

The Coming of the Holy Spirit



WE GATHER

+ **Leader:** Let us pray as one family filled with the Holy Spirit.

Reader: A reading from the Book of Ezekiel

“I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land; thus you shall know that I am the Lord. I have promised, and I will do it, says the Lord.” (Ezekiel 37:14)

The word of the Lord.


All: Thanks be to God.

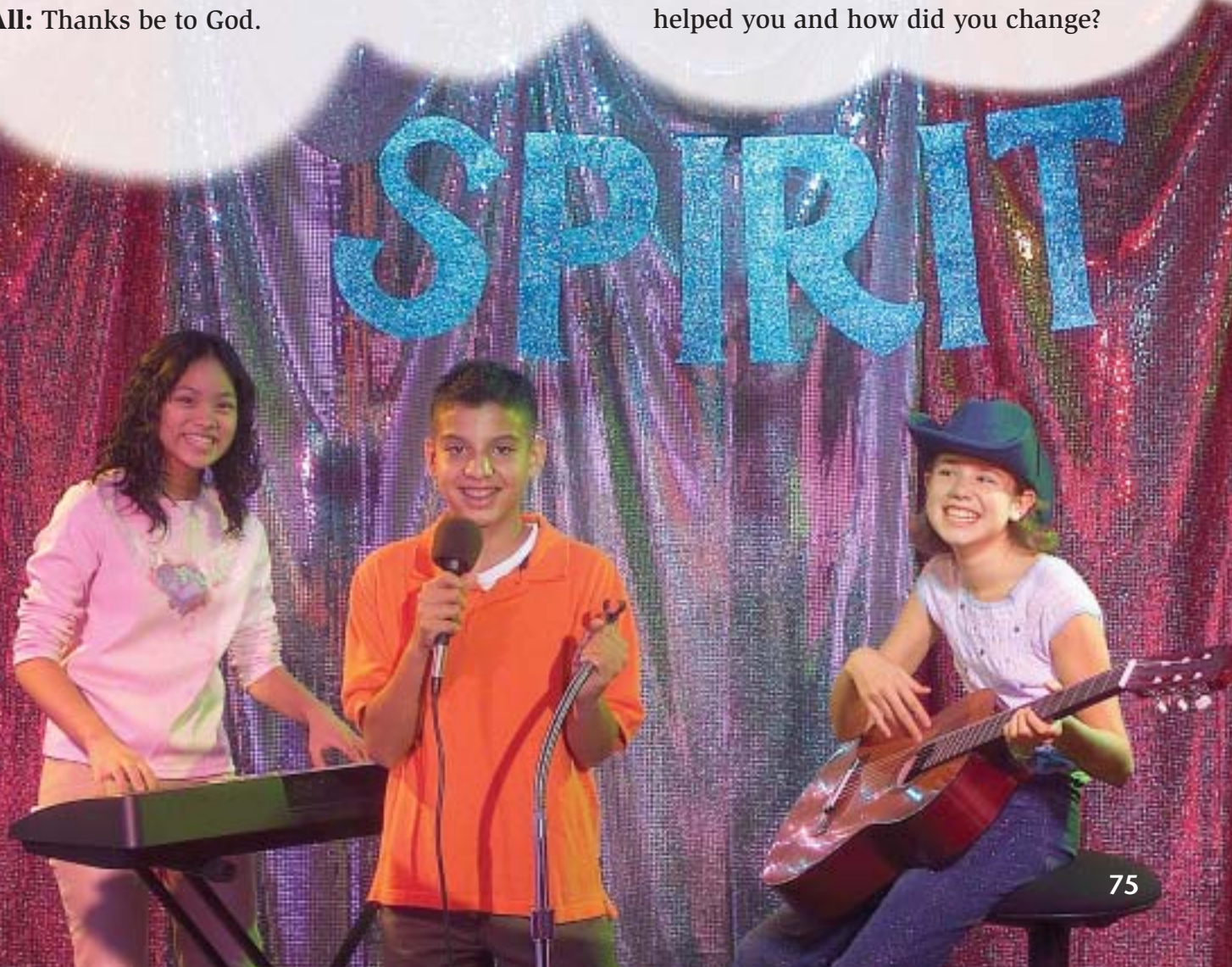
We Belong to God's Family

Refrain:

We belong to God's family.
Brothers and sisters are we,
singing together in unity about
one Lord and one faith, one family.

We are one in the Spirit,
the gift from God above.
We are sent to proclaim God's word
and live together in love. (Refrain)

 Think of a time someone helped you to change something about yourself. Who helped you and how did you change?



WE BELIEVE

On Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon the first disciples.

After his Resurrection, Jesus sent his apostles to preach in his name and to baptize those who believed in him. He promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide and help them.

The Holy Spirit would change their lives. Jesus promised, “you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts of the Apostles 1:8).

After Christ ascended to his Father, the apostles returned to Jerusalem. Mary, the mother of Jesus, and some other disciples were there, too. It was during this time that the Holy Spirit came as Jesus had promised.


 Acts of the Apostles 2:1–47

They were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.” (Acts of the Apostles 2:1–4)

The apostles went outside. Peter told the people that God the Father had indeed raised Jesus. He said that what they had just heard had been the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Each person heard this good news in his or her own language, and they were amazed. Peter told them to be sorry for their sins and to repent. He told them to be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. About three thousand people believed and became disciples that day.

Each year on Pentecost we celebrate in a special way the coming of the Holy Spirit. Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, we are all God’s workers in the world.

 In groups role-play the story of Pentecost as if it were happening today.

As Catholics...

We can find two symbols of the Holy Spirit in the Pentecost story: wind and fire. The word *spirit* comes from a Hebrew word that means "wind," "air," and "breath." Wind travels everywhere. It surrounds us. The Holy Spirit does the same.

The symbol of fire suggests warmth, energy, power, and change. Fire changes whatever it touches. So does the Holy Spirit. We are changed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Talk about other symbols or images of the Holy Spirit.

Laying on of hands and anointing are signs of the Holy Spirit's presence.

After Pentecost the Holy Spirit strengthened and guided the apostles. They gave witness to Christ and baptized many believers. The newly baptized received the strengthening power of the Holy Spirit when the apostles placed their hands on them. The laying on of hands was a sign of God's blessing. By this action, authority and grace were given in God's name.

The laying on of hands by the apostles was the beginning of the sacrament of Confirmation. As the Church grew, an anointing was joined to the laying on of hands. The word *anoint* means to apply oil to someone as a sign that God has chosen that person for a special mission. Like the laying on of hands, anointing is an ancient practice. Anointing was an important part of Jewish life during Jesus' time.

The anointing that took place with the laying on of hands was a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence and of the receiving of the Holy

Spirit. In time the anointing became the essential sign of the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Chrism, oil blessed by a bishop, was used in this anointing. Today in the sacrament of Confirmation, the anointing with oil is done as the celebrant lays his hand on the head of the one being confirmed.



With a partner talk about the actions that are part of our worship. Illustrate one.

In Confirmation we become more like Christ and are strengthened to be his witnesses.

God the Holy Spirit is always with the Church. We can turn to the Holy Spirit for comfort, guidance, and strength. In the sacrament of **Confirmation** we receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit in a special way. We become more like Christ and are strengthened to be his witnesses.


Confirmation is a sacrament of Christian initiation. The first sacrament of Christian initiation is Baptism. All baptized members of the Church are called to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Confirmation completes Baptism and along with the Eucharist fully initiates us into the Church.

The sacrament of Confirmation deepens the grace we first received at Baptism. In Confirmation:

- we are sealed with the Gift of God the Holy Spirit
- we become more like Jesus the Son of God and are strengthened to be active witnesses of Jesus
- our friendship with God the Father is deepened
- our relationship with the Church is strengthened
- we are sent forth to live our faith in the world.

Confirmation takes place in the parish community. The bishop usually visits parishes throughout the year and confirms all those who have prepared to receive the sacrament. Adults and older children who are catechumens receive Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at one celebration.



 Discuss the way your parish celebrates the sacrament of confirmation.

Key Word

Confirmation (p.267)

Preparation is an important part of Confirmation.

Those preparing for Confirmation are called candidates. With the help of their parish communities, they pray and reflect on the life of Jesus Christ and on the mission of the Church. Candidates discover what it means to be anointed with chrism and how this anointing will change their lives.

During this preparation candidates grow closer to Christ. They begin to feel a greater sense of belonging to the Church. They learn to share more completely in the mission of the Church.

If we were baptized as infants, our parents selected a name for us. Our name is often that of a saint or someone whom our parents admire. At Confirmation we choose a name, usually that of a saint whose example we can follow. We are encouraged to take our baptismal name to show the connection between Baptism and Confirmation.

If we were baptized as infants, our parents also chose godparents for us. When we are preparing for Confirmation, we choose a sponsor to help us grow in our faith.

A sponsor needs to be a Catholic who has received the sacraments of initiation and is someone we respect and trust. Our sponsor should be an example of Christian living so that he or she can encourage us to follow Jesus. Our sponsor can be one of our godparents, a family member, a friend, or someone from our parish.

Sponsors can help us prepare for Confirmation by sharing their experiences and answering our questions. At the celebration of Confirmation, sponsors present us to the bishop for anointing.

WE RESPOND



Think of people who are examples of Christian living. In what ways do they encourage others to follow Jesus?

How can the way you live encourage others to follow Jesus?

