

HOLY SPIRIT WORKSHOP

An SCM Workshop

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

This SCM workshop aims to explore a group's thoughts and feelings surrounding the Holy Spirit and hopefully share approaches from different traditions. It is meant to be a reflective rather than an academic exploration. From Quakers to Charismatics, a focus on being Spirit-led is a core Christian principle, and we hope this workshop will help you inspire and challenge each other. Allow about 80 minutes for the whole workshop.

You'll need a set of pictures for the Picture this exercise. Try magazines, newspapers or the Creative Commons resource on Flickr. The pictures need to be things that can be cut up, so don't use anything that you want to keep! You'll also need a large sheet of paper, thick pens, glue and pair of scissors for each group, another piece of paper or flipchart for writing up responses in the Ask the question section, some enthusiasm and perhaps a few cups of tea.

INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

This workshop asks people to share their personal reflection and experiences so it is important to establish trust in the group and make sure everyone is as comfortable as possible. You may like to begin by explaining that everyone is in a safe space and non-judgemental place and encouraging people to share in a spirit of open-mindedness, a key principle of SCM.

As an icebreaker, go round the group and ask people to finish a sentence. Some examples:

If money wasn't an object I would...

I think my best quality is...

The best piece of advice I've been given is...

You could finish with: I think the Holy Spirit is...

ASK THE QUESTION(S) (10-15 MINUTES)

Introduce the question that this workshop will explore:

What does the Holy Spirit mean to you?

You might want to explain that there is not a right or wrong answer to this question and that the aim of the workshop is not to reach a conclusion but to challenge and enrich each other's understandings through 'exploring together a radical faith'.

Ask for words from the group that they would use to describe their ideas and feelings about the Holy Spirit and write these up on a large piece of paper on the wall.

EXPLORE THE ISSUE(S) (30 MINUTES)

This exercise will help each member of the group express their own experience of the Holy Spirit and stimulate discussion.

Lay out the set of images on the floor and let people walk around and look at the images. These pictures might include traditional images of Holy Spirit such as the dove and fire, but may also include pictures of nature, the sky, baptism, cityscapes, animals, people in various moods and anything else you can think of; the images don't need to be serious or positive, in fact it's helpful if there's a real mixture. Make sure there are more images than there are people.

Ask each person to choose an image that best represents the Holy Spirit (or their relationship with the Holy Spirit) to them. You could play some music while they choose. Take about 5 minutes for this bit.

Then ask the group to get into pairs and share with their partner why they have chosen this image. You might like to ask the group to form a pair with someone they don't know very well if you feel this would help group cohesion.

INVITE THE RESPONSE (30 MINUTES)

Ask the pairs to form small groups with other pairs around them. Then ask them to briefly share their picture choices with the group. Then ask each group, giving each group a large piece of paper, glue, pens and scissors, ask them to amalgamate their images into a piece of art that incorporates all of their experience of the Holy Spirit, however contradictory. They might also like to write words and sentences on their piece of paper.

Bringing the whole group back together, ask each group to share their collages with the group.

CLOSING THE SESSION (5 MINUTES)

It would seem odd to run a workshop on the Holy Spirit and leave no space for participants to reflect with God. Why not use a short version of Centring Prayer to bring the workshop to a reflective close? Instructions for Centring Prayer can be found in The SCM Little Book of Prayer. You could suggest that people chose a word from their collages as their sacred word.

If centring prayer doesn't seem appropriate to your group you could finish with a time of silence and/or open prayer.

FUTURE DISCUSSIONS AND MORE RESOURCES

If your group is interested in exploring this theme further, then you could try some of these topics for further discussions or invite a speaker. Get in touch with the SCM office if you need any help or resources (scm@movement.org.uk).

- *The Spirit is a holy troublemaker. Discuss.*
- *A Bible study on gifts of the Spirit (e.g. 1 Corinthians 12:1-11)*
- *If you are not familiar with the Pentecostal or Charismatic tradition, ask someone who is to come and share their understanding of the Spirit.*
- *Similarly with Quaker understandings of the Spirit, invite someone from your local Quaker Meeting to come and speak.*

- *This Risen Existence: The Spirit of Easter by Paula Gooder*
- *The Holy Spirit in the World: A Global Conversation by Kirsteen Kim*
- *The Go-Between God: The Holy Spirit and Christian Mission by John V Taylor*
- *Pentecostal Theology by Keith Warrington*
- *The Holy Spirit: Classic and Contemporary readings ed. Eugene F. Rogers Jr. (Wiley-Blackwell 2009)*

