



LESSON 1
PREPARATION NOTES

The Holy Spirit

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN BRIEF:

- The Person of the Holy Spirit and his roles.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- In this lesson, we want to unveil the beauty of the “forgotten” third Person of the Trinity.
- Catholics receive the Holy Spirit at Baptism and Confirmation.

“ The anointing with sacred chrism, perfumed oil consecrated by the bishop, signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized, who has become a Christian, that is, one “anointed” by the Holy Spirit, incorporated into Christ who is anointed priest, prophet, and king. ”

CCC 1241

“ Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds. ”

CCC 1316

- The chocolate milk analogy illustrates why we need to continually give the Holy Spirit permission to be active in our lives. There will be a difference in our lives when he is allowed to act (this is explored in Lessons 4 and 6). There are limitations to this analogy that should be clarified. It could make the Sacrament of Baptism seem inadequate (it needs to be stirred up). But Baptism is not inadequate for our salvation. We can avoid this potential misunderstanding by stating more explicitly that we often neglect the gift of the Holy Spirit received in Baptism, and therefore that gift does not permeate our lives. We need to open ourselves to permeation by the gift that we have already received.
- We then look at the Person of the Holy Spirit; how he is described in the Word of God and his particular role.
- This lesson lays the foundation for participants to establish a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit.

RECOMMENDED READING:

- Background for this lesson (and the entire study) is chiefly found in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 683-701 and 731-741. It is very important for you to read it in preparation for the lesson. To find other related passages, consult the CCC index under *Holy Spirit*.



LESSON 1

The Holy Spirit

LEADERS: Take 10-15 minutes so your group can get to know each other before diving into the material.



Introduction

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As Catholics, we are filled and sealed with the Holy Spirit at Baptism and Confirmation. This is a tremendous gift: the Third Person of the Trinity, alive within us. Despite his presence, however, we may not have really noticed that the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in our souls! How can we get to know the Holy Spirit and experience him?

The Chocolate Milk Analogy

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Suppose we consider all human beings as glasses of milk, and the Holy Spirit as chocolate syrup. Let's say that Christian glasses of milk receive a squirt of chocolate syrup when they are baptized.



LEADERS: All analogies have their limitations. To be clear, the Holy Spirit is not a substance that gets poured into us. He is a divine Person!

1 How does the chocolate milk analogy relate to the spiritual life?

ANSWER: If the chocolate syrup is not stirred, it will settle at the bottom of the glass and the milk will not taste chocolate. Similarly, if the Holy Spirit is not stirred up in us, we will not take on his flavour—it will not be evident in our lives that we have received this tremendous gift. We will become ineffective Christians if we do not continue to let the Holy Spirit fill us.

LEADERS: Ask, “How do we *stir our milk*?”

ANSWER: We stir our milk by letting the Holy Spirit act within us. Or, more correctly, God stirs the milk when we let him. The whole point of this “stirring” action is for the Holy Spirit to more fully permeate every aspect of our existence. If this has not happened, it is not because the Holy Spirit needs stirring—the Holy Spirit always wants to lead us to God, and is willing to take any chance he can get. He is active when we let him. It is we who have fallen into inaction, into torpor, into lethargy.

We can open ourselves to the action of the Spirit in many ways, especially through frequenting the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, and by asking the Holy Spirit to act in us (empowering and helping us in the Christian life).

Our situation could be compared to someone who has a high-end computer equipped with all the latest technology, but only uses it to type out an occasional letter. What a waste! There is so much more that could be experienced, accomplished and accessed with this computer.

The same is true for us in encountering the Holy Spirit. There is so much more to him than we realize. The purpose of *Source* is to encounter the Person of the Holy Spirit so that we can experience his joy, love, power, help and freedom in our lives. In today’s lesson we begin by looking at who he is and what he does.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

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LEADERS: This lesson is a review of what is taught in Confirmation preparation classes.



The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity who proceeds from the intimate and infinite love of the Father and the Son. In fact, the Church teaches that the Holy Spirit *is* the love of the Father and the Son.

“ 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.

The Nicene Creed

“ Not only is He the direct witness of their mutual love from which creation derives, but he himself is this love. He himself, as love, is the eternal uncreated gift.

Dominum et Vivificantem, 34

“ God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Romans 5:5

It may seem that the Bible doesn’t often speak of the Holy Spirit. His most dramatic appearance seems to occur only at Pentecost, after the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ. However, this is not his first manifestation. He is described repeatedly in the Old Testament through the use of images and symbols. These symbols can help us better understand who the Holy Spirit is.

2 What biblical images of the Holy Spirit are familiar to you?

ANSWER: These answers are summarized from *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (694-701). Be sure to read the entire section as you prepare for this lesson. The references indicate where these images can be found in Scripture.

- water (John 7:38)
- anointing (Luke 4:18-19)
- fire (Acts 2:3-4)
- dove (Matthew 3:16)
- seal (Ephesians 1:13-14)
- hand (Acts 8:17-19)
- finger (Exodus 31:18)
- cloud and light (Exodus 40:34-38)

Another particularly powerful image is a river. St. Ambrose elaborates on this image, found in Ezekiel 47:1-12. The river flowed out from under the temple and grew deeper and deeper to bring flourishing growth to its banks. The Holy Spirit accomplishes similar growth in our souls.

The Hebrew word for Spirit is *ruah*, which means wind, breath or air. This is probably the strongest image used to describe the Holy Spirit. And the word spirit comes from the Latin *spiritus*, which also means breath. The Holy Spirit is the breath of the Father. When God created Adam and Eve, he breathed into them and gave them life. Breathing indicates life. John 6:63 tells us that “It is the spirit that gives life.” The Spirit breathes life into the sacraments, Scripture, Church teachings, and into our very selves!

2 Timothy 3:16 says that all Scripture is inspired by God. *Inspired* literally means *breathed into*, so you could say God breathed into the Scripture.

- | **LEADERS:** Some participants may be confused about the different works of the Persons of the Trinity. *Who is doing what? Is God not doing everything? How can one be doing something without the others?* The following explanation helps address these questions.



Although all three Persons of the Trinity accomplish all that is done by the divine nature together, certain works are more appropriately attributed to specifically the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit. For example, the work of creation is attributed to the Father, salvation to the Son, and sanctification to the Holy Spirit, even though the same Triune God is active in all of these.

3 The Holy Spirit's role can seem more obscure. What do you know about the actions of the Holy Spirit?

- | **LEADERS:** This is meant to be a discussion for participants to share their understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in their lives.
- | Listen carefully to their answers for insight into their perspectives.

To begin learning about the specific actions of the Holy Spirit, we will look at Scriptures that illustrate three major roles the Holy Spirit plays—helping us to *know*, *grow* and *show*.

Know: The Holy Spirit helps us believe.

Faith is not just an intellectual decision to believe in God, nor is it an emotional response to God. Faith is a gift God offers to everybody through the Holy Spirit. God is not a distant force hiding in heaven, waiting for us to find him. God has revealed himself to the world, and he actively seeks to help us believe and to enter into a relationship with him. One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to point us towards God and strengthen us so we can believe.

4 Read 1 Corinthians 12:3 and 1 Corinthians 2:9-10. How does the Holy Spirit help us believe?

1 CORINTHIANS 12:3

Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9-10

But, as it is written, “what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

A | **ANSWER:** Without the Holy Spirit, we would not be able to put Jesus at the centre of our lives and to declare our belief in him as our Lord and Saviour. God reveals his salvation to us through the Holy Spirit. The great things God has prepared for us (salvation, heaven) are greater than anything we could imagine, and he prepares our hearts and minds to desire, receive and accept these truths through the Holy Spirit.

5 Read Romans 8:26. What are some ways the Holy Spirit helps us pray?

ROMANS 8:26

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.

ANSWER: Whether we are just beginning our prayer life or have been praying for a long time, there is always room to grow in “praying as we ought.” The Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray so that we can be ready to receive Jesus into our lives. When we are just beginning to pray, the Holy Spirit opens our hearts to receive Jesus and start a relationship with him. As we progress in Christian maturity, the Holy Spirit continues to teach us how to pray with greater maturity. Every time we begin to pray, it is the Holy Spirit who draws us to prayer. We can call upon the Holy Spirit to assist us in prayer at any time. While there are many ways one could call on the Holy Spirit, the simplest and most direct is to simply pray, “Come, Holy Spirit.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church calls the Holy Spirit the “interior Teacher of Christian prayer” (CCC 2681).

6 Read John 14:26 and John 16:13. How does the Holy Spirit help us to understand Jesus?

JOHN 14:26

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.

JOHN 16:13

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

A | **ANSWER:** The Holy Spirit teaches the truth to us. His revelation of truth is Trinitarian: the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father, in the name of Jesus, to reveal everything the Father and the Son wish to reveal to us.

Grow: The Holy Spirit helps us grow in holiness.

Another important role the Holy Spirit plays in our lives is to help us grow in holiness. We are called to know, love and serve God with all our mind, all our heart, and all our strength and to love others as Jesus has loved us. But like faith, holiness is not a goal we can accomplish on our own; we have been given the Holy Spirit as a helper. The Holy Spirit gives us the strength to live holy lives; our job is to cooperate with the gift of the Holy Spirit every day. As we grow in our relationship with God, we become more like him. The Holy Spirit always points us in the right direction so that our decisions and habits increasingly resemble God's holiness.

7 There are endless ways the Holy Spirit helps us grow in holiness. What are some ways with which you're familiar?

L **LEADERS:** This is a brainstorming opportunity to catch any other thoughts participants might have on how the Holy Spirit helps us grow in holiness. A major focus throughout the rest of the lessons in *Source* is how the Holy Spirit helps us grow in holiness.

ANSWER: Here are some non-exhaustive examples:

- The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Knowledge, Strength (also called Fortitude), Piety (also called Reverence), Wonder and Awe (also called Holy Fear of God). This will be discussed further in Lesson 6.
- We learn to follow God's commandments and the Church's teachings.
- A** • We grow in love for our neighbour and our desire to act motivated by love.
- We succeed in overcoming areas of habitual sin (vice) and develop good, holy habits (virtue).
- Like Mary, the Holy Spirit will lead us to follow God's will for our lives when we give him permission, like her "yes" to the Angel Gabriel's message at the Annunciation. Mary's docility will be further discussed in Lesson 5.

8 Read John 14:15-17, Romans 5:5. How does the Holy Spirit help us build our relationship with God?

JOHN 14:15-17

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

ROMANS 5:5

And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

ANSWER:

- The Holy Spirit helps us keep God's commandments. The commandments are designed to show us how we can become holy. They are not meant to impose upon us, but to model what will bring us to true happiness and holiness.
- The Advocate: a title of the Holy Spirit describing how he acts on our behalf to teach us and lead us. This will be discussed further in Lesson 3.
- The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive: the Holy Spirit points us towards God's truth. Our world, however, often prefers to find its own definition of truth apart from God's, in part because the world does not know God.
- The Holy Spirit pours God's love into our hearts.

9 Read Galatians 5:22-23, Romans 14:17, 2 Timothy 1:6-7. What are some of the gifts the Holy Spirit gives us to help us grow in holiness?

GALATIANS 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

ROMANS 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

2 TIMOTHY 1:6-7

For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

ANSWER:

- **Galatians 5:** The fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23): love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control. This will be discussed further in Lesson 6.
- **Romans 14:** Righteousness: moral correctness, connected to the virtue of justice. It also means being justified before God.
- **2 Timothy:**
 - **Power:** The Holy Spirit is more than just God's presence with us. He gives us supernatural strength to believe in God and to make good moral decisions. He is active in our lives every day, helping us to move towards holiness and a stronger relationship with God.

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- **Self-discipline:** Growing in holiness is all about replacing bad habits (vice) with good habits (virtues). Growing in virtue is like building muscle; it takes daily commitment and self-discipline to slowly transform our bad habits into good ones. The Holy Spirit gives us an extra boost to help us grow in self-discipline.
- **“For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice”:** Sometimes growing in holiness can be hard, but the Holy Spirit helps us to make courageous choices to follow God even when it seems difficult.

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LEADERS: The “laying on of hands” is a traditional way of praying for the Holy Spirit to be poured into a person’s heart. For instance, at Confirmation the bishop or priest places his hands on the forehead of each confirmand and prays, “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.” The laying on of hands can also be used in more informal prayer as a way of calling on the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

Show: The Holy Spirit sends us on mission to witness to God’s love and to proclaim his salvation to others.

10 Read Acts 1:4-5,8. How were the disciples (and how are each of us) called to participate in the Holy Spirit’s mission to unite all people to the Father and the Son? Why do you think Jesus told the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit?

ACTS 1:4-5,8

While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

ANSWER: Like the first disciples, we are all called to be witnesses to our faith throughout the whole world.

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The disciples needed to be filled with supernatural power. On their own, they would never have been able to carry out the mission. We have already seen how the disciples fled in fear at the passion of Jesus. Without the supernatural power and inner transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit, they would not have had the courage to face the crowds, the authorities, the persecution, and the martyrdom to come.

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LEADERS: Have participants glance at Acts 2. Ask if they are familiar with the story of Pentecost. The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost marks the beginning of the Church. The call to mission and evangelization is the focus of the *Commission* faith study.

The Holy Spirit makes us children of God. He is God's love poured out into the world. In heaven, we will live in perfect communion with God forever and will experience his love and presence more than we can ever imagine on Earth. God is not content to make us wait to enjoy a first taste of heaven; the Holy Spirit is God's gift to us, and our encounters with the Holy Spirit give us a small sampling of all that awaits us in Heaven.

More About the Holy Spirit



We have seen that the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus, helps us pray, enlightens our minds to understand spiritual truths, and sends us out to be witnesses of the Gospel. Some other important roles of the Holy Spirit include:

- **Inspiring the authors of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16).**

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

- **Guiding the Tradition of the Church (teachings passed on from one generation to the next) (1 Thessalonians 2:13).**

We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers.

- **Assisting the leadership and discernment of the pope and the bishops (also called the Magisterium—the teaching office of the Church) (Acts 15:1-35).**

For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials.

LEADERS: Acts 15 is the account of the *Council of Jerusalem*, where the apostles discerned—with the guidance of the Holy Spirit—whether Jewish laws should apply to non-Jewish Christians.

- **Acting directly in the sacraments, bringing us into union with God (1 Corinthians 12:13).**

For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.

11 What did you learn about the Holy Spirit in today's lesson?

Summary

21

“ Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven and adopted as children, given confidence to call God “Father” and to share in Christ’s grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory. ”

St. Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, as quoted in CCC 736

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. When we recognize his activity in the world, in salvation history, in the Church and in our own spiritual lives, we see how truly powerful he is. He makes us children of God and gives us a first taste of the joy of heaven. What a gift we have in the Holy Spirit!

Living It Out

21

CHALLENGE

Read some of the book of Acts to relive the adventures of the apostles at the coming of the Spirit.

HERE ARE SOME RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Chapters 1-2—Pentecost
- Chapters 3-4—Peter and John: signs and wonders
- Chapter 8—Philip: supernatural experiences
- Chapters 9-10—Saul’s Conversion
- Chapter 12—Peter’s imprisonment
- Chapters 19-28—Paul’s voyages and adventures

MEMORIZE ROMANS 5:5

God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Leader's Journal



Take 15 minutes as soon as possible after finishing the lesson to reflect on how God moved during your study and how your small group participants responded.

1 Thanksgiving

Reflect and say a prayer of thanksgiving for specific ways the Holy Spirit was present in that small group.

- a. How did you experience the Holy Spirit helping you to lead the lesson?

- b. How did you experience the Holy Spirit moving in the small group today?

- c. What were the positives from today's group?

- d. What were areas for improvement?

2 Prophetic Listening

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you review the lesson. Think about each person in your small group as you prayerfully reflect on these questions.

- a. What are some indications that each participant caught the main points of this lesson?

- b. If you noticed gaps in any participant’s understanding of the main points, is the Holy Spirit inviting you to do anything over the course of this week to help this person better understand?

- c. Are there any other ways the Holy Spirit is inviting you to intentionally care for or nurture your individual small group participants?

- d. Is there anything you want to remind yourself from what played out in this lesson for when you sit down to prepare the next lesson?

3 Intentional Accompaniment

Write down a plan to intercede for your small group participants based on the specific insights above, including how you will reach out to them and/or tailor the next lesson’s introduction based on your reflections.