

SESSION 13: BURN

TOPIC: The Holy Spirit in the Church

GOAL

The goal of this session is to introduce the teens to the person of the Holy Spirit and explore the role of the Spirit within the Church.

KEY CONCEPTS

The personhood of the Holy Spirit is difficult to understand, but is revealed to us in Scripture, tradition, and through the prophets.

The titles of the Holy Spirit give insight into His role in our lives and in the life of the Church.

Looking at the Sacraments of Initiation, we learn that the Church cannot be separated from the workings of the Holy Spirit.

KEY TERMS

Prayer: The elevation of the mind and heart to God in praise of His glory; a petition made to God for some desired good, or in thanksgiving for a good received, or in intercession for others before God.

Sacrament: An efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Trinity: The mystery of one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The revealed truth of the Holy Trinity is at the very root of the Church's living faith as expressed in the Creed.

SCRIPTURE

John 14:26

Luke 4:18-20

CATECHISM

253-254

737-741

ABOUT THIS SESSION

The Gather helps the teens become familiar with the symbols of the Holy Spirit. The Proclaim emphasizes the Holy Spirit as a person of the Holy Trinity and His role in the life of the Church. The Break uses questions from Pope Francis to process our personal relationship with the Spirit. The Send invites the teens to call for an awakening of the Holy Spirit.

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

"Burning in My Soul," Matt Maher (*All the People Said Amen*, Essential Records, 2013)

"Holy Spirit," Jesus Culture (*Live From New York*, Jesus Culture Music, 2012)

AS YOU GET STARTED

In background play songs about the Holy Spirit (e.g. those mentioned in the Media Suggestions)

GATHER

Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 min)

Gather the teens in the main meeting space. Welcome them to the session and begin in prayer.

PROCLAIM

"Burn" Teaching (30 min)

Introduction

If you are familiar with comic books or superheroes, you might remember this famous introduction:

"Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird!"

"It's a plane!"

"It's Superman!"

Superman was so fast, powerful, perplexing, and gravity-defying that people were unsure of what to make of him. They trusted that he would come at the right moment to save them from danger, even though they did not fully understand him. Was he more like a bird or a plane? What could they compare Superman to that would help them make sense of him?

Due to our limited and often misguided understanding of the Holy Spirit, it can be easy to compare the Spirit to a superhero — He comes to our aid, gives us power, is mysterious, and is even likened to a bird (like Superman). But in making these comparisons, we lose some of the recognition of the reality, authority, presence, and Godliness of the third person of the Holy Trinity. Comparisons can be helpful, but they do not capture the full picture.

CCC 687; Acts 1:8; Matthew 3:22; Romans 8:26

Before we continue, it is important to note that you are making an act of faith and practicing the virtue of humility in this very moment because the Holy Trinity will never be fully understood until we get to heaven and experience God ourselves. God's thoughts and ways are beyond our own, but He is revealed through the Holy Spirit so we can learn how to know, love, and serve Him in this life so as to be with Him in the next. It is OK not to completely "get it" right now, but that does not mean we should not ask questions and seek answers.

"My thoughts," says the Lord "are not like yours, and my ways are different from yours." — Isaiah 55:8

The Identity of the Holy Spirit

The question itself holds insight into the answer. The Holy Spirit is a "who" not a "what." He is not an "energy" or "force" coming from God, but a person who is God Himself and part of the Holy Trinity. We know that God is not three separate gods, but rather, one indivisible God of three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as professed in the Nicene Creed. Almost 300

years after the Council of Constantinople amended the Creed to include greater revelation of the Holy Spirit, the Council of Toledo XI convened and made clear that “the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is God, one and equal with the Father and the Son, of the same substance and also the same nature.”

CCC 245

The Bible also shows us the interactions of the Holy Trinity, notably at the baptism of Jesus, Jesus’ foretelling of the Holy Spirit, and St. Paul’s greeting to the people of Corinth.

2 Corinthians 13:14; John 15:26; Matthew 3:16-17

What is the role of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit has many titles and as we saw in the Gather activity, symbols attributed to Him are a glimpse of who He is and how He interacts with us and the Church. Some of His titles are: The Lord, the giver of life; Paraclete; and Spirit of Truth.

Consider projecting each of the titles as you discuss them and adding any other titles for the Holy Spirit that your teens would relate to.

Let us break each of them down.

The Lord, the Giver of Life

The Holy Spirit gives us life. In Genesis, God breathed His Spirit into Adam and he became a living being. In Ezekiel, the prophet called to the Spirit, or “breath,” to breathe life into the dry bones and they were brought back to life. The birth of the Catholic Church is celebrated on Pentecost, the day on which the Holy Spirit came upon the followers of Jesus.

Acts 2:1-12; Ezekiel 37; Genesis 2:7

The Paraclete

The word “paraclete” translates from Greek to “he who is called to one’s side.” Jesus promised that He would “pray the Father, and He will give you another counselor, to be with you forever.” When Jesus ascended into heaven, we were not left to go through life aimlessly. We have relied, and should rely on, the Holy Spirit, who speaks to us and for us as our helper and consoler.

CCC 692; John 14:16

Spirit of Truth

The bath of Baptism is both material (water) and spiritual (Spirit) and enlightens us to know God, understand our faith, and live our faith in an intentional way. What we know of God the Father and God the Son has been revealed to us by God the Holy Spirit because “knowledge of faith is possible only in the Holy Spirit... who comes to meet us and kindles faith in us.”

CCC 683, 687; John 16:13

The Mission of the Spirit and the Church

The roles of the Holy Spirit help us to better know our roles as members of the faithful. The great commission — to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” — is our mission and can only be

possible through the life-giving advocacy of the Holy Spirit, who speaks truth through us. Just like the prophets and apostles were emboldened by the Holy Spirit and courageously proclaimed a Savior and redeemer, our baptism into the Christian family requires us to bring more people to and through the waters so they too can know God and His bride, the Catholic Church. The Holy Spirit and the Church are uniquely united. The movement of the Spirit is found in the Church through Scripture, tradition, the Magisterium, sacramental liturgy, prayer, charisms and ministries, apostolic and missionary life, and the witness of the saints.

Let us focus on two of these: sacraments and prayer.

The active presence of the Holy Spirit can be found in each of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. Concentrating on the Sacraments of Initiation, we learn that the Church cannot be separated from the workings of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is the beginning of life in and with the Holy Spirit. We are free of sin, made co-heirs of the Kingdom with Christ, receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and are ready to receive and listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

CCC 1213, 1266

Confirmation is the necessary completion of the Sacrament of Baptism. In this sacrament, we are sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are increased in us, and are strengthened in our responsibilities to spread the Gospel.

CCC 1285; Acts 8:14-17

The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Catholic faith. It is where we come together as a Eucharistic assembly to be the Church. It is through the words of Jesus and the invocation, or “calling down,” of the Holy Spirit that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ.

CCC 1324, 1333; Luke 22:14-20

We need the sacraments to strengthen us in our daily walk with God, which is a relationship that is manifested through prayer. Prayer is our relationship with God, but for many of us, it is a daunting or boring chore. We often times impatiently and half-heartedly pray, asking for immediate answers and failing to recognize that prayer is not solely our response to God; rather, it comes from the Holy Spirit. Thankfully for us, the Holy Spirit is the “master of prayer” and in our weakness, advocates on our behalf and brings us to the source of life-giving water: Jesus.

CCC 2726, 741, 2652; Romans 8:26

The fullness of the Holy Spirit might be more than we can ever fathom or fully know, but that which is revealed should spring up in us gratitude and a desire to know, love, and serve God. We can do this in union with the Church by partaking in the sacraments, cultivating a strong prayer life, and sharing our faith, the Good News, with others.

BREAK

Small Group Discussion (25 min)

Divide the teens into their small groups. Read the following passage from Pope Francis and then use the questions to facilitate a discussion:

In his May 15, 2013 General Audience, Pope Francis said, “Let us try asking ourselves: am I open to the action of the Holy Spirit? Do I pray for him to give me illumination, to make me more sensitive to God’s things? This is a prayer we must pray every day: ‘Holy Spirit, make my heart open to the word of God, make my heart open to goodness, make my heart open to the beauty of God every day.’ I would like to ask everyone a question: how many of you pray every day to the Holy Spirit? There will not be many but we must fulfil Jesus’ wish and pray every day to the Holy Spirit that he open our heart to Jesus.”

- What symbol of the Holy Spirit do you relate to the most? Why?
- What is your relationship like with the Holy Spirit? How does it compare to your relationship with God the Father and God the Son? How is it different from those relationships?
- How can you strengthen your relationship with the Holy Spirit?
- How can you more fully participate in the sacraments?
- What are ways in which you can grow in your prayer life, specifically in regard to the Holy Spirit?

Litany of the Holy Spirit (10 min)

Give each teen a pen and a copy of the *Litany of the Holy Spirit* handout. Invite the teens to silently pray through the litany, circling the names or roles of the Holy Spirit they see as most prevalent in their lives. If time allows, have them share their reflections with their small group. Close the activity by praying the following prayer by Pope Francis:

Holy Spirit, make my heart open to the word of God, make my heart open to goodness, make my heart open to the beauty of God every day. Amen.

SEND: *Fire Fall Down (15 min)*

Allow the teens to remain in their small groups or spread out throughout the main meeting space. Use the following to introduce the prayer activity:

In your small groups, you prayed the prayer that Pope Francis gave us: “Holy Spirit, make my heart open to the word of God, make my heart open to goodness, make my heart open to the beauty of God every day.”

To be open to that which is true, good, and beautiful, we first need to be open to the Holy Spirit. It is not a difficult task, but it does require vulnerability, humility, and gratitude. During this time of prayer, we are going to acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit. A lot of us love music — we play instruments, sing, or just generally love music. In the Bible, we read how music helps us praise God. It is not about singing well, but about singing with your heart. I encourage you to sing, knowing the Spirit hears you and responds. You were also given the Litany of the Holy Spirit and were asked to circle the names or roles of the Spirit that you relate to. Throughout the prayer, call out to the Holy Spirit using one of the titles. You are joined in this prayer with your peers, but this prayer is between you and God, so do not be afraid.

Time of praise and worship using music on youtube. Close the session with a spontaneous prayer, asking for a greater outpouring of the Spirit throughout the week.

Handout: Litany of the Holy Spirit

Lord, have mercy on us. *Lord, have mercy on us.*

Christ, have mercy on us. *Christ, have mercy on us.*

Lord, have mercy on us. *Lord, have mercy on us.*

Father all-powerful, *have mercy on us.*

Jesus, eternal Son of the Father, redeemer of the world, *save us.*

Spirit of the Father and the Son, boundless life of both, *sanctify us.*

Holy Trinity, *hear us.*

Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, *enter our hearts.*

Holy Spirit, who is equal to the Father and the Son, *enter our hearts.*

Promise of God the Father, *have mercy on us.*

Ray of heavenly light, *have mercy on us.*

Author of all good, *have mercy on us.*

Source of heavenly water, *have mercy on us.*

Source of consuming fire, *have mercy on us.*

Spirit of love and truth, *have mercy on us.*

Spirit of wisdom and understanding, *have mercy on us.*

Spirit of counsel and fortitude, *have mercy on us.*

Spirit of knowledge and piety, *have mercy on us.*

Spirit of fear of the Lord, *have mercy on us.*

Spirit of grace and prayer, *have mercy on us.*

Spirit of peace and meekness, *have mercy on us.*

Spirit of modesty and innocence, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Spirit, the comforter, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Spirit, the sanctifier, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Spirit, who governs the Church, *have mercy on us.*

Gift of God, the most high, *have mercy on us.*

Spirit who fills the universe, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Spirit, *come and renew the face of the Earth.*

Holy Spirit, *shed your light in our souls.*

Holy Spirit, *engrave your law in our hearts.*

Holy Spirit, *in flame us with the fire of your love.*

Holy Spirit, *open to us the treasures of your graces.*

Holy Spirit, *teach us to pray well.*

Holy Spirit, *enlighten us with your heavenly inspirations.*

Holy Spirit, *lead us in the way of salvation.*

Holy Spirit, *grant us the only necessary knowledge.*

Holy Spirit, *inspire in us the practice of good.*

Holy Spirit, *grant us the merits of all virtues.*

Holy Spirit, *make us persevere in justice.*

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *send us your Holy Spirit.*

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *pour into our souls the gifts of the Holy Spirit.*

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *grant us the Spirit of wisdom and piety.*

Come, Holy Spirit! Fill the hearts of your faithful, *and enkindle in them the fire of your love.*

Let us pray: *Grant, O merciful Father, that your divine Spirit may enlighten, inflame, and purify us, that He may penetrate us with His heavenly dew and make us fruitful in good works, through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who with you, in the unity of the same Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

Adapted from aleteia.org/2017/04/27/want-to-learn-more-about-the-holy-spirit/.