Overview of The Holy Spirit and the Church Course

The Holy Spirit energizes and brings life to the Church and to all baptized believers. Throughout these sessions the participants will explore how the Holy Spirit moves in God’s people and will discover concrete ways the Holy Spirit is present in the world today. They will examine how the gift of God’s grace is made possible by the Spirit and will reflect on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how these gifts help them to respond to God’s love. In exploring the Holy Spirit’s activity in the Church, the young people will look at how God’s Spirit was present in the lives of the Apostles, examine various models that help us to understand the meaning of Church, and look at how all the baptized participate in the mission of Christ to make disciples of all nations. The remaining sessions focus on what is needed to enter God’s Kingdom and how Mary, the saints, and those whose lives reflect the qualities, values, and beliefs that characterize Jesus’ followers can serve as models of faithful discipleship.

Course Themes

Core Session: 1. The Holy Spirit
This session explores how the Holy Spirit is present in the world today and gives life to the mission of Jesus Christ.

Core Session: 2. With God’s Grace
This session examines the gift of God’s grace and how it allows us to participate in the life of God and enables us to bring God’s love to others.

Core Session: 3. Pentecost and the Early Church
This session looks at the Holy Spirit’s activity in the early Church. The session recognizes that the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles at Pentecost marked the beginning of the Church and empowered Jesus’ disciples to spread the Good News to the ends of the earth.

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Core Session: 4. Images of the Church
This session examines how images of the Church, specifically the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit, help us to understand the nature of the Church community.

Core Session: 5. The Structure of the Church
This session explores how all baptized Catholics are called to participate in the mission of Christ to make disciples of all nations by participating in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly mission of Christ.

Core Session: 6. End Things: Heaven and Hell
This session reflects on God’s desire for us to be with him and how choosing to follow Jesus’ command to love others can lead to perfect union and happiness with God forever.

Core Session: 7. Saints and Mary
This session explores the special connection we have with Mary and the saints and how they are examples for us of what it means to be disciples of Jesus.

Life Issue Session: 8. Dealing with Peer Pressure
This session examines how peer pressure can be either positive or negative. The session emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in helping young people to deal with peer pressure and helps them to develop the skills and tools needed to resist negative peer pressure.

Life Issue Session: 9. Role Models: Whom Should I Look Up To?
This session explores how role models help us to become the people we want to be and how to identify the qualities and values characteristic of Christian role models.

Concluding Session: 10. The Holy Spirit and the Church Celebration
This session revisits some of the main themes of the previous sessions and allows the young people (and, optionally, their parents) to celebrate what they have learned and the time they have spent together.

Optional Course Project: The Spirit Is Moving All Around Us!
The participants look for signs of the Holy Spirit at work in the world around them: in their families, parish, and community.