

## UNIT THREE: I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

CONFIRMATION  
YEAR ONE

### LESSON 3: Promises, Instructions... And What Happened Next!

#### CONTENTS OF LESSON:

1. Before his death, Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father. He would be with us forever, teach us, remind us of Christ's words, and guide us into the truth. [CCC 729]
2. Before he ascended into heaven, Jesus made further promises: the disciples would be baptized with the Spirit soon and receive power, becoming his witnesses. He instructed the disciples to remain in Jerusalem and to wait for the promised gift. [CCC729]
3. The disciples, with Mary, waited and prayed in the upper room for this heavenly gift. On the feast of Pentecost the Spirit came, accompanied by the sound of wind and tongues of fire. The disciples began to praise God in other languages. Peter preached to the people who gathered, quoting the prophecy of Joel. [CCC 731, 2623]
4. The people's first reaction was amazement and confusion. The disciples, filled with the Spirit became witnesses of Christ.
5. *At our Confirmation, we will receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as at Pentecost. Like the disciples we must believe in the promises of Jesus and pray, ask and wait for this holy gift. We could ask Mother Mary to pray for us as she did with the disciples.* [CCC 965, 1302]



REFERENCES: John 14:15, 26; 16:12. Acts 1:5, 8, 12-14; 2:1-18, 22-23; 32-33.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts; story- strips (photocopy one per group).

#### I. STARTER:

[Form groups and distribute a story strip to each group. Give the students 5 minutes to guess the story and think of a good end to it. They draw the end of the story in the box given. They then share their ideas. Bring out:]

- The old farmer did not know how to help his sons because they were very lazy and did no work. He knew they would land in trouble once he died.
- When he was on his death-bed he told them that there was a treasure buried in the field and if they found it, it would be theirs.
- After their father's death, the two sons dug the whole field, but found nothing. They thought that their father had fooled them and complained to a friend.
- The friend, hearing the story, told them what to do: sow seeds in the well-dug field and they would get their treasure.
- The brothers did this and discovered the joy of hard work and a rich harvest. What their father could not teach them in his life-time, he accomplished after his death!

#### II. DEVELOPMENT:

- In a way, this story is like the story of Jesus and his disciples, especially when it was time for his death. Can you see any connection? [Using the responses of the students, bring out:]
- Jesus had spent about 3 years teaching and guiding his disciples. But as his time to die came near, they were still far from ready to carry out the task he had for them. (Like the 2 sons.)
- When Jesus was arrested, they all ran away in fear. Just when he was about to ascend into heaven, they asked him, "When will you come to restore the kingdom of Israel?" They were still thinking of overcoming the Roman power. They did not seem to be very good material for the task of leading the Church!

- But like the old farmer, Jesus had a plan. He promised his disciples a treasure, a gift. And he told them what they had to do to. What was that gift? *[The Holy Spirit.]*

Let us look at some of the promises Jesus made about the Holy Spirit.

*[Give out the handouts. The students work on the first section 'PROMISES' without opening their Bibles. Go over the answers:]*

1. "I WILL ASK THE FATHER AND HE WILL GIVE YOU ANOTHER ADVOCATE TO BE WITH YOU FOREVER." JOHN 14:15.
2. "THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL TEACH YOU EVERYTHING AND REMIND YOU OF ALL THAT I HAVE SAID TO YOU." JOHN 14:26.
3. WHEN THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH COMES HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL THE TRUTH." JOHN 16:12.
4. "YOU WILL BE BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT NOT MANY DAYS FROM NOW." ACTS 1:5.
5. "YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME UPON YOU AND YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES." ACTS 1:8.

*[Students do the INSTRUCTIONS' section. They look up the Bible references and answer the questions:]*

1. The key to receiving the Holy Spirit is ASKING. Jesus told us that the Father wants to give the Holy Spirit to everyone, but our part is to ask.
2. Jesus told the disciples not to leave Jerusalem but wait there for the promise to be fulfilled.
3. The disciples believed Jesus and obeyed him. They went to an upper room (most probably the same place that they had had the Last Supper with Jesus) and there they spent their time praying and waiting.

(The feast of Pentecost comes 50 days after the Passover. Jesus was with the disciples for 40 days before he ascended. So we calculate that they prayed for 9 days and then the Spirit came. This was the very first 'novena'!)

Let's go to the big day when the promised gift came. *[The passage from Acts is read aloud for dramatic effect and the answers done together and written:]*

1. The Spirit came on the feast of Pentecost, a Jewish feast.
2. The 2 signs that the Spirit had come were the sound of a mighty wind and tongues of fire.
3. The disciples began to praise God in different languages.
4. The people were AMAZED, ASTONISHED, PERPLEXED. (Some thought they were drunk.)
5. The prophet Joel.
6. He foretold that the Spirit would come on everyone. ('upon all flesh'.)
7. Peter and the others became WITNESSES of Jesus, as he had promised.

### III. INTERIORISATION/PRAAYER:

- What has this story got to do with you? The Church tells us that at Confirmation the very same thing happens as at Pentecost: You will receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- But why is it that many people don't really experience any change or see any of Jesus' promises come true? *[Accept the students' suggestions.]*
- Perhaps it is that they missed the first 2 parts: They didn't know all Jesus' PROMISES, or didn't believe that these promises are for them too. And perhaps they missed following the INSTRUCTIONS: To wait, pray, ask for the Spirit.
- Even from now, let us prepare well for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on us at Confirmation. Let us WAIT, ASK, PRAY. We could do this with Mary's help, as the first disciples did.

**HOME ASSIGNMENT:** ⇨ Read the handout.