



Holy Spirit

MEETING AIM

To give an overview of some of the qualities and characteristics of the Holy Spirit.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 1:1-2; Exodus 31:1-5; Isaiah 59:21; John 14:25-26; John 15:26; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:38; Acts 10:38

BACKGROUND

This session plan is designed to be used in a home setting or online using video-calling software. You could also run it in person if you wish.

The Holy Spirit can be a difficult person to understand for children, whose thinking is concrete. God the Spirit may be too abstract an idea the children we work with. However, it never hurts to introduce the idea that God is with us all the time, comforts us and guides us. Children will probably know the love shown by family and friends, and they can know that God loves them too – he is with us by his Spirit even when no one else is around.

STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments (if you can). Ask the children to share anything they know about the Holy Spirit.

PLAY

10 MINS

You will need: lining paper; felt-tip pens

Roll out a big sheet of lining paper and let the group draw pictures of the Holy Spirit. If they aren't sure how, get them to think about anything they might know about what the Holy Spirit does and do a picture representing that. They might also choose to create a picture of what they think God is like. Another option is for them simply to demonstrate the idea of the Holy Spirit using colours and shapes.

If you're working online, then make sure everyone has at least basic art materials, and create your artwork at the same time.

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: each verse (below) or passage written or printed on a separate piece of paper and each put in an envelope (or on PowerPoint if you're meeting online) Write out the whole verse or passage on the paper, not just the reference. Before the session, hide the envelopes around your meeting space. If you're online, prepare your PowerPoint so that you can show each verse in turn.

Gather the group together and ask them to be Holy Spirit detectives for you, building up a picture of what the Holy Spirit is like. Ask them to search for the envelopes and then come back together. Open the envelopes one by one and read the verse. Ask the group to tell you what the verse tells them about the Holy Spirit. Try to sum up the idea in a word or phrase. There are ideas given below, but if the children have better ones, use those. Write the describing word / phrase on the envelope and see if the group can create a simple action to go with it.

When you've gone through all the envelopes, hold each up in turn and get the group to repeat the word and do the action.

Verses:

Genesis 1:1-2 THERE AT THE BEGINNING
Exodus 31:1-5 CREATIVE
Isaiah 59:21 WITH US
John 14:25-26 PROMISED BY JESUS
John 15:26 SHOWS US JESUS
Acts 1:8 POWERFUL
Acts 2:38 A GIFT
Acts 10:38 DOES GOOD / HEALS

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- What have you learned about the Holy Spirit that you didn't know?
- Is the Holy Spirit the same as God?
- How does it feel to know that the Holy Spirit can be with you?
- What gets you excited about the Holy Spirit?

CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

You will need: pieces of card (business-card size); felt-tip pens; stickers; laminator and small pouches (optional) Ask the children to think about the ways that they described the Holy Spirit earlier in the session and choose their favourite idea. On their card they can write 'Holy Spirit...' and then fill in the blank, eg "Holy Spirit is creative", "Holy Spirit does good stuff" or "Holy Spirit shows us Jesus". They can decorate their card and you might choose to laminate it for them.

PRAYER

5 MINS

You will need: some bare tree branches held steady in a pot; green paper cut into leaf shapes; pens; string

Ask the children to think about the ways that they described the Holy Spirit earlier in the session and choose their favourite idea. On their card they can write 'Holy Spirit...' and then fill in the blank, eg "Holy Spirit is creative", "Holy Spirit does good stuff" or "Holy Spirit shows us Jesus". They can decorate their card and you might choose to laminate it for them. Talk to the group about the fact that everything the Holy Spirit does brings life in some way. Ask them to write down something they are thankful for about the Holy Spirit on a leaf and help them to tie the leaves onto the bare tree, creating the illusion of life.

JENNY CHEUNG

is a mum, church planter and choir-nut! She pioneers The Voice Project Scotland – a missional expression inviting children and their families to find their voices and sing together with others.



Encounter

MEETING AIM

To tell the story of how the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost to equip and comfort Jesus' followers.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 2; Ephesians 1:13-14

BACKGROUND

This session plan is designed to be used in a home setting or using video-calling software. You could also run it in person.

The Holy Spirit is a key player right throughout the Bible. He is there at the beginning, hovering over the waters, ready to breathe life into the universe. We see the Spirit moving throughout the story of the Old Testament and in the form of a dove when Jesus is baptised in the Jordan. Before his death and resurrection, Jesus speaks of one yet to come, who will continue his work, adding to the myriad of prophecies that refer to the Holy Spirit. As we reach the book of Acts, the disciples are together, probably celebrating the Feast of Shavuot – a celebration of early harvest – and it's at this point that the Holy Spirit chooses to make his entrance, igniting the movement we now call the Church.

STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments (if you can). Ask the children to share the most interesting or unusual person they've met.

INTRO ACTIVITY

10 MINS

You will need: the word 'Welcome' in as many languages as you can find (printed out or put on a PowerPoint slide)

Stick your different 'Welcome's around the room (or share your PowerPoint slide). Ask the group to write on each notice (or shout out) which language they think it is. Encourage them not just to copy what others have written, but write what they think.

Finally, go through all the answers.

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: red and yellow face paint

If you're meeting in person, ask the group to stand in a circle looking inwards as you tell the story.

When the day of Pentecost came, all the disciples were together. It was a feast day, celebrating the early harvest. Suddenly, there was a sound like a mighty wind that filled the house. *Ask the group to make whistling wind noises.* Not only was there the sound of wind, they realised that each of them seemed to have some kind of flame resting on their heads. *Use red and yellow face paint to paint a small flame on each person's forehead, or ask the children to find a suitable filter or emoji. The group can get involved and do one another. Of course, children don't have to be painted!* If that wasn't strange enough, suddenly they all found that they were speaking in other languages – languages they'd never learned! *Ask the group to call out any words or phrases they know in any other languages.*

There were lots of people of God from other nations in Jerusalem for the feast and they were amazed to hear their languages being spoken. *Ask for a volunteer to freeze in an amazed pose.* Some of them made fun of the disciples, though, suggesting they'd had too much to drink. *Ask for a second volunteer to freeze in a mocking pose.* Peter sprang into action. He stood up and told everyone who could hear that no one was drunk – it was only just after breakfast – but instead the promised Holy Spirit had come. He reminded the people that God's word had spoken a lot about how the Holy Spirit would come and do incredible things. *Invite a third volunteer to pose as if they are giving a great sermon or speech.* Peter went on to talk about Jesus and tell the crowd that Jesus, who had been crucified, was, in fact, the Son of God.

The people were amazed at everything Peter said and they wanted to do something to show how sorry they were that Jesus had been crucified. Peter told them that God loved them and wanted them to believe in and follow Jesus. He said they could show that they accepted this by being baptised. That means going into water to wash off an old way of life and show that you are ready to follow Jesus and a new way of living. *Show the group how to pretend to baptise one another by having one child fall backwards into another's arms – just like the classic trust exercise. If you're meeting online, then invite the children to splash themselves (lightly!) with water.*

About 3,000 people decided to follow Jesus that day and the first churches were born. They were all about learning about Jesus, hanging out together, having dinner and talking to God. They shared all their stuff

between them so that everyone had what they needed and they saw amazing miracles happen. Every day, more and more people came to join in. *Ask the group to turn around so that now the circle faces outwards.*

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Ask the group these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- How would you have felt if you were one of the disciples in this story?
- How would you have felt if you were someone in the crowd watching this?
- Why did the Holy Spirit come like this?
- In Ephesians, it says that the Holy Spirit marks us as belonging to Jesus. How could other people see this mark?

CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

You will need: electric tealights; cardboard tubes; red, orange and yellow tissue paper; scissors; glue

Cut a ring as high as the tealight off one end of the cardboard tube that. Cut strips of tissue paper (one of each colour) that are the right length to go round the cardboard ring. One should be 2cm higher than the cardboard ring, one should be 4cm taller and the last should be 6cm taller. Fold each strip like a concertina, making the folds about 2cm apart. Cut a wavy flame shape in the top 2cm of each folded strip, so that when you open the fold, you have flames right along the top edge. Stick the tallest piece around the cardboard tube, matching the straight edge of the tissue with the edge of the cardboard. Now add the medium piece to the outside, and then the smallest. When you place the tealight inside, the flames will glow like real ones. Don't use a real tealight!

PRAYER

5 MINS

You will need: real candle; flame candles from 'Creative time'

Light a candle centrally (or in front of your camera) and ask the group to find a quiet, comfortable place to sit. Invite the children to switch on their own tealight if they want to invite Holy Spirit to fill them up.

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Spirit, Father, Son

MEETING AIM

To see that Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 3:21-22

BACKGROUND

This session plan is designed to be used in a home setting or online using video-calling software. You could also run it in person if you wish.

And now for one of those tricky theological things that no one understands fully...the Trinity! There are many analogies and pictures of how the Trinity works – none of them is perfect, but they all help us to build up a picture of the mystery where God is three but also God is one. Maybe the most important thing to understand is that God is in relationship, and invites us into that relationship.

STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments (if you can). Ask the children to share a fact that blows their mind. (It might be good to have an example so they get the idea, such as the fact that the light we see from the sun left the sun eight minutes ago.)

INTRO ACTIVITY

10 MINS

Ask the children to think of things that have three parts. For example, an egg has a white, a yolk and a shell; a Mars bar has chocolate, caramel and nougat. Once they have an example, they should try to describe the parts, without naming the whole. Everyone else has to guess what the thing is.

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: ice cubes; a bowl of water; a kettle'

Show the ice cubes, a bowl of water and a kettle to the group. Make the kettle boil so that there is some steam. Ask the group what ice, water and steam have in common. Talk about how all three things have the same chemical composition – H₂O – but they exist in different states

according to how warm or cold they are. Say that God has something in common with water. Ask the group to listen carefully to the story from the Bible and see if they can figure out the similarity. Give the background first – John the Baptist has been baptising people in the river and encouraging them to follow God. He's also been telling them about someone amazing who's going to come. Now read Luke 3:21-22. Use a version with simple language, such as the Contemporary English Version.

Ask the group if they can see any similarities between God and water. Help them to see that there are three different examples of God in this story – the Father, Jesus and Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. Make the point that this is mind-bending stuff and we can't fully understand it. Talk about how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are made of the same stuff: they are all God, but they also have their own particular form. Do re-emphasis that this is a mystery!

Talk about how Father, Son and Holy Spirit are bound by love, and how each of us is created from that love and invited to be part of that circle of love. Let the group know that they don't have to understand it to be part of it!

We call this idea of God being Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Trinity. Sometimes you might hear people talking about God being three in one – that's the same idea.

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- Can anyone think of another good picture of the Trinity?
- Can you think of ways that God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit might do things differently from one another?
- Why did God the Father and Holy Spirit show up when Jesus was being baptised?
- How does it feel to know that you are made from love and invited into relationship with God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

You will need: the Celtic knot sheet; coloured string or wool; glue; felt-tip pens and coloured pencils

Let the children explore the Celtic knot shape representing the Trinity. They can have a go at drawing their own and decorate the ones on the sheet by sticking string or wool along the pathways the shape makes.

PRAYER

5 MINS

You will need: Celtic knots from 'Creative time'

The Celtic knot can be used as a finger labyrinth, simply by tracing the unending path with your finger. Encourage the children to find a quiet space and concentrate on tracing the path with their finger. You might like to play some instrumental music. As they go around the path, encourage them to talk to God about anything they like. If you have a lot of space, you could mark out a big knot shape with tape or pebbles and let the children actually walk around the shape as they quietly talk to God.

JENNY CHEUNG

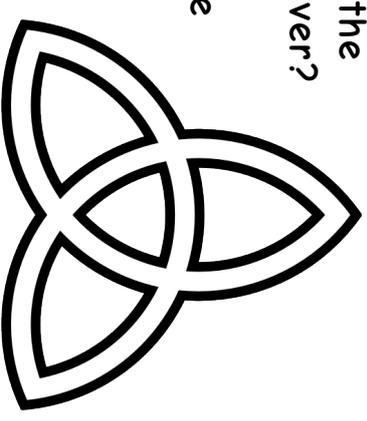
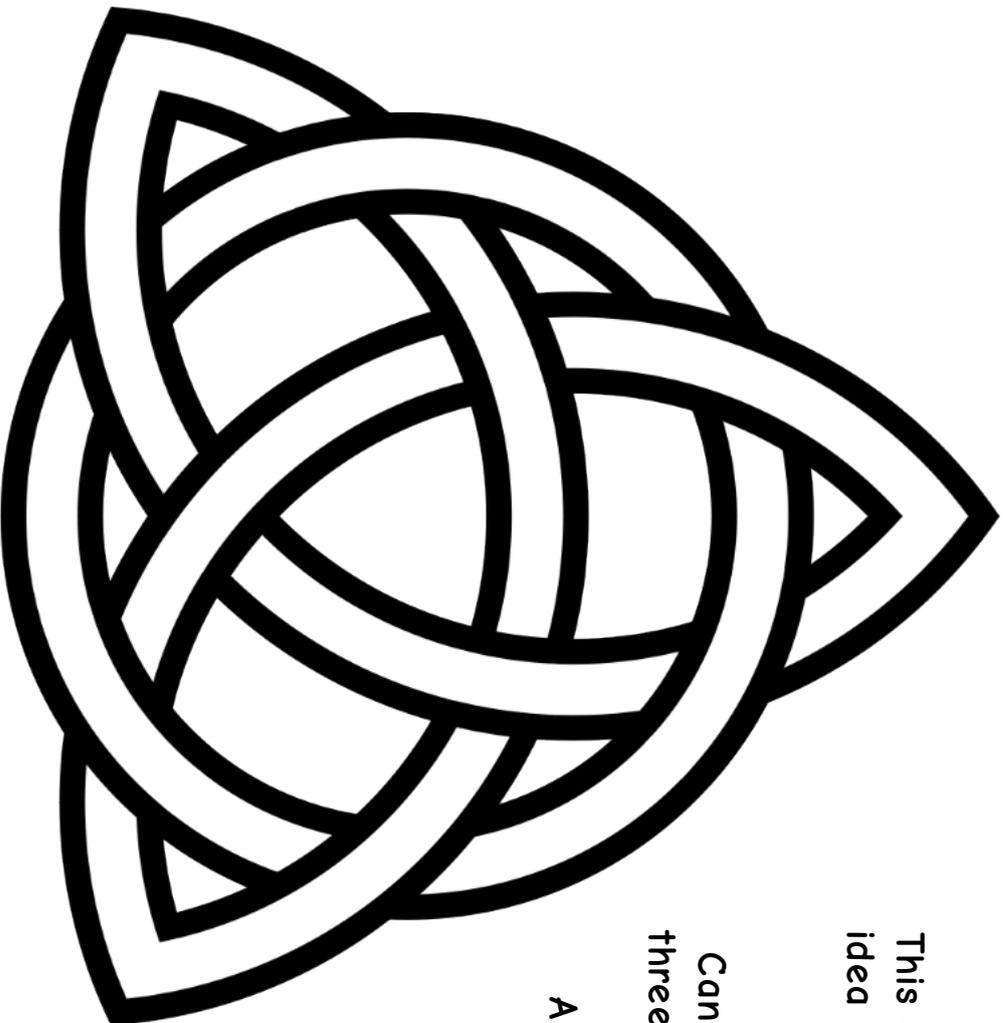
is a mum, church planter and choir-nut! She pioneers The Voice Project Scotland – a missional expression inviting children and their families to find their voices and sing together with others.

THE TRINITY

This symbol is often used to show the idea of the Trinity – God being Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Can you see how the shape with the three points goes on and on for ever?

And can you see how the circle is woven through?



Try and copy the picture above. See how your pencil can go round and round the shape without ever stopping.

Decorate the shapes with coloured pens and pencils or by sticking wool or string along the paths of the shapes.



Breath of life

MEETING AIM

To explore how Holy Spirit was there at the beginning, breathing life, and how Jesus then re-breathes the Spirit into his followers.

BIBLE PASSAGE

John 20:19-22

BACKGROUND

This session plan is designed to be used in a home setting or online using video-calling software. You could also run it in person if you wish.

The Holy Spirit is actually the first person of the Trinity to get a mention in the Bible – they are there, brooding over the waters at the point of creation. The Hebrew word used for Spirit is *ruach*, meaning breath and source of life, so we'd have to assume the Holy Spirit is intimately involved with the process of creation and in the sustaining of life ever since. When Jesus breathes on his disciples after the resurrection, they receive the Spirit in a new way and are equipped to bring new life to the world around them.

STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments (if you can). Ask the children to share any instructions they've been given today – perhaps their mum told them to clean their teeth or their dad asked them to make some toast.

INTRO ACTIVITY

10 MINS

You will need: air-drying clay, playdough or salt dough

Give out whatever modelling clay or dough you have (if you're meeting online, then make sure each child has access to some dough – you may need to deliver some before the session). Invite everyone to make a figure about 10cm tall. As you work, continue your chat from 'Starting out'.

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: dough figures from 'Intro activity'; Morph animation

Ask the children what they know about how the Bible describes God making human beings. Point them towards Genesis 2:7 to show them that Adam was formed from the earth and then God breathed life into him. Ask the group to breathe some life into their clay figures. Ask why it didn't work.

Point the group back to the very beginning of Genesis where it says that God's Spirit was hovering or brooding. Talk about how the word for 'spirit' in the original translation means breath or life source. Bring out the point that it's God's Spirit that causes creation and breathes into that man made of earth. If you need a little moment of fun at this point, you could play a Morph animation to show what happens when a clay man is given life – the one in the 'you will need' list is about Easter eggs.

Say that you're going to fast forward now right through the Old Testament and right through Jesus' life to end up after the resurrection. Read John 20:19-22 using a straightforward translation. Ask the group what it is that Jesus tells the disciples before he breathes on them. He says that he's sending them, just like Father God sent him. Ask the group to think about all the amazing things Jesus did: is it possible that now the disciples are being sent to do the same sort of things?

Jesus knows they can't do it alone so he breathes on them so that they receive his Spirit. Ask if anyone can tell you any stories about what the disciples get up to once they have the Holy Spirit working through them. You can point to some episodes from Acts – the lame man, for example. Point out that the same Holy Spirit also lives in us today if we ask.

If you have time, chat about the differences between the 'life' that Morph has and the life that the Holy Spirit gives.

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- Which bit of today's story are they most interested in?
- How do they think the disciples felt when Jesus breathed on them?
- What do they think about living with the Holy Spirit inside them?
- Do they think they can do the same stuff as Jesus and the disciples?

CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

You will need: the clay people from 'Intro activity'; extra clay or dough

Let the children think about how to pose their clay person to show that they are full of life. They can use extra clay to create any props or scenery they might need to make this obvious.

PRAYER

5 MINS

You will need: mints, such as Polos

Give everyone a mint and talk about how fresh this makes their mouth feel and how cold their breath is when they breathe out through their fresh, minty mouth. Ask the group to think about areas where they need new life or fresh life – perhaps someone is ill or a friendship has gone bad. As they think about their situation, they can imagine breathing in the Holy Spirit's life, and breathing out their hopes for what might happen next.

Check for food allergies before you give out the mints.

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