



Living the Faith – Step 3

The power of the Spirit

Aim

To deepen understanding of the Pentecost story, and the ongoing action of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Jesus disciples today.

Resources needed

Leaders

- *Come and See notes*
- *PPT laptop and projector or TV*
- *Prayer focus items*
- *Large Sheets of paper and pens*

For Young People

- *Journals and hand outs*

Prayer Focus

Expressions of our belief:

Red Cloth – *Pentecost Season*

Image of the Risen Lord

Items representing Gifts – *eg: Bible, wisdom; iPad, Knowledge; rosary beads, piety; flowers, fear of the Lord (awe) &/or*

Candle – *yellow, orange or multicoloured, symbolising the flame of the Holy Spirit*

Water – *cleansing and life-giving action of the Holy Spirit in Baptism*

Liturgical Link

The Father is the one to whom Jesus points the Way. The sacrament of reconciliation helps to bring healing, restoring our relationship with the Father.

Overview

- Waiting – ‘Don’t be afraid’
- Pentecost – the Power of the Spirit
- Recognising our Gifts
- Becoming a Miracle worker
- Cultivating our Gifts
- Prayerful Reflection

Preparation by Catechists

- *Familiarity with content and resources*
- *Be ready to share about personal gifts and unexpected events*
- *Pray for the young people and leaders*

Scripture Passages

- Acts 1:6-14 Final instructions
- Acts 2: 1-11 Pentecost
- Corinthians 12:4-11 Diversity of Gifts

Tenets of Faith (Faith Formation)

- The importance of Prayer & Waiting
- The Power of the Holy Spirit
- Giving Witness
- Gifts to be cherished and used in service to the Lord, for unity

Gathering:

- **Welcome & Overview:**
Thank the young people for coming back, give a brief reminder of key points from the last gathering. Give overview and aim for today.
 - **Introductory activity - *Waiting*** - Just as the disciples were waiting for the gift of the Holy Spirit so do we have many experiences of waiting in our lives.
 - Working in pairs, each to be given a sheet of A3 and a number of letters of the alphabet written across the top.
 - Pairs jot down on one side of the paper as many experiences or possibilities of waiting related to each of the letters – have an example on each sheet to help them get started: Aeroplane, Exam, Kettle, Photo, Wedding.
 - Allow a couple of minutes then invite individuals to go to each sheet and add feelings they have already experienced, or believe they might, in relation to any of the items mentioned.
 - Gather the group around the sheets and highlight the range of feelings and experiences, including the variation for the same item, depending on the person or circumstances: eg Aeroplane: fear, apprehension, anxiety, excitement, sadness, uncertainty.
 - Invite anyone to share a particularly difficult time of waiting they have experienced.
 - Then together reflect on the experience of the Disciples after the Ascension, while awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- FF** - Before Jesus departed from them, the disciples had gazed intently at Jesus, being totally present to him in that moment.
- Waiting patiently for God's Spirit or action in our lives is something we need to cultivate. Prayerful contemplation is an important aspect of the waiting, the disciples were reminded of this following the Ascension.
 - A valuable attitude to cultivate in life is never to ask another person to do something you are not willing to do yourself. We must lead by example, as Jesus did.

Opening Prayer

- **Prayer focus:** *refer to items and their significance here and as appropriate later*

Waiting – Acts 1:6-14 The Ascension and final instruction

- FF**
- In the final conversation recorded with the disciples, in Acts, Jesus makes clear to the disciples that through the Holy Spirit they will understand and fulfil their mission.
 - As instructed they returned to Jerusalem to pray and to wait. The disciples would have experienced many different emotions, including fear.
 - Through prayer and reflection, they will have been reminded of the many times Jesus had quelled the fears of people during his ministry.
 - The disciples also need to hang in there to wait for the Spirit.
 - While listening to the song, offer to the Lord any fears or worries you may have, or that your loved ones are carrying.

Song: Don't be afraid – from Come all You People CD, *Wild Goose Worship Group, Iona*. or other.

Leader	Today and tomorrow	All	Today and tomorrow
Leader	Know I am with you always	All	When we try to do your will
Leader	I am with you always	All	When we go where we do not know
Leader	I am with you always	All	Where faith ends and doubt begins
Leader	I am with you always	All	And should we forget
Leader	I am with you always	All	Today and tomorrow, you are with us always, to the end of time. Amen

Scripture and Reflection

- **Pentecost – Acts 2:1- 4, 5-13** *The Power of the Holy Spirit*

Introduction: As we have already heard the disciples are gathered in the upper room, unsure, but waiting as instructed. The video clip we will view provides a wonderful depiction of the scripture story. [https://youtu.be/ R_4QoGZJBg](https://youtu.be/R_4QoGZJBg)

Reflection Activity: *Group members are then ponder these questions:*

- what are the sights and sound encountered of the Holy Spirit in action?
- what do they symbolize, or link back to in earlier Gospel stories?
- how must the disciples have felt following the coming of the Spirit?
- the devout Jews in Jerusalem who witnessed the event – what might they be thinking or feeling?
- what do you think happens next?
- *Encourage jottings to be made in journals, each person be ready to share one comment with the group*

- FF**
- The mighty wind and tongues of fire, mentioned in the text, but not really visible in the video, are symbolic of the way the Holy Spirit, through the disciples, will drive a wind of change that will powerfully change the lives of many, including Saul, destined to become one of Christs biggest advocates.
 - With Peter and the other disciples Paul will be instrumental in journeying to the 'ends of the earth' to spread the Gospel.
 - Instantly, having received the Holy Spirit, the disciples become the witnesses Jesus asked them to be. They overcome the barriers and divisions that previously presented them from doing so.
 - The list of places where the people gathered originate from shows how quickly the Gospel message is being taken to the ends of the earth. They quickly then continue this work in Jerusalem, journeying on to Judea and Samaria, the reverse of the route Jesus took in his ministry.
 - Mockingly, some suggest the disciples to be drunk. The theme of rejection and mockery appears regularly through Acts. It is part of the energy of the Spirit that opposition is aroused as well as commitments made.

Notes adapted from the New Testament, Nichola King, Kevin Mayhew Pub

- **Recognising Gifts:**

Just as on the day of Pentecost the disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit, so too has God given gifts to each of us.

Not only do we have individual gifts, unique to us, we also have family traits, gifts and habits in common with parents and siblings.

Activity: Personal gifts -

- Individuals each identify and list the particular gifts and talents they possess.
- Looking again at the list, they then circle or underline the gifts that are shared by parents or siblings.
- Encourage people to then highlight the gifts they particularly value, or feel the most pride in.
- Allow brief sharing in small groups, or all together.
- Acknowledge gifts that are common amongst the group.
- Consider how these gifts compare with those received by the disciples from the Holy Spirit?

- FF
- Coming to faith is not so much acquiring a new set of beliefs about God as discovering God's existence within the realities of our own lives.
 - The gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit help us to be more attuned to the actions of God at work in us, and in the world.
 - In baptism, the newly initiated receive the Spirit, and at confirmation, the Spirit of God is renewed and confirmed in each person to help them bear witness to the love of God at work in them.

Going Deeper

- **Gifts of the Spirit: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11**

Activity Gifts of the Spirit: What are the gifts of the spirit that Christians receive in Baptism, then have affirmed and strengthened through Confirmation?

- Invite responses, chart up, then fill in any blanks and tease out the meaning of each.
- See how many of the Holy Spirit gifts match up with the personal gifts already identified.
- Repeat the exercise looking at the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Ponder: if time allows

- How evident are the Gifts and fruits of the Spirit in our Church and society in general, give examples to get the conversation started.

- FF
- There are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit which strengthen our relationship with God:
wisdom - enables people to recognize what is important in life, and the need to keep God central in life
understanding - the ability to comprehend the meaning of God's message
counsel (right judgment) - the ability to see the best way to follow God's plan when there are important choices to make in life and faith
fortitude (courage) - the courage to do what is right, especially when the decision will be unpopular

knowledge - the ability to think about and explore the revelation of God, and also to recognize there are mysteries of faith beyond us

piety (reverence) - helps us pray to grow closer to God in true devotion

fear (awe) of the Lord - the sense of amazement of God, ever-present, whose friendship we crave (CCC #1831)

FF - The Church also recognizes twelve fruits of the Spirit: personal characteristics that develop when we live in relationship with God, following the ways of Jesus, attuned to the Spirit within them.

Charity (love), joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity (CCC #1832)

- All these gifts are given to help individuals grow closer to God in service to God's Church, the Body of Christ.

• **Cultivating Gifts to become a miracle worker:**

Following the descent of the Holy Spirit the disciples not only had the courage to go out and preach the Gospel, they performed miracles in the name of Jesus too.

In a world where increasing numbers of people choose not to believe in God, how can we not just bear witness to the love of God, but also help people to recognize the small miracles that happen around us each day.

The really positive 'God instances' that are generally referred to as co-incidences.

We need to cultivate the journey to holiness, by cultivating the gifts and fruits of the spirit.

Activity Celebrating gifts: looking again at the lists of gifts and fruits individuals

- Identify the one gift and two fruits they recognise the need to work on

- Consider what might be the minor miracles they have experience, or are aware of in the lives of others

- Ponder how cultivation of the gifts and fruits of the Spirit might help us to become miracle workers

FF - Essentially the disciples embraced the gift of the Holy Spirit and went out to share it.

- Pentecost was originally a Jewish harvest festival, celebrated fifty days after the Passover. It was one of the great pilgrimage festivals for the Jews, which is why so many pilgrims were present in Jerusalem on the day the Spirit descended on the disciples.

- The Christian feast of Pentecost is fifty days after Easter and is the culmination of the Lent –Easter – Pentecost cycle. The Church again returns to ordinary time.

- However the feasts of the Trinity and Body and Blood of Jesus follow on the next two Sundays.

Closing Prayer

- Gather in a circle / semi-circle around the prayer focus.

Placing the Holy Spirit candle in the centre of the group the leader invites individuals to listen to the song and as they do so to ask the Holy Spirit for the courage to witness to the love of God in their lives, and to strengthen them in the gifts they need to do so.

FF - The gifts received at birth and through the Sacraments are given to be celebrated and used, not for self-interest, but for the Church, the body of Christ we belong to. Each Christian has a role to play in the building of God's Kingdom here on earth.

- Holy Spirit Rain Down: https://youtu.be/d-SI_HRWooA
- Or Receive the Power: *WYD 2008 Anthem* <https://youtu.be/iwoEU2uVDfw>
- Together we offer our prayers asking God to hear them and help us on the path to holiness:

We pray

Leader Through our lives, and through our prayers, may your Spirit come.

All Through our lives, and through our prayers, may your Spirit come.

Leader To the old and the young.

All May your Spirit come.

Leader To the students and the workers.

All May your Spirit come.

Leader To the leaders of the Church and each nation.

All May your spirit come.

Leader Lord, to you be the glory, now and always.

All Amen

Closing Remarks and Next Step

- Invite response to the Step 3 gathering
- Living the Faith Step 4 – Missionary Disciples
- Encourage personal and prayer support of one another and attendance at Mass