



Introduction

Here are a simple story and a poem that try to prepare the ground for talking about Jesus returning in the person of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Preparation

The story and the poem need no special props. You might prefer to change the name or sex of the person in the story, choosing one that is unusual but not unknown to the children. Both the story and a poem are only discussion starters or could possibly be used as short pieces that are part of a bigger presentation about this festival in the assembly

Development

1. A story to prepare for Pentecost

Everyone enjoyed Bill's company. He was so kind and so full of life. His eyes never seemed to stop smiling. He was that rare sort of man who always had the right word to say. It was almost as if he knew what was on your heart and mind. Yes, the great thing about Bill was that people could trust him and people did.

It was not surprising then that the news of his promotion, which would mean him moving along a long way away, came as a great blow to all his friends. Of course they were pleased that his hard work had been recognised and rewarded. There was no doubt he had earned his new post; but even so, the thought of his going away from them was hard to take. Where would they be able to turn now for that encouraging smile and sympathetic listening ear? How would they cope without his good advice and thoughtful comments? He knew them all so well and they knew him. Friendship like his is hard to find. It was going to be a great loss.

Yes, everyone who knew Bill was not looking forward to his leaving and they all agreed that things could never be the same again. Of course he might write and there was always the phone and email but somehow that would be no substitute for the company of a man like Bill. You needed to be with him, to see him personally and to share things with him face to face. Pen and paper, telephone voice or Internet message were by comparison far too distant and cold.

If only he could stay. If only they could have him around all the time. If only somehow Bill could be with any of them, anywhere and anytime they needed him. That's what they wanted but of course it was a silly thought.

Follow-up to the story:

I wonder whether you've ever been privileged enough to meet someone in your life like Bill? I wonder whether you have ever known someone who has made such an impact on you, because of his



or her understanding and kindness – the sort of friend you just wouldn't want to lose? If you have, then you know how the disciples felt about Jesus. He'd been so special and so important to them that when it was time for him to go, they were really very lost and they longed that he might stay with them for ever.

What was a silly thought for Bill's friends, was however a real possibility for the disciples. Jesus had told them he would come back to them, to each one of them, and be with them wherever they went, forever. Just as Jesus had come down from God, so the Holy Spirit – God in a different, invisible form – was going to come down to each one of them and all this actually happened for them at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is a person – God coming in another form; Jesus coming back to be with them – and us – for ever.

2. A poem for Pentecost

Introduction:

The Holy Spirit is described in various ways in the Bible: like water that fills and refreshes; like fire that burns and purifies; like wind that brings life and power. These pictures of the work of the Spirit are important but there is a danger that we then think of the Spirit as a thing. The Holy Spirit is a person ready to be welcomed into the life of anyone who is sorry for the wrong they have done and who asks for God's forgiveness through Jesus. When this person comes in, he makes all the difference. The Spirit makes Jesus real to us. He makes the Christian life possible and he makes our lives new. Perhaps this short poem can help sum up the difference that the third person of the Trinity makes to a Christian's life.

When the spirit comes

Before the Spirit came, you were just words on a page,
Black on white and yellowed with age.
Simply a story of long ago,
Of a man who had so much love to show;
Who healed the sick and cured the lame;
Took our guilt and bore our shame.
It sounded so good, but it just couldn't last.
It was not for today but locked in the past.
Until the Spirit came.

Now the Spirit has come, you are here at my side,
Larger than life and ready to guide;
Making real to me all that you said
And doing through me the things that I read.
I am the glove that your hand has filled;
I am the cup into which you have spilled
All the love and the power which you promised would come,



Right now in the present and for everyone.
Since the Spirit came.