

The Holy Spirit

Core Activity

God with Us



1. Before beginning this activity, make a copy of the handout “Images of the Holy Spirit in Scripture” (Document #: TX003185), and cut it apart as scored. Also display the following items in a prominent area of the classroom:

- a clear bowl or pitcher of water
- oil in a clear glass container
- a lit candle
- an electric fan with a ribbon attached on the front
- a depiction of the Holy Spirit as a dove

2. Introduce the activity by telling the students that a common image for the Holy Spirit is a breeze or wind. Then turn the fan on at low speed, just high enough to gently move the air and slightly rustle or extend the ribbon. Ask the students to feel the effect of the breeze on their body and to notice the effect on the ribbon. Then ask them to respond briefly to questions such as these:

- What are some ways God or God’s activity in the world might be compared to a breeze or wind?
- How was the ribbon on the fan affected by the breeze?
- Assuming that the fan represents the Holy Spirit, how does turning on the fan symbolize the effects of the Holy Spirit on an individual?

3. Invite a student to read Acts 2:1–2. Then pause and turn the fan to high speed. Direct the students to feel the strength of the wind, allowing it to blow against their bodies and move throughout the room, and to see and maybe even hear the effects of the breeze on the ribbon. Allow the fan to blow hard for just 10 seconds or so. Then return the fan to low speed. After the students are settled, ask the reader to continue with Acts 2:3–8,12–13.

4. Ask the students to briefly respond to questions like the ones that follow:
- What symbolic meaning is conveyed by the strong wind in the passage?
 - What happened to the ribbon when the fan was turned up? What might that suggest about Pentecost? What might that suggest about the work of the Spirit in the lives of believers today?

5. Focus the class’s attention on the items you placed on display in the room. As a way of briefly introducing the topic, ask the class to describe the role of those items in our lives. Explain that each item is a scriptural image of the Holy Spirit.

6. Create five small groups and assign each group one of the symbols from your display. Ask the groups each to list all the ways humans encounter and use their assigned symbols. Next ask them to discuss what the items on their lists tell us about the Holy Spirit; for example, if the Holy Spirit is like wind, what does that tell us about how the Holy Spirit works in our lives?

7. Give each group the appropriate section of the handout. Direct the groups to read the scriptural passages that relate to their symbols and to then discuss what the passages tell us about how the Holy Spirit works.

8. Ask each group to plan a short presentation designed to teach everyone else about the symbol it studied and what it tells us about the Holy Spirit. The presentation should address the following questions:

- How do we encounter or use the symbol in ordinary life?
- What does the human experience of the symbol tell us about the Holy Spirit?
- How is the symbol used to depict the Holy Spirit in Scripture?

After the small groups finish planning their presentations, allow time for them to share those presentations with the whole class.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Core Activity Extension

Living Water

As homework or class work, highlight the powerful point that those who receive Living Water then become sources of Living Water for others. Ask the students to read John 7:37–39 and to write a brief reflection paper or journal entry, using the following questions as a guide, and turn it in:

- What are you thirsting for in your life?
- Imagine that thirst being quenched. What quenches your thirst?
- How do you respond?
- Do you become a source of Living Water for others? That is, once your thirst has been quenched, do you imagine yourself being able to help others find what they are thirsting for?
- What one thing can you do this week to be more of a source of Living Water for someone?

Instruct the students to write the action on a piece of paper and post it where they will see it during the week as a reminder that they can quench the spiritual thirst of another person. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Additional Activities

Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit

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1. Before beginning this activity, make copies of the handout “Gifts of the Spirit” (Document #: TX003186), and cut them apart as scored; you will need enough copies so that you have one Gift of the Spirit for each student in your class. Also list the following fruits of the Holy Spirit on the board, on newsprint, or on an overhead:

- love
- joy
- peace
- patience
- kindness
- generosity
- faithfulness
- gentleness
- self-control

2. Introduce the activity by reading 1 Cor. 12:4–7. Explain that according to the Tradition of the Church, there are seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The point of this activity will be to explore those Gifts.

3. Give each student one Gift of the Spirit from the handout, and ask your students to do the following things:

- Define their assigned Gifts, using their own words and ideas.
- Read the Scripture passages related to their Gifts.
- Review the descriptions of their assigned Gifts on pages 131–132 of *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, Third Edition (CFH)*.
- Come up with examples of how their Gifts help teenagers live as Christians.

After the students have completed their work, invite them to share their findings and their examples.

4. Note the following ideas in your own words:

- The giving to us of the Gifts of the Spirit is not where the story ends. If we use these Gifts of the Spirit as they have been given to us, we will reap rewards or benefits in our lives and in the lives of the Church and of the world around us. The Church refers to these benefits and rewards as the fruits of the Spirit.

Read Gal. 5:22–23. Refer to the fruits of the Spirit that you have displayed, and ask the students to reflect and write on the following questions:

- Which of these fruits have you experienced in your life?
- Which of those fruits would you most like to receive in greater measure?
- Which Gifts of the Spirit do you think you would have to exercise more in order to receive the fruits of the Spirit you so desire?
- What would the exercise of those Gifts look like?

5. Conclude by asking everyone to talk about the fruit they would like to experience more fully.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

“Veni Sancte Spiritus”

Arrange for someone who knows the Taizé chant “Veni Sancte Spiritus” (perhaps the choral director) to teach it to the students. Encourage the young people to use the chant in their personal prayer. The song is published by GIA Publications, www.giamusic.com, in the second edition of its *Gather Comprehensive* hymnal. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

The Holy Spirit in the Eucharist

Invite the students to pay special attention to mention of the Holy Spirit when they attend Mass next Sunday. Ask them to pay particular attention to what we ask of the Holy Spirit during Mass. Have them report their discoveries to the class. Then distribute copies of the *Roman Missal* and ask the students to compare the variations of the Eucharistic Prayer that are used during Sunday liturgy. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

The Spirit on the Internet

Visit www.disciplesnow.com and click on “It’s Catholic” to learn more about the Holy Spirit. Look in “It’s Catholic” for the link to the *Youth Update* article “Holy Spirit: Giving Your Life the Light Touch,” by Christopher M. Bellitto; it is also available in print from St. Anthony Messenger Press, 800-488-0488, catalog.americancatholic.org. Have the students reflect and write a brief paper or journal entry on the following questions:

- When have you felt the Spirit moving in your life?
- In what area of your life do you long for a stronger awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit?
- What are the implications of failing to recognize the presence of the Spirit in your life?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

(The material labeled *TC: Creed* is adapted from *Total Catechesis: Catechetical Sessions on the Creed*, by Maura Thompson Hagarty, Michael J. Hagarty, Marilyn Kielbasa, and Barbara Murray, in the Total Catechesis series [Winona, MN: Saint Mary’s Press, 2004]. Copyright © 2004 by Saint Mary’s Press. All rights reserved.)