

The Parish Community – God’s Holy Spirit in Action

In this unit students explore the Holy Spirit in action in their families, their parish and in their wider community. They examine the variety and unity of gifts in 1 Corinthians, and at the conclusion of the unit students are invited to reflect upon their understanding of the importance of using the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

DOCTRINAL FOCUS

In planning to teach this unit the following references from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church are recommended:

#798 The Holy Spirit is ‘the principle of every vital and truly saving action in each part of the Body’. He works in many ways to build up the whole Body in charity: by God’s word ‘which is able to build you up’; by baptism, through which he forms Christ’s Body; by the sacraments, which give growth and healing to Christ’s members; by ‘the grace of the apostles, which holds first place among his gifts’; by the virtues, which make us act according to what is good; finally, by the many special graces (called ‘charisms’), by which he makes the faithful ‘fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the Church’.

(See *Compendium* #160 *What are charisms?*)

#1966 The New Law is the *grace of the Holy Spirit* given to the faithful through faith in Christ. It works through charity; it uses the Sermon on the Mount to teach us what must be done, and makes use of the sacraments to give us the grace to do it.

(See *Compendium* #145 *What does the Holy Spirit do in the Church?*)

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS

For over the past two hundred years Catholics in parishes in Australia have loved and served their God and their community. As individuals and as groups they have developed ways of responding to the needs of others, ways of building faith and learning communities, of offering friendship and support, of being a voice of justice and peace, and of being a place of celebration and prayer. Who are the people and what are the activities in the local parish that inspire you? What motivates people to be part of parish life? Why do some Catholics withdraw from the parish?

Caritas, the Catholic Church’s Aid and Development Agency, lives the Christian message of love and service. Caritas makes sense of Christ’s message in a practical way, matching action and participation with the message of the gospel – love of neighbour. Caritas actively helps people help themselves. Their work takes a holistic approach. For example, in a water project in Tanzania, not only is water piped to villages; new skills are learned, vegetables are grown for food and to sell, trees are planted to counter soil erosion, girls are able to go to school, better sanitation and clean water improves health, bricks for building are made and communities are active and cohesive.

All Church organisations strive to love and serve the community and God. What does love and service look like in your school? What are some of the challenges or tensions that arise for your school out of this way of being?

LINKS TO STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

Students may belong to a variety of religious traditions. *What understandings or experiences do students have of the practices and ministries of the Catholic Church? How can students recognise the Holy Spirit in action in the local parish?*

Through the media students are exposed to and receive information about the local and global community. *How can students explore the needs of the world today, and how best can they respond to those needs?*

Through serving others who are in need students can become aware of the Holy Spirit's presence in their lives. *What kinds of attitudes and activities do students associate with the work of the Holy Spirit?*

EXPLANATION OF SCRIPTURE

1 Cor 12: 4–11 **Variety of Gifts but the Same Holy Spirit**

Paul, who wrote this letter to the Christians of Corinth, was not one of the twelve apostles mentioned in the gospels. He wrote before any of the gospels we have today were written. His letters often addressed the concerns and problems, and even failures, of the early Christian communities. Corinth was religiously diverse and ethnically complex. Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth to address a series of problems such as social status, non-Christian environment and problems of liturgical assemblies. It is in this latter section that our text is found. Here Paul is trying to clear up a wrong impression about spiritual gifts, and so Chapters 12, 13 and 14 are about spiritual gifts. In our passage Paul seems keen to point out that a variety of gifts are given so that we all have some gift to contribute, but that they come from the same Holy Spirit. The challenge for us, as it was for the people of Corinth, is to recognise and encourage the gifts and abilities of each person so as to build up the Body of Christ in such a way that it is an active, dynamic body that serves the wider community.

POSSIBILITIES FOR PRAYER AND WORSHIP

- Decorate the prayer space with orange, red and yellow 'flames' that contain images of the parish community at work and prayer. Arrange a number of tea lights around the space and light these when the class gathers to pray.
- Pray or sing a Litany of the Saints, including saints that are important for the parish community.
- Prepare a Liturgy of the Word around 1 Cor 12: 4–6, 11 (variety and unity of gifts). Invite parishioners to participate, e.g. St Vincent de Paul, Pastoral Associate, people who take communion to the sick, or who do the flowers ... Pray a prayer of thanksgiving with a sung response, e.g. 'One Body, One People' (Michael Mangan, *Setting Hearts on Fire*, Litmus Productions).
- Pray together the 'Our Prayer' echo prayer in *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 4, Chapter 6, p. 47.

- Using the mantra 'Come, Holy Spirit', compose a Litany of Prayer for all those in the parish community who are sick or in need.
- Pray the Pentecost Sequence (this is found in the lectionary for Pentecost Sunday). The Sequence is a very ancient prayer. Invite the students to translate it into words that make the meaning clear for them. This can be bound into a book of class prayers related to the Holy Spirit that can be used regularly throughout this unit.
- Prepare a Liturgy of the Word using Isa 61: 1–2, Mic 6: 8, and a hymn such as 'We Are Called' (David Haas, *Blest Are They*, GIA Publications).

Related Chapters – *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 4: Chapter 6, Our Parish Community; Chapter 8, God's Spirit Alive in the Church; Chapter 13, Called By God.

Faith concepts: parish, community, Church, Holy Spirit, love, service.

Seeking understanding:

Where do we see the Holy Spirit in action in our families, in the parish and in the wider community?
As people of the Holy Spirit how can we serve the community?

Understandings:

Jesus Christ is the model of Christian love and service.
The Holy Spirit inspires Christians to love and serve others.
The Holy Spirit is active in each person in different ways and through different gifts.
The Holy Spirit is active in the people of the local parish.
The parish is part of the worldwide Church and the wider community.

Scripture Text: 1 Cor 12: 4–6, 11 The Variety and Unity of Gifts.

Unit specific learning:

Students will learn about	Students will learn to	Students will undertake to
<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Reasoning & Responding</i>	<i>Personal & Communal Engagement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways in which people live a life of Christian love and service. • Some of the qualities of a Spirit-filled person. • The variety and unity of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how these are expressed in family and parish life. • How the action of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the disciples is described in Acts 2: 1–12. • The work of the local parish as an expression of the Holy Spirit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the action of the Holy Spirit in their own lives, their families and the parish community. • Recognise people in the local community who are expressions of the Holy Spirit's action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and participate in a thanksgiving liturgy. • Decide how they use their gifts to be a person of love and service.

PHASES OF STUDENT INQUIRY

Additional Reading for Teachers	Orientation to Inquiry <i>What do students already know, think or feel in relation to the topic? What are students' questions about the topic? What experiences and reflections can we offer students to become engaged with the topic?</i>	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning
<p>The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity who is one God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Drawn into communion with God through the Holy Spirit we are filled with love and strength to live and work in our communities and in the world, just as Jesus Christ did.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior Knowledge: Concept Map As a class complete a concept map investigating what the students already know about the Holy Spirit, e.g. <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"> </div> 	<p>Assessment for Learning This task will indicate students' prior knowledge and experience.</p>
<p>Symbols of the Holy Spirit. At Baptism the pouring of water symbolises the Holy Spirit poured out upon us. At Confirmation the bishop extends his hands over the heads of the candidates in an ancient gesture of calling the Holy Spirit upon them. The same</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting the Scene: Focused Prayer Experience Decorate the prayer space with orange, red and yellow 'flames' that contain images or photos of the parish community at work and prayer. Include 	

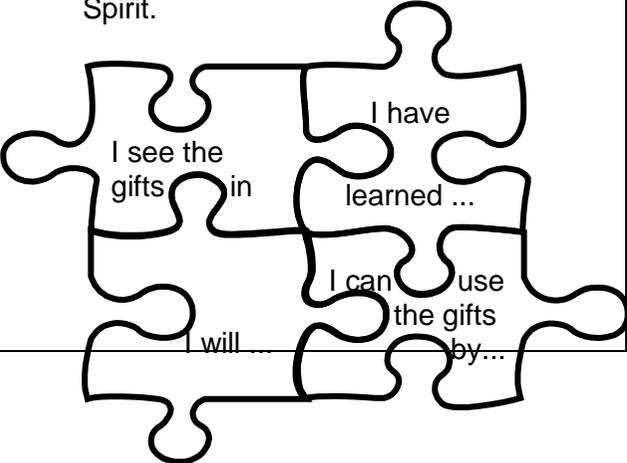
<p>gesture is used in the Mass when the Holy Spirit is invoked over the bread and wine. Oil is used to signify being sealed with the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>Images often used to help us understand the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in the Church include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fire and wind (Acts 2: 1–4) • a dove (Jn 1: 32) • breath (Gen 2: 7; Jn 20: 21–22) 	<p>an image of the saint after whom the parish is named.</p> <p>Ask students to choose an image that they are drawn to, and to speak to God about the parish people and activities using this image.</p>	
<p>The word Church refers to the people God calls and gathers together from every part of the earth ... 'who through faith and baptism have become children of God, members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit' (CCCC#1447).</p> <p>A parish is a local community of the Church. Its members pray and work together, usually under the leadership of a parish priest.</p> <p>The gifts of the Holy Spirit – vital for living well in families, in parish life, in the wider world – are wisdom, understanding, courage, right judgment, knowledge, reverence, wonder and awe in God's presence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation Using the Think-Pair-Share strategy, investigate the inquiry questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Where do we see the Holy Spirit in action in our families, in the parish and in the wider community? – As people of the Holy Spirit how can we serve the community? 	
<p>Additional Reading for Teachers</p>	<p>Development</p> <p><i>What experiences and religious texts will provide new learning for students? What skills will students need in order to work with these resources? What strategies and tools will enable students to think and reflect on these experiences and texts? How will students process their</i></p>	<p>Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning</p>

	<i>thinking and learning?</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit in My Family Read picture story books through which students can begin to identify how people use their abilities to love and serve others, e.g. Junko Morimoto, <i>A Piece of Straw</i>. Students identify a person in their family who they associate with love and service. What is it about this person that shows love and service? What special gifts and abilities do they have? Lead students to identify these gifts and abilities as gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to identify the people as people filled with the Holy Spirit. On a class chart, record the gifts of these people under the heading: <i>The gifts of the Holy Spirit in our families are...</i> Say a prayer of thanks for the love and service that these people offer us. 	Assessment for Learning This task will provide information about what students perceive and identify as acts of Christian love and service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit in Action in the Class: Classroom Directory Students identify gifts and abilities of class members. Create a classroom telephone directory that lists the gifts and talents of each class member. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Holy Spirit in Action in the Disciples: Dramatising Scripture 	

	<p>In small groups dramatise the Pentecost story from Acts 2: 1–12, using a strategy such as Curtains Up, Curtains Down, Ripple Movement or Connected Statues. As a class reflect on the following questions once all groups have performed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How did the disciples change? – What were they doing before the experience? – How did they feel before the experience? – How did they feel after the experience? – What caused this change? – What effect did the Holy Spirit have on them? 	
<p>If a parish directory is not available ask a parish secretary for a list of parish groups. Generally these include the St Vincent de Paul Society, catechists, youth groups, ministers of communion to the sick, prayer groups, special ministers, church cleaners, liturgy teams, sacrificial giving counters, flower arrangers, lectors, gardeners and maintenance workers, choir, play groups, catechumenate, social justice group and associations connected to school, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Holy Spirit in Action in the Parish: Parish Investigation Read 'Our Parish Community' in <i>KWL</i>, 2nd edn, Year 4, Chapter 6, p. 44. <p>Provide pairs of students with a parish directory.</p> <p>Each pair chooses a parish group and emails, writes to or interviews the group asking them about the activities of the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What is the purpose of your group? – What work do you do? – What are the roles of the members? – What gifts do the people in your 	<p>Assessment of Learning The presentations at the conclusion of the investigation will provide evidence of students' knowledge of the local parish.</p>

	<p>group have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Who makes up your group?– What kind of decisions does your group make in the parish?– What would happen if this group did not exist in the parish? <p>Invite students to formulate some of their own questions too.</p> <p>Each pair develops a way to communicate to the rest of the class what they have learned about the group. Some possible modes could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Visual: brochure.– Auditory: a current affairs interview.– Kinaesthetic: a showbag of objects, stories, images that reflect the work of the group. <p>At completion invite students to view, listen to and interact with the material.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Journal Students consider:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The most important thing I have learned about this parish is ...– The most surprising thing I learned is ...– The most puzzling thing I learned is ...– I now believe ...– I now wonder...	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I now dream ... - I now think ... 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy Spirit Poem Students express their ideas, thinking and feelings about the action of the Holy Spirit using a poetry form such as haiku, cinquain or acrostic. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Echo Prayer Read the Echo Prayer located in <i>KWL</i>, 2nd edn, Year 4, Chapter 6, p. 47. Students then create their own Echo Prayer individually or in small groups. 	
Additional Reading for Teachers	SYNTHESIS <i>How will students demonstrate their understandings, beliefs, values, skills and feelings in relation to the topic? How will students take action based on their learning? What strategies and tools will enable students to discern their action, to plan and implement action and to evaluate their action?</i>	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Revisit the inquiry questions using the Think-Pair-Share strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where do we see the Holy Spirit in action in our families, in the parish and in the wider community? - As people of the Holy Spirit how can we serve the community? <p>Students compare their responses with those in the Orientation phase. Consider the following questions and write on post-it notes to share with the whole class:</p> 	<p>Assessment of Learning This journal will indicate the students' understanding of Spirit-filled people.</p> <p>Assessment as Learning Students' responses to the questions will enable them to identify development in their understanding, thinking, beliefs or skills.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is something new you have learned? - What is something that has taken your interest? - Have any of your ideas or beliefs changed? 	
<p>Prayer together is helped by having a definite shape. Below is an outline of a simple prayer time:</p> <p>An introduction: the Sign of the Cross, a brief statement of why we are gathering to pray and sometimes a song or hymn or a short ritual like the lighting of a candle.</p> <p>A reading or readings from Scripture.</p> <p>A sung or spoken response such as a psalm.</p> <p>Prayers of intercession for the needs of others and our own needs.</p> <p>The Our Father.</p> <p>A concluding hymn or song.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Liturgy Prepare a thanksgiving prayer which recognises the variety and unity of the gifts we share. Incorporate the Echo Prayers created by the students. • Holy Spirit in Action Award In small groups, students design 'Holy Spirit In Action Awards'. Present these awards to selected people from the school and parish community at a school or class assembly. • Jigsaw Reflections Students complete the jigsaw pieces to reflect upon their understanding of the importance of using the gifts of the Holy Spirit. 	<p>Assessment of Learning The jigsaw reflection will indicate how students identify the Holy Spirit in their own lives.</p>

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RESOURCES

To Know, Worship and Love, 2nd Edition

Year 4: Chapter 6, Our Parish Community; Chapter 8, God's Spirit Alive in the Church; Chapter 13, Called By God.

Literature

Morimoto, J 1985, *A Piece of Straw*, Collins, Australia.

Music and CDs

Haas, D 1988, 'We Are Called' in *Gather Australia*, GIA.

Mangan M 2001, *Setting Hearts on Fire*, Litmus Productions.

Morimoto, J 1985 *A Piece of Straw*, Lothian.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS

This unit may be used to assess some of the Level 3 standards.

Students identify with biblical characters and people in the past and present Church by making inferences about their actions, feelings and motives. Students collaboratively plan liturgy using appropriate symbols, words and actions, following a given liturgical form.