



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

YEAR OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

MAY 24TH, 2026 - MAY 16TH, 2027



NINE HIGH SCHOOL LESSON PLANS

for

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

&

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Dear Teachers & Youth Ministers,

We thank God for the gift of your vocation, your charism of teaching and ministry, and the beautiful variety of personalities you bring to each of your classrooms and parishes. Bishop Gruss has inaugurated a Year of the Holy Spirit for our diocese from Pentecost 2026 to Pentecost 2027, and we look to you to help bring this spiritual renewal to our schools and parishes. To that end, Bishop has asked for nine lesson plans to be included in this year's classes for all high school grades and parishes. Please note that these lesson plans do not constitute a permanent change in the diocese's Religion/Theology curriculum standards; rather, they are unique for this Year of the Holy Spirit. Please take the following outlines and add your talents and creativity to effectively communicate the glory and majesty, the tender care, and the deep love of God the Holy Spirit. We hope that your students, your peers, and even you yourselves will benefit from the prayerful implementation of this project.

In Christ,

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Before Beginning

If you have not already done so, listen to Bishop Gruss' talk kicking off the speaker series for the Year of the Holy Spirit <https://saginaw.org/holy-spirit-year>

Reflect on the following:

- *Pete Burak - Faith Magazine May 1, 2026*

“The power of the Holy Spirit is foundational, not optional, for living as a Catholic disciple of Jesus Christ. As we strive to grow in holiness and go make disciples, we’re invited to recognize that both are only possible through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads, convicts, challenges and inspires. The question is, are we listening? Do we expect the Holy Spirit to speak and do we believe we have the power to hear, understand and act? Reading Scripture, silent prayer, and seeking mature advice are simple things we can do to become more aware and responsive to the Spirit.”

Consider choosing one of the following books for your personal spiritual reading

- *Game Changer: The Role of the Holy Spirit in the New Evangelization*, Pete Burak
- *Forgotten God*, Francis Chan
- *Sober Intoxication of the Spirit: Filled with the Fullness of God*, Raniero Cantalamessa, O.F.M. Cap.
- *The Holy Spirit, Fire of Divine Love*, Fr. Wilfrid Stinissen, O.C.D.
- *The Little Book of the Holy Spirit*, Bede Jarrett, OP
- *In the School of the Holy Spirit*, Fr Jacques Philippe
- *The Great Unknown: The Holy Spirit and His Gifts*, Antonio Royo Marin, O.P.

Teacher Preparation

The following classes need materials prepared beforehand:

Lesson 1

- Prepare invitation
 - Print and cut invitations for each student filling in their names at the top. This is a great opportunity to pray for each student as you do so. Use thicker paper if possible.
- Prepare any images or slides you want to use

Lesson 2

- Prepare index cards
 - Three index cards each with a large letter on them, F, S, HS
- Prepare a piece of artwork to display either physically or digitally for bell work activity
- Find and bring a three pronged object, something smallish that can fit in your hand, can be hidden from students until the appropriate time, a three pronged back massager or similar may work well.

Lesson 3

- Print and cut sheets of John 14 excerpts (John 14:15-24 & 14:25-31) for students to work in pairs
- Prepare video clips to display

Lesson 4

- Print a copy of “The Holy Spirit in our Lives” article for each desk for bell work
- Print and cut copies of Sr. Brittany’s “BE LITTLE advice” for each student to take home
- Object lesson for prayer activity: Find a clear bin, glass/cup/jar, ink or food coloring to make water in the glass dark. Alternate source of clear water - very large in comparison to glass

Lesson 5

- Object lesson for review: Milk, glass or pitcher, chocolate sauce, spoon or whisk
 - If feeling extra: tarp or plastic for the floor, and rain poncho

Lesson 6

- Print copies of assignment for each student
 - For this lesson there are two options
 - Six pairs or groups take an excerpt from the article “The Holy Spirit in the Sacraments” (one for each Sacrament with Penance and Anointing of the Sick combined) to read and create a 2 min lesson for the rest of the class
 - Socratic seminar on the full article (recommended for upper grades due to reading level of the article)
 - This option requires you to pre-read the text and create questions appropriate to ability level

Lesson 7

- Prepare video clips to display
- *(Optional)* List of charisms described in Scripture to display in front of class for prayer activity. Otherwise students can re-reference for themselves what they read in class

Lesson 8

- Prepare video clips to display

Lesson 9

- Prepare video clips to display

Notes on approach:

Most bell work should be a paragraph-length reflection on each quote displayed on the board or article on their desks. It should be made very clear to students that a summary is not a reflection. Students should focus on the thoughts and feelings they have in reaction to the material. While this is expected to only be a completion grade, if a student simply summarizes please have them try again.

Reading from Scripture or the Catechism should involve physical Bibles and Catechisms in the students' hands.

Learning about the Holy Spirit is good and beautiful, but it does not replace time spent with the Holy Spirit in prayer. Prayer Activities are meant to help students do the work of the heart. If a lesson needs to be abridged to protect the last 5-10 minutes of class for prayer, then please do so.

After the lessons:

To create space to Encounter Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we ask schools and parishes to arrange a time of Adoration following each of these nine lessons. This time could include silence, music, and/or prayer teams.

Student Objectives

Lesson 1 Who is the Holy Spirit?	Students will be able to: describe how the Holy Spirit eternally “proceeds” from both the Father and the Son using the Nicene Creed and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Identify the Holy Spirit as the “bond of love” between the Father and the Son. Identify and recall multiple titles and symbols of the Holy Spirit found in Scripture.
Lesson 2 The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament	Explain that the Nicene Creed attributes God speaking through the prophets as an action of the Holy Spirit
Lesson 3 The Holy Spirit in the Gospels	Describe the character of the Holy Spirit as a divine person rather than some amorphous force or power. Describe the work of Jesus as a joint mission with the Holy Spirit.
Lesson 4 Pentecost	Describe how, through the foundational sacrament of Baptism, we become temples of the Holy Spirit (together with the Father and the Son), such that the Holy Trinity dwells within us as long as we remain in the state of grace by avoiding serious sin.
Lesson 5 The Holy Spirit and Me	Identify changes in the behavior and attitudes of the Apostles after they received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Identify ways that each of us can personally grow closer to God with the help of the Holy Spirit.
Lesson 6 The Sacraments and the Holy Spirit	Identify the presence of the Holy Spirit in each of the sacraments
Lesson 7 Charisms and Community	Recall the charisms (spiritual gifts) of the Spirit mentioned in Scripture. Describe the purpose of charisms in building up the Church.
Lesson 8 Healing Inside and Out	Recall stories of miraculous healings from Scripture and in the lives of the saints. Explain that miraculous healings still occur today. Describe redemptive suffering as a way to grow close to Jesus on the cross. Identify inner healing and growing closer to the Lord as more important than physical healing.
Lesson 9 Fruits and Relationship	Recall the fruits of the Holy Spirit from Scripture. Describe ways to cultivate the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

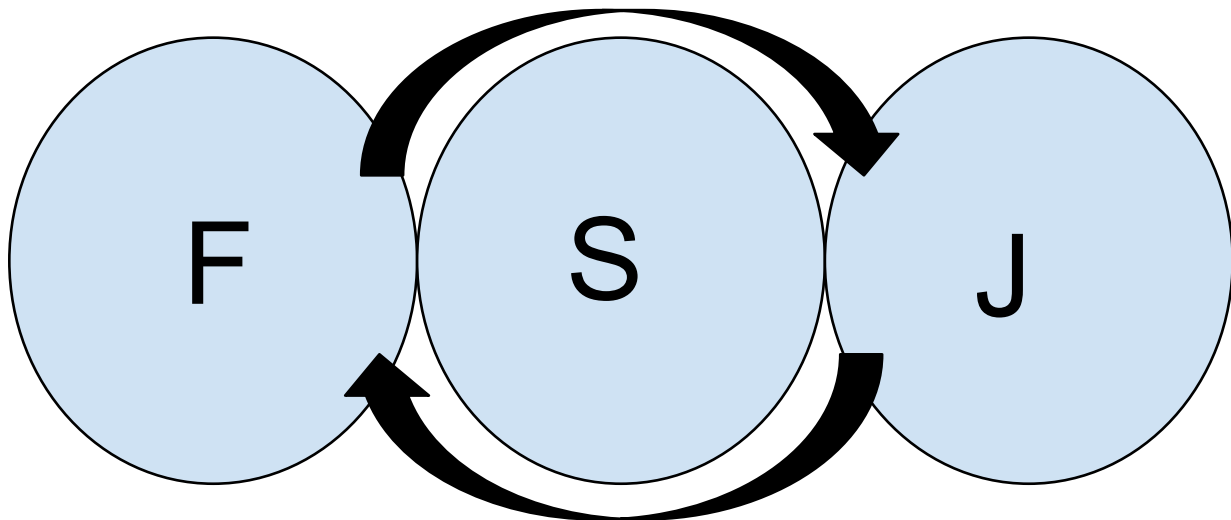
Lesson 1: Who is the Holy Spirit

Objective: Describe how the Holy Spirit eternally “proceeds” from both the Father and the Son using the Nicene Creed and the Catechism of the Catholic Church 245-246. Identify the Holy Spirit as the “bond of love” between the Father and the Son. Recall multiple titles and symbols of the Holy Spirit found in Scripture.

- **Bell Work** (*written up on the board for students to work on before the teacher/youth minister begins*): Students skim Catechism paragraphs 692-701, write one paragraph describing a favorite title AND symbol of the Holy Spirit.
- **Invitation:** Pass out personalized invitation slips; consider including your own verbal invitation (*invitation from Bishop on page nine*)
- **Lesson:** (sample Lesson - <https://youtu.be/urNuz10xdYM?si=-xsd78zKdCZuiC2R> demonstration of Perichoresis begins at 8:30)
 - Present and discuss different images of the Trinity in art discussing where they help and where they fall short. Some ideas include: three leaf clover, musical chord, traditional icons, the family, Aquinas Triangle.
 - Augustine’s Perichoresis
 - Draw first circle with the letter F, which represents the Father
 - Draw second circle with the letter S which represents the Son
 - Do your best to leave space in the middle for a third equally sized circle
 - The Son eternally begotten from the Father
 - Cellular division a helpful image
 - One thing perfectly replicated in an equal
 - One more way we are the image and likeness of God, our very bodies reflecting His begotten nature from our own earliest being
 - “The Father eternally generates the Son, pouring His love onto Him”
 - Draw arrow arching from the Father to the Son - “Very important that this act of generation is first from the Father to the Son, since the Father is the point of origin within the Trinity, not in time but in being”
 - Draw arrow arching underneath from the Son to the Father - “The Son is fully God, perfectly and eternally returning love to the Father”

- “This mutual, infinite love between the Father and the Son is so perfect that it is actually a third divine person, the Holy Spirit (use marker to emphasize the love shared back and forth between the Father and the Son turning the arrows’ movement into a full circle connecting the Father and Son, label middle circle with an HS, representing the Holy Spirit).”
- “This is what Scripture means when John says, “God IS Love.” (1 John 4:8,16)”
- “Perichoresis” means “the Dance of Love”
 - Trace the exchange of love around the three circles repeatedly while emphasizing the words of the Athanasian Creed: “We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity, neither confusing the persons or dividing the substance that we are compelled by Christian truth to confess that each distinct person is God and Lord and that the deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one equal in Glory, coequal in Majesty”
 - “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified.”

Teacher Note: It is important that the three circles are touching so as to maintain the unity of One God. You can decide if it is helpful for your students to mention that articulating the truth of the Trinity always involves the need to avoid falling into modalism or polytheism.



- Class Work:
 - Class discussion: (can be a quick Turn and Talk if pressed for time) What title and symbol did you pick for your bell work?

- **Prayer Activity: Lectio Divina**
 - Reading Scripture and letting Scripture read you
 - The Four Steps
 - **Read (Lectio):** Three students slowly read the passage aloud in turn (first student reads the whole passage, a break for silence, second student reads the whole passage, silence, cont.) Notice if a specific word or short phrase stands out to you and jot it down.
 - **Meditate (Meditatio):** Repeat that word or phrase in your mind. Journal about how it connects to your life today and what the Holy Spirit might be showing you.
 - **Pray (Oratio):** Talk to God from your heart. Tell Him what you feel, ask for His help, or thank Him for His guidance.
 - **Contemplate (Contemplatio):** Be completely still and silent. Rest in the loving presence of the Holy Spirit without trying to force any thoughts.
 - Use Acts 2:1-21

This year I invite you to rediscover the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in your life. I along with you desire to rekindle the gifts received in Baptism and Confirmation, and to embrace the Spirit's guidance in continuing Christ's mission. Through prayer, discernment, and parish events, I seek to foster spiritual renewal, unity, healing, and a renewed commitment to living out the Gospel, recognizing that the Holy Spirit transforms and animates the Church, making Christ present in the world. Please join me in deepening your relationship with the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity.

In Christ,
+ *Bishop Gruss*

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Lesson 2: The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

Objective: Explain that the Nicene Creed attributes God speaking through the prophets as an action of the Holy Spirit

- **Bell Work:** Choose a piece of art depicting the Holy Trinity for students to recreate a sketch on a blank piece of paper. Students will then turn and talk to a partner sharing something they noticed about what the art communicates. You can always ask a few students to share with the class before moving on if you feel you have the time.
- **Review** the notion of the the three Divine Persons as inseparable yet distinct
 - Object lesson (*skip if you can't find an appropriate object*)
 - Bring some student volunteers to the front (2-5) facing the class with their backs to you. Have them guess if the object(s) touching their back are one thing, two things, or three things.
 - Go down the line gently pressing one, two, or three prongs of your three-pronged object into each student's back as students guess.
 - At the end, reveal that you only have one object
 - Repeat words from last class "We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity"
 - Index cards (see CCC 257-258)
 - Hold the cards aloft with the F in front, S second, and HS last.
 - "I can say that the Father created, but does that mean that the Son and the Holy Spirit did not co-create with the Father?" - fan cards to display other letters (the answer is "no")
 - Move F to last card "I can say that Jesus died on the cross, does that mean the Father and Spirit weren't there united to the Son?" - fan cards (the answer is "no")
 - Move S to the last card "And I can say the Spirit animates the Church now, but does that mean Father and Jesus aren't also animating and sanctifying the Church?" - fan cards (the answer is "no") Repeat words from last class: "We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity"
- **Lesson**
 - Analogy of the Mind
 - Draw a brain on the board

- Describe the Father as the concept or memory held within the mind, the eternal Son as the interior Word (who will be incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary), and the bond of love between the Father and the Son – the Holy Spirit. - Spirit is connected with “Breath” (think of the wind at the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost)
 - “Inspiration” - “in” “spirate” - “to breath in me”
 - This analogy of the Trinity uses the human mind based on the fact that human beings are created by God in his image and likeness.
- Scripture connections
 - John 1:1 - The Son is the eternal Word within the Trinity
 - Genesis 1:1-2 - The Trinity not fully revealed to us until the coming of Christ, but existing from all eternity with no beginning or end
 - The rhythmic Hebrew of Genesis and the Psalms leads us to imagine that perhaps God did not simply speak creation into existence, but, by way of poetic analogy, sang it into existence
 - Illuvitar in Lord of the Rings
 - Aslan in Narnia
 - String Theory in the real world
 - Job 38: 4-7
 - “We are starting today’s class by re-emphasizing the unity of the Trinity because that is what God is, and also how He revealed Himself to us through time. The Old Testament presents to us a singular God. And yet, in the fullness of Christianity revealed to us by Jesus, we understand that the Holy Spirit in a special way spoke through the prophets, as we say every Sunday in the Nicene Creed.”
 - “Even before the nature of the Trinity was revealed to us, the whole Trinity was acting together from the beginning of time. The Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets through his inspiration, breathing in them and through them, if you will.”
- **Class Work**
 - “In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit worked in powerful ways, speaking through the prophets – not on his own, but together with the Father and the Son.”
 - Have half the class look up Is 61:1-2 and the other half look up Lk 4:18-19. Two students read them aloud for class discussion
 - Assign pairs or groups to read a selection of the following, find an example of fulfillment in the New Testament, discuss insights, and share with the class. This is a great time for students to learn and/or practice how bibles are structured with superscript, footnotes, and cross-references.
 - Psalm 22: 16-18

- Isaiah 35:5-6
- Micah 5:2-4
- Genesis 49:10-12

- **Prayer Activity: Private Lectio Divina**

- Students should do Lectio Divina privately on Luke 4:14-30, reading and reflecting on the passage for themselves.
- The Four Steps
 - **Read (Lectio):** Students slowly read the passage three times. Ask the students to notice if a specific word or short phrase stands out to them, and if so to jot it down.
 - **Meditate (Meditatio):** Repeat that word or phrase in your mind. Journal about how it connects to your life today and what the Holy Spirit might be showing you.
 - **Pray (Oratio):** Talk to God from your heart. Tell Him what you feel, ask for His help, or thank Him for His guidance.
 - **Contemplate (Contemplatio):** Be completely still and silent. Rest in the loving presence of the Holy Spirit without trying to force any thoughts.

Lesson 3: The Holy Spirit in the Gospels

Objective: Describe the character of the Holy Spirit as a divine person rather than some amorphous force or power. Describe the work of Jesus as a joint mission with the Holy Spirit.

- **Bell Work (write quote)** : "When we die to something, something comes alive within us. If we die to self, charity comes alive; if we die to pride, service comes alive; if we die to lust, reverence for personality comes alive; if we die to anger, love comes alive." - Blessed Fulton Sheen
- **Review:**  Why the Holy Spirit Isn't Just a "Force" (~4 min)
- **Lesson**
 - "For a video called "Why the Holy Spirit Isn't Just a 'Force'" It sure does look and sound like a force. But let's dig into a Catholic understanding of the Holy Spirit as a person."
 - "The video showed the Holy Spirit enlightening people in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament recreating our hearts, teaching us how to love, and becoming who we were made to be. How does that happen? By spending time with Him. Knowing the Holy Spirit as a person and talking to Him as a friend, listening to Him talk back to us, to teach us, change us."
 - "The Holy Spirit is not some amorphous force like from Star Wars. Not some distant uncaring power to be wielded by a special few for good or ill. If some would use Star Wars as an analogy of the Catholic Faith, it's a bad one. You can like Star Wars but you can't say it's Catholic. It doesn't work. We do not believe in a balance between Good and evil; life is not yin/yang. Neither do we believe God is someone like Zeus sitting on a cloud waiting to strike you down if you displease him. He is not a vending machine to give you what you want if you push the right buttons and say the right prayers, nor is He a genie to grant you three wishes."
 - "We believe in a God who is all good, all loving, Who can never deceive or confuse. He is the Lord the Giver of Life who uproots death and disorder, whose order and harmony brings Beauty, Truth, and Goodness, which is to say Himself. The Holy Spirit is God – a Person who created you, knows you and loves you along with the Father and the Son."
 - Read aloud from CCC 727: "Christ's whole work is in fact a joint mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit"
 - Have a student read CCC 689

- “You cannot separate Jesus from the Holy Spirit in the same way you cannot separate Word and Breath. While never separated from the Father, the Holy Spirit cooperates with Jesus (the incarnate Son) throughout His mission on earth”
 - Write “Physical Symbol” [NOT “symbolic” because that would be *inaccurate*] vs. “Invisible Act” in different spots on the board. Discuss as a class each of the following manifestations of the Holy Spirit and whether they should be categorized as “Physical Symbol” or “Invisible Act”. Emphasize that all of these are an action of God the Holy Spirit; the difference is that some are revealed in a way seen or felt externally through a symbol. Does the verb from Scripture pair with a physical symbol or not?
 - Assign students verses individually or in pairs or groups to read the language and make their case to the class. As the class comes to a consensus, write the instance under the category.

Physical Symbol

“Descends” (dove)

- Matthew 3:16-17
- Mark 1: 10-11
- Luke 3:21-22

“Entered” (cloud)

- Matthew 17:5
- Mark 9:7
- Luke 9:34-35

“Resting” (sound, wind, flame)

- Acts 2:2-3

Invisible Act

“Overshadows” (Incarnation)

- Luke 1:35
- John 1:14

“Fills” (Elizabeth, Zachariah, and Simeon, causing them to prophesy)

- Luke 1:41-45
- Luke 1:67
- Luke 2:25-26

“Led” (Jesus into the desert)

- Matthew 4:1-11
- Luke 4:1

“Anointed” (Jesus to proclaim good tidings to the poor)

- Luke 4: 18

“Receive” (Empowers Apostles to forgive sins)

- John 20: 22-23

- Class Work
 - “If Jesus and the Holy Spirit are together on mission, then perhaps we should pay special attention to Jesus' promise about the Holy Spirit.”
 - Pass out half sheets of the following verses to pairs of students, who will first individually read and annotate before sharing their reflections with their partner. *If there's time, you can ask students to share something their partner brought up that stood out to them.*
 - John 14: 15-24
 - John: 14: 25-31

John 14 - (Partner 1 Reads)

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

¹⁸ “I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹ He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

John 14 - (Partner 2 Reads)

²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” ²³ Jesus answered him, “If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

- **Prayer Activity:** Adventure with Jesus (read aloud by teacher/youth minister)
 - *Have students settle their bodies, close their eyes, and breathe to prepare for this imaginative prayer. As much as possible, read slowly, poetically, rhythmically:*

“Holy Spirit come. Imagine you are in your room preparing for a trip. Look around, what is on your walls? What does it smell like? What does the floor feel like under your feet? On your bed you see a bag. What kind of bag is it? How big? What is it made of? Any pockets? You approach your bag and begin to pack. Not objects, but troubles. Doubts, questions, anger, hurt, sorrow, fear. How many things go in the bag? How full is it? How heavy is it as you throw it over your shoulder?

You head toward your front door and pause to put your shoes on. What kind of shoes are they? How do they feel when you squish your toes? You could stop here. You set the bag down, you don’t have to pick it back up. You eyeball your bag, make a decisive sigh, and take up your pack.

The doorknob is cold on your hand as you open and close your front door. Heading down the road you hear birds, engines, the usual sounds of your neighborhood. You hear your feet pad the asphalt and your bag rustle on your back. You walk for a while, noticing the warmth of the sun on your neck, but there’s a nice breeze every once in a while too. Your road doesn’t seem like your road anymore. Asphalt has turned to gravel, your steps adding a crunch to the rhythm of the afternoon. More trees than before. More sounds of nature, less sounds of men. Not long after that the road becomes dirt. You are kicking up dust and you’ve been walking a while now. The strap of your bag is starting to dig into your shoulder. You adjust the weight and steadily keep your pace.

After some time the road begins to climb. You are winding up the base of a mountain. Pretty soon you can see a view above the trees, but also feel the weight of your bag. You’ve been carrying that a while now. As you continue up on what is now a trail, you watch out for rocks that might trip you, leaves that might make you slip as it gets steeper. Your thighs are starting to complain as you lug this bag along. Each step hurts a little more. Up. Up. You might need to find a stick to help you keep your balance. Up. Up. This is wilderness now, and you’re alone on a trail. It wouldn’t be a surprise if something was watching you make your way, and you hope it’s something closer to a squirrel than a mountain lion.

The trees become sparse and the stones grow. Rounding a bend you happen upon a boulder field. No way up but through. Shifting the weight of your bag squarely on your back you start to clamber over the giant rocks with both hands. This is a full body commitment and you are working harder to breathe. Can’t believe you forgot your water bottle. Some of the smaller rocks are wobbly and not the best footholds. Some of the larger rocks are too big to

find a purchase. The stones in shadow are cool, but those in the sun are a little too warm for comfort. Yet up you go, scrambling as best you can. You need to go up. Hand. Foot. Work. Breathe. Hand. Foot. Work. Breathe. Breathe. You made it. Just a little further now.

A few more minutes and one last bend and a clearing opens before you. Green and welcoming, a soft place to land. The rest of the mountain reaches up above you, a sheltering protective sort of feeling. Someone waiting for you emerges from the trees. Jesus. He smiles proudly and invites you to rest. He spreads a meal before you, and a cool drink. It's time for you to sit with Jesus and show Him what is in your bag."

- Leave your students in silence for a while to talk with Jesus while you pray for them.
- When the time feels right, lead students out of prayer: "It's time to choose. If you leave your bag with Jesus, He wants to give you a gift in return."
- Another moment of silence, and then close briefly with a Glory Be.

Lesson 4: Pentecost

Objective: Describe how, through the foundational sacrament of Baptism, we become temples of the Holy Spirit (together with the Father and the Son), such that the Holy Trinity dwells within us as long as we remain in the state of grace by avoiding serious sin. Describe how the “the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.” (see CCC 1302-1305)

- **Bell Work:** *The Holy Spirit in Our Lives* article reflection
- **Review:**
 - Can you name some instances from the last class where the Holy Spirit acted in the Gospels?
- **Lesson**
 - Have a student come to the board and draw the Perichoresis using F for the Father, S for the Incarnate Son (Jesus) and HS for the Holy Spirit. Ensure they draw the arrow from the Father to the Son first.
 - Describe the three connected circles as the eternal relationship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, each co-equal in glory and majesty and each fully God. However, God’s loving connection with us is a little different
 - Make it clear that the following diagram is just an analogy – that we can never capture the reality of the Holy Trinity in words or pictures. Draw a rough approximation of earth and above it the three circles of the Perichoresis vertically, highest circle F, middle circle HS, and lowest circle S.
 - The meaning of the second circle, the eternally begotten Son is now more apparent as, in some sense, a “movement” from Heaven to earth in Jesus’ Incarnation. Likewise the meaning of the middle circle and the Holy Spirit’s mission “breathed forth” from the Father and the Son, is now also more apparent as a “movement” from Heaven to earth.
 - Erase a portion of the top and bottom of the S circle
 - “Through his Incarnation, death, Resurrection and Ascension, Jesus is now the Door between Heaven and earth, allowing not only holy souls to enter Heaven, but also (together with the Father) pouring out the Holy Spirit onto earth”
 - Draw squiggles of the Holy Spirit pouring out of the Godhead onto earth
 - The same Love that the Father and the Son pour out to each other is the same Love poured out to each of us, especially in Baptism and Confirmation
 - On the day of Pentecost the Holy Trinity is fully revealed to humanity.
 - Read Acts 2: 1-13

- At Pentecost, the Apostles receive the Holy Spirit from the Father through the Son, not just as an inspiration like the Old Testament prophets before them; rather, they are **filled** with the definitive gift of the third Person of the Holy Trinity – the Holy Spirit. They are now living temples of the Holy Spirit, empowered to spread the Good News throughout the world, just as we are after being baptized and then confirmed. Beginning with Pentecost, the Holy Spirit dwells within every baptized person together with the Father and the Son, transforming the earth through the mission, ministry and witness of Christians for the rest of time.
- Fire
 - What is the difference between salad and a cake? You could unmake a salad if you really wanted to and separate all the parts, but can you unmake a cake? Fire permanently changes the elements of a batter into a new form.
- If the Spirit changes us in a permanent way; how are Christians different from the rest of the world? As a class, look at the following excerpts from the Catechism and discuss
 - Baptism (CCC 1265-66)
 - Confirmation (CCC 1303)
- “It is important to note that when we say the Sacrament of Confirmation “perfects,” we do not mean that it perfects the Sacrament of Baptism. Confirmation perfects the human person, and the Holy Spirit continues to perfect us for the rest of our lives, getting rid of the bad and building up the good, that we may more perfectly reflect our Creator.”
- “Sometimes there is a fear that growing to become more like Jesus means becoming less of yourself – that you will be some cookie-cutter version of a Christian without much of a personality. It couldn’t be further from the truth. Christians believe that God made you a unique being unrepeatable in all of time and space – that you as an individual bring something of God to earth that no one else can or will. When we talk of the Holy Spirit changing us, getting rid of the bad, it is so that we may become most fully ourselves without anything holding us back. We become a beautiful bouquet of varied personality and culture bound up in the ribbon of Christian community. It is sin that makes everyone the same, dragging everyone down into the same muddy swamp filled with the same vices and the same lies.”
- As St. Francis de Sales said, “Be yourself and be that well!”
- As St. Irenaeus said “The glory of God is man fully alive”
- “It is worth noting that sin can disrupt the presence of God in our lives. Not because it is more powerful than God, because *we choose* to remove God to make room for this vice. This is described in the Catechism as a loss of Charity, another word for Love.”

- Read CCC1855
 - For students who have questions about sin, direct them to explore CCC 1846-1876 on their own time
 - So what do we do when we fall in the mud? While God's presence may leave us if we send Him away through choosing mortal sin, God is also ever wooing us back. When we fall in the mud we repent. Because mortal sin is capable of attacking Charity, God gave us the great gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - Read Ez 18: 30-32
 - For students who have questions about sin, inviting them to read the whole chapter on their own time can be helpful
 - Read 1 Cor: 10-16
 - "Are my hands open to receive God or full of something else? Do I continue to grip that thing or choose to let it go? At the end of my life, when everything passes through the Fire of the Holy Spirit, if I am still clinging to that seriously sinful thing that is not of God, I risk being destroyed with it. But it's not just about the future. If I let go now I can receive what God has for me now. Freedom, Goodness, Peace, Joy...things the devil can't copy."
- Prayer Activity: Clean Water
 - Pull out a bin and glass with dark water.
 - "When we start to choose God, or maybe choose Him for the thousandth time, it is normal to want change to be immediate. Sometimes it is! But there are many other ways in which change is frustratingly slow. The darkness we see in ourselves requires a courageous perseverance."
 - Begin pouring clean water into dark glass so that the dark water overflows into the bin. Depending on the size of the bin and the glass, you may want to hold the glass above the bin for students to see.
 - Continue to pour clean water into the dark glass until the water in the glass is totally clean and all darkness has spilled out. This should take a full minute or more.
 - Invite students to spend a few minutes in prayer asking the Holy Spirit where they may have a little darkness that needs recommitment to perseverance. Lead students to ask the Holy Spirit for His living water to pour abundantly into them.
- Homework: Take home Sr. Brittany's BE LITTLE advice and put it somewhere you will see often. Practice these things this week and be ready to describe one aspect of your life that changed for you

The Holy Spirit in Our Lives

February 12, 2024

How to develop a connection with the best friend we never knew we had

SR. BRITTANY HARRISON, FMA

I could never pray to a bird, I thought, as I looked at the stained glass window of the Trinity in my home parish. I was fourteen and a newly initiated Catholic. The fruit of only a year of Catholic education, I knew I wanted to be Catholic because of the Eucharist. The Holy Spirit, however, baffled me. Maybe you've felt similarly. It's taken me over twenty years to even begin to understand how the Holy Spirit — often known as the most neglected member of the Blessed Trinity — is important to our spiritual lives.

Around the time of my stained glass window ponderings, I ran across a booklet called *The Holy Ghost, Our Greatest Friend: He Who Loves Us Best*. The author, Fr. Paul O'Sullivan, begins by quoting Jesus (a good place to start):

And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you forever. The spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it sees him not, nor knows him: but you shall know him; because he shall abide with you and shall be in you.
(John 14:16-17, emphasis mine)

I wondered back then if we made the Holy Spirit look like a bird because "Paraclete" sounded a lot like "Parakeet"; a mispronunciation I often heard years later as a theology teacher. I got it sorted out when I took a New Testament class in college.

My professor explained that paraclete was a Greek word that could be translated to mean many different things — advocate, comforter, intercessor, helper, teacher, encourager. ... “Like a cheerleader,” she clarified. And who doesn’t want a personal cheerleader?

The Holy Spirit is active and moving within those who receive the seven sacraments. “As the soul is the life of the body, so the Holy Spirit is the life of our souls,” explains St. Peter Damian. The Spirit comes to us at our Baptism, dwelling within our souls, making us temples of God and disciples of Jesus. At our Confirmation, we are strengthened by the Spirit to bear witness to Jesus like the Apostles were. And when we fail in this, we seek God’s forgiveness in Penance, and the Holy Spirit guides our confessor and moves our hearts to contrition. In the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit unites us to our Savior and inspires us to grow in love for him. In all the sacraments, the ability of the Holy Spirit to act depends upon our openness and willingness to let him act, a disposition fostered by our prayer life.

The patron saint of parish priests, St. John Vianney, the Curé d’Ars, outlined the importance of the Holy Spirit in our spiritual lives. He taught:

Those who love the Holy Ghost [a name people used in older times for the Holy Spirit] experience every kind of happiness within themselves. The Holy Ghost leads us like a mother leads her little child, or like a person with sight leads a blind man. Those who love the Holy Ghost find prayer so delightful that they cannot find sufficient time to pray.

If we wish to grow in union with Jesus and holiness, the Holy Spirit is not optional.

BE LITTLE - *Sr. Brittany, FMA*

B - Begin each day anew
E - Enter your inner room
L - Learn about Holy Spirit
I - Invite the Holy Spirit to inspire your prayer
T - Tell the Holy Spirit what you need
T - Trust that the Holy Spirit is with you
L - Let the Holy Spirit lead you
E - Encourage others

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Lesson 5: “Breath of God” The Holy Spirit and Me

Objective: Identify changes in the behavior and attitudes of the Apostles after they received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Identify ways that each of us can personally grow closer to God with the help of the Holy Spirit.

- **Bell Work:** What is one thing Sr. Brittany’s BE LITTLE advice changed for you?
- **Review:** Object Lesson
 - Pour milk - “This milk is you”
 - Pour chocolate sauce. A lot of chocolate sauce. When you think it's too much keep going. Keep going until students find it ridiculous and laugh. Big chunk of brown at the bottom of the glass/pitcher- “this is the grace of God you received in Baptism”; you can be silly and shout, “more grace!” “All the grace!” Etc.
 - Hold glass aloft - “Is it chocolate milk?” Kids debate
 - Produce spoon/whisk, - “At Baptism you received the grace of God which changed you permanently, this massive sweet gift of God, but He has even more planned for you!”
 - Stir chocolate - “Confirmation, in a sense, “stirs up” our identity as children of God given to us in baptism. Instead of carrying Grace like a box in your heart, you carry it like blood in your veins. Fully chocolate milk. Fully powered up. A permanent change to your character.”

Teacher’s note - It is possible to talk through the milk analogy. It is more memorable as an object lesson demonstrated for them. It is more fun if you put a tarp on the floor, cover a kid in a rain poncho holding the pitcher while you make an absolute mess stirring up the chocolate at high speed. Alternatively, each student could have supplies to do the object lesson following your direction and everyone gets to enjoy a glass of chocolate milk.

- **Lesson**
 - Class discussion on Fire
 - What are its properties? What can it do?
 - Destroy (forest fire)
 - Clean (purify metals)
 - Protects (purposely charring wood makes it less flammable)
 - Melts (changes the state of something)
 - Make something edible (meat)
 - Make something inedible (burnt)
 - Permanently change (like baking a cake)

- “In welding, you might imagine someone with a blowtorch heating metals so that they melt together; however, what actually happens is that the atomic composition of metals automatically connects together. We don’t see that in regular life because there is always a layer of oxygen between the atoms. When I clang two pieces of metal together they bounce off. In welding, what we actually see is the torch burning away the oxygen so the atoms can connect as they naturally would. Similarly, the Holy Spirit burns away that which separates us from Christ and allows us to conform to Him as we were created to do.”
- Choose a student to read aloud the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23)
- “Sometimes, when you are trying to share Jesus with someone and it doesn’t go the way you hoped, a well-meaning friend will try to comfort you, saying that it’s okay you didn’t see the result you wanted yet...you were just sowing seeds. However, the deeper truth is that the Holy Spirit is the Sower of Seeds. Constantly generous, pouring Himself out onto this world and God’s people, to our very hearts. Our responsibility is to tend the garden of our heart. Can I receive what God wants to give me? Our work is to till the soil, remove the thorns and weeds. We can even gently help others to do so! But it is always the Holy Spirit, the Lord the Giver of Life, who gives new life to the garden. In fact, he never stops.”
- **Class Work:** Before and After
 - Assign a pair of readings to each student. Students work individually making notes on their observations to then share in a class discussion.
 - Fearful
 - Mark 4:35-41 and Acts 9: 10-19
 - Matthew 26:69-75 and Acts 4: 16-22
 - Confused
 - Luke 18:31-34 and Acts 4:12-13
 - Matthew 16:6-11 and Acts Acts 2: 42-47
 - Rivalry
 - Mark 10: 35-41 and Acts 6: 1-7
 - Luke 22: 24-27 and Acts 4: 32-37

- **Prayer Activity:** Breaking walls
 - “What if I am baptized and confirmed but I don’t feel different, or powerful, or clear? Having a gift is not the same as opening a gift. When we interact with God and spend time opening our hearts in prayer, growing closer to the Holy Spirit, we grow in that boldness, power, and clarity that comes with being a well-formed Christian. This prayer activity will allow the Holy Spirit to work on whatever might be a barrier between us and Jesus and to better attach to Him as we were made to, just like with welding.”
 - “We are going to ask the Holy Spirit to show us what might be separating us from Jesus with the image of a wall. Like Jericho in the Old Testament, a wall stood between God’s people and God’s promise. We are going to explore how that same thing might affect us today. Each one of you has a personal, individual relationship with the Holy Spirit and He will communicate with you in whatever way you can best understand Him. Your image may not look like someone else’s and that’s totally normal. Perhaps someone’s wall is very imposing, someone else’s may be made of something silly, another person may be able to see through their wall. Just lean into whatever the Holy Spirit brings you to get to the truth of the message.” **Teachers, I once had a student with a wall made of Patrick Stars from Spongebob. It really is okay if it’s ridiculous; it means something. In the end we want all the walls to come down anyway**
 - “I (Teacher) am going to lead you through some questions to ask the Holy Spirit, but it is important that you ask them yourself in your own heart and mind. I cannot have this conversation for you, I am only leading you through it. You have to talk to God yourself.”
 - Holy Spirit, is there anything separating me from Jesus?
 - Holy Spirit, what does this wall look like?
 - What is it made of? How tall is it?
 - Holy Spirit, how did this wall get here?
 - Holy Spirit, how would You like to bring this wall down?
 - Give the Holy Spirit permission to bring down the wall.

Lesson 6: The Sacraments and the Holy Spirit

Objective: Students will be able to identify the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in each of the Sacraments

- **No Bell Work/Review Today**

- **Lesson**

- “The Holy Spirit helps us get closer to God and grow as Christians. This can happen in personal prayer, in communal prayer, and in a special way in the seven sacraments of the Church. The Holy Spirit makes [but not as a lone ranger] the sacraments ‘efficacious’ – that is – to have a powerful effect on our lives. What is a key difference between a bath and a Baptism? The Holy Spirit and His divine power!”
- Read CCC 1210

- **Class Work**

- OPTION 1: Students are assigned pairs or groups to read and discuss the following excerpts. Students should then craft a 2 min lesson to teach the rest of the class. This should be more formal than a class discussion, with students coming to the front of the room to present. At teacher discretion they may use additional resources to craft their lesson.
 - This option is likely preferable for younger grades as the reading level of the article is a bit high. Focusing on a small portion may be helpful.
- OPTION 2: Socratic Seminar:
 - This option may be more suited to older grades because of the reading level, though at teacher discretion older grades may still utilize Option 1.
 - Students are assigned the following article the night before or week before to closely read, annotate, and come up with questions/comments.
 - <https://catholiceducation.org/en/culture/the-holy-spirit-in-the-sacraments.html>
 - The following pages contain guidance on hosting a Socratic Seminar, if you have never done so
 - Students are given 10 minutes after bell work to re-read and review notes
 - Students should show you their annotated article and notes
 - Small classes can have just one conversation
 - Larger classes are split into two talking groups, an outer circle and an inner circle.
 - In this form an outer circle student is paired with an inner circle student to observe, then seats are swapped for a second conversation

- Possible opening questions
 - Out of the sacraments you have received, which one is your favorite and why?
 - Which sacrament do you think is easiest/hardest to sense the Holy Spirit at work?
 - What is a word or phrase in the article that was confusing or hard to understand?
 - Which saint quote did you find the most appealing?
 - Is there a paragraph in the introduction or conclusion that stood out to you?
 - What is something new you learned about a sacrament from this article?
- **Prayer Activity:** Litany of the Holy Spirit
https://sacredheartsisters.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Litany_of_the_Holy_Spirit.pdf

Rubric Option (tally for each time they participate)

Name	Notes	Contribution to Discussion	Offer a Reference	Ask a Clarifying Question	Real Zinger	Total
	3 points	4 points	3 points	3 points	5 points	(15 needed)
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						
13.						
14.						
15.						

Name	Notes	Contribution to Discussion	Offer a Reference	Ask a Clarifying Question	Real Zinger	Total
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5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						
13.						
14.						
15.						

Rubric Option

Each time your partner does one of the following put a tally mark in the box

Your name: _____

Partner's name: _____

Speaks in the discussion	
Looks at the person who is speaking	
Refers to the text	
Asks a question	
Responds to another speaker	

Interrupts another speaker	
Engages in side conversation	
Loses attentive posture	

Reflection:

What is the most interesting thing your partner said?

What would you have liked to say if you were in this discussion?

Debrief Worksheet

1. What was the best point made during the seminar?

2. What ideas did you agree with?

3. What ideas did you disagree with?

4. What questions were left unanswered?

5. What did you contribute to the discussion?

6. What do you wish you had said in the discussion?

7. Who were the top three contributors in the discussion?

8. What is your overall evaluation of the seminar?

Teacher/ Discussion Leader

- Ask open-ended questions keeping students' attention on text
 - "Why" or "should"...
 - "What does X mean when..."
 - "How would you describe..."
 - Themes, ideas, contradictions
- Wait for replies, if silence is uncomfortable let it be. Do not rephrase or redirect question.
- Whenever possible, let students build on each other's ideas
- Stick close to text

Exploratory Questions

- Ask speaker to clarify or explain
- Ask other students for response
- Ask for evidence in the text
- Invite new ideas
- Test an idea - do others agree, what does that look like compared to this other text, etc.

Move On

- Ask a question on new content
- Consolidate ideas
- Reintroduce idea posed earlier
- Summarize discussion

To help students engage in discussion it can be helpful to write two lists on the board, one for behavior expectations, another for comment/question starters

I agree with you because...

I disagree with you because...

I would like to add...

Tell me more about...

I'm not sure I understand...

Attentive posture

Address each other respectfully (some teachers may even ask for formal Mr. or Ms.)

Offer a supporting example from the text

Invite another student to share their ideas

OPTION 1 EXCERPTS

BAPTISM

Pope John Paul II establishes the connection between the Holy Spirit and Baptism by asserting: “In the light of Pentecost we can also understand better the significance of Baptism as a first sacrament, insofar as it is a work of the Holy Spirit.” He goes on: “This baptismal walk in newness of life began on Pentecost day at Jerusalem.” (9) Cardinal Newman recalls that “not only [is] the Holy Ghost . . . in the Church, and that Baptism admits [us] into it, but that the Holy Ghost admits by means of Baptism, that the Holy Ghost baptizes.” (10)

And what about the effects of Baptism? The great apologist notes that “we but slowly enter into the privileges of our Baptism; we but gradually gain it.” (11) In fact, he says, “nothing shows, for some time, that the Spirit of God is come into, and dwells in” the soul of the baptized. (12) Novatian nicely summarizes this point when he writes:

“It is [the Holy Spirit] that effects with water a second birth. He is a kind of seed of divine generation and the consecrator of heavenly birth, the pledge of a promised inheritance, and, as it were, a kind of surety bond of eternal salvation. It is He that can make of us a temple of God, and can complete us as His house; He that can accost the divine ears for us with unutterable groaning, fulfilling the duties of advocate and performing the functions of defense; He, that is an inhabitant given to our bodies, and a worker of holiness.” (13)

CONFIRMATION

Like patristic theologians and modern ones, too, Newman held that “Confirmation seals in their fullness, winds up and consigns, completes the entire round of those sanctifying gifts which are begun, which are given inchoately in Baptism.” (14) Pope John Paul II spells out the “Spirit-dimension” of it in this way:

“Confirmation, the sacrament connected to Baptism, is presented in the Acts of the Apostles in the form of an imposition of hands through which the apostles communicated the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (15)

PENANCE AND ANOINTING OF THE SICK

In the same general audience, the Pope teaches that “in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (or Penance), the connection with the Holy Spirit is established through the power of the word of Christ after His Resurrection.” He likewise observes that these same post-resurrectional words “can also refer to the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.” (16)

By God’s design, it is the priest’s vocation to heal wounds, renew strength, and “wash the stains of guilt away.” That almost incredible power was given to the apostles and their successors on Easter night, when Our Blessed Lord linked for all time the possession of genuine peace to the forgiveness of sins. Nevertheless we live in such a world that the psychiatrist Karl Menninger could entitle his book, *Whatever Became of Sin?* Modern man has lost his sense of sin which, of course, explains why he has also lost the key to full and lasting peace. We priests must remind the world that sin exists, not in the fashion of a dreary and depressing Cassandra, but with an attitude of joy and enthusiasm.

Cardinal Newman, in his poem, “Absolution,” introduces us to a priest who, in admirable humility and with love for sinners, says to the fallen: “Look not to me no grace is mine; But I can lift the Mercy-sign. This wouldst thou? Let it be! Kneel down, and take the word divine, *Absolvo te.*” (17)

The work of absolution is accomplished in Baptism, Penance, and the Anointing of the Sick. This paves the way for any other sacramental encounters which increase the divine life within. Once the roadblock of sin is removed, then the process of divinization can begin and only then.

HOLY ORDERS

By the plan of Providence, it is the priest who imparts, through Word and Sacrament, this “divine sense of human life.” We priests, by the mysterious workings of grace, are called to “shed a ray of light divine.” It is our particular privilege to be “the Father of the poor,” not merely to those economically disadvantaged but even more to those who are spiritually malnourished and who cry out for the food of the truth of Christ.

By standing at the altar and saying the awesome words of Christ at the Last Supper, we give the Lord's people access to "sweet refreshment here below," which is a foretaste of the "rest most sweet; grateful coolness in the heat; solace in the midst of woe," all of which anticipates the glory of the liturgy of heaven. It is our responsibility to teach all who would listen that where God's Holy Spirit is not present, "man hath naught, nothing good in deed or thought, nothing free from taint of ill."

MARRIAGE

Regarding Holy Matrimony, Pope John Paul observes:

"This sacrament is the human participation in that divine love which has been 'poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 5:5). According to St. Augustine, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity in God is the 'consubstantial communion' [*communio consubstantialis*] of the Father and the Son. Through the Sacrament of Matrimony, the Spirit forms 'communion of persons' between a man and woman." (18)

EUCCHARIST

The Pentecost observed by the apostolic community was a major feast of covenant renewal, harking back to that primal giving of the Law to Moses, that act of God which made Israel His chosen people. Each time the Church gathers to celebrate the Eucharistic sacrifice, she engages in a similar ceremony of covenant renewal, and the same Spirit which hovered over the waters of the abyss bringing creation from chaos, the same Spirit which hovered over the Blessed Virgin Mary making her the Mother of the Messiah that same Spirit hovers over the elements of bread and wine, transforming them into the Lord's Body and Blood which saved the world 2000 years ago and makes present that invitation to salvation day in and day out, until He "comes in glory."

Hence, it is possible to say that every time the sacrifice of Calvary is sacramentally renewed, a little Pentecost occurs. How fortunate I always regard myself that I had the great grace of celebrating my first Mass on Pentecost!

Not surprisingly, we hear Pope John Paul explicate what St. John Damascene enunciated 13 centuries ago in *De Fide Orthodoxa*, and so many other Fathers and doctors have affirmed:

"Christian Tradition is aware of this bond between the Eucharist and the Holy Spirit which was expressed, and still is today, during the Mass when, in the *epiclesis* the Church requests the sanctification of the gifts offered upon the altar. . . . The Church emphasizes the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit for the completion of

the Eucharistic consecration, for the sacramental transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, and for the communication of grace to those who participate in it and to the entire Christian community.” (19)

In *Dominum et Vivificantem*, Pope John II’s encyclical on the Holy Spirit, we read:

“Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church from the beginning expressed and confirmed her identity through the Eucharist. . . . Through the Eucharist, individuals and communities, by the action of the Paraclete-Counselor, learn to discover the divine sense of human life” (no. 62).

The Holy Spirit in the Sacraments

Very Rev. Peter Stravinskas

One of the questions I receive at *The Catholic Answer* with amazing frequency is this: If the sacraments were indeed instituted by Christ, why don't the creeds of the Church ever mention them? Now, having no doubt that all of you have studied the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in great detail, I am sure it will come as no surprise when I remind you that immediately following the article of the Apostles' Creed dealing with the Holy Spirit, we meet the Church and, not long thereafter, mention of the *communio sanctorum* which not only means the communion of saints, but also communion "in holy things" (Catechism, no. 948).

The point is that the Holy Spirit gives us the Church and she, in turn, gives us the sacraments. St. Augustine taught us, "what the soul is to man's body, the Holy Spirit is to the Body of Christ, which is the Church. The Holy Spirit does in the whole Church what the soul does in the members of the one body." (1) This realization led Cardinal Newman to declare that "Holy Church in her sacraments . . . will remain, even to the end of the world, after all but a symbol of those heavenly facts which fill eternity." (2)

And what do these sacraments accomplish? Nothing less than the divine indwelling, which Newman describes thus: "Our Lord, by becoming man, has found a way whereby to sanctify that nature, of which His own manhood is the pattern specimen. He inhabits us personally, and this inhabitation is effected by the channel of the sacraments." (3)

How does this all come about? Through the imposition of hands which Tertullian refers to, in a most felicitous phrase, as "inviting and welcoming the Holy Spirit." (4) As Pope Leo XIII remarked in his encyclical *Divinum Illud Munus*, this awesome reality although certainly a work "of the whole Blessed Trinity 'We will come to Him and make our abode with Him,' (Jn. 14:23) nevertheless is attributed to the Holy Ghost" (no. 9).

To be sure, you and I have access to the Triune God in ways far greater than the apostles and disciples who walked and talked with Our Blessed Lord for three years. As St. Augustine put it, for "that giving or sending forth of the Holy Ghost after Christ's glorification was to be such as had never been before; not that there had been none before, but it had not been of the same kind." (5) This led Pope Leo to assert:

"[T]hat which now takes place in the Church is the most perfect possible, and will last until that day when the Church herself, having passed through her militant

career, shall be taken up into the joy of the saints triumphing in heaven” (*Divinum Illud Munus*, no. 6).

This idea was not a novelty of either Newman or Leo XIII. We find Hilary of Poitiers already in the fourth century referring to the Spirit as the “*donum in omnibus*” (gift in everyone). (6) Newman does, however, say ever so graciously:

“The Spirit came to finish in us, what Christ had finished in Himself, but left unfinished as regards us. To [the Spirit] it is committed to apply to us severally all that Christ had done for us. As a light placed in a room pours out its rays on all sides, so the presence of the Holy Ghost imbues us with life, strength, holiness, love, acceptableness, righteousness.” (7) And yet again, he says that Christ shines through His sacraments, “as through transparent bodies, without impediment, . . . effluences of His grace developing themselves in external forms. . . . Once for all He hung upon the cross, and blood and water issued from His pierced side, but by the Spirit’s ministration, the blood and water are ever flowing.” (8)

Wind, fire, thunder, and lightning. The Sacred Scriptures are replete with instances of divine Revelation accompanied by these awe-inspiring phenomena in nature. The Book of Genesis tells us that “a mighty wind swept over the waters” (Gen. 1:2) at the dawn of time; in the Book of Exodus, we learn how God gave the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai with thunder and lightning as the communicators of His will and Word (cf. Ex. 19).

But less fearsome signs have also been used by the Almighty as we recall how the gentle breath of God brought Adam to life (cf. Gen. 2:7) and how the breath of Jesus on the apostles gave them the ability to restore to life those who were spiritually dead through sin (cf. Jn. 20:22). All of these events are connected to God’s self-manifestation or, even better, His self-communication to the human race and, most especially, to His chosen people.

BAPTISM

Pope John Paul II establishes the connection between the Holy Spirit and Baptism by asserting: “In the light of Pentecost we can also understand better the significance of Baptism as a first sacrament, insofar as it is a work of the Holy Spirit.” He goes on: “This baptismal walk in newness of life began on Pentecost day at Jerusalem.” (9) Cardinal Newman recalls that “not only [is] the Holy Ghost . . . in the Church, and that Baptism admits [us] into it, but that the Holy Ghost admits by means of Baptism, that the Holy Ghost baptizes.” (10)

And what about the effects of Baptism? The great apologist notes that “we but slowly enter into the privileges of our Baptism; we but gradually gain it.” (11) In fact, he says, “nothing shows, for some time, that the Spirit of God is come into, and dwells in” the soul of the baptized. (12) Novatian nicely summarizes this point when he writes:

“It is [the Holy Spirit] that effects with water a second birth. He is a kind of seed of divine generation and the consecrator of heavenly birth, the pledge of a promised inheritance, and, as it were, a kind of surety bond of eternal salvation. It is He that can make of us a temple of God, and can complete us as His house; He that can accost the divine ears for us with unutterable groaning, fulfilling the duties of advocate and performing the functions of defense; He, that is an inhabitant given to our bodies, and a worker of holiness.” (13)

CONFIRMATION

Like patristic theologians and modern ones, too, Newman held that “Confirmation seals in their fullness, winds up and consigns, completes the entire round of those sanctifying gifts which are begun, which are given inchoately in Baptism.” (14) Pope John Paul II spells out the “Spirit-dimension” of it in this way:

“Confirmation, the sacrament connected to Baptism, is presented in the Acts of the Apostles in the form of an imposition of hands through which the apostles communicated the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (15)

PENANCE AND ANOINTING OF THE SICK

In the same general audience, the Pope teaches that “in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (or Penance), the connection with the Holy Spirit is established through the power of the word of Christ after His Resurrection.” He likewise observes that these same post-resurrectional words “can also refer to the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.” (16)

By God’s design, it is the priest’s vocation to heal wounds, renew strength, and “wash the stains of guilt away.” That almost incredible power was given to the apostles and their successors on Easter night, when Our Blessed Lord linked for all time the possession of genuine peace to the forgiveness of sins. Nevertheless we live in such a world that the psychiatrist Karl Menninger could entitle his book, *Whatever Became of Sin?* Modern man has lost his sense of sin which, of course, explains why he has also lost the key to full and lasting peace. We priests must remind the world that sin exists, not in the fashion of a dreary and depressing Cassandra, but with an attitude of joy and enthusiasm.

Cardinal Newman, in his poem, "Absolution," introduces us to a priest who, in admirable humility and with love for sinners, says to the fallen: "Look not to me no grace is mine; But I can lift the Mercy-sign. This wouldst thou? Let it be! Kneel down, and take the word divine, *Absolvo te.*" (17)

The work of absolution is accomplished in Baptism, Penance, and the Anointing of the Sick. This paves the way for any other sacramental encounters which increase the divine life within. Once the roadblock of sin is removed, then the process of divinization can begin and only then.

MARRIAGE

Regarding Holy Matrimony, Pope John Paul observes:

"This sacrament is the human participation in that divine love which has been 'poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 5:5). According to St. Augustine, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity in God is the 'consubstantial communion' [*communio consubstantialis*] of the Father and the Son. Through the Sacrament of Matrimony, the Spirit forms 'communion of persons' between a man and woman." (18)

EUCCHARIST

The Pentecost observed by the apostolic community was a major feast of covenant renewal, harking back to that primal giving of the Law to Moses, that act of God which made Israel His chosen people. Each time the Church gathers to celebrate the Eucharistic sacrifice, she engages in a similar ceremony of covenant renewal, and the same Spirit which hovered over the waters of the abyss bringing creation from chaos, the same Spirit which hovered over the Blessed Virgin Mary making her the Mother of the Messiah that same Spirit hovers over the elements of bread and wine, transforming them into the Lord's Body and Blood which saved the world 2000 years ago and makes present that invitation to salvation day in and day out, until He "comes in glory."

Hence, it is possible to say that every time the sacrifice of Calvary is sacramentally renewed, a little Pentecost occurs. How fortunate I always regard myself that I had the great grace of celebrating my first Mass on Pentecost!

Not surprisingly, we hear Pope John Paul explicate what St. John Damascene enunciated 13 centuries ago in *De Fide Orthodoxa*, and so many other Fathers and doctors have affirmed:

“Christian Tradition is aware of this bond between the Eucharist and the Holy Spirit which was expressed, and still is today, during the Mass when, in the *epiclesis* the Church requests the sanctification of the gifts offered upon the altar. . . . The Church emphasizes the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit for the completion of the Eucharistic consecration, for the sacramental transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, and for the communication of grace to those who participate in it and to the entire Christian community.” (19)

In *Dominum et Vivificantem*, Pope John II’s encyclical on the Holy Spirit, we read:

“Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church from the beginning expressed and confirmed her identity through the Eucharist. . . . Through the Eucharist, individuals and communities, by the action of the Paraclete-Counselor, learn to discover the divine sense of human life” (no. 62).

HOLY ORDERS

By the plan of Providence, it is the priest who imparts, through Word and Sacrament, this “divine sense of human life.” We priests, by the mysterious workings of grace, are called to “shed a ray of light divine.” It is our particular privilege to be “the Father of the poor,” not merely to those economically disadvantaged but even more to those who are spiritually malnourished and who cry out for the food of the truth of Christ.

By standing at the altar and saying the awesome words of Christ at the Last Supper, we give the Lord’s people access to “sweet refreshment here below,” which is a foretaste of the “rest most sweet; grateful coolness in the heat; solace in the midst of woe,” all of which anticipates the glory of the liturgy of heaven. It is our responsibility to teach all who would listen that where God’s Holy Spirit is not present, “man hath naught, nothing good in deed or thought, nothing free from taint of ill.”

COME, DWELL IN US

As we gain a deeper appreciation of the Church’s sacramental life, we discover in all these encounters the gentle but powerful presence of the Holy Spirit. Newman had it exactly right when he referred to the sacraments as “the embodied forms of the Spirit of Christ,” which “persuade” by their “tenderness and mysteriousness.” (20)

This is why Pope John Paul can urge what he calls “a sacramental practice which is ever more consciously docile and faithful to the Holy Spirit who, especially through the ‘means of salvation instituted by Jesus Christ,’ brings to fulfillment the mission entrusted to the Church to work for universal redemption.” (21)

In *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, Pope John Paul II expresses the hope that this preparatory year dedicated to the Holy Spirit would lead to “a renewed appreciation of the presence and activity of the Spirit, who acts within the Church both in the sacrament . . . and in the variety of charisms, roles and ministries which He inspires for the good of the Church” (no. 45).

St. Basil said it best when he wrote: “Creatures do not have any gift on their own; all good comes from the Holy Spirit.” (22)

Permit me to conclude, then, with the beautiful prayer of the Byzantine liturgy of Pentecost which, I believe, sums up the goal of this presentation:

Heavenly King, Consoler, Spirit of Truth, present in all places and filling all things, Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life: Come and dwell in us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O Good One!

Lesson 7: Charisms and Community

Objective: Students will be able to recall charisms (spiritual gifts) of the Spirit mentioned in Scripture. Students will be able to describe the purpose of charisms in building up the Church.

- **Bell Work:** “Since the wonderful moment of our Baptism, the Holy Spirit has been dwelling within us, loving us and giving Himself to us. How blessed our life becomes when we draw close to the Holy Spirit, responding with all of our love to the Divine Person whose very name is Love.” - St. Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologiae I.37.2)
- **Review:** What is the most striking thing you remember another student saying in the last class?
- **Lesson**
 - “A Charism is a special gift God has given to a person to build up the Church and participate in Christ’s mission on earth. Everyone has one, or even a few!”
 - “Let’s remember that while sometimes people are afraid that being Christian is about making you the same as everyone else, it actually makes you more beautifully who you really are, an individual created by God, a unique instance in the universe never made before and who will never be made again. Additionally, we were made to need each other.” Have a student or two read aloud CCC 1936 and 1937.
 -  What are "charisms" or charismatic gifts? (~4min)
 - Arrange students in three groups to read one of the following Catechism excerpts. Students should discuss and be prepared to summarize for the class: 799, 800, 801
 - Each group should compare and contrast the following lists of gifts described in the Scripture and have one insight ready to share with the class.

■ 1 Cor 12:8-10	■ Ephesians 4:11
■ Romans 12:6-8	■ Is 11:1-3
 - What do all of these many gifts have in common? Their purpose is not to draw attention to the individual or set someone apart as special, but to serve others and build the unity of the Church. Nobody gets all the gifts. We need each other. The other thing the gifts have in common is that they are all at the service of love, selfless, unconditional “agape” love.
 - Read 2 Kings 4: 1-7
 - What to do when we feel empty? Continue to give. It is the only way to be filled. It is not selfish to invest in your spiritual gifts. They are good for you, good for the Church, and good for the world.
 -  Can I "practice" or grow in the spiritual gifts? (3min)

- **Prayer Activity:** Interceding for each other
 - Have the class stand in a circle with a hand on a shoulder of the person in front of them. Students will choose one or two charisms that they want more of and the student with the hand on their shoulder will pray out loud for him or her to receive that gift. Proceed around the circle.
- **Homework:** Pick a saint and describe how the Holy Spirit worked in their life to build up those around them (length of assignment determined by teacher appropriate to grade level)

Lesson 8: Healing Inside and Out

Objective: Recall stories of miraculous healings from Scripture and in the lives of the saints. Explain that miraculous healings still occur today. Describe redemptive suffering as a way to grow close to Jesus on the cross, especially when we do not receive a miraculous healing ourselves. Identify inner healing and growing closer to the Lord as more important than physical healing, since the soul and our spiritual health are more important than bodily health.

- **Bell Work:** “Love forgives many mistakes, while hatred imagines mistakes even where they do not exist.” - St. John Chrysostom
- **Review:**
 - The purpose of charisms is to build up the Church. Can you list any from last class?
- **Lesson**
 - Class discussion: Do you believe in miraculous healings?
 -  16-year-old Mary: "I was healed through Blessed Solanus Casey" (~5 min)
 -  Encounter Ministries Testimony | Angel Fully Healed of Stage 4 Esophagea... (~3 min)
 - “The world went through a great upheaval in the Industrial Revolution, WWI, The Great Depression, WW2. Something happened to the world that even affected the Church. This sort of inward turning, fearful seriousness crept in with so much hurt and change and it stole things from the faithful, like hope and joy and belief in miracles. While never fully gone from the Church, miracles became seemingly sparse, something many dared not hope for. Your parents and grandparents may not have been taught much about miracles, but God’s miraculous healing is not stuck in the past. It is not confined to special holy places or special holy people. It is explicit Church teaching that miracles still happen. It’s even normally required to have two miracles to canonize a new saint. God’s power and provision, care and healing, indescribable joy and peace are ALL available to you right now.”
 - Questions
 - Does God desire all people to be healed?
 - Jesus is God’s answer to evil, including sickness and disease. In Jesus, God reveals to us that he is Infinite Goodness and it is his will to heal everyone of the cause and consequences of evil and sin by inviting everyone to live with him in heaven where we will experience the fullness of the redemption Christ wrought for us in the Paschal Mystery. In this sense, we can say that God wills that

all people to be healed. The question is when? Since the kingdom of heaven comes in the preaching of the Gospel through the ministry of the Church, we believe that God wills to heal many people now, even if not all will be healed this side of heaven. In other words, we cannot say that God wills to heal everyone of their sicknesses in this life. Only in heaven will we experience the fullness of healing. Nevertheless, it is not up to us to decide who will be healed by not praying for healing. In fact, choosing not to pray for healing because we know that not everyone will be healed on this earth is like choosing not to take a sick person to the hospital because some people don't survive the treatment offered at hospitals. It's our job to pray and God's job to heal. If we choose not to pray for healing because of a misguided and premature judgment that it's not God's will to heal, we cannot conclude that the lack of healing is due to "God's mysterious will." Christians involved in healing prayer ministry have found through praying with others that God actually wills to heal more people in this life than what most Catholics expect.

- Where does redemptive suffering fit in with healing?
 - We believe what the Church teaches: there is absolutely no conflict between seeking healing from Jesus and offering up to the Father – in union with Jesus' suffering on the cross – the suffering we experience from unhealed sickness or pain, whether the pain is physical, mental, or emotional. The Church's teaching on redemptive suffering, especially as articulated by John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter, *Salvifici Doloris* (1984), is a profound truth that can help us grow in holiness and intercede for the salvation of the world. For example, in the absence of physical healing we can simply offer our suffering up as a prayer to Jesus like St. Paul modeled for us in Colossians 1:24 "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church." The paradox of our faith, as witnessed by the New Testament and the tradition of the Church, is that God is so good that he not only can save us from evil but also save us despite evil. Look at the cross of Christ: the worst evil ever to happen in the history of the world is transformed by God into the greatest act of saving love in the history of the world.

- Do I need a special gift (or charism) of healing to pray for healing?
 - No. Every Christian is called to pray for healing, whether it be for other people or for themselves. Having a charism means that God has given a person the ability to perform an activity or deed with unusual frequency and effectiveness. For example, not all have the charism of teaching, but all can teach in some way (e.g., all parents teach their children). Not all have the charism of administration, but everyone can and must do some administration (at least in their own lives!). Likewise with prophecy and healing. God can use ordinary Christians in extraordinary ways by means of their faith, even if he uniquely equips some Christians with special charisms for his purposes. Moreover, not only can God grant new charisms for those who seek them, but some disciples grow and mature in their ability to use the charisms that God grants through developing their understanding of how to cooperate with his grace and through practice.
- **Class Work**
 - Individually look through Matthew chapters 8 and 9. Choose a story of healing to bring to your partner or group. Share why it stood out to you.
- **Prayer Activity**
 - Invite the students to ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind an area of their life that feels thorny or dry. Maybe a hope that has fallen flat, or a hurt they've set aside and ignored. Teacher - Remember that you have a level of spiritual authority over the students placed in your care. Prayerfully read the Dry Bones Scripture passage over your students in Ezekiel 37:1-14
- **(Optional) Prayer for Healing:** *If you have participated in healing prayer before or are feeling emboldened by the Spirit to try, lead students in prayer for physical healing*
 - Ask if any students have a physical ailment the class could pray for. Have them rate their pain 1-10 just to see if they can tell a difference after prayer. Check for any limitations in movement that would be obviously apparent if healed.
 - Remind students we are not praying to test the Lord, we are praying with full confidence that our prayers will help this student physically or spiritually, now or later. Do you want healing for your friend? That's why we're praying.
 - Students may lay hands if the recipient is comfortable or extend a hand over the student receiving prayer. Those receiving healing prayer do not pray for themselves – they simply receive prayers.

- Lead a simple prayer for healing such as: “Holy Spirit, come. Jesus, we know that you are the Divine Healer. We ask you, Lord, please pour out your healing power on _____. How do You want to heal _____?”
 - Whatever He tells you or shows you in prayer, you are encouraged to do, asking for permission as needed. You can pray for a symptom to be removed in the name of Jesus (ex: pain, swelling, discomfort, etc.)
- Check in with recipient to see if their pain or mobility has changed
- Try praying for healing three times, to give prayer a chance without exhausting the intercessors or recipient. The more specifically a recipient can describe the issue, the more specifically you can pray, which is powerful.
 - If nothing happens, remind students that healings can happen after the fact, such as waking up healed the next day, when they go to Mass or Confession, etc. (Luke 17:14) – and to let you know if something happens later.
 - If a little change happens, such as pain is reduced from a 6 to a 5 or there is slightly more mobility, CELEBRATE IT and ask for MORE.
 - If a big change happens, celebrate what God is doing and has done. Gratitude and joy are part of the healing process. Don’t downplay what just happened. Invite the recipient to pray aloud with gratitude to the Lord in their own words. The student should not go back to injured behavior; for example, if they are wearing a boot and their foot is truly healed, they don’t put the boot back on. Even if they don’t have another shoe, it’s a sock for the rest of the day, which is a great segue for telling people what God did for them!
- Whether a healing happens or not, if the student feels loved and respected then you’ve succeeded
- **Note to teachers:** If no students volunteer with an ailment, allow students to pray over you. Yes, it is vulnerable, but that’s why it’s good. Pick something simple and age-appropriate for the students to pray for, like the healing of a headache or sore joint. Laying of hands should be restricted to your head and shoulders.

Lesson 9: Fruits and Relationship

Objective: Recall the Fruits of the Holy Spirit from Scripture. Describe ways to cultivate the Fruits of the Spirit. Describe the Holy Spirit as a divine Person to have a relationship with.

- **Bell Work:** “Seeking the Holy Spirit is not just about receiving a bundle of gifts (although that is part of it), but the reality of seeking a relationship with a person. The more intimately we love each person of the Trinity the more we will be ready for Heaven!” - Brother Barnabas, OP
- **Review:** Turn and Talk - do you find inner healing or physical healing more interesting? Do you agree that inner healing is the most important?
- **Lesson:**
 - Draw a plant with fruit on the board, including roots under the ground. (basic, vaguely tomato-esque is enough) “What is the difference between a fruit and a vegetable?” Let students try to answer. “A fruit is what the plant produces. A vegetable is any other part of the plant; sometimes we call the leaves “herbs,” but you get the point. So what does it mean when we have spiritual fruits? It means the seeds which the Holy Spirit planted in us have matured and produced goodness. The fruit of the plant has more seeds in it, more life to multiply and bring more good fruit! This imagery is so prevalent that even Solomon’s Temple was decorated with pomegranates everywhere (ask students if anyone has eaten a pomegranate and to describe it). It is a fruit with abundant and delicious seeds, like it’s pretty much entirely seeds – an image of abundant life in the Spirit.”
 - Scripture describes the fruits of the Spirit in Gal 5: 22-23. Can students name any before we look? Read from Scripture.
 - “Unlike charisms, each person is meant to have all of these fruits. These are not special gifts, but the normal way humans grow to be more like Jesus through the cultivating action of the Holy Spirit. When we see these fruits in ourselves or others, we are seeing God at work.”
 - “Sometimes it's hard to identify a plant before its fruits and flowers appear. Similarly, we may not always be able to easily tell if a choice is good or bad. One way we can discern if something is good or bad is to look at the fruits. Is this helping me grow in holiness?”

- “How do I get more abundant fruit? Grow more seeds! Continuing to grow your relationship with the Holy Spirit as a Person who is caring for you, building you up, convicting you, cultivating and growing you, just like we have seen. When you find rocks, thorns, or dry ground within yourself, strive to uproot these with God’s help. Prayerfully water the apathy within you so that there can be vibrant life in the Spirit.
- “Bishop Gruss invited you to this special time of cultivating your relationship with the Holy Spirit and our last lesson will conclude with his words”:
- Bishop Gruss Pentecost Homily 2026 <https://share.google/7rq4MVCpyP2rauz9X> (~16 min)
- **Prayer Activity: Rosary**

Our Lady, Daughter of the Father, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, and Mother of Jesus Christ, pray for us. Help us to surrender our entire life to God as you have. Leave students a moment of silence, inviting them to explicitly give their lives to Jesus.

 - At the teacher’s discretion, lead students in a scriptural rosary of the Glorious mysteries found here <https://www.ourcatholicprayers.com/the-glorious-mysteries.html>
 - At the teacher’s discretion, you may choose to pray a single decade; if only a decade, choose the third Glorious Mystery, the Descent of the Holy Spirit