

**Worship Material**  
**Unity in diversity**  
**Material from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 8th June**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Father God, we thank you for sending your Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Fill our hearts with your love and help us to seek your face.

Give us grace to turn to your world with a burning desire to bring your love to others.

**Amen.**

**Read Acts Acts 2.1-21**

**Bible notes**

The disciples are together, praying, and God comes and blows them away, turns them inside out and fills them with life! But this is not just a private experience: it draws a crowd. From day one, the Church existed for others and not just itself; from day one, the Church faced outwards into the world not inwards into itself.

The Holy Spirit didn't just anoint the leaders but filled each and everyone in the room (there were 120 or so there). And the Holy Spirit then pushed the disciples out of their comfort zone into the world to speak to any and everyone in languages they understood. What began upstairs behind locked doors spilled out into the streets of the crowded city. And the ensuing rumpus ended with a baptismal service.

Note that the list of countries in 2:5-11 is a picture of the Holy Spirit bringing down the barriers that divide people. This is in many ways the reversing of the story of Babel in the Genesis passage – the scattering of that story is replaced by a gathering here: all people, all languages, all hearing what God is doing. But all these people, in Jerusalem for the festival, will be scattered back to the communities from which they came.

These crowds report hearing the good news in their own language. Often, we think of the miracle of Pentecost as the gift of tongues, so the disciples could speak about what God is doing. But maybe it is more about hearing. The miracle is that everyone heard this good news in their own language, in a way that they could understand and respond to. As Peter unpacks what has

happened, he talks about the end of the world. It starts with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on everyone and ends with signs in the heavens. What Peter is seeing here is the end of the scattering of Babel, the end of that world of division and antagonism, and the start of the new world where a diverse body of people is gathered by the gospel of Jesus and the power of his Spirit. The only suitable language is the apocalyptic vocabulary of the prophet Joel, quoted in verses 17-21.

### Prayer

Today we have heard miraculous stories of people both separated and united by language. Lord, we thank you for our mother tongue, the language that reveals our true selves. We rejoice in the gift of communication.

Thank you that our words can be extraordinary when your Spirit breathes through them.

**Amen.**

### A prayer to conclude

Lord, we have come together as your people.

We have listened to your Word and joined together in your praise.

Send us back to our daily lives, ready to share your good news through the coming week.

**Amen.**