

Risen and Real: Resources for Intergenerational Worship

Pentecost Year B

Bible Engagement Romans 8:22-27

Wait for it!



What this is: Bible Engagement



Where it's used: In any intergenerational gathering; Early Word, Bible Reading



Time: 5 minutes



Bible focus/theme: Pentecost; Romans 8:22-27



What's needed:

- Text of Acts 2:1-21 displayed with selected highlighted words on screen, or printed copies for your gathering. See format below.
- Art image 'Pregnant Creation Groans' by Chris Booth. See below p. 2
- Leader to facilitate introduction and participation
- Reader who has practiced reading the text of Romans 8:22-27 slowly, expressively and meaningfully and is prepared to stop on all of the **Orange Bold**

Introduction

Today, as we celebrate the day of Pentecost, we think about this question: What is it like when we live in the Spirit of God? Is it full of Joy? Is it scary? Is there suffering and pain?

Let's see how our Bible reading helps us.

Our Bible reading today comes from the book of...wait for it...wait for it...wait for it... Romans.

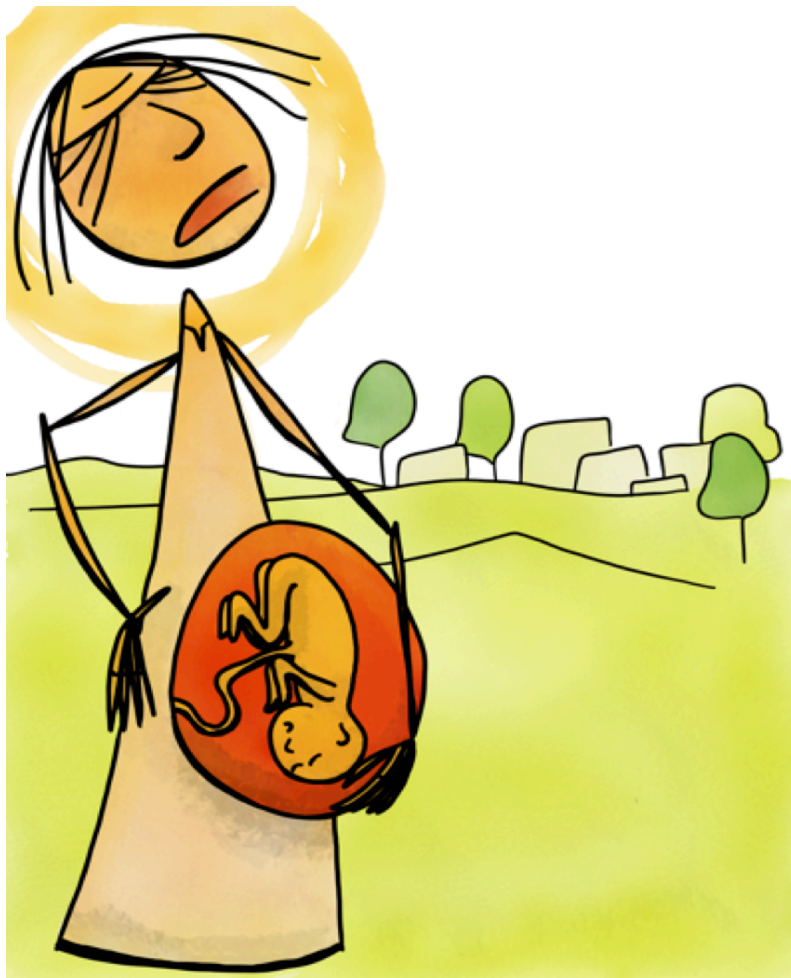
(Leave this part out if your gathering is familiar with the structure of the New Testament)
This part of the bible, comes after the stories of Jesus – called the Gospels, and after the stories of how Jesus followers kept following his ways, living how Jesus had shown them with the help of the Holy Spirit after Jesus was raised from the dead – called Acts.

This part of the Bible is called the Epistles or the Letters. These books are written in the form of letters. But they are full of vivid pictures and stories.

One of the writer's favourite images in these letters is the image of ...wait for it...wait for it...wait for it....mums and their babies! It turns up lots! And here it is in our reading today.

So let's get ready to imagine along with the writings of Romans.

Here, the writer says life in the Spirit of God is just like – wait for it...wait for it...wait for it.... – being very pregnant and having a baby. Wow! Not many of us in our everyday lives have much experience being around a baby being born, unless it's our job, but in the time the New Testament was written, everyone had lots of experience of a baby being born in the next room- or even the same room, and hearing the cries and groans and joy. So no one would have been shocked or embarrassed at this idea. Not so common for us, but we've got a piece of art here to help us imagine.



Pregnant God, Chris Booth, 2017

Invite contributions of observation and reflection on the image:
What can you see?
What has already happened?
What is happening?
What is about to happen?
What colours are used and how do they help us understand the feelings in the image?
Who is feeling something in this image?
What are they feeling?.
Are there more squares or triangles or circles in this image?
What effect do you think using those shapes has on how we interpret the image?

Summarise drawing together the contributions of your gathering.

What a joyful thing – the birth of a child brings such incredible joy – it's such good news! All that green surrounding the Mother and Child!

But wait – look! Listen! – the woman is wailing and weeping, groaning and screaming – isn't she glad about the birth of this new life? This new baby? Who thinks she is in pain – give us a loud groan! Who thinks she is full of joy – give us a loud cheer!

Yes of course she is. She is both full of Joy AND full of pain. Bringing a new life into the world is hard work, painful. A mother's body suffers in lots of ways, and it's well known for women to groan and cry as a baby is being born. Sometimes the dads standing close cry too! Still, the joy and wonder of new life that is coming is very real too.

But, as we see in the picture – and in the reading from Romans – there is still some waiting.

In the passage we're about to read, all of creation is like a woman – large and beautiful, round and pregnant and about to have a ...wait for it...wait for it....wait for it... a baby.

With this image to help us, let's read how it goes in Romans.
As we do, we'll practice this waiting.
We'll stop and wait and **sigh** on the words that are in bold.

Some of them are the sounds of waiting and suffering –groaning and sighing.
Some of them are the words of waiting and rejoicing – Hope! and happy sighing.

Romans 8:22-27

We know that the whole creation
has been **groaning together**
in labor **pains together**
until now;
and not only the creation,
but we ourselves,
who have the first fruits of the Spirit,
groan inwardly
while we **wait**
for adoption,
the redemption of our bodies.
For in **hope**
we were saved.
Now **hope**
that is seen
is not **hope**.
For who **hopes**
for what is seen?
But if we **hope**
for what we do not see,
we **wait for it**
with **patience**.
Likewise the Spirit
helps us in our weakness;
for we do not know
how to pray as we ought,
but that very Spirit
intercedes with **sighs**
too deep for words.
And God, who searches the heart,
knows what is the mind of the Spirit,
because the Spirit intercedes
for the saints
according to the will of God.

Read the passage together once, leading the sighs. Take plenty of time, to feel the waiting.

Read a second time together.

Conclusion

Living in the Spirit of God is full of groaning, full of suffering and pain, sometimes it's beyond words. Its beyond what we can see. In the Spirit of God we know the promise of new life.to comes and we....wait for it.....wait for it...wait for it....

Amen.