

The Spirit at Work



Parents & guardians, start here.
Read these numbered instructions
to yourself throughout the process.

1

Thank you for guiding your child through this process. Please be sure you have **read the Parent Introduction Page** so you will understand your role.

2

Before you begin, read the introduction on the right to yourself. It will help you understand what you will be exploring with your child in the following pages.

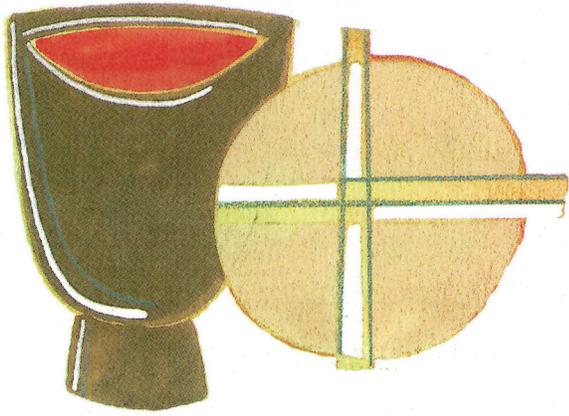
The Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit, may be a difficult concept for young persons. The Spirit was given to us by Jesus so we would continue to be aware that God loves us and has a Plan, the Reign of God, for how we should live. We are called to love God, to love ourselves, and to love others. As the doxology in our Sunday Mass reminds us, we live *through*, *with*, and *in* Jesus, and in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

3

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.

4

Getting started. Discuss together: Who are some of the people you love? How do you show your love? How do they show their love to you?



1

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

Whom do you love? Take just a few moments right now and think about the people you love. Why do you love them? Do you think about them and miss them when they go away? Are you happier when they are around?

We know whom God loves—*us*! God created us and our world to be beautiful and peaceful. When humans decided not to listen to God, then God reached out to us to make a covenant. The covenant, a special promise, claimed us as children of God forever. This is why we think of God as a parent, someone who gave us life and who takes care of us.

As part of the Plan of God, Jesus came to live with us. Jesus is both human and divine. God chose to understand and love us by becoming one of us. Jesus taught us how to be a part of the Reign of God. We are builders of the Reign of God when we work toward a better world here and now and toward our afterlife in heaven. Through Jesus' death and resurrection we were all saved. Jesus is the reason we think of God as Savior, someone who shows us that God loves us and helps us to love one another.

Jesus lived like any other human and died as all humans must. But Jesus also rose again. That was a very special message to us. Jesus was telling us we will all live again with God, even after death! Jesus didn't stay here physically with us, because now it is our turn to live as God's children. Jesus ascended into heaven and there someday we will meet him face-to-face. But he didn't leave us alone!

Remember when you were thinking about people you love? There's something about love that we can't explain very easily, isn't there? Love is something we experience, something we feel, but words don't fully capture what it is.

Jesus left us his love, God's love. God's love is still with us. God still takes care of us, guides us, strengthens us, forgives us and helps us be the best people we can be. This presence of God is what we mean when we think about God as the Holy Spirit.

These three unique experiences of God show us three ways God is with us. We call these three presences the three Persons of God: God the Father (Creator, Yahweh), God the Son (Savior, Jesus), God the Holy Spirit (Sanctifier, Guide). These three experiences of God are why we call God the Trinity, that is, three persons in one God.

When we talk about how the Spirit was left by Jesus to be with us, what does that mean? How does the Spirit help us today?

The Spirit helps us to know God as a parent, as a friend, as a guide. With the Spirit we have sacraments. The sacraments are special times when God is with us in a special way and we are with God. These times are moments of grace. Grace is our friendship with God. It is how God cares for us.



Jesus himself is a sacrament. Jesus is “Emmanuel,” which means “God with us.” Jesus was God in a form people could touch, listen to, and love as one of us.

Jesus gives us another gift, the Church. The Church is a gathering of people who are trying to continue living as Jesus lived. We celebrate and serve as Jesus taught us. We help build the world according to God’s Plan; a world where people love God and one another.

The Church has seven unique ways to remember that God is with us and we are with God. These are called the seven sacraments. They are Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony (for married couples) and Holy Orders (for priests and deacons). In this book we will look at four of these sacraments through stories: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist and Reconciliation.

The Church helps us to understand and love God. The Spirit has a lot to do with how the Church started. It all began on a day we call Pentecost.

God is in your life, even when you aren’t aware of God. When you look at the world with an open heart as well as with open eyes, it’s easier to find God. Where can you see grace (God’s love) in your life right now?

The Spirit is with us now, today! As you read these stories, say a simple prayer to the Holy Spirit. Ask that the Spirit of God be with you and help you be the best person you can become. Then, just listen. The Spirit will be there in your heart!

2

Ask your child to retell the reading to you in their own words.

3

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

1. What do we mean when we talk about the Plan or Reign of God?
2. Who are the three Persons in the Holy Trinity? How do we see the actions of these three Persons today?

1

Have your child start their activity on the next page.
(The matching flames are numbers two and seven.)
Then continue to read below.

2

Just for you: The Reign of God happens whenever we live with love for God.

There are three persons—Father, Son and Spirit—in our one God. This is the teaching we call the Holy Trinity. Just as we live in relationships, so God lives in relationship both within God and with us. This is a central belief and a deep mystery, something we know through God’s revelation but do not completely understand. God creates us, redeems us and saves us. These three actions show us God’s love and grace.

Familiar Flames

Fire can remind us of the Holy Spirit. After Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to disciples on the road to Emmaus, they said that their hearts were “burning within us.” The Holy Spirit continues to give us passion and power to do what God calls us to do.

Below, find and circle the two flames that are exactly the same.



Spirit Stories

1

Together, read through the titles of the stories we will be reading during these sessions. What do you think these titles say about how the Spirit is with us?

The Spirit at Work



◀ Pentecost:
The Day the Spirit Came

Spirit of Belonging



◀ Philip and the Ethiopian

The Maiden Who Finally Came Home ▶



Spirit of Prayer



◀ The Church That Began at Home

The Woman who Laughed with God ▶



Spirit of Forgiveness



◀ The Man Who Made Trouble

The Soldier Who Had No Enemies ▶



Spirit of Action



◀ A Letter of Good News

The Bishop for the Poor ▶



The Not-the-End



◀ The Spirit Is With You

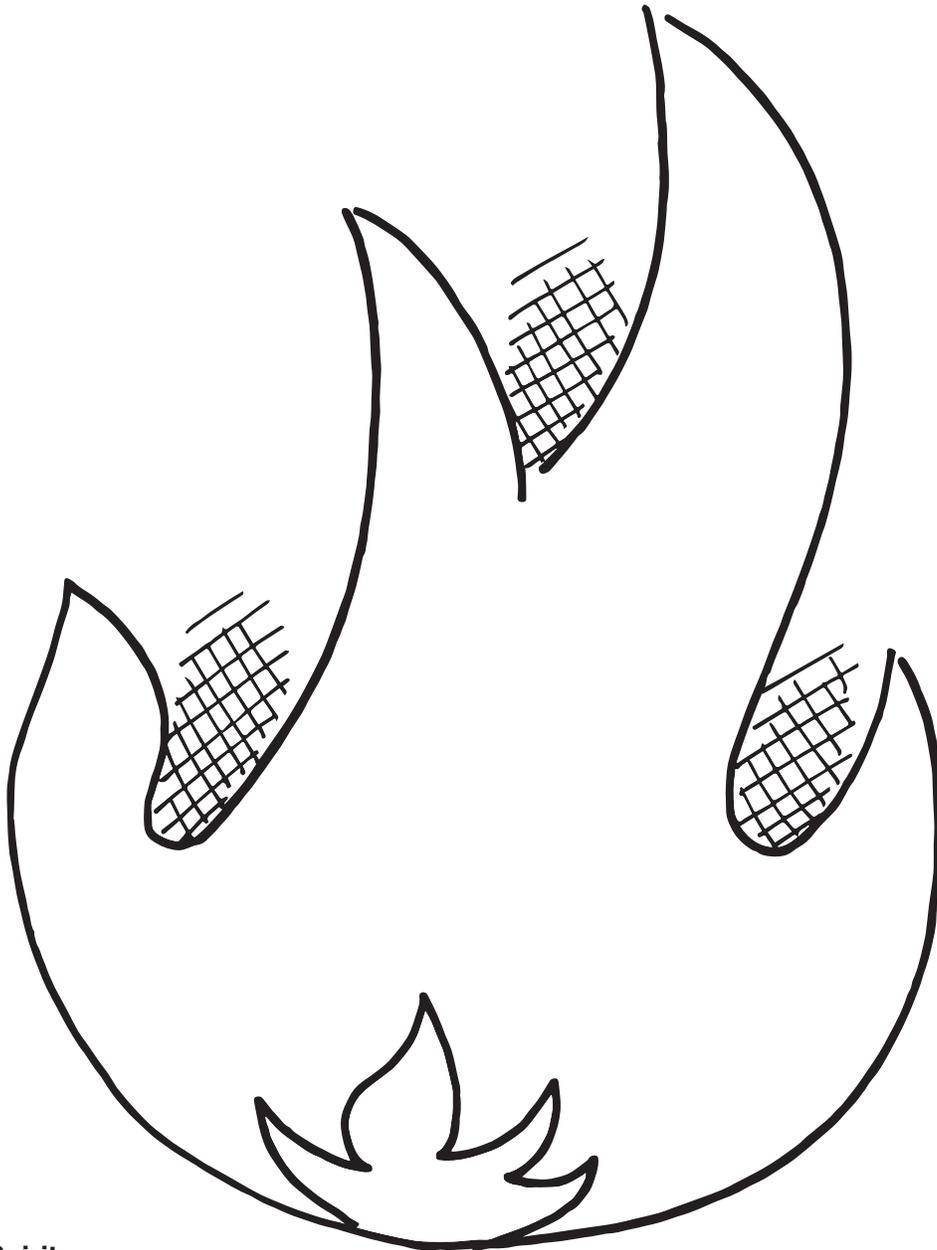
2

Now move on to the next page and complete the activities together.

My Story of God's Spirit

Think about what in your life brought you to this day and this time. Are there times when God was obviously present to you through community? With forgiveness and action? In prayer? When are the times when you are aware of the Spirit at work?

Adults: Write a word or a phrase inside the flame reminding you of one of the times when you knew the Holy Spirit was present. Ask your young person to do the same in the space around the flame.



Petitions to the Spirit

Finish the sentences below together.

Spirit of God, we know you work through us when we _____.

Spirit of God, we know you are present with us when we _____.

Spirit of God, we know you are alive in our world when we _____.

Draw God

1

Go through the pictures in a children's Bible, Bible storybooks, or other such books to find images of Jesus and God. Ask your young person to draw God however he or she best imagines God to be. These drawings may be symbolic rather than portraits of God.



Closing Ritual

2

Pray together the petitions you wrote for the Spirit of God on pg. 7. Finish by praying together the doxology.

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.”

