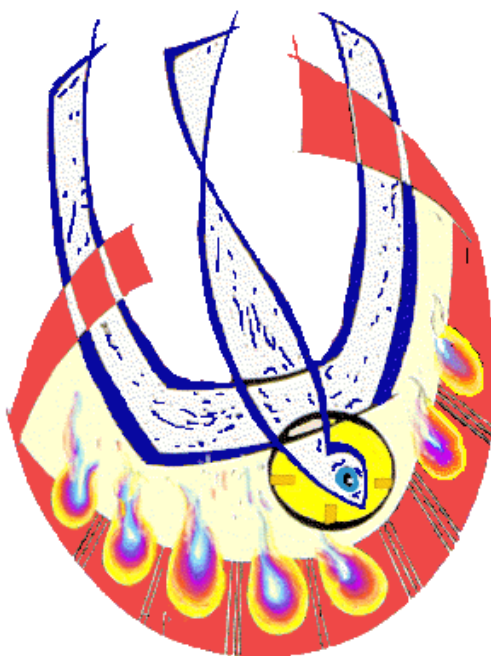
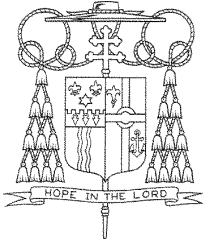


CONFIRMATION:  
So That All May Be Moved By The Spirit



A Manual for Catechists, Teachers, DRE's, PCL's, Youth Ministers,  
Pastors and Anyone who Prepares Young People for Confirmation

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE  
Office of Youth and Young Adults



## Archdiocese of Louisville

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OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

August 16, 2008

Dear Friends in Christ:

It is with great pleasure that I present this manual to assist parishes as they prepare our young people for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The time of preparation and celebration of this sacrament is an important one in the life of an adolescent. This manual is designed to give you a guide as you serve those young people. The manual includes an overview of the theology of Confirmation, a set of the procedures that I prefer we use in our archdiocese and some practical ideas as you implement your program and do the important ministry of preparing candidates.

I am grateful to the staff of our Archdiocesan Youth Ministry team who prepared this resource. Please feel free to contact them at the Office of Lifelong Formation and Education if they can assist you further.

Be assured of my prayers.

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph E. Kurtz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a cross at the end.

Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, D.D.  
Archbishop of Louisville

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\* Information on letters to the Archbishop are included in the Sacramental Guidelines mailed out by the Archbishop's office with liturgy planning materials.

# A Theology of Confirmation

## **The Sacrament of Confirmation**

“When the day of Pentecost came it found them gathered in one place. Suddenly from up in the sky there came a noise like a strong, driving wind which was heard all through the house where they were seated. Tongues of fire appeared, which parted and came to rest on each of them. All were filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:1-4).

“Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ Jesus our Lord” (*The Rites of the Catholic Church #25*).

“By Confirmation, Christians, that is, those who are anointed, share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit with which he is filled, so that their lives may give off the ‘aroma of Christ’” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church #1294*).

## **Community’s Story**

In the Old Testament the spirit of God descended upon certain people destined for a special mission. John the Baptist announced the Messiah’s coming as one who would baptize with “The Holy Spirit and fire” (Luke 3:16). At his baptism in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus and at the conclusion of his life, Jesus promised to send his Spirit to his disciples to comfort and guide them (John 14:16). At Pentecost, the birth of the Church, the first disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit to go out and preach the Good News (Acts 2:1-13). The first Christians understood that receiving the Holy Spirit was a necessary part of being a follower of Jesus, and the gift of the spirit was closely associated with the new birth of Baptism.

In the first centuries of the Church, Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist were linked together in one sacramental ritual of initiation. The three became separated when it was no longer possible for the bishop to perform all the baptisms. Priests then became the ordinary ministers for Baptism. The Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Catholic Churches handled this in different ways. In the Latin Rite the baptism of a child includes anointing with the sacred chrism (oil). Later as the child grows older the bishop confers the sacrament of Confirmation. In the Eastern Rites the three have remained unified. The priest who performs baptism also confirms the child and administers Holy Communion in the same ritual. These different practices emphasize different aspects of the Confirmation ritual. The Latin Rite clearly expresses the communion of fully initiated Christians through the bishop with the whole universal Church. In the East, the emphasis is placed upon the traditional unity Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, emphasizing that the Holy Spirit is given in all three sacramental moments.

At the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) bishops called for a reform of the sacraments of initiation and requested that the links between Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist be strengthened. A unified process was developed for receiving adults into the Catholic Church that came to be called “The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults” (RCIA). The common practice in Catholic churches in the West is to baptize infants and confirm later in life, usually

during adolescence. In this way Confirmation strengthens the candidates' bonds with the Church and enriches their lives with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, completing the initiation process begun at Baptism. Confirmation provides adolescents with a boost for their spiritual lives offering the gifts of wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and wonder and awe.

### **Theology and the Sacraments of Initiation**

The Catholic Church describes the lifetime of a Christian as a journey of faith. It begins when a person is baptized and continues until death. It is a process involving repeated dialogue between the person and God. The dialogue consists of God's call inviting the person to come closer in a covenant relationship and the person's response in accord with the grace given by God.

The most appropriate terminology for each age in human history is found in the field of theology. The Catholic Church looks to theology to explain the word and gesture that takes place on the spiritual level in the dialogue between God and the person being called. The outward expressions of this dialogue are celebrated as sacraments.

Confirmation is about becoming a fully initiated Catholic, empowered to live a holy life, in the service of the Gospel and God's people. For persons on the journey of faith, Confirmation is not the end of Christian formation, but rather the beginning of living the Christian life fully. Confirmation candidates, therefore, are expected to enter a formal process of catechesis in which they identify and renew the faith they hold and believe. In addition to formal catechesis, candidates also are expected to be fully involved in the life and worship of a parish faith community where they are welcomed, encouraged, and challenged to deepen their commitment to Christ and Gospel living. As a public recognition of Christ's command to care for the "least of these" (Matthew 25:40), candidates are expected to engage in the parish's outreach ministries of service and care for the poor.

"All powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their helper and guide" (*The Rites of the Catholic Church* #25).

### **The Present Practice**

Today, the most common practice is to baptize at infancy and confirm later in life. The reform and revision of Confirmation recommends that a person baptized as an infant and requesting Confirmation later in life be given the opportunity to experience as much as possible the unifying effect of the initiation process. Such a person should receive catechesis in the basic beliefs of the Catholic faith and be involved in the worship, service, and celebration of the faith community.

### **The United States Bishops and Confirmation**

The United State Conference of Catholic Bishops publishes a catechism for adults. That document, *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, states the following regarding the Sacrament of Confirmation:

“As the Confirmed, we walk with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Wisdom enables us to see the world from God’s viewpoint, which can help us come to grasp the purpose and plan of God. It grants us the long-range view of history, examining the present in the light of the past and the mystery of the future. It saves us from the illusion that the spirit of the times is our only guide. The Spirit’s gift of knowledge directs us to a contemplation, of thoughtful reflection, of the mystery of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – as well as of the mysteries of the Catholic faith. We are drawn to meditative prayer, where we allow God to lead us while we rest patiently in the divine presence.

“The gift of understanding stimulates us to work on knowing ourselves as part of our growth in knowing God. It is what St. Augustine meant when he prayed, “That I may know You, may I know myself.” When the Spirit pours fortitude or courage into our hearts, we can trust that we are prepared to stand up for Christ and the Gospel when challenged. As the gift of counsel or right judgment grows in us, we can sense the quiet teaching that the Spirit gives us about our moral lives and the training our consciences.

“The gift of piety or reverence is an act of respect for the Father who created us, for Jesus who saves us, and for the Spirit who is sanctifying us. We learn reverence for God and people from our parents and others who train us in virtue. The Spirit fills us with this gift at liturgy, which is a masterful school of reverence, as well as through popular devotions and piety.

“Finally, the gift of fear of the Lord or wonder and awe in God’s presence can infuse honesty into our relationship with God, a frankness that places us in awe before the majesty of God. Yet the gift also imparts an attitude of grateful wonder that God loves us and that we can share in his life.

“When we are responsive to the grace of Confirmation and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, we begin to bear the fruits of the Spirit. The tradition of the Church names twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity.

“There are those who have said that courage in witnessing our faith is one of the best proofs for the existence of God. Confirmation is the Sacrament that makes possible courageous witness. The never-ending stories of the martyrs and other Christian heroes and heroines throughout the centuries to the present provide ample evidence of the Holy Spirit’s gift of courage. Today, there are plenty of opportunities to act courageously on behalf of the teachings of Christ and the Church, to promote the stability of marriage, to support the ideals of family life, to be brave in defending human life from conception to death, to be steadfast in seeking justice for the oppressed, and to be determined that the light of Christ’s compassion and peace will shine everywhere on earth.” (*United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, p. 208-209, 211).

## **The Focus of the Preparation**

Persons on the journey of faith are confirmed in order to be strengthened by the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. They need to identify and to renew the faith they hold and believe. This happens in the preparation for Confirmation. It continues through ongoing formation and faith sharing with the parish community. Persons are not simply confirmed to mark the coming of age within the faith community, nor are they confirmed in order to acknowledge completion of the formal training in religious or parochial educations. Persons are being confirmed to complete their initiation process with their faith community.

Confirmation is the sacrament whereby the grace of the Holy Spirit is conveyed in a new or fuller way to those who have already received it in some degree at their Baptism. As the Catechism reads, “Grace is first and foremost the gift of the Spirit who justifies and sanctifies us. But grace also includes the gifts that the Spirit grants us to associate us with his work, to enable us to collaborate in the salvation of others and in the growth of the Body of Christ, the Church.” Therefore, Confirmation is not an action of the Confirmandi but, rather an action of God. Grace is God’s gift to us.

The faith community is a necessary component for all persons who are on the journey of faith. It is within the context of a faith community that persons are welcomed, encouraged, and supported with each response to God’s call to journey onward. The faith community needs to be involved to some degree in the preparation and the celebration of all sacraments, especially Confirmation. The candidates being confirmed need to be surrounded by a faith community that shares beliefs and doubts as they journey together to achieve their call to holiness.

## **Preparation for Confirmation**

The Confirmation process completes the entry into a lifelong journey of discipleship. It represents a defining spiritual moment in the lives of young people, their families, and the faith community. This spiritual process of initiation can take a variety of shapes and forms that expresses the diverse needs and context of each community. Since this is primarily a spiritual process, it is vital that candidates’ families and the parish community are prayerfully connected throughout the time of preparation.

The themes that are woven into Confirmation preparation should recognize the development stages of the young people involved and focus on:

- Spiritual living.
- Initiations into discipleship.
- Serving God by caring for God’s people, especially the most vulnerable.

## **Catechesis for Confirmation/Chrismation**

“The revised *Rite of Confirmation* indicates that Episcopal conferences may designate the appropriate age for Confirmation. In the United States the age of Confirmation in the Latin Church for children and young people varies widely from diocese to diocese; it can be designated between the age of discretion (the age of seven) through around sixteen years. Since the sacramental practice for Confirmation in the United States is so diverse, a single catechesis cannot be prescribed for Confirmation. However, some general guidelines can be articulated.

“Confirmation for adults preparing for Confirmations follows the pattern recommended in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. Dioceses and parishes should present catechesis for the Sacrament of Confirmation that:

- Teaches that Confirmation increases and deepens the grace of Baptism, imprinting an indelible character on the soul.
- Teaches that Confirmation strengthens the baptismal conferral of the Holy Spirit on those confirmed in order to incorporate them more firmly in Christ, strengthen their bond with the Church, associate them more closely with the Church’s mission, increase in them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and help them bear witness to the Christian faith in words and deeds.
- Teaches about the role of the Holy Spirit, his gifts and his fruits.
- Is developmentally appropriate and includes retreat experiences.
- Includes instruction on the Rite of Confirmation and its basic symbols: the imposition of hands, the anointing with Sacred Chrism, and the words of the sacramental formula.
- Ensures that parents and sponsors are involved in the catechetical preparation of the children for Confirmation.
- Teaches that the bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation.  
(*National Directory for Catechesis 122-123*)

## **Shared Responsibilities and Resources**

### **Responsibilities**

The Confirmation process is a journey that the whole community embarks upon. The entire parish shares in the responsibility of welcoming, affirming, and preparing young people for Confirmation. The key leaders in this ministry are the pastor, the parish staff and catechists, the parents, sponsors and family members of the confirmands, and of course the young people themselves. Throughout the process pastoral leaders, catechists, and teachers should find creative opportunities to invite the entire parish into the Confirmation journey.

### **Resources**

The first and most important resource in the ministry of Confirmation preparation is to be found in the faith-life, gifts, and experience of those catechists, teachers, parents, and sponsors who will walk the journey with the Confirmands. The Office of Youth and Young Adults offers support services, training and guidance for Confirmation catechists, parents, and sponsors.

There are many diverse resources (publications, program materials, and audio-visual aids) to assist with planning. Those responsible for planning the preparation and celebration of Confirmation are encouraged to seek guidance from the staff at the Office of Youth and Young Adults. They can help discern how to select and implement Confirmation resources and generate a process that is appropriate to the needs of the Confirmands and the specific character of the local parish.



## **Keys Steps on the Confirmation Journey**

### **Invitation/Enrollment**

The Confirmation process begins when candidates are invited to participate in a formal ritual enrollment, ideally during a Sunday Eucharist. On this occasion candidates are invited to step forward and, in a prayerful way, make public their commitment to the Confirmation journey before the parish assembly. Creativity and prayerfulness are encouraged when formulating the enrollment ceremony. This is an opportunity to affirm the young candidates and their families and to invite the whole parish to prayerfully support and enter into the process.

### **Investigation**

The next phase is a period of intensive catechesis, study, and investigation of the faith. Confirmands explore the life and message of Jesus, the teachings and the story of the Catholic Church, and what it means for them to live as young disciples of Jesus. This formal period of catechesis can take place in a variety of settings: at home with parents and sponsors, during catechetical sessions at church, and as part of the religious education curriculum at a Catholic grade school or high school.

Confirmation offers the entire parish community the opportunity to reflect upon and recommit to a life of discipleship. This takes place in a variety of ways:

- The young candidates are remembered in prayer at Sunday Eucharist.
- Parishioners make prayerful connections with individual Confirmands.
- Parents and sponsors gather to pray, discuss, and learn about the demands of faithful living.

Other opportunities to enhance the spiritual preparation of Confirmation include retreats, pilgrimages, and prayer services. OLFE staff members can provide assistance to catechists and parents seeking creative ways to deepen their spirituality as they journey with Confirmation candidates.

### **Interviews**

Interviews shall include:

1. Personal contact and rapport with the candidate. It is an opportunity to show care and concern for the young person.
2. The opportunity to help the young person discern readiness for the sacrament. The interview will be conducted during the preparation process. The entire parish staff may be responsible for conducting these interviews.

**Suggestion:** Consideration can be given to having youth schedule their own interviews with a staff member of their choice. This approach allows candidates some flexibility and some ownership of the interview process. Candidates can be offered the option of scheduling an interview at their convenience and over a certain time period (i.e., two weeks).

### **Catechetical Sessions**

Catechetical Sessions should give the candidates an opportunity to explore and understand the basic themes of Confirmation and how those themes relate to their faith and life experiences.

## **Service**

Young people should be exposed to the concept of stewardship and its relationship to discipleship. A specific number of hours or projects for candidates to complete can give a false impression of having accomplished service. However, there is an expectation that some form of service is a part of the preparation process. Each parish should determine realistic service experiences that are to be completed.

## **Letters to the Archbishop**

Confirmands are strongly encouraged to write letters to the Archbishop sharing their thoughts on their preparation, how they have engaged in their preparation, especially their service outreach, and in what ways they will stay involved in their parish. These letters should be mailed as a group at least two weeks before the reception of the sacrament.

## **Celebration of Confirmation**

### **1. Liturgical Celebrations**

“Ordinarily confirmation takes place within Mass in order to express more clearly the fundamental connection of this sacrament with the entirety of Christian initiation. The latter reaches its culmination in the communion of the body and blood of Christ. The newly confirmed should therefore participate in the Eucharist, which completes their Christian initiation” (*The Rites: Rite of Confirmation #13*).

Catechesis for the Rite of Confirmation should include an explanation of symbols and some elements of the rite, such as:

- Presentation of the candidates.
- Renewal of baptismal promises.
- Imposition of hands.
- Anointing with chrism.
- Candidate’s responses during the ritual.

### **2. Planning Sheet**

The Office of the Archbishop provides a “Confirmation Liturgy Planning Sheet” that assists in the preparation process. The completed form should be returned to the Archbishop’s office at least two weeks before the celebration.

### **3. Prayer Texts**

Ordinarily the prayer texts are taken from the Ritual Mass for Confirmation. This is found in the *Roman Missal*, Ritual Masses: Christian Initiation, No. 4 – Confirmation. Several optional texts are given. Ordinarily the Preface on pages 54 or 55 is used. However, on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, Ash Wednesday, and the weekdays of Holy Week, the Mass of the day takes precedence.

The scripture readings are taken from the Mass of the day or from the selections for Confirmation in the *Lectionary for Mass*, Volume IV (Nos. 764-768). If Confirmation is celebrated on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, Ash Wednesday, and the weekdays of Holy Week, the scripture readings from these days are used.

The Creed is omitted since the profession of faith is included in the Rite of Confirmation.

#### **4. Music**

The music chosen should respect the liturgical season and the selections recommended in the rite for the celebration of Confirmation. Selecting music for the celebration of the Rite of Confirmation is the responsibility of the parish music minister and/or pastor. Involvement of the candidates in the selection process can enhance their participation in the rites. It is important to keep in mind the participation of the entire assembly when making these selections.

#### **5. Processions**

Candidates may be part of the entrance procession and may assist in bringing the gifts to the altar (*The Rites: Rite of Confirmation #31-b*).

#### **6. Liturgy of the Word**

Lectors are chosen on the basis of their ability to proclaim the word. A parish cantor leads the dialogical prayer of the responsorial psalm. A deacon, the pastor, or another priest reads the Gospel.

#### **7. Prayer of the Faithful**

The Prayer of the Faithful may be taken from the Rite of Confirmation or may be composed by parish ministers (*The Rites: Rite of Confirmation #30*). It is desirable that the intentions be announced or sung by the deacon, cantor, or other minister.

#### **8. Environment for Worship**

The liturgical space reflects the festive nature of the celebration with respect to the liturgical season. The art and environment committee in the parish has the responsibility for the preparation of the worship space.

#### **9. Photography**

Care should be taken so that photography does not distract from the sacredness of the sacramental celebration. Designated photographers and videographers may be given a specific location from which where the liturgy may be recorded and pictures may be taken that prevents distraction during the liturgy.

## **Additional Items of Interest**

### **1. At what age should children already baptized be confirmed?**

In 2001, the U.S. Catholic Bishops reaffirmed canon 891 of the *Code of Canon Law* stating that the sacrament of Confirmation is normally conferred on young people between the ages of seven and about sixteen years. In the Archdiocese of Louisville, the normative practice is that Confirmation is conferred from middle school age to senior high.

### **2. Why are those preparing for Confirmation expected to do service?**

Through Baptism, Catholic Christians are called to serve and bring about the Kingdom of God to create a world that is just, peace-filled, and unified. This was Jesus' mission. In becoming full members of the Catholic Christian church, candidates must be encouraged to take responsibility for serving others. It is recommended that leadership not set a specific number of hours or projects for candidates to complete. Such a practice can give a false impression of having accomplished service. A young person might be asked to keep a log of service activities for later reflection and discussion.

### **3. What are the qualifications for a Confirmation Sponsor?**

Qualifications are the same as those for a sponsor of Baptism. According in Canon 893 (included in Canon Law section of this booklet), parents cannot be a Confirmation sponsor for their child.

Since it would clearly show the connection between Baptism and Confirmation, and strengthens an already existing relationship, it is desirable that the Baptism sponsor be the sponsor for Confirmation (*Code of Canon Law c. 893*).

### **4. It is necessary to take on a new name for Confirmation?**

In order to express the intimate relationship of Confirmation to Baptism, it is acceptable for candidates to use their baptismal name or take a new name. If a new name is taken:

- The confirmand can name a Saint/Beati/Venerable whom they admire and see as a role model that carried or carries that name.
- They must have a significant reason for choosing their Baptismal or a new name.
- In either case, they should research a Saint with the same name as they have chosen and determine a virtue or quality of that person's life that can be incorporated into the confirmand's life, taking that Saint as a spiritual patron.

### **5. How is readiness determined for Confirmation?**

Readiness for Confirmation is determined by:

- Understanding of initiation with implications for truly being a part of the community and being accepted by the community.
- Understanding of Spirit with implications of God's power, strength, and life being with them always and calling them to live and relate to people in a certain way.
- Ability to define what it means to be an active or practicing Catholic.
- Desire and willingness to participate in Eucharist.
- Willingness to pray, serve and be a party of the community.

## **6. What are appropriate symbols for Confirmation?**

- The use of the dove, wind, tongues of fire, and other Holy Spirit symbols, are most important.
- Mantles and white robes can be worn as signs of initiation.
- The stole is not an appropriate symbol for Confirmation as it is first a symbol of ordained priesthood.

## **7. How do you handle grading/preparation in a class setting?**

- There are some knowledge aspects of formation for which the adolescent can be held accountable. Some grading or accountability system is valid here.
- The thrust is on matters not so open to grading – willingness to pray, celebrate Eucharist, understand Holy Spirit in a personal way, etc. The catechist, through journaling, interviews and other personal sharing, can get a feel of the adolescent's understanding and dialogue with them. In the case of journaling, a catechist can mark a journal to show that they have read it and know that it is done. However, there should be no "grade" on a journal.

## Guidelines for Celebrating Sacraments with Special Needs Children

The respect that is due to special needs children extends to respecting their rights to the sacraments. The United States bishops have set out these guidelines to help maintain the dignity of all God's children.

- 1) By reason of their baptism, all Catholics are equal in dignity in the sight of God and have the same divine calling.
- 2) Catholics with disabilities have a right to participate in the sacraments as full functioning members of the local ecclesial community.
- 3) Parish sacramental celebrations should be accessible to persons with disabilities and open to their full, active, and conscious participation, according to their capacity.
- 4) Pastoral ministers should make every effort to determine the presence of all Catholics with disabilities who reside within a parish's boundaries . . . However, pastoral ministers should remember that many persons with disabilities still reside with their families.
- 5) In accord with canon 777, n 4, pastors are responsible to be as inclusive as possible in providing evangelization, catechetical formation, and sacramental preparation for parishioners with disabilities.
- 6) Pastoral ministers are encouraged to develop specific programs aimed at forming a community of believers known for its joyful inclusion of all of God's people around the table of the Lord.



## Sample Interview Questions for Confirmation

What was your favorite part of your Confirmation preparation process? Why?

When and how do you pray?

What do you like best/least about Sunday Liturgy?  
Why? Do you attend?

What is your favorite gift of the Holy Spirit? Tell me  
about a time you experienced this gift of the Spirit?

What was your service project? What did you like  
best about the experience? How is service a sign of  
your commitment of time and talent to the parish  
community? If you were to do it again how might it be  
different?

What was your favorite/worst part of your retreat day?

How is your relationship with your sponsor? What have the two of you been doing and  
discovering together?

Do you wish to be confirmed? What would it mean to you?



### Readiness Indicators:

- Participation in Sunday Liturgy (weekly)?
- Participation in all formation sessions?
- Participation in on-going religious education in a deanery, parish, school or home program?
- An appropriate attitude and aptitude for the seriousness of the sacrament?

## **Core Questions for Confirmation Catechesis**

The following “Core Questions” should be used as foundational content as catechists to prepare young people for the Sacrament of Confirmation. These questions give the Confirmandi an opportunity to learn and deepen their understanding of some of the core concepts related to Confirmation. The Confirmandi should become familiar with the questions and their answers in preparation with their meeting and dialogue with the archbishop when he celebrates the Sacrament with them.

### **1. What is Confirmation?**

Confirmation is a sacrament of initiation whereby the candidate receives a special outpouring of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Confirmation completes the grace of Baptism strengthening the candidates and empowering them to be active participants in the worship and apostolic life of the Church.

### **2. What is grace?**

The free and undeserved gift God gives us so we can become his adopted children.

### **3. Who is the ordinary minister of Confirmation?**

The (arch) bishop is the ordinary minister, or with the permission of the (arch) bishop, a pastor may confer the sacrament.

### **4. What are the outside signs of Confirmation?**

The outward signs are the anointing with chrism and the laying on of hands.

### **5. What is chrism?**

It is oil consisting of a combination of olive oil and balsam. It signifies abundance of grace and committed service to God. Chrism is used in several sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders.

### **6. Who is the Holy Spirit?** The Holy Spirit is one of the three persons of the Blessed Trinity and is alive and active in our lives and helps us to become stronger members of the Church.

### **7. What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit and what do they mean?**

Wisdom - The power to judge things in light of God’s standard and to make decisions and act according to God’s law.

Understanding -The power to better understand the mysteries of life and religion, to know how to live your life as a follower of Jesus, and to apply the teachings of the Church

Counsel/Right Judgment -The power to make good decisions in matters of right and wrong, good and evil

Courage/Fortitude - the power to stand up for my beliefs and the values of Jesus’ message even when it is difficult.



Knowledge - the power to know the value and worth of things and see all of life and creation through God's eyes.

Reverence/Piety - The power to treat God and people with honor, seeing people as made in God's image.

Wonder and Awe - The power to recognize how awesome God is and to recognize this awe in his creation

**8. What are some symbols of a bishop?**

Ring, miter, crosier (staff), cathedra (bishop's chair), pectoral cross

**9. What are the words the bishop uses to confirm someone?**

"Be sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit."

**10. Why should Catholics be confirmed?**

By being confirmed Catholics complete their sacramental initiation by receiving the grace of God. By being confirmed they receive the gifts of the Spirit which strengthen them to become active participants in the work and mission of our Church.

## *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

### Confirmation and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

The Church has promulgated a universal catechism to assist those who do the important ministry of catechesis. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* gives us a helpful overview of the history of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Catechism explains the history of the Sacrament of Confirmation through the lens of the economy of salvation in the following articles:

- 1286 In the Old Testament the prophets announced that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the hoped-for Messiah for his saving mission. The descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at the baptism by John was the sign that this was he who was to come, the Messiah, the Son of God. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit; his whole life and his whole mission are carried out in total communion with the Holy Spirit whom the Father gives him “without measure.”
- 1287 This fullness of the Spirit was not to remain uniquely the Messiah’s but was to be communicated to the whole messianic people. On several occasions Christ promised this outpouring of the Spirit, a promise which he fulfilled first on Easter Sunday and then more strikingly at Pentecost. Filled with the Holy Spirit the apostles began to proclaim “the mighty works of God,” and Peter declared this outpouring of the Spirit to be the sign of the messianic age. Those who believed in the apostolic preaching and were baptized received the gift of the Holy Spirit in their turn.
- 1288 “From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ’s will, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism. For this reason in the Letter to the Hebrews the doctrine concerning Baptism and the laying on of hands is listed among the first elements of Christian instruction. The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church.”
- 1289 Very early, the better to signify the gift of the Holy Spirit, an anointing with perfumed oil (chrism) was added to the laying on of hands. This anointing highlights the name “Christian,” which means “anointed with the Holy Spirit.” This rite of anointing has continued ever since, in both East and West. For this reason the Eastern Churches call this sacrament Chrismation, anointing with chrism, or *myron* with means “chrism.” In the West, Confirmation suggests both the ratification of Baptism, thus completing Christian initiation, and the strengthening of baptismal grace – both fruits of the Holy Spirit.
- 1290 In the first centuries Confirmation generally comprised one single celebration with Baptism, forming with it a “double sacrament,” according to the expression of St. Cyprian. Among other reasons, the multiplication of infant baptisms all through the

year, the increase of rural parishes, and the growth of dioceses often prevented the bishop from being present at all baptismal celebrations. In the West the desire to reserve the completion of Baptism to the bishop caused the temporal separation of the two sacraments. The East has kept them united, so that Confirmation is conferred by the priest who baptizes. But he can do so only with the *myron* consecrated by a bishop.

- 1291 A custom of the Roman Church facilitated the development of the Western practice: a double anointing with the sacred chrism after Baptism. The first anointing of the neophyte on coming out of the baptismal bath was performed by the priest; it was completed by a second anointing on the forehead of the newly baptized by the bishop. The first anointing was sacred chrism, by the priest, has remained attached to the baptismal rite; it signifies the participation of the one baptized in the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices of Christ. If Baptism is conferred on an adult, there is only one post-baptismal anointing, that of Confirmation.
- 1292 The practice of the Eastern Church gives greater emphasis to the unity of Christian initiation. That of the Latin Church more clearly expresses the communion of the new Christian with the bishop as guarantor and servant of the unity, catholicity and apostolicity of his Church, and hence the connection with the apostolic origins of Christ's Church.

# Canon Law

## Canon Law as Related to Confirmation

### The Sacraments

- Can. 840      The sacraments of the New Testament were instituted by Christ the Lord and entrusted to the Church. As actions of Christ and of the Church, they are signs and means by which faith is expressed and strengthened, worship is offered to God and our sanctification is brought about. Thus they contribute in the most effective manner to establishing, strengthening and manifesting ecclesiastical communion. Accordingly, in the celebration of the sacraments both the sacred ministers and all the other members of Christ's faithful must show great reverence and due care.
- Can. 841      Since the sacraments are the same throughout the universal Church, and belong to the divine deposit of faith, only the supreme authority in the Church can approve or define what is needed for their validity. It belongs to the same authority or to another competent authority in accordance with Can. 838 § 3 and 4, to determine what is required for their lawful celebration, administration and reception and for the order to be observed in their celebration.
- Can. 842      § 1      A person who has not received Baptism cannot validly be admitted to the other sacraments.  
§ 2      The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Blessed Eucharist so complement one another that all three are required for full Christian Initiation.
- Can. 843      § 1      Sacred ministers may not deny the sacraments to those who opportunely ask for them, are properly disposed and are not prohibited by law from receiving them.  
§2      According to their respective offices in the Church, both pastors of souls and all other members of Christ's faithful have a duty to ensure that those who ask for the sacraments are prepared for their reception. This should be done through proper evangelization and catechetical instruction, in accordance with the norms laid down by the competent authority.
- Can. 844      § 1      Catholic ministers may lawfully administer the sacraments only to Catholic members of Christ's faithful, who equally may lawfully receive them only from Catholic ministers, except as provided in §2, 3, and 4 of this Canon and in Can. 861 §2.

- §2 Whenever necessity requires or a genuine spiritual advantage commends it, and provided the danger of error or indifferentism is avoided, Christ's faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, may lawfully receive the Sacraments of Penance, the Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick from non-Catholic ministers in whose churches these sacraments are valid.
- §3 Catholic ministers may lawfully administer the Sacraments of Penance, the Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick to members of the eastern churches not in full communion with the Catholic church, if they spontaneously ask for them and are properly disposed. The same applies to members of other churches which the Apostolic See judges to be in the same position as the aforesaid eastern churches so far as the sacraments are concerned.
- §4 If there is a danger of death or if, in the judgment of the diocesan bishop or of the Episcopal conference, there is some other grave and pressing need, Catholic ministers may lawfully administer these same sacraments to other Christians not in full communion with the Catholic church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and who spontaneously ask for them, provided that they demonstrate the Catholic faith in respect of these sacraments and are properly disposed.
- §5 In respect of the cases dealt with in §2, 3, and 4 the diocesan bishop or the Episcopal conference is not to issue general norms except after consultation with the competent authority, at least at the local level, of the non-Catholic church or community concerned.
- Can. 845 §1 Because they imprint a character, the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders cannot be repeated.
- §2 If after diligent enquiry a prudent doubt remains as to whether the sacraments mentioned in §1 have been conferred at all, or conferred validly, they are to be conferred conditionally.
- Can. 846 §1 The liturgical books, approved by the competent authority, are to be faithfully followed in the celebration of the sacraments. Accordingly, no one may on a personal initiative add to or omit or alter anything in those books.
- §2 The ministers are to celebrate the sacraments according to their own rite.
- Can. 847 §1 In administering sacraments in which holy oils are to be used, the minister must use oil made from olives or other plants, which, except as provided in Can. 999, n 2, has recently been consecrated or blessed by a bishop. Older oil is not to be used except in a case of necessity.

§2 The parish priest is to obtain the holy oils from his own bishop and keep them carefully in fitting custody.

Can. 848 For the administration of the sacraments the minister may not ask for anything beyond the offerings which are determined by the competent authority, and he must always ensure that the needy are not deprived of the help of the sacraments by reason of poverty.

## **Title II: The Sacrament of Confirmation**

Can. 879 The Sacrament of Confirmation confers a character. By it the baptized continue their path of Christian Initiation. They are enriched with the gift of the Holy Spirit and are more closely linked to the Church. They are made strong and more firmly obliged by word and deed to witness to Christ and to spread and defend the faith.

### **Chapter I: The Celebration of Confirmation**

Can. 880 §1 The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred by anointing with chrism on the forehead in a laying on of hands, and by the words prescribed in the approved liturgical books.

§2 The chrism to be used in the Sacrament of Confirmation must have been consecrated by a bishop, even when the sacrament is administered by a priest.

Can. 881 It is desirable that the Sacrament of Confirmation be celebrated in a church and indeed during Mass. However, for a just and reasonable cause it may be celebrated apart from Mass and in any fitting place.

### **Chapter II: The Minister of Confirmation**

Can. 882 The ordinary minister of confirmation is a bishop. A priest can also validly confer this sacrament if he has the faculty to do so, either from the general law or by way of a special grant from the competent authority.

Can. 883 The following have, by law, the faculty to administer confirmation:

- 1 within the confines of their jurisdiction, those who in law are equivalent to a diocesan bishop;
- 2 in respect of the person to be confirmed, the priest who by virtue of his office or by mandate of the diocesan bishop baptizes an adult or admits a baptized adult into full communion with the Catholic Church.
- 3 in respect of those in danger of death, the parish priest or indeed any priest.

- Can. 884 §1 The diocesan bishop is himself to administer confirmation or to ensure that it is administered by another bishop. If necessity so requires, he may grant to one or several specified priests the faculty to administer this sacrament.
- §2 For a grave reason the bishop, or the priest who by law or by special grant of the competent authority has the faculty to confirm, may in individual cases invite other priests to join with him in administering the sacrament.
- Can. 885 §1 The diocesan bishop is bound to ensure that the Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred upon his subjects who duly and reasonably request it.
- §2 In order lawfully to administer Confirmation in another diocese, unless it be to his own subjects, a bishop needs the permission, at least reasonably presumed, of the diocesan bishop.
- Can. 886 §1 A bishop in his own diocese may lawfully administer the Sacrament of Confirmation even to the faithful who are not his subjects, unless there is an express prohibition by their own Ordinary.
- §2 In order lawfully to administer Confirmation in another diocese, unless it be to his own subjects, a bishop needs the permission, at least reasonably presumed, of the diocesan bishop.
- Can. 887 A priest who has the faculty to administer Confirmation may, within the territory assigned to him, lawfully administer this sacrament even to those from outside the territory, unless there is a prohibition by their own Ordinary. He cannot, however, validly Confirm anyone in another territory, without prejudice to the provision of Can. 883, n.3.
- Can. 888 Within the territory in which they can confer Confirmation, ministers may Confirm even in exempt places.

### **Chapter III: The Persons to Be Confirmed**

- Can. 889 §1 Every baptized person who is not Confirmed, and only such a person, is capable of receiving Confirmation.
- §2 Apart from the danger of death, to receive Confirmation lawfully a person who has the use of reason must be suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew the baptismal promises.
- Can. 890 The faithful are bound to receive this sacrament at the proper times.

Parents and pastors of souls, especially parish priests, are to see that the faithful are properly instructed to receive the sacrament and come to it at the opportune time.

- Can. 891 The Sacrament of Confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful at about the age of discretion, unless the Episcopal Conference has decided on a different age, or there is a danger of death or, in the judgment of the minister, a grave reason suggests otherwise.

#### **Chapter IV: Sponsors**

- Can. 892 As far as possible the person to be Confirmed is to have a sponsor. The sponsor's function is to take care that the person confirmed behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfils the duties inherent in this sacrament.

- Can. 893 §1 A person who would undertake the office of sponsor must fulfill the conditions mentioned in Can. 874 which reads:

*§1 to be admitted to undertake the office of sponsor, a person must:*

- 1. be appointed by the candidate for baptism, or by the parents or whoever stands in their place, or failing these, by the parish priest or the minister; to be appointed the person must be suitable for this role and have the intention of fulfilling it;*
- 2. be not less than sixteen years of age, unless a different age has been stipulated by the diocesan bishop, or unless the parish priest or the minister considers that there is a just reason for an exception to be made;*
- 3. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has received the blessed Eucharist, and who lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken;*
- 4. not labor under a canonical penalty, whether imposed or declared;*
- 5. not be either the father or the mother of the person to be baptized.*

*§2 A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community may be admitted only in company with a Catholic sponsor, and then simply as a witness to the baptism.*

#### **Chapter V: Proof and Registration of Confirmation**

- Can. 894 To establish that Confirmation has been conferred the provisions of Can. 876 are to be observed.
- Can. 895 The names of those confirmed, the minister, the parents, the sponsors and the place and date of the Confirmation are to be recorded in the



Confirmation registers of the diocesan curia or, wherever this has been prescribed by the Episcopal Conference or by the diocesan bishop, in the register to be kept in the parochial archive. The parish priest must notify the parish priest of the place of the baptism that the Confirmation was conferred, so that it be recorded in the baptismal register, in accordance with Can. 535 §2 which reads, *“In the register of baptisms, a note is to be made of Confirmation and of matters pertaining to the canonical status of the faithful by reason of marriage, without prejudice to the provision of Can. 1133, and by reason of adoption, the reception of sacred order, the making of perpetual profession in a religious institute, or a change of the rite. These annotations are always to be reproduced on a baptismal certificate.”*

Can. 896 If the parish priest of the place was not present, the minister, personally or through someone else, is to notify him as soon as possible that the Confirmation was conferred.

## Church Document Resources:

### General Catechetical Directory

57. Confirmation binds the Christian more perfectly to the Church and enriches *them* with a special strength of the Holy Spirit, so that *they* may live in the world as a witness of Christ.

### Basic Teachings for Catholic Religious Education

11. . . . Confirmation is the sacrament by which those born anew in baptism now receive the seal of the Holy Spirit, the gift of the Father and the Son. Confirmation, as the sealing of the candidate with the Spirit, is linked with the other sacraments of Christian initiation, baptism and the Eucharist. Religious instruction should emphasize the idea of initiation and explain the sealing of the Spirit as preparation for the witness of a mature Christian life, and for the apostolate of living in the world and extending and defending the faith.

- appB From time to time the Church has listed certain specific duties of Catholics. Some duties expected of Catholic Christians today including the following. To study Catholic teaching in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, to be Confirmed and then to continue to study and advance the cause of Christ.

### Catechism of the Catholic Church

- 1242 In the liturgy of the Eastern Churches, the post-baptismal anointing is the Sacrament of Chrismation (Confirmation). In the Roman liturgy the post-baptismal anointing announces a second anointing with sacred chrism to be conferred later by the bishop – Confirmation, which will as it were “confirm” and complete the baptismal anointing.
- 1285 . . . It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For “by the sacrament of Confirmation, (the baptized) are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.
- 1288 “From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ’s will, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism.” For this reason in the *Letter to the Hebrews* the doctrine concerning Baptism and the laying on of hands is listed among the first elements of Christian instruction. The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church.

- 1289 Very early, the better to signify the gift of the Holy Spirit, an anointing with perfumed oil (chrism) was added to the laying on of hands. This anointing highlights the name “Christian,” which means “anointed” and derives from that of Christ himself whom God “anointed with the Holy Spirit.” This rite of anointing has continued ever since, in both East and West. For this reason the Eastern Churches call this sacrament Chrismation, anointing with Chrism, or myron which means “chrism.” In the West, Confirmation suggests both the ratification of Baptism, thus completing Christian initiation, and the strengthening of baptismal grace – both fruits of the Holy Spirit.
- 1294 . . . The post-baptismal anointing with sacred chrism in Confirmation and ordination is the sign of consecration. By Confirmation Christians, that is, those who are anointed, share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit with which he is filled, so that their lives may give off “the aroma of Christ.”
- 1295 By this anointing the confirmand receives the “mark,” the seal of the Holy Spirit. A seal is a symbol of a person, a sign of personal authority, or ownership of an object. Hence soldiers were marked with their leader’s seal and slaves with their master’s. A seal authenticates a juridical act or document and occasionally makes it secret.
- 1300 The essential rite of the sacrament follows. In the Latin rite, ‘the sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”
- 1301 The sign of peace that concludes the rite of the sacrament signifies and demonstrates ecclesial communion with the bishop and with all the faithful.
- 1302 It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.
- 1303 From this fact, Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:  
 It roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, “Abba!  
 Father!”  
 It unites us more firmly to Christ;  
 It increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us;  
 It renders our bond with the church more perfect;  
 It gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the  
 faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the  
 name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross.
- 1304 Like Baptism which it completes, Confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark, the “character,” which is the sign

that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness.

- 1305 This “character” perfects the common priesthood of the faithful, received in Baptism, and “the confirmed person receives the power to profess faith in Christ publicly and as it were officially.”
- 1306 Every baptized person not yet confirmed can and should receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Since Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist form a unity, it follows that “the faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time,’ for without Confirmation and Eucharist, Baptism is certainly valid and efficacious, but Christian initiation remains incomplete.
- 1307 The Latin tradition gives “the age of discretion” as the reference point for receiving Confirmation. But in danger of death children should be confirmed even if they have not yet attained the age of discretion.
- 1309 Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit – his actions, his gifts, and his biddings – in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands.
- 1311 Candidates for Confirmation, as for Baptism, fittingly seek the spiritual help of a sponsor. To emphasize the unity of the two sacraments, it is appropriate that this be one of the baptismal godparents.
- 1319 A candidate for Confirmation who has attained the age of reason must profess the faith, be in the state of grace, have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs.

## **Vatican II Documents:**

### **Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy/*Sacrosanctum Concilium***

71. The Rite of Confirmation is to be revised and the intimate connection which this sacrament has with the whole of Christian initiation is to be more lucidly set forth; for this reason it will be fitting for candidates to renew their baptismal promises just before they are confirmed.

Confirmation may be given within the Mass when convenient; when it is given outside the Mass, the rite that is used should be introduced by a formula to be drawn up for this purpose.

## **Dogmatic Constitution on the Church/*Lumen Gentium***

11. Bound more intimately to the Church by the sacrament of Confirmation, they are endowed by the Holy Spirit with special strength. Hence they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ.

## **Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity/*Apostolicam Actuositatem***

3. The laity derives the right and duty with respect to the apostolate from their union with Christ their Head. Incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord himself. They are consecrated into a royal priesthood and a holy people (cf. 1 Pet. 2:4-10) in order that they may offer spiritual sacrifices through everything they do, and may witness to Christ throughout the world. For their part, the sacraments, especially the most holy Eucharist, communicate and nourish that charity which is the soul of the entire apostolate.

# Celebrating the Rite of Confirmation: A Practical Guide

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## THE RITE AT A GLANCE

### Introductory Rites

### Liturgy of the Word

### Rite of Confirmation

- A Presentation of the Candidates
- B Homily or Instruction
- C Renewal of Baptismal Promises
- D The Laying on of Hands
- E The Anointing with Chrism
- F General Intercessions

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

### Concluding Rite

## UNDERSTANDING THE RITE

The celebration of the sacrament itself begins with the **presentation of the candidates**, after the proclamation of the Gospel in the Liturgy of the Word. The candidates are called by name and, accompanied by their sponsor or parents, come forward to stand before the bishop.

The bishop then gives a brief **homily or instruction**, helping the candidates, their sponsors and parents, and the entire assembly to better understand the mystery of confirmation.

Following the homily, the candidates are invited to **renew their baptismal promises**. After having done so, the bishop and any concelebrating priests **lay hands upon all the candidates**. The sacred Chrism is then brought to the bishop, who **anoints the one to be confirmed** saying, “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”

The rite concludes with the **general intercessions**, in which the community prays for the newly confirmed, their parents and godparents, the Church and its leaders, and all people throughout the world.

## **PREPARING THE LITURGY**

### **Choosing the Readings**

The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation is often scheduled according to the local bishop's schedule. Those preparing the liturgy must know the various available options regarding the choice of Scripture readings. If there is a "V" to the left of the ordo entry for that day, Ritual Masses (i.e., Confirmation) are permitted. Readings may be chosen from among those given for Confirmation (Volume IV of the lectionary, numbers 764-768). If there is no "V" to the left of the entry, the readings assigned to the day must be used.

### **Music Considerations**

The Rite of Confirmation calls for song after the profession of faith and during the anointing with chrism. The sung response or acclamation following the profession of faith should be brief. Because the Sacrament of Confirmation is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation, consider choosing hymns whose texts highlight the sacramental journey and all its symbols

One of the often overlooked languages of the liturgy is the language of silence. While it is tempting to play or sing during the laying on of hands, this is most powerfully done in silence.

### **Liturgical Color**

The assigned liturgical color for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation is red or white. A choice of red provides an opportunity to invite the candidates for Confirmation and all other members of the assembly to "celebrate the Spirit" by wearing something red to the mass.

### **Liturgical Symbol**

The sacred Chrism is used in the anointing of the candidates for Confirmation. Depending upon the location of the ambry (where the oils are kept), the parish's vessel of sacred Chrism may be left in the ambry, placed on the edge of or near the baptismal font (to highlight the connection between Baptism and Confirmation as Sacraments of Initiation), or placed on a special stand in the entrance of the church or in the sanctuary area. During the celebration of Confirmation, the vessel may be carried to the bishop in simple procession, and Chrism may be poured from the parish's large vessel into a bowl for the bishop's use during anointing. Highlight the parish's larger vessel of sacred Chrism by placement, procession, and use of liturgical color (with ribbons, cloth, flowers, or a candle on the stand).

### **Preparing the Liturgical Ministers**

Ministers of hospitality are important to the successful celebration of any sacramental rite. Ministers of hospitality should greet attendees graciously and distribute hymnal or worship aids. In addition, they can direct people to the location of babysitting services, restrooms, and how to get to the reception following the liturgy are not obvious to visitors. Ministers of hospitality also need to know of any reserved or special seating, and could be asked to take charge of

distributing nametags to the candidates and their sponsors. Any special instructions should be conveyed to the ministers of hospitality well in advance of the celebration.

Since the bishop is normally the presider at the celebration of Confirmation, servers will require some additional training.

With so many options available, it will be necessary for the lectors to know what readings have been chosen, and where those readings are located within the lectionary. As always, lectors should be chosen according to their ability to proclaim the Word of God clearly and well.

Eucharistic ministers need to know their stations and responsibilities ahead of time. The person scheduling the Eucharistic ministers should include any concelebrating priests and deacons as Eucharistic ministers for the celebration.

## **ENGAGING THE ASSEMBLY**

The best way to engage an assembly in any sacramental celebration is to encourage them to attend. Attendance is more likely if parishioners feel they are part of the preparation process or if they know or have prayed for the candidates. Prior to the celebration, post photos and have the candidates supply biographical facts about themselves. The same information or a list of the candidates' names could be included in the parish bulletin. Invite parishioners not involved as sponsors, parents of the Confirmation candidates, or Confirmation catechists to plan and host the reception following the liturgy.

Encourage parishioners to keep the candidates in prayer. Invite them to take a slip of paper, cut in the shape of a dove or a flame, listing the name of a Confirmation candidate and the gift of the Holy Spirit she/he most desires. On the other side of the prayer symbol, include the words of the "Prayer Over the People" from the rite of Confirmation. Encourage parishioners to keep the candidates in mind by praying this prayer frequently.

*God our Father,  
complete the work you have begun  
and keep the gifts of your Holy Spirit active in the hearts of your people.  
Make them ready to live his Gospel and eager to do his will.  
May they never be ashamed to proclaim to all the world Christ crucified  
living and reigning for ever and ever. AMEN.*

*(Rite of Confirmation, "Prayer Over the People")*

Taken from the RCL Supplement 2007



## Confirmation Textbooks/Programs in Office of Youth & Young Adults

<b>Title</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>
Anointed in the Spirit a High School Confirmation Program <sup>1</sup>	Saint Mary's Press	Senior High
Anointed in the Spirit a Middle School Confirmation Program <sup>1</sup>	Saint Mary's Press	Junior High
Be Sealed – Confirmation <sup>1</sup>	Pauline Books & Media	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade - Senior High
Call to Celebrate Confirmation <sup>1</sup>	Our Sunday Visitor	Junior High
Call to Celebrate Confirmation for Older Adolescents <sup>1</sup>	Our Sunday Visitor	Senior High
Celebrating Our Faith: Confirmation <sup>1</sup>	Our Sunday Visitor	Junior High
Chosen <sup>2</sup>	Ascension Press	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade - Senior High
Confirmation <sup>1</sup>	RCL Benzinger	Junior/Senior High
Confirmation: Gifted with the Spirit <sup>1</sup>	Pflaum	Junior High
Confirmation – Inspired by the Spirit <sup>1</sup>	Sadlier	Junior & Senior High
Confirmation: Receiving the Gifts of the Spirit <sup>1</sup>	Pflaum	Senior High
Confirmed in a Faithful Community <sup>1</sup>	Saint Mary's Press	Senior High
Confirmed in a Faithful Community (Immediate Preparation) <sup>1</sup>	Saint Mary's Press	Senior High
Confirmed in the Spirit <sup>1</sup>	Loyola Press	Junior High
Decision Point <sup>2</sup>	Dynamic Catholic	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade - Senior High
Images of God Series (Confirmation) <sup>1</sup>	Ignatius Press	Junior/Senior High
One8 Confirmation <sup>2</sup>	Life Teen	Senior High
Send Out Your Spirit <sup>1</sup>	Ave Maria Press	Junior/Senior High
The Sacrament of Confirmation <sup>1</sup>	New Hope Publications	Junior/Senior High
The Spirit Sets Us Free <sup>1</sup>	Sadlier	Junior High
Un llamado a celebrar: la Confirmación <sup>1</sup>	Our Sunday Visitor	Junior High

The primary texts used for catechesis must be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

**1** Textbook is in conformity with the USCCB Conformity List. See the current USCCB Conformity Listing here: <http://usccb.org/about/evangelization-and-catechesis/subcommittee-on-catechism/upload/Current-Conformity-List.pdf>

**2** Confirmation program is not textbook based and therefore not eligible for review by the USCCB Conformity Committee, but does include both a Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur indicating it is free from doctrinal or moral error.

## Confirmation Resources in Office of Youth & Young Adults

<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Publisher</u></b>	<b><u>Grade Level</u></b>
Called to be Catholic (Supplemental curriculum to Confirmed in the Spirit curriculum)	Loyola Press	Junior/Senior High (age 12-15)
Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth (Supplemental curriculum with Catechist Guide)	Saint Mary's Press	Senior High
Catholic Know-How: Como ser un Padrino o Madrián de Confirmation	Our Sunday Visitor	n/a (supplemental booklet)
Catholic Know-How: Preparando a su Hido para la Confirmation	Our Sunday Visitor	n/a (supplemental booklet)
Catholic Know-How: Preparing Your Child for Confirmation	Our Sunday Visitor	n/a (supplemental booklet)
Choosing Confirmation Names for Young Women	Liguori Press	n/a (supplemental booklet)
Choosing Confirmation Names for Young Men	Liguori Press	n/a (supplemental booklet)
Faith to Faith: Six Conversations for Confirmation Sponsors & Candidates	Loyola Press	n/a (supplemental resource)
FAQ's About Confirmation	Pflaum	n/a (supplemental resource)
Living Spirit, Holy Fire: Music to Celebrate the Holy Spirit, Confirmation and the Call to Discipleship (2-cd set)	GIA Publications	n/a (supplemental resource)
Serving as a Confirmation Sponsor	Liguori Press	n/a (supplemental booklet)
The All-Purpose, Hands-on Confirmation Directors Manual	Pflaum	Junior/Senior High
The Gifts of the Holy Spirit (2-cd set)	Cornerstone Media	n/a (supplemental resource)
Together in the Spirit: Celebrating and Living the Sacrament of Confirmation	Ave Maria Press	n/a (supplemental resource)

**Contact the Office of Youth & Young Adults if you wish to review any of the above-listed Confirmation textbooks, programs, or supplemental resource materials.**

## Rites, Rituals, and Symbols



**ENROLLMENT AT THE PARISH LITURGY:** This ritual is strongly suggested as a visible witness to the rest of the congregation that the young people are embarking on an important step in their faith journey. The young people formally “sign in” in a special enrollment book or a scroll.

**IN ADDITION:** the rest of the preparation process can be marked by announcements in the bulletin or from the ambo about the key elements of the process. For example, the Sunday before the retreat/day of reflection, the congregation is invited to pray for the Confirmandi as they take time to reflect on the importance of this step in their lives.

**NAMING CEREMONY:** a ceremony can be designed to honor the names the young people choose as their Confirmation names, whether that is their baptismal name or a new name. Incorporate the idea of “claiming your name as your identity as a disciple of Jesus.” If names, other than the baptismal name, are chosen care should be given to the process of choosing those names. One of the strongly practiced traditions of Confirmation is that the Confirmation name is that of a significant faith role model or saint. A naming ceremony should emphasize that concept.

A simple ceremony: Take your group to your church and have them sit in the front pews. Have them write their confirmation name on index cards. Each person comes forward, faces those assembled and proclaims their confirmation name loudly and the reason they have chosen it. They place the cards on the altar and return to their seats. When all have come forward the whole group states or reads the Creed together.

**CHRISM/ANOINTING:** Remind the young people that an anointing with oil is used in four sacraments, Baptism, the Sacrament of the Sick, Ordination to Priesthood and Confirmation. Explain the use of oil and anointing in both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and in the life of Jesus. (See Psalm 105: 1, 12-15; Isaiah 61:1-3; Matthew 6:17-18; Luke 7:37-48; James 5:13-14). Find opportunities to incorporate anointing in your prayers. You can use baby oil and have the young people anoint each others’ hands or you can anoint them with the simple prayers: “May the fragrance of this oil and its soothing touch remind us of the strength we get spiritually from holy anointings.” Play a recording of “I Have Been Anointed.” (World Library Publications) to accompany your prayerful anointing.

If scheduling allows, take your Confirmandi to the Chrism Mass on the Tuesday of Holy Week. This will provide your students the opportunity to see how the oil is created and blessed by the archbishop.

**BREATH, WIND, FIRE, DOVE:** Provide opportunities to use these symbols into your program whether in the content sessions, your retreat/day of reflection and/or as liturgical art for the Sacramental celebration. (For example: Junior High – especially in a school setting, include an art activity that invites the students to paint, sculpt or draw an illustration of these symbols; High School: Poetry/Reflection writing.)

# Confirmation Evaluation

## Example 1

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

1. What do you believe are the strengths of the Confirmation process?
2. Where does the process need improvement?
3. What suggestions would you give to the small group leader/catechist to help the candidates next year?
4. On a scale of 1-10 (10 is high) how much effort did you put into this process? Think in terms of meeting requirements, being on time, participation in small and large group, a willingness to go above and beyond what was asked. Explain the number.
5. What should the coordinator do to make this a better experience?
6. Are you likely to be involved in the future here at \_\_\_\_\_ (parish)? Will you come forward without being called? In what are you most likely to be involved?

# Confirmation Evaluation

## Example 2

(The following can be used in evaluating the Confirmation process in terms of its effectiveness. You may need to change the language to make it more appropriate for younger candidates.)

*Give advantages and disadvantages of the following:*

**Small group discussions:** (List the topics or make a reference to them) What topics did you find most interesting? Which topics were less appealing? Are there any topics you would have liked to discuss? Is there anything that could have made your discussions better? How effective was your small group leader?

**Prayer experiences:** Was there enough variety in the prayer experiences? Which of the prayer services brought you closer to God? Do you have any ideas to add?

**Journals:** Did you have a positive experience with the journals? Why or why not? Where have you seen personal growth through journaling?

**Service Hours:** Did you feel you had enough opportunities offered? How were you stretched beyond your comfort zone? What did you learn? How will your service experiences become part of daily living?

(If applicable) Impressions of sponsor-candidate retreat:

Impressions of youth retreat:

General comments about the Confirmation process:

Suggestions for improvement:

## Confirmation Retreat for High School Students

- 9:00 a.m. Opening Prayer**  
Introduction  
Overview of the Day  
(students divided into tables of 8 with sponsors/parents and facilitator)
- 9:20 a.m. Ice Breaker – Youth & Adults**  
“This is Who I Am”
- 9:30 a.m. Session 1 – Discovering Self – Gifts & Talents**  
9:30 a.m. Read scripture pericope about Jesus in his youth.  
9:35 a.m. Present topic of discovering gifts and talents  
9:55 a.m. Journal walk  
10:30 a.m. Small Group Sharing  
10:40 a.m. Large Group Discovery
- 10:45 a.m. Break**
- 11:00 a.m. Session 2 – Discovering Community – Where Do I Fit In**  
11:00 a.m. Presentation – Community qualities & responsibilities  
11:20 a.m. Small group activity – Create Want Ads  
11:45 a.m. Large group presentations of Want Ads
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch**
- 12:45 p.m. Session 3 – Discovering Parish Opportunities for Involvement**  
12:45 p.m. Witness Talks by three teens/young adults  
1:00 p.m. Speed Dating parish ministries & clubs  
1:30 p.m. Journal  
2:00 p.m. Small Group Share  
2:10 p.m. Large Group Share
- 2:15 p.m. Session 4 – Questions & Answers about Confirmation & preparation**
- 2:30 p.m. Break**
- 2:45 p.m. Practice**
- 3:15 p.m. Closing Prayer**

Evening Mass – optional – nice way to end w/sponsor & parents present.  
Just adjust the time as needed.

## Items Needed:

Sign-in Sheet	Poster Board
Extra permission slips and accident forms on hand	Timer
Pens/pencils	Bell/Buzzer
CD player – instrumental music	Speed Dating Forms
Bibles	Journals
Prayer Table items	

## This Is Who I Am – Ice Breaker

All present create name tag

Supplies needed: 5 X 5 piece of card stock, twine/cord, markers

Punch a hole in two different corners – each on the same side

Thread and tie off twine/cord so that it's long enough to drape name tag around the neck and allow the tag to be about chest high.

The participants write their names in the center of the tag.

In one corner have the participants (adults & youth) write in the high school they attend/attended, in another corner their favorite music group. In the other corners something else, i.e., favorite food, names of brothers and sisters and where they fit in the rank. Under their name, place a prayer intention.

Then with their name tags on, all walk around and introduce themselves to one another and read each other's stories. Have them pay particular attention to prayer intentions.

Keep the students moving – don't let them clique-up with just friends

Re-gather the group, and then to get the room quiet again, say a prayer with persons mentioning their prayer intentions.

## Session One: Discovering Self

Read scripture quote of when Jesus was a young person (have a student do the reading)

Leader presents on how we discover our own unique talents and gifts. Move into the discussion of, what may have been the struggles for Jesus as he became a teenager?

What would be the struggles for Jesus as a teenager today? How do you imagine how Jesus discovered who he was? How are you discovering your own gifts and talents?

Really, before one can figure out what they want to do or be or how they can be of help – they need to find out what they have to give.

Go on a journal walk – with the above questions – walk outdoors if possible

Did you see signs of growth? Were the seasons changing – what marked the differences? Can you relate this to your own life – the change?

## Session Two: Discovering Community – Where do I Fit In

Presentation – Community qualities & responsibilities for membership

Small group activity – Create Want Ads for local parish community member

Large group presentations of Want Ads



### **Session Three: Discovery Parish Opportunities**

Witness Talks by three teens/young adults who are involved in the parish

Speed Dating the parish ministries, clubs, organizations

Set-up tables for each ministry or parish club/organization. (if you have an extremely large confirmation class it may be more efficient to have each club/ministry set-up two tables). Make sure to have a table for the pastor, vocations, and parish council.

Invite the ministries/clubs months in advance to give them ample time to prepare and choose one or two people to sit at their booth. It would be helpful to meet with these groups prior to the reflection day to do a run through and prep them on how this is a time for them to invite the youth to join them and not only talk about their ministries.

Give each student a “dating card/dance card”. Place students into groups of 2-3 and instruct them to go to the first table on their form.

Ring bell/buzzer to start the conversations. Give the tables 3-5 minutes to tell about themselves. Ring bell/buzzer to end session, then again to start round 2. Proceed until all students have met everyone.

Journal – outside/church – What can you do for you and your parish?

Service in school? Service in community?

What are the obstacles that are holding you back?

Small group share possibilities & obstacles; what are some possible solutions to the obstacles.

Large group share – particularly solutions to the obstacles.

### **Closing Prayer**

Called by name scripture

Play appropriate song

Call each student’s name aloud, have them stand, then pronounce one of their gifts and talents

Concluding prayer

## Directions for Your at-Home Retreat

(For those who absolutely can't attend the scheduled retreat)

This private retreat asks that you spend some time alone with God before Confirmation. Decide on a day when your schedule is not too heavy and try to set aside at least two hours. You will need a bible and a notepad.

### **First Hour:**

Go off by yourself to a quiet place. Let your family know what you are doing and ask not to be interrupted. Friends who call should be asked to call back later.

Close your eyes and place yourself in the presence of God. Talk to God in your own words about how you are trying to spend some quiet time with Him before Confirmation. This is what a retreat is – taking time from your usual routine to pray and reflect. Ask God to help you make this a good experience.

Now make a list of things for which you are grateful, such as parents, a home, friends, food, talents, your personality; things that make you happy like sports, reading, drawing, etc. The list should have between 20 to 50 items in no particular order.

After making your list, pray with it. Consider how you have been “gifted” by God with all the people and things in your life and thank God for your ability to enjoy them.

Now take out a bible and read the Gospel story about the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19). Only one of the ten lepers came back to Jesus to say thank you. How do you feel about this story? What would you have done? (Be honest!) Write a prayer of thanksgiving for your gifts.

Take a short break now, perhaps by taking a walk.

### **Second Hour:**

Again, be sure that you will be uninterrupted by family members or by phone calls from friends.

Take a piece of paper and write 20 adjectives that describe the person who is you?

Now think of 20 adjectives that describe the person you would like to be. What will you have to do to become the person you would like to be? What kind of person do you think God wants you to be? Choose one thing about yourself that you could change for the better and make a resolution to begin working on this in the days before Confirmation.

Get your bible again and read Psalm 139. Meditate on the words for a few minutes. Then in your own words, tell God how you felt about being loved – just for who you are. God loves you without limit! Close your retreat experiences with a prayer of thanksgiving to God.

Be sure to share your retreat reflections with your parents and/or your sponsor.

# Candidate Retreat

(EXAMPLE)

- 8:30 – 8:45 Check in and assign small groups
- 8:45 – 9:00 Ice breakers
- 9:00 – 9:15 Opening Prayer
- 9:15 – 9:30 Speaker #1
- 9:30 – 9:45 Discussion of speaker (have questions prepared ahead of time and give them to the small group leaders.
- 9:45 – 10:15 Activity could include: skit, poster, scripture sculpture, bumper stickers, creating a song, poem, commercial, etc. Present to large group. If this is a combined cluster retreat, or if large parish is involved, make sure each time a person is up at the microphone or speaking, they give their name and parish/school.
- 10:15 – 10:30 Break
- 10:30 – 11:15 Short story, short film on the theme you have chosen, or movie clip that will depict the theme. Discussion afterward.
- 11:15 – 11:30 Pick table names from bible and present to the large group.
- 11:30 – 12:15 Lunch and another ice breaker
- 12:15 – 12:30 Speaker #2
- 12:30 – 12:45 Discussion or talk
- 12:45 – 1:15 Choose another activity from the above list. Present to large group.
- 1:15 – 2:00 In Search of the Holy Spirit  
Each group is given a list of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and are to find concrete objects that would fit that gift. (ex. a DARE card for Right Judgment, a picture of their grandparents for Wisdom.) This is shared with the large group. Make sure that they explain how their object relates to the Gifts.
- 2:00 – 2:15 Break
- 2:15 – 2:30 Journaling – Give two or three topics for them to journal on.

2:30 – 2:45 Large group discussion  
Of all the things that you have heard or believed about being Catholic, what do you struggle with the most? This can be an interesting discussion. Just make sure it does not become a gripe session. This is an opportunity to clarify misconceptions.

Alternative activity

Panel of confirmed teens or college students talk of their experiences or what they have gained through confirmation and answer questions from the group.

2:45 – 3:15 Evaluations and closing prayer

## Candidate Retreat (EXAMPLE)

- 9:00 – 9:30 Ice Breakers
- 9:30 – 9:45 Introduction of team, small groups and review of the time together
- 9:45 – 10:00 Opening prayer
- 10:00 – 10:15 Christ is my Life Talk – Adult/teen give talk on how Jesus is working in their life and the importance/relevance to them.
- 10:15- 10:30 Discussions
- 10:30 – 11:00 Small group activity and presentation to large group: poster, bumper sticker, song, skit, scripture, poem, commercial on how Christ is my Life.
- 11:00 – 11:15 Break
- 11:15 – 11:30 Select table/small group names
- 11:30 – 12:15 Lunch and ice breakers.
- 12:15- 12:45 Priest's talk: purpose is to experience him on a personal level, to discuss his struggles in faith, his vocation, etc. Too often teens only see the priest as the person who presides at Mass. Leave time for questions.
- 12:45 – 1:00 Risk taking and safe talk: purpose is for the speaker to give examples of where they have played it safe or risked, explaining the payoffs and costs of both. The talk should center on their faith life also in regard to risking and safe.
- 1:00 – 1:15 Trust building activity
- 1:15 – 1:30 Break
- 1:30 – 1:45 Adult talk: purpose on how they are living their vocation: single/married. How the Church, Jesus work into their life.
- 1:45 – 2:15 Faith walk: pair the teens up with team members and adults and give them one or two questions to answer. The object is for one person to listen for 15 minutes while the other talks, and then switches roles.
- 2:15 – 2:30 Journaling: provide two or three questions for them to work from.
- 2:30 – 2:45 Reflection on a song: use a song's words to discuss faith issues and how it fits their faith life.

- 2:45 – 3:15 Discussion shared with large group
- 3:15 – 4: 00 Activity: based on the table discussion, each group comes up with their own song, using a familiar melody or rap. Present to large group.
- 4:00 – 4:15 Break
- 4:15 – 4:45 Christ in my Family talk: purpose is to show how Christ works through and in the family. Who have been Christ-like models in your family?
- 4:45 – 5:15 Discussion: by this time discussion should be taking a longer time because of the pace and settling into the retreat.
- 5:15 – 5:45 Each small group presents a skit as Christ as head of the household. The skits may be funny but have a serious point.
- 5:45 – 6:30 Set-up for dinner
- 6:30 – 7:00 Reconciliation talk
- 7:00 – 8:00 Reconciliation and break
- 8:00 – 8:30 Holy Spirit talk: purpose is to define the role of the Holy Spirit and to bring an awareness of the Holy Spirit working in lives.
- 8:30 – 9:00 Discuss how the Holy Spirit is working in their lives. Write on slips of paper (rainbow colors) one way they could improve their faith life; to be used in final prayer.
- 9:00 – 9:15 Final prayer: focus on how confirmation is not the end, but the beginning and that there is hope (rainbow colors from slips that candidates have one at a time placed in a clear bowl) and time to keep praying, participating and learning.

## Sample Parent/Guardian – Candidate Evening

Items needed: Items for prayer table, newsprint, markers, and kleenex.

Have parents/guardians join the small group of their teens. In order to allow the candidates an opportunity to speak freely, the small group leader needs to encourage balanced discussion between youth and adults.

- 6:00 – 6:15 Each person in the group answers the question:  
What has been your best experience of church inside or outside this building?  
Give a specific example, rather than, “the baptism of my children.”  
Explain why it was a good experience.
- 6:15 – 6:30 The parents/guardians talk about what they remember about their confirmation. Any of the adults that have been through RCIA could talk about their experience to the large group. Have the teens share their confirmation experience and what they did not previously know.
- 6:30 – 7:00 Divide into small groups (five or six), separating adults and candidates. Each small group compiles a list on newsprint, answering the question, “What does it mean to be a faithful Catholic today?” For some adults this is a good opportunity to talk of their experiences of the Church.

Bring them back together to share their lists with the large group. Some of the adult groups may center on being a faithful Christian, but not a faithful Catholic. Groups may need to be guided to focus on specific Catholic identity rather than general Christian actions. Ask for reflections and observations about what people have heard. Make sure the teens have an equal opportunity to share.

### **Break**

- 7:15 – 7:30 Remain in the small group. Ask everyone, “How would you rate this parish as an active faith community on a scale of 1 – 10?”

Each person needs to back up their rating. After discussion in the small group, share reflections with the large group. The goal of the conversation is to objectively evaluate the parish, leading to creative solutions. Be constructive in your statements about parish assets as well as parish shortcomings. List specific suggestions for improvement. This list can be shared with the parish council, pastor, and staff.

- 7:30 – 7:45 Break into family groups, discussing the following:

(Candidates to Adults) When are you most proud of me as your son or daughter? What unique dimension do I bring to our family life? How does our Catholic faith influence who we are as family?

(Adults to Candidates) When are you most proud of me as your parent/guardian? What unique dimension do I bring to our family life? How does our Catholic faith influence who we are as family?

7:45 – 8:00

**Closing Remarks & Prayer**

(parents/guardians stand facing their son/daughter and look into their eyes. Parents/guardian say, “*Name*, I love you” at each pause.

**Leader:** Thank you, dear God, for every moment I spend with my child, in the good times and in the difficult times.

**Refrain:** *Name*, I love you.

**Leader:** Thank you for each moment – each holy moment: for the music in this child’s eyes, for the fragile moments when they have needed me, and for accepting the times when they haven’t.

**Refrain:** *Name*, I love you.

**Leader:** Lord, thank you for the wisdom growing inside; for the peer pressure they are attracted to, for the loneliness they run from, for who they are, not for what they do, and for their compassionate hearts.

**Refrain:** *Name*, I love you.

**Leader:** Lord, thank you for the greatest gift you have given me – this child. I am forever grateful for your loving generosity. Bless them today, as you do always.

**+Amen.**



# Sponsor – Candidate Afternoon of Reflection

(EXAMPLE)

The gathering usually takes place during the middle of the process, usually on a Saturday afternoon. Candidates and sponsors are then encouraged to go to Saturday evening Mass together.

Items needed: Prayer table items, name tags, pens, beverages for lunch & snacks, newsprint, markers, aluminum foil and perfumed oil.

As individuals arrive and check-in then direct them to have lunch and begin to discuss some of the questions on the tables – please sit with your sponsor/candidate.

- |                        |                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. | Share lunch together           |
| 1:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.  | Ice Breakers                   |
| 1:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.  | Prayer                         |
| 1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.  | Activity: What's on your mind? |

Give each person a sheet of newsprint and a marker. Have each draw a large profile of their candidate/sponsor. Tell each of the participants to keep his or her eyes on their own work. Once the picture is done, give the drawing back to the original owner; (after sharing with the person who has been drawn). Then draw three thought bubbles around the head. Have each label the bubbles: Friends/Family; School/Work; God/Church. Next, in each of the circles each person should write what is on his or her mind about those topics. Put two or three items in each circle. Then have the candidate and the sponsor find a spot for the two of them to share what each has in their bubbles. Much discussion can take place. Remind sponsors that their role is to listen and ask questions, rather than trying to solve problems the teens may have. Any insights share with the large group.

- |                       |                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. | One Holy and Catholic Church |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|

Distribute another sheet of newsprint to each person. Across the top have them write: Yes, this works for me; No, I am struggling; Dreams & Hopes & Desires. Have each person list their yes', no's and dreams and then share with their candidate/sponsor. In the large group discussion collate the answers and challenge the group to bring to fruition a dream/hope or to right a No.

- |                       |                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Break with snacks/beverages |
| 3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. | Faith Walk                  |

Each candidate and sponsor takes a walk outside or inside the building with three or four questions to ask each other about their faith life.

3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.            Large group questions:

What draws you to the Catholic faith? What can we do to make the Church more alive? How do you see yourself becoming more involved in your parish? Give examples of the Holy Spirit working in your lives.

3:45 p.m. – 4:10 p.m.            Metaphors for faith

Give each pair a sheet of aluminum foil and have them create a metaphor for faith. Share the explanation and the “creation” with the large group. (I have used pipe cleaners, too)

4:10 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.            Small break to set up for prayer service

Set up the room in a circle with candidate and sponsor sitting by each other. On a table in the center place candle and perfumed oil (and whatever will make it look pleasing). Then ask each pair to come forward to the center of the circle and say what they appreciate about each other. Ex. Why the candidate chose the sponsor or what the sponsor sees in the candidate. They then can anoint each other either on the forehead or on the palms of their hands.

4:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.            Anointing and Closing Prayer

4:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.            Clean up and prepare to go up to Mass.



## 1. Getting to Know Your Venn Diagram

Need: Venn Diagram

Gather in groups of three students (three who do not know each other). Supply a prepared three circle, Venn Diagram, for each group. Students talk in groups about themselves and the things they like to do. After a brief discussion, the students must decide on three ways in which they are alike. They write those things in the intersecting areas of the diagram. Then each student must write in his/her circle three facts that are unique to them.

## 2. Shared Drawing

For groups of 10 to 20.

Need: flip chart, pens and pencils.

Each participant will need a partner. Leader gives out pieces of paper. Each two-member team receives a piece of paper. Paper the size of larger art paper though 8 X 11 would work. Each two-member team gets one pencil or pen. There should only be one between them.

One member of the team should draw a line horizontally across the paper, about 2" above the bottom edge of the paper. In the big space that's left, one of the team should draw a large oval in the center of the paper (It's good to have one of these pre-drawn to show the group an example).

Explain that each team will draw a face. The leader says: one team member will take the pen and make only one line or mark on the paper, and then pass the pen or pencil to the other team member. In other words, one person might draw an eyebrow but cannot draw both the eyebrows. There must be no talking or communicating of intent.

When enough time has elapsed, and the teams have created some kind of face, the leader explains that the team will now write a caption or title for the drawing using the space left below the face. Using only capital letters, and no talking, the team creates a caption by passing the pen back and forth, each person writing only one letter. When the captions are written, the leader calls a halt. Collect and display the pictures. Pictures generally look the same and captions make no sense – explain this is normal. A discussion could follow: Ask them how it felt to create something without controlling the process? Did you feel yourself “going” with your partner’s ideas or resisting them? Why?

### **3. The Many Parts of the Body**

Need: Chocolate Pudding, spoons, napkins.

Place students in groups of 6.

Each person has a specific responsibility, and only one responsibility to the body. All the parts/persons (eye, ear, mouth, right arm, left arm, right leg, left leg) are blindfolded except the person playing the eyes. The eyes can talk to the ears only, the ears can only whisper to the mouth. The mouth is the only one who can speak directions to the right and left arms and legs. The group must move across the space to the cup of pudding, open it, and feed it to the mouth. The people who are the right and left arm can only use their right and/or left arm. Opening the container of pudding can be very amusing. It does not turn out to be as messy as it sounds. The students do a good job when reminded/encouraged to just use their gifts toward the benefit of the body and the lesson is fun. Can lead into a discussion on gifts.

### **4. Quotations**

The leader places a pile of quotes on slips of paper in the center of the room. Each person picks one up, then picks a partner and begins to discuss what the quote says to you, if it is meaningful, and how. Then, after a minute or so (very short), the leader gives a signal for everyone to change partners, and all are allowed to switch quotes as well if they like (in some cases your partner may prefer your quote and go with that.) This goes on for 15 minutes or so. This type of activity might also be revised to fit storytelling or a sharing of a different sort.

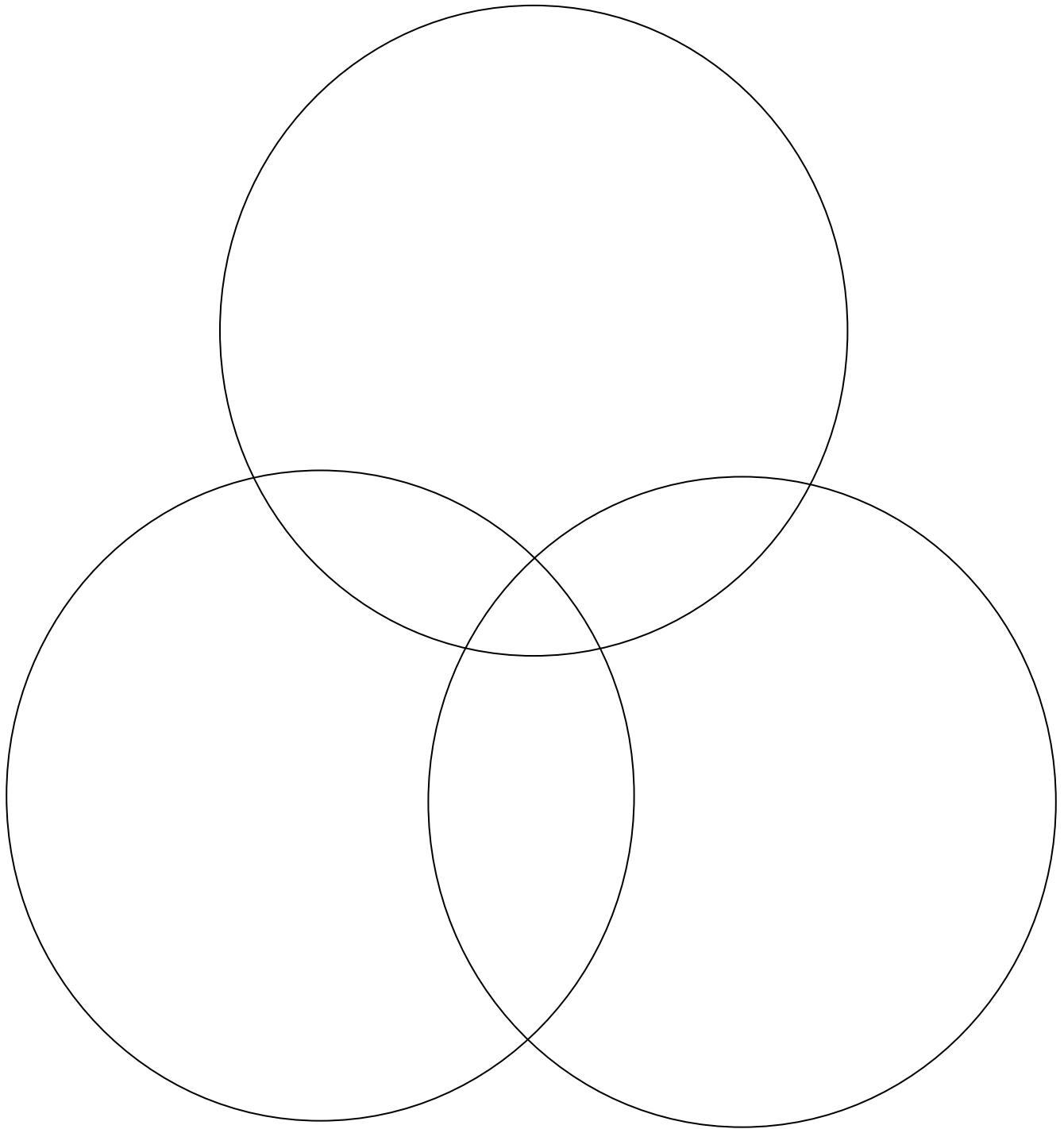
### **5. Just Looking**

Place questions (Sacramental/Rite/Symbol) on the floor and ask group to walk around and pick the question which they're interested in discussing. Hold a group discussion. This will only work if the group is a reasonable size, motivated and confident to talk openly. Work your way round the questions until all are covered.

### **6. Heart**

If God's goal is for His love to flow through you and to you from other people, how are you doing – both giving and getting His love?

Draw a heart shape and fill it with words that describe love. Share definitions/examples of love. Pray for someone who needs to know God's love and the love of others – it might be you.



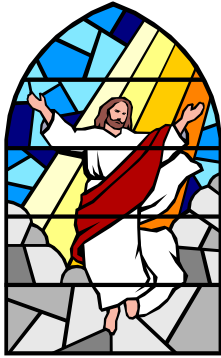
# Getting to Know You - Venn Diagram

# Sample Prayers to Use throughout the Confirmation Preparation Process

## I. The Jesus Prayer

Contemplation is the prayerful centering on God's presence. It is not really as distant from students as they might imagine. A simple and effective form of contemplation is the "Jesus Prayer" in which one quietly repeats the name of Jesus to themselves and tries to relax into the presence of the Lord.

Here is a low-stress introduction of the Jesus Prayer for students:



"Today we are going to try to relax into the presence of Christ. This is a simple prayer. But in order to make it work for yourself, you will have to try to remove some of the distractions of the day. First, sit up very straight. When we slouch, we put too much stress on our muscles and spinal cord. Now close your eyes and relax. You probably have a lot of thoughts running through your mind right now. Don't worry about those. Concentrate on the tension that is in your feet. If you think about it, you probably notice that you are holding the muscles of your feet tight. Relax those. Then slowly move your focus up your leg. Don't worry if other thoughts come. Just go back to trying to relax your legs. Move your focus a little further. Keep sitting up straight but relax your middle section. Just breathe easily and try to let the tension slip away. Move up to the shoulders and out to the arms. Imagine that the tightness is just slipping away. Relax your wrists and hands now. The fingers hold a lot of our tension. Let that go. Move your neck very slowly. Don't swing it around. Just move it enough to relax it. Let the tension come out of your face. If other thoughts come, just keep your mind on trying to relax. Now allow your breathing to slow a bit. Breathe easily and deeply. Let your breathing move easily and deeply in a steady rhythm. Don't worry if you feel as if you are about to fall asleep. You won't. You are just relaxing. Now begin to say the name 'Jesus' to yourself – very slowly, in time to your breathing. Let the name stretch out over a full breath in and out. If other thoughts come, just re-center on the name of Jesus. Relax and keep your mind open to Jesus."

The first time you try this technique, allow the students to go on for about a minute. In successive attempts gradually increase the time. Be assuring to those who are having trouble with it.

This form of contemplation can be used passages of Scriptures or the mysteries of the rosary.

## 2. Prayer for the Gifts of the Spirit

May the Spirit of God rest upon you.

May you be filled with the Awesome and Holy Spirit of God

A Spirit of Wisdom . . . to see myself and others with the eyes of God

A Spirit of Understanding. . . to see to the heart of people and things

A Spirit of Counsel . . .to listen to the goodness within me and around me

A Spirit of Courage. . . to confront the dark and frightening things within me and the world around

A Spirit of Knowledge. . . to know what is truly valuable in life

A Spirit of Holiness . . . to live in a humble and prayerful way

A Spirit of Reverence. . . to walk, talk and act in a way that is sacred and respectful



Underline the one gift that you feel you need most in your life right now.

Is there another gift that you feel you need?

I am also requesting the gift of: \_\_\_\_\_ .

## 3. The Person Next to You

The person next to you.

Look around you brother, sister, look around you. Who is the person next to you? They are the greatest miracle and the greatest mystery you will meet at this moment. A testament of the Word made flesh – of God's continuing Advent into the world.

The person next to you is a great reservoir of possibility – which has only partially been touched. The person next to you is a unique universe of experiences – someone with smiles and frowns, dread and desire, laughter and tears, fears and hopes and dreams all struggling to find expression.

The person next to you believes in something – something precious; counts for something, lives for something, runs toward something. The person next to you has problems and fears; wonders how they are doing and often doesn't feel very good about it; is often undecided and painfully close to chaos.

The person next to you has some things they can do well – some things they can do better than anyone else in the world. The person next to you is a mystery, and the Word made flesh is a mystery.

And the Word was made flesh and lives among us.

So, sisters and brothers, look around you, for God is here among us.

#### 4. Keep Us Afire

Who are we, O God?  
These persons You have gathered  
These women and men who choose You above all  
These hearts longing for union, burning with hope?

Spirit of God, keep us afire.  
Where should we go?  
Where is the Truth?  
Can we acknowledge,  
That we are wonderfully gifted,  
That we have been inflamed by The Spirit,  
That we are called to love and serve generously,  
That we are strong and frail and very human,  
That we have chosen to serve You together,  
That we long for corporate call and commitment?

Spirit of God, keep us afire.  
Where is our future?  
Who beckons us?  
You seem to be calling us to choose again and again,  
The poor, the oppressed, the hurting.  
You call us to embrace one another,  
To exult in the pain and blessedness of difference,  
To stretch across diversity, in unity,  
And rejoice that we are many,  
And can be one, if we choose.

Spirit of God, keep us afire.  
What tasks do You have for us?  
Will You stay with us,  
As we stand up for the poor and the homeless,  
As we stand up for oppressed people,  
As we stand up for persons without power,  
As we learn from the simple and unlearned,  
As we heal the wounds of violence and hate?

Spirit of God, keep us afire.  
We cry to You for strength and passion and faithfulness,  
Let not pride nor fear nor pain nor problem,  
Remove us from the chosen path  
You have laid before us.  
We trust in Your presence and Your nurturing love.  
Spirit of God, keep us afire.





## 5. Crucifix Prayer

Thank you, God, for becoming a human being,  
so I don't have to be like the gods.

Thank you for becoming finite, limited,  
so I don't have to be infinite, unlimited.

Thank you for becoming mortal,  
so I don't have to try to be immortal

Thank you for becoming inferior,  
so I and others don't have to be superior.

For being weak, so I and others don't have to be strong  
For being imperfect, so I and others don't have to be perfect  
For being disapproved, so I and others don't have to be approved.

God, thank you for being wrong, so I and others don't have to be right.  
For being a failure, so I and others don't have to be a success.  
For being poor in every way, so I and others don't have to be rich in any way.

Christ on the Cross, thank you for being different from my idols, so I don't have  
to hate myself and others for being different from those images I have created to  
support and hold me up.

Thank you for becoming all the things I think I should not be, so I don't have to  
kill myself and others trying to be all the things I think I should be.

Crucified God, thank you for becoming everything I despise about myself, so I  
can love myself and others in you.

I can love you – who by your humanity have joined yourself with me right at the  
point where I most dislike myself.

God – thank you for being crucified, so I can be free.



## 6. Who am I?

I am a person like no one else in the world.  
I am the people I have met.  
I am the experiences I have had.

I am the mistakes I have made  
and the wisdom I have gained from them.  
I am the lessons I have learned  
and the ones I have given.  
I am the good times in my life  
and the bad ones, too.  
I am the emotions I have felt  
and the thoughts I have thought.

God, I am the life I have lived.  
Although it's not a perfect one,  
understand that I'm doing the best I can  
with what you have given me.  
Because all that I have to work with . . . is me.

Tom Moore  
Bishop Foley High School  
Madison Heights, MI

## 7. Jesus Society

Jesus says in his society there is a new way for people to live:  
you show wisdom, by trusting people;  
you handle leadership, by serving;  
you handle offenders, by forgiving;  
you handle money, by sharing;  
you handle enemies, by loving,  
and you handle violence, by suffering.

In fact you have a new attitude toward everything, toward everybody.  
Toward nature, toward the state in which you happen to live, toward  
woman, toward slaves, toward all and every single thing. Because this is a Jesus  
society and you repent, not by feeling bad, but by *thinking different*.

Rudy Wiebe, *The Blue Mountains of China* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970) pp. 215-216.

## 8. A Mother Teresa Prayer

. . . he has become man  
to make it possible  
for us to love  
as he has loved us.

He makes himself  
the hungry one,  
the naked one,  
the homeless one,  
the sick one,  
the one in prison,  
the lonely one,  
the unwanted one,  
and he says:  
you did it to me

■ Mother Teresa



## 9. Words of Mother Teresa

“Be kind and merciful. Let no one come to you without coming away better and happier.  
Be the living expression of God’s kindness:  
    kindness in your face,  
    kindness in your eyes,  
    kindness in your smile,  
    kindness in your warm greeting,  
in the slums we are the light of God’s kindness to the poor.  
To children, to the poor, to all who suffer and are lonely,  
give always a happy smile – Give them not only your care,  
but also your heart.”

■ Mother Teresa

## 10. Just for Today

Today I will live in peace with God, my neighbor and myself.  
I will bring peace to my patch of this earth.

Today I will believe that world peace is possible  
I will remember that hope is the most important gift I can give my world.

Today I will not be a party to pessimism nor join the indifferent.

Today I will be happy.  
I will remember that my joy is up to me.  
I will carry my confidence to all I touch this day.

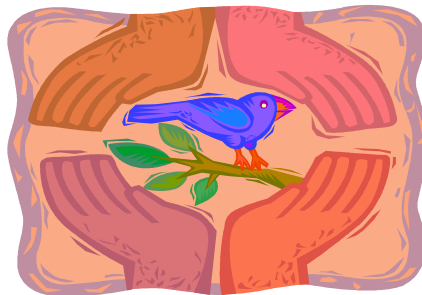
Today I will love my enemies.  
I will pray for them.  
I will try to see our differences from their point of view.

Today I will disarm myself of rage by extending my hand in help  
and forgiveness.

Today I will know that peace is the child of justice –  
that peace is more than the absence of war.

Today I will plant a seed of justice in this global village, in my city,  
In my neighborhood, in my family and my heart.

Today I will pray for peace for all those with whom I come in contact.  
Today I will test my love of peace by doing one act of peace.  
Today I will stand with Christ the Peacemaker.



## 11. **God of Life Prayer**

God of life, of all life and each life, we lay our lives before you. You know our most secret thoughts, nothing in us is hidden.

We bring the faith that is in us, and the doubt.  
We bring the joy that is in us, and the sorrow.  
We bring the pride that is in us, and the shame.

We bring the hope that is in us, and the despair.  
We bring the courage that is in us, and the fear.  
We bring the wisdom that is in us, and the unknowing.

You are before us, Lord, you are behind.  
When the journey is in darkness, you walk with us.  
When the journey is in light, you walk with us.

Always it is the same:  
You are with us.  
You have been there, all along.  
And you will be with us tomorrow,  
No matter what tomorrow brings.

Thank you, God of life, for your ever-presence.  
Thank you for being there, even when we thought you weren't.  
+Amen

## 12. **Adaptation of the poem entitled, "Eucharist"**

My friend, when you invited me to join your lunch table, you gave me Eucharist.  
When you listened to me tell you about my problems, you gave me Eucharist.  
When you let me borrow your favorite DVD or CD, you gave me Eucharist.

When you invited me to stay over at your home while things were  
rough at my own house, you gave me Eucharist.

When you were happy for me when I won the contest, you gave me Eucharist.  
When you listened to and absorbed my anger, you gave me Eucharist.

Yes, when we gave, in exchange, our daily lives, we gave each other Eucharist.

### 13. Merton Prayer

My Lord God,  
I have no idea where I am going.  
I do not see the road ahead of me.  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself,  
and the fact that I think that I am following your will  
does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But, I believe  
that the desire to please you does in fact, please you.  
And I hope  
I have that desire in all that I am doing  
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road,  
though I may know nothing about it.  
Therefore, I will trust you always,  
though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me,  
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.



## Sample Journal Topics

A journal is a reflective tool which helps process and explores faith issues. The journal, when used properly, can be an added relational link between the candidate and a caring adult. Suggestions for use of the journal, as well as possible topics are listed below. Remember if you are using journaling as a tool, you are required to read the students journals.

- The same and only one person should read the journals
- Give two or more journal choices at most meetings
- A page in length should be manageable for most candidates

1. Who is a role model of faith for you?
2. How have you changed in your faith life since elementary/junior high/middle school?
3. What would you think if someone called you holy?
4. List the top 10 events of the year and where you saw God or felt God's absence in those events.
5. Who was sent by God when you were most in need of grace?
6. Your greatest strength is also your greatest weakness. How is that true for you?
7. Is your life a burden or your greatest gift? Why?
8. To what do you need to open your eyes?
9. On a scale of 1-10, how is the confirmation process going? What do you need me (the confirmation coordinator) to know?
10. I promise myself to . . .
11. God never intended me to . . .
12. What is the single most important ingredient for spiritual life?
13. What is the most important value that you hold? How hard is it for you to express?
14. What will you teach your own children about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit?

## Seven Steps to Discernment

### **1<sup>st</sup> Step: State Your Question or Problem Clearly**

Before you can effectively face a problem or decision, you must state it clearly and lay it out before yourself. From the beginning and through the entire discernment process ask God for help in knowing God's truth.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Step: Gather Important and Necessary Information**

Think about the various possibilities of action. Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each; be creative as possible. It may help to write down the pros and cons – make sure you include the *effects* each alternative would have on your relationship with God, your family, and other important individuals or groups.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Step: Bring the Gathered Information to Prayer**

The heart of Christian discernment is not so much weighing all the pros and cons -- as it is the act of bringing the available options to prayer and seeing which options give you the greatest sense of God's presence, peace, and joy! This part of the discernment process is the most important and the most challenging. It is not easy to say in all sincerity, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, (not my will)." Of course with God's grace all things are possible.

St. Ignatius offers three imaginative exercises for consideration in the discernment process:

- Ask yourself what advice you would give to another person faced with the same situation.
- Imagine yourself on your deathbed and ask what you would then wish to have chosen.
- Picture yourself standing before God on the Last Day and consider what decision you would then wish to have made.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Step: Make a Decision**

At some point you must make a decision. You should go with the option that gives you the most peace when you are in prayer. But what if you experience no real peace about the options available to you? In that situation, you can either postpone the decision or choose the one least troublesome to you. You should not decide when in great doubt; and, if time allows, you should continue to pray until you experience some inner peace about a particular option. Remember the best option may not always be the most attractive one!



### **5<sup>th</sup> Step: Live with the Decision**

Once you come to a decision it is good to live with it for awhile before you actually act on what you decided. This is particularly important if you have a tendency to make hasty decisions.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Step: Act on the Decision**

This may seem obvious, but this step can be the most difficult because it may involve giving up something or someone to which you are still quite attached. You should ask the Holy Spirit to give you the power and courage to act on what you believe to be God's will for your life.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Step: Seek Confirmation of the Decision**

The final test for hearing God's will is whether living out our decision brings life to you and to others. If the choice you made gives you a sense of peace and well being, you can be quite sure you are following God's will. This is not to say that there won't be struggles connected with your choice. It is difficult to change old habits.

Discernment is not just a gift, but a skill learned through trial and error. God doesn't ask that you always be right; God asks only that you always try to be honest and act out of our best understanding of a particular situation.

Remember, too, that God often takes our mistakes and changes them into opportunities for growth!

### **An Exercise:**

Focus on one important decision that you face now or in the near future. Work your way through the beginning of the steps as you discern your answer.

## Table Leader Do's and Don'ts

### Do. . .

- ❖ Be inclusive of everyone. Use first names whenever possible: “Traci, how do you feel about that?”
- ❖ Create a relaxed atmosphere. Believe in the goodness of people and the Holy Spirit working in the members. Don't be anxious. The Lord will do the work.
- ❖ Encourage the expression of feelings and not just ideas. Feelings are good indicators of our values.
- ❖ Be respectful and supportive of each member, their ideas, and feelings. Be careful to avoid forcing your own viewpoint.
- ❖ Confidentiality is essential. Remind the group that what is said during the meetings should not be shared with others outside the group.
- ❖ Get to know each person at your table personally. Each person should be made to feel that they are there for a very important reason. Their absence would really be felt.
- ❖ Make sure that each person is heard. Often small conversations may take place at the table once one person is finished sharing. Ask all the members to listen to each other.
- ❖ Be comfortable sharing your own faith story. This will help the group members to feel more comfortable sharing their own. The feelings are more important than all the details involved. You can have high hopes that teens will be confidential, but don't promise something that cannot be guaranteed.
- ❖ Be aware of body language. Watch to see if anyone is sitting away from the table or doodling. They may be feeling left out, uncomfortable with what is being discussed or bored. Don't reprimand, just invite them to sit closer and be part of the group, without making it a big deal.
- ❖ Use open ended questions, rather than questions that require yes or no answers:
  - Why do you think that way?
  - What experiences have given you that idea?
- ❖ Share leadership. The table is the leader's responsibility, but the goal is solidarity as a group.
- ❖ Use summarizing skills:
  - “Who understands what Jessica is saying?”
  - “I hear us say . . .”

### Don't. . .

- ❖ Don't anticipate what is to come. Help the candidates let the day unfold. Avoid saying, “You'll really like what we are doing next.” It puts too many expectations on the team.
- ❖ Don't bombard candidates with questions. Often an introvert will need time to process. Encourage them to take their time in discussing what they wish to share.
- ❖ Don't over-lead or talk too much. Avoid teaching, sermonizing, or spiritual jargon unfamiliar to the group members.

- ❖ Be comfortable with silence. Allow people to relax and become comfortable with one another. Introductions, a little individual background, and humor will help break the ice at the beginning.
- ❖ Don't let one person dominate the conversation. Invite the quiet ones into the conversation. If someone is dominating, say things like, "thanks for sharing so much, Traci, but right now we need to hear from Todd.:" If the problem persists, take them aside and gather their assistance in drawing others out.
  - The opposite problem is if no one is talking or they are giving short answers. This can really drain a small group leader. Be patient; sometimes the group just needs time to get acquainted with each other and build the trust element. Often, smaller parishes have this problem with teens that have grown up with each other and are reluctant to share on a personal level. Keep asking questions, but it is more important for the group to be comfortable with each other first. Try to find some common ground: school sports, activities, movies, etc.
- ❖ The object of the retreat is not emotionalism, or for people to cry. There is real danger in an expectation of how someone should react or not react, or a judgment that someone didn't get it. The small group leader's job is to facilitate discussion, share their own faith story and help others to see where God is present and working in their lives, not getting them to share intimate stories with the group. Be careful of wanting to know the details of the story, rather than how God is working.
- ❖ Each candidate will be at a different place in their faith life. A candidate may not even believe in God or question the belief. Each person's questions is as valuable as those who have adult-like faith. Accept each person where they are, rather than where the leader thinks the candidate should be.

### **Helpful Questions for Facilitating Sharing and Discussion**

To draw out a silent member:

- "Does anyone who hasn't spoken like to sharing something?"
- "Tamela, what do you have to add?"

To suggest the need for sharing personal experience:

- "Does anyone know of instances where this can be true?"

To keep sharing focused on the subject:

- "That's interesting – but just how does your point fit in with the issue?"
- "I must have missed something you said. Will you help me understand the connection between your comments and the point we are sharing?"
- "We've wandered a bit. Can someone bring us back to our focus with a comment about the question?"

To prevent a few from monopolizing the discussion:

- "Excuse me, Tanya. Before you continue, may I ask if anyone has a comment on the point Tanya has made?"
- "Troy, since we have only a few moments left, could you share your experience briefly so we may hear from others, too?"

To suggest the need for closing the sharing time:

- "May I ask if anyone has a final comment to make before we close?"

# Reconciliation Service for a Confirmation Retreat

(Can be used if no priest can be made available to hear Confessions)

## Opening Prayer:

God we know you are always near, and that you never stop loving us even when we turn away from you and do wrong. We want to live in the way of Jesus, and we ask for your help for the times that we have not heard you. We ask this through Jesus, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever, Amen.

## First Reading:

This reading comes from the Book of Sirach and tells us that if we forgive others; God will forgive us when we do wrong.

A reading from the Book of Sirach,

If a person is angry with someone else, how can that person expect God to be gentle with him? If a person is unkind to another person, how can they dare to ask God to be kind to them? If a person will not forgive others, how can that person expect anyone to forgive them?

The Word of the Lord.

## Examine:

Please take a few minutes to think of ways you have turned away from God, hurt others or hurt yourself.

**Litany of Faults:** After each fault our response will be, "Jesus have mercy on us."

For not trusting in God. . .  
For being lazy towards spiritual things . . .  
For not praying often. . .  
For taking God for granted. . .  
For not participating at Mass. . .  
For putting other things before God. . .  
For neglecting the poor. . .  
For disrespect and disobedience . . .  
For taking our families for granted. . .  
For being more concerned about things than people. . . .  
For acting hatefully. . .  
For any and all acts of violence. . . .  
For not forgiving. . .  
For being quarrelsome. . .  
For misuse of food and drink. . .  
For being lazy. . .

For being greedy and materialistic. . .  
For being irresponsible with my talents and abilities. . .  
For not taking better care of myself. . .  
For seeking revenge. . .  
For stealing. . .  
For spreading lies, gossip, and making rash judgments. . .  
For not holding sacred another's trust. . .  
For being jealous of others. . .  
For all my faults. . .  
For all my sins. . .

## **Silence**

### **An Act of Contrition**

Oh my God, I am sorry for my sins, in choosing to sin and failing to do good, I have sinned against you and your Church whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend with the help of your Son, to make up for my sins and to love as I should. Amen.

### **Closing Prayer:**

God may we remember to do what is right and good, and to bring love, forgiveness, and peace to others. We ask this in your name, modeled in the way of your Son Jesus, and through the love of the Holy Spirit who live and reign with you forever and ever, Amen.

