



ASSEMBLIES.ORG.UK

School assemblies for every season for everyone

Pentecost power. Suitable for Key Stage 3

The story of Pentecost shows that we need the power of God's Holy Spirit to enable us to live as Jesus did and to be his disciples. *by Janice Ross*

Aims

The story of Pentecost shows that we need the power of God's Holy Spirit to enable us to live as Jesus did and to be his disciples.

Preparation and Materials

- This assembly contains lots of resources: you may want to omit one or two of the sections contained within it.
- You will need three teachers to read the script: Interviewer, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Jesus.
- Six pupils to read the Bible verses.

Assembly

1. Most of the students will be familiar with Andrew Lloyd Webber and his current search for three 'Olivers' and a 'Nancy' to star in the West End production of *Oliver*. *Oliver* is based on Charles Dickens' book *Oliver Twist* which tells the story of a young orphan boy who gets involved with a gang of pickpockets in nineteenth-century London.

But for those who haven't seen the programme here is a summary. Three years ago Andrew Lloyd Webber took on the challenge of putting on the musical *The Sound of Music*. Young women were invited to audition for the part of Maria, which had been played in the film by Julie Andrews. Numbers were whittled down and eventually 12 hopefuls were accepted into 'the house' to be prepared for the part. Week by week one was voted off until a new Maria was discovered, in the form of Connie Fisher.

The following year we saw a new star who was given the part of Joseph for the musical *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. His name was Lee Mead.

And this time Andrew Lloyd Webber wants three Olivers (the number of performances would be too gruelling for one boy) and one Nancy.

2. In initial auditions hundreds of hopefuls tried for the part of Nancy. Ask the students what kind of character the judges were looking for? (A quote from Andrew Lloyd Webber: 'a girl of the street and yet she has a heart of gold underneath it all. We're looking for a girl who really is a rough diamond.')

One by one the young women were asked to leave because they were 'too young, too middle class, too sweet' or they just couldn't sing! Those who made it were told, 'You could be a Nancy.'

Now 12 hopefuls are being taught to sing, act, talk, walk, think like a Nancy. Ask those who watch the programme what they think is the most difficult part of the training in the Nancy House? Who is the hardest taskmaster? Who do they think will win?

3. Now ask the children to picture a different house. This one is an upper room in ancient Israel. Twelve men have been chosen, but the numbers here have already been reduced to 11. (One has killed himself, having been responsible for the death of an innocent man, Jesus.)

Their task is going to be to take the message of Christianity to the whole world. They have been following Jesus of Nazareth for three years. Now they have 50 days to become the part, 50 days to become like Jesus, to be called Christians!

4. Ask the students to listen to the following interview and to think about whether they would take on any of these men if they were auditioning for the part of a Christian (which simply means a witness to, or disciple of Jesus)?

On the third day after his death the miraculous had happened, just as Jesus had said it would, although the disciples had not understood this teaching at the time. Jesus had risen from the dead. The disciples were now sitting with him, huddled in an upstairs room out of sight of the religious and Roman authorities. They were still very afraid that they might be next in line for crucifixion.

They talked with him, ate with him and marvelled as he went over the ancient scriptures once again and opened their eyes to the truth of God's word.

Then he said to them, 'You will be my witnesses.' Not: 'You could be my witnesses!' but: 'You will be my witnesses!'

Interviewer: So, who have you got lined up in the house, Andrew?

ALW: I'd say a very promising group. Some have real musical talent. There's



one I have my eye on who already talks and acts like a Nancy and then there is another who for her age has a remarkable ability to put herself in Nancy's shoes.

Interviewer: And what about you, Jesus? What about your group?

Jesus: Well, I suppose you would call them uneducated, rough men on the whole. Some are fishermen. Some, like the converted tax collector, Matthew, have not been very popular. They are nothing much to look at. Peter can be a bit of a hot-head and James and John are rightly nicknamed Sons of Thunder.

Interviewer: Mmm. Interesting! What about experience, Andrew? Have many of your girls been on the stage before?

ALW: Yes, they have. One has been in opera, many in beauty pageants, local singing talent shows. I am finding that more and more of our contestants have some sort of training in the performing arts.

Interviewer: So you have something to work on. What about your eleven, Jesus?

Jesus: They have certainly spent three years watching me at work and listening to my teaching. They have had a bit of practice themselves too. I sent them out two by two and they found themselves doing some of the things I could do. They travelled about with only the clothes they stood up in and yet they were provided for. They prayed for the sick and saw them healed.

Interviewer: That's excellent! And Andrew, there is no doubt that your girls were desperate for the job! Everyone watching the programme saw the tears and heard the screams of delight when you uttered those famous words, 'You could be a Nancy!' I suppose, Jesus, the same could be said for your disciples?

Jesus: Well no, not exactly.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Jesus: Well, they had been convinced for a while that I was the Messiah, promised from of old, and they gave up everything to follow me. But it all came to an end. I angered the religious leaders and our own people were responsible for my death, as you know. In the end my friends fled. The strongest of them even denied knowing me. They are no longer convinced that they want to be disciples. They are gripped by fear, and they have been



hiding behind locked doors. Can you blame them?

Interviewer: I see. No, I am not sure I do blame them. But now you are back, things will be fine again.

Jesus: But I am not staying. And life will not be easy for my friends.

Interviewer: Oh, so they are going to have to train very hard in the house over the next few weeks. You are going to have to knock some discipline into them. I don't envy you your task.

Jesus: No, my friend, it won't exactly be like that. That's not the way it will work at all!

5. Did it work for these disciples? Were they successfully turned into witnesses of Jesus?

Ask six children to read the following words from Acts, the book in the Bible that tells the story of the early church.

Reader 1: Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Reader 2: When the day of Pentecost came ... all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Reader 3: Those who accepted Peter's message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Reader 4: When the rulers, elders and teachers of the law saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished.

Reader 5: Persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem and they were scattered. Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

Reader 6: In Thessalonica Paul and Silas were dragged before the city officials. 'These men who are turning the world upside down have now come here!'

Time for reflection

Often we try to be like Jesus using our own strength and by our own efforts, and fail miserably! What difference does the Pentecost story mean for us today?



Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you that you know our weakness and lack of strength often to do what is right.

Thank you that you indeed helped these eleven men to be your witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Thank you that today you are still helping thousands of ordinary often uneducated men and women, girls and boys to be your disciples.

Amen.