

LESSON
PLAN



Photo by Phillip Laubner/CRS

“God does not ask us to win: just to show up, give our best, do what we think is right and, most important, to remember that the Holy Spirit will be with us.”

– Dr. Carolyn Woo
President and CEO
Catholic Relief Services

OBJECTIVES

Through this activity participants will:

- ❖ Gain a greater understanding of concepts surrounding advocacy.
- ❖ Understand why we as Catholics are called to be advocates for those whose voices aren't being heard in the halls of power.
- ❖ Connect themes of Pentecost to advocacy.

SUMMARY

Participants will reflect on Pentecost and its relationship to advocacy in order to better understand the importance of advocacy. They will make Holy Spirit “tongues of fire” with paint in order to think about how they can serve as advocates.

MATERIALS

- Large sheet of white paper
- *Why Do We Advocate? Themes of Pentecost* handout— one per participant
- Markers
- Orange paint
- One paper plate
- Paper towels
- Music and music player (suggestion: *Spirit of the Living God* – Audrey Assad)

PREPARATION

1. Compile enough *Why Do We Advocate? Themes of Pentecost* handouts for the class.
2. Place the large piece of paper on a flat surface at the front of the room (a table or desk), and put the markers nearby.
3. Put a quarter-size amount of the orange paint onto the paper plate, and place it next to the handout and markers.
4. Place the paper towels or make a handwashing station close to the handout and paints setup.

PROCESS

Choose one participant to read Acts 2:1-11 aloud from the *Why Do We Advocate? Themes of Pentecost* handout.

Choose one participant to read 1 Cor 12:4-13 aloud from the *Why Do We Advocate? Themes of Pentecost* handout.

Reflection

Instruct participants to take a few minutes to silently reflect on the readings they just heard and what they tell us about advocacy.

Discussion

Have participants discuss as a class or in small groups:

- These readings talk about our call to be disciples of Christ. Can you name a time when you, or someone you know, chose to follow Christ by standing up for someone who was voiceless or treated unjustly?
- When we follow Jesus, we are called to advocate for people who are not able to advocate for themselves. What can be difficult about doing that? In what ways can your faith strengthen you to speak up?

Examples of Advocacy: Mass on the Border and Catholic Advocacy Day

Show participants the Rome Reports' news broadcast about the Mass celebrated by U.S. Catholic bishops on the U.S.–Mexico border in Nogales, Arizona found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=17IWu6LHlpk. Show participants the Northwest Catholic advocacy video found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=86QktLidwh0.

Have participants discuss how the content of the two videos relates to the readings they heard and to themes of Pentecost, and how the videos provide examples of advocacy (this group discussion can be implemented after each video or after showing both videos).

Tongues of Fire Activity

After discussing the videos and their connection to advocacy, have participants reflect on this question:

As individuals who are part of a community, we can use the gifts God has given us to be advocates with and for others. Bishop O'Malley used his ability to speak Spanish to reach out to and advocate for and with migrants and their families. Marian Malonson used her understanding of poverty issues and passion for human life and dignity to advocate against the death penalty. Try to think of a few ways you could use your gifts to be an advocate.

(If participants are having trouble coming up with responses, you may want to provide them with some additional examples, such as using their writing skills to write and send letters to Congress, using their outgoing personality to raise awareness of an important issue after Mass at Church or among classmates at school, using their social media skills to inform and educate their friends about important issues, etc.)

Instruct participants to come to the front of the room, one at a time, and write on the sheet of paper one way in which each person can use his or her gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit to engage in advocacy. Each participant can then dip one finger in the orange paint and draw a flame next to their response on the sheet of paper. Once participants have written down their actions and drawn their flames, they can use the paper towels to wash their hands and then return to their seats.

During this portion of the lesson, reflection music can be played in the background (suggestion: *Spirit of the Living God* by Audrey Assad).

Prayer

After everyone has drawn their flame and written their advocacy idea, lead the class in this traditional Catholic Prayer of the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created
And you shall renew the face of the earth.
O God, who instructed the hearts of the faithful
by the light of the Holy Spirit,
grant us in the same Spirit
to relish what is right
and always rejoice in your consolation.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Closing Prayer: Our Father

Before closing the lesson with the Our Father, explain that the Our Father is a common prayer spoken by people throughout the world in many different languages.

Leader: When we say “Our Father,” we remember that God is the Father of all of us—those present here with us in this room whom we know, and those in our community and around the world whom we don’t know—our fellow advocates, and those for whom we strive to advocate.

Ask if anyone can recite the Our Father in a different language. Then, invite students to remember our global family by praying the Our Father together.