



Touching base (5 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone.



Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

Where is the Holy Spirit mentioned in the Old Testament?



Understanding the information (25 minutes)

Share these thoughts in your own words or read them together:

As Christians, we are familiar with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. But it is important to know that this arrival continues and expands the work of God's Spirit throughout all of history. It is with the arrival of Jesus that the Spirit appears in the fulness in which we know Him.



The Holy Spirit creates and sustains life. In the second verse of the Bible it is the "Spirit of God" who brings order out of a totally uninhabitable world of darkness and chaos, bringing life and meaning to the creation (Genesis 1:2) and human beings. (Genesis 2:7) Through His personal "breath", His own personal life-giving power, God is present to the world, both creating it and sustaining it.

In the New Testament this theme continues. Each Gospel emphasises how Jesus' work is connected to the creative work of the Spirit. The bird hovering over Jesus at His baptism recalls the Spirit over the waters at creation, bringing new life.

The Holy Spirit re-creates a broken world. If the first creative work of the Holy Spirit makes us God's creatures, the second work is to reverse the effects of sin by restoring us as His children, growing into who He made us to be, causing us to want to obey Him. In the Old Testament, particularly after Israel goes into exile, there is a longing for God's Spirit to be restoring His people. Ezekiel uses the words breath, wind and spirit to describe this restoration: "I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.... 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live'... I will put my Spirit in you and you will live..." (Ezekiel 37: 1-14). This is the high point in describing what the Spirit does – it is only by the Spirit that we can be truly re-created.

But with the arrival of Jesus -the anointed one - this new creation breaks into the world in a decisive way, expanding God's work of restoration. The Holy Spirit's power is linked to the power of Jesus' works and His resurrection. "Christ Jesus...who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 1: 1-4)

The Holy Spirit is a guarantee, and a foretaste of the complete healing of all things. He has begun this work and will not stop until the whole creation is liberated. Our experience of the Holy Spirit is as a down-payment of that future promise. We have received the first-fruits of the Spirit (Romans 8:23). That is why Pentecost is a festival of the first-fruits of the harvest that is to come.

The Holy Spirit restores disciples. The Holy Spirit is working to change us from the inside out, to grow the character of Jesus in us (the fruit of the Spirit). Whereas in the Old Testament people received the Holy Spirit for particular tasks, in Christ the Holy Spirit lives in us for a lifestyle. A word for this process is sanctification –the journey of being made more holy – set apart for God - throughout our lives. The Holy Spirit does the "heavy lifting" in our transformation, even our being able to put our trust in Christ depends mostly on the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit makes God's love and presence real. Only by the Holy Spirit can the love of God be made real to us, and can we be secure in our identity as His covenant children. The Spirit is God's personal presence. Jesus promises the Spirit to His disciples as someone who will come alongside them, like a legal defender (paraclete) when He is physically absent. In Romans Paul says it is the Spirit who leads God's children, reassuring them that they have been adopted by touching their spirits, and helping them call out to God with the respectfully intimate name, "Abba Father". (Romans 8)

The Holy Spirit commissions and strengthens disciples. The Holy Spirit appoints and commissions God's people to carry out tasks and gives the strength and wisdom to put them into action. In the Old Testament the Spirit usually gives people power for certain tasks, at certain times. It is the Spirit who enables people to prophesy throughout the Old Testament and linked to this the Spirit of the Lord coming on people is often associated with the task of leadership. Anointing with oil becomes a further sign of the Spirit's presence, particularly as people are appointed and strengthened. Saul and David both have oil poured over their heads by Samuel when they become king. "So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David." (1 Samuel 16:13)

Yet there is a promise that one day God "...will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days." (Joel 2:28-29) Jesus announces and demonstrates that His whole ministry is through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promises His disciples, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; And you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1: 8) At Pentecost, Peter quotes Joel's words to show this is the fulfilment of that promise. Because the Spirit now comes on a community, Pentecost is often known as the birthday of the church.

Discuss: Creating and sustaining life, recreating the world, restoring and changing disciples, making God's presence real and commissioning and strengthening...which of these works of the Holy Spirit means most to you and why?

Reading the Bible (15 minutes)

Read Ezekiel 37: 1-14 which describes a vision of the Holy Spirit's recreation.

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:

What does this passage teach me about God?

What does this passage teach me about people?

How does this passage call me to obey God?

What might I do in response to this this week?



Seeing how it looks in real lives (10 minutes)

There is no video, but you are invited to discuss your experience of what you love about the work of the Holy Spirit.



Responding to God's leading (5 minutes)

Give people an opportunity to think about, "What might God be showing me and how might I respond?" They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, "Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?"



Group prayer (5 minutes)

Holy Spirit, sent by the Father,
ignite in us your holy fire;
strengthen your children with the gift of faith,
revive your Church with the breath of love,
and renew the face of the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.





The Holy Spirit through the Bible



As Christians, we are familiar with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. But it is important to know that this arrival continues and expands the work of God's Spirit **throughout all of history**. It is with the arrival of Jesus that the Spirit appears in the **fulness** in which we know Him.

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