At the start of last year we decided that we would like to have a whole school Pentecost themed community event with links to the arts. “8 Bible Journey Days” by Barbara Meardon and Verity Holloway provided an inspirational framework to deliver this. Our overall aim was to give the children an opportunity to gain a much deeper understanding of Pentecost, to ask questions and share their thinking and to meet Christians from local churches to talk about Pentecost.

The idea of using art as a starting point saw each class analysing a different Pentecost painting and asking open “I wonder...” questions about each picture, some of which they were able to answer during the week. Various drama techniques were used to develop their understanding of the picture. Every class interpreted the painting in their own way for displays in the hall. The initial whole school worship introduced them to the bible story which was also shown to them through a reflective storytelling from Bible Story Bags or Godly Play. Every child had a heart, speech bubble or thought bubble to write or show how a character in the story might be feeling, what they might say or what they might think.

Painting of silk banners ran through the week with each child designing and painting a panel. Some of these were then given to the church communities many of whom sent members to the school to help during the week.

The community contribution was invaluable and really enabled links to be established with the school across all Christian churches in the area. The children really benefitted from meeting with and talking to Christians about Pentecost.

Everyone in the school learnt various songs, as suggested in the book, on the theme including the Nigerian song “Wa wa wa Emimimo”, “Come, O Holy Spirit come.” It was also an opportunity to celebrate the different home languages spoken in our own school community.

Through the week each class followed their own series of lessons taken from the book. Nursery, Foundation Stage and Year1 studied Teddy Horsley and the windy day, while Year 2 thought about and made flame crowns to wear.

Year 3 plotted where all the people in the story had travelled from and made cakes. We also had a visit from the Christian author, Mary Millard who talked about her books for children and many activities followed from that. Wind prayers were the theme for Year 4 while Year 5 explored the fruits of the spirit. Year 6 filmed all the activities on iPads and edited them to create 2 wonderful little films chronicling the week, as well as looking at how Pentecost is celebrated around the world.

The week’s events finally culminated on Friday with everyone in the school, including parents, making a kite to fly in the afternoon and also watching the films made by Year 6, singing Pentecost songs and having a birthday party for the church with flame decorated cakes and party games.
Some of the things we as staff think:
“Plans are going well and your help and e mails have been invaluable”.
“What an amazing week”

Some of the things our visitors said:
“What a wonderful week the children have had!”
“Lovely to see their enthusiastic faces.”
“Fantastic art work in the hall.”
“What an amazing week. The children were engaged and enjoying it. They have produced work of real quality and depth.”

Some of the things the children said...
“Now I know more about the Holy Spirit and I also know more stories about the disciples. Now Pentecost means a lot to me.”
“My favourite bit was when we made cakes with edible flames on top”
“I have learned that without Pentecost we would not have a church. I hope everyone knows about Jesus.”
“I was really excited to learn about Pentecost.”
“The Holy Spirit helps people to be brave, strong and bold and I liked writing about the Holy Spirit.”
“The best thing about the week was Pentecost painting. We thought about the paintings.”
“We made flame coloured kites and flew them.”

Author: Amanda Aze, Headteacher St John’s CE VA Primary School, Weymouth
Kite Flying

Batik Banners