

## How does the Holy Spirit help us?

***Objectives***

By the end of this lesson, the students should be able to

- relate the Scripture about the way the Apostles received the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- explain that the Holy Spirit gave the Apostles the strength to preach the Good News.
- state that the Holy Spirit gives us strength to respond to and share the Good News.

***For the Catechist***

The Eastern Churches continually emphasize the dependence of believers on the Holy Spirit. Every service begins with the invocation of the Spirit's blessing, the prayer "Heavenly King." The Holy Gifts are sanctified with an invocation of the Holy Spirit, as is the baptismal water. The consecration and blessing of all things is accomplished "by the grace of the All-holy Spirit."

Hymns in honor of the Holy Spirit are common in the Byzantine tradition. The words taken from the vespers of Pentecost explain the theology of the Holy Spirit in the Eastern Church: "The Holy Spirit provides every gift: He is the One who inspires prophecy and perfects the priesthood; It is He who grants wisdom to the illiterate and turns simple fishermen into wise theologians; through Him divine order comes into the organization of the Church."

Throughout this Grade 5 book, the children have been learning about the many ministries in the Church and about the many ways we witness to our faith in Jesus Christ. This lesson helps the children realize that the Holy Spirit makes all of this possible. The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to believe, to pray, and to go forth and witness to Christ. Children at this age know they need help in many areas, and often they are willing to ask for it and help others. This lesson helps them realize that all of us believers are continually in need of the Holy Spirit's power, presence, and assistance. Teach them through example and by instruction that all of us need to call upon the Lord—to call the Holy Spirit to "come and dwell within us."

***Materials Needed***

**Introduction:** Pieces of paper (2-inch squares), pencils or pens.

**The Message:** The New Testament, pens, markers

**Application:** Note cards, paper, pen or pencils

***Icons and Pictures***

*Come Bless the Lord:* Ascension, Pentecost  
Saints Peter and Paul

*Teaching Pics:* Ascension, Pentecost

# Connections

## 1. Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

Have the students gather before the icon and stand silently for a few seconds. Then make the sign of the cross. Pray “Heavenly King.”

## 2. Review (4 minutes)

Lessons in this unit are not taught consecutively; therefore, review the last lesson taught.

## 3. Introduction (4 minutes)

*Materials:* Pieces of paper (2" squares), pencils or pens

Divide into groups of two. Each person has one minute to tell the other person about a talent or skill of which they are proud. (Altar server, basketball player, a good babysitter) At the end of the sharing, the listener has to write on a square piece of paper the talent or skill described. On the back, print in small letters the name of the person described. All the papers are placed in a box.

The catechist reads the talent to the class and the students guess the person being described.

Connect this idea to the concept that all of us have talents, but we only recognize talents when they are put into action or when we tell a story that shows the talent. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can discover our talent and learn to use it.

**Alternate:** Ask the students to write a story in which they show their talent in action. Ask for volunteers to read their stories aloud in class.

## Notes for the lesson:

(Use this space to write helpful hints to use each year)

# The Message

## 4. The Promise of the Holy Spirit

(8 minutes)

a) Read the paragraphs. Before the Scripture is read, ask for three volunteers for the reading: the narrator, the Apostles, and Jesus.

b) After the reading, remain silent for a short time to think about the Scripture. Ask: *What question would you want to ask the Apostles if you could?*

c) Read aloud the verses referenced and have the students write the words to complete the passage.

### Supplementary Activity:

Ask for volunteers to act out the Scripture reading.

### Supplementary Activity:

Write the question for this lesson on the board or on a poster board: *How does the Holy Spirit help us?* Write the following answers when they are read in the text:

1. Gives us strength.
2. Gives us courage.
3. Gives us the Church.
4. Gives us the saints.

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## Pentecost

How does the Holy Spirit help us?



### The Promise of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit was given to the Church at Pentecost. He remains with the Church to this day, and He will remain with it forever as Jesus promised. The Holy Spirit gives Christians the strength to live for God. He gives us special gifts and talents to be used for the service of God. The Holy Spirit is always working in the Church to give us life.

The Apostles knew that the Holy Spirit was to be with them because they believed what Jesus told them before He ascended to the Father.

The story about the last time Jesus was with the Apostles before His ascension can be found in Acts 1:3-11. After you finish the reading, complete the following verses:

"... for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized \_\_\_\_\_  
with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5).

"But you will receive \_\_\_\_\_  
power when  
the Holy Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ comes upon you  
(Acts 1:8).

### Background Reading:

(Pentecost Icon)

"[In the Pentecost icon] we see the Apostles are gathered together in a deep inner unity in stark contrast to sin's division and confusion that reigned throughout all humanity. Pentecost is a reversal of the confusion of tongues deriving from the tower of Babel. There sin divided and scattered the people. Now humanity is united by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Each apostle retains his uniqueness and diversity (the tongues of fire separate to alight on each unique person); yet he is bound to the others in a single new body, the Church. Once again, God reaches out to each apostle as an individual, but never in an isolated manner. Only when they gathered together in a single room, did they receive the Holy Spirit" (LLII 39).

## 5. Pentecost (6 minutes)

a) Read the first four paragraphs, including Acts 2:3-4. [In the Grade 4 book, the students learned about the Old and New Covenant. The following questions are review:]

- *What does covenant mean?* (An agreement)
- *With whom is the agreement in the Old Covenant?* (God and the Israelites)
- *With whom is the agreement in the New Covenant?* (God and all people)
- *What is the agreement?* (We promise to become a baptized member of the Church and live as Jesus taught. In return, we will be granted eternal life with God.)

b) Complete the reading.

## Background Reading

(Our Goal)

"The fundamental point of faith is not to 'become a better person.' If that were so, our faith would be just one more ethical system, or one more approach to 'personal development.' And so no serious book on the spiritual life is intended to be a 'how to' manual which one can simply grab, run off and begin construction. It is for this reason that the great Russian saint, Seraphim of Sarov, gave this warning to a disciple: ' . . . The true end of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Spirit of God. . . of the grace of the Holy Spirit.'

"This is the goal of the Christian life that we have begun. . . we cannot 'jump start' the activity of God; we cooperate with His activity and respond to His invitations and initiatives through synergy. Anything it is within our power to do may make us good servants. It may move us forward. But nothing we can do will enable us to live in that stillness that is God's Life, God's Love. Nothing we can do will make us His children.

"But we have already been adopted by God in baptism: He is incorporating us eternally into the joy of His inner life, which is deification (theosis), achieved through the power of the Holy Spirit (LLIII 95).

## 6. The Holy Spirit, Our Strength

(5 minutes)

a) Have the students work together in groups of two: one reads the first paragraph and the other one the second. Then they explain what they read to the other person.

b) Ask the students to remain silent as they thank the Holy Spirit for breathing life into them at their Chrismation.

## 7. The Early Church

(5 minutes)

a) Read the first paragraph aloud. Ask: *Have all of us received the gift of the Holy Spirit? When?* (On the day we were baptized.)

**Pentecost**  
The Apostles waited for the gift of the Holy Spirit. They listened to Jesus who said, "Stay in the city [Jerusalem] until you are clothed with power from on high" (John 24:49).  
Can you imagine their surprise one day when all of them were together and "suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were" (Acts 2:2). Continue reading Acts 2:3-4.  
This is not the first time in the Bible that fire is used to tell us that God is present. In the Book of Exodus in the Old Testament, we read "Mount Sinai was all wrapped in smoke, for the Lord came down upon it in fire" (Exodus 19:18). Then we read that Moses received the Ten Commandments and God's Law for the Israelites as a sign of the Old Covenant.  
In this story of Pentecost, we read about God the Holy Spirit coming down in "tongues of fire." This time the fire is given to all the Apostles, and they gain courage to go out to preach about Jesus Christ, the New Covenant. This time the message is for all people who "speak in different tongues" (Acts 2:4).  
This event marks the beginning of the Church. The Holy Spirit gave the Apostles the strength they needed to do as Jesus told them, "Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). The people they baptized became members of the Church and built up the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the One who continues to give life to Christ's Body, the Church.

**The Holy Spirit, Our Strength**  
We are expected to accept the Holy Spirit's strength and power in the same way the Apostles did. When we receive the Mystery of Chrismation, we receive the Holy Spirit who can give us courage to follow Christ in everything that we do. Just as the Apostles cooperated with the Holy Spirit, we are to do the same. One way we cooperate is by working at what God calls us to do. We can learn what God wants us to do through prayer and fasting.  
As Christians cooperate with the Holy Spirit, they grow closer to God. When the members of the Church allow the Holy Spirit to guide and enliven them, the whole Church grows in strength. That is the power of the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life. He breathes God's life into us, the members of the Church. He guides us to share this life with others, just as Christ told the Apostles.

**The Early Church**  
We look to the members of the early Church to learn how we can share the Good News. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read how Peter began preaching about Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit gave him the courage to tell everyone "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).  
As the Church continued to grow, the Apostles needed assistants to help with the ministry. We read in Acts that the people who were chosen to help had to be presented "to the apostles who prayed and laid hands

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## 7. The Early Church...

(continued)

b) Ask a student to read the next paragraph aloud. As he or she reads, you walk around the room and place your hand on each student's head—make sure you keep the classroom door open.

c) Tell the students to remain silent as they think about the number of generations that have been part of the "laying on of hands." Ask: *What do you think that says about our Church?* (It has been given to us by Jesus.)

d) Complete the reading.

## 8. Let us remember that...

(8 minutes)

Ask the students to divide into groups of three. One person from each group learns one of the words and explains it to the others in the group.

### Supplemental Activity

Have the students write note cards for the words and the explanations. Use these cards for review

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Go to the Saints Peter and Paul icon in Unit Five of their book. Ask the students to read the description

on them" (Acts 6:6). Since the time of the Apostles, the "laying on of the hands" has been done for anyone chosen to serve the Church. Today, during the ordination of a priest or deacon, the bishop lays his hands on the ordained man just as has been done from generation to generation.

In June our Church asks us to honor the Apostles who, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, began the Church. On June 29 we celebrate the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. Through their speeches and their written words, both saints helped people become followers of Jesus Christ. On June 30 our Church recognizes all twelve Apostles. We are forever grateful to them for cooperating with the Holy Spirit and establishing the Church.

**Let us remember that . . .**

The Ascension of Christ is remembered each year on the sixth Thursday after Pascha. On this fortieth day after Pascha, Ascension Thursday, Christ returned to His rightful place at the right hand of the Father. For the first time since the beginning of the world, an earthly body, the human body of Jesus, was in glory. Christ's Ascension is a reminder to us that at the end of time, the bodies of all those faithful to Christ will themselves rise to be in glory with Him.

Pentecost is the feast day on which we commemorate the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. Pentecost, meaning fifty days, is held on a Sunday, fifty days after Pascha. Many churches are decorated with green tree branches or garlands of green on this day as a sign that the Holy Spirit is the One who gives life to the Church.

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Holy Trinity. In the time of the Old Testament He guided the biblical writers, inspiring them to write the Scriptures. He thus prepared the way for Christ's coming into the world. The Holy Spirit is with the Church to help and guide it in all things. The Holy Spirit keeps the Church from straying from Christ's Way and gives it life, especially through the Mysteries.

The Holy Spirit comes upon each person through Chrismation and helps the person live the Christian life. The Holy Spirit gives many different gifts that help the believer draw closer to God. When other people see the Spirit's gifts working, they are encouraged. In this way the Holy Spirit strengthens and builds up the whole Church.



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## Background Reading:

(Our Transformation)

"The work of Christ, and therefore of these mysteries, is to transform us. While many people yearn for a transfigured world, it is generally on the level of externals like the eradication of poverty. The work of Christ in us is to produce an inner transformation; some but not all of its effect may be externally visible. Some are in the realm of the kingdom of God to be manifested in God's own time. Christ's mystical presence in us through the holy mysteries is 'the hope of glory' (Col 1:26), for which the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church is but a pledge or guarantor of something more to come, our full and lasting transformation is in the kingdom of God. Then the 'inexhaustible delights' (Prayer at Consuming the Gifts, Liturgy of St. Basil) of which we have partaken here—the holy Mysteries—will no longer be merely types, but the fullness of eternal life" (ID 152).

**9. Action Plan** (8 minutes)

a) Before the students begin this page, share one of your stories about a choice you made with the help of the Holy Spirit. (Your decision to teach religious instruction classes, a decision about a job or a friend)

b) Ask them to read the instructions and brainstorm about ideas. Tell them to make a list of choices before they begin the writing about one.

c) Before the students write the prayer, have them share some of their stories.

Write the prayers on construction paper and place around the room.

**10. Summary** (10 minutes)

*Materials:* Paper, pens or pencils, and note cards with the following phrases—one phrase or word on each card:

- Holy Spirit*
- Jesus goes*
- Fire*
- Jerusalem*
- Apostles teach*
- Strength*
- Apostles waited*
- Many tongues*  
*(languages)*

Give one of the cards to groups of three or to individual students. They must get together and arrange the cards in order. Then the groups or the individuals write a story using all the words. Read the stories aloud to the class.

**11. Closing Prayer** (2 minutes)

Sing: "Heavenly King."

Action Plan

**Pentecost**

Think about a time you were brave about a choice that you knew Jesus wanted you to make. On the following lines explain what happened and tell how the Holy Spirit helped you make the decision.

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Write a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to help you follow the teaching of the Church always—even if someone might question you or make fun of you. Ask the Holy Spirit for the strength to live according to God's way so that your example will make other people want to join the Church.

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