

The Not-the-End



1

Before you begin, please read the introduction on the right to yourself.

2

With the help of your child, prepare the meeting space. Pull out your Bible, light some candles, and add any other decoration you'd like to make the space beautiful.

Then begin with a prayer.

The title of this series is *Spirit With Us*. If the stories you have shared with your young person do anything, they should show you that the Spirit is still active, still needed, still loving. Nothing is finished; all is still in process. We are continuing on our journey to God and to the Reign of God no matter what our age.

3

Getting started. Discuss together: Who is the best storyteller in your family or among friends? Why?

Have one family member read the text below out loud or take turns. Along the way, clarify anything your child might not understand.

What stories you have read in this book! You have read stories of belonging—about a treasurer who found great wealth and a young girl who found a way to live in two communities.

You have read stories of prayer—about how our earliest Christians celebrated together and how a modern woman wove her tradition into today’s world.

You have read stories of forgiveness—about a man whose hate changed to love when he was forgiven and another who used his love to overcome the evil of hating.

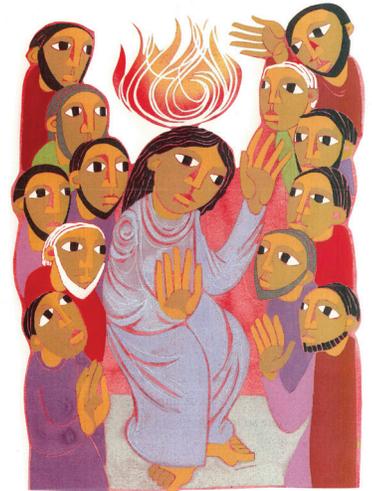
You have read stories of action—about service that started when individuals lived like Jesus and service that continues as the Spirit speaks to us today.

There is one story left. It does not begin with “A long time ago.” Nor does it begin with “Not so long ago.” It begins with, “Today...”

This is really the best story of all! The main character is a young person, about your age. This person is learning and growing in faith. This person is willing to ask questions.

You’d like this person. This is someone on a journey, someone God chose at birth to be special and important.

Through Baptism, God says, “You belong to me,” Through Confirmation, the Spirit says, “You will do great things.” Through Eucharist, Jesus says, “I am always with you.” God says wonderful things to this person!



As a young person's tale, this story is being written daily. There are incredible adventures yet to come. There may be some heartache as well. But this is someone who has a special promise, a covenant, from God.

Surely you know by now whose story this is. It's yours, of course, and it is the most important of all! Live your story, tell it to others and they will share theirs with you.

So, begin (not end) this book with, "Today..."



A Prayer for Your Story

Today

*the wind will rush in at me
and I will be on fire with God's love.*

Today

*the need to love will enable me
to belong in God's family.*

Today

*my heart will give out mercy and forgiveness,
and I will be the better for it.*

Today

*I will act with a spirit of wisdom,
of strength, of compassion,
and today I will not be too young.*

For today, today

is my time.

Today belongs to me,

(the Spirit sings this to me)

and I will give it to the world!

Amen.

This session will give you a chance to tell some of your story. Write, draw, doodle, whatever—but get some of your story down so you will remember!

You are the only one who can write these pages. May the grace of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit be with you!

1

Now discuss the reading with your child. Use the following or other questions:

1. Do you believe that your story is as important as anyone' else's who we have read about? Why or why not?
2. What was your favorite story in "Spirit With Us"? Why?

2

Get your child started on the activity on the next page, making sure they understand the instructions. Then continue to read below.

3

Just for you: We are sacraments, individually and in community, because we continue to show the Spirit of God in our actions and our lives.

While we learn much from our study of Scripture and our examination of the lives of other committed Christians, we must also reflect on our own lives, our own stories. Help your young person finish the blank pages in this book. Help your children see the value of their own stories of faith. Help them see the action of the Spirit, who is indeed with us, in their lives.

My Story

On the following pages, you will have the chance to write and draw a story of a way/some ways the Spirit has been at work in your life. You may choose to focus on people who have loved and supported you, helping you to know that you are cherished. It might be a story of a stranger or an acquaintance doing something unexpected to help you. It could be a story of some of the amazing gifts you've been given (material gifts like enough to eat, a home to live in, etc) or other gifts like a special talent you have or a gift in your personality or temperament that God uses to help others. On this page, design a cover for your story and give it a title as if it were bound as a book.



Your Story of the Spirit

1

Have your child start their activity on the next page, and then continue to step 2.

2

A story—or many stories—makes up the fabric of our lives. Remember the weaving activity at the beginning of this series? That was to remind you that your story is just as important as any other story in this book.

3

Take a few minutes now to think of your story and jot down answers to the questions below. You may wish to share your thoughts with your young person.

I see the Spirit of belonging in my life in...



I see the Spirit of prayer in my life in...

I see the Spirit of forgiveness in my life in...

I see the Spirit of action in my life in...

Use this space to write and draw a specific story of the Spirit at work in your life.

Seeing God in Your Life



1

The best way to help your young persons value their own stories is for you to share your story of faith with them.

Take time to reflect on where you have seen God and the Spirit act in your life.

Closing Ritual

2

Since this is your last session, close by sharing a meal or a special snack. As you eat, tell each other your “Not-the-End” stories. At the end of your time together, pray the doxology one more time.

Remember to pray for each other whenever you hear those words at Sunday Mass.

The Doxology

“Through Jesus, in Jesus, and with Jesus,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father,
forever and ever. Amen.”

