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## GOALS

*to realize that the Holy Spirit strengthens each of us to be Christ's witnesses; to understand the role of the Holy Spirit in the establishment and growth of the Church*

## GETTING READY

## ■ Materials needed:

*Prayer table environment: Bible, decorative cloth, candle, crystal or glass bowl, small pieces of paper, and pens*

*Bibles—preferably one for each young person*

*Chalkboard or poster board for several of the sections*

*Scripture task cards for Section One*

*Current world map for Section Two*

## Adult Focus

At the end of his public ministry, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples. He explained to them that it was only through his suffering, Death, Resurrection, and return to the Father that they would receive the Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit came to Jesus' followers, the world knew that Jesus' Death was not the end. This dynamic concept runs throughout the New Testament. An important theme of this chapter is that today, more than two thousand years after Jesus' Death and Resurrection, the Holy Spirit is still present and active in the Church.

As with the Apostles long ago, the Holy Spirit urges each one of us toward a more complete union with God and others. The Holy Spirit brings "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22–23).

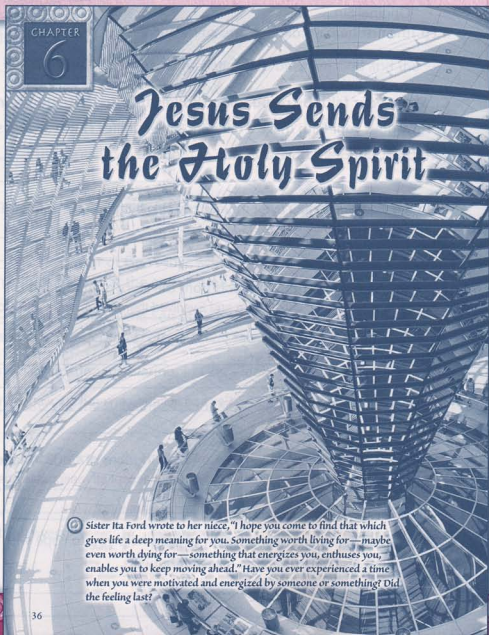
## Introduction ( \_\_ min.)

Gather the young people around the prayer table. Encourage them to think about an occasion on which they were proud of their actions. Offer suggestions such as an act of kindness, or a goal that they had reached. Ask: Who or what inspired them to do this thing? How did this action affect them?

Offer the prayer of the Holy Spirit on page 41. After a moment of silence, explain that this prayer asks the Holy Spirit to inspire us in every aspect of our lives.

Recall that a martyr is someone who dies for the faith. Explain that Sister Ita Ford was a missionary who served the poor in El Salvador. Talk about her love for God and commitment to her work, which led to her martyrdom in 1980 along with three other Catholic churchwomen.

Read the passage on page 36. It is from one of Sister Ita's letters. Discuss the questions that follow.



☉ Sister Ita Ford wrote to her niece, "I hope you come to find that which gives life a deep meaning for you. Something worth living for—maybe even worth dying for—something that energizes you, enthuses you, enables you to keep moving ahead." Have you ever experienced a time when you were motivated and energized by someone or something? Did the feeling last?



To be a Christian means to be identified by these characteristics.

The Holy Spirit is the source of all activity in the Church. The Holy Spirit unites the members into one living body with Christ as head, allowing each person to grow according to his or her gifts. "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit. . . . To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit." (1 Corinthians 12:4, 7)

Read Acts of the Apostles 2:1–4, the passage concerning the first Pentecost. Consider that through the active presence of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles were given the strength and courage to carry out the mission they had been given by Jesus.

## Reflection

Reflect for a moment on the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life and in the lives of your young people. Ask for guidance as you prepare to share with them this great news of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the building of the Church.

### 1 Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit.

We all need vision and goals to give us direction. We need courage and hope and someone to help guide us if we get off track. Jesus has given these things to us in a way we never could have imagined.

Jesus provided a sense of purpose, strength, and direction for his followers. His presence among his disciples, his teachings, and his way of life united them. Among these followers were a special group we know as the *Apostles*, a word meaning "those sent on a mission." The Apostles were twelve men chosen by Jesus to share in his mission in a special way.

Jesus promised his Apostles that he would be with them always. He would do this by sending the Holy Spirit to guide and encourage them. Jesus assured his Apostles with these words, "You will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts of the Apostles 1:8). The Holy Spirit would help them find the way to bring Jesus' message of God's love to the entire world.

Jesus told his Apostles, "When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth. . . he will testify to me. And you also testify, because you have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:26–27). The Advocate is God the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Spirit would:

- remain with them and in them
- teach them and help them to remember all that Jesus had said

Ask the young people what motivated Sister Ita Ford. Discuss the ways in which she can be an example of someone who motivates others.

## Presentation ( \_\_ min.)

### 1 Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit.

Have young people read silently Section One on pages 37–38. Then discuss:

ⓐ If a person lacks goals or vision, how does that affect him or her? (They have no direction; they lose a sense of purpose in their lives.)

ⓑ What did Jesus promise to do to help his followers maintain a sense of purpose, strength, and direction? (Jesus said he would remain with them always and send the Holy Spirit to guide and encourage them.)



② What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would do for them? (Jesus said the Holy Spirit would remain with them and in them; the Holy Spirit would teach them and help them remember what he had taught them; the Holy Spirit would lead them to the truth and give them strength.)

Have the young people write their responses to the questions at the end of Section One on page 38.

In advance, prepare task cards with one of the following Scripture passages on each card. Give each person, or pair of young people, a task card and a Bible. Instruct them to look up the passages and report on what each tells about the role of the Holy Spirit. Use these passages:

② Ephesians 3:14–21 (strengthened through the Holy Spirit)

② 1 Peter 1:10–12 (preaching Good News through the Holy Spirit)

② 1 John 5:5–12 (the Spirit is truth)

## 2 The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost.

Read aloud the paragraph and passage from the Acts of the Apostles under Section Two on page 38. Talk about how the disciples might have reacted (fearfully, excitedly, and joyously) to the events that happened on that first Pentecost. Have the young people finish reading Section Two on page 39. Ask:

② How were the Apostles different after the Holy Spirit had come to them?

### Answers for page 38:

See definition of Apostles in the Glossary on page 125. See names of the Apostles on page 39.

For second question see bulleted items on page 37.

- lead them to the truth of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who brings us Salvation and redemption
- give them the strength to be Jesus' witnesses.

*Advocate* is a word with many meanings: helper, friend, consoler, teacher, guide, and defender. The Holy Spirit is all of these things for us—our intercessor, consoler, and teacher.

God the Holy Spirit guides and strengthens us today as members of God's family. Because the Holy Spirit is unseen, like the wind, we know the Holy Spirit only by what he does to us and for us in the Church. At all times the Holy Spirit is in us and with us, drawing us together as God's people, making the Church one in truth and love.

Who were the Apostles? Why did Jesus promise to send them the Holy Spirit?

## 2 The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost.

Forty days after Jesus had risen from the dead, he returned to his Father in Heaven. We celebrate this event on the Feast of the Ascension. The Apostles then went back to Jerusalem, where they often came together to pray. We read an account in the New Testament of the earthshaking day on which the Holy Spirit came upon them:

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place 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. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Acts of the Apostles 2:1–4

## Do YOU Know?

Read the "Do You Know?" feature on page 39. Ask the group to share anything they know about any of the Twelve Apostles. For example: Peter was a fisherman with Andrew, James, and John. When Peter confessed his belief in Jesus as the Son of God, Jesus made Peter the leader of the Apostles.

After Jesus was arrested, Peter denied three times that he even knew Jesus.

The day on which the Holy Spirit came to Jesus' first disciples as Jesus promised is known as **Pentecost**. We read further in the Acts of the Apostles that the Apostle Peter began to preach to the crowds that filled Jerusalem. He declared that Jesus of Nazareth had worked amazing wonders and deeds and had been raised from the dead by God the Father. And Jesus had indeed sent the Holy Spirit, as he had promised.

Peter continued his speech, telling the crowds that all who were gathered there had seen and heard the coming of the Holy Spirit. They had to know that the crucified Jesus had been raised up. Jesus was truly Lord and Messiah!

The community of Jesus' disciples was called to share this message that Peter proclaimed. They would be the witnesses of Jesus Christ in the world, and the Holy Spirit would guide them. At first they had been a timid and fearful group; They had run away when Jesus was arrested, tried, and put to death. With the help of the Holy Spirit, however, they became strong and fearless. The Holy Spirit filled them with the fire of faith and the courage to proclaim the Good News of the risen Christ.



What happened at Pentecost? If you had been there, how do you think you would have acted?

## Do YOU Know?

Jesus went alone to a mountain and prayed all night before he chose his Apostles. When he was commissioning the Apostles, Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). Because they were sent by Jesus, the Apostles had the power to act in Jesus' name. The Twelve Apostles were:

<b>Simon</b> , later called Peter	<b>Thomas</b> , whose name means "twin"
<b>Andrew</b> , Simon Peter's brother	<b>Matthew</b> , a tax collector
<b>James</b> , son of Zebedee	<b>James</b> , son of Alphaeus
<b>John</b> , James' brother	<b>Thaddeus</b> , also known as Jude
<b>Philip</b> , a fisherman	<b>Simon</b> , the Zealot
<b>Bartholomew</b> , also known as Nathanael	<b>Judas Iscariot</b> , Jesus' betrayer

39

⊙ How did the Holy Spirit both comfort and challenge the Apostles?

⊙ After receiving the Holy Spirit, what did the Apostles do?

⊙ What is the Good News that the Apostles preached?

Emphasize the dramatic nature of the story of Pentecost. Have the young people respond to the questions at the end of Section Two on page 39. Share responses.

Remind the young people that Jesus had asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit to help the disciples proclaim the Good News of the risen Christ. At Pentecost, the people who listened to the disciples were able to understand them in their own languages.

Show the group a map of the world. Point out places in the world where missionaries are working to spread the Gospel. On the chalkboard or poster board, make a list of obstacles, other than language, that these missionaries might face.

Explain to the group that there are people where they live who are working to spread the Gospel to others. Ask the young people to think about which obstacles these missionaries might face. How are these obstacles the same or different from those faced in other countries?

John stayed with Mary at the foot of the cross when all of the other Apostles had run away. Jesus asked John to take care of Mary. John was the only Apostle not to be martyred. Thomas was not with the other Apostles when Jesus first appeared to them. Therefore, he did not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. Jesus came the next Sunday and told Thomas to put his fingers into the wounds in his hands and side.

Answers for page 40:

Let us see  
Accept all reasonable answers.

Answers for page 39:

Accept all reasonable answers.



### 3 The Holy Spirit helped the disciples to be Christ's witnesses.

Ask the group to think about situations that would make someone almost too afraid to do or try something. Make a list of these fears on the chalkboard or poster board. Then ask the group to describe how they would try to calm someone's fear in each of these situations.

Have the group read silently Section Three on page 40. Ask:

② What difference did the Holy Spirit make in the lives of the Apostles?

③ How did the early Christians show that they were witnesses of Jesus Christ?

Reiterate that the Holy Spirit empowers and transforms people, changing them from people of fear to people of courage. Recall that the Holy Spirit appeared to the disciples in the form of fire. Discuss the characteristics of fire and why fire is an appropriate symbol for the Holy Spirit. Explain that people who are disciples of Christ are often described as "on fire" with love of God. Ask: What aspect of discipleship does this refer to? Have you ever met anyone you would describe as being "on fire" with love of God?

Discuss characteristics of someone who is a true witness of Jesus Christ. Then have the young people write their description of a true witness at the end of Section Three on page 40.

④ How were the Apostles different after the Holy Spirit came to them?

Answers for page 39:

See list of sins in the Bible on page 38.

Answers for page 40:

Accept all reasonable answers.



### 3 The Holy Spirit helped the disciples to be Christ's witnesses.

Peter's proclamation of Jesus as Lord was very powerful. Lord was a title reserved only for God, and Peter truly believed in Jesus' divinity. Peter told the people gathered, "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 of the Apostles 2:38).

The Holy Spirit was at work through the Apostles. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, thousands of people changed their lives:

- They were baptized.
- Their sins were forgiven.
- They shared in the Gift of the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit made them one in their love for God and one another.

We read in the Acts of the Apostles about the way the early Christians tried to live. They committed themselves to the Apostles' teachings about Jesus. They lived together in fellowship and prayer. The early Christians ate together and shared their possessions. They cared for the needy as best they could. In what they said and what they did, they were witnesses of Jesus Christ.

To witness is to provide evidence for or to testify to the truth or validity of something. The word *witness* means "someone who has seen or heard something, or someone who gives evidence." This word brings up images of an eyewitness to a crime or a character witness in a court hearing. Being a witness or giving witness in these situations is not a

life long task. But being a life long witness is exactly what Jesus calls us to. Witnesses are people who speak and act based upon what they know and believe about Jesus Christ.

To be a Christian is not just to believe in Jesus Christ. We must give witness to Christ in all that we say and do. We need to share the Good News of Jesus with others. When people see us, they should see the power of Christ in our lives. If they do, they may come to believe, too.

The Apostles were the first witnesses of Jesus—they saw, touched, and spoke with him. The early Christians were called to give witness to the life and mission of Jesus. Many practiced their faith in spite of persecution from the government and from people who were not Christians.

We, too, are called to be Christ's witnesses through the actions, words, and thoughts of our daily lives. Sometimes this requires courage; sometimes it requires sacrifice; but through it all the Holy Spirit is with us, assisting us in living as followers of Jesus Christ.

Describe someone who is a true witness to Christ's life and teachings.

## Optional Activity

Encourage the young people to make a list of popular or religious songs that inspire them or give them courage. Discuss the specific elements of the songs that "speak" to the young people, for example: the powerful lyrics, the upbeat tempo of the music, etc. Compare the answers of the group. Is there any song or lyrics that they all find inspiring?

# GROWING IN FAITH

## PRAY

Jesus prayed at all times of the day. He asked his Father's blessing before he acted, and he thanked his Father afterward. Jesus prayed for strength and direction, and he taught his disciples to do the same. Jesus told them, "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Luke 11:9).

✠ Breathe into me I-Holy Spirit,  
that my thoughts may be all holy.  
Move in me, Holy Spirit,  
that my work too, may be holy.  
Attract my heart, Holy Spirit,  
that I may love only what is holy.  
Strengthen me, I-Holy Spirit,  
that I may defend all that is holy.  
Protect me, Holy Spirit,  
that I always may be holy.  
Amen.

## REFLECT & ACT

Do you prefer to think of the Holy Spirit as a helper, teacher, consoler, or defender? Why? When you are in need of help, do you ever ask the Holy Spirit to guide or help you?

## REMEMBER

The Church teaches...

- ③ God the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity.
- ③ The Apostles were twelve men chosen by Jesus to share in his mission in a special way.
- ③ Jesus Christ sent his disciples the Gift of the Holy Spirit.
- ③ The Holy Spirit is the Advocate: the helper, consoler, and teacher who strengthens and guides us.
- ③ The Holy Spirit is in us and with us at all times, drawing us together as God's people, making the Church one in truth and love.

## Faith Words

Apostles (p. 37)  
Advocate (p. 38)  
Pentecost (p. 39)  
witnesses (p. 40)

Think about the ways you can be an active witness to Jesus' life and teachings. Plan to do two of these things sometime this week.

## Conclusion ( \_\_ min.)

### Growing in Faith

Have the young people close their books. Ask them what they have learned in this lesson about the Holy Spirit, the Apostles, Pentecost, and witnesses. Reopen the books to page 41. Was everything from the **Remember** and **Faith Words** sections named? If not, point these out and help the group name the remaining concepts.

Invite the young people to read the **Reflect and Act** section and to write out their responses in the spaces provided. If desired, play some soft instrumental music while they do this.

Then, share the ways in which the young people can be active witnesses to Jesus. (Suggestions: communicating with and supporting missionaries in foreign lands; joining parish peace and social justice groups; teaching or enacting Gospel stories for young children or in nursing homes.)

Have a volunteer read aloud the paragraph in the **Pray** section.

Invite the young people to use the prayer to the Holy Spirit as an opportunity to ask for strength, guidance, direction, and comfort.

Close by offering the prayer to the Holy Spirit in the **Pray** section on page 41 together.

### Answers for page 41:

Left side:

Accept all reasonable answers.

Right side:

Accept all reasonable answers.

## CATECHISM FOCUS

"The Holy Spirit, whom Christ the head pours out on his members, builds, animates, and sanctifies the Church." (CCC, 747)

For additional reference and reflection, see CCC, 687–690.