

The Catechism Curriculum

by
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A LeaderResources
Work in Progress

What is a *Work in Progress*?

Works in Progress is a line of resources that are in the process of being developed. We offer them “as is” —with minimal editing, copyediting, layout or evaluation. We also offer them with the invitation to join in the development process. You have an opportunity to help the author refine this resource and prepare it for publication or help us decide that it is not sufficiently helpful to merit publication. In exchange for your help, you get a resource at a fraction of what it would normally cost.

Why do we do this?

There are several reasons:

- ◆ We believe that there are many people who can and/or have developed programs and resource materials that would be useful to others in the Church. Traditional methods of developing and publishing materials is so costly that these resources would never even be considered.
- ◆ We believe that there are many talented people in our congregations who can and will help refine resources. Again, traditional publishing methods rely on using the same small pool of people and must keep that pool small to keep costs down. This method opens up participation to anyone anywhere in the world who wants to use the material and give ideas for improvement. This creates a global resource development team at a fraction of the cost.
- ◆ We believe that people who try unfinished resources, assess them, experiment with them, add to them, interact with program authors and so forth become part of a learning community and that they will, themselves, learn from the process. We believe that this learning process helps strengthen the leadership capabilities in local congregations.

We believe that this way of creating resources will ultimately change the resource. Since this hasn't been done before, we don't know how it will change resources, but we know that the system one uses to produce something effects the product. Traditional ways of developing programs and resources relied on a few people who were seen to have expertise. While their work was valuable, the result sometimes “didn't work” in the local congregation. This may have happened simply because the experts were from one region of the country with one perspective that did not translate well into the local situation. Our guess is that this way of doing resource and program development will create multiple variations on a theme as different people from around the globe add what works for them in their situation. Others will be able to learn from the variations and pick and choose what works best for them.

It's an exciting new venture

The *Works in Progress* line of resources is an exciting new venture for us and for the Church. This is a new way of doing things and we will undoubtedly learn something about what works well and what creates more problems than it solves! Part of what is exciting is that this way of doing things opens up publishing and the distribution of information to a much larger group of people.

Before the printing press, people relied on a very small group of educated, skilled people to give information to a very small group of people. After the printing press, a much larger group of people could get information through books but the number of people involved in writing those books or deciding what was in them was still relatively small. With computers, we suddenly can make almost anyone a distributor of information. Like most things in life, that has its advantages and disadvantages. We want to work with you to maximize the advantages.....to bring together people from distant places who can combine their knowledge and skills to produce something that is greater than any one of you could do alone. Doing that work is tremendously exciting!

Welcome aboard!

So we welcome you to the Resource Development Team. The “rules of the road” are quite simple. Print out the material. Gather those who will be using it. Review it and decide how you will use it. Try it. Keep notes of any problems, bright ideas, things you did differently. Evaluate it. Think about what would make it work better **for you**. Send all of that to us at:

LeaderResources
38 Mulberry Street, Box 302
Leeds, MA 01053-0302
413-582-1860

We will use that material to prepare the next version of *The Catechism Curriculum*. While we can't compensate you for your ideas, we will try to include the names of those who have made significant contributions to the next edition. And you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your gifts and skills will be helping others in congregations around the world.

What happens next?

We don't know! If you like the program and want to use it next year, you can renew your license for another year by sending \$25 to LeaderResources. Remember, the material is copyrighted and your license is only for one year. We ask that you respect that and not use the materials if you do not renew your license. We expect that there will be some real changes to the program by the next “school year” so we will send you a new disk and you can see how things have progressed.

If the feedback we get is positive and the sales are strong, indicating that people are finding this program useful, we will move towards publication. For us that means editing and layout work that enables us to print a “camera ready” copy what congregations without a computer can then photocopy for use. It also means we can add graphics or other elements to make the resource more attractive. Since we are an “on demand” publisher we do not plan to publish it in a traditional format. So, while the cost of the program will go up significantly, it will still be much cheaper than buying a traditional four-color printed resource.

If and when the time comes to convert to a “full publication” resources (vs. a *Works in Progress* resource) those who have a current license to the program as a “Work in Progress” will be offered the expanded and edited version at a reduced price. If the decision is that there is insufficient demand for this program to merit full production, we will offer those who wish to continue using it an opportunity to purchase a long-term license for a nominal fee. Obviously, our hope is that you and your colleagues in other congregations will work with the author to make this resource a useful and valuable contribution to the life of the Church.

We want to hear from you

LeaderResources is a consulting and publishing organization that helps congregations and dioceses support people in leadership and ministry. Our goal is to build learning communities. We do that by offering resources, personal and print, in ways that invite the user into the learning process.

The *Works in Progress* line of resources is one example of that. All of our material are *Evolutionary Resources*™ which means they are constantly updated and improved as we receive input from our users. They are offered in print and computer versions. This enables us to personalize print versions with your congregation’s name on the cover and enables you to modify or adapt the materials to fit your needs. We are also working to develop “on-line” courses which will provide college credit or certification or just the satisfaction of learning. These courses will connect students from distant and diverse backgrounds with instructors to study more academic materials.

We also have a full complement of Consultants with a broad range of skills. They can help you assess your needs and develop ways to meet those needs. That might be in education/formation, in organizational development, in program or resource development, in leadership or ministry development, etcetera. In any case, we seek to build the skills of your leaders so they can not just do this task but also learn how to apply the knowledge and skills they learn to other situations in the congregation, diocese or in their work and community life.

A catalogue of our resources is available and we would be glad to discuss how our consultant might be able to assist you. We also welcome you thoughts and ideas on how we can better serve you and the Church. Call or write us at:

**LeaderResources
38 Mulberry Street
PO Box 302
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800-941-2218**

A Catechism Curriculum

Introduction

A Catechism Curriculum is a resource based on the Catechism in the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church. It is designed to be used in a congregation from kindergarten through adult. The underlying principle of this program is that the Catechism can serve as the basis for both Christian education and Christian formation programs.

The Catechism is divided into 18 sections, and each section is presented as a unit for study with accompanying suggestions for Bible study, reflection and other activities. For the adult section, participants are encouraged to take the materials home and study them before class. This helps discussion, and makes up most of class time. It also encourages a greater sense of ownership for the participants.

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Following are sample lesson plans for each of the age groups:

- **Grades 1-3**
- **Grades 4-6**
- **Junior/Senior High School**
- **Adult Study**

**If you have any questions, please feel free to call
LeaderResources at 1-800-941-2218.**

Unit 9: The Holy Spirit

Grades 1-3

Themes

1. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, God at work in the world and the Church even now.
2. The Holy Spirit is revealed in the Old Covenant as the giver of life, the One who spoke through the prophets.
3. The Holy Spirit is revealed in the New Covenant as the Lord who leads us into all truth and enables us to grow into the likeness of Christ.
4. We recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit when we confess Jesus Christ as Lord and are brought into love and harmony with God, with ourselves, with our neighbors and with all creation.
5. We recognize the truths taught by the Holy Spirit when they are in accord with the Scriptures.

Goal

The children have opportunity to experience the Holy Spirit working and give thanks for it.

Objectives

1. The children learn the story of Pentecost.
2. The children participate in events that reflect the gifts of the Spirit.

Suggested Activities for This Unit

How do you “teach” the Holy Spirit to children in the first three grades? That is the question before us, and rather than attempting formal pedagogy, the focus turns to allowing the children to experience the work of the Spirit, and helping them name that experience as the work of the Spirit.

1. Pentecost: Many Voices, One Message.

Acts 2:1-11 is the story of Pentecost in the Scriptures. This might be used, or the version as told in the Arch Books might be a little easier for the children to understand. Ask the children to have their own Pentecost by everyone talking about Jesus for thirty seconds all at once. Record the voices, and then have the children listen to themselves. What does it sound like to them? Are some voices louder than others? Is there some of it they can understand? Do they hear themselves in the tape?

Tell them that you want them to imagine for a moment that you are the little finger of a person’s hand. Assign different parts of the body to the children. After they have figured out what that part of the body does and why it is important, tell them that you don’t think you have anything to do that is important. What do you do that no one else does, and why is that important? Other parts of the body seem far more important. What will those other parts say to help you? When you are finished, attempt to join together in a circle or other

configuration, and do something as a body that everyone has a part in.

2. The Spirit Works Where She Wills.

This is more hands-on, experiential time. The Spirit is often thought of as the wind, blowing where it wills. “Wind, Wind, Blow on Me” might be a good song to teach the children for this activity. There can be stations set up in which children are invited to play with wind and its effects. These might include blowing a sailboat across a body of water (a sink or basin could do), a windmill made of paper and pencil and pin, creating paper airplanes to fly or kites, or even blowing up balloons and watching them fly when the air is let out. Discuss what they see, and what they don’t see. Where is the power coming from? Connect this to the work of the Spirit, who works without being seen, but certainly we can see the results.

3. The Fruit of the Spirit.

Plan with the children to work together as a group, possibly with other people, to do a special work. This work depends on your group and your congregation, but it might be a clean-up, a special meal or whatever. When completed, make sure to provide a time for the children to give thanks for the Spirit for bringing them together and making this possible.

Unit 9: The Holy Spirit

Grades 4-6

Themes

1. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, God at work in the world and the Church even now.
2. The Holy Spirit is revealed in the Old Covenant as the giver of life, the one who spoke through the prophets.
3. The Holy Spirit is revealed in the New Covenant as the Lord who leads us into all truth and enables us to grow into the likeness of Christ.
4. We recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit when we confess Jesus Christ as Lord and are brought into love and harmony with God, with ourselves, with our neighbors and with all creation.
5. We recognize the truths taught by the Holy Spirit when they are in accord with the Scriptures.

Goal

The children will identify the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives by the gifts that build love and harmony in life.

Objectives

1. Children will be introduced to images of the Holy Spirit from both the Old and New Covenants.
2. Children will be able to reflect on what the gifts of the Spirit are, and how they are used.
3. Children will identify gifts they have to offer to the Church and the world.

Outline of Unit

- A. Ask the children to give one- or two-word descriptions of the Holy Spirit. Write everything on the board or on newsprint. After you have everyone's ideas, go back over the descriptions and ask how many of these are common, where these ideas come from, etc.

Now introduce the idea that we can go to the Scriptures and find different ideas of the Holy Spirit.

Look first at John 1:12-17. This is Jesus' preparation of the disciples for what was to come, and his promise of the Spirit. Have the children make a list of what things have to happen for the Spirit (Paraclete) to come into people's lives. What will the Spirit do for people? What do people have to do to receive the Spirit into their lives? How will they know when the Spirit has been given to them?

- B. Read I Corinthians 12:12-30. Discuss how Paul equates the body with how the gifts

of the Spirit work in the Church, all working together for the building up of the Church. Have the children make up their own play based upon this lesson, asking each one to be different parts of the body, faced with certain everyday activities (getting up in the morning, walking to school, taking part in class discussion, recess, eating a snack, calling a friend, etc.). Have them experiment with both the body working together, and also parts working for themselves but not for others.

- C. Watch *The Music Box*. This is a wonderful film about a man who discovers the gift of a music box that has the power to bring great joy to all who listen to its music. Yet the man is reluctant to share the gift with others. When the movie is over, ask the children about the gift, how it was used, how it was not used. Are we sometimes greedy about things we have, afraid to share them with other people? What are some of those things?

If you are unable to find a copy of the suggested video, bring something from your life you cherish very much yet find difficult to share with others. Be willing to talk about why it is so difficult and what would prompt you to share it. Are there any restrictions on what people can do with your treasure even now when you share it?

- C. One other suggestion for this would be to have the class read a Dr. Seuss book of your choice that deals with the difficulty of sharing and then discuss it in personal terms.

Close with a prayer circle, asking God to help us share those things that are sometimes difficult to share.

- D. Ask the children to write down the important people in their lives. What gifts does each person have? Write those down. What special gifts do the students have? What gifts would they like to have? How would they use them? Have them write a short story about how they would like to help the Church, the world, or their family, and what special gifts they would need for that. Have them share their stories with the class, and then make them available to the congregation (maybe through the newsletter or bulletin).

Unit 9: The Holy Spirit

Junior/Senior High School

Themes

1. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, God at work in the world and the Church even now.
2. The Holy Spirit is revealed in the Old Covenant as the giver of life, the one who spoke through the prophets.
3. The Holy Spirit is revealed in the New Covenant as the Lord who leads us into all truth and enables us to grow into the likeness of Christ.
4. We recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit when we confess Jesus Christ as Lord and are brought into love and harmony with God, with ourselves, with our neighbors and with all creation.
5. We recognize the truths taught by the Holy Spirit when they are in accord with the Scriptures.

Goal

The student will recognize the power of the Holy Spirit to transform a community and its members.

Objectives

1. The students will know the story of the Church in Corinth and the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.
2. The students will identify their spiritual gifts and how they can be used (either to build up or destroy) in a community.
3. The students will join together to act as a small community and thereby reflect the presence of the Holy Spirit among them.

Outline of Unit

Background: The Church in Corinth was blessed with many gifts, and the people of Corinth knew this only too well. In fact, they knew how to use those gifts to separate themselves from each other. This is an example of having gifts, knowing the power of these gifts and abusing them for the sake of self rather than community. Paul writes to the people of Corinth exhorting and teaching them that the gifts are given by the Spirit out of God's love for them, and are to be used by the people for the building up of the community, not separating Christians.

This unit will recreate the experience of the Church in Corinth to some degree, so as to allow the students to experience and understand the power of the Spirit and the gifts given by the Spirit. It is a power that can be used or abused.

- A. "Factions among us..."—Introduce the idea of becoming the Christian community in Corinth. Describe Corinth by noting its geographical position as a port city. This

would explain many cultures and customs vying for loyalty, and the strong business climate lends itself to a spirit of competition and conflict. The Christian community on the surface looks very strong, and yet, as Paul sees it, is suffering greatly from the inner strife.

As the Church in Corinth, members of the class will be asked to align themselves with people who brought them into the Church, such as Paul, Apollos, Cephas. Have them think of the people who have been very important in their lives going to church: priests, parents, friends. Who will you align yourself with and why? What did they emphasize about your being a member of the church (coming on Sunday, being with your friends, having fun, listening, helping out, etc.)?

Read I Corinthians 1:1-12. Who is writing the letter? Who is it being written to? Why is it being written? What might their response be to reading this introduction? What would be your response?

Read 3:18-23. Let each group begin to draft a letter in response to Paul. This letter will be completed with the final session of the unit.

B. “About the gifts of the Spirit”—Introduce this session by declaring that Paul is upset by what he sees as our abuse of the gifts we have been given by the Spirit. In order to prove to him and ourselves that we have used our gifts wisely, we will take a spiritual inventory and see how we are using them.

Distribute a copy of the spiritual gifts worksheet and ask them to complete it. When everyone is done, go over the first part, and then the second part.

Read 14:26-33. Close with a prayer circle, asking each person to pray for the wisdom and grace to use one gift in particular in a wise way.

C. “Where true love is...”—Read 12:12-30. If we are like the body, we should be able to identify how the different parts of the body work together for the sake of the whole. Take time to identify the different gifts of each person, and then how these gifts might be used for a common project and thus for the good of the whole. Plan how this project might be accomplished and commit yourself to it.

Close by reading I Corinthians 13:1-13. Take time to have each student write a final draft letter to Paul either thanking him or criticizing him for the letter he sent to Corinth and explaining why he or she is thanking or criticizing him.

Spiritual Gifts Worksheet

Read I Corinthians 12:4-11. Complete the following based on your reading:

Spiritual Gift (cite verse): *How can this gift be used to build up?* *To destroy?*

What are the gifts God has given you?

How have you used these gifts to build up or destroy?

How could you make better use of these gifts in the future?

Unit 9: The Holy Spirit

Adult Study, based on the Prayer Book Catechism

From the Catechism, pages 852-853 of the BCP:

Q. What is the Holy Spirit?

A. The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity, God at work in the world and in the Church even now.

Q. How is the Holy Spirit revealed in the Old Covenant?

A. The Holy Spirit is revealed in the Old Covenant as the Giver of life, the One who spoke through the prophets.

Q. How is the Holy Spirit revealed in the New Covenant?

A. The Holy Spirit is revealed as the Lord who leads us into all truth and enables us to grow in the likeness of Christ.

Q. How do we recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

A. We recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit when we confess Jesus Christ as Lord and are brought into love and harmony with God, with ourselves, with our neighbors, and with all creation.

Q. How do we recognize the truths taught by the Holy Spirit?

A. We recognize truths to be taught by the Holy Spirit when they are in accord with the Scriptures.

Reflecting on the Catechism

How would you describe the recognition of the Holy Spirit in our lives? What questions are not answered in the Catechism for you regarding the Holy Spirit? If you were to reflect upon your life as a Christian, how much recognition of the Holy Spirit has there been for you personally? Why do you think that is?

Going Deeper

Read Ezekiel, chapter 2. This is the account of how the prophet was called forth by God. What was God calling him to do and be? Why? Why Ezekiel? How would we know if we are called by God? Are there any ways we can “test” these calls to make sure they are from God?

Read Ezekiel, chapter 37. What is the role of the Spirit in this lesson? How is this different from the previous reading? Are there any examples you can give from your life, or times that the Spirit has infused new life into you, or the community, or the church family? When and how did you come to understand this as the work of the Holy Spirit?

Read John 14:15-31. How does Jesus describe the gift of the Holy Spirit in relationship to our lives? Do we have to have faith before we receive the Holy Spirit, or can the Holy Spirit be given to us before we believe? What does the gift of the Holy Spirit bring to us?

Read I Corinthians, chapter 12. Paul describes the gifts of the Spirit and how they are found in the community. How would you describe the communities you belong to? What are the gifts in the community? How are those gifts used for building the community or for individuals? What other gifts might be needed in those communities?

—End of Sample Pages—

**If you have any questions
or would like to be on our mailing list,
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