

SESSION 3

Oil and Anointing

1 Samuel 16 • Exodus 30 • Isaiah 11:1-3

Part 1: Leader Preparation Guide

Session Overview

Discovery Aim

Participants discover why Israel poured oil on people: anointing marked a person as chosen, set apart, and claimed by God for one of three offices, priest, prophet, or king. They then discover that "Messiah" and "Christ" both simply mean "the Anointed One," and that Isaiah promised an Anointed One on whom the Spirit would not merely rush, but rest, carrying gifts. Saying "Jesus Christ" turns out to be a claim, not a name. And the word "Confirmation candidate" turns out to sit closer to that claim than anyone in the room suspected.

Catholic Touchstone

The title "Christ" means the one anointed by God's Spirit (CCC 436). Anointing with oil is the great biblical sign of the Spirit: it soaks in, it heals, it strengthens, it marks (CCC 695). The Spirit who rested on the promised Anointed One brings the sevenfold gifts the Church still names: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord (CCC 1831).

What You Need to Know

The question you planted last week walks in the door with them. Households were assigned to reread 1 Samuel 16:1-13 and notice what Samuel carries. Open the session by collecting the answer from them, not by announcing it. The week of waiting was the setup; tonight is the payoff. Whoever asked about the oil last week should be publicly thanked for asking the exact right question.

Mashiach. The Hebrew *mashiach* means "anointed one," a person who has had the oil poured on them. Greek translates it *christos*. So "Messiah" and "Christ" are the same word in two languages, and neither one is a surname. When the first Christians said "Jesus Christ," they were making Israel's biggest claim: this man is THE Anointed One, the priest, prophet, and king all the oil was pointing at. Most teens, and a fair number of parents, have never once heard this. Watch their faces when it lands.

Three offices, one oil. Israel anointed priests (Exodus 29:7), kings (1 Samuel 16:13), and, at least once by explicit command, a prophet (1 Kings 19:16). All three jobs stand between God and the people and act in God's name. The oil marks a person as no longer merely their own.

Six or seven gifts. Be ready for the sharp-eyed reader. The Hebrew of Isaiah 11:2-3 names six gifts, with "fear of the LORD" appearing twice. The ancient Greek and Latin translations render one occurrence as "piety," giving seven, and the Church's traditional list of seven gifts follows that older liturgical tradition (CCC 1831). Do not hide this; the answer box for Question 7 handles it honestly, and honesty here buys you credibility everywhere else.

The verb changed. Last week the Spirit "rushed" and "clothed" and "came upon." Isaiah 11:2 says the Spirit shall *rest* upon him. One quiet verb announces a new era: not a visit but an abiding. Let the group find this contrast themselves in Question 6; it is the hinge of the night.

For the parents in the room. Parents often carry a vague unease that Catholic ritual objects, oil among them, are superstition with a blessing on top. Tonight quietly answers it: in Scripture the oil never works as magic. In 1 Samuel 16:13 the oil is poured and the Spirit rushes, one event, sign and gift together. God attaches His actions to physical signs because He is dealing with creatures who have bodies. A parent who sees that pattern in the Old Testament will recognize it without argument when their child is anointed.

Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

- The anointing of David (1 Samuel 16:13) anticipates the anointing of the Son of David, not with oil but with the Spirit Himself at the Jordan (Session 5; Acts 10:38 is tonight's glimpse).
- Isaiah 11:1-3 (the Spirit resting on the shoot of Jesse with His gifts) anticipates Luke 4:18, where Jesus announces "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me," and the Church's prayer over every candidate for the sevenfold gift.
- The consecrated oil of Exodus 30, holy and not for ordinary use, anticipates sacred chrism. Do not develop this forward connection with the group; it belongs to Session 14.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (*Against Heresies, Book III, chapter 18*)

St. Irenaeus taught that the very name "Christ" contains the whole Trinity: it implies the One who anoints, the One who is anointed, and the Anointing itself with which He is anointed. The Father anoints, the Son is anointed, and the anointing is the Holy Spirit. Every time the group says "Jesus Christ" from tonight on, they are naming that whole event.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae I-II, q. 68*)

St. Thomas taught that the gifts of the Holy Spirit named in Isaiah 11 are not passing jolts of inspiration but abiding dispositions: they perfect a person so as to be readily and promptly moved by the Holy Spirit, the way a well-trained crew responds instantly to the helmsman. The gifts, in other words, make a soul easy for God to steer.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Mystagogical Catecheses, Lecture 3*)

Speaking to the newly initiated, St. Cyril told them plainly: having received the anointing, you have become "christs," anointed ones, and the word "Christian" means exactly that. What Israel gave to a few priests, prophets, and kings, God now gives to His whole people. Cyril said this out loud to the newly initiated of Jerusalem, sixteen centuries ago, and it belongs to your candidates' future.

Catechism Connection

- **CCC 436.** "Christ" comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew "Messiah," meaning "anointed." Jesus is the Anointed One because the Spirit consecrates Him for His mission as priest, prophet, and king.
- **CCC 695.** Anointing with oil is a chief symbol of the Holy Spirit; its full meaning appears in Christ, the one anointed by the Spirit of God.
- **CCC 1831.** The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David.

Thread Watch

Thread C: The Oil. Officially planted tonight, in front of everyone, by paying off last week's held question. It develops in Session 5 (Jesus anointed with the Spirit at the Jordan, Acts 10:38) and Session 10 (God "has anointed us," 2 Corinthians 1:21), and resolves at Session 14 when the group meets sacred chrism and the bishop's anointing. Tonight, keep every forward reference sealed. The oil in this room stays Old Testament oil.

Thread A and B check. The verb "rest" in Isaiah 11:2 quietly advances both prior threads: the Breath that visited now promises to abide (A), and the gifts carried by the Anointed One are the ones destined for the whole people (B, via CCC 1287, which you know and they do not yet). Say none of this. If a participant spots the visiting-versus-resting shift on their own, that is Thread A working exactly as designed; praise the observation and move on.

Session Goals

1. Participants can name the three anointed offices of Israel and what anointing marked a person as.
2. Every person in the room can say what "Christ" and "Messiah" literally mean, and knows that "Christ" is a title and a claim, not a surname.
3. Participants have found Isaiah 11 themselves, noticed that the Spirit "rests" rather than "rushes," and met the seven gifts by name.
4. The group has faced the "oil is Old Covenant shadow" objection at full strength, with the honest remainder left open until the Acts sessions.
5. Each household leaves with the seven-gifts, seven-days prayer plan and knows which gift goes with which day.

Time Note

Full plan runs about 75 minutes. To land at 60, make these cuts and no others: drop Win question 2 (keep question 1), skip the Dig Deeper box on Psalm 45, and present the steelman objection yourself in one minute rather than building it with the group. Never cut the opening payoff of the oil question, the live discovery of Isaiah 11, or the mashiach word study; those three carry the session.

Part 2: Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Leader: *Come, Holy Spirit. You marked priests and prophets and kings with oil, and every drop of it was a promise. Teach us tonight what Your anointing means, and what it costs, and Whose it makes us. Rest on this room the way Isaiah said You would rest. Through Christ, Your Anointed One, our Lord. Amen.*

Win: Opening Questions

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

1. Tell your partner about a time you were picked for something: a team, a part, a job, a responsibility. How did being chosen change how you acted?
2. If you could be given one of these, fully and permanently, which would you take: wisdom, courage, or understanding? Why that one?

Build: Into the Text

Scene One: The Horn of Oil (1 Samuel 16:1-13)

Households reread this at home. Do not summarize it for them; collect it from them. Ask the room: what did Samuel carry to Bethlehem, and who noticed it last week before you were asked to?

Question 1. Verse 13 puts two things in one sentence: Samuel pours the oil, and the Spirit rushes on David. What is the relationship between the oil and the Spirit here? Is the oil doing anything, or is it just decoration?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

The text welds them into a single event: "Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him... and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward." The oil is not magic; it has no power of its own, and Scripture never says it does. But neither is it decoration; the narrative joins the visible anointing and the Spirit's coming as closely as words can join two things. Sign and gift arrive together, because God is dealing with people who have bodies and learn through what they can see and touch. File this pattern away. It is how God works with humans from one end of the Bible to the other.

Question 2. Have someone read Exodus 30:25, 29, and 31-32 aloud. This is the recipe and the rules for Israel's anointing oil. What makes this oil different from the oil in your kitchen? What do the rules tell you anointing means?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

It is called "sacred anointing oil," and verse 29 adds that the consecrated things "shall be most holy; whatever touches them will become holy"; the oil must never be poured on an ordinary person or duplicated for everyday use. The oil is set apart, which is what "holy" means, and it consecrates what it touches. To be anointed is to be marked as claimed: this person now belongs to God for a purpose, and is no longer merely their own. The rules exist to protect the meaning. If everybody could wear the mark for any reason, the mark would say nothing.

Scene Two: Three Jobs, One Oil

Question 3. Build the list on paper together. Look up Exodus 29:7 (whose head gets the oil?), then 1 Kings 19:16 (who is Elisha anointed to be?), and recall 1 Samuel 16. Which three jobs in Israel get the oil, and what do those three jobs have in common?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Priest (Aaron), prophet (Elisha, the one prophet Scripture explicitly commands to be anointed), king (David): priests and kings regularly, and the prophetic office by that command completing the traditional threefold pattern. All three stand in the gap between God and the people: the priest carries the people's worship up to God, the prophet carries God's word down to the people, the king governs the people in God's name. Each one acts on behalf of Someone greater than himself, which is exactly why the mark of not-your-own belongs on all three.

Question 4. Word study, and let it land slowly. The Hebrew for "anointed one" is *mashiach*. Say it out loud as a room. Now the Greek translation of that same word: *christos*. Say that out loud too. So: what are we actually claiming every time we say "Jesus Christ"?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

"Christ" is not a last name; Joseph and Mary were not Mr. and Mrs. Christ. It is *mashiach* in Greek clothing: THE Anointed One. To say "Jesus Christ" is to make Israel's whole ancient claim in two words: this Jesus is the promised one on whom all the oil converges, the final priest, the final prophet, the final king in one person. Many people in the room have said the word "Christ" thousands of times without knowing they were saying "the Anointed One." Give them a moment with that. Then, if the room is ready, one step further and no more: the word "Christian" is built from the same root. What that means for them is a question this study will spend eleven more weeks answering.

Scene Three: 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 longest of the prophets, then that it is very near the front of him.

DIG DEEPER

The clue. "A royal family tree has been chopped down to a stump. Out of the dead stump, one green shoot grows. And on that single twig, the Spirit of the LORD comes down and stays, named gift by gift. Find the stump."

When found, have the discovering table read Isaiah 11:1-3a aloud, slowly.

Question 5. Jesse is David's father, so "the stump of Jesse" is David's family tree. What does it mean that the prophet pictures it as a stump? And what is God promising with the shoot?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

A stump is a tree that has been cut down: the prophetic image pictures David's royal house brought low, humbled to apparent deadness, an image later history filled out in the exile. Isaiah looks at the humbled royal line and promises that out of it, when everyone has stopped watching, a new shoot will grow: a new David, a true Anointed One, coming from a family everyone had written off. Worth saying gently in a room of teenagers and tired parents: God's favorite growing medium, on the evidence of Scripture, is the stump everyone gave up on.

Question 6. Listen to the verb in verse 2. Last week the Spirit "rushed upon" people and "clothed" them and "came upon" them. What does the Spirit do here, and why is that one word a big deal?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

The Spirit shall REST upon him. Not rush, not seize, not visit: rest, the way a dove settles, the way someone comes home. Be precise, because a sharp reader may recall that Numbers 11:25 also says the Spirit "rested" on the elders, and it did, for a moment: they prophesied, "but they did so no more." What Isaiah promises is different in scale: a resting that abides, on one figure, as his permanent endowment. Within the passages this study has walked, this is the promise of an abiding. On this one person, the Spirit will not be an event but a residence. If someone in the group connects this back to "from that day forward" over David, or forward to anything else, do not confirm or deny; smile and say that is worth remembering.

Question 7. Count the gifts in verses 2-3 as your Bible prints them. You will likely count six, with "fear of the LORD" twice. The Church's traditional list has seven: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord. What happened, and does the difference bother you?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

An honest answer, because the group has earned one: the Hebrew text names six gifts, repeating "fear of the LORD." The ancient Greek translation (the Septuagint), and the Latin after it, rendered the first occurrence as "piety," giving seven, and the Church's liturgy and catechesis follow that ancient list (CCC 1831). This is not a cover-up; the Church has always known both readings, and seven, the Bible's number of fullness, expresses exactly what Isaiah means: the complete equipment of the Spirit resting on the Anointed One. The Church has always read the list less as an arithmetic inventory than as a portrait of a person completely possessed by the Spirit of God, and she consistently names seven. Say plainly: the Church did not invent a gift; she received a translation older than Christmas.

The Push-Back: Shadows and Substance

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

The objection. Oil belongs to the Old Covenant, the age of shadows and symbols. In the New Testament, the "anointing" believers receive is explicitly spiritual: "you have been anointed by the Holy One" and "the anointing which you received from him abides in you" (1 John 2:20, 27), and no oil is anywhere in

sight; the anointing IS the Holy Spirit. So when the Catholic Church anoints teenagers with perfumed oil and calls it the gift of the Spirit, she has traded the substance back for the shadow, returning to the props of a covenant that is over. The Spirit needs no oil.

Question 8. Take it seriously; 1 John really does say that. What can you answer from the texts we have seen tonight, and from the New Testament itself?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Concede the center: in 1 John, the abiding anointing is commonly and rightly understood as the Holy Spirit Himself, not a substance, and any Catholic account that forgot this would deserve the objection. But the argument proves too much. First, the New Testament church did not retire oil: the Twelve "anointed with oil many that were sick" (Mark 6:13), and James commands the presbyters to pray over the sick, "anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14). Shadows do not survive into apostolic practice; signs do. Second, tonight's own pattern: in 1 Samuel 16 the oil never worked by magic; sign and Spirit came as one event, because God gives invisible gifts through visible means to creatures with bodies. The New Covenant does not abolish that pattern; it fills it. The honest remainder, left open on purpose: nowhere does the New Testament command oil for the giving of the Spirit to the baptized, and the group should not let anyone pretend it does. What the apostles actually did to give the Spirit, and how the Church's chrism grew from it, is exactly what Sessions 8 and 9 exist to examine. Hold the objection; it will be paid in full.

DIG DEEPER

Psalm 45:6-7. If time allows, look it up: a royal wedding song where God anoints the king "with the oil of gladness above your fellows." The Letter to the Hebrews (1:8-9) takes this verse and applies it directly to the Son. The New Testament read the anointing psalms in their fullest sense and saw the Son; the psalm was carrying more than its first singers could know.

One Last Glimpse

Read Acts 10:38 aloud yourself, without introduction.

Peter, preaching, says that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Say only this, and then stop: search the Gospels and you will find no horn of oil, no Samuel, no pouring, anywhere near Jesus' head. And yet Peter says he was anointed. So somewhere in the story there is an anointing scene we have all read without recognizing it. Next time we go looking for it.

Send: Closing Questions

1. Anointing means you are claimed, no longer merely your own. What is one area of your life where being claimed by God would actually change something this month?
2. Of the seven gifts named tonight, which one do you most need right now, honestly, and what would having it look like on an ordinary Tuesday?

Live It This Week

For every household, parent and candidate together: seven gifts, seven days. Each day this week, pray one sentence together for that day's gift: "Come, Holy Spirit, give us the gift of N." Monday wisdom, Tuesday understanding, Wednesday counsel, Thursday fortitude, Friday knowledge, Saturday piety,

Sunday fear of the Lord. One sentence, one gift, once a day. By Sunday you will have prayed the whole sevenfold gift over your house.

Closing Prayer

Leader: *Lord God, You promised a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and on Him Your Spirit resting: wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and fear of the LORD. We are done treating "Christ" as a last name. Anoint our eyes to see what we have been saying all along, and prepare these candidates for the day the claim reaches them. Through Jesus, the Anointed One, our Lord. Amen.*

Scripture Memory Verse

"And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD." (Isaiah 11:2)

Part 3: Leader Reference Card

Every passage used in Session 3, in order of use. RSV2CE.

- **1 Samuel 16:1-13** (Build, Scene One: the horn of oil, reread at home this week)
- **Exodus 30:25, 29, 31-32** (Build, Scene One: the sacred anointing oil)
- **Exodus 29:7** (Build, Scene Two: anointing of the priest)
- **1 Kings 19:16** (Build, Scene Two: anointing of the prophet)
- **Isaiah 11:1-3** (Build, Scene Three: live discovery, the shoot of Jesse and the resting Spirit)
- **1 John 2:20, 27** (Push-Back: the anointing that abides)
- **Mark 6:13; James 5:14** (Push-Back answer: oil in apostolic practice)
- **Psalms 45:6-7; Hebrews 1:8-9** (Dig Deeper: the oil of gladness)
- **Acts 10:38** (One Last Glimpse: God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit)

Catechism: CCC 436, 695, 1831.

Voices: St. Irenaeus of Lyons (Against Heresies III, 18); St. Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologiae I-II, q. 68); St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Mystagogical Catecheses, 3).

Distribute at the door: Take-Home 3, one per household, with the seven-gifts, seven-days plan.