pick up those folks who cannot drive and their pets to bring them to the liturgy.

St. Francis grew up in Assisi in Italy. He gave up his worldly possessions, thereby infuriating his parents and lived a monastic life. Francis is responsible for our use of nativity scenes. He put together a cast of animals and people to re-enact the birth of our Savior for the townspeople. He said that surely the animals celebrated the birth of our Savior as well. Francis loved animals and there are many stories of Francis befriending the wolf who terrorized the town of Gubbio, of his love towards birds) and the honor he accorded them.

All Saints Day - November 1

We all need a hero!

In the hymn “I sing a song of the saints of God” by Lesbia Scott, we sing “for the saints of God are just folk like me, and I mean to be one too.” In the previous verse we sang “and there’s not any reason, no, not the least, why I shouldn’t be one too.”

We are shaped by the people we are around - those with whom we have interaction. Role models are important and studying the lives of the saints of the church give us some very good role models to follow. They were folks just like you and me. Studying the saints also helps us live into our ministries, our occupations. As saints of God, God uses our jobs to help us take care of each other and his world.

Saints are not goody goodies. We make them be something they are not if we continue to hold up this image of them. They are just people trying to do God’s will.

There are many Tomie de Paolo books on saints such as Francis, Mary, Patrick, Benedict and Scholastica. Clip art drawings of the saints can be used for the students to make their own icon of a chosen saint. The web is a marvelous resource for getting information and activities for the saints.

You might like to choose some saints to study and become familiar with and then have your student paint pumpkins to resemble their saints. These can be displayed in the parish hall on the Sunday nearest All Saints and at the All Saints Liturgy. You might like to study the saints mentioned in “I Sing a Song of the Saints of God”.

If your church is named for a saint, find his or her date on the church calendar and make plans to honor that saint on that day. Find the other churches in the diocese who share your saint name and see what they might be doing. Share your good ideas with each other!

Look at the saints’ calendar in the Book of Common Prayer. Is there a saint day on your birthday? Are you named for a saint? Learn something about your saint who shares your name or your birthday.

Stewardship

The Fall brings special emphasis on stewardship.

We are asked by our church to stop and consider the matter of stewardship. We are asked to make a pledge of our time, our talents and our treasures for the coming year. The basis for this annual consideration is the belief that our lives, our talents and our money are gifts from God. We are free to choose how we use these gifts, but is in returning a portion of them to God that we recognize their holiness and make them holy. This process, in turn, makes us whole. We give, not in order that our church receives, but because of our need to offer back a portion of that which we have received.

Sharing our gifts makes us vulnerable. Our gifts may be rejected, spurned, misused or neglected. No one likes to be vulnerable. Think how much God opened himself to hurt when he gave his only son, Jesus. Yet that gift of sacrifice is the way the human race survived.

We need to understand that we are being asked to focus on the gifts we have received in time, talent and treasure, and to share them, not in a token manner but significantly and meaningfully. We want to share in such a way that God knows we are grateful. We need to give to God from our main course, not our leftovers. Through us, the ministry and mission of the church takes place. If we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly. If we give generously, we will reap generously. Stewardship is not an adults only activity. It is for everyone. God gives gifts to everyone, not just adults.

Stewardship comes from the abundance of the heart. There is much emphasis placed on adult stewardship in the congregation. But what about the children?

Young children can't think in the abstract. They are egocentric. It is difficult for them to see a situation from another point of view. Sharing does not come naturally, getting along with other children can be "iffy".

The key to teaching stewardship to young children is to begin with simple concepts upon which further building can occur as they grow older. As educators, our mission is to provide space where our children can explore the gifts of God in their own lives - and at their own level.

Stewardship books for children

You might like to examine these books for use as part of your stewardship formation and education for children.

Horton Hatches an Egg (Dr. Seuss)

The Very Hungry Caterpillar (Eric Carle)

Goodnight Moon (Margaret Wise Brown)

Inch by Inch (Leo Lionni)

Fortunately (Charlip)

A Baby Sister for Frances (Frances Hoban)

William's Doll (Zolotow)

Sylvester and the Magic Pebble (Steig)

The Carrot Seed (Krauss)

Swimmy (Leo Lionni)

Suggested Bible stories would include:

Creation (Gen. 1&2)

Jesus and the Children (Mk. 10:13-16)

Feeding of the 5000 (John 6:1-13)

Psalm 24

Acts 3:1-8 (Peter at the beautiful gate)

Pentecost at Home

Prayers for the Season

Father, we thank you for animals that help us, for cows, sheep and horses; dogs that guard us and those that guide us. We thank you too for all rare and strange animals and for those that make us laugh. May we take good care of them all.

(From the Lion's Book of Children's Prayers)

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O God, our heavenly Father, renew our faith, our hope, our love; renew our wills, that we may serve you more gladly; renew our delight in your word, and in the worship we offer you; renew our joy in you, and in all your good gifts; renew our longing that men and women everywhere may accept the salvation wrought by your Son Jesus Christ; renew our purpose and our happiness to serve others for his sake; who came not to be served, but to be the servant of all; who having yielded up his life upon the cross for us all, now lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

(A Procession of Prayers, from North India.)

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Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

(Prayer attributed to St. Francis)

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Poured out of deep summer pools, (elegant observation, refined reflection) into autumn's waterfall: school buses, meetings, lessons, practice. We are awash, tumbled in the rapids (kicking and screaming or enjoying the ride) in the long rush to winter. Wellspring of Life, Object of our Longing, save us from drowning! Remind us to breathe. Open our eyes, that neither beauty nor violence escapes our notice. Give us the wisdom to know when to go with the flow and when to swim upstream so that we may arrive at Thanksgiving with thanksgiving. Amen.

(The Rev. Lesely M. Adams, "Mother's Early Autumn Prayer" from Women's Uncommon Prayers)

Library Resources

The Diocesan ResourceLibrary has a number of Pentecost Resources to assist you in your programming needs for this season. To access a catalogue listing, please go to <http://weblibrary.epicenter.org:8090/> and enter keyword "Pentecost". You might try various combinations of Pentecost resources, Pentecost curriculum, etc. to obtain the most listings. And it is not too early to begin planning your Advent/Christmas/Epiphany programs and events. We have a large number of such resources and are also very happy to visit with you to help you plan your programs. We are happy to assist you in any way and also happy to mail resources to you. Please be mindful of the 2 week check out period and let us know if you wish to keep resources longer than that.

This is also a good time to look through your libraries and return those items you checked out from the diocesan resource center during the year.

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