



On your marks

We decorate the church for Christmas; we fill it with flowers for Easter; so why not make a colourful splash for Pentecost, the third of our major Christian festivals? This is the day the Spirit came to fill God's people with Jesus so we might be his body now on earth. This is the birthday of the Church and birthdays should be marked by a great celebration. What follows are some ideas to make your church a picture of Pentecost Praise.

Get set

The following suggestions are ones that your group could work on together to help decorate the church for Pentecost. They involve preparing visuals to hang in the church as well as the setting up Pentecost Praise stations. Why not make this a Pentecost project that you tackle as a team? This is by far one of the best means of learning about the day itself as well as a way to demonstrate the togetherness in Jesus that the Holy Spirit brings.

Go!

1. *Doves and Flames*

[Here are templates for doves and flames.](#)

Print these off and cut them out. Decorate the flames in vivid colours or cover them with overlapping shiny paper in oranges, yellows and reds. On the doves you could write the names or perhaps stick pictures of people from your congregation. It is we who by grace become the gifts of the Spirit to his church, each bringing our unique God-given and inspired talents and personalities for the work of the kingdom.

Punch holes in the flames and doves, and then string these on fine but strong nylon wire above the pews or chairs anchored on columns or from fanlight window latches. In this way the doves and flames will 'float' above the heads of your congregation on Pentecost Sunday.

2. *Water and Oil*

Jesus invites all who want to come and drink from the living water that he will give. John comments in his Gospel that this is all about the Spirit which he promises to his people (see John 7:37-39).

Arrange for large bowls of water to be placed at various 'stations' around the church along with jars from which water can be poured. Invite people to fill the jars from time to time during the service and slowly, and very deliberately, pour the water into the bowls to produce that refreshing and evocative 'waterfall' sound. Make sure there are towels or cloths available nearby, as there is bound to be spillage - who knows where the overflow of God's Spirit will go!



At other points - and safely out of reach of younger children - arrange for several aromatic oils to be burned, using some traditional pottery burners. This should fill the church with powerful smells as a reminder of the invisible presence of the Spirit anointing his body, the church.

3. *Flowers and Scents*

Ask those normally involved with the flower rota to allow your group to be responsible for a special display for Pentecost - perhaps near to the pulpit or lectern. You will need to use flowers that have plenty of bright reds, oranges and yellows in order to create a true 'burning bush of scented flowers' that will help focus your Pentecost celebrations.

4. *Wind and Sounds*

Borrow some wind chimes that you can place near the doors of the church, where the movement of those coming in and out will set up a draught that will cause them to play.

At other points, using a small fan (again safely out of reach of young fingers), set up a display involving some colourful wind-catchers, such as those seen on a beach, to remind everyone of the wind that blew on that first Pentecost.

In addition, in some other areas of the church, set up a display of musical scores and words of songs of worship from around the world, and have some CDs playing of worship in other languages.

5. *Candles and Banners*

Ask to be allowed to decorate the altar or focus table itself for this special day, swathing it with 'Happy Birthday' banners and even perhaps a birthday cake on top, but certainly plenty of candles visible. You may even be able to turn the whole table into a massive birthday cake, decorating it with colourful sweet- and chocolate-wrappers that talk of celebration, divine chocolate, heroes, good news, and so on.

6. *Tasty Pentecost Windows*

And finally, here is a simple recipe that could be something a group could prepare beforehand and give out to the congregation at the end of the service.

Use a basic biscuit recipe, cut out a shape with an empty centre (maybe a leaf shape which is similar to a flame). Fill the centre with crushed red, orange or yellow boiled sweets. Bake for 15 minutes at Gas Mark 4 (180°C, 350°F).

Make sure the biscuits are cold and the 'glass' set. Warning: The set 'glass' will be very hard!