# Here are some prayer and creative worship ideas that you might like to use in your Pentecost service. Feel free to adapt, develop or completely change them to suit your context. At the end, there are some suggestions for Pentecost-themed songs.

# Enjoy celebrating the gift of Pentecost!

## Prayer Ideas

### Imaginative Prayer

*This prayer invites listeners to imagine the events of Pentecost, as depicted in* ***Acts 2:1-12.*** *Feel free to read it out slowly, leaving plenty of space for people to ‘enter into’ the scene. If people want to close their eyes, this might help to cut out distractions.*

*A second person could read the Scripture (in bold and in quote marks below), to clearly distinguish between that and the rest of the prayer.*

Loving Father, we come into your presence now. *(Pause)*

Lord Jesus, we want to be close to you right now. *(Pause)*

Holy Spirit, would you help us do that. *(Pause)*

*Here, you might invite people to ask for a special gift from God in this short time of prayer. It might be the gift of encouragement, the gift of putting Jesus first or the gift of peace. This is just a space to invite people to consider what they’re seeking from God, and bring that before him. God moves when we ask him to!*

We can imagine the scene, as the disciples gather in the upper room.

**‘When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.’** We can imagine the house, the sun streaming through the windows, the smell of freshly baked bread wafting up from a market below … We can take in the expressions of the people in the house. What emotions are showing through? *(Pause)*

**‘Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.’** We can hear this sound, its suddenness, its volume, its violence … it fills the whole house. What does this mean? What does it feel like? *(Pause)*

**‘They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.’** We can see this. What do the flames look like? Are they forcefully sparking or gently flickering? What has happened to the expressions on the faces of those in the room? *(Pause)*

**‘All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.’** We can listen as we start to hear different languages. There’s Aramaic from someone beside us. What sounds like Greek sparks up from a corner of the room. Latin, Parthian, Median … We can imagine the babble of strange sounds, unfamiliar dialects and new words. *(Pause)*

**‘Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.’** Now, we can take ourselves down to the street below. We can imagine the commotion, but also the intent focus on the sounds coming from the open upper room window … *(Pause)*

**‘Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”’**

*(Pause)*

We can take some time to have a conversation with Jesus about what we’ve just seen, heard or felt. We can speak to him, as a friend speaks to a friend, and simply receive from him whatever he wants to give us. *(Pause)*

Thank you for giving the gift of the Holy Spirit to those first disciples.

Thank you for giving us the same Spirit.

Thank you for your generosity, loving Father.

Amen.

### Call and Response Prayer

*This prayer gives thanks for God’s gifts (call) and invites us to receive them (response). It might be worth practising the repeated refrain (at the end of each section) before praying.*

*If it would be helpful, there is a PowerPoint presentation with this prayer. It is available on the Pentecost page of the Resource Centre:* [*https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/key-dates/pentecost-sunday*](https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/key-dates/pentecost-sunday)*.*

Leader: Lord God, thank you for the gift of life. Thank you for breathing our lives into existence, for knitting us together in our mother’s womb, and for knowing us like no one else. *We don’t deserve it, Lord, but you give this precious gift.*

**Response: And we thank you for it.**

Leader: Lord God, thank you for the gift of creation. Thank you for the beauty of nature, the work of your hands. Thank you for your majesty, reflected in mountains and magpies. *We don’t deserve it, Lord, but you give this precious gift.*

**Response: And we thank you for it.**

Leader: Lord God, thank you for the gift of other people. Thank you for friends, and thank you for strangers who will be future friends. Thank you for family. Thank you for those we disagree with. Thank you for your image-bearers who display different sides of your face. *We don’t deserve it, Lord, but you give this precious gift.*

**Response: And we thank you for it.**

Leader: Lord God, thank you for the gift of your son Jesus. Thank you for revealing yourself in him. Thank you for walking among us, for doing life with us and never distancing yourself from us. Thank you for dying and rising, that we might have life too. *We don’t deserve it, Lord, but you give this precious gift.*

**Response: And we thank you for it.**

Leader: Lord God, thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit. Thank you for the Pentecost that we read about and the Pentecost that we can experience each and every day. Thank you for giving us what we need, by your Spirit. *We don’t deserve it, Lord, but you give this precious gift.*

**Response: And we thank you for it.**

Leader: Lord God, thank you for the gift of freedom. Freedom to walk in truth and light. Freedom to have relationship with you. Freedom to live each one of our days with your breath sustaining us. *We don’t deserve it, Lord, but you give this precious gift.*

**Response: And we thank you for it.**

Amen.

### Intercessions

You could take time to invite the Holy Spirit into different areas of life. This will be specific to your context and what’s happening at the time, but below is a suggested structure.

* Local church: joys, challenges, uncertainties …
* Village/town/city: local services, those struggling, other churches …
* Region: councillors, MPs …
* Nation: government, big decisions that affect everyone …
* World: countries experiencing wars, natural disasters, global tensions …

You might like to end each section with this repeated refrain:

Leader: *Come, Holy Spirit.*

**Response: Holy Spirit, come.**

### Questions for Reflection

You could weave the ‘Questions for Reflection’ resource into a time of corporate prayer. It is available on the Pentecost page: <https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/key-dates/pentecost-sunday>.

### The Gift of Daily Prayer

You could gift something simple to people at the end of the service, which serves as a reminder to seek the Holy Spirit daily in prayer. You might like to use the printable wrapping paper or gift tags, available on the Pentecost page: <https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/key-dates/pentecost-sunday>.

Here are some ideas of what you could gift:

* Bible verses about the Holy Spirit written on pebbles, or gift tags attached to chocolates **(Isaiah 11:2; John 14:26; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:26; and Galatians 5:22-23** are good places to start)
* Tealights to represent the fire of the Holy Spirit
* Flame-coloured stress balls
* If you have a budget for it, wooden holding crosses

## Creative Worship Ideas

Ordered by level of preparation required:

* This idea is simple to set up (\*)
* This idea requires a bit of preparation (\*\*)
* This idea may need some extra time to prepare (\*\*\*)

### Fiery Sweets (\*)

You could provide some flame-coloured sweets (red, orange, yellow etc) for people to take as they arrive or leave. Perhaps each one could come with a Bible verse about the Holy Spirit on a printable Pentecost gift tag? **Isaiah 11:2; John 14:26; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:26; and Galatians 5:22-23** are good places to start.

### Colourful Clothes (\*)

You could invite people to wear colourful clothes to your Pentecost celebration. You would just need to get the word out a few weeks in advance, to give enough time for everyone to dig around in their wardrobes!

If your church is multicultural, you could encourage people to wear their national dress. After all, Pentecost is the birthday of the global Church, so it’s a wonderful opportunity to celebrate different cultures.

### Languages Quiz (\*)

You could run a mini quiz where you show a translation of the word ‘gift’ on the screen and have teams of three to five ‘buzz in’ to answer with which language they think it is. The team with the most points at the end could receive a prize, which you could wrap up in the printable Pentecost wrapping paper.

If it would be helpful, there is a PowerPoint presentation with this quiz. It is available on the Pentecost page.

Here are some languages to get you started:

* ‘Gift’ (English)
* ‘Cadeau’ (French)
* ‘Regalo’ (Italian and Spanish)
* ‘Geschenk’ (German)
* ‘Ebun’ (Yoruba)
* ‘Lahja’ (Finnish)
* ‘Hadia’ (Arabic transliteration)
* ‘Dárek’ (Czech)
* ‘Prezent’ (Polish)
* ‘Ajándék’ (Hungarian)
* ‘Koha’ (Maori)
* ‘Paricu’ (Tamil transliteration)
* ‘Presente’ (Portuguese)
* ‘Nunana’ (Ewe)
* ‘Donum’ (Latin)
* ‘Seonmul’ (Korean transliteration)
* You could sign ‘gift’ in BSL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6kGBMyGne8>
* Gift emoji (emoji)!

### Never-ending Candles (\*)

You could invite some children up to the front and ask them to blow out candles on a cake. However, because they are the joke kind that don’t blow out, the flames keep coming back. This could be a light-hearted introduction to the two central elements of the Pentecost story: wind and fire.

### Ribbon Race (\*\*)

You could leave rolled-up ribbons in flame colours at one end of each row of chairs. The game is to pass the ribbon along the row, as quickly as possible, so that everyone in that row is holding on to it. The fastest row could receive gifts, which you could wrap up in the printable Pentecost wrapping paper.

If you wanted this to be less competitive, you could try it with the whole congregation setting the fastest time possible. For this version, you could try three times, with three different ribbons in red, orange and yellow colours. Just make sure that they are long enough to reach everyone!

### Flame Decorations (\*\*)

You could decorate your building with flame-coloured sheets, bunting and/or balloons. Try to create an explosion of red, orange and yellow as people come through the doors, for maximum impact.

### Holy Spirit Stories (\*\*)

Stories are powerful! You could invite members of your congregation to share their testimonies of the Holy Spirit moving in their lives, to encourage and build up everyone else.

### Sharing Cultural Gifts (\*\*)

Depending on your context, you could arrange a way to share the different cultures represented in your congregation. Perhaps this could look like a bring-and-share meal after your Pentecost service. Perhaps you could invite different people to read the Scripture in their mother tongue. Maybe everyone could say the Lord’s Prayer at the same time, in their native language.

### Pentecost in Practice (\*\*)

You could turn this resource into ‘stations’ that people can visit and reflect on. You could include objects for each station (eg a doll’s house for ‘home’ and a computer for ‘online’). Equally, it could be as simple as four distinct spaces that people go to visit.

You could print the handouts for people to take with them, or stick up a large printout in each station for people to read. The full resource is available on the Pentecost page of the Resource Centre: <https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/key-dates/pentecost-sunday>.

### Map Pinboard (\*\*\*)

You could print out a large map of your local area and mount it on a pinboard. You could then invite people to come up and put a flame-coloured pin in an area where they are asking the Holy Spirit to come. For added impact, you could invite people to tie their pin to another using flame-coloured string, covering the map in a fiery network of prayer.

### Pass the Parcel (\*\*\*)

You could really enter into the celebration of Pentecost with a whole-congregation game of pass the parcel. If you want, you could use the printable Pentecost wrapping paper. You could use the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in **Isaiah 11:2** for the layers, especially if you are using the ‘Questions for Reflection’ resource. These gifts are:

* Wisdom
* Understanding
* Counsel
* Might
* Knowledge
* Fear of God

Inside the final layer, there could be something that can be shared with everyone, such as a large box of chocolates.

## Song Suggestions

Pentecost is a great opportunity to celebrate the gift of the global Church. The song suggestions below reflect this diversity, both in terms of nationalities and denominations. You might like to add some more that are meaningful to you or your congregation:

* ‘One Life To Live’ by the International Staff Songsters of The Salvation Army: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbO7gmh6dFg>
* ‘Veni Sancte Spiritus’ by French ecumenical community Taizé, sung by 54 young people from 36 different countries: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=us-v4slsUX4>
* ‘Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost’ by Christopher Wordsworth, a 19th-century Anglican bishop: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDy7aSN99_M>
* ‘Rest on Us’ by Maverick City Music and UPPERROOM, American worship collectives: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8MZbl-GRdY>
* ‘It’s Your Love’ by Chemin Neuf, a French Catholic community: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5islLPrZEE>
* ‘Way Maker’ (the original version) by Sinach, a Nigerian gospel singer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QM8jQHE5AAk>
* ‘The Name of the Lord’ by Magnify Studio, featuring Japanese worship singer Philip Shibata: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7S2vcWL89s>
* ‘De Spiritu Sancto’ by Hildegard of Bingen, a 12th century German Benedictine abbess: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYzPR0nwcmY>
* ‘I Surrender’ by Hillsong Worship, sung in Farsi and English by Iranian worship leader Darya: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmD_C12gNxk>
* ‘The Blessing World Edition’ from 154 nations in 257 languages: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d48-qbcovVY>