

SESSION GOALS

Life Change: To regularly acknowledge the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit in our prayer lives.

SESSION'S QUESTION AND ANSWER

The Holy Spirit is the divine third Person of the Trinity who is an active agent in creation, Christ's resurrection, and our redemption. The Spirit comforts, enlightens, and empowers us to live righteously and reflect Christ to the world.

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REVIEW LAST SESSION

In our previous session, Francis introduced the person of Jesus—who he is, how he loves us, and what he did for us. Before moving to today’s session, let’s discuss the Deeper Walk exercises you chose. **Which ones got your attention? How did it go?**

OPEN

Which talent do you wish you had?

Some of us were born to sing, while others cannot carry a tune. Or perhaps you wish you were athletic but lack coordination and strength. Some abilities are innate while many can be grown and developed with practice. In our session today, Francis will explore the giver of spiritual gifts, the Holy Spirit. The Spirit does much more than just dole out special abilities—he makes dead things live and living things flourish.

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Francis Chan’s teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

What phrases do we see in Scripture that refer to the Holy Spirit?

In what ways is the Spirit working in the lives of believers?

Show Session 5: *Who Is the Holy Spirit?* (16 minutes).

Francis began his teaching by noting how often the Holy Spirit is left out of conversations about God and how sometimes he is considered less of a person and more of a power or thing. As we explore what the Bible reveals to us about the Holy Spirit, it's important to remember that we're talking about the third Person of the Trinity, God himself. **When you think about God, to what degree do you think of the Spirit? How do you tend to describe him—more as a person or a power or thing? Why?**

Francis reminded us that the Holy Spirit was present at creation with the Father and the Son. Read Genesis 1:1–2. Scripture emphasizes not the mechanics of how the world was created, but that God—all three Persons of the Trinity—created it. (Remember from session 4 that John 1:1 shows God the Son, Jesus, was also involved with creation.) **When you imagine God creating the world as described in Genesis 1, does the Spirit play a part in your imagination? Why, or why not? How does the Spirit’s involvement in creation reveal that the Spirit is fully God?**

The same Spirit who created the world and the first humans also dwells within each follower of Christ, redeeming us from sin and strengthening us to do good. Read Romans 8:1–2, 9. Note how Paul describes him as “the Spirit of Life.” With the Spirit, we have no more separation from God. If you are “in Christ”—trusting him as God and savior—the Spirit lives in you all the time, giving you power over sinful impulses and unrighteous desires. **If you follow Christ, in what ways have you noticed the Spirit working in your life? In what ways has he empowered you to live obediently and serve others?**

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To help you remember the freedom we have in Christ through the Spirit, see Practice 1 in the Deeper Walk section at the end of this session.

Francis walked us through several passages that show the Spirit's presence throughout the Bible. The Spirit was at work throughout the Old Testament, starting in Creation as we already discussed. He also gave people special abilities for acts of service and for leadership over his people. Read Judges 3:9–11 and 1 Samuel 16:13. When he chose judges like Othniel and kings like David to lead his people, God also empowered them through his Spirit. The Spirit's presence in certain people then, and in all believers now, was a sign of God's call on their lives. **To what extent were you aware that the Spirit had an active role in the lives of Old Testament people? In what ways does knowing the Spirit has always been working among God's people impact the way you think about him?**

For further study on the Spirit's activity in the Old Testament, see Practice 2 in the Deeper Walk section at the end of this session.

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The Spirit also took an active role in Christ's life on earth. When the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would bear the Messiah, she asked how it would come about. Read Luke 1:34–35.

The Spirit's direct involvement in the Incarnation of Jesus, the Son of God becoming human, was a sign of the Trinity's unified desire to reconcile with sinful people. **How is your view of God impacted by knowing that all three Persons of the Trinity took part in Jesus's incarnation?**

The Spirit appeared symbolically at Jesus's baptism. Read Matthew 3:16–17. In a rare scene, all three persons of the Trinity were made apparent to human senses—Jesus, the Spirit like a dove, and the voice of the Father from heaven. The Father was pleased with his Son and sent his Spirit to come upon him in power. It's worth noticing that Jesus's mission was so significant that all three persons of the Trinity made their presence known when he launched his ministry. Our salvation is dear to God because he loves us.

To what degree have you considered that the Holy Spirit loves you? What images or biblical scenes come to mind when you hear "God loves you"? If you do not typically think of the Spirit, what can you do to remember him more when you consider your salvation?

In another passage that directly references the Trinity, Matthew 28:19–20, Jesus commanded his followers to share the gospel and baptize disciples in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit. We believe in a triune God, and we are called to teach others about God as three Persons—including the Spirit. **Would you say you talk about the Spirit when you share the gospel? If so, what do you say about him? If not, in what ways can you include the Spirit**

more often when you talk about God with others?

When Jesus was preparing his followers for his coming death, he told them it would be better when he was gone because he would send the Spirit. Read John 14:15–17, 26. Jesus promised to send the Spirit, who comes alongside us to meet our needs, whether emotional, intellectual, or spiritual. His presence is with us always. **When you are enduring a trial, how aware are you that God’s Spirit is right there with you? What do you do to remind yourself of his presence?**

For an example of seeking the Holy Spirit in prayer, see Practice 3 in the Deeper Walk section at the end of this session.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

In John 14:16, Jesus promises that his Father will send “another counselor” (CSB). Footnotes in the biblical text offer alternative translations to counselor: comforter, advocate, and helper are the most common. The Greek word being translated is *parakletos*, or Paraclete, a term that refers to the Holy Spirit. As the Paraclete, the Spirit dwells within believers, constantly in our presence unlike Jesus the God-man who could be in only one place at a time. He is characterized by his abiding assistance and empowerment, giving Christians the help, comfort, counsel, and wisdom we need. Because the English language does not have a single word encompassing all of the characteristics found in *parakletos*, translators are forced to choose one of its several meanings.

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

In John 14:17, Jesus also described the Spirit as the Spirit of truth. He teaches us truth and gives us wisdom. As we surrender to Christ, the Spirit opens our eyes to truth. Read Acts 2:37–38. As Francis shared, the Spirit-led disciples preached to the crowds, who were “pierced to the heart.” Their repentance and baptisms revealed that the Holy Spirit had shown them the truth about Jesus. He does the same with us. **What means did God use to reveal the gospel as truth to you? What practices have you engaged in to continue believing and learning truth?**

As we continue to follow Christ, the Spirit gives us special gifts with which we serve the church. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4–11. The Spirit, the same God we all worship, gives us different gifts as he wills. Paul emphasizes in verse 7 that spiritual gifts are from God and “for the common good.” They’re part of the way the Spirit empowers us to serve him. **Which spiritual gifts have you been using to serve your church family? Which gifts do you see others in your group practicing?**

To help you learn more about your spiritual gifts, see Practice 4 in the Deeper Walk section at the end of this session.

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Ancient Words

From the Nicene Creed:

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the
Son.

With the Father and the Son he is
worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets.

The Spirit is a renewer—he brings life. Read Romans 8:6–11. The Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead now lives in us, empowering us for righteous living and offering hope both for today and in eternity with him. He changes our mindset about sin's power over us. **In what ways have you gained confidence that certain sins no longer rule you since you began following Christ?**

As Francis mentioned, it's an awesome thought to consider that the one who brought life back to Jesus's body abides with us and even prays for us to the Father. He gives us the power to live for God instead of ourselves. **What struggle, worry, or grief in your life needs the Spirit's comfort and counsel? What could it look like to rely on the Holy Spirit's power in your life today?**

The Spirit puts God's will into action. By his power, we can live obediently, choosing right more than wrong, serving others, and comprehending his gift of mercy. He is fully God yet abides with us so that we will never be parted from him. He invites us to bring him our troubles and seek his wisdom. Since Jesus ascended to heaven, the Spirit is God with us. What a gift! In the following section, find practical ideas to incorporate what you're learning about the Spirit into your everyday life.

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The Deeper Walk section is designed to help you practice different ways to interact with God and reflect on what you've learned in this session. Pick at least one activity to try before the next session.

Memorize Romans 8:1–2, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.”

To explore more fully how the Spirit worked in the Old Testament, read about specific people he empowered and why he did so. For instance: Bezalel (Exodus 31:1–5), judges like Gideon (Judges 6:11–23, 6:33–7:23) and Samson (Judges 13:1–5, 15:9–16), King David (1 Samuel 16:1–13), and the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 11:1–12). What tasks did the Spirit give them strength to do? How did they respond to God’s call on their life? What difference did they make among the people of Israel?

With your small group, read this traditional prayer aloud as an act of worship. (See the Peek at the Greek above for more information on the term Paraclete found in the second paragraph.) This prayer was written around the year 800 by the monk Rhabanus Maurus.

Come, Holy Spirit, Creator come,
From your bright heavenly throne!
Come, take possession of our souls,
And make them all your own.

[illegible]

You who are called the Paraclete,
Best gift of God above,
The living spring, the living fire,
Sweet unction, and true love!

You who are sevenfold in your grace,
Finger of God's right hand,
His promise, teaching little ones
To speak and understand!

O guide our minds with your blessed light,
With love our hearts inflame,
And with your strength which never decays
Confirm our mortal frame.

Far from us drive our hellish foe
True peace unto us bring,
And through all perils guide us safe
Beneath your sacred wing.

Through you may we the Father know,
Through you the eternal Son
And you the Spirit of them both
Thrice-blessed three in one.

All glory to the Father be,
And to the risen Son;
The same to you, O Paraclete,
While endless ages run.
Amen.

Practice 4: Community

The Bible tells us about gifts given by the Holy Spirit to all believers. Take a look at the gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11–13, Romans 12:6–8, and 1 Corinthians 12. Talk with your small group, close friends, or family about your spiritual gifts. If you are not sure what yours may be, ask those who know you best what they see you offering to the church. Often our gifts become evident to others

before we figure them out. Online spiritual gift tests can also be helpful in discerning how God is using you in his church or how you can effectively serve your faith community.

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What Is a Christian? STUDY GUIDE

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