

Second Sunday after Pentecost

**The Holy Spirit and Christian Spirituality***Old Testament: Isaiah 61:1-2 (NRSV)*

<sup>1</sup> The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;

*New Testament: Luke 4:16-21 (NRSV)*

<sup>16</sup> When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

<sup>18</sup> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

<sup>20</sup> And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup> Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

*General Concept: The Spirit of Christ liberates, transforms, and empowers.*

*Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School*

N/K/YE: **The Holy Spirit makes us better Christians.**

ME/OE: **The Holy Spirit is the power that can change us into better persons.**

Y: **The Holy Spirit is the power that can liberate, transform and empower the church for mission.**

A: **The Holy Spirit is the power that can liberate, transform and empower the church for mission.**

### *Exegesis of the Biblical References*

Isaiah 61 is part of the post exilic edition of the book of the Prophet Isaiah. Verses 1 and 2 speak of the mission of the post exilic people of Judah. They have now returned to their own home after their captivity under the Babylonians upon the fall of Babylon from the Persian Empire. They have received a decree to return to their home place and establish their community. Their release from captivity is also a sign from God enabling them to fulfill their responsibilities as the people chosen by God. This means that they have to claim the work of the Spirit of the Lord and the tasks involved in that claim. Their task is to proclaim the good news to the afflicted, bind up the broken hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, to announce the year of the favor of the Lord and to comfort all who mourn. It affirms the freedom that enables a person to empower others to strive for freedom.

The prophetic voice of Isaiah does not want the people of the rebuilding Jewish community to be passive. They have to be an active participant in the Holy Spirit's work towards the fulfillment of the promise of God in making themselves also a blessing to others especially those who belong to their community but who still feel the pains and trauma of captivity. This also speaks of what the Holy Spirit is doing to all the believers who pursue liberation in all aspects of bondage and captivity. The Spirit of God transforms and empowers the believers to testify to the good works of God in their life as a people and leads them to a holistic or total liberation as promised by God from the very beginning.

Luke 4 narrates the beginning part of Jesus' ministry in Galilee starting from the stage of preparation through the temptation in the desert and after triumphantly overcoming the devil. Jesus immediately proceeds to his Galilean ministry in Nazareth in the synagogue. He reads the part of the Scripture specifically Isaiah 61:1-2 and he ends the reading by saying it is fulfilled in the people's hearing. This statement did not earn the favor of the Pharisees in the Synagogue and due to the sudden fury arising out of such declaration he was forced to go away from Nazareth to conduct his ministry elsewhere. Jesus' proclamation of the work of the Holy Spirit as expressed and directed towards the healing and liberation of the most marginalized in his society is an affirmation of the concreteness of the saving power of God through the Spirit and Jesus.

This work of Jesus through the spirit is received and experienced by the people through ministries which liberate, transform and empower as stated in the following accounts in the gospel. One of the statements that is mostly quoted by church workers is that "no prophet is welcomed in his hometown". This could speak of how Jesus' belief and action was not acceptable to the prevailing culture and political and economic structure of his time. Jesus quotes Elijah as he sees himself like the prophet who was not accepted in his own land and surrounding Samaria due to the political and economic policies promoted by Baalism and as sponsored by King Ahab and Queen Jezebel (I Kings 17). This prevailing culture was opposite to the prophetic witness and proclamation of Elijah as he emphasized the liberation of the people like the widows and orphans from oppressive conditions made worse by the Baal culture. This scenario was also the same with Jesus as he ministered to those who need empowerment and liberation. His transforming ministry was seen as a danger to the prevailing Roman imperial values which were oppressive and depraving. This is the challenge of those who are under the power of the Spirit of the Lord and this prophetic witness could be seen as a threat to the prevailing oppressive forces and the values they promote and represent.

*Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users*

Christian spirituality is not a natural human quality but acquired by learning from Jesus' spirituality. Jesus calls us, "take my *yoke* and *learn* from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Matt 11:29)." One learns from Jesus by taking his yoke, meaning, carrying his load which is not really burdensome but in fact restful for the soul. The call is made for those who feel pressed to the ground by the burdens they are carrying in life. It is a spirituality borne of suffering with those who suffer as Jesus did.

"For freedom Christ has set us free" (Gal. 5:1). Here, Paul writes about being freed from the constraints of the law that block the work of grace and from Gentile beliefs that burden the gospel with unnecessary obligations and practices. In his first public appearance, Jesus announced emancipation and liberty to all victims of Roman colonization. Underlying every gain in the struggle for freedom, whether in the spiritual, material or political realm, is none other than the Spirit sent by Christ. No one who rejects Jesus' earthly praxis of freedom can achieve Christian spirituality because Christ sends the Spirit to dwell upon those who follow his historical and spiritual praxis of freedom.

In addition, the Spirit transforms and empowers those who follow Jesus' praxis of freedom. Those who follow Jesus undergo progressive life-changes that bring them closer to Jesus' human stature which in turn makes following Jesus more spontaneous. This is the result of the empowering work of the Spirit upon those who follow Jesus' praxis of freedom. Christian spirituality, therefore, is not a static mode of being that is possessed like a property but a dynamic progression in Christian growth.

The work of the Spirit is perhaps the most misunderstood concept in Christian life. Some people associate the Spirit as a source of superior power over the ordinary members of the church. They claim to have the power to discern the mind of God by which they give specific prediction of events and counsel to people who are faced with difficult decisions in life, claiming that it's the Spirit speaking through them. These pretenders are nothing but charlatans out to deceive people for profit, influence and prestige. The church must guard against people who are driven by spirits other than Jesus' Spirit.

How may we know that it is really the Holy Spirit that is at work in a person or church? The work of the Spirit may be recognized by its marks as enumerated by the Apostle Paul. His list is long but by no means exhaustive since it was informed from his pastoral work with the young churches. Together they constitute a work of the Spirit, resonating with one another and painting a complete and coherent picture of a Spirit-powered Christian praxis. For our guidance we should be wary about any claim to Christian spirituality that is inconsistent or contradicts with Paul's list.

## Nursery/Kindergarten/Younger Elementary Levels

### I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. begin to tell how the Holy Spirit helps us become better persons;
2. begin to list ways of demonstrating love for others by being good and kind; and
3. express one's thankfulness for the work of the Holy Spirit in each of us.

### II. Concept: The Holy Spirit makes us better Christians.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (NRSV), red and blue heart-shaped paper, a scroll, writing pens or crayons

### III. Learning Experiences

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Loving God, help us to become good persons by loving people and the rest of creation. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Come Holy Spirit"  
*Come, Holy Spirit we need You. Come, Holy Spirit we pray.  
Come in Your strength and Your power. Come in Your own gentle way.*

#### B. Getting Ready

1. As the children arrive, give each child a red or a blue heart. Group them according to the color of the heart they got. Tell the children in each group to find a partner and talk to each other. Then each child looks for another partner until each child has talked to everyone in the group. Remind them not to talk to anybody in the other group.
2. After the activity, ask the children how they felt talking to each member in the group. Continue to ask them how they felt not talking to the members of the other group.
3. Let the children compare their groups by talking about their similarities and differences. Expect answers similar to the following:
  - a. Similarities: The members of both groups are persons. All have names. Each belongs to a group. All attend Sunday school. (Encourage the children to give more similarities like the food they eat, their likes and dislikes, etc.)
  - b. Differences: Some members are boys. Some members are girls. They do not have the same group. (Encourage the children to give more differences like the food they eat, their likes and dislikes, etc.)

#### C. Learning Time

1. Ask the class about the things they do at home to show obedience to their parents (Sleeping early, eating vegetables, doing one's chores at home, playing with siblings, setting the table, fixing one's bed, etc.)
2. Ask the class about the things they heard about Jesus. (Expected answers are: Jesus was kind. Jesus told about the Good News. Jesus healed the sick. Jesus gave food to others. Jesus loved the people. etc.) Say: "There is another thing that we want to describe Jesus in relation to his Father. Jesus was obedient."
3. Tell the story.

#### Jesus' Obedience to the Father

(Based on Luke 4:16-21)

One Sabbath morning, Jesus went to the synagogue. He was asked to read from the scroll.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good

news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people.”

Then he closed the scroll and said, “Today this passage of Scripture has come true, just as you heard me read it.”

*D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

Discuss the different parts of the story.

1. Where did Jesus go on a Sabbath morning? (a synagogue in Nazareth)
2. What did Jesus do there? (He read the scripture from the scroll.)
3. Say: “The story says that Jesus filled with the Lord’s Spirit to tell the good news.” Ask: What was the good news? (That God chose Jesus to tell them about God’s love for them.)
4. Say: “God asked Jesus to do many things for the poor.” Ask: “What are some of the things Jesus needed to do for the poor?” Expected answers are: Jesus will free the prisoners. Jesus will make the blind see. Jesus will free those who are not treated with justice. Jesus will save God’s people. Accept other answers.
5. Say: “When Jesus brought the message of hope to the people, Jesus was saying that God cares for all of them.” Ask: “Is helping the poor and the needy a good deed or bad deed? (Good!) Are you willing to help the poor and the needy? How? These are expected answers: I’ll do my chores at home, in school, or in the church. I’ll share some of my food or things to the needy. I’ll listen to what my friends are sharing with me. I’ll not bully the younger children in my school. I’ll obey the rules. I’ll tell others about God’s love for me and them.
6. Say: “Jesus did what the Father asked him to do.” Ask: “Do you agree that Jesus is obedient to the Father? Why or why not” Go back to the part where they obey their parents and relate this to obeying God.

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: “Who will help you to become a better Christian? (The Spirit of Christ makes us better Christians.)

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Tell the class that following Jesus’ example is not easy but it is important. Encourage the children to use their sense of right and wrong. Let them recall their feelings about talking to a group of children and talking to everybody.
2. Assist them in understanding and memorizing the chosen verse: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.” (Luke 4:18a)
3. **N/K:** Provide each child a scroll and let them copy the memory verse. **YE:** Provide each child a scroll and let them copy the memory verse. Let the learners draw or list ways of demonstrating love for others by being good and kind. Then let both groups roll their scrolls and bring them home for the family to see and read.

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Offering: As the children offer their gifts, remind them that God sent Jesus into the world to teach people about God’s love.
2. Closing songs: “Come Holy Spirit” and other goodbye songs
3. Closing prayer: “Dear Father, thank you for sending Jesus to tell us about your love for all your people. May we learn to do the same in our daily life. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.”

## Middle and Older Elementary Levels

### I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. tell how the Holy Spirit helps us become better persons;
2. list ways of demonstrating love for others by being good and kind; and
3. express one's thankfulness for the work of the Holy Spirit.

**II. Concept:** The Holy Spirit is the power that can change us into better persons.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (NRSV), diary or booklet

### III. Learning Experiences

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Smile and greet the children as they come. Check the attendance.
2. Opening prayer: Holy Spirit open our eyes to your Word and make us people with a heart for those in need. Amen.
3. Opening song: "Come Holy Spirit"  
*Come, Holy Spirit we need You. Come, Holy Spirit we pray.  
Come in Your strength and Your power. Come in Your own gentle way.*

#### B. Getting Ready

Tell the class to study the following underlined words to help them understand how they are used in the story.

1. The Good News is about the coming of Jesus as he was sent by the Father, to save us from our sins by dying on the cross and by resurrecting on the third day so that, we, too, can experience resurrection on his Second Coming and while we are waiting, we can enjoy a new life sustained by the Holy Spirit. The Good News is also called the Gospel.
2. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. The Trinity is God in three persons—God, the Father, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son, to be the companion and guide of God's believers, to comfort and sustain them.

#### C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read Isaiah 61:1-2 first in unison. Discuss that even before Jesus was sent to earth, there was already a prophecy on what the Anointed One (Jesus) will do.
2. Have the class read, from their own Bibles, Luke 4:16-21 silently. Let them highlight the words or phrases that tell about the following:
  - a. The day and the place where Jesus went as a regular activity among the Jews
  - b. The condition of Jesus
  - c. The reason why Jesus was anointed by God, the Father
  - d. What Jesus will do with the captives or prisoners
  - e. What Jesus will do to the blind
  - f. What Jesus will do to those who are oppressed or are suffering
  - g. The time of salvation
  - h. The fulfillment of the prophecy

3. Encourage the class to realize that the reading of Jesus' mission signals the beginning of Jesus' ministry on earth and that Jesus was telling the people that fulfilling the prophecy is as an act of obedience to the Father.

*D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

1. Prepare the class for a choral recitation of Luke 4:16-21. Assign a group who will read the part of the narrator (verses 16, 17, and 21) and two groups reading the tasks of Jesus alternately from verses 18 to 19.
2. Discuss the lesson by letting the class answer the following questions:
  - a. What word in the story tells you that the Jews always worship in the synagogue and the time they do this? (As was his custom, the Sabbath Day)
  - b. Why is the verse "filled with the Holy Spirit" significant? (It signifies that it was the Spirit of God that gave him the blessing to do his mission.)
  - c. Why was Jesus anointed by God, the Father? (To bring the Good News to the poor)
  - d. What will Jesus do with the captives or prisoners? (Free them.)
  - e. What will Jesus do to the blind? (Make them see.)
  - f. What will Jesus do to those who are oppressed or are suffering? (Free them.)
  - g. When is the time of salvation? (Now)
  - h. How is the prophecy fulfilled? (Through the ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus)

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Say: "Who will give us the power to become better persons?" (The Spirit of Christ is the power that can change us into better persons. We become better persons when we obey God just as Jesus obeyed Him.)

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Tell the class that following Jesus is not easy. But as believers of Christ, it is our responsibility to do what God desires by following what Jesus did. Help them realize that sharing the Good News is possible with the Presence of the Holy Spirit.
2. Instruct the class to write in their diary their plans of sharing the Good News. Ask them to identify the person in their mind and the way they can share the Gospel.
3. Let the class study and memorize the verse: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Luke 4:18-19)

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Spirit of God, Descend upon my Heart" HFJ # 181
3. Closing prayer: "Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to us to save us and for the Holy Spirit that gives us the power to be better persons. Make us and mold us to be more like Jesus. This is our prayer. Amen."

## Youth Level

### I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. define the meaning of the words liberate, transform, and empower in relation to the Holy Spirit;
2. acknowledge the role of God's Spirit in the mission work of Jesus and the church; and
3. express one's thankfulness for the work of the Holy Spirit in each of us.

**II. Concept:** The Holy Spirit is the power that can liberate, transform and empower the church for mission.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (NRSV), worksheets, crayons, pencils, journals

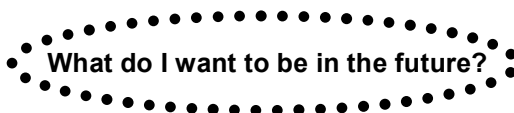
### III. Learning Experiences

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: Assign a prayer leader to lead the class in prayer.
3. Opening song: "Open My Eyes, that I May See" HFJ # 150  
By Clara H. Scott, 1896

#### B. Getting Ready

1. Present this thought bubble on the board and ask the class to answer it.



2. Process the responses of the students and encourage them to look at the following:
  - a. Their perspective of looking at the future
  - b. Searching for Biblical heroes who demonstrated strength and bravery because of their strong faith in God.

#### C. Learning Time

1. Ask the class to use the underlined words in giving actual life situations.
  - a. A liberating experience enables the believer to imbibe the teachings of Jesus that are life enhancing and affirming of freedom from ignorance and all forms of bondage and from any threat to the fullness of life and one that enables also the learner to live a life that becomes a channel of God's liberating ways for the rest of God's creation.
  - b. A transforming experience, based on the teachings of Jesus and sustained by the Holy Spirit leads to life defining changes in one's values, behavior, perspectives, beliefs, and principles in life and has the power to inspire others towards similar life changing experiences.
  - c. An empowering experience enables the believers to acquire knowledge, skills and character traits like discipline, excellence, compassion rooted in the teachings of Jesus and the rest of the Scripture for the believers to discover, hone, and use their talents and abilities for self-actualization and leadership in the service of the people and the rest of God's creation.
2. Ask the class to read, from their Bibles, Isaiah 6:1-2 and Luke 4:16-21. Let them compare the verses by:
  - a. identifying which is the prophecy and the fulfillment of the prophecy;



- b. listing the tasks in the mission tasks; and
  - c. the significance of these verses to the mission of Jesus
3. Discuss the responses of the students and encourage them to visualize the role of obedience in fulfilling the prophecy.

*D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time*

Say: "Isaiah foretold the prophecy of the coming Anointed One and it was Jesus who fulfilled it. Discuss the lesson. Ask these questions.

1. What are the tasks in Jesus' mission that can liberate the believers? (Verses 18-19)
2. How can the Holy Spirit transform the believers? How did Jesus acknowledge this? (Verse 18)
3. In terms of expectancy, when is the time that God, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, empower the believers to do the right action? (Verse 21)
4. When and how did Jesus proclaim the fulfillment of the prophecy? (Verse 21)

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: "How does the Spirit of Christ liberate, transform, and empower believers?" (Luke 4:16-21)

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

Tell the class to prepare an action project. Tell them that as the name suggests, this technique is designed to enable the students to design an activity wherein they will be able to use what they have learned in the classroom. Present the following steps:

1. Identify existing church programs that involve extending assistance to the needy.
2. Devise a plan by which the class participate either in the planning or actual program or both. The goal is to act in order to show concern for the needy and weary just like what Jesus did.
3. Provide this template.
  - a. Project Title (ex. "Soup kitchen, Saturday school with street children, Storytelling session with neighborhood children)
  - b. Goal:
  - c. Target Place:
  - d. People involved:
  - e. Time Frame:
  - f. Tasking:
  - g. Budget
4. Break down the tasks and assign point person for each task.

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Memory verse: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' (Luke 4:18-19)
2. Offering
3. Closing song: "Spirit of God, Descend upon my Heart" HFJ # 181
4. Closing prayer: Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to us to save us and for the Holy Spirit that gives us the power to be better persons. Make us and mold us to be more like Jesus. This is our prayer. Amen."

## Adult Level

### I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. explain the terms, liberate, transform, and empower and relate them to the work of the Trinity;
2. associate the work of the Spirit of Christ to the work of the church for mission;
3. express one's thankfulness for the work of the Holy spirit in each of us; and.
4. list some situations when we, as believers, are led to know the one true God.

**II. Concept:** The Holy Spirit is the power that can liberate, transform and empower the church for mission.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (NRSV), worksheets

### III. Learning Experiences

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: Assign a prayer leader to lead the class in prayer.
3. Opening song: "Open My Eyes, that I may See" HFJ # 150  
By Clara H. Scott, 1896

#### B. Getting Ready

Tell the class to study the following underlined words to help them understand how they are used in the story.

1. The Good News is about the coming of Jesus as he was sent by the Father, to save us from our sins by dying on the cross and by resurrecting on the third day so that, we, too, can experience resurrection on his Second Coming and while we are waiting, we can enjoy a new life sustained by the Holy Spirit. The Good News is also called the Gospel.
2. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. The Trinity is God in three persons—God, the Father, God, the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son, to be the companion and guide of God's believers, to comfort and sustain them.

#### C. Learning Time

1. Group the learners into small groups and let them read Isaiah 61:1-2 and Luke 4:16-21. Tell each small group to discuss the verses using the following steps:  
Step 1: Observation: Use questions like who, when, where, which, and what. to know what the story says. Make sure the facts are concrete, explicit, evident, and verifiable in the story.  
Step 2: Interpretation: Based on your observations, interpret the meaning of the facts in the story.  
Step 3: Application: Find out how you can apply the truths in the story in real life situations.
2. After their discussion, let them share their insights to the bigger group.

*D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

Discuss the lesson.

1. Jesus announced his ministry on earth. Read the mission of Jesus and list five things that he has been anointed to do. Opposite each task, tell whether the mission is for freedom, for transformation or for empowerment to do the right action.
2. Read verse 18a. Why is the filling of the Holy Spirit significant in Jesus' mission? Look at yourself inwardly and ask yourself about your mission in life. Study the mission of your local church. How can you get involved?
3. Why do you think Jesus called his mission the Good News to the poor?

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: "What empowers the church to do mission?" (The Spirit of Christ is the power that can liberate, transform and empower the church for mission.)

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

Tell the class to meditate on the following and decide how they can bring the Good News to those who suffer from the following conditions:

1. To those who are hungry. (Congregation food drive or families can offer free meals.)
2. To those who are ashamed because their clothes are old, they are not clean, or they are not presentable. (Distribution of used clothes and other things that can clothe them, Visit to safe houses, homeless shelters, day care centers)
3. To those who are sick and they cannot afford to get medical attention due to poverty. (Medical and dental mission)
4. Those that cannot go to school. (Sponsorship)
5. To those who are sad. (Fellowship, dialogue, celebration worship)

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Memory verse: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to release of the captives, to recover of sight to the blind, to free the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Luke 4: 18-19)
2. Offering
3. Closing song: "Spirit of God, Descend upon my Heart" HFJ # 181
4. Closing prayer: Tell the class to write a prayer to God based on what they just learned. Let them give one sentence that will get them involved in bringing hope and encouragement to all people and their attitude of obeying God's will as they help free, change and empower people.