

The Holy Spirit is like a Dove

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan
to be baptized by him.

John tried to prevent him, saying,
“I need to be baptized by you,
and yet you are coming to me?”

Jesus said to him in reply,
“Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us
to fulfill all righteousness.”

Then he allowed him.

After Jesus was baptized,
he came up from the water and behold,
the heavens were opened for him,
and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove
and coming upon him.

And a voice came from the heavens, saying,
“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

(Matthew 3:13-17 which is the Gospel read on the Baptism of the Lord, Year A.
A similar reading from Mark 1 is a choice for the Gospel on Confirmation.)

DRAW THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A DOVE

FOR REFLECTION

What did you hear about a dove in the story?
What happened before and after the reference to the dove?
Compared to Jesus' experience of the Holy Spirit at his baptism, how would you describe your experience of the Holy Spirit?
When are you most aware of doves or any other kinds of birds?
What does the image of a dove suggest to you (flight, purity, etc.)?
If you could see a dove soaring with the church on its wings (figuratively!), what is one height you think it would reach?

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

- The Lord says he carried the Israelites out of Egypt on eagles' wings (Exodus 19:4).
- Those who hope in the Lord will soar on wings like eagles (Isaiah 40:28-31).
- A similar recounting of the baptism of Jesus is found in Mark 1, Luke 3, and John 1.
- Jesus says how he longs to gather us as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings (Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34).

The Holy Spirit is like Oil

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

He came to Nazareth where he had grown up,
and went according to his custom
into the synagogue on the Sabbath day.

He stood up to read
and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

He unrolled the scroll
and found the passage where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”

Rolling up the scroll he handed it back to the attendant and sat down
and the eye of all in the synagogue looked intently at him.

He said to them,
“Today this scripture passage has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

And all spoke highly of him
and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth.

The Gospel of the Lord.

(Luke 4:18-22a is a choice for the Gospel on Confirmation)

DRAW THE HOLY SPIRIT AS OIL

FOR REFLECTION

What did you hear about oil in the story?

What happened after the reference to the oil?

When are you most aware of oil?

What does the image of oil suggest to you (blessing, healing, etc.)?

If you could see oil being poured out on our church (figuratively!),
what is one thing that the oil would bless?

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

- The Lord tells Moses how to blend the sacred anointing oil. This oil is for anointing the sacred objects, the high priest, Aaron, and all his sons (Exodus 30:22-33).
- The Lord sends Samuel to anoint David as king (1 Samuel 16:1-13).
- Jesus reads a passage from the book of Isaiah. The prophet Isaiah says that he has been anointed to bring good news to Zion (Isaiah 61:1-2).
- Jesus is anointed at Bethany for burial (Mark 14:3-9).
- The sick should be prayed over and anointed (James 5:13-15).

The Holy Spirit is like Fire

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled,
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.
Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven
staying in Jerusalem.
At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd,
but they were confused
because each one heard them speaking in his own language.
They were astounded, and in amazement they asked,
“Are not all these people who are speaking
Galileans (*Gah-lih-LEE-ans*)?
Then how does each of us hear them in his native language?
We are Parthians (*PAR-thee-ans*), Medes (*MEEDS*),
and Elamites (*EE-lah-mites*),
inhabitants of Mesopotamia (*Meh-soh-pah-TAY-mee-ya*),
Judea (Ju-DEE-ah) and Cappadocia (*Cah-pah-DOH-see-ah*),
Pontus (*PON-tus*) and Asia, Phrygia (*FRIH-jee-ah*)
and Pamphylia (*Pam-FU-lee-ya*),
Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene (*SYE-reen*),
as well as travelers from Rome,
both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans (*CREE-tans*) and Arabs,
yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues
of the mighty acts of God.”

The Word of the Lord.

(Acts 2:1-11 is the First Reading on the day of Pentecost &
a choice for the First Reading on Confirmation)

DRAW THE HOLY SPIRIT AS FIRE

FOR REFLECTION

What did you hear about fire in the story?
What followed the reference to fire?
When are you most aware of fire?
What does the image of fire suggest to you (warmth, unpredictability, etc.)?
If you could see a fire being lit in our church (figuratively!),
what is one thing that the fire would spark?

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

- Moses receives his call to lead the Israelites out of Egypt from the voice in the burning bush (Exodus 3).
- John the Baptist said one would come after him to baptize with the holy Spirit and fire (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16).
- Paul urges the Thessalonians not to quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The Holy Spirit is like Breath / Wind

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

On the evening of that first day of the week,
when the doors were locked, where the disciples were,
for fear of the Jews,
Jesus came and stood in their midst
and said to them, "Peace be with you."

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you.

As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

And when he had said this, he breathed on them

and said to them,

"Receive the Holy Spirit.

Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,

and whose sins you retain are retained."

The Gospel of the Lord.

(John 20:19-23 which is the Gospel read on the day of Pentecost, Year A)

DRAW THE HOLY SPIRIT AS BREATH / WIND

FOR REFLECTION

What did you hear about breath in the story?

What followed the reference to breath?

When are you most aware of your breath?

When are you most aware of the wind?

What does the image of breath or wind suggest to you (change, power, etc.)?

If you could see the wind blowing through our church (figuratively!),

what is one thing that the wind would stir up?

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

- The wind sweeps over the waters in the creation story (Genesis 1).
- The wind blows back the sea during the exodus from Egypt (Exodus 14:21-22).
- The Lord's breath creates and renews (Psalm 104).
- The wind enlivens the dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14, read on The Vigil of Pentecost).
- Jesus tells Nicodemus that the Spirit is like the wind (John 3:8).
- The wind blows on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-11, read on the day of Pentecost).

The Holy Spirit is like Water

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit;
there are different forms of service but the same Lord;
there are different workings but the same God
who produces all of them in everyone.

To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit
is given for some benefit.

As a body is one though it has many parts,
and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body,
so also Christ.

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body,
whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons,
and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.

(1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13 which is the Second Reading on the day of Pentecost,
Year A & a choice for the Second Reading on Confirmation)

DRAW THE HOLY SPIRIT AS WATER

FOR REFLECTION

What did you hear about water in the story?

What preceded the reference to water?

When are you most aware of water?

What does the image of water suggest to you
(ebb and flow, refreshment, etc.)?

If you could see water being poured out on our church (figuratively!),
what is one thing that the water would refresh?

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

- Speaking through Ezekiel, God promises that the people will be renewed in the Spirit as if by a refreshing shower (Ezekiel 36:25-26).
- Frequently the Spirit is poured out like water (Isaiah 44:3; Joel 3:1-5, read on The Vigil of Pentecost; Acts 2:17-18; Acts 10:25-26, 34-49; Romans 5:5).
- Jesus promises the Samaritan woman the gift of "living water" (John 4:5-42).
- Jesus says rivers of living water will flow because of the Spirit (John 7:37-39, read on The Vigil of Pentecost).