

Chapter 8: The Holy Spirit Teaches Us



Introduction

We all need help at one time or another. We need people to help us learn new things. We need people who can help us with good advice and encouragement. Who helps you? You might think of your parents, your teachers, or your friends.

Jesus knows that we need help to follow him, and he sent the Holy Spirit to help us. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit as our Helper. The Holy Spirit lives in us and helps us to be the best followers of Jesus we can be.

Scripture Story: Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit to Help Us

Jesus was speaking with his disciples at the Last Supper, the night before he died. He knew that after he died and rose again, the disciples would need help to remember his teachings and to follow his way. So he promised to send the Holy Spirit to help them. Let's listen to what Jesus said to his disciples that night:

[Jesus said,] "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God. . . . You know him, because he remains with you and is in you. . . ."

"The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you.

"Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid." (John 14:16–17, 26–27)

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all one God. They are the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

We first receive the Holy Spirit at Baptism. The Holy Spirit is our Helper. We cannot see him, but he works within us. The Holy Spirit helps us understand what Jesus taught, especially in the Bible. He helps us be better followers of Jesus by inspiring us to make good choices and giving us the strength to live out those choices. The Holy Spirit is at work in us each day. We can ask him for help and guidance.

An Examination of Conscience

One of the things that the Holy Spirit helps us with when we prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is our **examination of conscience**. Each of us has a conscience. This is another name for our inner knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. An examination of conscience helps us to think over what we have done since our last confession. It helps us remember any sins we have committed.

Before we make an examination of conscience, we pray to the Holy Spirit. We ask him to bring to our minds the things we have done to follow God's Law of Love and the things we have not done. We also ask him to help us to be truly sorry for our sins. You can find an examination of conscience in the *Rite of Reconciliation and Key Words* booklet.

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

In this last lesson, it would be good to review some of the important things you have learned. Here are some questions to help you. The answers are given after the questions. You might want to ask someone else to ask the questions and check your answers!

1. What do we call God's life in us? (*grace*)
2. When we disobey God's Law, we call it what? (*sin*)
3. What is the Great Commandment that Jesus taught us? (*to love God and to love others as ourselves*)
4. When we fail to love fully, where can we ask for forgiveness? (*in the Sacrament of Reconciliation*)
5. Why did God give us rules? (*to keep us safe and happy*)
6. How is an accident different from a sin? (*An accident is something unexpected that you did not choose to happen. A sin is a deliberate choice.*)
7. What is the difference between a mortal sin and a venial sin? (*A mortal sin separates us from God and from the Church. A venial sin harms our relationship with God and*

others. We must confess a mortal sin and ask forgiveness as soon as possible.)

8. What prayer do we say in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to express our sorrow for our sins? (*an Act of Contrition*)
9. When can we call on Jesus for help? (*any time, but especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation*)
10. What happens when we receive absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (*Our sins are forgiven, our relationship with God and with the Church is strengthened or restored, and we are given the gift of peace.*)

Things to Remember

- Jesus sends the Holy Spirit as our helper and guide.
- The Holy Spirit helps us examine our conscience and recall our sins.
- The Holy Spirit helps us remember important facts about the Sacrament of Reconciliation.