

CHAPTER 3

The Holy Spirit Is God

Student Preparation

- Students were asked to respond to the two questions in the text section “Prayer Reflection” (page 65).
- Students were requested to read Chapter 3: The Holy Spirit Is God (pages 66–89).

Warm-up (15–20 minutes)

- Have the students share their responses to the two questions in the text section “Prayer Reflection” (page 65).
- Write the word “**spirit**” on the board. Ask the students to share their definitions of “spirit.” Help them along by encouraging them to recall times they heard about or experienced school spirit or team spirit or someone who had spirit. Use questions like the following to facilitate discussion:
 - Where did the spirit show itself and how?
 - How did the spirit affect the school or team or person? How did it affect you?
 - How did the experience make you feel?
 - What builds spirit?
 - What destroys spirit?
 - What are some qualities of spirit? (*Note: List the students’ ideas on the board.*)
- Drawing on their own ideas, help the teens see that spirit is an elusive word, a word with wings. It’s hard for us to pin down. At the same time, spirit is a magnetic word. Spirit attracts. We gravitate to people of spirit. They light up the room. They light us up! Help the students recognize that wherever there is movement and maturation, wherever there is effort and enterprise, there is spirit.
- Invite the students to work with a partner to create a recipe for spirit. Have some sample food recipes available for the teens to use as references or for ideas. Tell them they can use the qualities they named as “ingredients” or add their own to develop their recipes. (*Note: Below is a sample recipe.*)

✧ *Sample “Spirit” Recipe* ✧

2 cups of Enthusiasm, Originality, Passion, Power, Forgiveness, Love, Joy, and Delight
1 cup of the Milk of Kindness
1 cup of Power
3 Tablespoons of Forgiveness
2 Tablespoons of Faithfulness
2 cups of Delight
Pinch of Passion

In a saucepan, combine the Enthusiasm with the Milk of Kindness and stir well. Simmer gently. Stir in the cup of the Power, the Forgiveness, and the Faithfulness until blended. Sift together the Delight and Passion. Mix all ingredients together. Heat through. Garnish the mixture with Love to preserve the spirit and keep it fresh. Pack portions in human hearts till they overflow.

Share recipes. Compliment the students on their efforts. Post the recipes in the meeting room or consider making them into a recipe booklet to share with other classes.

Part I: Lesson (30–40 minutes)

Text Reference: The Holy Spirit Is God; The Holy Spirit in the Bible; Name, Titles, and Symbols of the Holy Spirit (pages 66–76)

- Point out the passage from Matthew’s Gospel on page 66 and read it aloud. Explain that the risen Jesus was about to leave the apostles and return to the Father. Ask: “How do you think the apostles felt when they heard these words from Jesus? Do you think Jesus’ words were a challenge or a comfort or both? Why?”

Help the teens understand that as Jesus commissioned the apostles to take up his mission and ministry, he promised his eternal presence. That presence was—and remains—the Holy Spirit.

- Have the teens turn to “Gifts of the Holy Spirit” on page 69. Draw attention to the fact that these gifts are qualities of the Messiah—the anointed one—who will be guided by God’s own Spirit. Remind the teens that the Hebrew word “Messiah” (*Christos* or “Christ” in Greek) means “anointed.” Explain that we call ourselves “Christians” because we are the anointed ones, too. Use questions like the following to discuss the Spirit’s gifts:
 - Who is someone you admire that exhibits one or more of the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Explain.
 - Which of the gifts is most important to you? Why?
 - Which gift do you feel might be the hardest to live out?
- Conclude by explaining that these gifts contrast the world’s understanding of gifts. While the world often sees gifts as things we have earned that give us certain privileges (e.g., the way we treat movie stars or professional athletes), these are gifts that make sure that the mission and ministry Jesus began continues.
- Point out the opening text under the heading “The Holy Spirit in the Bible” (page 69). Ask one of the students to read the paragraph aloud. Briefly review the examples of the Holy Spirit’s presence in the Old Testament as outlined on pages 70–71 and list on the board: **ruah** (breath or wind—life-giving); **fire** (the burning bush); **power** (anointing). See if any of these images jibe with the qualities of spirit the students listed earlier in the session.
- Move on to have the teens work to complete the Scripture Search on page 71. Divide the class into five small groups. Have each small group look up one of the passages and summarize it. Then, have groups take turns sharing their summaries with the entire class. For example:
 - *Genesis 1:1–2; 2:7*: The Spirit, present from the beginning of creation, brings life to all created things including human beings and continues to sustain all creation.
 - *Isaiah 11:1–3*: The Spirit inspires Isaiah and the Hebrews to look for a messiah and describes the messiah so they could recognize him.
 - *Isaiah 61:1–2*: The Holy Spirit is making the vision of the messiah more and more clear.
 - *Ezekiel 36:26–28*: Describes the impact of the Spirit on people who are willing to open their hearts.
 - *Ezekiel 37:1–14*: Describes the power of the Spirit to bring life and hope even when it seems that all hope is lost and futile.

Note that God’s Spirit empowered God’s people with the breath of life and the fire of hope from the beginning of creation and throughout all salvation history.

- To help the students discover the presence of the Holy Spirit in Jesus, briefly review the material listed under the text heading “Jesus Is Filled with the Holy Spirit.” Stress that the Gospels reveal the Spirit radiating from Jesus. He had a certain electricity about him that lent spark to the heart and healing to the hurt. Merely to touch the hem of his garment brought renewal. Jesus admitted that he was possessed, possessed by the Spirit of God. And this Spirit is holy. It does not divide or destroy. It creates. It makes. It makes whole. It makes holy.
- Call attention to “The Holy Spirit in the New Testament” (pages 71–72). Remind the teens how they discovered in their first session together that over and over again in the Scriptures whenever God calls an individual to faith, God always finds a people. Then explain that the same Spirit that was present at the beginning of creation, that breathed life into our first parents, that revealed the divine name to Moses, that was promised to the Messiah, that re-animated dry bones, that came upon Mary, that dwelt always with Jesus, was poured out not on an individual (Adam, Eve, Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Mary, Jesus) but a whole people. Acts 2:14 describes the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. The Spirit that had rested on Jesus now rests on a Church. The Spirit that anointed Jesus now anoints a people, and commissions them to continue Jesus’ mission in and for the world.
- Summarize the material under the heading “Names, Titles, and Symbols of the Holy Spirit (pages 73–75) by writing the following major symbols mentioned in the text on the board: **fire, tongues of fire, anointing with oil, water, hand, and dove**. Then add other symbols the students discovered earlier (e.g., **breath, wind**). Invite the students to draw on what they read about these symbols and to tell where they came from and why they are important.

Break/Creative Exercise (10 minutes)

- Join the students in a break with refreshments.
- Have the students look up the Scripture passages in the heart activity on page 75 and write in their journals the name of the symbol mentioned in each passage. Finally, have art materials available and allow time for the students to choose one of the symbols and to draw it. If you wish, play a recording of Amy Grant's "Breath of Heaven" or other suitable piece of music while the teens work.

Part 2: Lesson (35–40 minutes)

Text Reference: The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Christian; The Mystery of the Trinity; Understanding More about the Trinity (pages 76–89)

- While students often have little difficulty recognizing God as a Father who creates us and all things and Jesus as God's Son who redeems us, they often find it difficult to recognize the "why" or need or purpose of the Holy Spirit. To help them make that recognition, distribute copies of the activity sheet "Without the Holy Spirit . . ." from the end of the lesson. Note that seven statements complete the phrase "Without the Spirit. . . ." Go through each statement with the students asking them to draw on what they have read to tell why each is true. Use the following outline to help the teens along.
 - *God would be far from us.* The Spirit is God immanent, God with and within us.
 - *Jesus would be but a figure of history and his Gospel would be no Good News.* The Spirit connects Jesus to the Father and extends his (Jesus') presence among us. Without the Spirit, Jesus would be just a figure to emulate, his message just another philosophy, not the Word made flesh, not the living Word alive among us.
 - *The Church community would be nothing more than a fraternal organization, never the Body of Christ.* The Holy Spirit makes us Christians and directs the Church to serve as compassionate servants like Jesus.
 - *Prayer would be talking to ourselves.* It is the Holy Spirit who intercedes to God for us (Romans 6:26).
 - *Our worship would smack of magic.* We have no authority to conjure God. Christ is present in our worship only through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - *Living the Christian life would be a burden, not a joy.* Only the Holy Spirit can make the "yoke" and "burden" Christ offers us "easy" and "light."
- Go on to have the students work on their own to read the remainder of the sheet and write their responses to the four questions. Afterward, share responses. Sum up by explaining that the Holy Spirit is a way for saying Christ still lives among us. Our lives of love are proof of that presence. The Gospel is a love story, and the love that gives it fire is the affection of the Son for the Father, which is called the Holy Spirit.
- Continue with the text under "Where the Holy Spirit Is Present" (page 78). Review each of the elements listed in the text. Students may be unfamiliar with some terms. If so, clarify that Tradition means the collected teaching of the Church throughout the centuries; review the names of all the sacraments; brainstorm ways the Church—outside the local parish—serves the broader community and the world; and tell the students that they will look at the signs of the Church more completely in Chapter 4.
- As you begin this section on the Trinity, be careful not to let the students approach this mystery as if it were a math problem—one in three, three in one. Begin by reminding the teens that they have already discovered that "mystery" is not a "problem" which—no matter how complex—can be understood or solved. A "mystery" is much more profound. It is something knowable but also inexhaustible. Thus, we can know the mystery of the Trinity, only because God revealed it to us, but we can never completely explain it.
- Write the word "**relationship**" on the board and have the teens spend one minute brainstorming its meaning. List ideas on the board. Ask them to think of their own relationships with family, friends, classmates, or neighbors. Use questions like the following to discuss relationships:
 - What do we have to do to establish a relationship?
 - What are some things we have to do to keep a relationship strong and going?
 - Why can we say that all real relationships involve us in mystery?
- Help the students respond to the third question above by reminding them how they already discovered that people in deep relationships are involved in a mystery. For example, no matter how much a long-married couple knows about one another, each will tell you that they are continuously discovering new things about each other. Conclude by telling the teens that the heart of the mystery of the Trinity is a communion of persons in loving relationship.

- Summarize the material in the text section “The Mystery of the Trinity” (pages 80–83). Begin by writing the phrase “The Trinity is a relationship” on the board. Explain that the Trinity is not simply a doctrine. It is a reality—the reality, which is relationship. The Trinitarian God does not dwell somewhere in the stars but in true and deepening relationship. The Father gives us Jesus who, in turn, reveals the Father and releases the Spirit. The reality of the Trinity reveals God’s inner life to us as three persons in love—three persons in one God who is love.
- Distribute copies of the activity sheet “Understanding the Creeds.” (page 290 of the TWE). Draw attention to the Nicene Creed and point out how the creed states that Jesus is “*eternally begotten* of the Father” and that the Holy Spirit “*proceeds* from the Father and the Son” (*emphases mine*). Explain that “eternally begotten” is a phrase Church leaders chose to refute arguments saying that the Son came after the Father. “Eternally begotten” means *always was*. In other words, the Creed reminds us that both Father and Son were always existing and always in the closest of relationships. Likewise, the Holy Spirit “proceeds” or issues from both Father and Son, together and eternally, not *after* in time. Finally, emphasize to the teens how the terms “begotten” and “proceeds” convey dynamism, movement, and power, all in the context of unity, equality, and love. The persons of the Trinity love one another with a love so powerful it creates, redeems, inspires, and sustains us.
- Summarize the material in the text section “Understanding More about the Trinity” (pages 83–86) by distributing copies of the activity sheet “Our Triune God” from the end of the lesson. Call attention to the sub-heading “Immanent Trinity” and have different students read aloud the three important truths about God’s inner life. To help the teens get a better handle on the meaning of the Immanent Trinity, have them turn to St. John Damascene’s image of the sun and its rays on page 260 of the Catholic Handbook for Faith. The Father is the sun, the Son is its rays, and the Holy Spirit is heat. Point out that there is no sun without its rays or heat, no solar heat without rays or sun. None of the elements *precede* any of the other elements.
- Draw attention to the activity sheet’s sub-heading, “The Economic or Salvific Trinity.” Ask different students to read aloud the ways we know the Trinity through God’s actions. Then divide the class into three small groups. Assign each group to one of the three persons in the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Direct group members to list the actions associated with their assigned divine person. Allow a couple of minutes for this activity. Call time and have the groups share the actions they came up with. Finally, use questions like the following to discuss with the teens ways in which we partake in God’s action as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier:
 - How do we create new things, physically, emotionally, or spiritually?
 - How do we save or “redeem” another person when we extend forgiveness or help someone right a wrong?
 - How do we inspire people to love better or to be more courageous or more generous?
- Briefly touch on the Trinitarian symbols described on page 86–87. Remind the students that all of these images only *point to* the mystery of the Trinity. None explains it adequately or completely.
- Point out the sub-head “My Trinity Quote” on the activity sheet and the “Writing Assignment” on page 87. Have the students read the quotes, create *one*—not two—of their own, and write it on their activity sheets. If students don’t have time to finish, allow them to complete their work at home.

Prayer Experience (10 minutes)

- Gather the students around the Paschal (Easter) Candle. Light the candle. Observe a moment of silence.
- Tell the students that one of the “Trinity” prayers we use daily is a powerful symbol of our beliefs. However, we often pray it in a rush. Use the script below to guide the students through a slow, meditative enactment of the Sign of the Cross.

In the name of the Father,
 the Creator who set into motion the stars and the planets,
 who placed the oceans and mountains,
 who brought each of us into existence
 and upholds us at this very moment,
 And of the Son,
 the Redeemer who became one of us,
 who taught us in word and example,

who suffered and celebrated with us,
who died for us and rose to save us,
And of the Holy Spirit,
who remains in our hearts,
who guides and strengthens us,
who comforts and challenges us,
who will be with us to the end. Amen.

- If your students were able to complete their “Trinity Quotes,” call on volunteers to share theirs in a spirit of prayer.
- Wrap up by leading the group in singing the final verse of the traditional hymn “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name”:

Holy Father, Holy Son,
Holy Spirit: three we name thee,
Though in essence only one;
Undivided God, we claim thee,
And adoring bend the knee
While we own the mystery.

Conclusion (5 minutes)

- Call attention to “Applying What You Have Learned” (page 89). Direct the students to complete assignment 1, 2, or 4 on their own, and to be ready to share their completed work at their next session.
- Ask the students to read Chapter 4: The Church: The Body of Christ (pages 90–117) in preparation for the next session.
- Distribute copies of the activity sheet “The Sign of the Cross” at the end of the lesson which contains the script of the prayer you just led. Encourage the teens to use the prayer at home.

Without the Holy Spirit . . .

God would be far from us.

Jesus would be but a figure of history and his Gospel would be no Good News.

**The Church community would be nothing more than a fraternal organization,
never the Body of Christ.**

Prayer would be talking to ourselves.

Our worship would smack of magic.

Living the Christian life would be a burden, not a joy.

The Holy Spirit is with us always, helping us understand and live out what Jesus taught. The Holy Spirit fills us with gifts to help us live out Jesus' difficult command, "Love one another."

* What is a gift of the Spirit you see in yourself? How are you wise? Understanding? Knowledgeable? A good counselor, correct in your judgments? Courageous? Reverent? In awe of God?

* Which gift would you want to develop more completely? Why?

* What we call the fruits of the Spirit are also the virtues of Christ. The fruits of the Spirit help us become more Christ-like.

* What is one fruit of the Spirit people clearly see in you? Charity? Joy? Peace? Patience? Kindness? Goodness? Generosity? Gentleness? Faithfulness? Modesty? Self-control? Chastity?

* Which fruit would you like the Holy Spirit to increase in your life? Why?

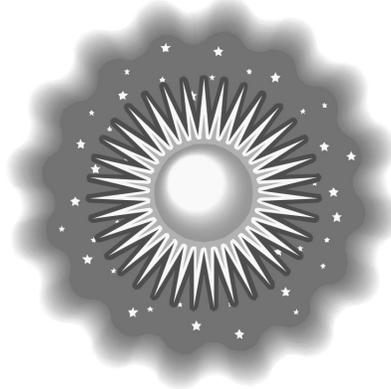
Our Triune God

Immanent Trinity refers to who God is in himself—God’s inner life apart from creation—and how the three persons of the Trinity relate to one another eternally.

- * There is only one God.
- * There are three distinct persons in one God.
- * The divine persons have distinct relationships with one another.

The Economic or Salvific Trinity refers to that aspect of the Trinity that is revealed in human history as God acts:

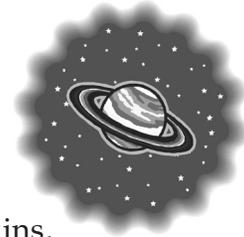
- * In creation
- * In the Word becoming flesh in Jesus and his saving acts on our behalf
- * In the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to inspire us, sustain us, and make us holy



My Trinity Quote

The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father,
the Creator who set into motion
the stars and the planets,
who placed the oceans and mountains,
who brought each of us into existence
and upholds us at this very moment,



And of the Son,
the Redeemer who became one of us,
who taught us in word and example,
who suffered and celebrated with us,
who died for us and rose to save us,



And of the Holy Spirit,
who remains in our hearts,
who guides and strengthens us,
who comforts and challenges us,
who will be with us to the end.
Amen.

