



BACKGROUND

In the Gospel of Mark (1:9-11), we read about the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River. As Jesus comes up from the water, the heavens open, the Holy Spirit descends like a dove, and the voice of God the Father says, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." This moment is important because it shows us how Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit and publicly affirmed as the Son of God. It marked the beginning of His mission on earth to teach, heal, and bring God's love to the world. This connects beautifully to the Sacrament of Confirmation. In Confirmation, we too are sealed with the Holy Spirit in a special way. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that Confirmation "roots us more deeply in the divine filiation" that means we are grounded in the assurance that we are truly God's beloved children and it "gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith" (CCC 1303). Just as Jesus was empowered by the Spirit at His baptism, we are strengthened by the Spirit in Confirmation to live out our faith with courage, love, and joy. So when we hear the story of Jesus' baptism, we remember that God also says to each of us: "You are my beloved child. I am with you."

INTRODUCTION

In this activity, we reflect on the gifts of the Holy Spirit that are named in the prayer of invocation in the Rite of Confirmation. This activity connects also to the symbol of the dove in the story of Jesus' baptism. Begin this activity by reading the scripture with the children. Then discuss some of these signs of the Holy Spirit's presence and action in scripture together. There are some questions below to get the conversation started. Then introduce the dove activity.

Question for discussion

- *How did the Holy Spirit come in this scripture?*
- *Why do you think the Holy Spirit revealed itself in this way, at this time?*
- *What other images of the Holy Spirit do we read about in the Bible?*

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS - MARK 1:9-11

About that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. As soon as Jesus came out of the water, he saw the sky open and the Holy Spirit coming down to him like a dove.

A voice from heaven said, "You are my own dear Son, and I am pleased with you."





DOVES - GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

As one of the images or symbols of the Holy Spirit is a dove, invite the participants to their own Holy Spirit dove to take home.

YOU WILL NEED:

- 7 different colours of A4 paper
- Paper cutter
- Scissors
- Staplers
- Pens/Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Prepare before the session:

- Stack 7 (one for each of the Gifts of the Spirit) different coloured sheets of A4 paper on top of each other
- Cut with a paper cutter 1cm wide strips down the length of the paper
- Staple one end to make a 'beak'

At the session:

1. Children write the names of the seven Gifts of the Spirit on the seven strips of their 'spirit dove'
2. Hold the strips in one hand and use the other hand to raise each paper strip up into the shape of a head approximately 3 cm from the 'beak'. Staple to make the neck.
3. To make the body of the bird, curve the bottom strips of paper downwards so that each colour can be seen. Staple approximately 9 cm from the neck.
4. Using the flat blade of a pair of scissors, curl the remaining strips to form a 'tail'.

