I Believe... in the Holy Spirit
By Don Boucher

Purpose
The Holy Spirit has been present throughout salvation history from the time of creation right up to present times. But the Spirit has never been in the forefront as the Spirit’s role is to always point to and reveal Jesus. This session explores the Holy Spirit from a variety of perspectives: the Holy Spirit in Scripture, the Holy Spirit and Pentecost, the titles and symbols of the Holy Spirit, and the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the participants. By the end of this session, participants will be able to more confidently proclaim “I believe in the Holy Spirit.”

Component: Catechesis

Session at a Glance
7:00 p.m.  Welcome and Introduction to the Session
7:10 p.m.  Me and the Spirit
7:30 p.m.  Tell Me More about the Spirit
7:55 p.m.  The Spirit and Me
8:10 p.m.  Closing Prayer
8:25 p.m.  Announcements
8:30 p.m.  Good Night!

Materials Needed
- Newsprint and easel stand
- Markers
- Large clear bowl (glass or plastic) filled half-way with water
- Tablet (iPad)
- Cloud light supplies: cotton batting, paper lantern, LED lights, clear nylon string, glue gun (see #2 in Prepare in Advance)
- Paper cut-out of a dove
- Small glass bowl filled about half-way with olive oil
- Two fake hands (from a mannequin or make them – see “Prepare in Advance)
- Six cloths, towels, or material scraps, each one large enough to cover one of the items listed above (the water bowl, tablet, cloud light, dove, olive oil bowl, hands)
- Download the following videos:
1. **Prepare in Advance**

1. Preview all the videos so you are familiar with the content. For the first video, you do not need to watch all three hours!


3. If you need to “make” your two hands, simply take a pair of working gloves or winter gloves and stuff them with paper or pillow batting so they are somewhat stiff.

4. Download “The Best Fireplace Video” onto the tablet.

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5. Prepare one or two sheets of newsprint with the second part of the Nicene Creed (about the Holy Spirit):

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,
who has spoken through the prophets.

6. Prepare another set of newsprint sheets with the following prayer on each one:

Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit,
and they shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.

7. Set up a long 8’ rectangular table (or two 6’ foot tables) at the front of the room. Place the items below on the table from left to right, as viewed by the participants, and cover each of them with a separate cloth.
   - Bowl of water
   - The tablet/iPad – face down (about 15 minutes before your session, begin playing the video so that you do not have to do this in front of the participants)
   - The cloud light
   - The cut-out of the dove
   - Bowl of olive oil
   - Two hands

8. Set up five different learning stations, either in your meeting room or in nearby rooms. At each station, place two to four Bibles, enough pens or pencils for one-fifth the number of participants you expect, and Handouts 1-5 at each station (all Handouts 1 at Station 1, Handouts 2 at Station 2, etc.).

9. Set up the prayer table in a prominent place in your presentation area.

10. Set up tables for refreshments and sign-in. Have one or two people at the sign-in table with a check-in sheet and name tags. Hospitality is
important: As the leader, do not use the gathering time before the session begins to take care of last minute preparations. Spend the time moving among the participants, greeting and speaking with them.

11. Invite one participant to be the reader for the Closing Prayer.

**Session Outline**

**Welcome and Introduction to the Session** (10 minutes)
Welcome the participants to this session, and tell them you will continue to explore what we believe as Catholics. Then invite participants to join you in prayer.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*(Direct participants to the newsprint sheets with the Holy Spirit prayer and invite them to pray it aloud together.)*

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, who has spoken through the prophets.

*(Continue on your own)*

Let us pray.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Ask for six volunteers. Have each one go behind the table facing participants. Each volunteer should have one of the objects covered with a cloth in front of them. Tell participants that under the cloth in front of them is an object, and each object is used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Each volunteer will uncover the object in front of them, tell everyone what it is, and then tell everyone how that object – or symbol – represents the Holy Spirit. If the volunteer does not know, you can then ask participants for their ideas. After each symbol, be sure to add the information from **Resource 1** as further explanation. Go one object/symbol at a time, but keep it moving. When you’re ready, begin.

When completed, continue with these or similar words:

We are here in the third of four sessions exploring our Creed as a people of faith. In our first session we explored the concept of faith and God as Father. In our second session, we explored Jesus Christ, who he was and is to us. In this session we’re going to look at the third part of our Creed which focuses on the Holy Spirit.
Me and the Spirit (20 minutes)

Ask participants to form small groups of four. Give each group a half sheet of newsprint and a marker. Ask one person in each group to be the recorder. Tell participants you’re going to ask them a question, and they are to say the first things that come into their mind. The recorder will write their responses on the newsprint sheet. Remind participants that this isn’t a discussion, but simply a brainstorming of ideas. They should get the words/phrases out quickly, and be honest in their responses. Tell participants they will have about three to four minutes to get as many of their ideas down on paper as they can. When everyone is ready, ask participants the following question:

“When you think about the Holy Spirit, what words or phrases come to mind?”

After about four minutes, get everyone’s attention and ask the groups to share what is on their newsprint sheet.

After you have heard from all groups, make any observations you have on their lists (keep your remarks brief). Then direct everyone’s attention to an open area of the room. Tell participants to imagine a line on the floor going from left to right (or front to back). That line has numbers on it from 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest level and 10 being the highest level. Tell participants you will read a statement and they are to go and stand somewhere on the line that best reflects their level of “yes” to that statement. For example, 1 could be “no way” or “not at all,” and 10 could be “absolutely yes” or “I have no doubt.” When everyone is ready, read this statement:

“I believe the Holy Spirit is alive, present, and active in the world today.”

Ask everyone to move and wait until everyone lands somewhere along the line. Get everyone’s attention, ask the following question:

“Why are you where you are on the line?”

Get a few responses from those on the lower end, those on the higher end, and those in the middle. Make appropriate comments to the responses, asking people to explain further their answers. Do not be afraid to ask them how they are sure about their position, and to ask for specific examples of where the Spirit is working or not working in the world today.

After a few minutes, read this next statement:

“I believe the Holy Spirit is alive, present and active in my life.”
Repeat the previous process with this question. After a few minutes, invite everyone to return to their places.

When everyone is settled, tell participants that everyone has different images and different experiences of the Holy Spirit:

Prior to the Second Vatican Council, we used to refer to the Holy Spirit as the Holy Ghost. The word “ghost” used to mean a spirit without a physical body. But over time, the word came to mean a dead person still roaming the earth that frightened you. So the Church fathers decided to eliminate the use of “ghost” and to use “spirit” instead. But many people today still seem to think the Holy Spirit is still a bit spooky. Let’s watch this video.

Invite participants to view the screen and play the “Holy Spirit” video.

**Tell Me More about the Spirit (25 minutes)**

Break the participants in five learning teams, ensuring as much as possible that all five teams have the same number of participants in them. Explain to participants that each team will gather at one of the five stations spread around the room (or located in different rooms). At each station, participants will find a stack of handouts and other materials they will need to complete their work.

When they arrive at their station, participants are to take one of the handouts and work through it as a group. There is one question at the bottom of their handout, and they are to develop their response to that question as a team. Each member of their team needs to know the response to their question, because when everyone re-gathers, one member from each of the five learning teams will form a teaching group, and then each member of the new group will “teach” the others in the group about their topic.

When you’ve given the instructions, tell learning teams they will have ten minutes to work through their handout and develop their response to their question, and then send everyone to their stations.

After ten minutes, bring everyone back together, and have them form teaching groups so that each group has at least one member from each of the five learning teams. When all new teaching groups have been formed, tell participants to begin “teaching” what they learned about their topic to the other members of their new group.

After about ten minutes, bring everyone back together again. Ask participants if they have any questions about any of the material they learned or presented. Make any concluding comments you deem are appropriate.
As a summary to this section, invite participants to turn their attention to the screen and play the “Chris Padgett on Fire with the Holy Spirit” video.

**The Spirit and Me** (15 minutes)
Ask participants to return to their group of four they had earlier in the session. Distribute the slips of discussion questions from Handout 6. Ask participants to spend some time in their groups sharing their responses to each question with their group. After about seven minutes, tell participants that if they have not yet discussed question #6 to move to that question at this time.

After about ten minutes, get everyone’s attention. Ask participants for their responses to question #2. After a few minutes, ask them for their responses to question #6. Make any appropriate concluding comments and then invite them to join together in closing this session in prayer.

**Closing Prayer** (15 minutes)

_Gather_
Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross and invite everyone to pray together the prayer on the newsprint sheet)*

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and we shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

_Listen_
Invite the reader to come forward to proclaim Luke 4:16-21. After the reading, allow a few moments of silence.

_Respond_
Prayer Leader: *(use these or similar words)*

If we truly believe in the Holy Spirit, then the words Jesus spoke in the Scripture we just heard apply to us as well. This is what we are called to do, and through the power of the Holy Spirit we can, and must, do what Jesus did.

So who are you called to bring the good news to? Who are the people in your life that are captive by someone or something? Who are the people in your life who are blind to something and need their sight recovered? Who are the people in your life who are oppressed and need to be set free?

Let us lift these people up in prayer. Our response to our prayers will be: _Let us become more aware of your presence._

And so, for what shall we pray?
Go Forth

Invite participants to pray the closing song as they listen to it. If you want to encourage them to sing along as they become comfortable with it, consider posting the song’s lyrics on newsprint. Play the video, “Holy Spirit | Jesus Culture | Performed by Abigail, Nathan & Peta.” Begin the video at 0:12 (this is where the song actually begins. At about 5:00, lower the volume slightly and invite everyone to recite this part of the Creed as the video continues:

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,
who has spoken through the prophets.

Then bring the volume up again and let the song finish. Stop the video at 6:21, and conclude with the Sign of the Cross.

Announcements and Good Night! (5 minutes)

Make any needed announcements about upcoming programs and activities. Thank everyone for the participation in tonight’s session.

This session was written by Don Boucher, Coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Davenport, and CMD adjunct staff member for the Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies. Fr. Roy Shelly, Ph.D., served as the theological consultant on this session. Fr. Roy is pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Spreckels, California.
Symbols of the Holy Spirit

Water. This signifies the action of the Holy Spirit in Baptism.

For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. (1 Corinthians 12:13)
On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed, “Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: ‘Rivers of living water will flow from within him.’” He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive. (John 7:37-39)

Fire. Fire is used to depict the vibrant and transforming energy of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit appears as tongues of fire above the Apostles, and this transformed them so they could overcome their fear, go out into the streets, preach the Good News, and begin their mission.

A cloud and light. In many places in the Old Testament God often appears as a fire or light within a dense cloud.

The cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire in the cloud at night, in the sight of the whole house of Israel in all the stages of their journey. (Exodus 40:38)
As I watched, a great stormwind came from the North, a large cloud with flashing fire, a bright glow all around it, and something like polished metal gleamed at the center of the fire. (Ezekiel 1:4)
These symbolize that the Holy Spirit reveals God’s glory but also keeps it somewhat hidden. In the New Testament, clouds appear at Jesus’ Baptism, at the Transfiguration, and at the Ascension.

A dove. Jesus’ Baptism is described in all four Gospels, and at each one the Spirit descends on him in the form of a dove.

Anointing (oil). Oil is used at the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick. The anointing with oil symbolizes the power of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the person. Even the word Christ means “the one anointed by God’s Spirit.”

Laying on hands. Jesus lays his hands on many, healing the sick and blessing the children. People received the Holy Spirit when the Apostles laid hands on them. At the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Orders, the bishop lays hands on those receiving the sacrament, praying for the Holy Spirit to descend upon them.
Handout 1

The Holy Spirit and the Old Testament

The Spirit of God is mentioned in the Bible over 800 times. And those references begin the second verse of the Bible.

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

The Hebrew word for wind, breath, or spirit is ruwach (roo'-akh). So this passage can also be understood as “...and the spirit of God sweeping over the waters.” So we know that the Holy Spirit was active in creation, right from the beginning of our salvation history.

But the word ruwach doesn’t mean a normal wind or breath. It means “a violent exhalation; a blast of breath.” The Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, always comes with a blast of power.

We also believe that the Holy Spirit was at work throughout the history of the Jewish people. While you rarely find a direct reference to the Spirit or Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, we do find many references to “the spirit of God.” The Jewish people saw the Spirit of God intimately linked with prophecy and prophets, believing that God spoke through the prophets as they spoke in God’s name. Check out these passages to see some of these references:

2 Chronicles 15:1    Ezekiel 11:25    Job 33:4    Isaiah 61:1

The Catholic Church believes that these references in the Old Testament to the Spirit of God are early references to the Holy Spirit.

Based on the above information, what do you want to tell others about the Holy Spirit and the Old Testament?
Handout 2

The Holy Spirit and the New Testament

There are few direct references to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament as we see indirect references like “the spirit of God.” However, this is not the case in the Gospel of Luke, which is often referred to as the Gospel of the Holy Spirit. Check out the following passages of Luke’s Gospel and make note of what each passage is about:

- 1:15
- 1:35
- 1:41
- 2:25
- 3:22
- 4:1

These are but a few of the Holy Spirit references in Luke’s Gospel, and we’re not even out of Chapter 4 yet!

In John 14:16-17:26, Jesus – during the Last Supper – promises to send the Holy Spirit to the Apostles after he leaves. Check it out.

All these references to the Holy Spirit in the Gospels tell us that wherever God sends his Son, he also sends his Spirit. Jesus’ mission and the mission of the Holy Spirit are one and the same and can’t be separated. But the Holy Spirit never draws attention to himself; his work always is focused on reveal God the Father and Jesus the Son.

*Based on the above information, what do you want to tell others about the Holy Spirit and the Gospels?*
Handout 3

The Holy Spirit and Pentecost

The time when we witness most dramatically the work of the Holy Spirit is at Pentecost. This event happens at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles. Jesus has already ascended into heaven and makes good on his promise to send the Holy Spirit. We find the Apostles along with some of the women disciples gathered in the Upper Room waiting for Jesus’ promise. Check out what happens by reading Acts 2-8.

This event is called Pentecost, and we celebrate this event every year approximately 50 days after Easter. We often refer to this celebration as the birthday of the Catholic Church, for on this day the Apostles were given the courage they needed to leave their hiding place, re-enter their world, and preach the message of Jesus Christ. The Apostles baptized thousands that day, and those newly baptized created new communities of faith in which to share their new faith in Jesus. Check out Acts 2:41-42 to see what they did in these communities.

The Holy Spirit and the Catholic Church share the same mission. The Spirit works through the Church to make the mission of Jesus Christ known by all. The Catholic Church is often referred to as the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Based on the above information, what do you want to tell others about the Holy Spirit and Pentecost?
Handout 4

Titles of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is known by many titles, and these are described in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The various titles and descriptions help us understand the work of the Spirit in the Church and in the world.

- **Advocate.** We find this title in the Gospel of John. Check out these passages: 14:16, 15:26, 16:7. This title is translated from the Greek word *Paraclete*. Some Bible translations use “helper” or “comforter.” It means “someone who stands by your side.” In the legal system, an advocate is someone who takes your side and pleads your case. The Holy Spirit, as Advocate, takes our side, helps us when we find it difficult to defend our belief in Jesus, and supports us in living out our faith.

- **The promise of the Spirit.** Check out Galatians 3:14.

- **A spirit of adoption.** Check out Romans 1:15.

- **The Spirit of Christ.** Check out Romans 8:9.

- **The Spirit of the Lord.** Check out 2 Corinthians 3:17.

- **The Spirit of God.** Romans 8:14.

- **The Spirit of Glory.** 1 Peter 4:14

The early Christians clearly identified the work of God the Father and Jesus with the work of the Holy Spirit.

*Based on the above information, what do you want to tell others about the titles of the Holy Spirit?*
The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit helps us to live out our faith, and in the Sacrament of Confirmation, we receive special graces, or gifts, from the Holy Spirit to do just that.

There are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, and in the Bible the number 7 is significant. The number symbolizes fullness or completion. We find these gifts mentioned in a prophecy from the book of Isaiah about the promise of the Messiah. Check out Isaiah 11:2-3.

Here are the gifts and a brief description of each:

- **Wisdom.** With this gift, we can recognize God working in our life and in the world. A wise person sees that the wonders of nature, events of history, and the highs and lows of our life take on deeper meaning and purpose.

- **Understanding.** With this gift we come to know how we need to live as a disciple of Jesus. With understanding, we are not easily confused by the many conflicting messages we hear from our culture about the right way to live.

- **Right Judgment.** With this gift, we learn how to tell the difference between right and wrong. It gives us the ability to choose what is right. With right judgment, we avoid sin and live out Jesus’ values in our life.

- **Courage.** With this gift, we conquer fear and take risks in living as Jesus wants us to. We can stand up for what is right in God’s eyes, even if it means rejection, verbal abuse, physical harm, or even death.

- **Knowledge.** With this gift, we come to understand how God has revealed himself, especially in the person, words and life of Jesus. We continually learn more about the Scriptures and our Catholic Tradition.

- **Reverence.** With this gift we develop a deep respect for God and the Church. We recognize our total reliance on God and approach him with humility, trust, and love. It is sometimes referred to as piety.

- **Wonder and Awe.** With this gift, we come to know the glory and majesty of God. We come to know that God is perfection of knowledge, goodness, power, and love. It is sometimes referred to as fear of the Lord.

Through these gifts we become empowered to participate in the Jesus’ mission and help make God’s Kingdom a reality.

*Based on the above information, what do you want to tell others about the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?*

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Handout 6

Discussion Questions

_Copy and cut along the line. Print enough for all participants and leaders._

1. What role does the Holy Spirit have in your life?
2. Why do you need the Holy Spirit?
3. Who is the Holy Spirit?
4. What does the Holy Spirit do?
5. Do you pray to the Holy Spirit?
6. How can you act like the Holy Spirit?

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