

Planning Workshops to Help Churches Use *Seasons of the Spirit*

Purpose

These suggestions will help workshop leaders prepare events for churches that have chosen *Seasons of the Spirit* as the curriculum for their church community. **The designs for workshops introducing *Seasons of the Spirit* to teachers and leaders is found in the *Congregational Life* resource** where, for each season, there is a “**Leader Preparation**” design that introduces the sessions and theme for that season of the church year. In most local church settings, a volunteer leader or church staff member should be able to lead others through the workshop. When invited as an “outside expert” to work with a church, workshop leaders should envision their role as teaching leaders from the church to lead these events in the future.

All the “Leader Preparation” designs provide activities through which people will learn about the *Seasons of the Spirit* resources. They will discover how, by connecting worship, learning, and service, these resources offer a new season of transformation for congregations engaged in lectionary-led education.

- ! We will experience resources that reach community-wide and invite people to discover and explore meaning and mystery in the Bible.
- ! Participants will discover the many ways in which *Seasons of the Spirit* provides resources that are accessible for leaders and learners.
- ! Together we will examine the ways the *Seasons of the Spirit* family of resources weave a whole church community together around the transforming power of the Bible.

Preparing for the Workshop

If a single congregation has invited you to lead this workshop, you might want to suggest that they contact other nearby churches that are also using *Seasons of the Spirit*. Sharing the experience among several churches can be an excellent way to build both enthusiasm and ecumenical connections. It is the host church’s responsibility to provide a meeting space, coffee, and other refreshments.

Identify for the workshop organizer (e.g. the local pastor, church educator, etc.) the types of information that may be helpful for the various participants to have handy. For example, the mission/service/outreach leaders would bring lists of special offerings and mission projects that will be done during this season. Worship leaders would bring lists of special worship events already set for those months. The idea is not to “stay with what’s always been,” but to take these specifics into consideration as this season’s planning moulds the shape and interconnections of education, worship, music, and mission.

Materials and equipment you will need:

The resources from *Seasons of the Spirit* for the season you are introducing (each leader will need the resources for the age level they will be teaching):

Age Level Resources

Multiage Resources

Congregational Life Resource

Behold: Arts for the Christian Year

Other *Seasons* resources that you will

need:

From Start to Finish (especially

“Overview of a Session,” p. 14, and

“Overview of Materials,” p. 15)

Music CD

Seasons of the Spirit Songbook or print

lyrics to songs you will use from the

Data CD in *Congregational Life*

Posters (included in Age Level resources)

Theological and Educational

Foundations paper

Newsprint

Markers

Paper

Pencils

Masking Tape

CD Player

Video Player (if you will use the *Seasons*

Introductory video)

Computer with Internet hookup (if you

will demonstrate the web site)

Cloth in colour appropriate to current

liturgical season

Candle

Copies of handout materials for worship

and/or workshops

Bibles or handouts with scripture passages

you will use

Sign-in sheet

Name tags

Preparing the Meeting Space

Arrange to meet in a large room around tables so that people will have ample opportunity to examine resources and learn about them.

Display posters from the curriculum. If the host church can provide them, banners representing the upcoming seasons of the church year will enhance the environment.

Place Sign-in sheet, name tags and any handouts on a table. As they arrive, invite people to sign in, create a name tag and pick up copies of handouts. You may also wish to invite them to browse a display of supplementary resources/curriculum and help themselves to refreshments.

Display two newsprint pages with the headings: “Things I want to be sure to learn about today . . .”
“Questions about *Seasons of the Spirit* . . .”

Arrange for *Seasons of the Spirit* resources to be available at the tables. Each leader should have the resources with which he or she will be working during the upcoming church season(s).

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| <p>! <i>Age Specific</i> resources for eight age levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth-Age 2 • Ages 3-5 • Ages 6-8 • Ages 9-11 • Multiage (Ages 5-12) • Ages 12-14 • Ages 15-18 • Adult <p>! <i>Congregational Life</i>, a 3-in-1 guide for church leaders including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Behold</i> • <i>Seasons Data CD</i> • <i>From Start to Finish</i> booklet | <p>! <i>Theological and Educational Foundations Paper</i></p> <p>! <i>Seasons of the Spirit Songbook</i></p> <p>! <i>Seasons of the Spirit Music CD</i> (have a CD player and have music playing as people arrive)</p> <p>! <i>Seasons of the Spirit Video</i> (arrange for a video tape player and TV or video projector)</p> |
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Other resources you will want to have available:

- ! *Bibles* (one for each person) or handouts with any Bible passages you will use
- ! CD Player
- ! Internet and technology resources
 - If there is capacity to connect to the Internet, arrange for a computer to be connected to the *Seasons of the Spirit* web site (www.spiritseasons.com).
 - If you have access to a video projector or can display the computer on a TV, it will allow more people to view this resource at one time. This equipment may also be used to project images from *Behold* that are on the *Seasons Data CD*.
- ! Newsprint and Markers
- ! Paper and Pencils
- ! Masking Tape

Arrange a worship centre in the room using the appropriate colour for the season of the Church Year. Prepare an opening and closing worship using elements from *Seasons of the Spirit* from the Sunday before or the Sunday after your event. Some ideas are included on pp. 5 of this outline. Selections from *Behold*, the *Seasons of the Spirit Music CD*, and the *Seasons of the Spirit Data CD* may be used in this worship setting.

Use the Leadership Preparation Designs

The content for workshops introducing Seasons of the Spirit to teachers and leaders is found in the *Congregational Life* resource in the “Leadership Preparation” designs (pp. 10-11 for Pentecost 2, 2002, or pp. 7-8 for Advent-Christmas-Epiphany, 2002-2003). These designs use resources from *Congregational Life*, *Behold*, and from age level resources. You will need to make copies of the pages from *Congregational Life* that will be used in the workshop.

The design follows the pattern of the *Seasons of the Spirit* session flow: Gather, Engage, Respond, Bless. Be sure to do all parts of the design.

As you plan this workshop, help leaders from the church to identify the “Leadership Preparation” design from which you are working, so that they might plan similar events for seasonal resources in the future.

Suggestions for Workshop for Pentecost 2, 2002

Before you begin looking specifically at the materials for Pentecost 2 (September 1 through November 24, 2002) you may wish to view one or more of the segments of the *Seasons* Introductory Video.

Use the outline of the “Leadership Preparation” design in *Congregational Life* for Pentecost 2, pp. 10-12. In the section on Gather is suggested that you “Invite everyone to look at the Chilean Arpillera and share some of the background information about it.” This information may be found on pages 3 and 61. For those that want more information there is a lovely book available with many pictures entitled *Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Love: The Arpillera Movement in Chile, 1974-1994* by Marjorie Agosin, Isabel Allende, Celeste Kostopulos-Cooperman (Translator). Visit the *Seasons of the Spirit* web site to experience an interactive version of an Arpillera with links to more information:
www.spiritseasons.com

In the section on Respond, if your group is fairly large, divide into small groups by interest (educators, outreach, worship, music). Below are suggestions for resources from *Congregational Life* that these small groups might be given to read and discuss.

Educators (Teachers, Sunday School Coordinator or Superintendent, Christian Education committee)

- Together look at pages 14-15 of *From Start to Finish*. These two pages give an overview of the flow of a session and an orientation to the contents of age level resources. If they have brought them, have teachers locate this material in their own resources.
- Hand out copies of “This Season So...For Christian Educators” (*Congregational Life*, page 5) and look at this together. Review the suggestions for “Getting Started.” This might be the time to look over material lists (pages 137-141) and decide how supplies will be gathered and organized.
- Look at “Planning the Season” (*Congregational Life*, page 13) and identify the questions relevant to education. Answers the questions for which you have information now; decide how you’ll reach answers for the remaining questions.
- Share information from *Congregational Life* about special days such as ecumenical observances, saint’s days, and civic holidays. Plan ways to incorporate these into your educational ministry. This information is included on the “Learning” page of the materials for each Sunday.

- Look at “This Season...at Home” (pages 129-136). This 8-page resource is designed for use in the home although it can be used in a variety of settings. It lists the lectionary readings for each week, along with some background about the focus passage, and a variety of activities related to the theme of the season. Decide how you will share this information with families. For example, it may be sent home as a newsletter, or pertinent sections might be highlighted in your bulletin or church newsletter.

Worship (Clergy, worship committee, lay preachers, worship leaders)

- Hand out copies of “This Season So...For Worship Leaders” (*Congregational Life*, page 4) and look at this together.
- Read the article “Sharing the Story: The Word with All Ages” (page 22) and reflect on any insights this gives you about how the gospel is proclaimed with all ages through worship.
- Look at the “Dedication of Leaders and Learners” on page 14. Decide how you will use or adapt this ritual in worship to recognize the volunteers who will teach or lead groups this season.
- Look at the resources on “Creating an Arpillera” (pages 17-18) and “Community Quilt-Making” (pages 19-21) and decide how these might be incorporated into the worship setting for this season. For example, a liturgical artist might create a banner or the image of the Chilean arpillera might be projected in the sanctuary, etc. Quilt making is also a suggested outreach activity for this season, so you will want to coordinate this with your outreach/mission groups.
- Look at the resources for Thanksgiving Sunday (pages.125-128). Decide how intergenerational worship will be planned and who will be involved.

Outreach (Mission coordinator, Outreach committees, Minister of Outreach)

- Hand out copies of “This Season So...For Outreach Ministries” (*Congregational Life*, page 6) and look at this together.
- Go over information from *Congregational Life* about special days such as ecumenical observances, saint’s days, and civic holidays. Plan ways to incorporate these into your outreach ministry. This information is included on the “Learning” and “Serving” pages of the materials for each Sunday.
- Look at the resources on “Creating an Arpillera” (pages 17-18) and “Community Quilt-Making” (pages 19-21) and decide how these might be incorporated into your church’s outreach ministry for this season.
- Identify mission and outreach currently done in your congregation during the months of September through November. Discuss how these mission/outreach/service efforts fit into Pentecost 2’s scriptural focus, and how these efforts might be enhanced by intentionally weaving them into Pentecost 2’s focus.

Music (Minister of Music, Choir leaders, Worship planners)

- Look together at the articles “Music in Seasons of the Spirit” and “Hints on Using the Music in Seasons of the Spirit” (*Music Section*, pages 1-3).
- Learn the songs for this season. Sing through the songs, using the piano accompaniment or the *Seasons* CD
- If you have purchased the *Seasons Songbook Volume 1* read and discuss the article “How to Teach Unfamiliar Music to a Congregation” found on page 41.
- Look at hymn suggestions and try some of the short musical pieces such as psalm responses and choral calls to worship found in *Congregational Life*. This information is included on the “Worship” resource pages of the materials for each Sunday.

Additional Resources for Workshop Leaders

Suggested Openings

Spirit Sightings

As you prepare for the workshop, visit www.spiritseasons.com and read the Spirit Sightings for the Sunday nearest the date of the workshop. Use this as your opening, reading the summary of the news article and inviting the group to reflect on one of the questions. They might reflect in silence, by drawing or writing something, by sculpting a piece of clay, or by discussing with a partner.

Being a Cross-Bearing Community

We started with making decorated crosses with our names, which were then used to introduce ourselves. The Worship Centre was then prepared, producing a cloth, candle, Bible and cross from a box (as suggested in the Ages 6 - 8 material). We read Matthew 16:21-28, and I spoke briefly about the cross being a sign of our community life. This led into putting the picture of the Arpillera on the worship centre, and we looked at the signs of community life in it. To finish the short time of worship, we placed all our crosses on the table and prayed for the communities from which we came, and the wider church community.

-idea from Mary Hawes, Diocesan Adviser, London, UK

Suggested Get-Acquainted Games

Name Tags

Cut name tags from various colors of construction paper. As participants arrive, ask them to choose a name tag of their favourite color and write on their name tag their own name in large block letters in the centre of the name tag. Then in one of each of the four corners write: the name of their favourite Bible character, the age level they will be a leader for, their favourite season of the Church Year, something they can be found doing when they are not at church. Use this as an ice-breaker. For example, invite them to find someone who likes the same church season and discuss with their partner why they like it. Or find someone who will be teaching a different age level and discuss what they like about working with this age level.

What's Your Favourite Season?

In pairs or individually (if you have a small group) invite people to name what their favourite church season is and why it is their favourite. The Season after Pentecost (and the Season after Epiphany) in some traditions is referred to as "ordinary time" because it is not a festival season (Christmas, Easter) or a season of preparation for these special events in the Christian Year (Advent, the four weeks leading up to Christmas; Lent, the weeks leading up to Easter). Although these high festival times are usually favourites, it is in the ordinary time that we spend most of our lives. In the "ordinary time" of the Pentecost season we can reflect on ways we experience the day to day presence of God.

Other Activities

We did a curriculum Scavenger Hunt (see p. 6) adapted from the outline provided at the Training of the Trainers event. I adapted this by including questions such as name two things that surprised you; find one thing you want to ask more about, and compared our answers. This gave me the chance to point out where extra material is hidden, in order to get the most out of it.

-idea from Mary Hawes, Diocesan Adviser, London, UK

Seasons Scavenger Hunt

The songs are found on pages ____ to ____ .

Some pages can be reproduced. What is the symbol for those pages?

Each session includes resource sheets. They are found _____
_____.

The list of materials required for the basic supply kit is found on page ____.

General information about the season can be found on page ____.

The focus scripture for a session is identified in several places. Name three.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The leader can keep a list of the materials needed for the activities chosen for a session in the margin of _____.

Two articles of help for the leader's general understanding of the biblical texts in this season are on pages ____ and ____.

Compare all three age levels. Find three pages that are the same in them.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____