

TIMELY TOPICS

OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND CATECHESIS

Pentecost: the "Feast of Fire"

Imagine all the emotions that Jesus' friends experienced during the events of Holy Week into Easter:

- ☞ confusion and bewilderment, fear that became sheer terror
- ☞ embarrassment, shame – maybe even guilt – and profound grief
- ☞ sadness, disappointment, fearfulness and longing

Then the unthinkable happened. The women found an empty tomb. The first response was disbelief.

The risen Christ, however, began to appear among them, comforting them and promising that they would be "baptized with the Holy Spirit" and become his witnesses "to earth's remotest end" (*Acts 1: 3-8*).

More confusion, more uncertainty

At the time of *Pentecost**, 50 days after Passover, Jesus' disciples were gathered in a place of safety where they could console and support one another.

And then – the **Pentecost of fire** that "set their hearts burning" with:

- ☞ love for God
- ☞ courage to preach the risen Christ
- ☞ zeal for the reign of God

The **fiery gift** of the Holy Spirit transformed them as only fire can do; they were utterly changed. The one Gift of the Holy Spirit ignited in them the multiple gifts of the Spirit (*Isaiah 11: 2*).

They were waiting in longing and expectation, and when the moment came, they accepted the Gift of the gifts that would transform them (*Acts 2: 1-4, 12-13*).

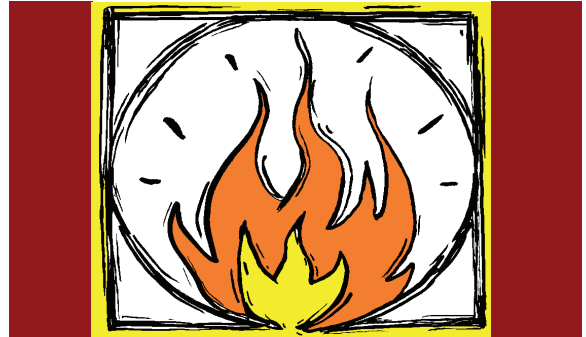
Empowering Gifts and Fruits

Those **gifts of the Spirit** bore fruit in the disciples lives. People could see the difference in how they lived, how they spoke, what they taught. No more fearfulness, caution, embarrassment.

The **fruits of the Holy Spirit** were evident as they accepted and *lived* the gifts (*Galatians 5: 22*).

Inspiring Individuals and Communities

We soon will celebrate Pentecost in our parish communities. It also is the season when the **Sacrament of Confirmation** is



celebrated. It is good to remember that the gifts of the Spirit come not only to individuals but also to communities. The gifts come to fruition not only in each person, but also in each "body" of persons gathered in Jesus' name.

Think About It

In preparation for Pentecost, we can ask ourselves

- ☞ What gift(s) of the Spirit do I most need in my life at this time?
- ☞ What fruits of the Spirit do I see in my parish or school community?
- ☞ For what gifts do we as a community need to pray?

**Pentecost coincided with the Jewish "Festival of Weeks", ending the 7-week season of thanksgiving following Passover, and related to a tradition commemorating God's appearance in flames of fire on Sinai, in which God addressed not only Israel but all the peoples of the world. ✕*

Inside this issue

Gift & Fruits of the Spirit	2
In Service	2
Ideas for all Ages	3
Correlation to the Graded Course of Study & National Standards	4
Resources	4

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

UNDERSTANDING is the ability to...
Listen and know the heart of another
Get to the bottom of things
Work at a problem until we grasp it

KNOWLEDGE is the ability to...
Be willing to search for the truth
Be open to truth where we find it
See what is important and what is not

COURAGE is the ability to...
Be unafraid to live the right way
Act even when we are afraid
Trust that God will lead and care for us
Live by our convictions
Follow our heart

RIGHT JUDGEMENT or COUNSEL is the ability to...
Make good choices
Know what is right and wrong
See the whole picture
Give and receive good advice

WONDER and AWE is the ability to...
Be aware of the wonder of creation around us
Be aware of the wonder of the people around us
Recognize the miraculous in the everyday
Nurture the quiet time/awareness in our lives

WISDOM is the ability to...
Learn from our mistakes
See what is good and what is not
Put things in their proper perspective
Look to the future
See things with the eyes of God
Apply knowledge in a particular time/place

REVERENCE or RESPECT is the ability to...
Be prayerful
Have a listening heart
Be attentive to the messages God sends with every breath,
if only we are open to them
See the presence of God in all people, all creation
Have the virtues of honor, courtesy, politeness

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

CHARITY is...
Loving God and one's neighbors
Freely giving love and care to anyone who needs it
Being able to put the needs of others before our own desires

PATIENCE is...
Being able to wait and to hope

PEACE is...
Being calm in the midst of crisis
Helping to build bridges
Being an agent of reconciliation

KINDNESS is...
Being gentle and loving to people, especially the weakest among us
Doing small loving things for people
Recognizing the presence of Christ in each person

SELF-CONTROL is...
Knowing when to speak and when to be silent
Learning to listen before acting
Being able to do what is right and not just what is most pleasing or convenient at the time

CHASTITY is...
Respecting the goodness, power and beauty of faithfulness and sexuality

LONG-SUFFERING is...
Knowing that tough times come to an end
Being able to stick-to-it in difficult times
Keeping your eyes on your dreams

GOODNESS is...
Knowing and doing the right thing

JOY is...
Having a positive outlook on life
Having a good sense of humor
Bringing genuine happiness to all we meet and in all we do

GENTLENESS is...
Being able to be easy on ourselves and on others
Treating people's souls and bodies with tenderness
Treating people and creation with care and respect

TRUTHFULNESS is...
Being honest with ourselves and others

FAITH is...
Believing that the presence of God is stronger than anything else in our life
Believing that we are children of a loving God and are called to great things



Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit: In Service

Reproduce the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit from page 2. Cut them apart into cards with a Gift or a Fruit on each one. Place one gift-card for each participant face-down in a basket; put a fruit-card for each person face-down in a second basket. Also provide copies of the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Using the information on page one as background, invite participants to imagine the turbulent emotions of the disciples as they experienced the betrayal, trial and crucifixion of Jesus, followed by news that he had risen and, finally, his bodily appearances among them.

Read aloud Jesus' promise to his disciples (*Acts 1: 3-8*) followed by the account of the coming of the Spirit (*Acts 2: 1-4, 12-13*).

- ☞ What changes in the disciples did the crowd observe?

Read aloud from the Bible the lists of gifts (*Isaiah 11: 1-3*) and fruits (*Galatians 5: 22*).

- ☞ What is the difference between the Gifts of the Spirit and the Fruits of the Spirit?
- ☞ When we accept the gifts we are given and activate them in our lives, it will be evident to others by the fruit they bear in our words and deeds. . . .)

Invite participants to draw a "Gift" and a "Fruit" from the respective baskets. Suggest that, between now and Pentecost, they might pray:

- ☞ to receive the Gift, and
- ☞ to be attentive to the Fruit in others – the sign of the Spirit's action

In conclusion, pray together the traditional **Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful,
and kindle in them the fire of
your love.

Send forth your Spirit and
they shall be created,
and you shall renew the face
of the earth.

O God, who by the light of
the Holy Spirit
instructed the hearts of the
faithful,
grant that, by the same Holy
Spirit,
we may be truly wise and
ever enjoy his consolation.
We ask this through Christ
our Lord,
Amen.

Ideas for every age

- ✂ With junior/senior high school students, adult faith formation groups, RCIA, use the "In-Service" provided above
- ✂ With junior high and older, use the following questions for reflection, journaling, and/or small-group discussion
 - ☞ What do you, personally, need from the Holy Spirit?
 - ☞ What do you think your community (group, class, parish, school) needs as a group?
 - ☞ What signs do you see of the Spirit working in your life?
 - ☞ What signs of the Spirit, alive and active, do you see in your community?
- ✂ With any age, introduce the Gifts of the Spirit and use the following in small groups:
 - ☞ make posters illustrating the Gifts of the Spirit
 - ☞ draw from a basket a slip of paper with a "gift" written on it;
 - ☞ create a skit or mime depicting the gift and see if others can guess which one it is
 - ☞ decide what gift your group needs; write a prayer asking for the specific gift; pray it as we approach Pentecost
- ✂ Get a list of names of the people who will be *confirmed* at the Easter Vigil and through PSR; pray for them by name; make/write a card with a special prayer or thought for each person being confirmed

Correlation to Certification Standards & the Graded Course of Study

We continue to provide a correlation of the 'Timely Topics' themes to the GCS and the National Certification Standards.

National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers

Standard I, Personal and Spiritual Maturity: 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.7; 1.9PCL*

Standard II, Lay Ecclesial Ministry Identity:

- 2.4 Model ecclesial ministry, collaboration, and leadership on the example of Jesus
- 2.8PCL Respond to the grace of leadership in catechetical ministry as a response to baptism
- 2.9PCL Give witness to the faith through worship and service

Standard III, Catholic Theology: 3.2.4; 3.15PCL, 3.19PCL, 3.20PCL

Standard IV, Pastoral Praxis: 4.1.1, 4.3, 4.6; 4.7PCL, 4.15PCL

Standard V, Professional Practice: 5.1, 5.6; 5.7PCL, 5.9PCL, 5.13PCL, 5.18PCL, 5.19PCL

*PCL indicates competencies specific to Parish Catechetical Leaders

Religion Graded Course of Study

Standard II-D, Recognize and illustrate God as Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

II-E, Identify the Church as the Body of Christ continuing Christ's mission of evangelization through word, worship, community and service,

Standard III-E, Identify the sacraments as God's active participation in our lives

Standard IV-B, Recognize that one responds to the love of God by growing in relationship to God, others, self and all creation

Resources

BOOKS/PERIODICALS

- Dues, Greg. Catholic Customs and Traditions rev. ed. New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2008
- Foley, Leonard. Believing in Jesus 5th rev. ed. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2005
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. The Creed. New York, NY: Doubleday Books, 2003
- Pennock, Michael. This Is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1998

CATHOLIC UPDATES/SCRIPTURE FROM SCRATCH

Order from St. Anthony's Messenger Press at www.americancatholic.org

DeGidio, Sandra. <i>Confirmation: Anointed for Fuller Witness</i>	CU 0984
Doohan, Leonard. <i>From Spirit to Holy Spirit in the Old Testament</i>	N0499
Foley, Leonard. <i>The Trinity: The Mystery at the Heart of Life</i>	CU 0788
Johnson, Elizabeth & Julia Brumbaugh. <i>Trinity: To Let the Symbol Sing Again</i>	N0599
Richstatter, Thomas. <i>Lent: Opening the Gifts of the Spirit</i>	CU 0298
Wintz, Jack. <i>The Holy Spirit – Yesterday and Today</i>	CU 0580

VIDEOS/DVDS

VTE 1554	<i>Confirmation: Sealed with the Spirit</i> , part 5, "The Gifts"	(teens)
DVD 1030	<i>Pentecost Party!</i> (The Bedbug Bible Gang)	(ages 3-8)
DVD 1095	<i>Faith Clips</i> by Fr. Robert Barron, part 2, "Trinity"	(HS-adults)
DVD 1086	<i>Initiation Sacraments for Young People</i> , parts 3 & 4	(ages 8-13)