

Lesson Plan 3:

"Challenges raised by Pentecostal communities"

Objective:

- Students will be able to identify core beliefs and practices of Pentecostal communities.
- Students will be able to articulate challenges faced due to theological differences between Catholics and Pentecostals.
- Students will be able to explore ways to promote Christian unity despite theological variations.

Starter (10 mins):

Icebreaker: Play a short video clip (1-2 minutes) showcasing a Pentecostal worship service ([YouTube video of Pentecostal worship service]). Ask students to share their observations about the service compared to a Catholic Mass.

Teaching Strategy (15 mins):

- **Beginning and growth of Pentecostal movements**
 - **The Inspiration:** Pentecostals draw inspiration from the biblical event of Pentecost (Acts 2), where the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples, empowering them to spread the Gospel.
 - **Seeking a Deeper Experience:** In the early 1900s, some Christians, particularly those in the Holiness movement, felt a growing desire for a more personal and powerful experience of the Holy Spirit.
 - **The Birthplace:** Many trace the beginnings of the modern Pentecostal movement to events in 1901 at a Bible school in Topeka, Kansas, led by Charles Parham.
- **Life-style and Teachings**

The Pentecostal movement is known for its vibrant worship services, emphasis on the Holy Spirit, and distinctive beliefs. Discuss outlook of Pentecostal groups towards catholic hierarchical church.
- **Pentecostal Movement in Kerala**

Discussion of the initial Pentecostal groups in 19 th century
Pentecostal groups believes that Catholics are idol worshippers
Elicit the common features of Pentecostal groups/friends of students of the class.
- **Drawbacks and Challenges**

Importance of sacraments in a catholic life.

- **Emphasis on Experience over Scripture:** Some critics argue that Pentecostalism focuses too heavily on personal experiences with the Holy Spirit, potentially downplaying the importance of studying and interpreting the Bible.
- **Focus on Spiritual Gifts:** The emphasis on specific spiritual gifts, like speaking in tongues, might overshadow other aspects of Christian life, such as developing Christ-like character and serving others.
- **Clerical Authority:**
 - Some Pentecostal churches might concentrate authority in the hands of certain leaders, potentially hindering open discussion and critical thinking
 - Discuss what constitutes "wrong teachings" within the context of religious belief systems. Discuss common misconceptions or misinterpretations found in Pentecostal teachings.
 - Engage students in a critical analysis of specific examples of wrong teachings and their potential impact on individuals and communities.
 - Encourage students to reflection how misinformation can influence beliefs and behaviours.
- **Religious Fundamentalism**
 - Define "religious fundamentalism" and its characteristics.
 - Explore how fundamentalist tendencies manifest within Pentecostal communities.
 - Discuss the implications of religious fundamentalism on interfaith relations, social cohesion, and individual freedoms.
 - Facilitate a discussion on strategies for promoting tolerance and understanding in the face of religious diversity.
- **Misconceptions about the End of the World**
 - Examine common beliefs within Pentecostalism regarding the end times and the apocalypse.
 - Encourage students to critically evaluate these beliefs in light of historical context and theological interpretations.
 - Discuss the potential psychological and social effects of apocalyptic beliefs.

Practical Implication(15 mins)

I will pray and work for the return of Pentecostal groups from their wrong teachings and to enter the Catholic Church.

Group activity

- **Challenges & Unity:** Facilitate a class discussion on the following questions:

- How might these Pentecostal beliefs and practices challenge the Catholic Church? (e.g., authority of the Pope, role of sacraments)
- How can we, as Christians, promote unity despite these differences? (e.g., focus on common ground like Jesus' teachings, interfaith dialogue)

Closing Reflection: Read and learn **Gal 1:8**

Conclude with a reflection on the quote: “ But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed!” (Gal 1:8). Encourage students to reflect on the bible verse.