

## Bible reading Acts 2:1-21

### Speaking your language

THIS WEEK WE EXPLORE THE GLOBAL VISION OF PENTECOST.

On the day of Pentecost, Jesus' disciples experience being filled dramatically with God's Holy Spirit – the culmination of many centuries of waiting for the fulfilment of God's promise – made known through Old Testament prophets.



## Pray

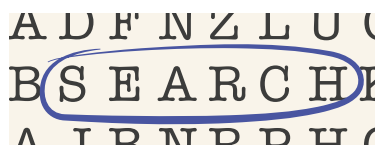


How well-travelled are the items in your home? Do you have exotic ingredients in your cupboard or souvenirs, books or music from far-flung places? Choose one such item that represents a country/area that you would like to find out more about. Spend some time finding out about worship in the place that you have chosen and pray for Christians living there. You might like to explore specific prayer requests from Christian Solidarity Worldwide. <https://www.csw.org.uk/home.htm>

## WATCH



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yp5nPGWWMh4>  
View 'Welcome to the Family Madrigal' from *Encanto* [PG]. All the Madrigals have different skills and ways of communicating, but they are all part of the same family. The song celebrates this. At Pentecost, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit, for everyone; whoever we are – whatever language we speak – however we communicate best. Try writing some lines that express these ideas to the same tune, beginning: 'Welcome to our global Pentecost'...



Do you have any local Whitsun traditions such as a Whit Walk, well dressing, a village fete or cheese-rolling? Find out about Whitsun traditions and think about new ways you could mark this time of year that would communicate the joy of the message of Pentecost to your friends and neighbours.

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803122336928;jsessionid=42ECFA7B56EC1F68A9C8A689BF5EA44E>  
<https://guestling-esussex.secure-dbprimary.com/esussex/primary/guestling/site/pages/easter/whitsuntidetritions>

## Bible notes

Pentecost (in Hebrew, Shavuot) was originally a harvest festival, but in Jesus' day it celebrated the covenant God made with Israel at Mount Sinai. Since the time of Moses, Israel had become a community that spread across the known world. As the dispersed Jews came back to settle in Jerusalem, the city became increasingly multi-national, multi-cultural and multi-lingual. After Jesus' ascension, his disciples were preparing by regular prayer for something to happen.

On the day of Pentecost their expectations were fulfilled. Luke's description in verses 2-3 of a 'sound like the rush of a violent wind' and the appearance of 'tongues, as of fire' suggests that they had a collective 'audio-visual' experience. Wind and fire accompanied God's appearance on Sinai in Exodus 19:16ff. According to Luke's near contemporary Philo, a Jewish writer living in Alexandria, the children of Israel heard God speaking intelligibly at Sinai. The 'other languages' (v:4) were probably identifiable foreign languages ('xenoglossy') rather than the 'tongues' ('glossalalia') of 1 Corinthians 12-14. But to their hearers they were more than just words. They heard Jesus' followers stepping into the diverse worlds they represented and respecting their various cultures. Peter saw Pentecost's global vision fulfilling the hopes of the prophet Joel. For Luke this meant that the Spirit's previous activity from creation through Israel and the prophets, down to John the Baptist and Jesus, was brought into focus by the Jesus movement. So, Pentecost was less the birthday of the Church, and more the revelation that God's promise to renew all creation was at last taking shape, around the crucified and exalted Jesus.

## First impressions

- Looking at the map, what strikes you about the crowd on the day of Pentecost?
- What does it feel like to hear people speak in a way that really connects with you?
- What might a global vision of Pentecost mean for your church?



## A gathering prayer

Lord, be with us today.  
Let us hear you speaking with words  
we understand deep in our being.  
As we hear your voice,  
comfort, encourage, challenge and motivate us.  
May your Holy Spirit inspire us, unite us and guide us.  
Breathe on us afresh.  
Renew our hope in your love and resurrection.  
Speak new life to everyone,  
wherever they are in the world.  
**Amen.**



Play a word association game beginning with 'Spirit'. Afterwards, spend a little time reflecting on where it took you. Were there any surprises? Would it have been different in a different context? Think about how you might communicate the Pentecost message to those who know very little about the Bible or church.