

30. The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Son. He is the invisible, personal presence of God, guiding, empowering, and inspiring believers to live holy lives and share the Gospel.

Key terms:

Advocate: (Greek: *parakletos*) meaning helper, advocate or intercessor.
(Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).

Counsellor: Title of the Holy Spirit given by Jesus (other translations of Scripture use Advocate or Paraclete), meaning “he who is called to be with” us.

Sanctifier: The one who makes holy.

Pentecost: (i) "Pentecost" originates from the Greek word *pentēkostē*, meaning "fiftieth". This refers to the fact that the Christian celebration of Pentecost commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks. (Acts 2:1–31).
(ii) The Jewish festival of Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks) is celebrated on the fiftieth day after Passover.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE THIRD PERSON OF THE BLESSED TRINITY

- He is a Person, not an “it” (Jn. 14:16-17,26)
- He is God (Acts 5:3-4)
- He is the Lord and Giver of Life (Gal 6:8)
- Fire, wind, a cloud, a dove, and anointing with oil are among the symbols of the Holy Spirit in Scripture (Ex. 14:24; Acts 2:3-4; Heb 12:29; Acts 1:9; Mt. 3:16; Mk. 1:10; Lk. 3:22; Jn. 1:32; 1Kgs 18:38; Ps. 29:7; Lk. 3:16; Acts 2:2; Gen 1:2; Gen 2:7; 1Kgs 19:12; Ex. 13:21, 22; Ex. 40:36-38; Num 10:12, 34; 1Cor 10:1-2; Ex. 14:19-20)

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SALVATION HISTORY

- He is present at creation (Gen 1:2)
- He appears to the Israelites as a cloud, a pillar of fire, and fire falling from heaven.
- He spoke through the prophets.
- By his power, Jesus is conceived of the Virgin Mary and is anointed for his mission (Lk. 3:21-22).
- Jesus promises the “spirit of truth” (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13).

HE COMPLETES GOD THE FATHER'S PROVIDENTIAL PLAN

- Jesus Christ promises that the Holy Spirit would come and remain forever in his Church.
- On the first Pentecost, he was poured out upon the apostles.
- Through the Church, he makes Jesus' salvific work on the cross effective in our lives.
- As Sanctifier, he completes God's plan of calling all people to the Father's love (Rom 1:1-6).
- He guides, protects, and sanctifies the Church.
- Through his indwelling grace, he makes us holy.

ROLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- He stands with us, consoles us, leads us into all truth, convicts us of sin, and draws us to Christ.
- Through the sacraments –
 - He bestows his sevenfold gifts (Is. 11:1-4).
 - He heals the wounds of sin, turning us instead to his fruits of Christ-like holiness (Gal 5:19-25).
 - He strengthens us, enlightens us, and prompts us to charity.
- He indwells in us and sanctifies us as his temple (1Cor 3:16).
- He is our instructor in prayer.
- He is the source of our hope (Eph. 1:13-14).
- He is the Protector and Guarantor of the Church and the Guardian of the Deposit of Faith.
- A relationship with the Holy Spirit is necessary for all believers. (Jude vv17-21; 1Jn. 4:1-15)

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH THE SCRIPTURE

- Jesus said: "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. (John 14:23)"
When the Holy Spirit dwells in a person, then Jesus and the Father dwells in that person.
- "The love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. (Romans 5:5)"
God's gift of love within a person is made possible through the Holy Spirit.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Upon receiving Baptism, the Holy Spirit pours His Seven-fold Gifts into our soul. These are the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. (Is. 11:2)

Wisdom	The knowledge of and judgment about "divine things" and the ability to judge and direct human affairs according to divine truth. (Jms 1:5; Prov. 4:7; Ps. 111:10; Eph. 5:15-16)
Understanding	A gift that enlightens the intellect. It is the ability to perceive, comprehend, and interpret information; to have insight and discern the inner Truths presented in the Word of God. (Job 28:28; Tim 2:7; Prov 2:6; Jms 3:13; Prov 1:7; Col 2:2-3)

Knowledge	The ability to study and learn; to acquire, retain, and master a wide spectrum of information; and to put it to good use for the building of God's kingdom. (Pet 3:18; James 1:5; Prov. 1:7; Phil 4:9)
Counsel	Good advice. It is the ability to teach and inform, guide and direct, warn and admonish, recommend and encourage. The Gift of Counsel serves as a bridge between the Intellect and the Will. Counsel is not only the ability to give good advice, but to receive it as well. (Prov 19:20-21; 1Kgs 12:6-19; Ps. 32:8; Jer 23:18)
Fortitude	An unwavering commitment to God or a proper course of action, and it shows itself in moral strength, courage, determination, patience in the midst of suffering, a resolute spirit, stamina, and resilience. (Jos 1:9; Phil 4:13; Eph 6:10; Is 41:10; Deut 31:6; 1 Cor 16:13; Ps. 56:3-4; Tim 1:7)
Piety	Personal holiness, the ability to live a good moral life, free of sin, devoted to God, and obedient to God's will. This is the Gift of the Holy Spirit in which we relish our relationship to God our loving Father. (Mt. 6:1-21; Acts 10:2; 1Tim 6:6; Jms 2:17; Tit 1:8; 1Tim 2:10)
Fear of the Lord	Awe, reverence, and respect for God. It downplays human self-sufficiency and acknowledges that everything comes from God. Those who "Fear the Lord" gladly offer their praise, worship, and adoration to God alone. Fear of the Lord moves us to rely not on our own resources and strength, but on the mercy, love and strength that comes from God. (Ps. 27:1; Job 28:28; Ecc 12:13; Deut 31:6; Josh 8:1; Ps. 34:4-5)

FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Love	Love is self-sacrifice, putting others' needs before our own, following Jesus' example and humbling ourselves as servants. (Deut 6:5; 1Cor 13:4-7; 1Jn. 4:19-21)
Peace	Christ has triumphed over sin and death. In Him, we have peace in the knowledge that He is in control, and that no matter what struggles we face in this world, we will be granted ultimate eternal peace in Him. (Num 6:26; Phil 4:6-7; Jn. 16:33)
Faithfulness	We are called to be faithful to Him who is always faithful to us. If we are faithful in the small things, God will reward us. (Lam 3:23; Mt. 25:22-23; 2Thess 3:3)
Joy	Joy is an active choice of attitude. As followers of Christ, we rejoice, because in him, we have redemption. (Ps 28:7; Ps 71:23; Ps. 94:18-19)
Goodness	If God has given you much, you can serve Him by sharing it with others. (Ps. 23:6; Rom 12:6-8; 2Cor 9:7-9)
Gentleness	A way for Christians to stand in contrast to the ways and conduct of the world, a display of God's love to those who are walking in darkness. (1Tim 6:11; Mt. 11:28-29; Jms 3:16-17; 1Pet 3:15-16)

Patience	As Christians, we are called to be patient, especially with our brothers and sisters in the Church. Living in peace with those around us can be a challenge, but we must respond in love, not anger, when differences arise between us. (Col 3:12-13; 1Pet 3:9; Jms 5:7-8; Rev. 12:12)
Self-control	By controlling our emotions when we are provoked to anger, we are able to demonstrate Christ's love to those around us and live peaceably with them. The Holy Spirit helps us act in love and have control over temptation and sin. (Prov. 15:1; Prov. 25:28; 2Tim 1:7)
Kindness	Kindness is looking beyond our interests to the interests of others. It often requires going out of our way or setting aside things that may seem important. Kindness also means not being vindictive and returning evil for evil, but instead, turning the other cheek and returning evil with good, whether the recipient deserves it or not. (Lk. 6:35-36; Tit 3:4-5; Rom 2:3-4; Gal 5:22-23)

EXPLORE!

- Explore with the candidates personal experiences in their lives that have revealed the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- Discuss the following statement with the candidates:
"It is better for us to have the Holy Spirit in us than to have Jesus next to us."
- Explore with the candidates the relationship between the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit.
- Explore with the candidates what it would look like for a Christian to submit to the control of the Spirit and harness the courage of the Spirit in order to be witnesses for Christ?

The Holy Spirit — Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. How is the Holy Spirit God's gift to us?
2. How do we come to know the Holy Spirit who is dwelling and acting in the Church?
3. How should the fact that we are temples of the Holy Spirit affect the way we live our lives?
4. How might the Holy Spirit work in and through us when our faith is challenged?
5. What are the consequences of grieving or refusing to follow the Holy Spirit?

PRAYER

Psalm 51

or

Gospel Reflection:	The Ascension of the Lord
Year A	Mt. 28:16-20
Year B	Mk. 16:15-20
Year C	Lk. 24:46-53

The following format will be used for all Gospel reflections:

- Read the text aloud.
- Pause for a minute's silence.
- Read the text aloud again.
- Ask everyone to pick a word or a phrase that struck them. They just say the word or phrase without comment or discussion.
- Read the text again.
- Ask those present to comment on their word or phrase. What struck them about it? Why/how is it speaking to them?
- Continue with the discussion.

The following questions may be helpful:

What does this mean to me?

How does it make me feel?

Did I find the text disturbing/hopeful/confusing?

What images of God emerge for me?

What do I think that God is saying in this text?

What impact does this have on my life?

Scripture and Catechism Resources

The Holy Spirit

Scripture

Gen 1:2	The Holy Spirit is present and active at creation.
1Kgs 18:16-40	The Holy Spirit falls as fire from Heaven and consumes Elijah's sacrifice to God.
Job 3:4	The Holy Spirit gives life to all creation.
Ps. 104:30	The Holy Spirit gives and sustains life.
Ps. 139:7-8	The presence of God's spirit assures us we are never alone.
Is. 11:2	The gifts of the Holy Spirit.
Mt. 3:16	The Spirit anoints and empowers Jesus for His ministry.
Mk. 9:2-7	The Holy Spirit overshadows the transfigured Jesus in a cloud.
Lk. 1:26-35	Jesus is conceived of Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Lk. 3:21-22	At the beginning of his public life, Jesus is anointed by the descent of the Holy Spirit.
Lk. 4:16-21	Jesus is the Anointed One of the Holy Spirit to preach the Good News of salvation.
Jn. 3:5	Our rebirth of water and the Spirit is necessary to enter the Kingdom of God.
Jn 4:24	The Holy Spirit enables genuine worship that is pleasing to God.
Jn. 14:16-17	Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit, he who dwells with us and will be in us.
Jn. 14:26	The Holy Spirit will teach us and remind us of the teachings of Christ.
Jn. 15:26	The Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father, will bear witness to Christ.
Jn. 16:7-11	The Counsellor will convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgement.
Jn. 16:13	The Spirit will guide us into all truth, for he speaks on the authority of God.
Acts 1:8	The Spirit transforms and empowers believers to be witnesses for Christ.
Acts 2:1-4	The Holy Spirit descends as tongues of fire on the disciples at Pentecost.
Acts 5:1-11	Lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God.
Rom 8:16	The Holy Spirit assures believers of their identity as God's children.
Rom 8:26-27	The Spirit intercedes for us in prayer according to the will of God.
1Cor 2:4-5	The Holy Spirit empowers preaching and ministry through the proclamation of the gospel.
1Cor 2:10	The Holy Spirit provides spiritual insight and understanding of God.
1Cor 3:16	Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us.
1Cor 12:4-7	The Holy Spirit distributes various gifts to believers for the common good.
2Cor 3:17-18	The Holy Spirit bring freedom and transformation transforming believers into the image of Christ, reflecting His glory.
Gal. 5:22-23	The fruits of the Holy Spirit.
Eph. 1:13-14	Sealed with the Holy Spirit, we belong to him, who guarantees our inheritance.
Eph. 4:3	The Holy Spirit fosters unity among believers and peace within the body of Christ.
Eph. 4:11-12	The Holy Spirit empowers and equips leaders in the church to build up the body of Christ.
Titus 3:5	The Holy Spirit renews and regenerates believers, emphasising the Spirit's role in the process of salvation.
Phil 3:3	The Holy Spirit empowers believers to serve and worship God authentically.

Catechism

243-245, 685 The Spirit is one and equal with the Father and the Son, of the same substance.

683-741 The Holy Spirit's mission, his names and symbols, his actions in salvation history and in the Church.

1695 Christians are temples of the Holy Spirit, who lives in us, teaches us to pray, prompts us to charity, heals the wounds of sin, renews us in the spiritual life, enlightens and strengthens us.

2670-2672 By the grace of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to pray to Jesus; we are encouraged to pray to the Holy Spirit, who instructs us in prayer, for help.