

# ONEWITH

OneWith community, OneWith faith, OneWith Christ.

November 22, 2020

## Reflection Break Outline Grade 9 ~ Session #4



### Session Goals

#### **Catholicism Unpacked:** “Who is the Holy Spirit?”

*This is the first of two sessions exploring the Holy Spirit. Before we ask what you what you believe about the Holy Spirit, let’s explore – Who (or What) is the Holy Spirit.*

- Compare/contrast biblical descriptions with our own understanding of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Scripture Unpacked:**

- Articulate the meaning of a Scripture passage from the Sunday readings (or homily).
- Reflect on *and articulate* at least 1 way these lessons could apply to contemporary life.
- Commit to one practice of Christian discipleship that corresponds to their own learning before the next session.

## **Ice Breaker Activity / Questions** (about 5 minutes)

*OneWith format is a very different way of exploring the Catholic faith and experiencing liturgy. Peer-to-peer witnessing is a critical part of to the discipleship process – but such authentic sharing does not happen easily. It may take a few or perhaps many sessions for your group to build trust in each other and become comfortable with this new format for exploring their faith.*

- *Take a few minutes to help everyone get to know each other and feel as comfortable as one can, given the current circumstances...*
- *Try some “softball questions” to get them talking... Favorite activity/moment of the week,*

**Pro Tip:** *Some established groups have a standard faith question that they use as an opener. In addition to creating a known question/topic that the youth can reliably anticipate being discussed, you also build in the expectation that everyone will be expected to share.*

- *What was your “God-Moment” since the last time we met.*
- *1-5... On a scale of one (“Where the heck are you?”) to five (“We’re like this!” - side-by-side fingers)... Where are you and God right now?*
- *Who did you bless this week? / Who blessed you?*
- *How did you do on your “Discipleship Commitment” from our last session? (more on that below)*

## **Reflection** (8-10 minutes)

### **“I Believe...”**

*The Holy Spirit is perhaps the least understood persons of the Holy Trinity, and at the same time most tangible manifestation of God in our daily life. We have models (even if imperfect) of a loving father, faithful son, wise teacher, etc.; but naming and describing Holy Spirit is much more difficult. In Scripture the Holy Spirit is described as Breath, a Mighty Wind, Tongues of Fire, a Dove, Wisdom (“Sophia” in Greek – revealing a feminine personae of God) and many more. On one hand this makes it difficult to define Who or What the Holy Spirit is. On the other, it reveals the breadth and creative ways that God’s presence is made real and active in our lives.*

*Because the Holy Spirit is so complex/difficult to comprehend, we will take two sessions to work on this Person of the Trinity.*

*This session will focus on defining/examining aspects of the Holy Spirit.*

*Next session will focus on what the youth believe about the Holy Spirit.*

~ Barry

In our first couple of sessions we have talked about God and Jesus. Today we will look at the Holy Spirit (the “Third Person” of the *Trinity* – *more on that later this year*). Images of God (“Father”, “King”, “The Almighty”, etc.) and Jesus (“Son of God”, Teacher/Rabbi, Healer, etc.) are familiar and easily relatable to our human experience. The Holy Spirit... not so much!

~ *What comes to mind when you think about the Holy Spirit?*

See if this helps... Watch “The Bible Project” video on the Holy Spirit...

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/holy-spirit/>

- Now, what comes to mind when you think about the Holy Spirit?
- The video talks about the Holy Spirit being described in the Bible as:
  - God’s “personal presence”
  - “Energy”
  - “Powerful Spirit”
  - “Wisdom/Understanding”
  - “Creative Genius”
  - “Empowering Love”
  - “New Creation”
  - “Life-giving Force”

Which of these is most descriptive to you... explain why?

- To help us all begin to get a grasp on the Holy Spirit in the world today, look through the list above and give an example of how have you experienced the presence of Holy Spirit in your life?
- Obviously the list above is not a complete description of the Holy Spirit. What is missing? What descriptions, adjectives, etc. can you add to the list.

*Keep your list! You will be referring back to it in a few weeks.*

### ***Want to Go Deeper?***

*Talking about really abstract and complex concepts like the nature of the Holy Spirit can be very intimidating. Since most of us have not formulated a concise answer for that let's start off our discussion with something we can articulate and is no less powerful... life experiences.*

- Does thinking of God as breath, wind, or animating energy depersonalize God or make God seem closer and more intimate with us?
- What comes to mind when thinking about the Spirit of God as a source of creativity and inspiration? [by the way the word "inspiration" *literally* means divine breath - spirit\*]

\* "Inspire": (definition from Marion Webster)

This moving little word may be traced back to the Latin *inspirare* ("to breathe or blow into"), which itself is from the word *spirare*, meaning "to breathe." It didn't take long to establish itself in a figurative sense, as our earliest *written English uses of inspire give it the meaning "to influence, move, or guide (as to speech or action) through divine or supernatural agency or power."*

Many of the early figurative senses of *inspire* are religious in nature, so it is not surprising to learn that the word shares a connection with ***spirit*** (which comes from the Latin word for "breath," *spiritus*, which is also from *spirare*).

## **Scripture Unpacked** (10-15 minutes)

*God's Word is more than "oddly phrased" words that people read during Mass... The wisdom and Truth of scripture are just as alive today as they were when they were first scribed millennia ago... The following questions are important to help our young disciples to learn the process of identifying, clarifying and focusing on the MEANING of the scripture passage.*

*Be on the lookout for answers that synthesize "gospel" concepts ("True" forgiveness) with "secular"/cultural beliefs (being nice). This is our (your) chance to correct or put a theological fine point on any misconceptions or perceptions that our teens might have. Ask questions like...*

- *What did you hear in Scripture readings from Mass?*
- *What did you hear in the homily (Fr. Mike's teaching)?*
- *What do you think was Father Mike's main point?*

*Close this part of the lesson by reiterating the teaching focus for the session - see pages 6-7 for more detail and some tips from the experts.*

### **Digging Deeper - Scripture Questions**

- List some of the conditions that characterize the "least"? Do they still exist today?
- What does the parable tell us about the connection between the poor, suffering and marginalized and the "King"? *(They are Him!)*
- When have you helped someone in need? What happened /how did it make you feel?
- When have you ever failed to help someone in need? Why did you not help?
- Compare this reading with Luke 4:16-21. What message is evident in both readings?
- What do you think the truth that Jesus is teaching in this parable? *(Whenever you serve the least of people, you serve Christ.)*

### **Scripture Application Questions**

*Disciples Do! The "Discipleship Challenge" asks our youth to take the practical lesson/wisdom that they have discerned from the Scripture readings (aka – the Bible) and/or the homily – and apply that in the context of their own lived experience.*

*Note: We are looking for something specific/concrete for them to commit to. "Being a better person" would be too generic... We also want to stay away from "praying" or "praying for someone" - We certainly want them to pray, but prayer is a separate practice of discipleship. If a youth is having problems coming up with something, start with their learned lesson/wisdom and work from there. The point here is to put faith into action by working up a tangible way for them to become agents of mercy, justice and love in their families, among their friends and in our world.*

### **"Discipleship Challenge"**

- What is one "practical lesson" or bit of wisdom that YOU can take away from the Bible readings and/or homily?
- What is one thing that you can do in the next two weeks to "be a sheep" for someone who is in need?

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## Resources

**Sunday Readings:** <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/112220.cfm>

### **Resource Videos:**

Holy Spirit (Bible Project): <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/holy-spirit/>  
(*Everyone in your group should view this before and/or during your reflection time*).

Links to websites with games and activities:

- <https://www.jubed.com/9-Icebreakers-Thatll-Leave-Your-Group-Buzzing>
- <https://teens.lovetoknow.com/teen-activities/youth-icebreakers-without-materials>
- <https://www.thereligionteacher.com/catholic-ice-breakers/>

## **Gospel Reflection** - By Greg Sunter

*This week's gospel is the final passage in Matthew's gospel before the passion narrative—the death and resurrection of Jesus. As such, it provides a powerful end point to the teaching ministry section of the gospel. In many ways this passage can be seen as a summary of Jesus' vision for the Kingdom—a world in which the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, and the imprisoned are treated with respect and dignity as a child of God. This is exactly what Jesus himself did throughout his ministry and it is what all Christian people are called to do.*

*Like the virtuous people of the passage, there are many times when we do not know the good work that we do. There are many times when our positive interaction with another person can be the difference between hope and despair for that person—and we may never know the difference we have made in their life. The challenge presented by Jesus is that whenever we see a person in need our response to them should be as if we were responding to Jesus himself.*

*But what of the times we fail to respond to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, and the imprisoned? Who are they for us? ... That irritating person who we've never been able to get along with? ... That person who's just arrived in the country and can't speak the language properly? ... That kid who always looks dirty and nobody talks to? ... That girl who's no good at relating to other people and everyone avoids her? ... The homeless man in the street who asks for money? ... The asylum seeker fleeing their country who didn't go through all the right channels to immigrate? ... Lord, when did we see you, and not come to your help?*

## **Gospel Focus—The Final Judgment**

*Often referred to as “The Final Judgment,” this gospel presents an understanding of judgment and punishment that reflects the theology and culture of the first century. It is an image that has continued to dominate Christian art and theology for most of its history: the idea of God sitting in judgment on the final day and weighing up each individual's actions. It is often applied very literally and it is a dominant image of God represented in the media—TV sit-coms and movies often draw on the image. It is a literalist image of God that needs to be challenged. We must remember that the focus of the gospel passage is on the call to action for justice.*

## **Questions for Adults**

- Q. What message or challenge emerges from the gospel passage for you?*
- Q. Which groups are the hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, and imprisoned today?*
- Q. How can you make a difference to one of these groups or individuals?*
- Q. How might the Church better respond to the face of Jesus in the needy today?*