

SESSION 2

The Spirit on the Few

Numbers 11 • Judges 6 • 1 Samuel 16

Part 1: Leader Preparation Guide

Session Overview

Discovery Aim

Participants discover the Old Testament pattern of the Spirit: given to a few, given suddenly, given for a task, and capable of departing. Inside that pattern they find Moses saying out loud the thing the whole Old Testament is aching for: "Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!" Confirmation stands inside the new covenant's answer to that ache, strengthening for mission the universal gift that Christ's Passover and Pentecost poured out.

Catholic Touchstone

Before Pentecost, the Spirit's mission was real but hidden, at work in judges, kings, and prophets for the sake of the whole people (CCC 702). The fullness of the Spirit was never meant to remain the possession of a few; it was to be communicated to the whole messianic people (CCC 1287). Tonight the group watches the "few" stage of that story, and hears Moses wish for the "all" stage.

What You Need to Know

The verbs are violent. The Old Testament almost never says the Spirit gently "filled" someone. He "came upon" the elders, "took possession of" Gideon (the Hebrew says the Spirit *clothed Himself* with Gideon, put him on like a coat), and "rushed upon" Samson and David. These are verbs of sudden seizure from outside. The Spirit in this era is an event that happens to a person, not a resident who lives in one.

The gift is task-shaped. In every case tonight, the Spirit comes so that someone can do a job for the people: help Moses govern, deliver Israel from Midian, shepherd the kingdom. Nobody receives the Spirit as a trophy or a private experience. This corrects, gently, the way many teens and adults imagine spiritual gifts, as personal upgrades. In Scripture the Spirit is given to you mostly for everyone else.

The gift can leave. The same chapter that says the Spirit rushed on David from that day forward says the Spirit departed from Saul. Do not soften this; the steelman chain tonight depends on facing it squarely. One precision to hold: tonight's pattern concerns the conspicuous task-endowments, prophetic, royal, military; it is not a claim that God's grace never truly dwelt in the righteous of the old covenant. Those charismatic givings could be withdrawn, and the Old Testament itself knows this is not good enough, which is exactly why its prophets start promising something permanent.

The oil rule. In 1 Samuel 16:13, Samuel anoints David with oil and the Spirit rushes on him. You must not develop the oil tonight. If anyone in the group notices it and asks, smile and say, word for word, "Hold that thought until next week." Session 3 opens on that very verse. Letting a participant's own question hang in the air for a week is worth more than any answer you could give tonight.

For the parents in the room. The fairness question ("Why would God give the Spirit to some and not others?") tends to come from parents as often as teens, sometimes wearing grown-up clothes: why does faith seem easy for some people and dry for me? Do not treat it as a distraction. The session's honest answer, that the selective era was temporary and aimed at a universal gift, lands hardest on the adult who quietly feels passed over.

Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

- Numbers 11 (seventy elders receive Moses' Spirit) anticipates Luke 10:1, where Jesus, the new Moses, appoints seventy and sends them ahead of Him. Tonight's closing glimpse.
- Moses' wish in Numbers 11:29 anticipates Joel's prophecy that God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh (Session 4) and Peter's "this is what was spoken" at Pentecost (Session 7).
- Gideon's fleece (Judges 6:36-40, adjacent to tonight's discovery) was read by St. Ambrose as an image of the Spirit: dew first on the fleece alone, then on all the ground. The few, then the all.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose of Milan (*On the Holy Spirit, Book I, prologue*)

St. Ambrose read Gideon's fleece as a picture of the Spirit's story. First the dew fell on the fleece alone while all the ground stayed dry: the Spirit's dew resting on the one people, Israel. Then the dew fell on all the ground: the grace poured out on all the nations. The movement from the one to the all that the group discovers tonight as a pattern, Ambrose saw as a promise.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae II-II, q. 171*)

St. Thomas taught that the light of prophecy was given to the prophets as a passing impression, not a permanent possession. A prophet could not prophesy whenever he wished; the gift came when God sent it and not otherwise. This is the precise, careful way of describing tonight's charismatic pattern: the prophetic and task-gifts of the old covenant came when God sent them, not at the prophet's disposal. Thomas is speaking of prophecy, not denying that God's grace truly dwelt in the holy ones of the old covenant.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catechetical Lectures, Lecture 16*)

Instructing his candidates, St. Cyril walked through the Spirit's work in the Old Testament and lingered on Numbers 11: the Spirit that rested on Moses was shared with the seventy elders, and even reached Eldad and Medad in the camp. Cyril's point to his hearers was that the Spirit they were preparing to receive was not a novelty; He had been at work among God's people for a very long time.

Catechism Connection

- **CCC 687.** No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God, who has spoken through the prophets.
- **CCC 702.** From the beginning until the fullness of time, the joint mission of the Word and the Spirit remains hidden, but it is at work; tonight's figures belong to that hidden preparatory era.
- **CCC 1287.** The fullness of the Spirit was not to remain uniquely the Messiah's, but was to be communicated to the whole messianic people.

Thread Watch

Thread B: From the Few to the All. Planted tonight in Moses' wish (Numbers 11:29) and watered by Ambrose's fleece. It develops in Session 4 (Joel: "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh") and resolves in Session 7 when Peter stands up at Pentecost and declares Joel's prophecy fulfilled, with Moses' wish granted in the same stroke on the Church's long-standing reading. Do not connect it forward; just make sure Numbers 11:29 gets read aloud twice and memorized.

Thread C: The Oil. Pre-seeded only. Samuel's horn of oil appears in 1 Samuel 16:13 and you say nothing about it. Session 3 opens there. If asked: "Hold that thought until next week."

Session Goals

1. Participants can describe the Old Testament pattern of the Spirit in their own words: on the few, suddenly, for a task, revocably.
2. Participants have found Judges 6 themselves and can explain what it means that the Spirit "clothed" Gideon.
3. Numbers 11:29 has been read aloud at least twice and every household leaves with it as the memory verse.
4. The group has faced the "Spirit who leaves" objection at full strength and seen how the Old Testament itself answers it by promising something better.
5. Nobody has discussed the oil. Truly. Not even you.

Time Note

Full plan runs about 75 minutes. To land at 60, make these cuts and no others: drop Win question 1 (keep question 2), skip the Dig Deeper box on Samson, and present the steelman objection yourself in one minute rather than building it with the group. Never cut the live discovery of Judges 6, the double reading of Numbers 11:29, or the Luke 10 glimpse.

Part 2: Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Leader: *Come, Holy Spirit. You rested on seventy elders in the wilderness, You clothed a frightened farmer like a coat, You rushed upon a shepherd boy in front of his brothers. Nothing about our ordinariness discourages You. Rest on this room tonight. Give us the honesty to ask for what Moses asked for, and the patience to watch You answer it. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Win: Opening Questions

Parent and candidate pairs. Two minutes each question, then a few pairs share with the table.

1. Who is someone you know personally who has a gift you wish you had? What is the gift?
2. Tell your partner about a time you were handed a job you felt completely unqualified for. What happened?

Build: Into the Text

Scene One: The Seventy (Numbers 11:16-17, 24-30)

Households read this at home this week. Have two readers take it in turns aloud now: verses 16-17, then 24-30.

Question 1. What problem is God actually solving by taking some of the Spirit that is on Moses and putting it on the seventy? What is the Spirit for, in this scene?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Moses is collapsing under the weight of the people; he has just told God he would rather die than carry them alone (verses 11-15, worth glancing at). The Spirit is God's answer to a leadership crisis. He is given so that seventy men can share a burden, which means the Spirit here is fuel for service, not a badge of honor. Notice that the elders prophesy once, as a sign, "but they did so no more" (verse 25). Even this gift is for the task, not for the thrill.

Question 2. Eldad and Medad missed the meeting, and the Spirit found them anyway, in the camp. Joshua wants them stopped. Read Moses' answer in verse 29 aloud, twice. What does Moses want, and why is it a surprising thing for him, of all people, to want?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Moses wants the exact opposite of what Joshua wants. Joshua wants the gift fenced, controlled, kept close to headquarters; he is jealous for Moses' status. Moses wants the fence torn down entirely: all the LORD's people, every last one, carrying the Spirit. It is surprising because Moses is the one man with the most to lose if the gift goes universal; his uniqueness is his authority. Instead the meekest man on earth (Numbers 12:3) wishes his own privilege onto everybody. Hold this question for the group: is verse 29 just a wish, or is it a prophecy? Do not answer it tonight. The study will.

Scene Two: Live Discovery

Do not announce the passage. Read the clue and let the tables hunt. Allow three or four minutes; if they stall, tell them it is in the book named for what its heroes were, then that the man's story starts with wheat.

DIG DEEPER

The clue. "A farmer is threshing wheat in a winepress, which is a strange place to do it, because he is hiding. An angel calls this frightened man a mighty warrior, which sounds almost like a joke. But later the Spirit of the LORD puts him on like a coat, and he picks up a trumpet. Find him."

When found, have the discovering table read Judges 6:33-35 aloud, and let someone summarize verses 11-16 for context.

Question 3. Your translation likely says the Spirit "took possession of" Gideon. The Hebrew underneath says the Spirit of the LORD *clothed Himself* with Gideon, wore him like a garment. Sit with that picture a moment. What does it suggest about who is doing the work when a Spirit-filled person acts?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

The picture reverses our instincts. We would say Gideon "had" the Spirit, as if the Spirit were Gideon's equipment. The Hebrew says the Spirit had Gideon; Gideon was the equipment. When the trumpet sounds and the tribes rally, the power at work is not a farmer's courage upgraded a little; it is God acting, wearing a human life. The man who was hiding in a winepress in verse 11 is mustering an army by verse 35, and the only thing that changed in between is the Spirit.

Question 4. Put tonight's cases side by side: seventy exhausted elders, one frightened farmer. What do these Spirit-comings have in common? Build the list together on paper.

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Draw out at least these: the Spirit comes suddenly, from outside, as God's sovereign provision, often answering a need someone has cried out about, as Moses did in verses 11-15, but never on human schedule or demand. He comes on people who are not obviously qualified, and the text goes out of its way to show us their weakness first. He comes for a task that serves the whole people. And he comes to a few, while everyone else watches. That last item should feel slightly uncomfortable. Let it. The discomfort is the Old Testament doing its job.

Scene Three: The Shepherd and the King (1 Samuel 16:13-14)

Read both verses aloud, and stop exactly at the end of verse 14.

Question 5. These two verses are a hinge. What happens to David, and what happens to Saul? What is different about the way the text describes the Spirit's coming on David compared to everything else we have seen tonight?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

The Spirit rushes on David "from that day forward," the first hint in the whole pattern of something that stays rather than visits. And in the very next breath, the Spirit departs from Saul. One verse of promise, one verse of warning, welded together on purpose. If the group notices the oil Samuel uses, say only, "Hold that thought until next week," and move on. Do not explain it, do not wink at it more than that.

The Push-Back: The Spirit Who Leaves

Build the objection at full strength before answering it. Ask the group to make it as strong as they can with you.

The objection. Tonight's own texts prove that the Spirit's presence is conditional and revocable. The Spirit departed from Saul. David himself, after his great sin, begged, "Take not thy holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11), which only makes sense if the Spirit can be taken. So the biblical picture is of a Spirit who comes and goes as God pleases and as our faithfulness holds. Any claim that a ceremony performed on a teenager confers the Holy Spirit as a permanent, unlosable possession contradicts the Bible's own evidence. You cannot seal the wind.

Question 6. The objection is built from tonight's passages, so it deserves an answer from tonight's passages. Take it seriously: what does the Old Testament itself do with the fact that the Spirit's presence in this era is unstable?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Concede the evidence first, because it is real: in the old covenant the Spirit's coming truly is selective, task-bound, and revocable, and Scripture never pretends otherwise. But watch what the Old Testament does with its own instability: it groans about it. Moses wishes the gift were universal. David, terrified of losing the Spirit, prays in the same psalm for a clean heart and a new and right spirit within him; read canonically, the Church has heard in that prayer a reaching toward the interior gift the prophets would soon promise. And the prophets, whom the group meets in Session 4, will promise exactly that: a new heart, and "my Spirit within you," put there by God to stay. In other words, the revocable era is not the Bible's final position; it is the Bible's setup. The honest remainder: how the permanent gift works, and what "sealed" means, cannot be settled from the Old Testament, and we will not pretend to settle it tonight. The New Testament texts that answer it are coming, and the objection deserves to be held open until they arrive.

DIG DEEPER

Judges 14:5-6. If time allows, look up Samson. The Spirit of the LORD rushes on the least saintly of all the judges, a man of appetite and revenge, whom God had nonetheless appointed to begin delivering Israel (Judges 13:5; 14:4). The Spirit's coming in this era is not a merit badge, and Scripture is almost aggressive about proving it. That should unsettle any candidate who thinks Confirmation is a reward for the well-behaved, and comfort any candidate who is sure they are not holy enough for it.

One Last Glimpse

Read Luke 10:1 aloud yourself, without introduction.

Jesus appoints seventy others and sends them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town where he himself is about to come. Say only this, and then stop: the last time somebody put the Spirit of one leader onto seventy helpers, we were in the wilderness with Moses. Somebody in this story is acting like a new Moses. And a new Moses might have something to say about Moses' old wish.

Send: Closing Questions

1. Every Spirit-coming tonight was for a task that served other people. If God gave you the Spirit's power for one task in the next year, what do you honestly suspect it would be?
2. Moses wished the Spirit onto everybody. Do you actually want that for yourself? What, honestly, makes you hesitate?

Live It This Week

For every household, parent and candidate together. Once a day, each of you prays Moses' wish over the other, by name and out loud: "Lord, put Your Spirit on N." Six seconds, once a day, in the car or the kitchen or the doorway. Praying it for the other person, rather than for yourself, is the point; that is what Moses did.

Closing Prayer

Leader: *Lord God, You are not stingy with Your Spirit; You are patient with Your story. Thank You for the elders, the farmer, and the shepherd, and for the wish of Moses that You have not forgotten. Make us a people who want what Moses wanted. We ask it through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Scripture Memory Verse

"Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:29)

Part 3: Leader Reference Card

Every passage used in Session 2, in order of use. RSV2CE.

- **Numbers 11:16-17, 24-30** (Build, Scene One: the seventy elders; verses 11-15 for context)
- **Judges 6:33-35** (Build, Scene Two: live discovery, the Spirit clothes Gideon; verses 11-16 for context)
- **1 Samuel 16:13-14** (Build, Scene Three: the Spirit rushes on David, departs from Saul)
- **Psalms 51:10-11** (Push-Back: "take not thy holy Spirit from me")
- **Judges 14:5-6** (Dig Deeper: Samson)
- **Luke 10:1** (One Last Glimpse: Jesus appoints seventy)

Catechism: CCC 687, 702, 1287.

Voices: St. Ambrose of Milan (On the Holy Spirit, Book I, prologue); St. Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologiae II-II, q. 171); St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Catechetical Lectures, 16).

Distribute at the door: Take-Home 2, one per household.

Standing rule tonight: nobody discusses the oil. If asked: "Hold that thought until next week."