



# FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Find time to explore these questions as a family after each session.

## Session 1

- What have you learned in church (or other places) about the Holy Spirit? When you think about the Holy Spirit, what image(s) comes to mind?
- How much do you think about the Holy Spirit in your worship or in times of private prayer and devotion?
- What unanswered questions do you have about the Holy Spirit?

## Session 2

- Describe a time in your life when you were particularly sensitive to the presence of God—a time when you really knew God was with you.
- When faced with a “moral dilemma,” how do you decide what to do? What role does the Holy Spirit play in your decision?

## Session 3

- Have you ever attended a worship service where people were “speaking in tongues”? What was it like?
- What is your view of spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues and prophecy?
- What talents or abilities do you have that you believe to be gifts of the Spirit?

## Session 4

- What do you believe the church ought to be doing with its gifts (the gifts of its members)?
- Describe a past experience of mission or service. What about that experience really made you feel the inspiration of the Spirit?
- Describe one of your hopes and dreams for what the Holy Spirit will do next in the church, community, or world.



## ENGAGE QUESTIONS



Who is the Holy Spirit?

Have you ever experienced the Holy Spirit? If so, when?

What is the difference between the Holy Spirit and God?

Who came first, the Holy Spirit or God?

How does the Holy Spirit relate to Jesus Christ?

When talking about the Holy Spirit, do we refer to the Holy Spirit as a *he*, *she*, or *it*?

What three words come to mind when you think about the Holy Spirit?



# SESSION 1 EXPLORATIONS

## Group 1: Scripture Study

### Step 1

Read Genesis 1:1–2 and explore the following together:

- What do you picture in your mind when you read these words?
- What does “a formless void” look like?
- What kind of impression does the phrase “wind from God” make on you? Can you see it, hear it, and/or feel it? Describe.
- At this point in the events of creation, who and what exists? Who and what does not yet exist?
- At what point in time or history do the events described in these verses take place?
- If multiple Bible translations are available, compare their phrases for the NRSV’s “wind from God.” What wording do you prefer? Why?

### Step 2

Based on your reading and exploration of Genesis 1:1–2, jot down your responses to the following questions:

Who is the Holy Spirit?

What is the difference between the Holy Spirit and God?

Who came first, the Holy Spirit or God?



## Responses

## Group 2: Faith Statement Study

### Step 1

Read the excerpt from the *Nicene Creed*.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

—*Nicene Creed* (1.3)

Explore the following together:

- This section of the *Nicene Creed* expresses four different ideas concerning the Holy Spirit:
  1. What the Spirit *does*
  2. Where the Spirit came from
  3. How we should approach the Spirit
  4. What the Spirit *has done*What words or phrases in the excerpt above connect with each of these ideas?
- What, in your view, is meant when the Holy Spirit is called “the Lord, the giver of life”? What possible different meanings can the phrase “giver of life” have?
- The claim that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son” has a long and controversial history. It means, basically, that the Spirit comes from God the Father and Jesus Christ. Does this suggest to you that the Holy Spirit somehow “ranks” lower than God the Father and Jesus Christ? Why or why not?
- On the other hand, it says that the Spirit is to be “worshiped and glorified” along with God the Father and Jesus Christ. In your view, does this contradict the previous statement? Why or why not?
- The last line in the excerpt says is that the Spirit “has spoken through the prophets.” Who are these prophets? Can or does the Spirit still speak through prophets? Can you think of any examples of prophets who are alive today? (It may be helpful to look up *prophet* in a dictionary or Bible dictionary.)

### Step 2

Based on your reading and exploration of the *Nicene Creed*, jot down your responses to the following questions:

Who is the Holy Spirit?

What is the difference between the Holy Spirit and God?

Who came first, the Holy Spirit or God?

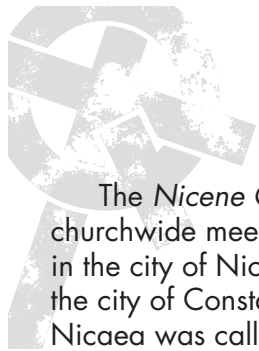


## SESSION 1 FAITH STATEMENT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

—*Nicene Creed* (1.3)





# FILIOQUE

The *Nicene Creed* was the product of two churchwide meetings of bishops (councils), the first held in the city of Nicaea in A.D. 325 and the second in the city of Constantinople in A.D. 381. The Council of Nicaea was called by the Roman emperor Constantine, who was troubled by differences of opinion in the church about important teachings concerning the relationship of Jesus Christ to God the Father. The Council of Constantinople resulted in the document we now know as the *Nicene Creed* in almost its final form.

The original version of the *Nicene Creed* (A.D. 381) had this to say about the Holy Spirit:

[We believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

In the Middle Ages, however, roughly between the seventh and eleventh centuries, many churches in the western half of the old Roman Empire began adding *filioque* (fee-lee-OH-kway), Latin for “and the Son,” making the statement read:

[We believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

In making this addition, these churches were following Augustine, a fifth-century theologian “who thought of the Spirit as the bond of love between the Father and the Son.”<sup>1</sup> When a pope of the western church made *filioque* official in A.D. 1014, it contributed to a permanent split between the western half of the church, today’s Roman Catholic Church, and the eastern half of the church, today’s Eastern Orthodox Church, which still uses the *Nicene Creed* without *filioque*. Because Protestant denominations split off from the Roman Catholic Church (in the Reformation of the sixteenth century), Presbyterians and other Protestant denominations use the version of the *Nicene Creed* that contains *filioque*.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The western church’s preference for saying that the Spirit “proceedeth from the Father and the Son” was “a way of reinforcing the deity of Christ. It also pointed to the New Testament teaching that the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ.”<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the eastern church believed that “the unity of the Trinity” was found in God the Father, “who begat the Son and generated the Spirit. The addition of *filioque* seemed to them also to demean the equality of the Spirit in the Trinity.”<sup>3</sup> How would you describe this difference of opinion? In your view, which position seems stronger?
2. What new insights (if any) does the *filioque* controversy give you regarding the origin of the Holy Spirit?
3. Read Genesis 1:1–2 again. How does this brief mention of God’s Spirit (v. 2) square with two versions of the *Nicene Creed*?
4. Considering the history of conflict in the church—including the conflict that led to the Protestant Reformation, the conflict that led to the Council of Nicaea, and the conflict over *filioque*—answer the following questions:
  - How do you think the Holy Spirit feels about all this conflict?
  - In what ways do you see the Holy Spirit at work in present-day church conflicts?
  - How should we respond to conflict in the church?
  - How should we approach matters such as trying to understand and define the nature of God?<sup>4</sup>

1. Jack Rogers, *Presbyterian Creeds: A Guide to The Book of Confessions* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1985), p. 51.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 51–52.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

4. The background material for this activity is adapted from the discussion of the *Nicene Creed* in Jack Rogers, *Presbyterian Creeds: A Guide to The Book of Confessions* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1985), pp. 39–52.

# LECTIO DIVINA GUIDELINES

*Lectio divina* ("divine reading") is an intentional, contemplative way to connect with God's Word. This ancient spiritual practice involves listening to multiple readings of the same Scripture passage interspersed with short periods of silence. If possible, invite different types of voices to be readers (e.g., young and old, male and female).

## **Relax in God's Presence**

Dim the lights. Light a candle or oil lamp. Play contemplative music. Take a few minutes to relax in God's presence.

## **Listen for God's Word**

### **First Reading**

Have a group member slowly read the Scripture passage out loud while the rest of the group members listen for a word that "jumps out" to each of them. Give each person an opportunity to share his or her word (without comment or explanation) with the rest of the group. Allow a time of silence before the next reading.

### **Second Reading**

Invite each group member to think about his or her word during the next reading, exploring the question "How does this word and this Scripture passage connect with my life?" Have a second reader slowly read the Scripture passage out loud to the group and allow for a time of silence after the reading. Give each person an opportunity to share his or her response to the question.

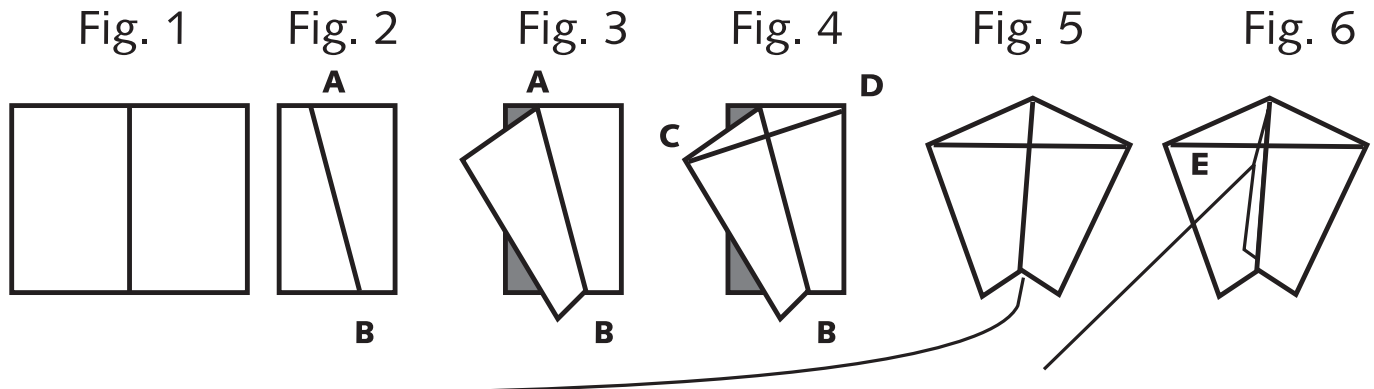
### **Third Reading**

Invite each group member to think about the question "What is this passage calling me to do?" or "Who is this passage calling me to be?" during the next reading. Have a third reader slowly read the Scripture passage out loud to the group and end with a time of silence. Give each person an opportunity to respond to the question "What have you heard from God in this Scripture passage?"





# KITE INSTRUCTIONS



1. Fold a sheet of 8 1/2" x 11" paper in half (to 8 1/2" x 5 1/2") (Fig. 1).
2. Fold again along diagonal line AB (Fig. 2).
3. Fold back one side, forming the kite shape shown in Fig. 3, and place tape firmly along the fold line AB. (No stick is needed here, because the fold stiffens the paper and acts like a spine.)
4. Place a shish kebab stick from C to D and tape it down firmly (Fig. 4).
5. Tape 6 to 10 feet of plastic flagging tape or plastic spiral cut from trash bag to the bottom of the kite at point B (Fig. 5).
6. Flip the kite over onto its back and fold the front flap back and forth until it is perpendicular to the rest of the kite (Fig. 6). (Otherwise, it acts like a rudder and the kite spins around in circles.)
7. Punch a hole in the flap at point E, about one-third of the way from the top.
8. Tie one end of the string to the hole and wind the other end onto the 1" x 3" cardboard string winder.

Diagrams and instructions are adapted from "20 Kites in 20 Minutes" from [allfreecrafts.com/kids/paper-kites.shtml](http://allfreecrafts.com/kids/paper-kites.shtml). Used by permission.





## SPIRIT POURED OUT

**Leader:** A wind from God is sweeping across the face of the waters.

**Women:** God declares, In the last days it will be that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.

**Leader:** A wind from God is sweeping across the face of the waters.

**Men:** Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, . . .

**Women:** and your people shall see visions, . . .

**All:** and your people shall dream dreams.

**Leader:** In those days I will pour out my Spirit, and my people everywhere will pray: in the silent depths of their hearts . . .

*(Pause for silent prayer.)*

. . . and in one voice as children of God, the body of Christ:

**All:** Holy Spirit, gracious God, loving Savior: When time began, your Spirit hovered above the deep waters, and you spoke us all into being. Now your Spirit moves in each of us and—if we would just give ourselves wholly to you—would speak your truth through the words of our mouths and the actions of our bodies. Make us like your followers long ago who witnessed the wind and flame of your Spirit at the birth of your church. Lead us to be part of the continuing *re*-birth of your church. Through your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.





# MORAL DILEMMAS



.....

You see a classmate cheating on a test.

- What should you do?
  - What do you actually do?
  - How do you know the right thing to do in this situation?
- .....

You see a \$20 bill fall from the pocket of someone you really don't like, and you realize that they don't notice.

- What should you do?
  - What do you actually do?
  - How do you know the right thing to do in this situation?
- .....

You're taking a test that you haven't studied for, and you know that you're headed for a really bad grade. Suddenly you realize that you have a clear view of a smart friend's paper.

- What should you do?
  - What do you actually do?
  - How do you know the right thing to do in this situation?
- .....

You see someone being bullied.

- What should you do?
  - What do you actually do?
  - How do you know the right thing to do in this situation?
- .....

You're walking down the street, late for school, when a beggar asks you for spare change.

- What should you do?
  - What do you actually do?
  - How do you know the right thing to do in this situation?
- .....

You're aware that a friend is being abusive to a girlfriend/boyfriend.

- What should you do?
  - What do you actually do?
  - How do you know the right thing to do in this situation?
- .....

You're driving late at night, when you find yourself stopped at a really long red light. The streets are deserted.

- What should you do?
  - What do you actually do?
  - How do you know the right thing to do in this situation?
- .....





## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- How do you sense God's presence in your life?
- How do you know when God is speaking to you and leading you?
- When have you experienced the Holy Spirit working in your life?
- Is it OK to experience God differently than other people do? Why or why not?
- Who is the Holy Spirit?



# SESSION 2 EXPLORATIONS

## Group 1: Scripture Study

### Step 1

Read John 14:15–26. Explore the following together:

- This passage is part of a long talk by Jesus with his disciples as he tries to prepare them for his leaving them. Based on what Jesus is saying, what do you think the disciples were thinking and feeling during this time?
- What difference does it make that Jesus is speaking to a community of people, rather than to an individual?
- According to Jesus, who is the Advocate and what will the Advocate do for the disciples?
- If multiple Bible translations are available, compare the words they use in place of the NRSV's "Advocate." What different meanings do the different words suggest? Which word do you prefer? Why?
- Do you consider yourself among those who "know" and have received the Holy Spirit? (See v. 17.)
- If your answer to the previous question is yes (or even "sort of"), do you feel that you have received the benefits of the Spirit that Jesus describes? (See vv. 17, 19, and 26.) If so, in what ways do these gifts influence your life?
- What does John 14:15–26 tell us about who the Holy Spirit is and where the Spirit comes from?

### Step 2

Based on your reading of John 14:15–26 and your discussion, jot down your responses to these questions about the Holy Spirit:

How do we sense God around us?

How do we know God is speaking to us and leading us?

Who is the Holy Spirit?

## Responses

## Group 2: Faith Statement Study

### Step 1

Read the excerpt from the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

[The Holy Spirit] is the Lord and Giver of life, everywhere present, and is the source of all good thoughts, pure desires, and holy counsels in [people]. By [the Spirit] the prophets were moved to speak the Word of God, and all the writers of the Holy Scriptures inspired to record infallibly the mind and will of God. The dispensation of the gospel is especially committed to [the Holy Spirit]. [The Spirit] prepares the way for it, accompanies it with . . . persuasive power, and urges its message upon the reason and conscience of [people], so that they who reject its merciful offer are not only without excuse, but are also guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit.

— *Westminster Confession of Faith* (6.052)

Explore the following together:

- This section of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* expresses a variety of ideas concerning the Holy Spirit: who the Holy Spirit is, where the Spirit can be found, what the Spirit has done in the past and continues to do today, and how we are to be in relation to the Spirit. What words or phrases in the excerpt above connect with each of these ideas?
- In your view, what is meant when the Holy Spirit is called "the Lord and Giver of life"? What possible different meanings can the phrase "Giver of life" have?
- What do you think of the statement that the Holy Spirit "is the source of all good thoughts, pure desires, and holy counsels in [people]"? Do you buy it? Why or why not?
- What is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to Scripture?
- The last thing the Faith Statement says is that people who "reject [the Spirit's] merciful offer are not only without excuse, but are also guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit." What is the Spirit's "merciful offer"? Do you see a contradiction between the Spirit's "merciful offer" and the suggestion that you are "guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit" if you reject it? Why or why not?

### Step 2

Based on your reading and exploration of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, jot down your responses to the following questions:

How do we sense God around us?

How do we know God is speaking to us and leading us?

Who is the Holy Spirit?



## SESSION 2 FAITH STATEMENT

[The Holy Spirit] is the Lord and Giver of life, everywhere present, and is the source of all good thoughts, pure desires, and holy counsels in [people]. By [the Spirit] the prophets were moved to speak the Word of God, and all the writers of the Holy Scriptures inspired to record infallibly the mind and will of God. The dispensation of the gospel is especially committed to [the Holy Spirit]. [The Spirit] prepares the way for it, accompanies it with . . . persuasive power, and urges its message upon the reason and conscience of [people], so that they who reject its merciful offer are not only without excuse, but are also guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit.

— *Westminster Confession of Faith* (6.052)





# THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

## Step 1

Look up and read your assigned Scripture passages from the list below. Each passage describes events from the life of Jesus. In the space provided, make a quick note about the passage that summarizes what Jesus says or does.

Luke 2:41–52

Luke 6:37–38

Luke 15:11–24

Matthew 4:1–11

Mark 2:1–12

John 8:3–11

John 2:13–16

Luke 10:30–37

Mark 10:17–22

Mark 1:16–20

Mark 6:30–44

Luke 19:1–10

John 5:1–9a

Luke 9:57–62

Matthew 26:26–29

Luke 6:20–21

Matthew 6:19–21

Matthew 26:36–39

Matthew 5:1–12

Luke 13:34–35

Luke 23:33–34

Matthew 5:43–48

Luke 15:1–7

John 21:4–13

## Step 2

Using the notes you made on the Scripture passages listed above, write or draw something that conveys what it means to lead a Spirit-filled life.

# LECTIO DIVINA GUIDELINES

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## **Relax in God's Presence**

Dim the lights. Light a candle or oil lamp. Play contemplative music. Take a few minutes to relax in God's presence.

## **Listen for God's Word**

### **First Reading**

Have a group member slowly read the Scripture passage out loud while the rest of the group members listen for a word that "jumps out" to each of them. Give each person an opportunity to share his or her word (without comment or explanation) with the rest of the group. Allow a time of silence before the next reading.

### **Second Reading**

Invite each group member to think about his or her word during the next reading, exploring the question "How does this word and this Scripture passage connect with my life?" Have a second reader slowly read the Scripture passage out loud to the group and allow for a time of silence after the reading. Give each person an opportunity to share his or her response to the question.

### **Third Reading**

Invite each group member to think about the question "What is this passage calling me to do?" or "Who is this passage calling me to be?" during the next reading. Have a third reader slowly read the Scripture passage out loud to the group and end with a time of silence. Give each person an opportunity to respond to the question "What have you heard from God in this Scripture passage?"





# What is your greatest gift or talent?



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**What talent do you  
have that no one else  
knows about?**



What is the gift or  
talent that you most  
wish you had?



name a gift or talent  
that you have but don't  
know what to do with.



name a human talent  
or ability that  
you've witnessed  
that seems pointless.



**What humanly  
impossible ability do  
you wish you had?**

# SESSION 3 EXPLORATIONS

## Group 1: Scripture Study

### Step 1

Read Acts 19:1–7. Explore the following together:

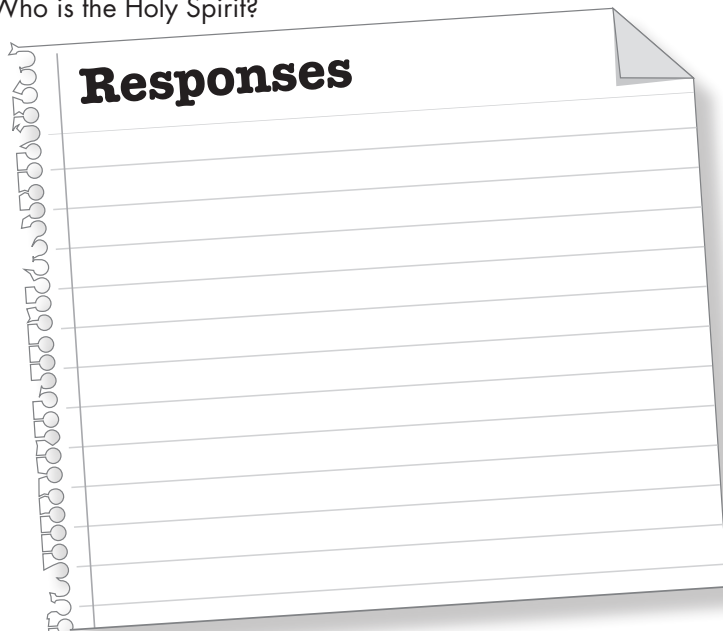
- Read Mark 1:4–8; this will give you a little background on these “disciples” who say they were baptized by John. Then turn back to Acts 19, where in verse 2 they say they have not heard of the Holy Spirit. By now, you’ve obviously heard of the Holy Spirit, but can you identify with their confusion? How so?
- Another confusing aspect of Acts 19:1–7 is that it seems to suggest that Christians need to be baptized not only with water but also with the Spirit. Do you believe this? Why or why not?
- What is the importance of baptism in this passage? How does that compare with the importance and function of baptism in the church today? (If you’re not sure, look up *baptism* in the index of the *Book of Order*.)
- After Paul baptized these disciples, “the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.” What is your understanding of spiritual gifts? In your view, what is the purpose of such gifts? (For more information on tongues and prophecy, look them up in a Bible dictionary.)
- What are Paul’s various roles in this episode? Is there someone in your life who functions in these ways for you?
- What does Acts 19:1–7 tell us about who the Holy Spirit is and where the Spirit comes from? (What does the passage *not* tell us about these questions?)

### Step 2

Based on your reading and exploration of Acts 19:1–7, jot down your responses to the following questions:

What does the Holy Spirit do for us?

Who is the Holy Spirit?



## Group 2: Faith Statement Study

### Step 1

Read the excerpt from *A Brief Statement of Faith*.

We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church.

The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church. . . .

—*A Brief Statement of Faith* (10.4)

Explore the following together:

- The first word of the Faith Statement is “we.” How would the meaning of the statement be different if all of the occurrences of “we” and “us” were “I” and “me”?
- The Faith Statement lists just one thing that describes who the Spirit is, but it lists many things that the Spirit does. What does this suggest to you about human interaction with the Spirit?
- Of the many things the Faith Statement says that the Spirit does, which do you consider the most important? the least important? the most confusing?
- Who benefits from these gifts of the Holy Spirit? How so?

### Step 2

Based on your reading and exploration of *A Brief Statement of Faith*, jot down your responses to the following questions:

What does the Spirit do for us?

Who is the Holy Spirit?



## SESSION 3 FAITH STATEMENT

We trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.  
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,  
sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,  
and binds us together with all believers  
in the one body of Christ, the Church.  
The same Spirit  
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rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,  
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and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church. . . .  
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## BIBLE STUDY

**Read Acts 19:1–7 and explore the following questions together:**

- After these disciples were baptized by Paul, “the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.” What does it mean to “speak in tongues” and to “prophesy”?
- What do you think is the purpose of speaking in tongues? What clues does Acts 19:1–7 give as to the purpose of speaking in tongues?
- Have you ever visited a congregation where speaking in tongues is practiced during worship?
- Using a Bible dictionary, look up *tongues* and *spiritual gifts*. What additional insights does the dictionary provide?

**Read 1 Corinthians 14:1–4 and explore the following questions together:**

- What is Paul’s view of the spiritual gifts of tongues and prophecy?
- Why does he seem to value one over the other?

**Read 1 Corinthians 14:22–25 and explore the following questions together:**

- How do spiritual gifts impact the church’s mission?
- What, in your view, are other important spiritual gifts that affect the church’s mission?

**Read 1 Corinthians 14:26–33, 40 and explore the following questions together:**

- How is Paul’s description of proper worship like or unlike the worship in your congregation?
- What spiritual gifts are evident in your congregation’s worship? How does verse 40 resonate with your congregation’s worship?

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### **Third Reading**

Invite each group member to think about the question "What is this passage calling me to do?" or "Who is this passage calling me to be?" during the next reading. Have a third reader slowly read the Scripture passage out loud to the group and end with a time of silence. Give each person an opportunity to respond to the question "What have you heard from God in this Scripture passage?"





## CLOSING LITANY

**Leader:** Altogether there are about twelve of us.

**All:** While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples—that is, he found us.

**Leader:** He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?”

**All:** We replied, “No, we’ve never even heard of the Holy Spirit!”

**Leader:** That may be, but the Holy Spirit has sure heard of you!

**All:** Really?

**Leader:** Remember when that infant was baptized in worship? That child had never heard of the Holy Spirit, or even God or Jesus! But God reached out and claimed that child—same as God has reached out and claimed all of you!

**All:** God the Holy Spirit—now we remember!

**Leader:** And do you remember your numbers? All together now . . .

**All:** We trust in God the Holy Spirit!

*(Readers 1 through 11 read their lines at the same time, resulting in a confusing babble.)*

**Reader 1:** The Spirit is the giver and renewer of life—everywhere!

**Reader 2:** The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith!

**Reader 3:** The Spirit sets us free to accept ourselves!

**Reader 4:** The Spirit sets us free to love God and neighbor!

**Reader 5:** The Spirit binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the church!

**Reader 6:** The Spirit inspired the prophets and apostles!

**Reader 7:** The Spirit rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture!

**Reader 8:** The Spirit engages us through the Word proclaimed!

**Reader 9:** The Spirit claims us in the waters of baptism!

**Reader 10:** The Spirit feeds us with the bread of life!

**Reader 11:** The Spirit quenches our thirst with the cup of salvation!

**Leader:** It’s true: the gifts of the Spirit can be confusing at times—maybe this is what they mean by “speaking in tongues”! Let’s try it again, one at a time.

*(Readers 1 through 11 read their lines in sequence. See above.)*

**Leader:** Altogether there are about twelve of us, and the Spirit is leading us to pray together:

**All:** Thank you, God. Thank you for the gifts of your Spirit. As we prepare to go back out into the world, start in us the process of figuring out how these gifts translate into the languages of our lives. Claim us, justify us, and give us faith. Rule us, renew us, feed us, and quench our thirst. Engage and inspire us, call us, bind us together, and then set us free. In the holy name of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.



# SESSION 4 EXPLORATIONS

## Group 1: Scripture Study

### Step 1

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4–11. Explore the following together:

- A couple of recurring phrases in this passage are *the same Spirit* and *the one Spirit*. Paul clearly means to emphasize that there is only one Spirit. Why does this matter?
- List the spiritual gifts that Paul describes in this passage. Do some of them seem more important than others? If so, what makes them more important?
- According to this passage, how are the gifts of the Spirit distributed to people?
- According to this passage, why are spiritual gifts given at all?
- What does 1 Corinthians 12:4–11 tell us about who the Holy Spirit is and where the Spirit comes from? What does the passage *not* tell us about these questions?

### Step 2

Based on your reading and exploration of 1 Corinthians 12:4–11, jot down your responses to the following questions:

What does the Holy Spirit do through us? And why?

How are we supposed to know when the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives?

Who is the Holy Spirit?

## Responses

## Group 2: Faith Statement Study

### Step 1

Read the excerpt from *A Brief Statement of Faith*.

. . . In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage  
to pray without ceasing,  
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,  
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,  
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,  
and to work with others for justice, freedom,  
and peace.

—*A Brief Statement of Faith* (10.4)

Explore the following together:

- The Faith Statement begins with the words *In a broken and fearful world . . .*. Why do you think the writers of the statement chose to begin that way? How would the statement be different if it began simply *The Spirit gives us courage . . .*?
- Do you think the order in which the items in the statement are listed matters? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to “unmask idolatries”? (Use a dictionary and/or a Bible dictionary to look up *idol* and *idolatry* if necessary.) What sorts of idols exist in the church? in the culture?
- Who are some “peoples long silenced”? Why is it the duty of the church to hear their voices? What else does the church have a responsibility to do for such people? What does the church gain from hearing such people?

### Step 2

Based on your reading and exploration of the Faith Statement, jot down your responses to the following questions:

What does the Holy Spirit do through us? And why?

How are we supposed to know when the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives?

Who is the Holy Spirit?



## SESSION 4 FAITH STATEMENT

. . . In a broken and fearful world  
the Spirit gives us courage  
to pray without ceasing,  
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,  
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,  
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,  
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.  
—*A Brief Statement of Faith* (10.4)





# BANNER DESIGN TIPS

## Using Symbols

Symbols for the Holy Spirit include flames, a dove, clouds, and wind.

## Using Color

- Be mindful of your overall color scheme and how the colors go together. Warm colors and cool colors have different effects. Sometimes limiting the number of colors on the banner can help with clarity.
- Remember that colors can symbolize different things:
  - Green = growth, new life
  - Blue = water, baptism, renewal
  - Red = flames of Pentecost, blood

## Basics of Banner Design

- Keep the design as simple as possible—banners are tough to understand if they get too complicated.
- Try to avoid making images and words too small—they need to be large and clear.
- Use the whole space so that the banner doesn't seem empty or unfinished.
- Keep it balanced—spread out the images, don't let the design get cluttered, and be aware of what part of the banner your eyes are drawn to when you first look at it.

## Using Words

Words or short phrases can help to convey the message of the banner. To make letters, cut the letters out of pieces of felt, use a paint pen to write on the felt, or glue string or cord onto the felt.