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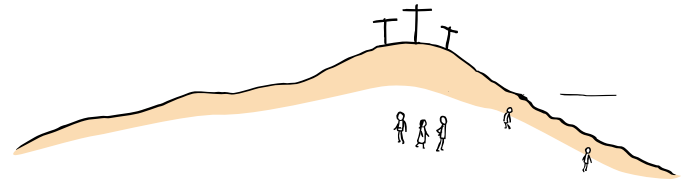
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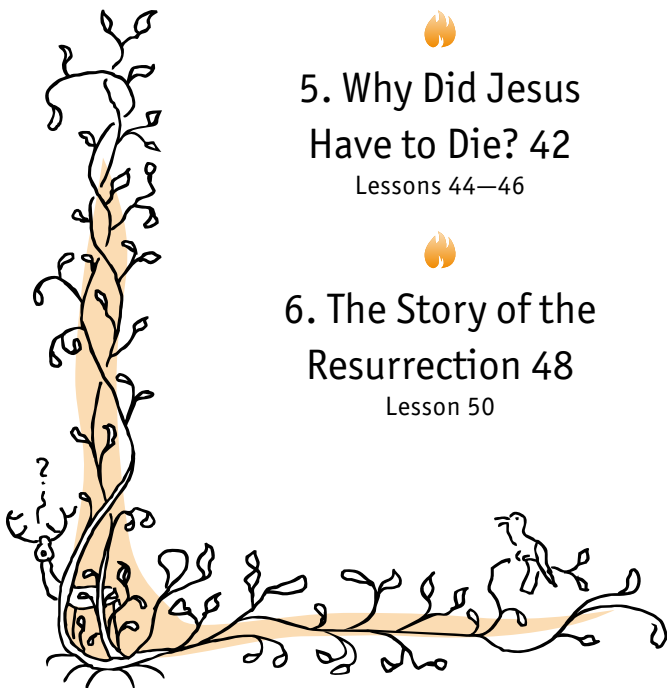
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Group 1: **B** → Gen 1:26–31 (the creation of man)

Group 2: **B** → Ex 3:1–6.13–14 (God reveals himself to Moses in the burning thorn bush)

Group 3: **B** → Jn 14:8–11 (God reveals himself in Jesus Christ)

Presentation of the results

The three groups will now present their findings. They should do so in the right chronological order (Creation, Moses, Jesus).

In the presentation and in any ensuing discussion, the following aspects should be highlighted:

- 🔥 God finds that man is good (**B** → Gen 1:31).
- 🔥 God has created man without seeking to harness him for a particular purpose (but purely out of an abundance of overflowing love—cf. also **Y** → 2).
- 🔥 God makes contact with man (**B** → Ex 4:14).
- 🔥 God reveals himself in Jesus Christ (**B** → Jn 14:9).

Link

Lead on to the next point by saying, *“Okay, so we have heard what God reveals to us about himself. Now let us take a look at how he actually sees us.”*

BIBLE SESSION “WHO AM I TO GOD?”

Lest gemeinsam **B** → Jn 15:15: “No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.”

What is important here is that God sees us as his friends.

Then read **B** → Jn 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” In discussing this passage afterward, you can point out that at this point we could equally replace “the world” with the word “you”. In this way you can make still clearer just how immensely important every single one of us is in God’s eyes.

Link

You can lead on to the final topic of the lesson by saying something like: “Now that we have seen how important we are to God, we need to ask ourselves what plan God actually has in mind for us.”

BIBLE SESSION “WHAT DOES GOD WANT FOR ME?”

Red together **B** → Jn 17:24 (“Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which you have given me in your love for me before the foundation of the world”). Explain to your group that what is meant here is that God wishes to have communion (be united) with us in all eternity.

YOUCAT SESSION “WHAT DOES GOD WANT FOR ME?”

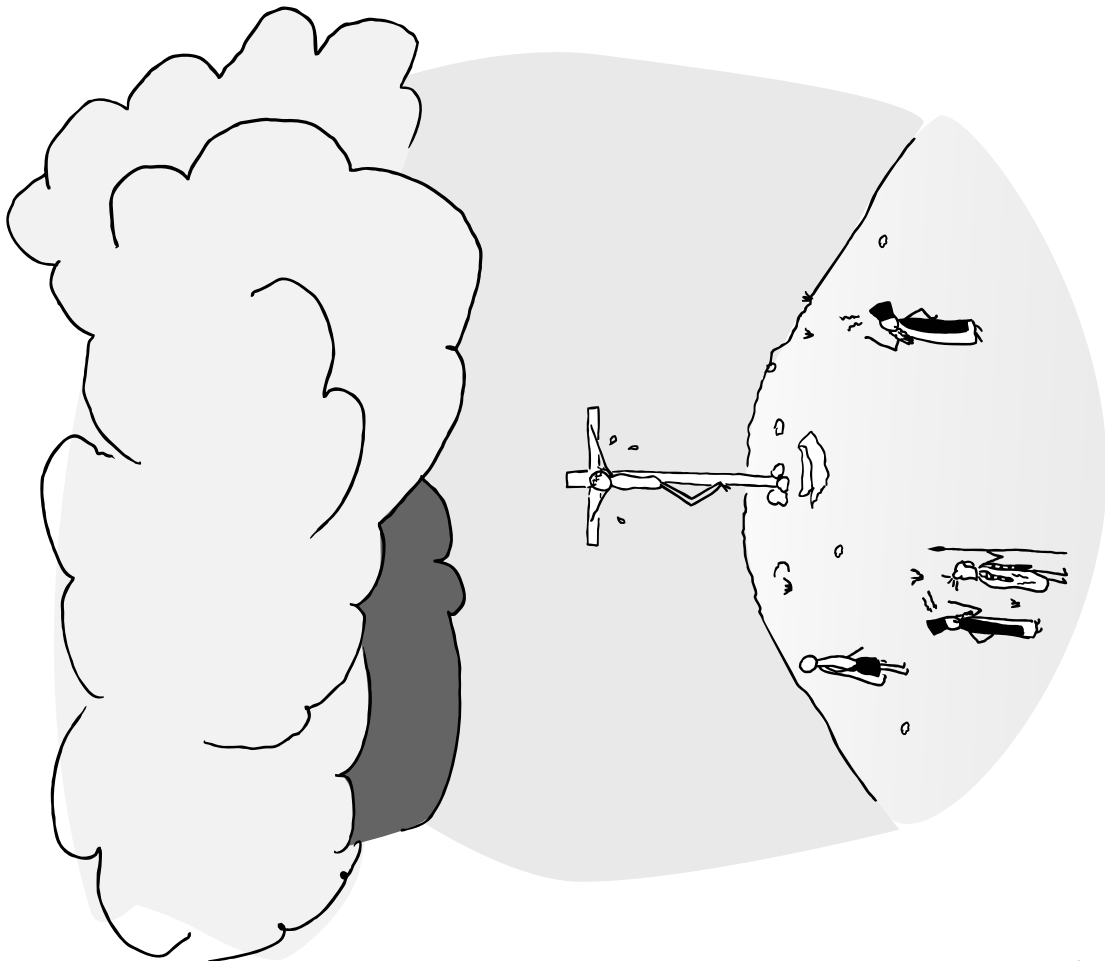
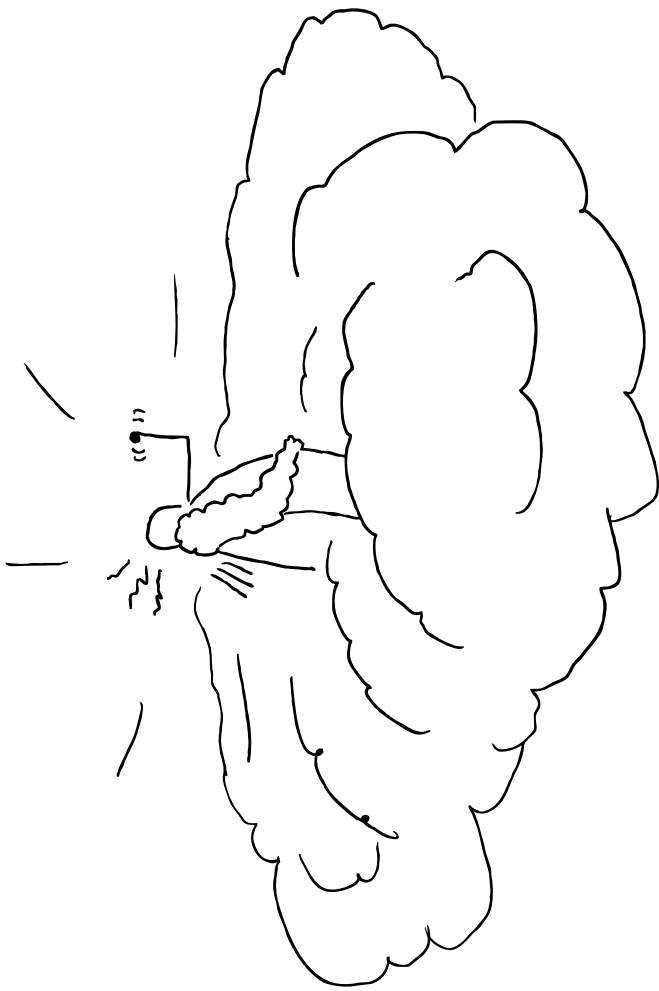
Read **Y** → 1 (“For what purpose are we here on earth?”), and share your ideas about it with the group.

Conclusion and prayer

Gracious God,

You have created us all out of love. You want to be close to us and to live together with us. Help us also, so that in our ordinary lives we can really behave like your friends, and at the end of our lives, take us up into your everlasting community.

Amen.



FEEL THE SPIRIT!

In Search of the Holy Spirit



Theological basis

“Then it must have been the Holy Spirit ...” Such was the tongue-in-cheek reaction of many a mother in Germany, in days gone by, when none of the children was willing to own up, after having got up to mischief. It’s an expression that in some ways illustrates the sheer mystery, the gap in the life of many Christians that the Holy Spirit represents. He is somehow incomprehensible.

This is also partly due to the images we have grown up with: God the Father with a flowing white beard, Creator of the world, looking down from a cloud; God the Son—by far the most common theme of classical art; God the Holy Spirit—a dove. Great. The Holy Spirit is simply a more abstract being ... Of course—because he is the relationship between the other two! **Y → 38**

Yet God the Holy Spirit is not just the relationship between God the Father and God the Son; for he also unites us with God and unites us, as human creatures, with one another—in love. Without him there would be no faith. And so the Holy Spirit is mightily important to us. **Y → 113–115**

The meaning and purpose of being a Christian is to be taken up into the love of God, into the inter-Trinitarian love, the love of the Blessed Trinity. Since the Holy Spirit is this love, being filled with him means being taken up into the love of God. This is not something that we can just let happen to us, in a trice, for example by simply going to Confirmation and just letting it all happen to us. The third Person of the Trinity helps us to keep on becoming better, helps us to draw closer and closer to God, instead of turning away from him. **Y → 118**

This is not the place to write a history of the Holy Spirit. But you will doubtless recall that even in the Creation account we are told that he hovered over the waters (**B → Gen 1:2**). Here one can already picture the wind, the roaring sound with which he later came over the disciples at Pentecost (**B → Acts 2:2**). But he is also there, breathing life into the first man—the “breath of life”—which in Hebrew also means the soul (**B → Gen 2:7**). And when Jesus breathes his last breath on the Cross, we are told that he “gave up his spirit” (**B → Jn 19:30**). Finally, (**B → Jn 20:22**) the risen Jesus breathes on his disciples and tells them “Receive the Holy Spirit.” It is the Spirit of Jesus, for Jesus himself promised to send the Spirit in his place. Ever since then he is the secret leader and custodian of the Church; from that time onward he guides the faithful into love and to God.

The Holy Spirit is himself a gift of God; indeed he is the greatest and highest gift of God. That is why the sin against the Holy Spirit is the sin that cannot be forgiven (**B → Mt 12:31–32**); for this is the denial of God himself, the rejection of his love. We need to remind ourselves again and again: there are no half measures here—God himself gives himself to us in his love. **Y → 120**

Confirmation “increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us” as the Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us (**CCC 1203**). What do these gifts actually signify?

Wisdom is not some kind of mystifying verbiage, nor is it a collection of sentimental sayings, such as one might find in certain kinds of esoteric mysticism or gift books of clever sayings. Instead it is precisely the gift that transcends human wisdom and human counsels, the capacity to discern the divine from the human. The gift of wisdom should enable us to recognize God and acquire a loving nature.

Understanding is the gift that helps us to understand our faith. Each of us should seek to penetrate further into the truths of Christianity, and learn to distinguish them from passing human knowledge and earthly attitudes. If only this gift of the Holy Spirit were more cultivated among baptized Christians, there would be no need to be concerned about the “evaporation of knowledge of the faith” or the same constantly recurring demands on the Church.

With the gift of counsel, it is a question of decision-making. Often enough we find ourselves at a crossroads in life and do not know which way to go. We are confronted with means that are meant to serve a good end—but are these means good in themselves? [53] We need to constantly scrutinize our own actions and those of our fellow men: Is the spirit at work in them the Spirit of Jesus, or that of another?

The gift of fortitude is not about being macho man or alpha male, but about applying a genuine athlete’s outlook to the realm of faith as well (see B > Phil 3:14). Single-mindedness, self-discipline and training will lead to victory over the evil one. It is much easier, less challenging and more “acceptable”, so to speak, to go with the flow, to think and live in the way that prevailing fashions or public opinion dictate. Faithfulness and strength of will are needed here—qualities we cannot supply alone and unaided.

Knowledge—“Science has shown ...” No doubt you’ve heard the phrase before? Again and again we are told of “pioneering discoveries” that so often, on closer inspection, prove to be far less spectacular than we thought. Such supposed new “knowledge” and insights are no less familiar nowadays in the areas of faith and the Church. The gift of Knowledge, therefore, is the gift of discernment: What is more plausible? What can I know? Modesty is also a scholarly virtue.

Piety does not get a good press today—and yet in antiquity it was regarded as the highest of virtues. For it has nothing to do with preaching from the pulpit or praying in a convent, but rather with respect: for God and his laws, for nature, for our elders, for the feelings of others. But anyone who shows a lack of respect during religious worship is truly making himself ridiculous.

Fear of the Lord does not mean “being afraid of God” but rather “the beginning of wisdom” (B → Sir 1:14): It means a respect—indeed a reverence—for the divine that far exceeds all respect for created things. God is the Creator; God is the Lord over life and death, and God is the supreme Judge for all eternity. Understanding this sheer difference of degree and taking account of its importance in our actions is the first step toward true worship of God. In bestowing this gift on us, the Holy Spirit also teaches us its accompanying virtue, namely, humility.



CATEGORY



The Holy Spirit—The Great Unknown

Theme and objective:

The Holy Spirit is the Third Divine Person.

He gives us strength to live our life consciously with God.

We look more closely at the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Preparation

For each of your students buy a short but stubby white candle, and in addition buy nine sheets of wax in different colors. Cut up the wax sheets in such a way that each candidate has a sufficiently large piece in each color. Bear in mind also that each student should be able to use a pair of scissors, and think about protecting the surfaces in the room, for example with something like newspaper.

Introduction

Play a game of “The Great Unknown” with your students. You impersonate an unknown person, and your students have to find out who it is by asking questions, to which you will only answer with “Yes” or “No”. Needless to say, you will play the role of the “Holy Spirit”. If you suspect that your students have already guessed the topic of the lesson, either by looking at their student books or because they are in any case just too smart, you can put them off the scent by first of all getting one or two of the young people to play some other person, before you take your turn. In order to avoid any risk, it’s probably best to prepare role play cards beforehand for the two students who go first.

The Rite of Confirmation

The bishop: **Do you reject Satan and all his works and all his empty promises?**

The candidates (together): **I reject.**

After the negative, now comes the positive:

The bishop: **Do you believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?**

The candidates: **I do.**

The bishop: **Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?**

The candidates: **I do.**

Then the bishop will ask you if you are really serious about the Church:

The bishop: **Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, [the Lord, the giver of life, who came upon the apostles at Pentecost and today is given to you sacramentally in Confirmation? Do you believe in] the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?**

The candidates: **I do.**

Then the bishop confirms your profession of faith:

The bishop: **This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Now follows the invitation to all present to pray together. It is a little like that first Pentecost, when the infant Church had gathered together around Mary and fervently prayed for the coming of the Holy Spirit. And as you know, moments later the tongues of fire descended upon them! So the bishop invites the whole congregation to pray together, in something like the following words:

The bishop: **My dear friends, in Baptism God our Father gave the new birth of eternal life to his chosen sons and daughters. Let us pray to our Father that he will pour out the Holy Spirit to strengthen his sons and daughters with his gifts and anoint them to be more like Christ the Son of God.**

All pray in silence for a short time. Fervently, and from their hearts. It's best if they kneel at this moment, since kneeling is a posture of especially intensive prayer.

Then the bishop extends his hands over the candidates. By this gesture the bishop draws together and gives voice to the profound prayers of all present. He expresses this in the following words:

The bishop: All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All respond: Amen. (which means: So be it; we ask this too!)

Now follows the actual anointing. A deacon or another helper brings the chrism to the bishop.

The candidates now approach the bishop individually, accompanied by their sponsors.

The sponsor places his or her right hand on your shoulder and gives your saint's name (or your name) to the bishop. Sometimes it is the candidate himself who is asked to give this name.

the bishop dips his right thumb in the chrism, places his hand on your head and makes the Sign of the Cross with his thumb on your forehead.

The bishop addresses you by your chosen name and says:

N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit

You reply:

Amen.

This means something like:
Yes, so be it. I want this. I agree to this.

The bishop then says:

Peace be with you.

The candidate responds:

And with your spirit.

So now you are confirmed.

