

Clothed in Power

(A participation play for all ages)

This play was originally presented during a church service and the entire congregation took part. Because of the size of the groups and time constraints, this participation play had people learning chants only as the audience participation in the play. The three capes are the only items to be pre-made. If it is used for a special event for smaller groups, costumes, props or simple scenery could be added. Unlike the other Participation Plays in the series, there is a larger role for Peter. It would be most effective if the lines were memorized, but it is possible for the part to be read from the script.

Participants are divided into four groups according to seating areas. A leader for each group should have a sign with the name of their group and the short phrase to be spoken in the foreign tongue. (These are not real words or languages)

- 1) Parthians***
- 2) Elamites***
- 3) Judeans***
- 4) Asians***

Leaders prepare groups by teaching them their phrase in their own language to be repeated at appropriate times during the play.

Groups stay in these places for the start of the drama, but (if room) take their places at the front for the day of Pentecost.

Introduction

Narrator: And Jesus said, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Disciples sit.

Narrator: Peter and the disciples knew of the Holy Spirit.
They had heard, as we have,
about Jesus' baptism by John in the River Jordan.
"As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went out of the water.
At that moment the heaven was opened,
and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove
and lighting on Him."

***Two people with dove cape
swirl around in centre during the chant.***

Choir: (chanting)

Group 1: The Holy Spirit comes as a dove.

Group 2: A heavenly dove.

Group 3: A dove of beauty and gentleness.

Group 4: A dove of peace.

Peter stands.

Peter It was wonderful being with Jesus.
There was just something about Him -
something peaceful, gentle yet strong.
Something that convinced all of us
(gesturing to disciples)
to give up our lives - some as as fishermen
and become His "fishers of men."
Could we ever have this special gift -
this Holy Spirit?

Peter sits.

Narrator During the time that the disciples followed the Master,
 the Holy Spirit was with them in Jesus.

 They witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit in action
with each act of teaching, healing or caring performed by Him.

 Jesus gave the disciples the authority to act in His name -
 to preach, to cast out demons and to heal the sick.

But - what is to happen when Jesus can no longer be with them?

 He was the only link with this intangible - the Holy Spirit -
 theirs was, at best, a secondhand experience,
 a power channeled through Jesus.

Hymn: Fairest Lord Jesus verses 1&4.

Lights out.

Peter I know Him not. **(Cock crows.)**
 I know Him not. **(Cock crows.)**

Congregation I know Him not. **(Cock crows.)**

Peter **(Long pause, head down - anguished, lifts head.)**

 Unworthy, so unworthy.
How can one man lack so much courage?
 I loved Him - I love Him -
 He called me Rock - some rock! -
 to crumble so easily.
 He knew my weakness
 and still He called on me.
 "Feed my sheep," He said.
 "But," I thought,
 "I'm only a man -
a man who has already failed Him so often!"

Peter turns his back to the congregation.

Narrator

Over a period of forty days after his death,
Jesus appeared to his disciples several times.

On one occasion, He commanded them:

*“Do not leave Jerusalem,
but wait for the gift my Father promised,
which you have heard Me speak about.
For John baptized with water,
but in a few days
you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”*

And so the disciples, as commanded,
gathered in Jerusalem to pray.....and wait.

Disciples sit, heads bowed.

As the day of Pentecost approached,
pilgrims from many lands
gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast.

Groups of people came,
each speaking their own native language:

Parthians: Pando id radan dy bant.

Elamites: Ef olo mydat im rid.

Judeans: Shadma doquor barmitis.

Asians: Wul ing lo si limao.

***As they are called, each group moves to designated areas
at the front of the church
while chanting in their own language.***

Narrator

The day of Pentecost arrived
with everyone celebrating as usual -
greeting old friends.

Chorus: Shalom

***Starts with choir singing and shaking hands,
continues until entire congregation has joined in.***

***As singing fades,
leaders have people sit.***

Agitated disciples stand facing the congregation.

Narrator

The disciples, however,
stirred in their place of refuge.
Something very different was happening
on this Pentecost day:

*“Suddenly a sound
like the blowing of a violent wind
came from heaven
and filled the whole house where they were sitting.”*

Choir: (Chanting)

Group 1: The Holy Spirit comes as a wind.

Group 2: An invisible wind.

Group 3: A wind of power,

Group 4: A wind of sovereign purpose.

*During the chant two people swirl the wind cape
around the disciples.*

Narrator

“They saw what seemed to be
tongues of fire that separated
and came to rest on each of them.”

Choir: (Chanting)

Group 1: The Holy Spirit comes as fire.

Group 2: A cleansing fire.

Group 3: A fire of protection,

Group 4: A fire that is the presence of our Lord.

*During the chant two people swirl the fire cape
around the disciples.*

**Choir repeats three chants (Dove, Wind, Fire)
while two people swirl capes
and place them on the shoulders of the disciples.**

Narrator

“All of them were filled
with the Holy Spirit
and began to speak in other tongues
as the Spirit enabled them.”

***One disciple begins saying the words of the Parthian language.
Parthian leader softly brings in his group.
A second disciple begins saying the words of the Elamite language.
Elamite leader brings in his group.
First disciple speaks to Judeans
who also join in in their own language.
Second disciple speaks to the Asians who also begin speaking.***

(Disciples could walk to the front of each group as they speak.)

Peter ***(Raising his voice above the crowd)***
I believe in The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit.

***Repeats until all groups following their leaders
have changed to English, repeating this with Peter.
Voices fade to silence.***

Narrator The gift of other tongues...
a sign that the Gospel was to be
carried to all nations.

Peter ***“Repent and be baptized, every one of you,
in the name of Jesus Christ,
so that your sins may be forgiven.
And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
The promise is for you and your children
and for all who are far off -
for all whom the Lord our God will call.”***

Narrator About 3000 people accepted the message that day
and were baptized.
Now the Spirit was not only with the disciples
but IN them.
They were clothed in power to be Christ’s witnesses.
The gift of the Holy Spirit is not one gift
but many gifts according to the need.

Choir: (Chanting)

Side 1: The Holy Spirit is

Side 2: A cloak to cover our human weakness.

Side 1: The Holy Spirit is

Side 2: A cloak to identify a divine representative.

Side 1: The Holy Spirit is

Side 2: A cloak to enable the doing of God's will.

Peter In an instant, understanding came -
a kind of wordless understanding.
The Holy Spirit enabled us to finally comprehend
what Jesus had been teaching us.
As for me,
I was still just a man -
but now I had the power to become the rock
on which to build a church.

On that first day
I found I was able to preach and exhort.
Could I really have won 3000 in one day?
By the power of the Spirit - yes!
Could I really show mercy, heal, perform miracles?
Yes!

By the power of the Spirit
I could say to the crippled beggar,
"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,
walk."

Could I,
the man who denied Christ three times,
have faith and be courageous?
Yes!

Inspired by the Holy Spirit,
I could confront the Elders and Rulers -
men who could easily seal my fate -
and say to them,
*"Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight
to obey you rather than God."*

Narrator There are many gifts of the Spirit
 given to people according to their need -
 knowledge, wisdom, prophecy,
 administrating, teaching, service ...change.

Peter Change - yes - (*Chant*)

 Not by the will or hand of a man
 But by the power of the Holy Spirit in a man.

Disciples chant with Peter.

Choir repeats chant with Peter and the disciples.

Congregation repeats chant with Peter, disciples and choir.

All sing: Chorus: We are one in the Spirit.

(Peter, disciples and cape swirlers exit.)

Sing: Filled with the Spirit's Power
(or appropriate chorus)

Costumes: 3 capes made of black material

-one decorated with the dove



-one decorated with a wind symbol



-one decorated with a fire symbol



Staging: 3 stools for disciples