

ONEWITH

OneWith community, OneWith faith, OneWith Christ.

January 10, 2021

Reflection Break Outline Grade 9 ~ Session #7



Session Goals

Catholicism Unpacked: “Who is the Holy Spirit?”

This is the second of two sessions exploring the Holy Spirit. Before we spent time identifying/defining the HS. In this session we ask what youth truly believe about the Holy Spirit.

- What do you believe about the Holy Spirit?
- How do you see the Holy Spirit alive in the world today?

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)*

Catholicism Unpacked (8-10 minutes)

“I Believe...”

*Because the Holy Spirit is so complex/difficult to comprehend, we are spending two sessions to work on this Person of the Trinity. Last time we focused on trying to defining/examining aspects of the Holy Spirit (I've included notes from that session in the “**Resources Section**” below). Tonight, we want to move beyond definition – into belief.*

*In this session we continue our quest to discern the truths of our faith by reflecting on **what we truly believe about the Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit is perhaps the most elusive yet pervasive persons of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit is a force – manifesting as fire and wind. The Holy Spirit is a presence – love, peace (that surpasses all understanding) and hope. The Holy Spirit is inspiration, beauty, truth, wisdom (“Sophia” in Greek – revealing a feminine personae of God) and much more.*

On the eve of his execution Jesus promised his disciples that he would not leave them orphaned (John 14:18). The Holy Spirit is with us always (John 14:16); helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:26) and is the giver of gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1-11).

~ Barry

Since we are trying to make it personal, here's what I believe about the Holy Spirit. If you have not already seen it take the “Awareness Test” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ahg6qcgoay4>)...

I believe the Holy Spirit is a Moonwalking Bear! The Holy Spirit is real and present in our lives. From the words of inspiration that come out of our mouths unexpectedly, to the inner strength that helps us bear unimaginable sorrow, the Holy Spirit is moonwalking around us in a thousand ways! Yet too often in my life I become so focused on “keeping my eye on the ball” that I am often oblivious to presence of God right in front of me. I am grateful for you and so many others who remind me to be aware, amazed, and amused by the Holy Spirit!

~ Barry

Take some time to help the teens articulate what they believe about the Holy Spirit...

On a whiteboard or poster board make a list from the following questions...

- *What do you believe about the Holy Spirit?*
- *Name some qualities of the Holy Spirit, as you understand Her.*
- *Share one personal example of a time when you witnessed or experienced the work or presence of the Holy Spirit in your life.*

Looking at your list of things that you believe about Jesus...

- *Is there anything that you would like to add to this list?*
- *Identify those things on which you can all agree.*
- *Work this list to your **top 3-5 qualities/attributes that you can all agree on.***

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

Want to Go Deeper?

- *In what ways is God's Spirit specifically working through you and/or those around you to promote the Gospel values of justice, forgiveness, generosity, humility, reconciliation, and love?*
- *How is the Holy Spirit the same as God and Jesus? How do you perceive the Holy Spirit to be different from God and Jesus?*

Scripture Unpacked (10-15 minutes)

As Catholics, we believe that the Bible is the living Word of God. That alone should give us reason to pay attention, but there's more! Scripture offers us lessons and wisdom that can be beneficial to OUR lives – right now! At today's Mass we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, but it is also a reminder and celebration of our own Baptism.

Today's gospel is a reminder that we are baptized with the Holy Spirit, not merely with water. To be baptized with the Holy Spirit means that we are drawn into communion with God and we are also empowered by that communion to make a difference in the world—to reach out a helping hand to those in need and to proclaim the good news of Jesus through our actions and our words.

Digging Deeper - Scripture Questions

Choose and discuss one or more of the following questions:

- *What purpose is served by John preaching about someone “more powerful” than himself?*
- *Why does Jesus need to be baptized by John?*
- *What do you think motivates parents today to have their children baptized?*
- *What is the difference between a baptism of water & being baptized with the Holy Spirit?*

Homily: What was the main point of the Priest/Deacon's homily? How does that message tie back to the bible readings and/or your life?

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

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/>

Resource Videos:

Holy Spirit (Bible Project): <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/holy-spirit/>

A personal testimony about the Holy Spirit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXnQlH9nKco>

Awareness Test: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ahg6qcgoay4>

Sunday Readings:

Reading #1: Isaiah 42:1-7

Responsorial Psalm: 29:1-10

Reading #2: Acts 10:34-38

Gospel: Mark 1:7-11

A full copy of the readings for the week can be found on the U.S. Bishop's website:

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/011021.cfm>

Notes From OneWith Session #4...

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*).

Gospel Reflection

Scriptural context – Mark and Isaiah

Today's first reading from Isaiah 42 begins with the very words that come from heaven during the baptism of Jesus in the gospel. It comes from the first of four passages from the book of Isaiah that are known as the Servant Songs. The Servant Songs in Isaiah provided a great deal of inspiration to Mark. The imagery and even specific language used in Isaiah to describe the messiah who will come is scattered throughout the gospel of Mark and subsequently the other gospels as well. Mark's depiction of Jesus as the messiah is characterized by the image of the suffering servant.

Messianic Secret

The baptism of Jesus in the gospel of Mark serves as a revelation of the identity of Jesus. Throughout this gospel there is secrecy about who Jesus really is. Whenever a person's faith reveals that Jesus is the Messiah or the Son of God, Jesus commands them to remain silent and not tell anyone else about him. However, through the baptism event, the reader is let in to the secret from the outset. Unlike the public announcements of Jesus as the beloved Son of God that occurs in other gospels, in the gospel of Mark, the voice is addressed to Jesus himself and there is no indication that anyone else hears it. The words used are, "You are my Son" not, "This is my Son." But the reader is placed in the privileged position of knowing the truth about Jesus from the very beginning of the gospel. As they read further, they observe the disciples' growing yet imperfect understanding of this truth.

John the Baptist serves another particular function in the gospel story. Aside from fulfilling scriptural prophecy by proclaiming the one who is to come, he provides a point of contrast with Jesus. In many ways, John represents the Jewish religious belief of the time. For John, baptism is a ritual of purifying and forgiveness of sin that can be administered as often as required. The way to God is through strict observance of the Law and through ritual acts of prayer and purification. For Jesus though, the way to God is through love and through Jesus himself. The baptism that Jesus will give is a baptism of the Spirit—pouring out the Spirit on those who realize and accept the love of God in their lives.

Questions for Adolescents

- Q. What purpose is served by John preaching about someone "more powerful" than himself?
- Q. How do you think John's followers might have responded to Jesus' arrival?
- Q. What is the difference between a baptism of water and being baptized with the Holy Spirit?
- Q. Why does Mark include the reader in the secret of Jesus' truth from the beginning of the gospel?

Questions for Adults

- Q. Why does Jesus need to be baptized by John?
- Q. Why might the gospel of Mark begin with John the Baptist rather than the birth of Jesus?
- Q. What do you think motivates parents today to have their children baptized?
- Q. Why are we invited to renew our baptismal promises every Easter?

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