

SEALED WITH GOD'S SPIRIT

**SPIRIT ALIVE
IN COMMUNITY
&
A CHILD'S VIEW
OF COMMUNITY**



LEADER'S GUIDE

PLEASE NOTE: This leader's guide was originally written for those using this video program in its VHS format. Those now using this program on DVD may find some references that do not apply to their use (i.e., directions for locating segments, time notations, etc.). We trust that both VHS- and DVD-users will find this guide a valuable resource.

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CATHOLIC UPDATE VIDEO

The Use of Video in Faith Formation

Jesus used the “media” of his day to teach. He was a master storyteller. His preaching is full of imagery. His parables are calculated to engage his audience. Through the ages, Christian teachers and preachers have followed Jesus in the creative proclamation of his message.

From the culture of Jesus’ time, heavily dependent on *oral* communication—to the advent of *print* communication—to our own time and its dependence on *electronic* media—Christian teachers have adapted their proclamation to each new medium and its particular demands.

Media scholars like Marshall McLuhan remind us of the impact of the medium on the message it carries. *How* we communicate affects *what* we communicate. Electronic media offer us new ways to tell the story of our faith. Father Pierre Babin points out (see *The New Era in Religious Communications*, Pierre Babin with Mercedes Iannone, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991) that the message, as well as the sender and receiver, all will be re-shaped in the telling.

Catechesis, as a part of the total evangelization process, must touch the learners’ hearts and shine the light of faith on their lives. It must connect to the learners’ experience or risk being discarded as irrelevant. To be effective, catechists must learn how to make the best use of the electronic media available in our culture, aware of the particular medium’s strengths and weaknesses.

Video is a very popular, familiar and accessible part of our electronic culture. It draws us in, captures our imaginations and touches us on a deep, emotional level.

As it speaks to our experience and utilizes several of our senses, its message is more likely to be heard and remembered. By integrating quality video programs into the catechetical process, catechists can share the message more effectively.

At the same time, as television becomes a more pervasive part of our lives, we can be lulled into thinking that it can do everything for us—inform, entertain, shop, even worship. The reality is that it can't and shouldn't do everything. As Pierre Babin emphasizes, electronic media function differently than print media. They appeal first to the emotional content of our faith rather than the intellectual content. Video cannot begin to convey the amount of information print can. It cannot replace the live presence and personal witness of the catechist. But in a catechetical setting, it can be a powerful part of the “mix of media” used in proclaiming the message.

How effectively video—or any electronic media—is used in the catechetical setting depends primarily on how prepared the catechist is to use it:

- A preview of the video is essential to determine the best use of the program with a particular group.
- The catechist should select a video program (or section of a video) based on the audience, the purpose, and the availability of competent teachers and other resources and activities to support the theme.
- Sufficient time should be available to introduce the video and to process the viewing experience.
- Catechists must realize that they control the use of video in their sessions. They might approach a video program in one of two ways: as a skeleton on which to build a presentation or as a way to “enflesh” an existing skeleton.

A video program well-tailored to the needs of a group might be used in its entirety. At other times, catechists may creatively manipulate the video to fit their needs:

- An excerpt may be taken from a longer piece to illustrate a point.
- A video may be shown with the sound off to highlight an aspect of the program.
- The “pause” button can be used freely to interject explanations and examples or to elicit reactions.
- The program or excerpt may be repeated to emphasize a point.

The producers of this video program have attempted to craft both medium and message with an awareness of the power of the medium as well as its limitations. They encourage those who use it to study this guide and become familiar with ways to allow this program to supplement their own sharing of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Introduction to the Series

Catholic Update Video is a video resource designed for use in the RCIA, catechist formation, sacrament programs for parents, faith-sharing groups, study groups, ministry training and high school religious education. *Catholic Update Video* draws from Catholic life and practice to present a single topic in a “video toolbox” format with four distinct segments—story, witness, teaching and musical reflection.

Catholic Update Video has been designed with today’s learner in mind. Its segments are short and can stand alone or be used with others in the program. The format is flexible, making it useful in a variety of group settings as well as for individual viewing. The emphasis

is on what video can do best, namely touch us through story (*story segment*), testimony (*witness segment*) and song (*musical reflection segment*) with images and the emotions they carry. But a more “didactic” approach (*teaching segment*) respects the need to convey a concise core of information.

The general model for catechetical process (life experience, message or doctrine, response) is respected by the order of the four segments, although at times a catechist may choose to use them alone or out of sequence:

- Each program begins with a **story segment** designed to draw viewers in and help them connect their life-experience to the faith-topic.
- The testimony of real-life Catholics in the **witness segment** helps viewers reflect on their own life experience and prepare for group sharing.
- Our teacher briefly highlights some aspects of the topic in the **teaching segment**. Relevant images help to illustrate the points being made. (*This segment is not intended to treat a topic exhaustively nor substitute for a more thorough presentation on the message or doctrine.*)
- Viewers are invited to respond in prayer using the **musical reflection segment**.

The program’s host provides a context for each segment. This is designed to help viewers who will see the program from beginning to end. Catechists who use segments individually or out of sequence may wish to prepare their own lead-in. On-screen graphics provide viewers with a question for reflection or sharing between segments.

This leader’s guide is an important tool for making the best use of this video program.

It includes the following features.

- **Summary and Suggestions for Use** for each segment.
- **Questions for Sharing** for the *story, witness and teaching segments*; facilitators can choose from them or use them as models for developing their own questions.
- **Suggestions for Use** for the *musical reflection segment* provide suggestions for using this segment in a prayer setting.
- **Resources for Further Study** are listed at the end of this guide.
- Approximate times are noted for where each segment begins. (*If the VCR is equipped with an “elapsed time” counter, reset the counter to 0:00:00 at the beginning of the tape and fast-forward to the time listed for the beginning of the desired segment. If the VCR does not have an “elapsed time” counter, the facilitator can fast-forward in the “review” mode [i.e., while the VCR is in “play”] to find the gray screen and Catholic Update Video logo that indicate the start of a segment.*)

SEALED WITH GOD'S SPIRIT **SPIRIT ALIVE IN COMMUNITY**

Overview Of The Program

The “Sealed With God’s Spirit” programs are a “mini series” within the larger Catholic Update Video series. They are designed to assist catechetical leaders in the preparation of candidates of various ages and backgrounds for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation; help in the formation of parents, sponsors and catechists; and be a resource for use in faith formation on broader issues of Christian initiation and discipleship.

“...[O]ur relationship with Jesus is found in our relationship with the community of Jesus—the Church. The way to Christ is through the community in which he lives.” (*Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*, USCC, 1993)

Jesus promised his apostles at the Last Supper (John 14:15-17) an “...Advocate to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth...he abides with you, and he will be in you.” The Holy Spirit is the presence of God loving us, teaching us and giving us the power to live our lives in imitation of Jesus Christ. That power is especially visible as the Spirit unites individuals into a community. Besides uniting us, the Spirit also gives us our identity, tells us who we are: The Body of Christ.

In one of the Eucharistic Prayers, the Holy Spirit is called Christ’s “first gift to those who believe.” Here’s a gift we can continually unwrap, one we can learn more about and come to appreciate throughout our lives. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, both individually and as a community, in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Because the

Holy Spirit comes to us as a gift, we recognize that nothing we do or say can “earn” that gift. The Spirit is given to us freely. But the Giver naturally wants us to enjoy and use the gift that we’ve received.

This *Catholic Update Video* will explore the many ways that the Holy Spirit is alive and active in the *community* of the Church.

This program begins with a documentary about a parish community in the *story segment*. The parish is the Catholic Community of St. Francis Xavier, located near Baltimore, Maryland. The community is unique in some ways—because of how it began, its early history, and some of its structures and customs. But this group of Catholics shares the same Holy Spirit that we all do.

Real-life Catholics share their experiences of the traditional “seven gifts of the Holy Spirit” in the *witness segment*.

In the *teaching segment*, Father Greg Friedman, O.F.M., offers some personal examples of the ways community has been significant to his own growth in faith. However imperfect, the Church community will always be an important vehicle of God’s Spirit, present to us as individuals and to the entire world.

The program concludes with a *music video reflection* to the song “Holy Spirit, Fall Down on Me.” Along with story vignettes, the song itself celebrates how the Holy Spirit is present and active when we gather in community.

Audience

This program is intended for an adult or teenage audience. It may include

- parents, sponsors and catechists of Confirmation candidates;

- teen and adult candidates for Confirmation;
- RCIA candidates;
- those returning to Church involvement after a time of separation;
- parish leaders, particularly those involved with parish renewal or evangelization efforts;
- any group learning about the Church community and how the Spirit is alive and active within it.

Story Segment

(Begins approximately 03:16 into program.)

Summary

The *story segment* profiles a Catholic community near Baltimore, Maryland, a parish whose members, goals and structures offer the Spirit of Jesus a place to work.

The Catholic Community of St. Francis Xavier (CCSFX) is a young and vibrant parish that began as a community of people long before they had a church building in which to worship. The foundation on which this Church was built is the teaching of St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 12, 13). Paul writes of different spiritual gifts but the same Spirit who bestows them. The founding pastor, Father Tom Donellan, impressed upon the early parishioners that each person has a special gift. Together, he and the pioneer members of the parish worked to facilitate the formation and growth of a group of people who would share their gifts for the common good.

CCSFX is a community in which the gifts of all are valued and celebrated. Young and old serve as lectors, greeters, Eucharistic ministers, peer ministers, catechists and music ministers. People of all ages are involved in service activities within and outside of their

parish community. A special program for teens offers them the freedom to explore their faith in a setting they find comfortable and inviting.

The governance of the parish community is based on a concept of “ownership.” All members of the CCSFX community are considered “owners.” As an owner, each parishioner is responsible for what takes place in the community; each has an opportunity to give input on important issues and decisions. The significant involvement of so many parishioners is evidence that the people have responded with energy and enthusiasm.

Parents are empowered to take an active part in the faith formation of their children. Many choose family-based catechesis, using the resources the parish provides and setting aside time at home each week to intentionally grow in faith as a family.

The community turns to the Spirit-inspired gift of Sacred Scripture as a tool for growth and guidance. Parishioners are offered resources to help them prepare to hear the Scriptures proclaimed at Sunday Eucharist. There are Bible studies for adults, a summer Bible camp for the children and a Children’s Liturgy of the Word at Sunday Mass.

The founding members of this community came to understand the difference between a church building and a Church community. Meeting for over 10 years in secular locations such as a hotel conference room forced them to focus on the building up of their faith community. Now that the community enjoys a new church building, it continues to emphasize that Church is people, not a building. Welcoming and hospitality are emphasized. Community members invite their friends and neighbors to join them. Some say that more people are coming now because they have a permanent and beautiful location. But new people return because of the welcome they received as visitors and the warmth

and vibrancy of the community.

With the exception of its rather unique governance, many of the things this community does are present in other parishes throughout the country. While this parish and its members are admittedly more affluent than many, the Holy Spirit is alive and active in *every* Church community. The spirit of the CCSFX community has much more to do with their vision of Church than the size of their bank accounts or their beautiful new church building. It began over a decade ago in a hotel conference room. There a group of people gathered with the conviction that “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7).

Suggestions for Use

This documentary segment is not intended to showcase an unattainable ideal. It is meant to show one parish among many where the community allows the Spirit to guide, energize and challenge the members to grow as disciples. It serves as an example or model of a vibrant Christian community.

It is important to note that the Spirit is manifested in different ways in every parish. Every parish is unique and so will be the work of the Spirit within it. It is likely that some viewers will compare their own parishes to CCSFX, either favorably or unfavorably. The producers of this segment recognize that comparisons are inevitable, but also hope that viewers will be positively motivated to ask, “How can the members of *my* parish be moved by the Spirit?” As one of the CCSFX parishioners says in an interview, what has happened in her community can be repeated *anywhere*.

This segment may be used in a variety of ways:

- with RCIA candidates who are learning about the Church community;

- with parish members involved in planning and executing renewal efforts;
- with parish leaders and staff as they prepare mission/vision statements or do planning for their parish; and
- with candidates for any of the Sacraments of Initiation.

Questions for Sharing

1. In what ways do you see the Spirit alive and active in CCSFX?
2. In what ways do you see and experience the Spirit alive and active in your own faith community?
3. Why do you think the Spirit is so obviously present at CCSFX?
4. What can your community do to better allow the Spirit to energize it?
5. What value of CCSFX particularly resonates with your own vision of Church?
6. Most communities have a longer history than CCSFX. How can the history of your parish community be an asset in its growth in the Spirit?
7. What about CCSFX affirms your vision of Church? What challenges your vision of Church?

Witness Segment

(Begins approximately 17:56 into program.)

Summary

In the *witness segment*, real-life Catholics testify to how they've experienced the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Introduction

We have these gifts both individually and collectively. When we all come together, all the gifts of the Spirit are present.

Wisdom: helps us see God and God's goodness in all things.

- We've come to learn that if it's not right today, that's okay, because tomorrow it will be okay. What happens today lays the groundwork for what's going to happen tomorrow.
- God teaches me to be insightful and molds my heart so I can be more Christlike.

Understanding: gives us insight into our faith and helps us teach others by word and action.

- It's understanding the needs of others and being able to help them.
- It helps me to be able to share my faith with others. In the face of suffering, it helps to know that Jesus is risen and has already taken my burden.

Right Judgment/Counsel: helps us make the right choices in life.

- We found help from the Spirit and the community when making the decision to adopt our child.
- I can feel more confident making decisions that may disagree with others.

Courage/Fortitude: strengthens us to do what is right and to be faithful despite difficulties.

- One of our parishioners got cancer. As you could see the effects of cancer, you could also see the effects of the Holy Spirit with his courage and faith.

- I call on the Spirit for the courage to speak the Lord's words, to be able to pray with other people and to encourage my children to pray and be holy.

Knowledge: helps us know God and God's saving plan for us; what is important and what is not.

- It's participating in the Lord's plan with others who believe the same or came with the same thing in mind.
- It helps me discern what I should do and how I should prioritize activities in my busy life.
- When you're having problems in your family, you feel like Jesus is there. I feel like he's the answer to all my questions.

Reverence/Piety: calls us to love God and to respect God and all creation; we obey out of love, not fear.

- I thank God for everything—even the ordinary, everyday blessings and challenges of life.
- I'm beginning to understand that the Spirit is here to help us and fill us with God's grace—not because we've earned it but as a gift.

Wonder and Awe/Fear of the Lord: inspires us to marvel at the power and beauty of God's creation.

- Laughter and joy remind me of God.
- Participating in Sunday Mass helps me feel good all week. It helps me to be cheerful on Monday mornings when everyone at work is grouchy.
- I always see God in nature. I see God in the beautiful things and I know that he must be an artist.

Conclusion

Everything that we receive from God, that enables us to serve God better, is oriented toward community. If we

recognize the opportunity to give away what we've been given, then that's authentic, that's a real relationship with Christ.

Suggestions for Use

This segment is intended to help viewers consider the many ways they can and do call on the gifts of the Spirit in their lives. The onscreen “definitions” are compilations of a variety of available definitions and are not intended to limit the ways one can understand the meaning of the seven traditional gifts of the Spirit. It is more important to focus on the gift “which is the Holy Spirit” and all that the Spirit offers rather than an individual gift or definition of a gift.

A recently published book, *Enkindled: Holy Spirit, Holy Gifts*, offers these insights into the gifts of the Spirit:

“The traditional ‘seven gifts of the Holy Spirit,’ a term dating back to the second century, have their roots in Isaiah’s description of the spiritual endowment of the promised messianic king. The Anointed One would receive ‘the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord’ (Isaiah 11:2). In the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate translations of the Bible, the last gift, indicated by one Hebrew word used twice, was translated by two different terms—piety and the fear of the Lord—and thus the gifts became seven. This is a biblical number connoting abundance, fullness and plenitude rather than seven distinct gifts.

“The history of Christian spirituality, however, has given considerable attention to these seven as distinct....Today, unfortunately, these seven gifts do not get much attention. Indeed, discussion of them seems

restricted to Confirmation preparation classes and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. But they are still very active in our individual lives since they make us 'docile in readily obeying divine inspirations' (CCC, #1831). In a nutshell, they are the extra spiritual 'boost' that puts a 'tiger in the tank' and enlightens us to the divine fire of life and love that burns within us and pervades everything that surrounds us."

(Enkindled: Holy Spirit, Holy Gifts by Albert Haase, O.F.M., and Bridget Haase, O.S.U., © 2001, St. Anthony Messenger Press, pp. 11-12)

Use this segment to initiate personal sharing about the action of the Spirit in the lives of the group. Those viewers who are preparing for Baptism may find it helpful and enlightening to reflect on their need for the gifts of the Spirit.

Questions for Sharing

Some questions may need to be slightly altered if used with those preparing for Baptism.

1. How do you experience the Spirit's action in your life?
2. What gifts of the Spirit do you call on/need most?
3. What gifts of the Spirit do you recognize within your faith community?
4. How do you accept gifts from others? How does this affect the way you accept the gifts of the Spirit?
5. How easy is it for you to ask others for help? How does this affect the way you call on the Spirit for gifts?

Teaching Segment

(Begins approximately 24:04 into program.)

Summary

Father Greg Friedman, O.F.M., executive producer of this series and author of books and articles on Catholic faith and practice, shares some insights about the significance of community and how the Holy Spirit is present in the community of the Church. He begins with the story of a canoe trip through the Canadian wilderness with three companions. This adventure is a portrayal of the importance of community: They planned carefully, pooled resources, worked together, divided up responsibilities and helped each other by sharing individual gifts and skills. The remainder of his presentation is outlined below.

I. Community is fundamental to our faith in Jesus Christ.

- A. Throughout life, community has played a central role in my faith.
- B. Most of us can trace our faith to some experience of community.
- C. Faith in Jesus grows as it is shared in community.
- D. The Spirit continues to work in the Church today.

II. We use the word “spirit” when we speak of what animates a group.

- A. “Team spirit” or “school spirit” refers to something all the members of a group share.
- B. Team spirit unifies the individual members with a common goal or vision, making them a community with a shared purpose.

III. Greg's ministry in a variety of communities has helped him discover how much our call to follow Jesus is rooted in community.

- A. There we celebrate our unity in the Spirit of Jesus.
- B. There we are nourished and energized to reach out to others in service and witness.
- C. There we welcome new members through the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist.
- D. The work of the Spirit continues, creating the community we share in Eucharist.
- E. There are many signs of the unifying Spirit in the Church: RCIA, families forming their children in the faith, parish social life and outreach efforts.

IV. Human weakness can disrupt our unity.

- A. Reading the Acts of the Apostles or Paul's Letter to the Galatians shows us some of the arguments that divided the early Church community.
- B. While we acknowledge shortcomings in the Church today, we believe that sin can never block God's work completely.
- C. God continues to communicate, heal and invite us to live more fully through community.
- D. It is in community that we find God's reconciling Spirit.

V. Changes in our society make experiences of community all the more important.

- A. Our society is more mobile and impersonal than before.
- B. Those new to our faith community depend on our welcome.

Suggestions for Use

This segment gives viewers a chance to reflect on the ways their own faith has been shaped by their experiences of community. It also provides an opportunity to look at their role as members of a Spirit-led community and to consider the ways the Spirit works through them for the benefit and growth of community.

Use this segment to help viewers consider the presence of the Spirit in their Church community and within each of them as members of the community.

- For those being initiated into the Church, it provides an opportunity to not only learn about the importance of community but also to share about their own call to the community of faith: What brought them to seek initiation into the Catholic Church? What drew them to your particular parish community? It may also lead to discussion about the ways the Church prays as a community and how bringing our personal faith to a community for enrichment, support and challenge is vital to living a Christian life.
- Those involved in parish leadership or the planning of a parish renewal or evangelization effort may view this segment with interest as they consider ways to help their parish further embrace the action of the Spirit, welcome new members, and develop a stronger feeling of community within their parish.
- Those returning to the Catholic Church and taking part in some form of “re-membering Church” process may find Father Greg’s comments and personal sharing to resonate with their own desire and need to return to community membership. His comments on the human face of the Church may

help them to put their own issues with the Church into better perspective.

Questions for Sharing

1. What role has community played in your own coming to faith?
2. How have you experienced the “spirit” of a group such as a sports team or school? How do these relate to your experiences of the Spirit in your Church community?
3. Father Greg says that our call to follow Jesus is rooted in community. What examples of this can you find in Jesus’ life and teaching? What examples do you find in your own life?
4. The Spirit unites us. When have human weaknesses divided your community? When have you experienced God’s reconciling Spirit in community?
5. Our mobile society makes communities very important today. How do you welcome new members to your community? What has been your experience as a new member of a community?

Musical Reflection Segment

(Begins approximately 33:33 into program.)

Summary

The program concludes with a *music video reflection* to the song “Holy Spirit, Fall Down on Me” composed by Reginald Butler and performed by the Exalted Gospel Ensemble. It is an inspiring and moving celebration of the Holy Spirit. Video vignettes show the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of members of a Church choir as they prepare for a concert performance.

We see the choir members living out the faith they proclaim in song.

- A couple has an argument as they prepare to take food to a foodbank. On the sidewalk outside the foodbank, they encounter choir members who invite them to the concert. The couple goes to the concert, but the tension and distance between them remain. Choir members join the couple in their pew—nudging the couple closer.
- A choir member learns of a parishioner who is sick. She stops on her way to purchase a get-well card, then takes it to the church and invites other choir members to sign it.
- A choir member drops her wallet in the street. Some teenagers notice, pick up the wallet and chase after her car in an attempt to return it to her. The teens' parents are choir members, waiting for them to return home so that they can leave for the concert. When the teens get home, they give the wallet to their father. He discovers that it belongs to a member of the choir. The family leaves for church where the wallet is returned to its owner.
- A choir member who is already running late realizes that he's supposed to bring bottled water for the choir. He makes a hurried stop at a grocery yet allows a mother with a full shopping cart and noisy children to go ahead of him at the checkout.

The choir members all arrive at the church and gather together to pray before the concert. As the music video concludes, we see and hear the choir members proclaiming in song the faith they live.

Suggestions for Use

This segment may be used as part of a prayer experience. An outline of a sample prayer service follows.

1. Invite the group to begin the prayer with a reverent and thoughtful “Sign of the Cross.” Comment on the fact that, whenever we pray, we begin and end in the name of the Holy Trinity. You may wish to have individual members of the group sign themselves as you make a large sign of the cross in front of them all.
2. Use the following or similar opening prayer: *Father, Son and Spirit, you call us into being, you walk with us in friendship, and you remain with us to help and guide. We thank you for calling us to share in Christian community and for the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit in our Church and each of us. Hear us as we unite our prayers as one.*
3. Scripture: John 14:15-17
4. Invite each person to pray in thanksgiving for a way that they see the Spirit present in themselves, in another or in their Church community.
5. Watch the music video for “Holy Spirit, Fall Down on Me.”
6. Conclude by praying together the “Glory Be” and ending with the “Sign of the Cross.”

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1) Scripture references:

Many of the teachings of Jesus such as those found in Matthew 5-7; 25:31-46 and the teachings of Paul in Colossians 3-4:6; Philippians 1:27-4:9; Ephesians 4:25-6:17; and Galatians 6:1-10 give us guidance about how to live as disciples. Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-37 tell us about life in the early Church.

Some references to the Holy Spirit can be found in Isaiah 11:1-2; John 1:32, 3:8; 14:15-26, 15:26 and 16:13; Acts 2:1-41, 19:1-7; Romans 5:5, 8, 14:17, 15:16; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 5:6-8; Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10 and Luke 3:21-22. See *The Rite of Confirmation* for additional Scripture passages.

2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:

Themes covered in this program are found in the *Catechism* under:

Christian Holiness 2012-2016; Moral Life and Missionary/Witness 2044-2046; the Church, People of God, Body of Christ, Temple of the Holy Spirit 781-810; Sacraments of Initiation 1212; Baptism 1213-1284; Confirmation 1285-1321; Eucharist 1322-1419; The Holy Spirit and the Church in the Liturgy 1091-1112; I Believe in the Holy Spirit 683-747; and Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit 1830-1832.

3) Available from St. Anthony Messenger Press

PLEASE SEE OUR CATALOG AT

<http://Catalog.AmericanCatholic.org> for additional print (magazine, newsletter, book and pamphlet), audio (book and presentation) and video (DVD and VHS) resources to support your efforts in faith formation and personal spiritual growth.

SEALED WITH GOD'S SPIRIT
A Child's View of Community

Leader's Guide

Overview of the Program

This program describes how children can see the Spirit of Jesus Christ at work in the life of the Church. It begins with a brief message for catechists and parents from Judith Dunlap, catechetical advisor to St. Anthony Messenger Press. A variety of children offer their own responses to the question, "What is Church?" The video story that follows is presented as a child's religion class report on the Church community. In it, crayon drawings "come alive" into video images depicting what it means to "be Church." Diverse cultures are represented to help children see that "my Church" is broader than "my parish." The program ends with a prayer meditation read by children and more responses to the question, "What is Church?"

Themes covered in the story are:

- A Church is more than a building.
- People are very important in the Church.
- The Church is made up of different kinds of people.
- We all come together because we love God.
- We believe the same things about what God is like and how God wants us to live.
 - We believe that God loves us and that God created everyone and everything.
 - We believe that Jesus is God's son.
 - We believe that the Holy Spirit is always with

our Church and each of us as our helper and guide. The Spirit helps us love each other.

- We are called a community. The Catholic Church is a community of God's people. It is our home in the Body of Christ, the family of Christians.
- We are like a big family. We do a lot of the things that families do:
 - We eat together. Our most important meal is called the Mass or the Eucharist.
 - We pray together.
 - We play together.
 - We celebrate God in our lives at important times. In our Church community, seven of these special celebrations are called *sacraments*.
 - We welcome members in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.
 - We celebrate healing in the sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick.
 - We celebrate special promises in the sacraments of Marriage and Holy Orders.
 - We share our stories. We hear stories from the Bible at Mass. They tell us about God's love for us and about Jesus' life and teachings.
 - We learn and grow. We can always grow closer to God.
 - We have leaders who help and guide us.
 - We support and encourage one another.
 - We help others. Jesus taught that whatever we do for others, we do for him.
 - We tell others about Jesus and invite them to pray with us. We share God's word with others and live its message.

Prayer

God, our Father,

We are your children. You made us in your image.
We thank you for creating and loving us and all of creation.
Help us to care for the world and each other.
Give us thankful and happy hearts.
Help us to use the gifts you gave us so that others will come
to know and love you too.

Jesus, the Son,

You are our brother and friend. You came to show us how
much God loves us.
We thank you for teaching us about God's love and about
how to live as Christian disciples.
Help us to be kind and forgiving.
Give us caring hearts and helpful hands.
Help us to share your great love with others.

Holy Spirit,

You are our helper and guide. You help the seed of love in
our hearts to grow.
We thank you for teaching us how to pray and for making
us members of the Church.
Help us to grow wise, strong and respectful.
Give us knowledge, understanding and wonder.
Help us to always choose to love others.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

Your Holy Trinity is the first community.
We thank you for the gift of our families, friends and Church.
Watch over and guide all people on Earth.
Guide our Church so that we may always be on the path
to you.
Help us to know that you are always with us.
Amen.

Suggestions for Use

This program was prepared as a supplement to the *Catholic Update Video* Confirmation series, *Sealed With God's Spirit*. It was intended to assist in the catechetical formation of primary school-age children for the sacraments of initiation. This includes those parishes in which Confirmation is celebrated prior to First Eucharist. But, as described below, the video has a number of uses.

This story can help young viewers reflect on different aspects of what it means to “be Church.” It may be useful in a variety of settings such as:

- Preparation for any or all of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist (can be viewed by the children and their parents)
- Third grade religion classes in which the topics of Church and community are covered
- Any gathering of children who are discussing/learning about the Church as a community

Suggested Procedure

1. Invite the children to think of some of the communities to which they belong. Help them by naming a few—family, neighborhood, city or town, Church, school, sports teams, dance classes, friends, scout troops, clubs, etc. Write the children’s responses on one side of the chalk/dry erase board or a large sheet of paper.
2. Have the children look over the list and think of things that all of these different groups have in common. Write these where the children can also see. Tell them that the things these groups have in common are characteristics of “community.”

3. Focus now on the Church community. Many children will think of the building when the word *church* is used. Help them to see the difference between a “church” building and a “Church” community. It may help them if you use “Church community” to refer to the community and “church” to refer to a church building. Invite them to imagine that they are talking with another child who doesn’t know anything about the Catholic Church. Have them consider what they might tell the child in order to help him or her get a good sense of what the Catholic Church is—what it believes and how it lives.
4. Introduce the video story as one child’s description of the Church community. Share the video story with them.
5. Discuss some of the different characteristics of the Church community noted in the video story. Help the children see the Church community as friendly and welcoming, real and alive, imperfect but growing—our home in the family of God.

Questions for Sharing

1. How is the Church community like a family?
2. What makes the Church community different from other communities?
3. When you think of your Church community, what do you think makes it special?
4. How would you describe your Church community to someone else?
5. What helps you feel a part of your Church community? When do you feel left out?
6. What could your Church community do to help children feel that they are important members?

Sample Prayer Experience

1. Invite the children to prayer by playing a song about community. *(It would be most effective to choose one they already know from participation in Sunday liturgy. This connects them to the larger community of the local Church.)*
2. Begin your prayer with the Sign of the Cross.
3. Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 12-13 (If available, use the *Lectionary for Masses With Children*, #58.)
4. Reflection on Scripture: Invite the children to talk about the Scripture passage just shared. Ask them: How do you serve others? What gifts do you have to share? Why do we call the Church the Body of Christ? How is the Church like a body?
5. Invite each child to share something they are thankful for in their Church community.
6. View and pray the video prayer (text on page 27).
7. End with the song about community used to open the prayer experience.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1) Scripture references:

Many of the teachings of Jesus, such as those found in Matthew 5-7; 25:31-46; and the teachings of Paul in Colossians 3-4:6; Philippians 1:27-4:9; Ephesians 4:25-6:17; and Galatians 6:1-10 give us guidance about how to live as disciples. Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-37 tells us about life in the early Church.

2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:

Themes covered in this program are found in the *Catechism* under: Christian Holiness 2012-2016; Moral Life and Missionary/Witness 2044-2046; the Church, People of God, Body of Christ, Temple of

the Holy Spirit 781-810; Sacraments of Initiation 1212; Baptism 1213-1284; Confirmation 1285-1321; Eucharist 1322-1419; The Holy Spirit and the Church in the Liturgy 1091-1112; I Believe in the Holy Spirit 683-747; and Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit 1830-1832.

3) Available from St. Anthony Messenger Press

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