

The Sacrament of Confirmation



Forming Christ-centred pilgrims of hope with kind hearts, questioning minds, a thirst for knowledge and a hunger for justice.

A pastoral note

Catechists should keep all discussion and reflection gentle and age appropriate.

The Holy Spirit in Scripture

Session overview:

- The Holy Spirit is present throughout the Bible.
- The Holy Spirit was active at creation and throughout God's plan for His people.
- The Holy Spirit gives life, guidance, and strength.

Direct knowledge statement for pupils:

The Holy Spirit has always been present and active in God's plan and is still at work in the world today

Unlock the theme

Display a picture of wind, fire, or a dove.

Ask:

- What kinds of things are powerful even though we cannot hold or fully see them?
- What helps bring life, movement, or change to the world around us?
- Why do you think the Bible uses signs like wind, breath, fire, and water for the Holy Spirit?

Proclaim scripture

Genesis 1:1–3 Creation

After proclaiming the passage, pause.

Say: "Before anything was created, the Holy Spirit was already present and active in God's plan."

Discussion prompts

Use some of these questions gently rather than as a rapid-fire quiz:

1. What do you notice about the Holy Spirit in this passage?
2. Why do you think the Spirit is present at the very beginning of creation?
3. What kinds of things bring life and goodness into the world?
4. Why might the Bible describe the Holy Spirit as moving over the waters?
5. What does this scripture teach us about God's presence in creation?
6. Where might people see signs of God's Spirit in the world today?

Quick activity

Give each child a small paper spiral, flame, or dove shape.

Invite them to write or draw one place where they can see life, goodness, or hope in the world.

For example:

- nature
- kindness
- family
- prayer
- friendship
- helping others

Repeat the direct knowledge: **The Holy Spirit has always been present and active in God's plan and is still at work in the world today**

Prayer

Holy Spirit,

Thank you for being present from the beginning.

Thank you for bringing life, hope, and goodness into the world.

Help me to listen to Your guidance

and stay close to God each day.

Amen.

Repeat the direct knowledge statement together.

Teacher Notes

This opening session establishes an essential foundation for the whole Confirmation programme: the Holy Spirit is not introduced suddenly at Pentecost or Confirmation, but has always been active throughout salvation history.

Many pupils associate the Holy Spirit only with symbols such as flames or doves, or only with the story of Pentecost. This session helps broaden and deepen their understanding by showing that the Spirit is already present at creation itself. The Spirit is life-giving, creative, sustaining, and active throughout God's relationship with His people.

Genesis 1 is particularly valuable because it presents the Holy Spirit at the very beginning of the biblical story. The image of the Spirit "hovering over the waters" communicates God's presence bringing order, life, and creation from chaos. This helps pupils begin to see the Holy Spirit not as distant or abstract, but as active and life-giving.

At this stage, avoid overly technical explanations about the Trinity. The goal is not theological complexity, but recognition:

- the Holy Spirit is God
- the Holy Spirit acts throughout Scripture
- the Holy Spirit continues to guide and strengthen people today

The symbols associated with the Holy Spirit should also be explained gently and meaningfully:

- wind suggests unseen power and movement
- fire suggests light, courage, and transformation
- water suggests life and renewal
- the dove suggests peace and God's presence

1. What do you notice about the Holy Spirit in this passage?

Pupils may notice that the Holy Spirit is already present before creation fully begins. Help them recognise that the Spirit is active, life-giving, and close to God from the very beginning.

2. Why do you think the Spirit is present at the very beginning of creation?

Guide pupils towards understanding that the Holy Spirit is part of God's work of creation. The Spirit brings life, order, goodness, and the presence of God into the world.

3. What kinds of things bring life and goodness into the world?

Children may mention love, kindness, friendship, peace, beauty, helping others, nature, or prayer. Affirm these responses and gently connect them to the work of God's Spirit.

4. Why might the Bible describe the Holy Spirit as moving over the waters?

The image suggests movement, life, protection, and God preparing creation. Water is often connected in Scripture with life, cleansing, and new beginnings.

5. What does this scripture teach us about God's presence in creation?

Help pupils understand that God is not distant from creation. God is present, active, and caring from the very beginning of the world.

6. Where might people see signs of God's Spirit in the world today?

Pupils may recognise the Spirit in acts of kindness, courage, forgiveness, prayer, peace, worship, care for others, and the life of the Church. Encourage simple, concrete examples from everyday life.

The tone of the session should remain reflective and hopeful. Pupils should leave with a growing sense that God's Spirit has always been present in the world and remains present with the Church today.

How this is seen in the Sacrament of Confirmation

- In Confirmation, the Holy Spirit strengthens us to live as followers of Jesus.
- The anointing with Chrism reminds us that God's Spirit is with us.
- Confirmation continues the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church.
- The Holy Spirit helps us grow in faith, courage, and holiness

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Session overview:

- The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.
- The Holy Spirit helps, guides, and strengthens God's people.
- Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would remain with the Church.

Direct knowledge statement for pupils:

The Holy Spirit is God, who guides, strengthens, and stays with us.

Unlock the theme

Display an image of a guide leading others, a light in darkness, or a hand helping someone up.

Ask:

- Why do people need guidance and support in life?
- What difference can it make when someone helps us through difficult times?
- Why do you think Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to His followers?

Proclaim scripture

John 14:15–17 Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

After proclaiming the passage, pause.

Say: 'Jesus promised that His followers would never be left alone'

Discussion prompts

Use some of these questions gently rather than as a rapid-fire quiz:

1. What does Jesus promise His disciples in this passage?
2. Why do you think the disciples needed the Holy Spirit?
3. What words are used to describe the Holy Spirit?
4. How might the Holy Spirit help Christians today?
5. Why is it important to know that God stays close to His people?
6. What does this passage teach us about God's love and care?

Guide pupils towards understanding that the Holy Spirit is God's presence with His people, helping and strengthening them.

Quick activity

Give each child a paper footprint.

Invite them to write or draw one time when people might need help, guidance, or courage.

For example:

- when feeling afraid
- making a difficult choice
- helping someone
- praying
- feeling alone

Pupils say:

The Holy Spirit is God, who guides, strengthens, and stays with us

Prayer

Holy Spirit, Advocate,
thank you for staying close to us.

Guide me when I am unsure,
strengthen me when I am afraid,
and help me to follow Jesus each day.

Amen.

Repeat the direct knowledge statement together.

Teacher Notes

The Blessed Trinity is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This session helps pupils move from thinking about the Holy Spirit as only a symbol to understanding that the Holy Spirit is truly God: present, personal, and active in the lives of believers. The focus should remain relational and pastoral rather than overly theological. Pupils do not need a detailed explanation of the Trinity at this stage; instead, they should begin to recognise the Holy Spirit as the One who guides, strengthens, comforts, and remains with the Church.

Jesus' words in John's Gospel are deeply reassuring. The disciples are worried about Jesus leaving them, but Jesus promises they will not be left alone. The title "Advocate" can be explained simply as helper, guide, supporter, or someone who stays beside us. Pupils may connect this naturally to experiences of encouragement, support, friendship, or guidance in their own lives.

Some pupils may notice that the Holy Spirit cannot be seen directly. This can help open discussion about how people recognise the Spirit through its effects: courage, peace, kindness, wisdom, prayer, love, and perseverance.

Possible responses to the discussion prompts may include:

- the disciples needed courage and guidance
- Jesus wanted His followers to know God would remain close to them
- the Holy Spirit helps people make good choices
- Christians experience the Holy Spirit through prayer, worship, peace, kindness, or strength during difficult times

Encourage simple and concrete examples rather than abstract answers. The aim is to help pupils recognise that the Holy Spirit is not distant or only part of Bible stories, but continues to guide and strengthen Christians today.

The tone of the session should remain calm, reflective, and hopeful. Pupils should leave with a growing sense that God stays close to His people through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

How this is seen in the Sacrament of Confirmation

- In Confirmation, the Holy Spirit comes to strengthen and guide us.
- The bishop prays that the Holy Spirit will remain with us throughout our lives.
- The words "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit" remind us that God stays close to His people.
- Confirmation helps us trust that we are never alone in following Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit continues to help, guide, and support the Church today.

Pentecost and the Birth of the Church

Session overview:

- At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples.
- The Holy Spirit gave the disciples courage to proclaim the Gospel.
- Pentecost marks the beginning of the Church's mission to the world.

Direct knowledge statement for pupils:

- **At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled the disciples with courage and sent them out to share the Good News.**

Unlock the theme

Display an image of Pentecost showing flames above the disciples.

Ask:

- What can make people afraid to speak or act?
- What kinds of things can change fearful people into courageous people?
- Why do you think the disciples needed the Holy Spirit before beginning their mission?

Proclaim scripture

Acts 2:1-4 Pentecost

After proclaiming the passage, pause.

Say: "The coming of the Holy Spirit changed the disciples and gave them courage to share the message of Jesus."

Discussion prompts

Use some of these questions gently rather than as a rapid-fire quiz:

1. What happened when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost?
2. How were the disciples different after receiving the Holy Spirit?
3. Why do you think the disciples needed courage?
4. What signs and symbols of the Holy Spirit appear in this passage?
5. What does Pentecost teach us about the mission of the Church?
6. How might the Holy Spirit still help Christians today?

Guide pupils towards understanding that the Holy Spirit strengthens ordinary people to live and share their faith.

Quick activity

Give each child a flame-shaped piece of paper.

Invite them to write or draw one way they can share goodness, hope, or kindness with others.

For example:

- helping someone
- standing up for others
- praying
- encouraging someone
- showing forgiveness
- welcoming others
- As pupils do this, say "**At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled the disciples with courage and sent them out to share the Good News.**"

Prayer

Spirit of God,
fill us with courage and faith.
Help us to live as followers of Jesus
and share His love with others.
Amen.

Repeat the direct knowledge statement together.

Teacher Notes

This session focuses on Pentecost as the moment when the disciples are filled with the Holy Spirit and sent out on mission. Pupils should recognise the dramatic change that takes place in the disciples: before Pentecost they are fearful and uncertain, but afterwards they speak boldly and publicly about Jesus.

The emphasis should remain on courage, guidance, and mission rather than dramatic spectacle. The signs of wind and fire are important because they reveal the power and presence of God. Fire suggests light, strength, and transformation, while wind suggests movement, life, and the unseen power of the Spirit.

Possible responses to the discussion prompts may include:

- the disciples received courage and confidence
- they were no longer afraid to speak about Jesus
- the Holy Spirit helped people from different nations understand one another
- Pentecost marks the beginning of the Church's mission
- Christians today still ask the Holy Spirit for strength, wisdom, and guidance

Keep examples practical and relatable. Pupils may recognise situations where people need courage: standing up for someone, telling the truth, helping others, or living out their faith openly. These examples help connect Pentecost to everyday Christian discipleship.

How this is seen in the Sacrament of Confirmation

- In Confirmation, we receive the same Holy Spirit who came upon the disciples at Pentecost.
- The Holy Spirit strengthens us to live and share our faith courageously.
- The laying on of hands continues the gift of the Spirit given to the Church.
- Confirmation sends us out to live as active followers of Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit helps the Church continue its mission in the world today.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Session overview:

- The Holy Spirit gives special gifts to help Christians live as followers of Jesus.
- These gifts help believers make good choices, grow in faith, and serve others.
- Confirmation strengthens us through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Direct knowledge statement for pupils:

In Confirmation, the Holy Spirit strengthens us through His gifts.

Unlock the theme

Display an image of someone helping, guiding, encouraging, or supporting another person.

Ask:

- What kinds of qualities help people make good and loving choices?
- Why do people sometimes need courage or wisdom?
- How might God help people live faithfully and make good decisions?

Proclaim scripture

Isaiah 11:1–3 The Gifts of the Spirit

After proclaiming the passage, pause.

Say:

“The Holy Spirit gives God’s people the strength and wisdom they need to live faithfully.”

Discussion prompts

Use some of these questions gently rather than as a rapid-fire quiz:

1. What gifts of the Spirit are named in this passage?
2. Why do you think people need wisdom, knowledge, and understanding?
3. How can the Holy Spirit help people make loving and faithful choices?
4. Which gifts might help someone during difficult times?
5. How might these gifts help Christians care for others?
6. What do these gifts teach us about living as followers of Jesus?

Quick activity

Place seven candles, stones, or cards around the room labelled:

- Wisdom
- Understanding
- Counsel
- Fortitude
- Knowledge
- Piety
- Fear of the Lord

Read each gift aloud slowly with a short simple explanation.

Invite pupils to walk quietly around the room and stand beside the gift they feel would help them most in their lives right now.

After a short moment of silence, invite a few pupils to share why they chose that gift if they wish.

As pupils reflect, say quietly:

‘In Confirmation, the Holy Spirit strengthens us through His gifts.’

Prayer

Spirit of Wisdom,
Help us to listen to Your guidance.
Give us courage, understanding, and faith
so that we may follow Jesus each day.
Amen.

Repeat the direct knowledge statement together.

Teacher Notes

This session introduces pupils to the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit:

- wisdom
- understanding
- counsel
- fortitude
- knowledge
- piety
- fear of the Lord

These gifts should be presented simply as ways the Holy Spirit strengthens believers to live faithfully and grow closer to God. Avoid turning the session into memorisation of difficult definitions. The aim is to help pupils recognise that God helps Christians through the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah's prophecy is important because it presents these gifts as signs of God's Spirit resting upon His people. Pupils should understand that the gifts are not rewards, talents, or achievements. They are spiritual helps given by God.

Some terms may need gentle explanation:

- wisdom helps us see things in God's way
- understanding helps us grow deeper in faith
- counsel helps us make good choices
- fortitude gives courage and strength
- knowledge helps us recognise God's presence
- piety helps us love and worship God
- fear of the Lord means wonder, respect, and trust in God

Possible responses to the discussion prompts may include:

- people need wisdom to make good choices
- courage helps people do what is right
- understanding helps people learn about faith
- the Holy Spirit strengthens Christians during difficult situations
- the gifts help believers live kindly, faithfully, and prayerfully

How this is seen in the Sacrament of Confirmation

- In Confirmation, we receive the strengthening gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- The bishop prays for the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us.
- Confirmation helps us grow in wisdom, courage, faith, and holiness.
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit help Christians make loving and faithful choices.
- Through Confirmation, the Holy Spirit strengthens us to live as followers of Jesus.

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Session overview:

- The Holy Spirit helps Christians grow in holiness and love.
- The fruits of the Holy Spirit strengthen us to live as followers of Jesus.
- The fruits of the Holy Spirit can be seen in the way we live and treat others.

Direct knowledge statement for pupils:

- **The Holy Spirit helps us grow in goodness, love, and holiness.**

Unlock the theme

Display an image of a healthy tree bearing fruit.

Ask:

- What helps a tree grow strong and healthy?
- How can you tell when something is healthy and growing well?
- What kinds of qualities help people grow into loving and good people?

Proclaim scripture

Galatians 5:22–23 The Fruits of the Spirit

After proclaiming the passage, pause.

Say: “When the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives, it changes the way we live and treat others.”

Discussion prompts

Use some of these questions gently rather than as a rapid-fire quiz:

1. What fruits of the Spirit are named in this passage?
2. Why do you think Saint Paul describes these qualities as “fruit”?
3. Which fruits help people build loving and peaceful relationships?
4. How can the Holy Spirit help people grow in these qualities?
5. Which fruits of the Spirit are especially important in everyday life?
6. Where might we see these fruits in the lives of others today?

Guide pupils towards understanding that the Holy Spirit changes people gradually and helps them grow in love, goodness, and holiness.

Quick activity

Create a quiet prayer focus with a tree branch, image of a tree, or prayer table.

Give each child a paper leaf.

Invite pupils to spend a quiet moment reflecting on this question:

“What kind of person is God calling me to become?”

Children then write one quality they would like the Holy Spirit to help grow in them.

The fruits of the Holy Spirit are:

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-control
- Generosity

One at a time, invite pupils to place their leaf onto the tree display or near the prayer focus in silence. As they do this, they say **“The Holy Spirit helps us grow in goodness, love, and holiness.”**

Prayer

Spirit of Wisdom,
help us to grow in love, joy, and peace.
Guide us to live with kindness and patience
and help us become more like Jesus each day.
Amen.
Repeat the direct knowledge statement together.

Teacher Notes

This session helps pupils understand that the Holy Spirit changes people gradually from within and helps them grow in holiness, love, and Christian character. The image of growth is important throughout the session. Just as a healthy tree slowly grows and bears fruit over time, Christians also grow spiritually through the guidance and grace of the Holy Spirit.

The Fruits of the Spirit should be presented as visible signs of a life shaped by God. They are not simply personality traits or achievements, but qualities that develop as people grow closer to Christ. Pupils should recognise that the Holy Spirit helps believers become more loving, peaceful, patient, gentle, and faithful in everyday life.

Keep examples practical and relatable. Pupils may recognise these qualities in:

- kindness towards others
- patience with family or friends
- forgiveness
- peace-making
- honesty
- self-control
- encouragement and care for others

Possible responses to the discussion prompts may include:

- fruit grows slowly over time
- the Holy Spirit helps people become more like Jesus
- Christians need God's help to live lovingly and wisely
- the Fruits of the Spirit can be seen in ordinary acts of goodness and care

You may briefly introduce the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as special strengths given by God to help Christians live faithfully. However, the focus of this session should remain on growth in daily Christian living rather than memorising lists or definitions.

The prayerful activity is designed to encourage quiet reflection and openness to the work of the Holy Spirit. Pupils should leave the session with the understanding that holiness is not about perfection, but about allowing God to shape and guide their lives over time.

How this is seen in the Sacrament of Confirmation

- In Confirmation, the Holy Spirit helps us grow more like Jesus.
- The Gifts of the Holy Spirit strengthen us to live faithfully and wisely.
- Confirmation helps us grow in love, courage, peace, and holiness.
- The Holy Spirit continues to guide us throughout our lives.
- The Fruits of the Spirit can be seen in the way Christians live and treat others

Signs & Symbols of Confirmation

Session overview:

- Confirmation uses signs and symbols to show the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- The laying on of hands and anointing with Chrism are important parts of the sacrament.
- In Confirmation, we are strengthened by the Holy Spirit to live as followers of Jesus.

Direct knowledge statement for pupils:

In Confirmation, we are sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Unlock the theme

Display an image of the bishop anointing someone during Confirmation.

Ask:

- Why do important moments often include signs or actions?
- How can symbols help people understand something they cannot see?
- Why do you think the Church uses actions like laying on of hands and anointing in Confirmation?

Proclaim scripture

Samuel 16:1–13 Samuel Anoints David

After proclaiming the passage, pause.

Say: "Throughout the Bible, anointing is a sign that God is calling and strengthening someone for a special purpose."

Discussion Prompts

Use some of these questions gently rather than as a rapid-fire quiz:

1. What happens when Samuel anoints David?
2. Why do you think oil is used as a sign in the Bible?
3. What does anointing tell us about God's blessing and calling?
4. Why might the Church continue using signs like oil and laying on of hands today?
5. What signs and symbols are used during Confirmation?
6. What do these signs teach us about the Holy Spirit?

Quick activity

Create a quiet prayer focus with a small bowl of oil or an image of the Sacred Chrism.

Give each child a small card with the words:
"Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit."

Invite pupils to spend a quiet moment reflecting on how God calls and strengthens people. Children then decorate or underline a word from the sentence that stands out to them:

- sealed
- gift
- Holy Spirit

Invite pupils to place their cards around the prayer focus in silence.

As pupils do this, say quietly:

"In Confirmation, we are sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit."

Prayer

Holy Spirit of Strength,
thank you for your gifts and fruits.
Help us to follow Jesus faithfully
and live with courage, wisdom, and love.
Amen.

Repeat the direct knowledge statement together.

Teacher Notes

This session introduces pupils to the visible signs and actions of the Sacrament of Confirmation. At this stage, it is important that pupils understand that sacraments use physical signs to reveal God's grace and presence. The signs are not simply symbolic actions; they help communicate the reality of God's work in the life of the Church.

The anointing of David provides a helpful biblical foundation because oil in Scripture is often connected with blessing, calling, healing, strengthening, and being set apart for God's purpose. This helps pupils understand why Sacred Chrism is used in Confirmation.

Pupils should become familiar with the key signs of the sacrament:

- laying on of hands
- anointing with Sacred Chrism
- the Sign of Peace
- the words "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit"

Keep explanations calm and reassuring. Many pupils are more anxious about what will happen during the rite than about theology itself. The aim is to help them feel prepared and confident about the sacrament.

Possible responses to the discussion prompts may include:

- oil is used as a sign of blessing and strength
- laying on of hands shows prayer and the giving of the Holy Spirit
- signs help people understand invisible realities
- Confirmation shows that God strengthens believers for Christian living

The prayerful activity is intended to help pupils reflect quietly on the meaning of being "sealed" with the Holy Spirit. The word "sealed" can be explained simply as belonging to God and being strengthened by His Spirit.

How this is seen in the Sacrament of Confirmation

- The bishop lays hands on those being confirmed and prays for the Holy Spirit.
- Sacred Chrism is used to anoint each person being confirmed.
- The words "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit" are spoken during the anointing.
- The signs and symbols of Confirmation show God's grace and strengthening presence.
- Confirmation marks us as followers of Jesus strengthened by the Holy Spirit.