***LSW***

children

*You may also wish to discuss stories of the great missionary saints. It is recommended that this be limited to the saints known to the children. A good example would be St Francis Xavier, who brought the message of Christ to Goa in India, Melaka in Malaysia, to Japan, where he baptised thousands, and to Macau in China, where he eventually died waiting to enter China proper.*

*In addition there are thousands of other people who may not be canonised saints, but are devout nevertheless and have brought the Gospel to all the places of the world. These people are called missionaries. Discuss those who the children may know personally.*

*St Francis Xavier is famous in Asia and is the patron saint of missionaries. He was a Spaniard, who left his family, home, country, and all things familiar to him to a faraway place to tell people about Jesus. Get the children to imagine having to do that and go to a place where they did not know anyone, know the language, the costumes, the customs, the food, to do something which people could kill you for. St Francis went to India, then Malaysia, and then Japan. Along the way, he made many people Christians. He wanted to teach the Chinese people about Jesus but he died near Macau, before he could set foot into China.*

*St Francis Xavier and many other missionaries made many sacrifices so that people could become Christians. It was because of their sacrifices that we are now Christians.*

*It will be wonderful if you could research how Christianity came to your town, region our country or how your people and ancestors came to be converted. That would be your story to tell. I feel it is important for everyone to be able to tell the story of their people and I hope Christianity is an important enough a defining feature of your people (like for the Irish) that it becomes part of your folklore how your people became Christians.*

Year A, B, C

Pentecost Sunday

**Image**

Birthday of the Church

**Points to note**

For this Sunday, the Gospel is not used and the more vivid story of the descent of the Holy Spirit from the Acts of the Apostles is used instead.

The emphasis is on a beginning of the Church. It is from the day of Pentecost that the mission of the Church began. Armed with the Holy Spirit, the Church now had the courage to take Christ’s message to the world. It is important to convey this to the children.

As such, this feastday is sometimes known as the birthday of the Church. This may be something that can be played up as birthday is something that children identify with. Discussions, I feel, should go beyond birthdays.

Stories of missionaries may be used. Perhaps, the stories of the apostles as used in Easter 2 could kick off the story telling.

**Liturgy**

## Reading

As the Gospel is not read, the Acclamation is omitted. Being the birthday of the Church, we could welcome the reading with a rendition of ‘Happy Birthday’ to the Church instead (make sure you get approval from your parish priest before hand).

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And with your spirit.

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles

(Ac 2: 1-11)

When Pentecost day came round, the apostles had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech.

Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled, each one bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language. They were amazed and astonished. “Surely”, they said, “all these men speaking are Galileans? How is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Iranians and Syrians; people from Iraq, Israel, Jordan and Turkey, Egypt and Libya; as well as visitors from Rome - Jews and converts alike - Greeks and Arabs; we hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God.

This is the Word of the Lord

**Discussion**

Has anybody just celebrated a birthday? Or been to a birthday party? *Discuss what is a birthday, and that it happens once a year and it celebrates an event that took place once before on the same day. Explain that that first birthday is a beginning of a life.*

Do you know that the Church has a birthday? Do you know which day? *Discuss that the Church also has a beginning. Discuss the story of Pentecost. Emphasise the fear the apostles had after the resurrection and contrast it with the courage they had after Pentecost. Explain that after Pentecost, the apostles went out to preach the Gospel to all people all over the world. You may wish to revisit some of the stories of where the apostles went. The following stories are not biblical:*

*The apostles drew lots to see where they would go. Peter went to Rome and became the first bishop of Rome. Once, when he was running away to escape from soldiers, he saw Jesus walking the other direction. When he asked Jesus where he was going, Jesus replied that he was going to Rome to be crucified again. Peter was so ashamed of himself that he ran ahead of Jesus and was arrested. He told the soldiers that he should be crucified upside-down as he was not worthy to be crucified upright like Jesus.*

*Thomas was chosen to go to India. He didn’t want to because it was so far away. Jesus visited him in a dream, but still he told Jesus, “Anywhere Lord but India”. The next morning, Jesus was at the harbour and asked the captain of a ship if he needed a slave, pointing out to him Thomas. The captain called Thomas over and asked him if Jesus was his master. When Thomas said yes, the captain said he had bought him and Thomas was going to India. Thomas went and made many Christians there.*

*Of all the apostles, only John lived to an old age but in exile in the island of Patmos. Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped cross in Greece. James was martyred in Spain and Matthew in Ethiopia. Philip was crucified in Turkey. Bartholomew was whipped to death in Armenia. Simon and Jude were killed for the faith in Persia.*

*St Paul, according to the Acts of the Apostles, made four missionary journeys. He probably made more, one of which was to Rome where he was martyred.*