

Catholic Diocese of Columbus

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation Resource Packet

More resources and information can be found at:

<https://columbuscatholic.org/evangelization>

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Introduction

This resource packet is intended to help assist parishes in the preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. This can and should be used in conjunction with all approved curriculum for sacramental prep.

We understand every parish is unique and every confirmandi has specific needs for their formation. We pray that this resource helps assist parishes meet those formational needs of the individual confirmands.

Finally, it is important to note that this resource is not intended to be a newly mandated curriculum or approach to the preparation process. The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis is available as needed to offer assistance to pastors and parish leadership in developing programs and opportunities that respond to the unique needs of a parish.

Proposed Logistical Timeline and Implementation

The proposed *Diocesan Sacrament of Confirmation* Policy will be implemented over the next four years, beginning in **Fall 2025 through Spring 2029**. The administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation would entail the following:

Announcement

In the **Spring of 2025**, an announcement will be made by Bishop Fernandes confirming the shift of the reception of the age of Confirmation to age nine/ten (**4th grade**).

Diocesan Catechetical and Pastoral Overview

1. **Beginning in the Fall of 2025 through the Spring of 2029**, the Diocese of Columbus will propose/confirm/approve the implementation of the sacrament of Confirmation, which will be conferred at the **age of 9/10 (4th grade)**, beginning with **Deanery 6**.
2. Catechetical Formation and Training of all Catholic Schools Educators and Parish Religious Education Catechists would begin in the **fall of 2025** through the respective Diocesan offices of Catholic Schools and Evangelization. Formation and Training would be quarterly.
3. From **Fall 2025** through **Spring 2026**, catechetical resources and general guidelines will be sent to all Pastors, Parish Catechetical staff, and Catholic School Administrators and Educators to help them acclimate to the new Confirmation process. **All new and current students preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation and First Holy Communion who are not part of the first designated transition for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation will continue with the current Diocesan Sacrament of Confirmation process.**
4. Deans will assist Bishop Fernandes in administering the sacrament of Confirmation (TBD).

Chart of Implementation

Catholic Schools

1. Grades 4 and 8 would prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation for the designated year (**2025-2026**).
2. As each year of implementation progresses from the previous year, every fourth and eighth grader would be confirmed until all students are confirmed between grades four and eight after four years.

Parishes

1. Depending on the student confirmation population of the parish's religious education program, parishes within a designated deanery would have the option to combine multiple ages/grades based on combined grade levels at the parish level.

Proposed Reception Timeline of the Sacrament of Confirmation, Age 9-10 (4th grade and 8th grade combined) (School model)

| Year | Deanery | Age/Grade | Projected # of Confirmands |
|-----------|---------|---|----------------------------|
| 2025-2026 | 6 | 4 th grade/8 th grade | 250+ |
| 2026-2027 | 6 | 4 th grade/8 th grade | TBD |
| 2027-2028 | 6 | 4 th grade/8 th grade | TBD |
| 2028-2029 | 6 | 4 th grade/8 th grade | TBD |

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|
| 2029-2030 | TBD | TBD | TBD |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|

Proposed Reception Timeline of the Sacrament of Confirmation, Age 9-10 (4th grade) and 8th grade combined (Parish model)

| Year | Deanery | Age/Grade | Projected # of Confirmands |
|-----------|---------|--|----------------------------|
| 2025-2026 | 6 | 4 th grade/7 th -8 th grade | 250+ |
| 2026-2027 | 6 | 4 th grade/7 th -8 th grade | TBD |
| 2027-2028 | 6 | 4 th grade/7 th -8 th grade | TBD |
| 2028-2029 | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 2029-2030 | TBD | TBD | TBD |

Meetings and Interviews

In this section, you will find examples of a sample parish timeline, different meeting models, sample class outlines, as well as resources and questions that can be used in the interviews held throughout the process. Please feel free to adapt to suit the needs of the families in the parish.

Meetings

Since the preparation process includes not only the confirmandi but their families and sponsors as well, meetings are helpful to ensure that everyone has all the information they need. In this resource, we recommend offering at least two meetings that include all the confirmandi, their parents, and ideally their sponsors.

The initial meeting should be held at the very beginning of the preparation process. This meeting is when the parish lays out all of the various expectations, communicates details of the preparation process, hand out important information, and responds to any questions that the confirmandi and their families might have.

The final meeting, typically held 2-3 weeks before Confirmation, is intended to communicate final details, ensure everyone has completed and turned in all that is expected of them (forms, certificates, etc.), and set up times for the final interviews (if you wish to do the final interviews after the final meeting).

Interviews

We recommend two interviews throughout the preparation process. The pre-interview helps in 1) determining whether the candidate should be in the preparation process and 2) to help get a feel for the individual so a simple plan for their spiritual growth and readiness to receive the sacrament can be put in place. The final interview is intended to 1) help the candidate discern their readiness for Confirmation and to 2) help the candidate make an informed decision to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. We've laid out much more information regarding these interviews, as well as sample questions that can be asked.

Sample Parish Timeline

This section is intended to give an overview of how a parish prepares for the Sacrament following a six (6) month preparation timeline and is done alongside (not as a part of) the other formation programs offered in the parish.

It is recommended that actual classes and/or meetings occur monthly throughout the preparation process to accommodate participation in other formation opportunities (small groups, bible studies, youth group, faith formation, etc.) available to the young people, offering a more comprehensive “school of formation” in the parish. Making sure this occurs opens up opportunities for the parish to engage in a more holistic approach to discipleship formation. Again, as a reminder, this is just a “sample” timeline. Please feel free to adjust as needed within the diocesan guidelines. Please contact our office if you have any questions or need assistance in setting up a timeline for your parish.

Sample Timeline

Before beginning the six months

- Request and Finalize Confirmation Date with Bishop’s Office
- Reserve Facilities

6 Months Prior

- Initial Meeting & Interviews

5 Months Prior

- Session One
- Collect Sponsor Information

4 Months Prior

- Session Two

3 Months Prior

- Session Three
- Parish Retreat

2 Months Prior

- Session Four

1 Month Prior

- Offer Makeup Classes
- Final Interviews
- Submit Liturgy Planning to Office of Liturgy
- Confirmation Rehearsal

Confirmation Day

- Document Sacraments
- Offer a Final Class to Celebrate and Share!
- Have handouts of what they can do after Post Confirmation

**between classes, the confirmandi are asked to do other preparation work, to include meetings with their sponsors, choosing a confirmation saint, attending other retreat opportunities, etc.*

Confirmation First Meeting Agenda

This meeting is typically held about 6-9 months before the date of Confirmation. Candidates and their parents should attend. The Pastor should also be present.

Purpose:

- I. To help the candidate, family, priest, and/or parish staff in charge of confirmation preparation to discern the candidate's readiness and receptivity to the sacrament of confirmation.
- II. To discuss the expectations and practical details of the sacrament as well as the preparation process.
- III. For the candidates, families, priest, and parish staff to get to know each other better.

Sample Agenda

Beginning Activity: What is Confirmation?

- Have some time for an ice breaker activity before or as the session begins (such as a brief discussion or even a simple meal). (Optional)
- Discuss what they think confirmation is and what they expect from the process. This can be done as a self-reflection activity, as a large group discussion, or between parents and their children.

Talk – *What is Confirmation? What does Confirmation do for me?*

- Witness – consider having a person who has been confirmed come in to give a brief testimony of what the process was like and how they have continued to live out their faith after confirmation.
- Offer a brief history of the sacrament.
- Address what the Sacrament does for a soul and how Confirmation connects to Baptism and the Eucharist.
- Here is a top ten list of what Confirmation does for us (these come from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1285-3121. These are in no particular order:

1. Confirmation completes the Sacraments of Initiation, and without Confirmation, a person is not fully initiated into the Catholic Church. If you are not a full member, you cannot receive the fullest benefits belonging to the Body of Christ, the Church. It would be like going to boot camp for the Marines and not completing all 13 weeks of boot camp. If someone completed only 11 weeks and then left, then that person cannot say they are a Marine. When we receive all the Sacraments of Initiation, we become a soldier for Christ; the Church Militant.

2. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit. This means that we are sealed, marked for eternal life. We are anointed for a purpose, for God, for heaven. We have a mark forever on our soul, the same permanent mark and character that is given at baptism and holy orders.

3. We should get confirmed to enter into a sacramental marriage. Can. 1065 §1. Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before they are admitted to marriage if it can be done without grave inconvenience. There are certain exceptions, but they must get approval from the Bishop to have a valid sacramental marriage.

4. The increase of the Spirit is given to us: Faith, Hope, and Charity are given in baptism. Faith, Hope, and Charity direct our whole lives. Hope is the goal; helping to keep our eyes on the finish line, which is heaven. Faith is our tool, our guide. It is the right road, which takes us to heaven and charity. Charity is the action of having the courage to walk on the road to keep walking during hard times, and to lead others to walk on the road of faith toward heaven.

5. We are strengthened in the gifts of Fortitude, Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Piety, Fear of the Lord, and Counsel. You are given the fruits of the Holy Spirit, including Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Benignity, Goodness, Longanimity, Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Continency, and Chastity. We first receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit at our Baptism, but in confirmation, they are strengthened and perfected.

Activity – Memorize the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

An easy way to memorize the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit is the acronym: “WUCKPuFF”.

W isdom

U nderstanding

C ounsel

K nowledge

P iety

u (disregard. It helps make the funny word)

F ortitude

F ear of the Lord

6. We have a claim to divine assistance for the rest of our lives. This means that we can always call upon God to help us. We can remind God (although He really doesn't need reminding, but sometimes we like to think this way) that through our Confirmation, He promised us strength we can always call upon Him. This gift is perpetual, which means it is not just for one day, but rather whenever we need His assistance. The strength available at all times will help us to courageously confess the name of Christ and carry our Cross. Psalm 92 says, “To me you give the wild-ox's strength; you anoint me with the purest oil (we are anointed at Confirmation, and the Bishop says Be sealed with the Holy Spirit). My eyes looked in triumph on my foes; my ears heard gladly of their fall.” We are given the strength to do battle against the enemies of Salvation

7. We are strengthened in our role as prophet, priest, and king, which we were given at baptism. Prophet or teacher – we adhere to the true faith; profess the faith; we communicate the faith. Priest – We accept suffering as Christ did; we are willing to do penance. King – we are a leader, leading others to Salvation. We have a good character, one that can withstand bad examples (peer pressure) and seduction. We have a strong personality.

8. We are given a mission and sent out with a purpose. Just as Christ was sent by the Father and just as Christ sent the first apostles, we too are called; we are chosen. Every baptized person, confirmed by the Spirit, has a mission to bring others to Christ; this is to be done with the help of others, a collective witness, the body of Christ.

9. We have a Confirmation patron, a Saint who gives you personally an example of holiness, and you are assured of their constant intercession for life.

10. Finally, we must realize we are basically weak without Confirmation. Saint Pope John Paul II called confirmation the gift of strength. Confirmation is not to be taken lightly; in fact, it is a sin to neglect Confirmation, especially in these evil days when faith and morals are exposed to so many and such violent temptations. The gift of strength is such a great gift; it must be cherished and embraced for it is the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

The Expectations/Requirements for Confirmation Preparation

Explain the expectations of the candidates, their parents, and the sponsors throughout the preparation process.

- **Pre-Interview with Priest/Delegate(s):** This is to explore what the candidate has learned and help them respond to the grace of the sacrament. This is also a chance for the priest and/or parish staff to get a sense of the candidate's and the candidate's family's readiness and receptivity to the sacrament and preparation.
- **Preparation Sessions:** The expectation is that candidates will attend all sessions. How will they make up for missed sessions? Explain the sessions and hand out the schedule.
- **Continuing Formation:** Explain that the expectation for all sacraments is that we continue to learn and grow in faith. Provide opportunities for continued formation in the parish and diocese.
- **Sponsor Selection and Involvement:** A confirmation sponsor is meant to be a mentor and guide, and so should be 1) a witness of strong faith for the candidate and 2) be someone whom the candidate can share with, learn from, and consult regarding the interior life as well as ask questions about the Church's teachings.
 - **Canon 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 fulfills the duties inherent in the sacrament.
 - **Canon 983:** A person who would undertake the office of sponsor must fulfill the conditions mentioned in canon 874, which reads:
 - To be admitted to undertake the office of sponsor, a person must: be appointed by the candidate for Baptism, or by the parents or whoever stands in their place, or failing these, by the parish priest of the minister; to be appointed the person must be suitable for this role and have the intention of fulfilling it;
 - Be not less than sixteen years of age, unless a different age has been stipulated by the diocesan bishop, or unless the parish priest of the minister considers that there is a just reason for an exception to be made.
 - Be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has received the blessed Eucharist, and who lives a life of faith which benefits the role to be undertaken.
 - Not labor under a canonical penalty, whether imposed or declared
 - Not be either the father or the mother of the person to be baptized.
 - 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.
- **Sponsor Meetings:** It is highly recommended in addition to whatever the sponsor feels is necessary, throughout the preparation process; confirmandi will be given four different meetings with their sponsors. These will be given out each month and are to be turned in the following month.
- **Confirmation Retreat:** God desires to be with you and speak to each of you throughout this preparation process. It is important to always make time to get away to be more attentive to what God desires to do in us. *Share with everyone the list of options and parish expectations regarding the retreat.*
- **Participation in the life of the Church:** Attending Mass every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation, and receiving the Sacrament of Penance regularly.
- *Discuss any catechetical requirements for those who haven't been regular religious education attendees.*
- *Cover any other logistical points specific to your parish preparation process.*

Time for Questions

Prayer/Discernment

- Take some quiet time for prayer
- Scripture (choose some appropriate passage(s) regarding commitment to the process and give some time for prayerful meditation on the passage(s))
- Question to pose and reflect:
 - What are your impressions of the requirements we've talked about?
 - Realistically consider the time and commitment for this preparation.
 - Can you commit to your fullest to this process?
 - How will Confirmation preparation affect your other activities?
- Consider offering a time for a commitment or non-commitment to Confirmation preparation. This can be done through an official registration form, having the candidates that are ready to say "yes" to this commitment come forward for a prayer and blessing from the priest, etc.

Closing

- Offer a sign-up form for individuals to sign up to meet with the parish DRE, YM, or Pastor regarding any further questions or concerns.
- Make a sign-up form available for the pre-interviews.
- Close with a final prayer

Confirmation Preparation Pre-Interview - Information & Questions

Purpose of the Interview

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 (CCC 1309).

The whole process of Confirmation preparation is viewed by many as a list of hoops to jump through, but it is an intensive period of spiritual maturation. “Although Confirmation is sometimes called the ‘sacrament of Christian maturity,’ we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth, nor forget that the baptismal grace is a grace of free, unmerited election and does not need “ratification” to become effective. St. Thomas reminds us of this:

Age of body does not determine age of soul. Even in childhood, man can attain spiritual maturity: as the book of Wisdom says, "For old age is not honored for length of time, or measured by number of years. "Many children, through the strength of the Holy Spirit they have received, have bravely fought for Christ even to the shedding of their blood (CCC 1308).

This initial interview, with that aim in mind, is an important step in laying out an individualized plan for each candidate, even as they participate in the overall program along with the other candidates. We should always have the personal growth of the individual in mind.

The following questionnaire is meant to facilitate a conversation between a parish priest or delegate(s), the young person, and the parents who have attended the initial meeting. The purpose of the interview is to 1) determine whether the candidate should be preparing for Confirmation and 2) to help get a feel for the individual so a simple plan for their spiritual growth and readiness to receive the sacrament can be put in place.

The benefit of the doubt must always be given to the candidate. The Church only requires that candidates ask for, and be properly disposed to receive a sacrament (see *Code of Canon Law*, 843- 1&2). It is the Church’s responsibility to prepare those who have requested the sacrament. We should not look at this interview, or any other part of the process, as the candidate trying to “prove” their worthiness to receive the sacrament, but instead, we should do our due diligence to properly prepare and catechize in the face of challenges and opposition. The interview should not be considered an examination in which a particular response automatically excludes a candidate from preparing for Confirmation. Rather, the conversation is meant to give those in charge of the preparation program for the parish a general sense of the candidate’s disposition. Some responses might call for a further conversation about postponing a candidate's reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Here are some examples that might call for a further conversation about postponing:

- Not believing in God
- Ignorance of basic knowledge about Jesus Christ (his humanity and divinity, his saving mission)
- Lack of interest in getting to know the person of Christ better or a general disinterest in religious things
- Infrequent attendance at Sunday Mass
- Considerable ignorance about the Eucharist or any of the other sacraments
- An expressed unwillingness to at least learn more about the teachings of the Church
- An expressed unwillingness to grow in holiness

- Being too busy or at a point in the life of the individual or the family that is too hectic or tumultuous to prepare for Confirmation
- A lack of desire to participate in the Church
- Little or no interest in prayer
- Aware that they are living a life of mortal sin and “don’t care.”

The length of postponement for a youth before entering into preparation will depend on each person on a case-by-case basis. In some instances, it will only take a few meetings, and in others, it may take several months. No matter the case, there needs to be a process set up for the young person and their family to be in a place to begin the process of preparing for Confirmation.

How the interview should be done

Suggested topics for the interview are included below. We are trying to get a sense and basic understanding of the overall religious education of the individual, and to see if, through their years of formation, they have learned how to think with the mind of the Church. Not all topics need to be covered. Subjective and objective questions are included for each topic. Sometimes it may be easier to create a simple paper questionnaire for the candidates to fill out before the meeting to help start the conversation. A conversation of 10-15 minutes is usually all that it will take to get a general idea of where each candidate is. This also gives the one leading the meeting a good opportunity to see the family’s and the candidate’s receptivity.

One last thought, addressing a possible objection to this approach

It is a popular strain of thought in the Church today to look down on intellectual pursuits. It is about knowing Christ, not knowing about him. But a good understanding of the human person tells us that to love something, we must know it first. If we do not know the truth of Christ, God our Father, the Holy Spirit, and the life of the Church, we cannot learn to love them. For example, if a husband truly loves his wife, then one way it can be shown is through how much he knows of his wife. By fully knowing his wife, he shows his affection in desiring to know her better, and in turn, he can serve her better, which leads her to heaven in love. This conversation shouldn’t be viewed as a purely intellectual one, but a loving, discerning way to see if the candidate has an appropriate knowledge of the Lord, so he/she can enter deeply into the process of Confirmation preparation and help transform that knowledge into a lived relationship.

Suggested questions for the candidate

A good overall question to keep in mind during this interview: *What has your relationship with God been like to this point in your life?*

The Existence of God; the Three Persons of the Trinity

- Do you believe in God? Why?
- How would you describe or explain God to a friend?
- Do you think you can know God personally? Do you think he has a vested interest in you and your life? Why or why not?
- What has been the most powerful experience of God in your life?
- How are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit God?

The Person of Jesus Christ

- How is Jesus different from someone like Buddha?
- Who is Jesus?

- The Son took on a human nature so that God could be close to us. Would you like to get to know Jesus better?
- Where do you see Jesus in your life?
- What story of Jesus do you like best or relate best to?

The Holy Spirit

- What do we say about the Holy Spirit when we recite the creed on Sundays? What do those things mean?
- Have you ever felt the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?
- What do you think the connection between the Holy Spirit and Confirmation is?
- How is a person who has received the Holy Spirit in baptism's life different from one who has not? Is it?

The Church

- What is the difference between worshipping God in church on Sunday as part of a community (Mass), rather than just praying on your own at home?
- What role does the Church play in your life right now?
- How might the Church shape your future decisions, such as where you go to college or what career you pursue?

The Sacraments

- Name as many of the seven sacraments as you can.
- Why was your Baptism important, even if you don't remember it?
- What do you remember about your First Holy Communion?
- Were you prepared for the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Have you gone to Confession lately?
- Would you like to be confirmed? Why or why not? What do you hope Confirmation will do for you?

The Eucharist

- Why is it obligatory for Catholics to go to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation?
- Do you attend Mass on Sunday? What do you think of it?
- What is the purpose of Mass? What are some of its effects?
- Do you believe in the presence of Jesus- Body, Blood, Soul, & Divinity in the Eucharist? Do you believe that the wine and the bread become Jesus?
- How does receiving Holy Communion and praying the Mass every week affect how you live during the rest of the week?

Discipleship

- What does it mean to be holy?
- Who's your favorite saint? Why? Who are you looking at to be your patron saint at Confirmation?
- What does a follower of Jesus (a disciple) look like?
- Would you like to be a better disciple of Jesus? What needs to happen for that to become a reality?
- Do you have the time to properly prepare for Confirmation? To become a better disciple of Jesus?

Prayer

- Why is it important to pray?
- Do you pray? What does your prayer life look like?
- What effects does prayer have in your life?

- What would you like to learn about prayer?

General

- What do you appreciate most about being Catholic?
- Which teachings of the Church confuse you the most?
- Are there any teachings of the Church that you disagree with? When did you come to the realization that you disagreed with this? Have you ever sought out answers? If so, what were some of the answers you received?
- Are you willing to learn more about why we teach the things we do?

Suggested questions for parents

- Why do you want your child to be confirmed?
- What do you do in your home to encourage prayer and formation?
- Do you attend Mass regularly as a family?
- How are you and your family involved in the parish? If you're not, how/would you be interested in being more involved in some way?
- In what ways do you continue to learn and grow in your faith?
- Do you understand the expectations for your son or daughter regarding preparation for Confirmation? Are you willing to support your child in this process?
- How can we help you in the faith formation of your family?
- Are there any particular needs that we should pay attention to for your child as they prepare for Confirmation?
- Do you have any concerns with the process of preparation?

Final Interview Questions & Information: Discerning Readiness for Confirmation

“To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. More intense prayer should prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act.”

(CCC 1310)

Overview & purpose of the final interview

This final interview is to come back together and ask/discuss any questions or concerns that may have come up during the pre-interview or preparation process. It is also the time to ask the candidates to make a choice to receive the sacrament. There needs to be an understanding that there is a distinct difference between committing to the preparation process and deciding to receive the sacrament. By agreeing to be fully initiated into the Catholic Church and committing to life in light of this sacrament. The focus of this interview is discerning readiness for Confirmation. In one respect it is the priest/delegate finding if the candidate has gone through any conversion through the process of preparation, but also, **and more importantly**, the conversation will help the candidate and their family to make an informed decision to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. This interview should be done with the candidate and their family.

Questions

Here are some questions for the candidates to ask themselves (with the assistance of their family) in preparation for the interview and then for the interviewer (whether it be the priest or the delegate) to follow up on. It may be helpful to have them journal or spend some time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament with these questions.

- Is it your desire to receive the sacrament of Confirmation and become a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church?
- What has been the most important thing you have learned about God and his Church these last few months?
- How have you seen God working in your life throughout the preparation process?
- What is your prayer like?
- Do you embrace the teachings of Jesus Christ and the demands of discipleship?
- Do you believe in God? How has your belief deepened these last few months? Or is there still some doubt in your heart? Can you name where that doubt came from?
- What are some teachings of the Catholic faith that you struggle with? How do you deal with uncertainty and doubt?
- Does your life in the Church impact you moment by moment or do you still separate what you do in church from what you do in school or at home?

Confirmation Final Interview Notes

To be used by the interviewer to keep a simple record that can be shared with the pastor.

Name of Interviewer:**Location of Interviews:****Date of Interviews:**

Confirmandi Name: _____ **Time of Interview:** _____**Circle One:** No Concerns Minor Concerns Major Concerns**Notes:** *(notes required for major/minor concerns)*

Confirmandi Name: _____ **Time of Interview:** _____**Circle One:** No Concerns Minor Concerns Major Concerns**Notes:** *(notes required for major/minor concerns)*

Confirmandi Name: _____ **Time of Interview:** _____**Circle One:** No Concerns Minor Concerns Major Concerns**Notes:** *(notes required for major/minor concerns)*

Final Meeting Agenda & Information

This meeting is typically held about 3-6 weeks before the date of Confirmation. Candidates and their parents should attend. The pastor should also be present.

Purpose:

- I. After all the preparation, the candidates must decide whether or not to receive the sacrament.
- II. If they do decide to be confirmed, they can prepare their hearts for the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- III. A place to discuss any logistics for the actual Confirmation
- IV. Offer confession in preparation for receiving the Sacrament.

Meeting Components:

Recap and Sharing

- Spend a few moments sharing some of the graces that you've experienced through this process so far, and thank everyone for their commitment to the process. If there are any youth and/or parents who would like to also share, this would be a good place to do so.

What happens at Confirmation:

- Have the words that will be prayed over the candidates by the bishop and the gestures that he and they will make printed out so they can reflect on all that will be said and done during the celebration (see CCC 1297-1301).
- Also have the effects of Confirmation printed off for them to reflect on (see CCC 1302-1305).
- Quickly review what will happen during the celebration and then let the candidates silently reflect on what they are about to undertake.

*These three points are meant to be a reminder/recap of what was already discussed in the lessons and/or their retreat. Thus, this should **not** be the first time they have heard, read, or seen these things.

Making a decision:

It may be appropriate to have a short explanatory talk on these concepts:

- In today's world of indecisiveness, the Church stands and asks that people make definitive decisions. To be confirmed is one such decision.
- The devil likes to muddy the waters or cause confusion at pivotal moments like this, especially when it comes to receiving the massive outpouring of sacramental grace like what happens in Confirmation
- The pastor and confirmation coordinator are available to offer counsel should any of the candidates have concerns or questions leading up to the day of Confirmation.

Preparing for the sacrament with confession:

- "To receive Confirmation, one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the Sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. More intense prayer should prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act" (CCC 1310).
- To receive the sacrament, you must be free of mortal sin. Confession will be made available at the close of this meeting and after a final time of prayer together (or give them the time when it will).

Set up appointments for the final interview and hand out review question sheet/ general examination of conscience for personal prayer (to be completed before the interview)

- The interview would be with the confirmand family and the parish priest/delegate
- We will be asking for your final decision at this meeting

- If any of the confirmandi are experiencing any confusion or doubt about their decision, this will be a great place to get some spiritual guidance from their parish priest/delegate

Go through any general logistics that may be lingering or need some explaining prior to Confirmation

- Any missing sacramental verifications
- How the Confirmation Day will go
 - Schedule
 - What to wear
 - What to bring
 - Where to meet
- Collect any missing forms

Confirmation Sessions

Explanation and Information for Confirmation Sessions

It is recommended there should be no less than four (4) and no more than twelve (12) confirmation sessions taking place during the preparation process for confirmation. Attached to this packet there are six (6) lessons that can be used within the confirmation sessions and/or in a confirmation retreat. You are allowed to use other lessons and resources to prepare your confirmation sessions that have been approved by the Diocese of Columbus.

Please remember that the aims, as stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, in preparing a young person in the Confirmation Sessions are the following:

- Leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and more familiar bond with the Holy Spirit: His actions, gifts, and bidding. (cf. CCC 1309)
- The effects of the Sacrament (cf. CCC 1302-1303)
- Confirmation being a completion of Baptism and the indelible mark left on the soul (cf. 1304-1305)
- Teaching to the Rite of the Sacrament (Form & Matter) within the Catechism and Sacred Scripture (cf. 1309)

As a reminder, these sessions, in addition to the other resources included in this packet, are intended to offer formation specifically in regard to the preparation of the Sacrament of Confirmation. This preparation should work alongside in tandem with other formation opportunities for the candidates.

These outlines were written with the idea that a priest, parent, and/or other catechist could teach the content of these lessons. Parishes are encouraged to supplement these lessons with other visuals, videos, etc. in order that the content would be best received.

Catechetical Foundations

When preparing any lesson/talk for Confirmation Sessions and/or Retreat(s) please keep the following catechetical principals in mind:

1. **Christocentricity:** What does this topic have to do with Jesus and the “love that never ends?” What are the kerygmatic elements to this topic?
2. **Scriptural Driving Force:** Which foundational scriptures will be used so the teaching relies on God’s Word?
3. **Primary Catechism Sections:** Which texts from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are central to understanding this topic?
4. **Other Important Resources:** What other creative resources will be helpful in this catechesis? (Textbook pages, websites, other books, maps, movie clips, music, art, stories, newspaper articles, etc.)

Outline for Lessons for Confirmation Sessions

Below is an outline using the Ecclesial Method for you to put together your lesson(s) for the confirmation sessions and/or retreat talks. Please know that the times in parenthesis are only suggestive, but should indicate where the breakdown of your time should be and where it should be used mostly.

Preparation (10-15 minutes)

How will you help the participants disengagement from daily life to focus on the word of God? For example, what environment would you have in the room to facilitate this?

Examples of Preparation include:

- Creating a sense of the sacred in the meeting environment, with a prayer space in the room with: Prayer table with liturgical color cloth, Candle in a container, Large Crucifix, enthroned Bible.
- Welcoming Activity, both informal and structured (such as game/Icebreaker).
- Gathering through Song/Music.
- Taking time in silence.

Proclamation (5 minutes)

This time is to provide a short, poignant statement of heart/core truth of teaching, related to the doctrinal premise. It is essential to begin with the Scriptural Story.

Examples of Proclamation include:

- Beginning by singing a short antiphon, such as “Thy Word is a Lamp unto My Feet”.
- Having a prepared reader proclaim the Scriptures while all follow along. Allowing time verbally or in silence for reflection.
- Briefly announce short summary of the session, connecting the Scripture passage to the Church’s catechesis on this subject.

Explanation (20 minutes)

Following the Keys to the Deposit handout, list the doctrinal points and method of delivery, such as a lecture.

Examples of Explanation include:

- Recapping from the previous session (if applicable)
- Teaching, using Scripture and Catechism
- Research Activity, such as looking up Bible passages, textbook activity, arts/crafts

Application (30 minutes)

This time is dedicated to applying the doctrinal topic to personal life and to culture/real world. Consider using an example from the lives of the Saints. Ask yourself: *What methods, such as small group, large group, testimony, or silent reflection, will be used for this?*

Examples of Application include:

- Saint story
- Witness sharing
- Using something within Pop Culture that can connect to the topic being discussed

- Small Group discussion/Quiet Journal Activity, especially by reflecting on Scripture
- Action Plan, making simple, practical resolutions to become more Christ-like, involving:
 - Specific commitment to grow in the Word of God (through prayer, Bible reading, memorization, etc.)
 - Specific way to spread the Gospel (especially in the family and with friends).

Celebration (20-25 minutes)

This closing time should be about ending in a place of gratitude and praise to Christ, and a call to spreading the Gospel. Things to ask yourself: *What type of prayer will be used here? Will there be any rituals or prayers (such as from the Book of Blessings, or Rites books, or the Roman Missal), or use of sacramental, or song?* This is also a time to give any important administrative information (i.e. announcements)

Examples of Celebration include:

- Modified Liturgy of the Hours with time for intentions.
- *Lectio Divina* approach to praying the Scriptures.
- Prayer Devotion
- Announcements

Additional Resources

In this section, we've included many of the other common resources that Confirmation Coordinators have found to be helpful and can be considered "norms" for use in the diocese.

Here is a list of these resources and a brief explanation of their purpose and use:

Confirmation Sponsor Information

This is a sample of a handout that you can use to guide the candidates in selecting a sponsor. It also includes some of the information that you are encouraged to ask which draws out their reasoning for their selection.

Sponsor Meetings

It is recommended that the candidate's meet frequently with their sponsors throughout the preparation process. These four sponsor meetings sheets can be used as "homework" for them to turn in throughout the preparation period. It is a great way to 1) foster a deeper faith-centered relationship with their sponsor, and 2) to continue to receive feedback from them throughout the preparation process.

Confirmation Saint Profile

This is a sample form to assist the candidates in choosing a Confirmation Saint. It is intended to be filled out and turned in to the parish.

Basic Registration Form for Confirmation

A basic registration form that can be used to collect much of the required and helpful information at the beginning of the preparation process.

Confirmation Commitment Form

A sample form that be used to draw out some of the "burning questions" at the beginning of the preparation process. It also requires a signature which can be helpful in asking the candidate to say "yes" to the preparation process.

Lessons for Confirmation Sessions and/or Retreats

There are six (6) lessons that are provided that can be used for confirmation sessions, meetings, and/or retreats throughout the confirmation process. These can be used by parish/school leaders and/or by parents. You are welcome to use any part(s) from any of the lessons as you see fit and that follow the outlines for the lesson preparation. You may also use any approved curriculum for your sessions. You may also mix between these lessons and those of approved curriculum as well.

Confirmation Sponsor Information

(Due at _____ Meeting/Class)
date

An important part of your preparation is choosing a sponsor to support you in your faith journey. When looking at someone as a potential sponsor, ask yourself: “Which adult do I know whose faith I look up to?” and “Who would I be willing to talk seriously and candidly with about the faith?” Keep in mind there will be a series of sponsor follow-ups after each sponsor session, so this will be a person that you will be meeting with frequently throughout the preparation process.

We ask that you pick a sponsor who will be able to meet with you individually throughout the preparation process- either in person or by phone or video chat. It should also be someone who can attend as many of the meetings as possible with you.

Your individual meetings with your sponsor can take place anytime and anywhere you are able to meet (i.e. a restaurant, a park, a bookstore, coffee shop, etc.). These meetings should be a time for your sponsor to mentor you in the faith. As I mentioned before, we will give you sheets to complete with your sponsors after each session.

Your sponsor:

- Must be at least 16 years old
- Must be a confirmed, practicing Catholic who leads a life in harmony with the faith and must be a worthy example for you in the moral life and practice of the Catholic faith. This means regular participation in the life of the Church, which begins with the weekly Sunday mass. Just going to mass on Sunday does not necessarily mean a person is leading a life worthy of example, but not going to mass on Sunday certainly does disqualify a person from claiming that distinction.
- May not be a parent of the confirmation candidate

Choosing a sponsor is not just an honor to be given a good friend or relative. Sponsorship is an important faith commitment, not to be taken lightly. Please prayerfully consider your choice of sponsor.

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Your Name:

Sponsor’s Name:

Sponsor’s Address:

(street, city, state, zip)

Sponsor’s Phone Number and Email Address:

Sponsor’s Home Parish (Name, City, State):

Please answer these two questions on the back of this paper:

1. *I am asking this person to be my sponsor because.....*
2. *I look up to them in their faith life because.....*

Sponsor Meeting #1

Due by:

Candidates are asked to meet with their sponsors regularly throughout the preparation process to discuss the faith and in order that they might be more aware of what God is doing throughout the process.

--- PRIOR TO MEETING ---

Fill out the life graph sheet. Share a copy with your sponsor. You can do this my mail or email. Make sure to send it to them with enough time to look through it before you talk next.

--- BEGIN WITH PRAYER ---

*Read this passage **twice** together and discuss using the questions below. Keeping in mind that the Word of God is “living and effective” - the actual voice of God reaching out to you to speak into your life, think about why that word/phrase is standing out. How is God speaking to you in the circumstances of life?*

So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not heed them. I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.” - John 10:7-15

Questions to discuss together - You’ll share some of your discussion on the following page

- What does this passage reveal to you about God?
- What does it mean that Jesus is the “Good Shepherd”?

--- LESSON REVIEW: GRACE* ---

Discuss the following questions with your sponsor. With each question talk not only about the answers to the questions taught in the lesson, but also about if you understand the answer or if you struggle with what was taught. Formulate questions for the priest or DRE if you come up against a roadblock.

- Do you believe that God created us? If so, why do you think he did? If not, why not?
- How do we describe God?
- How were we made by God and what went wrong?
- How does God find a way to mend our broken relationship with him?

--- LIFE GRAPH ---

Share your life graph with your sponsor and discuss the following questions

- Ask your sponsor - when in your life have you felt closest to God?
- Discuss together - How do we know that we are close to God and how do we get close to God? Is feeling the best way to gauge our closeness to God?

Sponsor Meeting #1 Turn-In Sheet

Name

*After each meeting with your sponsor please respond to the questions below and turn this sheet in to the parish.
Please respond in at least 2-3 full sentences for each question.*

1. In a few sentences, what are a few things that you and your sponsor shared or talked about as you went through the scripture passage and questions following?
2. What is something you learned about your sponsor or something that your sponsor said that helped you see your faith a little differently?
3. In regard to the life graph how would you respond to someone who says that they do not believe that you can be close to God? How would you share with them God's grace and presence in your own life?
4. St. Teresa of Calcutta, the famous Mother Teresa herself, didn't feel the closeness of God for the majority of her life. Yet, when we look at her life we see that she loved God profoundly and lived a deep life of prayer. How can we remain close to God even if we don't feel close to him?
5. Do you have any other questions or final thoughts that you would like to share with us?

Life Graph

Instructions:

- Using the graph below go back as far as you can remember and chart out different important moments in your life.
- You can place a dot that represents how close or far away from God you felt at these moments in your life and a couple of notes about what happened.
- Connect all the dots with lines so you can chart out the highs and lows of your spiritual life.
- Go through the chart with your sponsor (and visa versa), looking for how God's grace was working in your lives.



Sponsor Meeting #2

Due by:

Confirmandi are asked to meet with their sponsors regularly throughout the preparation process to discuss the faith and in order that they might be more aware of what God is doing throughout the process.

--- BEGIN WITH PRAYER ---

*Read this passage **twice** together and discuss using the questions below. Keeping in mind that the Word of God is “living and effective”- the actual voice of God reaching out to you to speak into your life, think about why that word/phrase is standing out. How is God speaking to you in the circumstances of life?*

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” - John 14:15-21

Questions to discuss together - You’ll share some of your discussion on the following page

- What does this passage reveal to you about God?
- What does this teaching from Jesus have to do with the sacraments?
- Why would Christ give us the sacraments? Are they just some hollow ritual or do they actually do something in us?

--- LESSON REVIEW: SACRAMENTS ---

Discuss the following questions with your sponsor. With each question talk not only about the answers to the questions taught in the lesson, but also about if you buy into that answer or if you struggle with what was taught. Formulate questions for the priest or DRE if you come up against a roadblock.

- How did Christ prepare his disciples to lead the Church after his Ascension?
- Who is the Holy Spirit? What titles do we give him and what do these titles tell us about him?
- What are the sacraments? What do we need in order to receive them properly?
- What effect do the sacraments have on our lives?

--- RELATING TO THE SACRAMENTS ---

- Ask your sponsor - Which sacraments have the most power in your life? The least? Why?
- Discuss - How can we believe that the sacraments have such profound power in our souls when they don’t feel or look that powerful? What can we do to better prepare ourselves to receive the sacraments?

Sponsor Meeting #3

Due by:

Confirmandi are asked to meet with their sponsors regularly throughout the preparation process to discuss the faith and in order that they might be more aware of what God is doing throughout the process.

--- BEGIN WITH PRAYER ---

*Read each passage **twice** together and discuss using the questions below. Keeping in mind that the Word of God is “living and effective”- the actual voice of God reaching out to you to speak into your life, think about why that word/phrase is standing out. How is God speaking to you in the circumstances of life?*

[Jesus said]: “I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

- John 16:7-15

“Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for it had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.”- Acts 8:14-17

Questions to discuss together - You’ll share some of your discussion on the following page

- What does this passage reveal to you about the Holy Spirit?
- What does it mean when Jesus says that it is to our advantage that he goes away so we can receive the Holy Spirit?
- Why did the apostles need to lay hands on the Samaritans who had been baptized? What does it mean that they received the Holy Spirit?

--- LESSON REVIEW: CONFIRMATION ---

Discuss the following questions with your sponsor. With each question talk not only about the answers to the questions taught in the lesson, but also about if you buy into that answer or if you struggle with what was taught. Formulate questions for the priest or DRE if you come up against a roadblock.

- Why has the Church established the sacrament of Confirmation? What does it do? Why is it necessary?
- What are the effects of the sacrament? What will happen to you when you are confirmed?
- How can you prepare yourself to fully receive the grace of the sacrament?
- What all happens during the sacrament? What are all the signs, gestures, etc.? What do they all mean?
- What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit? When did you initially receive them? What does the sacrament of Confirmation have to do with them? How does it affect them?

- Read over and discuss the sheet on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Discuss how you would use these gifts to think through and act on several real-life situations and current hot button issues.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

(According to Archbishop Luis Martinez from his book "The Sanctifier")

What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit? *The gifts of the Holy Spirit are bestowed on us at baptism. Picture it this way: a sailboat is fairly useless without opening its sails. It can't move, but is constantly thrown about on the waters, completely hopeless and at the mercy of the elements. At baptism the sails of our hearts were opened for the wind of the Holy Spirit to guide us towards our ultimate happiness- union with God our Father. We can't do this on our own, but Jesus has given us his very life in order for us to come back to the Father. This is a great grace. As St. Athanasius said: "For the Son of God became man so that we might become God." Jesus lived a life of faith, hope, and love. Due to sin, we need supernatural help to live this way as well. We're given the gifts of the Spirit to perfect our minds so we can know the truth and our wills so that we can love what we've come to know. We in a way live Jesus' life (or as the theologians say participate in the divine nature of Christ)! Here is a short summary of the gifts and how they perfect us. It is important to note that we are supposed to grow in these gifts. Take note of how each "level" of the gift makes us look more and more like Christ.*



Gifts perfecting our will

This picture gives us a good image of this category of gifts. Notice how the heart at the center looks like it belongs to both Jesus and the priest. His heart has become one with Jesus. Also notice how the arm of Christ sort of fuses to the priest, so the priest becomes an extension of Jesus himself.

Fear of the Lord

Repugnance at separation from God

Level 1: Horror of sin- conquering temptation and sin with many struggles and failures

Level 2: Soul stays away from sin and begins to cling to God, avoiding even insignificant failures and grows a profound respect for everything sacred

Level 3: Total detachment from the things of the world. They all lose their fascination

Fortitude

The ability to overcome dangers and struggles through various virtues moved by the Holy Spirit

Level 1: We can do all necessary for salvation, even extraordinary or heroic things

Level 2: We can do more than what is necessary but what the Spirit counsels us to do

Level 3: We can conquer ourselves and have “boundless confidence and unchanging peace” in our hearts, nothing will sway us

Piety

Put all of our relationships (God, friends, family) in place, guides them, makes them more perfect and more profound

Level 1: When we regard others, the soul gives generously to them what they need

Level 2: When we regard others, we desire to give to them even from what we need

Level 3: Gladly giving self without reserve

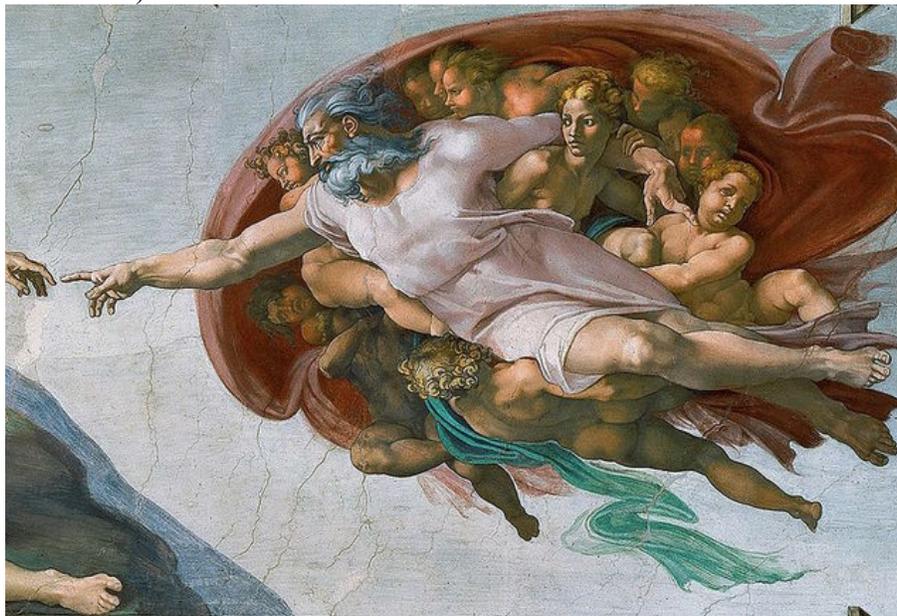
Counsel

Divine prudence, not only rightly-ordered thought about what we should do, but God’s rightly-ordered thought

Level 1: We succeed rapidly in doing the will of God, what’s necessary in the spiritual life

Level 2: Shows us the will of God beyond just the necessary but what is beneficial and useful in growing closer to God

Level 3: Soul rises from earth and lives in a different plane, guided completely by the hand of God (prudence & boldness complete and ordered)



Gifts perfecting our intellect

Many don't notice that the cape and the angels surrounding Michelangelo's famous depiction of God creating Adam is shaped like a brain. This is supposed to symbolize creation coming forth from the mind of God. It also shows how we're

made in His image. This is a good visual for this second type of gift. These gifts are the divine mind reaching out to touch ours so we can think like Him.

Knowledge

Divine wisdom, theologizing, ability to scrutinize the world (spiritual and material), probe the depths of all phenomena and recognizes what God has/is doing

Level 1: Can see the vanity of worldly things and the reflection of God's goodness

Level 2: Enjoy a vision of the world similar to how Adam and Eve saw it before the Fall

Level 3: Complete detachment, most can't relate with how these souls see the world- even loving suffering and humiliation

Understanding

Ability to ponder and penetrate lofty truths, our soul transforms, gift of meditation (ability to pray)

Each degree advances like a person climbing a mountain, the higher the degree the more the soul can take in the larger, more beautiful scene.

Wisdom

Divine knowledge, obtained from a deep intimacy with God, experiencing all the things the theologize and talk about and meditate on

Level 1: We cling to God

Level 2: We feel delight in the things of God & start to scorn human satisfactions & even start to love suffering

Level 3: We live as if in Heaven, no longer seeking the things of earth at all

Sponsor Meeting #4

Due by:

Confirmandi are asked to meet with their sponsors regularly throughout the preparation process to discuss the faith and in order that they might be more aware of what God is doing throughout the process.

--- BEGIN WITH PRAYER ---

*Read each passage **twice** together and discuss using the questions below. Keeping in mind that the Word of God is "living and effective"- the actual voice of God reaching out to you to speak into your life, think about why that word/phrase is standing out. How is God speaking to you in the circumstances of life?*

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. **Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like.** I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;** against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another." -Galatians 5:1, 13-26 (emphasis added)

Questions to discuss together - You'll share some of your discussion on the following page

- Why does St. Paul list these fruits of the Spirit?
- Do you see the fruits of the Spirit or the fruits of the flesh mentioned in this passage more in your life?
- How is God asking you to "live by the Spirit"? What does that even mean?

--- LESSON REVIEW: CONFIRMATION ---

Discuss the following questions with your sponsor. With each question talk not only about the answers to the questions taught in the lesson, but also about if you buy into that answer or if you struggle with what was taught. Formulate questions for the priest or DRE if you come up against a roadblock.

- Review the gifts of the Holy Spirit. What effect do they have on our lives?
- What does it look like to follow the Spirit? How can we tell the Holy Spirit from our own imagination or even the temptations of the devil?
- What are the fruits of the Spirit? Do you see the fruits of the Spirit present in your life?

Sponsor Meeting #4 Turn-In Sheet

Name

*After each meeting with your sponsor please respond to the questions below and turn this sheet in to the parish.
Please respond in at least 2-3 full sentences for each question.*

1. What are a few things that you and your sponsor shared or talked about as you went through the scripture passage and questions following?
2. What is something you learned about your sponsor or something that your sponsor said that helped you see your faith a little differently?
3. Some may look at the list of the fruits of the Spirit and works of the flesh and think the list of the works of the flesh look much more fun. Why do you think sometimes sin looks more fun than sanctity?
4. We are taught that sanctity, friendship with God, and a life filled with the fruits of the Spirit are actually the things that will bring us greater happiness. How can that be?
5. Do you have any other questions or final thoughts that you would like to share with us?

Confirmation Saint Profile

(Due at _____ Conference)

Your Name: _____

Please take time in considering your confirmation name. “Confirmation... 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 the power from on high so that he may be his witness.” (CCC 1304) Your patron saint is your companion in faith through their prayer and intercession. Names of saints are chosen to serve as patrons and models for those being confirmed. A confirmand should choose a patron saint’s name, ***not*** because of the attractiveness of the name or what they are the patron/patroness of, but because of the attractiveness of the Christian life that person led. You are encouraged to use your baptismal name for Confirmation in order to show the relationship between the sacraments. However, if desired, a special name may be chosen, in which case it should be a recognized saint. If the baptismal name is not that of a recognized saint, a new name should be chosen for the celebration of Confirmation.

Find out more about your patron saint’s life.

Saint’s Name: _____ Feast Day _____

Saint’s place of birth _____

Short saint biography (some bullets points will do):

Find out something about this Saint’s:

Family: _____

Occupation _____

Death: _____

What virtues did this saint practice in his/her life?

What aspect of this person’s Christian life attracted you? Why have you picked this Saint?

How is this saint a model for Christians today?

Feel free to use to an additional sheet of paper for more writing space.

Basic Confirmation Registration Form

Due by:

| | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|--|
| Confirmand's Full Name (First , Middle, & Last) | | | |
| Confirmand's Address | | | |
| Confirmand's Phone Number and email | | | |
| Parent's phone number and email | | | |
| Date of Birth | | Age (at Confirmation) | |
| Father's Name | | | |
| Mother's Name (Including Maiden Name) | | | |
| BAPTISMAL INFORMATION | | | |
| Parish & Address of Baptism (do not need <i>address</i> if baptized at this parish) | | | |
| Date of Baptism | | | |
| Minister of Baptism | | | |
| Godparent's Names | | | |

Confirmation Commitment Form

Jesus tells us time and again in scripture that when we call upon him, he will respond to us.

Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

Matthew 7:7-8

And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Luke 11:9-13

In preparing for Confirmation, you are being invited to seek the Lord and to bring yourself to him. That means addressing the questions in your heart about God and his Church. Many Catholics leave the faith following their Confirmation or soon after, because they didn't bring their questions to the Lord honestly and in full faith.

There are not a hundred people in America who hate the Catholic Church. There are millions of people who hate what they wrongly believe to be the Catholic Church — which is, of course, quite a different thing.

- Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen

We at [INSERT PARISH NAME] want to aid you as you seek answers to those questions, but it is your task to pose those questions and put in the commitment to seek the Lord. That cannot be done for you.

Please know that whatever questions you have in your heart or whatever else you may be taking with you into this process of preparing for your confirmation, God desires to come to you in some way to bring you closer to him and to reveal more deeply (though maybe not fully) his plans for you. Below are a few lines for you to write out 1-3 burning questions about the faith or about God that you want to seek an answer for as you prepare to be confirmed.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Commitment to the Preparation Process

I, _____, here state that I will pray to the best of my ability, seek the Lord in the tasks I am asked to do this year for Confirmation preparation, and will seek out answers to the burning questions God has put on my heart, giving him the space to answer them in his time and in the way he desires. I promise to be as committed a disciple as I am able as I walk through this preparation process.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Explanation of Retreats/Days of Reflections

Parishes can provide a retreat or a day of reflection as part of the preparation process. Many questions are asked regarding this component of preparation. We've included a short FAQ below.

In many cases it makes sense for the parish to offer a retreat "in house" to best accommodate schedules and other logistics involved. We've included a resource in this section to assist parishes in planning a retreat like this. The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis can provide recommendations or assist you as needed.

Confirmation Retreat FAQ's

Q. Does the Diocese require a Confirmation Retreat?

While it is encouraged that parishes offer a retreat or a day of reflection for candidates and their family to attend, it is not required. A candidate cannot be withheld a sacrament due to missing a retreat.

Q. Does the retreat have to be specifically a Confirmation Retreat?

The primary focus on a confirmation retreat must be on the sacrament of confirmation. That being said, Pastors may determine that other opportunities might be best for a candidate (and their family) depending on where they are at in their faith formation process.

Q. Does the diocese offer Confirmation Retreats?

The diocese does not offer confirmation retreats.

Retreat Outline

The aim of this retreat is primarily kerygmatic. We hope to preach the gospel to the confirmandi so they may accept Christ in their hearts and receive more fully the graces of the Sacrament of Confirmation. This guide is meant to help you plan out your own confirmation retreat. It provides you with four topics for talks along with some scripture and bullet points to speak on or pray with. Each topic also includes some bullet points that you can use for small group discussion or guided prayer. There are also points below the list of topics that lay out how this all connects to Confirmation. Know that these topics are just suggestions. You can use as many or as little of them as you want. You can change up the order or come up with your own topics if you wish. These topics can either be used to prepare talks, small group sessions, and/or prayer resources. Below that are a couple scheduling options for a morning-long retreat or a day-long retreat.

Some One-Day Retreat Schedule Options

Shorter Form Retreat

8:30- Welcome and ice breakers
9:00- Talk 1 (whichever topic you choose)
9:30- Small Group
10:15- Break
10:30- Silent prayer w/ confessions
10:45- Talk 2 (whichever topic you choose)
11:15- Small Group
12:00- Break (can be longer if you provide a meal)
12:45- Silent prayer w/ confessions
1:00- Mass (homily could be based on one topic)

Longer Form Retreat

9:30- Welcome and ice breakers
10:00- Talk 1
10:45- Small group
11:15- Break
11:30-Prayer
12:00- Lunch Break
1:00- Talk 2
1:30- Small group
2:00- Ice breakers/break
2:30- Talk 3
3:00- Small Group
3:30- Prayer
4:00- Mass
5:30- Dinner
6:15- Talk 4
6:45- Final Small Group (game plan going forward)

Talk Outlines & Small Group/Journaling Questions

These outlines are intended to get someone started in crafting a talk on their own.

Topic 1: **Identity**

SCRIPTURES TO USE: *Baptism of Jesus: Mark 1:9-10, We are God's children: 1John 3:2¹*

- Who are you? Where do you find your identity? What is the meaning of your life?
- What does it mean that you are baptized? You have a new baptismal identity.
- Christ lives within you and is changing you from the inside out.
- No one and nothing can take that identity away from you.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION OR QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE CONSIDERATION/JOURNALING:

- Journal answers to the three questions before and after you hear the talk
- Do you believe that God can answer these questions for each of us or do you think this all just made-up religious mumbo jumbo?
- What does it mean for us that Christ is in us and working for our salvation?

Topic 2: **Relationship**

SCRIPTURES TO USE: *Remain in God's love: John 15:9, Fruits of God's love: Galatians 5:16-26*

- What we do, the way we do things, and the things we do should all correspond to our true identity.
- Why does the Church ask us to do all the things she asks us to do? The moral codes, the sacraments, the goofy hoops we always seem to have to jump through? It's all about a deep, lasting relationship with the God who wants our happiness.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION OR QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE CONSIDERATION/JOURNALING:

- Why be obedient to what the Church teaches?
- Does your daily life look like the life of a disciple of Christ? What does or doesn't?
- There are two different definitions of freedom we are offered:
 - **Worldly definition:** The ability to do whatever you want.
 - **God's definition:** The ability to live life to the fullest through virtue and union with God.
- Which one of these definitions do you live by?
- What does it mean to have a relationship with God?

Topic 3: **Obstacles**

SCRIPTURES TO USE: *The origin of original sin: Genesis 3, By grace you have been saved: Ephesians 2:1-10, Jesus heals a woman's wounded identity/relationship: Mark 5:24-34*

- God answers our deepest questions: the meaning of life is to do his will, we find perfect love and happiness in him, we are his children and we have the divine life within us.
- We often seek our own answers to these questions and ignore the answers God gives to us. Where our answers differ there is a wound because we have stopped believing in Him and we've turned away from the source of everlasting happiness.
- We can take hope in the fact that Christ can heal us.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION OR QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE CONSIDERATION/JOURNALING:

¹The scriptures provided here are for use by the speaker and/or for the retreatants' private lectio divina. If you intend to have the students do lectio divina, you should go through the method with them at the beginning of the retreat and provide some written aid or some pre-prepared questions to kick off their prayer. Remember this is probably very new for the majority of the confrmandi.

- What are the biggest obstacles to believing in God's answers to the deepest questions in your heart?
- What makes you happy? How long does the happiness that thing gives you last? What happens after the happiness ends?
- Write out a letter to Jesus about what is going on in your life right now or what has gone on in your life leading up to this point.
- What do you most want in life? What is it you most want Jesus to do for you?
- What do you think Jesus most wants to do for you?
- How can we tell if God is speaking to us or if it's something else?

Topic 4: **Mission**

SCRIPTURES TO USE: *The Great Commission: Matt 28:18-20, Missionary Mandate: Mark 16:15-18*

- God has given us each particular tasks. These tasks lead us to union with Him.
- What will your task be? What is it now? How can I discover God's purpose for my life?
- Defend God's presence in your heart by resisting distraction, sin, and temptation.
- Adorn the temple of your heart with recollection. Remember God and speak to him as often as you remember.
- Enter the temple of your heart and live in God's presence through participation in the sacraments and committing to regular personal prayer.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION OR QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE CONSIDERATION/JOURNALING:

- If your heart is a temple, you have three jobs to do: 1) defend it from distractions and sin, 2) to enter in and talk to God there, and 3) to fix it up and decorate it so it is a beautiful place for God to dwell by praying constantly throughout the day and repenting a quickly making amends and doing penance when you've fallen down. Make an action plan for how you can do this going forward.
- How did your confirmation saint defend, enter, and adorn the temple of his/her heart? What can you learn from their example?

---- **Retreat Tie-in Points w/ Confirmation**----

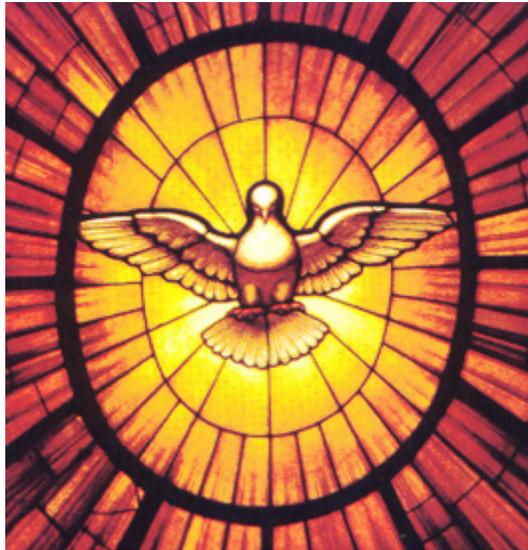
1. God has given you the great gift of his love, meaning, and even his own divine life so we can live in friendship with him
2. Now we have a particular task so we can give it all back to him, which is the point of the sacrament of confirmation
3. You will be sealed and sent forth with new grace and new healing, being confirmed in your baptismal identity to live as soldiers for Christ and serve his Church

List of Lessons for Confirmation Sessions

Lesson – The Holy Spirit, the Advocate

Gospel Reading – John 16:12-15

Jesus said to his disciples: “I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.”



Who is the Holy Spirit? “The third person of the Holy Trinity, who is distinct from the Father and the Son but one in being, coequal, and coeternal with them, because, like them, he is in the fullest sense God. The Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father but also from the Son as from a single principle, through what is called a single spiration. He is the personal infinite term of the eternal act of mutual love of the Father and the Son; hence his name of Spirit, as the issue or term of God’s eternal love or act of will. He is also called the Spirit of Truth, the Creator Spirit, the Sanctifier, as the gifts of revelation, of creation (and re-creation), and of sanctification are the outpourings of God’s love, and therefore appropriated to the Spirit of Love, though whatever God does outside the Trinity (in the world of creatures) belongs to the common or united action of the three divine persons. He is called Dove, because it was in this form that he descended visibly upon Christ in the Jordan (Mark 1:10).”²

What is the Holy Spirit’s role and responsibility? The Holy Spirit’s role and function “...is to teach, bear witness, and ‘to convince the world of sin,’ The Holy Spirit is the love of God producing the effects of divine grace on earth.”³

How will the Holy Spirit convince the world of sin, justice, and judgment? The Holy Spirit was another advocate that helps bring all truth. If Jesus is the truth, then He is God. If the Holy Spirit is truth then He is God;

² Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary, 255

³ Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 402

not a different God, but one in the same. The Holy Spirit came to help us understand the fullness of truth. By fulfilling the truth, the Holy Spirit comes to cast light on darkness and sin.

What is an advocate? In our society, an advocate is someone who is willing to step up and speak out in support of a cause or policy. For example, we can be advocates for the Pro-Life movement. We can advocate for the millions of unborn children who are in danger of abortion and do not have a voice to cry out. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate who strengthens and pleads our cause to God the Father when we call Him to our side. Jesus Christ was our first Advocate. In the letter of Saint John, he writes “[Christ] our Advocate with the Father.”⁴ “Christ is our advocate who defends the cause of Christian believers against their accuser, the devil.”⁵

How does the Holy Spirit advocate for us? The Holy Spirit is the Advocate for the Mystical Body, the Church and its members. He pleads God’s cause for the human family, keeping the Church from error, sanctifying souls through the preaching of God’s word and through the sacraments.⁶

Discuss a time the Holy Spirit acted as an advocate in your life.

Why does Jesus call the Holy Spirit “Spirit of Truth”? Jesus uses this term a little later in reference to the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of Truth” because He guides the Church in all Truth of God because He is God Himself. He will come to the aid of those that defend the Church and those who seek to find the Truth and call upon the Holy Spirit.

How does the Holy Spirit teach all truth? “By guiding the Church, that is, its infallible administration, by His light to the knowledge of the truth necessary for the salvation of souls, preserving it from error; and by advancing those members of the Church who seek His light and place no obstacle in its way, in the necessary knowledge of truth.”⁷ We have to remind ourselves that the Holy Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit in His very essence is truth. The Holy Spirit always was, is, and ever shall be God. We are reminded of one God in three persons each time we pray the Glory Be. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is not, and every shall be. Each person (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) was in the beginning,



each person is now, and each person every shall be for all eternity.

⁴ 1 John 2:1

⁵ The Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 14

⁶ Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 402

⁷ Goffines, The Church’s Year, pg. 281

Why can't the world accept the Holy Spirit? The world did not accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The rejection of God by the world has been a constant since the Fall of Adam and Eve. When we speak of 'the world,' we mean those people who choose to follow the temptations of earthly things and neglect the things of God's Kingdom. At times, the Israelites failed to accept God as Father. The Jews failed to accept Jesus as the Son of God. Now, Christ is telling us the Holy Spirit will be treated no differently. He will not be accepted because "the Spirit will be visible...only to the eye of faith."⁸

Where else do we see the Holy Spirit? "We see the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures He inspired; in Sacred Tradition, to which the Church Fathers are the witnesses; in the Magisterium [Pope and Bishops] which He assists; in the sacramental liturgy, through its words and symbols, in which the Holy Spirit puts us into communion with Christ; in prayer, where he intercedes for us; in the apostolic and missionary life; in witness of saints through whom he manifests his holiness and continues the work of salvation."⁹ It is also by the power of the Holy Spirit that the greatest of Divine mysteries is accomplished, the Incarnation of the Word. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God."¹⁰

Activity – List as many symbols for the Holy Spirit as possible

The proper name is "Holy Spirit." The Church has received it from the Lord who is united with the Spirit. The title, Holy Spirit, was used throughout the Acts of the Apostles, but Saint Paul and Saint Peter had other titles for the Holy Spirit. As a family you can read through one (or more) of these four groups, or if you are leading a large group and have enough people you can separate them into four groups. Have one group look in 1 Peter, have group 2 look in Romans, have group 3 look in 1st and 2nd Corinthians, and have group 4 look in Galatians and Ephesians. An alternative option is hand out strips of paper with the verse written on them and have them race to find them. Once they have found them, discuss the meaning of each title given to the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of the Promise (Gal 3:14; Eph 1:13) The Holy Spirit is the one Jesus had promised to the Apostles and all of us.

The Spirit of Adoption (Romans 8:15) In today's Gospel, Jesus said he would not let us become orphans. The Holy Spirit has adopted us as sons and daughters, and cares for us.

The Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9) The Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ are inseparable. "When the Father sends his Word, he always sends his Breath...To be sure, it is Christ who is seen, the visible image of the invisible God, but it is the Spirit who reveals him."¹¹

The Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:17) Another name for Jesus Christ is Lord. You may refer to the previous "The Spirit of Christ"

Spirit of God (Rom 8:9, 14; 15:19; 1 Cor 6:11; 7:40) The Holy Spirit is the spirit of God because He is God! The spirit of God comprehends the thoughts of God and expresses them, but He does not speak of himself. This

⁸ The Jerome Biblical Commentary 63:145, 17

⁹ CCC 688

¹⁰ Luke 1:35

¹¹ CCC 689

is why in the Nicene Creed we say, “He has spoken through the prophets.”¹²

Spirit of Glory (1 Peter 4:14) The Holy Spirit brings us the Glory of God by His divine assistance and intervention. He inspired the Apostles and inspires us to understand and preach the Glory of God.

¹² Nicene Creed, par 465

Multiple Choice Questions

1. **What does the word “Advocate” mean when talking about the Holy Spirit?**

- A) Someone who tells jokes
- B) Someone who helps and speaks up for others
- C) Someone who plays music
- D) Someone who builds things

Answer: B

2. **Why is the Holy Spirit called the “Spirit of Truth”?**

- A) Because He always wins at games
- B) Because He helps us make up good stories
- C) Because He helps us know and tell what is right and true
- D) Because He never makes mistakes in math

Answer: C

3. **What is a common symbol of the Holy Spirit in the Bible?**

- A) A lion
- B) A rainbow
- C) A dove
- D) A mountain

Answer: C

Discussion Questions

What does it mean to be an advocate? Can you think of a time you advocated for someone? Can you think of a time when someone advocated for you?

How do you think the Holy Spirit helps us when we're scared or unsure?

Imagine the Holy Spirit whispering something to you when you're nervous—what would He say?

Why do you think Jesus called the Holy Spirit the “Spirit of Truth”?

Can you think of a time when telling the truth was hard—but the right thing to do?

How does the Holy Spirit help point us in the right direction?

Where do you think we can “see” the Holy Spirit working today? At home, at school, at church?

What do you think the world would be like if everyone listened to the Holy Spirit more?

Lesson: Fruits of the Holy Spirit/Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Survey Activity)

Gospel Reading – John 15:1-8

(Can be read out loud before going through the Lesson)

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

Lesson – Fruits of the Holy Spirit

“bear much fruit”



There is a Nigerian phrase, “It is the He in me” This is usually said when a compliment is given to a person. The person recognized that without Christ the good word, thought, or deed is nothing and thus says, “It is the He [Jesus] in me”. We cannot bear good fruit if we do not remain in Christ and if He does not remain in us.

How can we identify a Christian? A Christian is the soul being perfected by the Grace of God and therefore can be identified or recognized by the perfections of the Holy Spirit, which are the fruits of the Holy Spirit. “The perfections of the Holy Spirit forms in us as the ‘first fruits’ of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church identifies twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit.”¹³

ACTIVITY – Fruit Game

Purchase four different types of fruit. You can buy 4 or 5 of each piece depending if you have multiple children or a large group. In addition, you will also want to purchase powdered donuts (a small box is be perfect), this is also for

¹³ Catechism of the Catholic Church – Glossary

the game. If doing this with a group, form four teams of five people each. Set up four chairs facing the group and ask for the first four people (one from each team) to sit in the chair. The volunteer youth will be blindfolded. Assign four people that are not on any of the teams to place fruit in the volunteer's hands. After the volunteers have been blindfolded, tell them that a fruit will be placed in their hands. The fruit should be the same for each person. The first one to raise their hand and guess the fruit wins that round. After a volunteer choose correctly, move onto the next group of volunteers from each team. Place a different fruit in their hand. Repeat this for each fruit that you have. After all the fruits are gone, the last round will be a trick. The blindfolded volunteers will think they are going to guess a fruit. Instead of placing a fruit in their hands, the assistants will place a powdered donut in their hands. If you are a parent, you can still do this activity with your child by blindfolding them and placing each fruit and have them guess just as above with the powdered donut be the last option.

It is fairly easy to identify natural fruit, even when we are blindfolded. It is even easier to distinguish between a natural fruit and another object that is not fruit. Ask the group if they can name 12 fruits from the grocery store. Ask the group if they can name the 12 fruits of the Holy Spirit. **Why is it easy to identify natural fruits, but not spiritual fruits?** One reason is that we see natural fruits each day, we are accustomed to them. **Are we around spiritual fruits each day? If we are, why don't we recognize them?**

What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit? The fruits of the Holy Spirit including Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Fidelity (Faith), Modesty, Self-Control and Chastity.¹⁴ There are supernatural works that, according to St. Paul, manifest the presence of the Holy Spirit. The one who performs them recognizes God's presence by the happiness he experiences, and others the divine presence by witnessing these good works (Galatians 5:22-23). They are, in other words, identifiable effects of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵

What do each of the fruits of the Holy Spirit looks like in our life? How can we recognize them in the life of the disciple?

Charity – Charity is the power by which we, who have been loved first by God, can give ourselves to God so as to be united with him and can accept our neighbor for God's sake unconditionally and sincerely as we accept ourselves. [CCC 1822-1829, 1844] Jesus places love above all laws, without however abolishing the latter. Therefore, St. Augustine rightly says, "Love God, and do what you will." Which is not at all as easy as it sounds. That is why charity, love, is the greatest virtue, the energy that inspires all the other virtues and fills them with divine life.¹⁶

Joy – Joy is a lasting happiness. Many times we are asked if we are happy. We can only answer this question at that moment because happiness is temporal, it passes. Joy, however, is an eternal happiness. **What is eternal happiness?** Eternal happiness is seeing God and being taken up into God's happiness. [CCC 1720-1724, 1729]. In God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit there is unending life, joy, and communion. To be taken up into it will be an incomprehensible, infinite happiness for us men. This happiness is the pure gift of God's grace, for we men can neither bring it about ourselves nor comprehend it in its magnitude. God would like us to decide in favor of our happiness; we should choose God freely, love Him above all things, do good and avoid evil insofar as we are able.¹⁷

Peace – Peace is the consequence of justice and the sign of love put into action. Where there is peace, 'every creature can come to rest in good order' (Thomas Aquinas). Earthly peace is the image of the peace of Christ, who reconciled heaven and earth. Earthly peace is the image of the peace of Christ, who reconciled heaven and earth. [CCC 2304-2305] Peace is more than the absence of war, more than a carefully maintained balance of powers ('balance of terror'). In a state of peace, people can live securely with their legitimately earned property and freely exchange goods with one another. In peace the dignity and the right of self-determination of individuals and of

¹⁴ Gal. 5:22-23

¹⁵ Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.; Modern Catholic Dictionary

¹⁶ YouCat (Youth Catechism); 309

¹⁷ Ibid. 285

peoples are respected. In peace human coexistence is characterized by brotherly solidarity.¹⁸

Patience – A form of the moral virtue of fortitude. It enables one to endure present evils without sadness or resentment in conformity with the will of God. Patience is mainly concerned with bearing the evils caused by another. The three grades of patience are: to bear difficulties without interior complaint, to use hardships to make progress in virtue, and even to desire the cross and afflictions out of love of God and accept them with spiritual joy.¹⁹

Kindness – One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit; the quality of understanding sympathy and concern for those in trouble or need. It is shown in affability of speech, generosity of conduct, and forgiveness of injuries sustained.²⁰

Goodness – The secular definition of goodness is the state or quality of being good. There is only one that is good, that is God. Goodness is a share in the goodness of God (the qualities of God); an imitation of Christ.

Generosity – is a readiness and willingness to give to others, without anything in return. This is also called almsgiving.

Gentleness – is similar to the beatitude of meekness. A person who is not severe or violent, and practices moderation.

Faithfulness / Fidelity (Faith) – Constancy in allegiance to God or the things of God...implicit in loyalty is strong affection based on firm conviction that the object of one's fidelity deserves the allegiance.

Modesty – The virtue that moderates all the internal and external movements and appearance of a person according to his or her endowments, possessions, and station in life. Four virtues are commonly included under modesty: humility, studiousness, and two kinds of external modesty, namely in dress and general behavior. Humility is the ground of modesty in that it curbs the inordinate desire for personal excellence and inclines one to recognize his or her own worth in this true light. Studiousness moderates the desire and pursuit of truth in accordance with faith and right reason. Its contrary vices are curiosity, which is an excessive desire for knowledge, and negligence, which is remissness in acquiring knowledge that should be had for one's age and position in life. Modesty in dress and bodily adornments inclines a person to avoid not only whatever is offensive to others but whatever is not necessary. Modesty in bodily behavior directs a person to observe proper decorum in bodily movements, according to the dictum of St. Augustine, "In all your movements let nothing be evident that would offend the eyes of another."²¹

Self-Control – The act, power, or habit of having one's desires under the control of the will, enlightened by right reason and faith.²²

Chastity – The virtue by which a person who is capable of passion deliberately and resolutely reserves his erotic desires for love and resists the temptation to find lewd images in the media or to use others as a means of achieving his own satisfaction.²³

¹⁸ Ibid. 395

¹⁹ Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.; *Modern Catholic Dictionary*

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ YouCat (Youth Catechism); page 220

Lesson – Gifts of the Holy Spirit Survey Activity

Below is a print out that can be used to better understand the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and which one's your child are utilizing today. You can either have your child complete the survey alone, or assist them in completing the survey and/or adding up the numbers to get the scores for each gift (You will add the total across from left to right).

A key point to remember is your children have already received and have the Gifts of the Holy Spirit by their Baptism. Confirmation aims to strengthen them even more in their lives. Whether they have a high score or low score, they will still have a score greater than zero because the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are at work in their lives. This can be a fun activity for the whole family to do, and see where they are strong in, and where they can improve on.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Part I

- Please answer all of the following questions.
- Please answer 1 if NEVER, NOT VERY fits the answer the best.
- Please answer 5 if ALWAYS, EXTREMELY WELL, or A LOT/ALL THE TIME fits the answer best.
- If your answer is not 1 or 5, pick 3 if you feel neutral and 2 or 4 if you lean more toward one side or the other.

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | How often do I ask what would Jesus do? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | How confident do I feel in doing what God asks of me? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | How often do I feel that I actually know God's will? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | How strong do I feel spiritually? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | How often do I ask God, what do you want from me? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | How much do I know about the Sacraments? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | How often do others ask me for spiritual advice? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | How often do I feel that God helps me through my fears? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | How much help do I get from people to know God's will? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | How much religious pictures, articles, music do I have in my life? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | How often do I get sad when others are sinning? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | How sad do I feel when I see sin in the world? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | How often do I talk to God (pray)? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | How often do I go to Mass? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | How much do I talk to others about Christ and the Church? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16 | How often do I give God praise for good things in my life? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17 | How often do I find myself avoiding sin? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | How well do I feel I model my life after Christ? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19 | How often do I notice I am in temptation and try to get out? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20 | How sad do I feel when I do sin? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21 | How often do I think of Heaven? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22 | How well do I feel my family and friends encourage me? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23 | How well do I know the bible? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24 | How often do I feel I overcome obstacles? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25 | How often do I go to Confession? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26 | How well do I know what the church teachings on moral issues? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27 | How often do I do the sign of the cross? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28 | How often do I read scripture? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29 | How often do I feel guilty when I sin? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30 | How often do I tell others that I am sorry for hurting them? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31 | How well do I know my Faith? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32 | How often do I feel that I do God's will? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33 | How often do you think about your friendship with God? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34 | How well do I know the life of Christ? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35 | How often do I ask God about the choices I make in life? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Part II

**(please give this sheet out separately
AFTER questions are answered)**

Wisdom – gives us a longing and love for the things of God and directs our whole life and all our actions to His honor and Glory.

Understanding – enables us to know more clearly the mystery of faith.

Counsel – warns us of the deceits of the devil and of the dangers to salvation.

Fortitude – strengthens us to do the will of God in all things, despite fear and obstacles.

Knowledge – enables us to discover the will of God in all things (what should I do?)

Piety – makes us love God as a Father and obey Him because we love Him. This helps us to have reverence and to pray well (As we pray, we believe)

Fear of the Lord – fills us with a dread of sin, and a dread of offending, hurting God and others through our sin.

THE NUMBERS ON THE CHART BELOW ARE THE NUMBERS OF THE QUESTIONS ABOVE, NEXT TO THE NUMBER OF QUESTION, WRITE IN THE NUMBER YOU CIRCLED AND THEN ADD UP THE TOTAL.

| Gift of the Spirit | | | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|--------------------|-----------|--|-----------|--|-----------|--|-----------|--|-----------|--|--|-------|
| Wisdom | 14 | | 16 | | 21 | | 28 | | 35 | | | |
| Understanding | 6 | | 23 | | 26 | | 31 | | 34 | | | |
| Counsel | 7 | | 11 | | 19 | | 25 | | 29 | | | |
| Fortitude | 2 | | 4 | | 8 | | 22 | | 24 | | | |
| Knowledge | 1 | | 3 | | 5 | | 9 | | 32 | | | |
| Piety | 10 | | 13 | | 15 | | 18 | | 27 | | | |
| Fear of the Lord | 12 | | 17 | | 20 | | 30 | | 33 | | | |

1. Which gift were you the strongest in? Give examples of how you can see this gift working in your life?
2. Which gift were you the weakest in? Give examples of how you feel you can strengthen this gift with the help of the Holy Spirit?
3. What gift do you feel is needed the most by youth today?
4. Give examples of how you see these gifts practiced in the life of Jesus, Mary, the Saints and people in your life.

Lesson - Sacrament

What is a Sacrament? A sacrament is “an efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit.”²⁴ “As actions of Christ and the Church, they are signs and means which express and strengthen the faith, render worship to God, and effect the sanctification of humanity and thus contribute in the greatest way to establish, strengthen, and manifest ecclesiastical communion.”²⁵ A more simplified answer to this question is a Sacrament is an outward sign, of inward grace, instituted by Christ, and entrusted to the Church.

When or how did Christ institute the sacraments? What are the outward signs (Matter & Form) and inward grace? How are they entrusted to the Church?

[See “Sacraments Chart” below for Scripture versus and catechism paragraphs]

Chrism Oil – The noblest of the three oils is the chrism, and its consecration is more solemn, and fuller of mystery than those of the other two. It is by the chrism that the Holy Ghost imprints His indelible seal on the Christian that has already been made a member of Christ by Baptism. The water gives us our spiritual birth; the chrism gives us strength; and until such time as we have received its holy anointing, we have not as yet the perfect character of a Christian. Anointed with this holy oil, the Christian has a visible sign given him of his being a member of the Man-God, whose name of Christ signifies the unction He has received both as King and Pontiff. This consecration of a Christian by chrism is so much in accordance with the spirit of our holy religion, that, immediately after Baptism, the child receives upon its head an anointing (though it is not a sacramental one) of this oil, to show that he is already a sharer of the kingly character of Jesus Christ.

What is the Chrism Oil used for? Chrism Oil is used various ways. It is used in anointing the head of a person during Baptism, Confirmation, and consecration of a Bishop. It is also used to consecration of chalices, consecration of altars, blessing of bells, and Dedication of a Church. At Baptism during the anointing of Chrism the priest or deacon prays, “God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.”²⁶ We are united to Christ and to His mission, that of being a priest, prophet and king.

How does the Sacrament of Confirmation relate to the other uses of the oil? Through Confirmation, we are set aside (consecrated) and are the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Church is a temple just as our body and both are dedicated/consecrated with the same oil. Confirmation calls us to bear witness to Christ through our words and deeds. In addition, just as a Church bell announces the invitation to come to Christ, we as confirmed Catholics announce Christ to the world. We are called to dedicate our lives as an offering to Christ just as the sacrifice of the holy mass takes place on an altar. We are called to live out the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity. The chalice is a symbol for the virtues: the base is faith, the steam is hope, the cup is charity. The Bishop is a shepherd, and we are the soldiers of Christ, through Confirmation, and the Bishop our general, giving us marching orders.

What is the purpose of Sacraments?

1. They are how we express our faith.

In the Sacraments we do not get caught up in subtle reasoning asking questions like, “Am I really absolved and forgiven my sins?”, “Is the host really the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus?”, “Will baptism and confirmation really give me grace to live a holy life and be strong?” We could ask these questions about the

²⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church, Glossary

²⁵ Code of Canon Law - 840

²⁶ Rite of Baptism

Sacraments, but in the end, we come to Jesus as the leper did, with faith. We pray along with Saint Thomas Aquinas, “Faith will tell us Christ is present, when our human senses fail” or “God, I believe, help my unbelief.” The Sacraments are always a matter of faith; they stretch, challenge, and express our faith.

2. They are the means from which our faith is strengthened.

In the Sacraments we see the matter (material used in the Sacrament), and we hear the form (the words prayed or spoken), the grace given by Christ and His Church however is invisible. While we may not be able to physically see the grace we receive in the sacraments, we know they do affect us; we can look to the leper who was healed whose leprosy left immediately or the woman with hemorrhages stopped immediately. The strength of faith we receive in the Sacrament is seen in the fact that we must continually come back to the source of Grace, Jesus and His Church. If we continue to go back, we will receive healing and strength.

3. They are how we worship God.

Religion is what we believe and how we worship. If a person believes and worships, then they have a religion by definition. Our Catholic Faith, our religion, as established by Christ, is apostolic and sets forth for us what to believe (orthodoxy) and how to worship (orthopraxy). The Sacraments are essential to both orthodoxy (doctrine) and orthopraxy (prayer and worship). A Christian life without the Sacraments leads to confusion in error in the areas of doctrine, prayer, and worship.

It is Christ that is giving the grace. Grace is always primary and faith is secondary. The “New Law” is one of grace (the Sacraments) and faith (the one receiving the Sacrament). This grace and faith is at the core of our worship, and it is this worship that leads to works. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so not one may boast. For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.”²⁷ Jesus did not abolish religion or law. “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.”²⁸ In Jesus the “old” becomes “new”, for “the one who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’”²⁹

Questions we need to ask our self in regards to the Sacraments and grace, faith and good works:

Grace – Do we know what the Church teaches about the Sacraments? Are we in continuing to learn more about the teachings of Christ and His Church? “Pastors of souls and other members of the Christian faithful, according to their respective ecclesiastical function, have the duty to take care that those who seek the sacraments are prepared to receive them by proper evangelization and catechetical instruction, attentive to the norms issued by competent authority.”³⁰ Through this knowledge and preparation, we should come to a deep appreciation of what we are offered. Do we appreciate the Sacraments and see them as a channel of Grace?

Faith – How do we approach the Sacraments? What is our disposition? Do we believe as the leper that the Grace from the Sacrament can indeed heal us? Do we trust Christ and give me our all, our whole self? If we are not in the state of Grace, the grace of the Sacraments are blocked or inhibited. How often do we approach Christ, go to confession, go to Mass? When we receive Our Lord in the Eucharist, what is our disposition, our posture, our attitude and focus? When receiving the sacrament of Confirmation, we stand. Confirmation prepares us to be ready to be a soldier of Christ. Do we go to the Sacraments in the same manner that the leper went to Christ? Are we sincere? Do we admit our disease (i.e. our sin or failings)? Do we humbly ask to be cured (i.e. go to Confession)?

²⁷ Ephesians 2:8-10

²⁸ Matthew 5:17

²⁹ Revelation 21:5

³⁰ Code of Canon Law – 843 §2

Work - “Often Jesus asks the sick to believe. He makes use of signs to heal: spittle and the laying on of hands, mud and washing. The sick try to touch him, ‘for power came forth from him and healed them all.’ And so in the Sacraments, Christ continues to ‘touch’ us in order to heal us.³¹

“In order to apply to men the merits of His life and Passion, our Blessed Lord instituted seven Sacraments. These Sacraments act *ex opera operato*, provided all the conditions for their action are present; but they act in proportion to our dispositions. We must, therefore, not only receive them, but try to receive them well.”³²

What does *ex opera operato* mean? *Ex opera operato* means “from the work performed”, this means that the Sacrament has grace simply because it is the work of Christ and is performed by the bishop (or priest), who is in the person of Christ. The Sacraments are the works of Christ. He is working in the Sacraments, and thus the Sacraments are real and grace-filled.

Sacraments are not just a symbol; they are the work of Christ. The work of Christ through the Sacrament cannot be lessened by the minister. In other words, if the priest lacks faith or is a sinful man, the work, grace, and validity of the sacraments of Christ is not lessened.

Is there anything that could make a Sacrament invalid? Yes. All the conditions for the Sacrament’s action must be present. **What are the conditions necessary for the Sacraments?** “Every Sacrament consists of two things: matter, which is called the element, and form, which is commonly called the word.”³³ We have to have the right matter (physical material(s)) and the right form (words), and the person receiving the sacrament must be in the proper state. [Please also see “Sacrament Chart” for required state]

Video - Bottle Whistle

<https://youtu.be/o7LFahY0vvI>

The Sacraments are like a bottle whistle. To make a whistle out of a bottle all we need to do is have a bottle and blow air across the opening of the bottle. The bottle and the wind do all the work. Many children when being taught how to make a whistle sound from the bottle and air, try to make the sound themselves. When they try to make the sound themselves from their own lips, the bottle whistles does not work. The bottle can be compared to the matter of a Sacraments, the blow or air can be compared to the form or words spoken. All we have to do is allow the Sacrament to happen, for it is truly Christ at work, not us, our role is to be receptive.

How can we allow the work of Christ, through the Sacraments, have the most impact in our life? The beauty of the Sacraments is that they are effective and grace filled for us because of the Jesus Christ, not because of us. There is nothing we can do to add or take away from the Sacrament, but we can through our disposition, block or inhibit the grace that is offered to us.

Why is it important to be respectful and reverence in the preparation and reception of the Sacraments? Our reverence and respect enables us “in the best possible way to receive all the fruits of a Sacrament.” We can ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit called Piety. Piety, which leads one to devotion to God³⁴. Filial piety connotes an attitude of reverence and respect by children toward their parents³⁵. Piety also refers to the religious sense of a people, and its expression in popular devotions³⁶.

³¹ CCC – 1504

³² Roman Catholic Daily Missal; 1962; The Sacraments

³³ Catechism of the Council of Trent; The Sacraments

³⁴ CCC 1831

³⁵ CCC 2215

³⁶ CCC 1674

Holy Mother Church, just like our own earthly mothers, give us rules or disciplines, so that we can get the best or the most out of what we are given. Teachers and coaches give us rules and discipline so that we can get the most out of the instruction. The Church gives us important rules in regards to how to celebrate the Mass and the Sacraments. These rules are also called norms, rubrics, instructions, or disciplines and are contained in the liturgical books such as the Rites and the Roman Missal. In these books there are black text and red text. A popular saying in the formation of priests is “do the red, say the black.” This is very similar to the script of a play that gives “stage directions” which are similar to the red and the “script” itself, which is similar to the black.

TV Show - “Boy Meets World Eric Hollywood”

<https://youtu.be/FSgoKcVGQE4>

The character of the show gets ask to play a role of a typical older brother, however all he has ever done is Shakespeare plays. Imagine going to a Shakespeare play in which the actors did not follow the stage directions or the script. The actions and dialogue could be altered in such a way that one might not consider it a Shakespeare play at all. The same is true of sports. There are rules that must be followed. Imagine a basketball game in which most of the rules were broken, you could no longer call the game basketball, for it might resemble basketball, but would not be basketball.

Don’t rules and structure make things boring? Sports have rules. Music has rules. Yet, our culture cannot get enough of either. Pretty much all TV Shows; whether they are sitcoms or reality based, follow rules, structures and patterns.

TV Show – Phineas and Ferb “Tri Stone Area”

<https://youtu.be/zDCWJCsMFNs?si=XSwMP-nWbUv6S953>

For example, *Phineas and Ferb*, a Disney cartoon uses the same pattern every episode. In season 3, episode 20 “Tri-Stone Area” the writers change the look of all the characters and even use a “caveman” language so that the viewer doesn’t know what is being said. Due to the constant pattern of the series, the viewer knows exactly what is going on and the episode is entertaining.

In the Liturgy, we have the same pattern or template, what changes are the feasts, the readings, some prayers and the sentiments that we carry in our heart and mind. Pattern does not make things boring; we do. We must be careful though not to think of Mass as a television show where we may think, “oh, I’ve seen this episode before” and tune out. The difference is the Mass is the same one as Jesus celebrated 2,000 years ago and is not just a “recreation” or “representation” of what took place. It is the moment every time when Heaven comes down to Earth, and we kneel in awe and in thanksgiving.

TV Commercial - NFL Timeline This commercial

<https://youtu.be/CPr4-P19NtE>

This ad aired during the Super Bowl, expresses what was spoken about in the previous question when dealing with rules and safety.

4. They sanctify us, make us holy, and help us to be a holy witness to the world

The call to holiness implies that we should be as holy as we can be, and help others to be holy. The rule of Saint Benedict mandates that a monk, “not to wish to be called holy before one is holy; but first to be holy, that one may be truly so called.” The Litany of Humility says, “That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should.” This call to holiness is capable of being practiced and lived because of the grace we have been given and the faith we have in which to believe and receive it.

Do we live out our call to holiness with grace and faith equips us to do? If we truly believe in the grace of the Sacraments and we accept grace with sincerity and faith, it only follows that we should live it out. The faith that we profess should never be separated from our life. The “split between the faith, which many profess and their daily

lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age.”³⁷ We can look to the many people that Jesus heals they cannot contain themselves in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and their healing. When we receive the grace of God, we should be overjoyed and never afraid the love of God.

5. They are the center of the Church community because they establish it, strengthen it, and manifest it.

“God gathered together as one all those who in faith look upon Jesus as the author of salvation and the source of unity and peace, and established them as the Church that for each and all it may be the visible sacrament of this saving unity.”³⁸ The establishment of the Church was sacramental, and we are established in the Sacraments. The Sacraments are what give us our strength, our unity, and they are universal (Catholic). Not only does the Church give us the seven Sacraments to strengthen us in the Church but, because of its union with Christ, they manifest to the world. “Since the Church is in Christ like a Sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely-knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race, it desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission. This it intends to do, following faithfully the teaching of previous councils. The present-day conditions of the world add greater urgency to this work of the Church so that all men, joined more closely today by various social, technical and cultural ties, might also attain fuller unity in Christ.”³⁹

The Sacraments are the means to what end? The end, the goal is “that he [Jesus] might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.” So many seek the Sacraments, but don’t understand the means and/or the ultimate goal of them. The Sacraments are the means of Salvation.

Why are the Sacraments a part of everything we do as Catholics? We participate in the Mass and others Sacraments in every moment and especially key moments of our life because they are “the center of our Church community.” This is why programs, private devotions, prayer groups, should never take priority over the Sacraments and the Mass. This is why we include the Sacraments and the Mass in our planning of catechesis, retreats, missions and important celebrations with friends and family.

Do we seek Sacraments or salvation? If we desire Sacraments without salvation, we are missing the point of the mission of Christ, which is to love, sanctify, and cleanse our souls, “so that we might be without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish.” There are two extremes that can be taken; we seek a Sacrament but ignore salvation, or we seek salvation but ignore the Sacraments. We must keep in mind both the means and end. The end of man is Life Eternal (Salvation), and the ordinary means that God uses to help man arrive at his end are the Sacraments. Seeking a Sacrament but not salvation is like a parent buying a teenager a car, but then never allowing them to drive it. How many times do people seek the Sacrament of Baptism for their child, but then do not take their child to Mass or instruct them in the faith? How many times do parents prepare their child to receive First Holy Communion, but then never attend Mass again so that their child may receive second, third, and fourth Holy Communion? Let us always keep the end in mind, use the grace we receive from the Sacraments to strengthen us against the battles so that one day, God willing, we will be with Him for eternity in Paradise.

³⁷ Council of Vatican II; *Gaudium et Spes*; Section 43

³⁸ Council of Vatican II; *Lumen-Gentium*; Section 9

³⁹ Council of Vatican II; *Lumen-Gentium*; Section 1

| Sacrament | Minister | Scripture | Required State | Frequency | Effect | Form | Matter |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Baptism CCC 1213-1284 | Ordinary: a Bishop, priest or deacon; Extraordinary: any person if necessary (CCC 1256) | Mt 28:19-20; Jn 3:5; 4:1-2; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom 6:3-4; Mk 16:16; Titus 3:5; Eph 5:26; 1 Peter 3:21 | Unbaptized pagan, convert to the Christian Faith, newborn infant (CCC 1246-1255) | Only applied once (Eph 4:5; CCC 1272) | Removes Original and Actual sin (CCC 1263); causes New Birth ("born again") (CCC 1265); incorporates into Christ (CCC 1267); is the doorway into the Church (CCC 846, 1213) | "I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Mt 28:18-19; CCC 1240) | Water (Immersion, Infusion, or Sprinkling) (CCC 1278) |
| Confirmation CCC 1285-1321 | Ordinary: the Bishop; Extraordinary: a Priest (CCC 1313, 1318) | Acts 8:14-17; 9:17- 19; 19:6; Heb 6:1-6 | Baptized but unconfirmed; needed Completion of Baptismal grace (CCC 1285); Baptized Christians from other traditions incorporated into the fullness of the Catholic Church | Only applied once (CCC 1304) | Sign of consecration (CCC 1294); spiritual seal (CCC 1293); completion of baptismal grace (CCC 1285); full outpouring of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1302-1303) | "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." (CCC 1300) | Holy Chrism (Blessed Oil) and the Laying on of hands by the Bishop or a delegated priest (CCC 1288, 1294, 1300) |
| Eucharist CCC 1322-1421 | The Priest (CCC 1411) | Jn 6:1-71; Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:7-20; 24:13-53; Acts 2:42-47; 20:7; 1 Cor 10:16-21 | All Catholics are encouraged to participate (CCC 1417); Baptized believers in Communion with the Catholic Church (CCC 1396-1401) and devoid of Mortal Sin (CCC 1415) | Minimum of once a year, as frequently as daily (CCC 1389; 1417) | Intimate union with Christ (CCC 1391); Receiving Christ; nourish spiritual life; medicine of immortality, separating us from sin, removal of venial sin, spiritual strength, unites the Body into One (CCC 1391-1401) | "Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body which will be given up for you... Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me." (CCC 1412; 1 Cor 11:24-25) | Bread and Wine (CCC 1333) |

| Sacrament | Minister | Scripture | Required State | Frequency | Effect | Form | Matter |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| Confession, Penance or Reconciliation CCC 1422-1498 | The Priest (CCC 1461) | Jn 20:23; Mt 16:18- 19; 18:15-18; James 5:14-15 | In mortal sin; desiring the Grace of Confession; in need of spiritual guidance (CCC 1446) | Minimum of once a year; or as frequently as necessary (CCC 1457- 1458) | Forgiveness of mortal and venial sins, reunification with the Church, cleansing and formation of conscience, restores grace (CCC 1468-1470) | Priest's words: "God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (CCC 1449) | Contrition (sorrow), confession of sins; satisfaction (penance) (CCC 1480) |
| Matrimony CCC 1601-1666 | The Spouses, with the priest or deacon as witness (CCC 1623) | Gen 1:27-28; 2:18- 25; Mt 19:3-12; Jn 2:1-11; Eph 5:25- 32; | Each spouse must be a baptized man and woman with no impediment to marriage (CCC 1625) | Once and to one spouse as long as the spouse is living; again only if the spouse dies (CCC 2382) | The two become one flesh (Eph 5:31; perpetual and exclusive covenant partners (CCC 1638-1640) | The "I do", by which both spouses indicate their mutual consent to the marriage covenant (CCC 1626-1628) | Mutual Consent and Covenant to live together as husband and wife (CCC 1626); and the consummation of the Marriage (CCC 1640) |
| Holy Orders CCC 1536-1600 | The Bishop (CCC 1576) | Acts 6:5-6; 13:3; 14:23; 20:28; Jn 20:21-23; 1 Tim 3:1; 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; Titus 1:5; Phil 1:1 | A Baptized man who has been called for ordination by God; in the Western rite, with the exception of permanent deacons, the ordained must be celibate (CCC 1577- 1580) | Only once; separate ordination for Deacon, Priest, and Bishop (CCC 1582) | A special relationship to Christ to lead and serve the Church; indelible spiritual character imprinted on the soul (CCC 1581; 1594) | The Bishop's "specific consecratory prayer asking God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and his gifts proper to the ministry to which the candidate is being ordained" (CCC 1573) | Laying on of the Bishop's hands with the consecratory prayer (CCC 1538) |
| Anointing of the Sick, Extreme Unction, and Last Rites CCC 1499-1535 | Only a Bishop or Priest (CCC 1516) | Mk 6:13; Jn 20:23; Mt 16:18-19; 18:15-18; James 5:14-15 | Seriously ill; at the point of death or before a serious operation or for the elderly whose frailty becomes more pronounced (CCC 1541f.) | Repeatable; at the point of grave illnesses or before a serious operation (CCC 1514f.) | Sins forgiven; grace to face trial; spiritual preparation to die; and if God's will, physical healing (CCC 1520-1523) | Prayer of the Priest over the sick person for the grace of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins (CCC 1513, 1519) | Anointing with Holy Oil and Imposition of Hands (CCC 1513, 1519) |

Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is a sacrament?

- A. A nice tradition the Church follows
- B. A symbol made by people to feel better
- C. An outward sign of inward grace, given by Christ
- D. A prayer said during Sunday school

Answer: C

2. How many Sacraments are there in the Catholic Church?

- A. Three
- B. Five
- C. Seven
- D. Ten

Answer: C

3. What Sacraments use Chrism Oil?

- A. Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders
- B. Eucharist, Confession, and Marriage
- C. Anointing of the Sick and Eucharist
- D. Only Confirmation

Answer: A

4. In the Sacraments, who is really at work?

- A. The priest or bishop only
- B. The people receiving them
- C. Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit
- D. The Church building

Answer: C

5. What does “ex opera operato” mean?

- A. Only holy people can give the Sacraments
- B. Sacraments only work when we see them happen
- C. The Sacraments give grace because Christ works through them
- D. We must work really hard to receive grace

Answer: C

Discussion Questions

Can you describe in your own words what a Sacrament is and why it's important?

How can you prepare your heart to receive the grace of a Sacrament (especially Confirmation)?

How can the Sacraments help you grow in holiness and become a better person at home or at school?

Confirmation is sometimes called the Sacrament that makes us "soldiers of Christ." What does that mean to you? How can you be a "soldier" for Jesus at school or home?

The lesson said that the Sacraments are not "just symbols." What do you think that means?

When we receive grace through the Sacraments, how can we share that grace with others in our lives?

Lesson – Confirmation Completes Baptismal Grace

Gospel Reading – John 15:26-27; 16:12-15

Jesus said to his disciples: “When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me. And you also testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.

“I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.”

Spiritual Reading

From the treatise Against Heresies by Saint Irenaeus, bishop

When the Lord told his disciples to go and teach all nations and to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, he conferred on them the power of giving men new life in God.

He had promised through the prophets that in these last days he would pour out his Spirit on his servants and handmaids, and that they would prophesy. So when the Son of God became the Son of Man, the Spirit also descended upon him, becoming accustomed in this way to dwelling with the human race, to living in men and to inhabiting God’s creation. The Spirit accomplished the Father’s will in men who had grown old in sin, and gave them new life in Christ.

Luke says that the Spirit came down on the disciples at Pentecost, after the Lord’s ascension, with power to open the gates of life to all nations and to make known to them the new covenant. So it was that men of every language joined in singing one song of praise to God, and scattered tribes, restored to unity by the Spirit, were offered to the Father as the first fruits of all the nations.

This was why the Lord had promised to send the Advocate; he was to prepare us as an offering to God. Like dry flour, which cannot become one lump of dough, one loaf of bread, without moisture, we who are many could not become one in Christ Jesus without the water that comes down from heaven. And like parched ground, which yields no harvest unless it receives moisture, we who were once like a waterless tree could never have lived and borne fruit without this abundant rainfall from above. Through the baptism that liberates us from change and decay we have become one in body; through the Spirit we have become one in soul.

The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of God came down upon the Lord, and the Lord in turn gave this Spirit to his Church, sending the Advocate from heaven into all the world into which, according to his own words, the devil too had been cast down like lightning.

If we are not to be scorched and made unfruitful, we need the dew of God. Since we have our accuser, we need an Advocate as well. And so the Lord in his pity for man, who had fallen into the hands of brigands, having himself bound up his wounds and left for his care two coins bearing the royal image, entrusted him to the Holy Spirit. Now, through the Spirit, the image and inscription of the Father and the Son have been given to us, and it is our duty to use the coin committed to our charge and make it yield a rich profit for the Lord.

Lesson

**This lesson and discussion go with the Spiritual Reading in this packet; please read the Spiritual Reading first. **

Flour without water can be easily blown and scattered. In the analogy that Saint Irenaeus gives, we are the flour. Satan is continuously prowling around like a lion, looking for someone to devour. Our souls, like flour, are susceptible to being blown around and scattered by Satan. Sin is separation; separation between man and God. If our souls were like the tiny pieces of flour, Satan would like to separate and scatter them. Flour with water is bound together (baptism).

To prevent separation and scattering, we are baptized. In the waters of baptism, we are brought together into God's family and protected from the snares of Satan as we renounce Satan and embrace Christ.

Flour with water is simply dough. Although bound together, it is still weak and without purpose. Dough must be put in the fire, rise, strengthen, and become the perfection that it was meant for. "According to the Council of Trent, this Sacrament [Confirmation] makes us perfect Christians."⁴⁰ With Baptism, we become dough, safe from the winds of Satan, which threaten to scatter us. Without Confirmation, we remain simple dough; weak, without purpose, not reaching perfection. With Confirmation, we are baked into bread and like Christ, the Bread of Life, are given to the world.

The following prayer is a witness to this goal of perfection, which the Sacraments of Initiation help us achieve. "Lord, may everything we do begin (Baptism) with your inspiration, and continue (Confirmation and Eucharist) with your help, so that all our prayers and works may begin in you and by you be happily ended. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen."

God gives us the Sacraments of Initiation so that we can have a beginning (Baptism) and the strength to continue through life (Confirmation and Eucharist) toward our ultimate end, heaven. Our spiritual life is similar to our physical life. We have organs, but they must be protected, strengthened, and nourished to continue.

Every life has to have an origin, development, and nourishment. **What is the origin, development, and nourishment of the Spiritual life?** The Spiritual life has an origin (Baptism), development (Confirmation), and nourishment (Eucharist). The human body also has organs, a skeleton, and needs nutrients. Confirmation is like the skeletal system of the soul, which gives support and strength.

Here is a breakdown:

Without Baptism: we are flour blown around by Satan

With Baptism: water and flour are mixed and become dough

Without Confirmation: We are just dough (Confirmation completes Baptismal Grace)

With Confirmation: The fire of the Holy Spirit turns dough into bread

Without the Eucharist: We are not one in body and spirit and do not have nourishment

With the Eucharist: We are one in body and spirit, are nourished, and in Christ, give our life to the world

At World Youth Day 2008, the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, during the final Mass, when he confirmed young people said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you". These words of the Risen Lord have a special meaning for those young people who will be confirmed, sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, at today's Mass. But they are also addressed to each of us – to all those who have received the Spirit's gift of reconciliation and new life at Baptism, who have welcomed Him into their hearts as their helper and guide at Confirmation, and who daily grow in His gifts of grace through the Holy Eucharist. At each Mass, in fact, the Holy Spirit descends anew, invoked by the solemn prayer of the Church, not only to transform our gifts of bread and wine into the

⁴⁰ Roman Catholic Daily Missal [1962]; page 1841

Lord's body and blood, but also to transform our lives to make us, in His power, "one body, one spirit in Christ"⁴¹.

Christian initiation is complete with Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. In the early Church, Confirmation was received after Baptism and can be seen as a second installment. The third installment is the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. In Baptism, we become adopted children of the Father. In Confirmation, we receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit with its gifts and fruits. In the Holy Eucharist, we physically receive Jesus' Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. The Sacraments of Initiation are Trinitarian and give us the Divine Life in participation with the Life of the Blessed Trinity.

"But the one who gives us security with you in Christ and who anointed us in God; he has also put his seal upon us and given the Spirit in our hearts as a first installment."⁴²

What do the words security, seal, and installment mean? "The commercial terms gives us security, seal, first installment are here used analogously to refer to the process of initiation into the Christian life, perhaps specifically to baptism. The passage is clearly Trinitarian. The Spirit is the first installment or 'down payment' of the full messianic benefits that God guarantees to Christians."⁴³

⁴¹ Homily at the 23rd World Youth Day by Pope Benedict XVI

⁴² 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and Ephesians 1:11-14

⁴³ 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (footnote) NAB

Lesson – The Power and Gift of Confirmation

Scripture Reading – Acts 2:1-4

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.



What is Confirmation? Confirmation is the sacrament in which, through the laying on of hands, anointing with chrism, and prayer, the Holy Spirit strengthens those who are already baptized, in order that they may steadfastly profess the faith and faithfully live up to their profession.⁴⁴

What are the effects of the Sacraments? “Confirmation completes the grace of Baptism by a special outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which seal or ‘confirm’ the baptized in union with Christ and equip them for active participation in the worship and apostolic life of the Church.”⁴⁵ Let’s look a little closer of the grace that is given at Confirmation and the other sacraments:

Justifying Grace – Justifying Grace is “the grace by which a person is restored to God’s friendship, either for the first time, as in baptism, or after baptism, as in the sacrament of penance.”⁴⁶

Sacramental Character – The Sacramental Character “is not common to all, but peculiar to three, Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders – it is the character which they impress on the soul.”⁴⁷ “The three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders confer, in addition to grace, a sacramental character or “seal” by which

⁴⁴ Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 122

⁴⁵ Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), Glossary

⁴⁶ Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.; *Modern Catholic Dictionary*

⁴⁷ *Catechism of the Council of Trent – Effects of the Sacraments*

the Christian shares in Christ's priesthood and is made a member of the Church according to different states and functions. This configuration to Christ and to the Church, brought about by the Spirit, is indelible; it remains forever in the Christian as a positive disposition for grace, a promise and guarantee of divine protection, and as a vocation to divine worship and to the service of the Church. Therefore, these sacraments can never be repeated."⁴⁸

Why is the Sacramental Character or indelible mark is called a "seal"? Saint Paul says, "But the one who gives us security with you in Christ and who anointed us in God; he has also put his seal upon us and given the Spirit in our hearts as a first installment."⁴⁹ There are three Sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion. Baptism is the first installment. Confirmation is the second installment, which is "necessary for the completion of baptismal grace"⁵⁰. The final payment, which was the payment of Christ on the Cross, is the Most Holy Eucharist, the crown of our Faith.

What do the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist do for us? They give us a positive disposition for grace. **What does disposition mean?** Disposition is similar to our attitude. Disposition is how open we are to something. The Sacraments enable us to be open to many other graces which God will offer. The Sacraments are a promise and guarantee of divine protection. We pray in the Our Father, "deliver us from the evil one". The Sacraments promise divine protection from the evil one. The Sacraments are a vocation [a call] to divine worship and to the service of the Church. The baptized Catholic is called to worship; this is why it is a precept of the Church to attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation. This is also why baptized Catholics, if they are called to marriage, are called to a Sacramental Marriage, in the Church, using the Rite of Matrimony. It is also a precept of the Church to "help to provide for the needs of the Church." This is a call to service, serving both the physically and spiritual needs of the souls that the Church serves, and the sacrament of confirmation helps us to do this.

For the confirmed Catholic, there are two marks placed upon the soul, one of Baptism and one of Confirmation. For the Priest or Deacon, there is a third through the sacrament of Holy Orders. We can think of the indelible marks or Sacramental character impressed upon our souls as marks of honor, similar to merit badges. The mark of Baptism, makes a person a citizen of heaven and of the Church. The mark of Confirmation makes a person a soldier, responsible for the protection and well-being of the baptized citizens. The mark of Holy Orders makes a person a general, responsible for leading the soldiers of Christ, who are the Church Militant. Together the generals and soldiers live out the words of Saint Paul to Saint Timothy "Fight the good fight for the faith. Lay hold of eternal life, to which you were called when you made the noble confession in the presence of many witnesses."⁵¹ Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders are all noble confessions in the presence of many witnesses, and all three enable us to lay hold of eternal life and give us the strength to fight the good fight. Saint Augustine says of the marks, "Shall the Christian Sacraments accomplish less than the bodily mark impressed on the soldier? That mark is not stamped on his person anew as often as he resumes the military service which he had relinquished, but the old one is recognized and approved."⁵²

This character [seal or mark] has a twofold effect: it qualifies us to receive or perform something sacred, and distinguishes us by some mark one from another. In the character impressed by Baptism, both effects are exemplified. By it we are qualified to receive the other sacraments, and the Christian is distinguished from those who do not profess the faith. The same illustration is afforded by the characters impressed by Confirmation and Holy Orders. By Confirmation we are armed and arrayed as soldiers of Christ, publicly to profess and defend His name, to fight against our internal enemy and against the spiritual powers of wickedness in the high places; and at the same time, we are distinguished from those who, being recently baptized, are, as it were, newborn infants. Holy

⁴⁸ CCC 1121

⁴⁹ *2 Corinthians 1:21-22*

⁵⁰ CCC 1285

⁵¹ *1 Timothy 6:12*

⁵² *Catechism of the Council of Trent – Effects of the Sacraments*

Orders confers the power of consecrating and administering the Sacraments, and also distinguishes those who are invested with this power from the rest of the faithful. The rule of the Catholic Church is, therefore, to be observed, which teaches that these three Sacraments impress a character and are never to be repeated.⁵³

How is Confirmation a gift? Confirmation is a gift because we are able to do one of few things once we receive the gift from the Bishop:

One, we could throw it away.

Two, we could take it, but ignore it. Maybe we put it in the closet or on a shelf letting it gather dust. We could have the attitude that it is not that important but I might want it later.

Three, we can open it up with excitement and put the gift to use.

The fact is, if someone was confirmed because “my parents made me” that is a good thing. Our parents can make us receive this gift. In fact, if they have a sacramental marriage (Church marriage) they promised to raise their children up in the Catholic Faith, so if they do not have us receive it, they would be breaking their promise to us and to God. Our parents, however, cannot make us open it. In fact, no one can make us open it, not even God because of our free will. We have the responsibility to do the right thing with the gift, which has been given to us by our parents, by Christ and His Church.

How do we open up the gift of Confirmation? First, we must make a firm yes, to utilize the grace of strength within our daily lives. We can go to Mass and take it much more seriously because we have the eyes of faith to see what is truly taking place each and every time during the words of consecration; the re-presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ’s Passion, and receiving the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Him. We can pray more fervently and take to heart what God wishes to give us in our prayers. We can grow in knowledge of the faith and morals and live them courageously being a witness for Christ. We can make a much longer list and encourage all to do so because we should call upon our Confirmation each and every day by drawing out the grace receive(d) on that day.

How does Confirmation give us strength? Jesus gave us the sacrament of Confirmation because He knew that we would need strength. Christ gives us the Sacrament of Confirmation so that all will have access to the strength necessary to reach Christian perfection. Saint Peter says, “Stay sober and alert. Your opponent the devil is prowling like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, solid in your faith.”⁵⁴ The word confirmation means, “to thoroughly make firm” or “to make solid”.

Pope St. John Paul II said, “The Grace conferred by the Sacrament of Confirmation is more specifically a gift of strength. This gift corresponds to the need for greater zeal in facing the spiritual battle of faith and charity in order to resist temptation and give witness of Christian word and deed to the world with courage, fervor, and perseverance. This zeal is conferred by the Holy Spirit.”

Confirmation strengthens and completes our baptismal vows. Let us take a look at what was done at our Baptism so we know what is being strengthened and completed. The Holy Spirit is the “Gift of Strength” that helps us with the needs below by giving us the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are in parenthesis.

What do we need strength for?

Our relationship with God, our Father

We need a deeper love for God and to obey Him as a Father (Piety)

We need help in discerning the will of God in all things (Knowledge)

We need the strength to do the will of God in all things (Fortitude)

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ 1 Peter 5:8-9

We need help to hunger and thirst for the things of God (Wisdom)
We need help directing our life and actions to the Glory of God (Wisdom)

Our relationship with Christ and the Church

We need a firm and lasting connection to the Body of Christ, the Church
We need help in knowing the mysteries of our Faith (Understanding)

Rejecting Satan, his empty promises and evil ways – the baptismal promises

We need to dread, despise, and hate sin (Fear of the Lord)
We need to be warned constantly of the deceits of Satan (Counsel)
We need to know clearly anything that puts our salvation in danger. (Counsel)

Living out the Faith which we profess

We need help in perfecting the Grace that was given at Baptism. Jesus says, “be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”⁵⁵ Moreover, Saint Paul says, “May the God of peace make you perfect in holiness.”⁵⁶
We need help bearing witness to Christ and professing our Faith in both word and deed, even unto death.
We need help with our minds, which have become darkened. Faith enlightens our mind
We need help with our wills, which have lost courage. Fortitude gives courage to our will

To those who have taken advantage of this great Sacrament and received the gift, St. Ambrose says, “Recall then that you have received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment (counsel) and courage (fortitude), the spirit of knowledge and reverence (piety), the spirit of holy fear in God’s presence. Guard what you have received. God the Father has marked you with his sign; Christ the Lord has confirmed you and has placed his pledge, the Spirit, in your hearts.”

During the Rite of Confirmation just before the laying on of hands, the confirmandi profess a renewal of baptismal promises. All the statements are similar to the basic renewal of vows except the statement of the Holy Spirit. It says, “Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who came upon the apostles at Pentecost and today is given to you sacramentally in Confirmation?”⁵⁷ It is essential that we believe that the power of the Holy Spirit, who is the giver of life, is the same yesterday, today and forever. We are receiving a personal Pentecost when we are confirmed, the same as the apostles. “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.”⁵⁸

Where did the Apostles go after Pentecost? The power of Pentecost gave all the Apostles the courage to not just leave the upper room, but to go to the ends of the known world. Here is a list of the Apostles and where they had traveled⁵⁹:

MAP – Where the 12 Apostles Died

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?ll=34.307144000000086%2C44.648437999999994&spn=59.613075%2C123.222656&hl=en&msa=0&z=3&source=embed&ie=UTF8&mid=17Pei9xSgVK1kj83Gye2sZwCf7IE>

This is a Google maps image of where tradition has our apostles dying in the world. Some Apostles have multiple locations because we are not 100% sure with some. You can use this map along with the context below.

⁵⁵ Matthew 5:48

⁵⁶ 1 Thessalonians 5:23

⁵⁷ Rite of Confirmation

⁵⁸ CCC 1288

⁵⁹ Pope Benedict [The Apostles](#) and [newadvent.org](#)

Peter: He was able to bring the Church ultimately to Rome and establish his chair there. Before that, he held the council of Jerusalem and traveled to Antioch, Corinth, and made his way to Rome where he was crucified upside down upon his request.

James the Greater: He is mentioned concerning his death in the book of Acts.⁶⁰ He had a high position with the Church in Jerusalem. Tradition holds, he traveled as far as Spain during his life to evangelize. Other traditions believe his body was sent there after his death. Either way, he now rests in Santiago de Compostela, which is one of the oldest and most popular pilgrimages in the Church.

John: He is noted by St. Paul as one of the “pillars”, the other being Peter. He was responsible for supervising the first Christians. He was also sent to Samaria and is the only apostle not to die a martyr’s death. He wrote his Gospel as an old man looking back on the history and growth of the Church and in it, he mentioned numerous details not mentioned in the first three Synoptic Gospels.

Andrew: He was known as the apostle of the Greek world. He later was crucified at Patras. He though, like his brother Peter, did not want to be crucified like Jesus. Instead, he was crucified on a diagonal or X-shaped cross, which has now come to be known as “St. Andrew’s cross”.

Thomas: He is believed to have traveled the furthest distance. He first evangelized in Syria and Persia then went on to Western India, from where he finally reached Southern India. To this day, most Indians from the South of India are Christian. For many years those who were from India and were Christians were known as “Thomas Christians”. Indians who live North of where Saint Thomas died are usually Hindu or Muslim.

Bartholomew: We have no precise information about his whereabouts and where he went. Fourth century historian, Eusebius discovered traces of Bartholomew’s presence in India. In the Middle Ages, the popular tradition was that flaying killed Bartholomew. In Michelangelo’s painting “Last Judgment”, in the Sistine Chapel, Saint Bartholomew is shown holding his own skin in his left hand on which the artist left his self-portrait.

James the Lesser: James is extremely important after Pentecost. He helped bridge the gap between allowing pagans into the Church, and the Jews who were converting. He also helped with the issue of circumcision. It is thought that he stayed in Jerusalem for most of his life. A high priest betrayed him and turned him in to be stoned to death.

Matthias: We only know he was chosen to take the spot of Judas. We also know he was a witness to all of Jesus’ earthly events⁶¹ because that was part of the criteria which the other eleven set for selecting an apostle to take Judas’ place.

Philip: He is said to have evangelized first in Greece and then Frisia where he is supposed to have died, in Hierapolis, by a torture described as a variation of crucifixion or stoning.

Matthew: He is credited with not only preaching, but also writing one of the first gospels in his Hebrew language. He preached in Persia, Macedonia, Syria, and Ethiopia to the south of the Caspian Sea (not the country in Africa). We are not sure how he died, but we do know he was a martyr.

Simon: He is often associated closely with the Apostle Jude. There is little known of exactly where he preached. Some have him going as far as Britain, the Black Sea, in Egypt and in Northern Africa. He is believed to have been crucified, and his body then sawed into many pieces.

⁶⁰ Acts 12:1-2

⁶¹ Acts 1:21-22

Jude Thaddeus: It is believed he went and preached in Judea, Samaria, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Libya. He is the author of his letter in the Bible in which he wrote, “But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit.”⁶²

Paul: St. Paul, although he describes himself as “least among the apostles” because he was called last by Jesus after his Resurrection, was the most active and missionary of all the apostles. He took multiple missionary trips across the Mediterranean area. He returned home to Antioch. He was in Jerusalem at the Apostolic Council. He went to Cypress, Pamphylia, Asia Minor, Ephesus, and Derbe just to name a few of the places. He was later imprisoned. He was sent to Rome and was eventually beheaded.

MOVIE – Spider-Man/Great Power....

<https://youtu.be/5d6rTQcU2U>

With great power comes great responsibility. Confirmation gives us great power but also gives great responsibility. Uncle Ben tells Peter Parker to be careful, “These are the years that a man changes into the man he will become the rest of his life, just be careful who you change into” We can take both Uncle Ben’s and Pope Ben’s (Benedict XVI) advice. In a few moments, we will celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation. The Holy Spirit will descend upon the confirmands; they will be “sealed” with the gift of the Spirit and sent forth to be Christ’s witnesses. What does it mean to receive the “seal” of the Holy Spirit? It means being indelibly marked, inalterably changed, a new creation. For those who have received this gift, nothing can ever be the same! Being “baptized” in the one Spirit (cf. *1 Cor* 12:13) means being set on fire with the love of God. Being “given to drink” of the Spirit means being refreshed by the beauty of the Lord’s plan for us and for the world, and becoming in turn a source of spiritual refreshment for others. Being “sealed with the Spirit” means not being afraid to stand up for Christ, letting the truth of the Gospel permeate the way we see, think and act, as we work for the triumph of the civilization of love.”⁶³

How is Confirmation our Pentecost? Just like at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, at our Confirmation we receive the same Holy Spirit. We too receive the same graces, virtues, gifts, courage, and strength the Apostles received 2,000 year ago. Simply put, Confirmation is the Gift of Strength; it “strengthens the divine life within us.”

What does the Holy Spirit do for us? He enlightens us so that we may know the truths of religion and salvation, and the beauty of virtue; The Holy Spirit moves us to desire, and seek with love these things; He renews our hearts by cleansing our sin, and finally gives us His supernatural gifts and fruits of holiness by which we can become sanctified.⁶⁴

Is confirmation similar to graduation in the Church? No, Confirmation is not like graduation because when we graduate from school we leave and never return again to the place of study. For the Church, we have just begun to open the doors of the Church, and our places to study, pray, discern, and worship. We will never have enough time in our lives to learn everything there is to know in the Catholic Church, but that does not mean we are to stop learning about our faith. We must continue to dive into Sacred Scripture, the writings of the Church Fathers, and the Doctors of the Church, attend Mass at least every Sunday and Holy Day of obligation, pray without ceasing, and do whatever else is necessary to grow in our Faith. We then begin to seek out where God wishes us to serve Him in this life through our Vocation. We seek where God wants us to serve Him in our everyday life. At Confirmation we receive in a deeper way, the Holy Spirit, which the Creed says is “the Lord, the giver of Life”. There are two Sacraments that help perpetuates life. Matrimony aided by the Holy Spirit, perpetuates natural life. Holy Orders, aided by the Holy Spirit, perpetuates spiritual life. Our ultimate “graduation prize” is hopefully making it to Heaven.

⁶² Jude v. 20

⁶³ Homily at the 23rd World Youth Day by Pope Benedict XVI

⁶⁴ Goffines, The Church’s Year pg. 301

Multiple Choice Questions

- 1. What does the word “Confirmation” mean?**
 - A. To graduate from the Church
 - B. To completely stop going to Mass
 - C. To make firm or solid
 - D. To become a saint**Answer: C**
- 2. Which of the following is a Sacrament that leaves a special mark on the soul (a seal)?**
 - A. Reconciliation
 - B. Confirmation
 - C. Matrimony
 - D. Anointing of the Sick**Answer: B**
- 3. Who gives the gift of Confirmation during the ceremony?**
 - A. The parents
 - B. The Pope
 - C. The Bishop
 - D. The Deacon**Answer: C**
- 4. What happened to the Apostles at Pentecost?**
 - A. The Holy Spirit came upon them like tongues of fire
 - B. They ran away and hid forever
 - C. They got lost in the desert
 - D. They all fell asleep**Answer: A**
- 5. What is the purpose of the Sacrament of Confirmation?**
 - A. To replace Baptism
 - B. To forget your sins
 - C. To get presents
 - D. To strengthen you with the Holy Spirit**Answer: D**

Discussion Questions

What does it mean to be “sealed” with the Holy Spirit?

How is Confirmation a personal Pentecost for you?

Why do we need the strength that Confirmation gives?

What are some ways you can “open the gift” of Confirmation in your life?

How are you called to live out your faith after Confirmation?

How can you be a soldier of Christ in your everyday life (school, family, friends)?

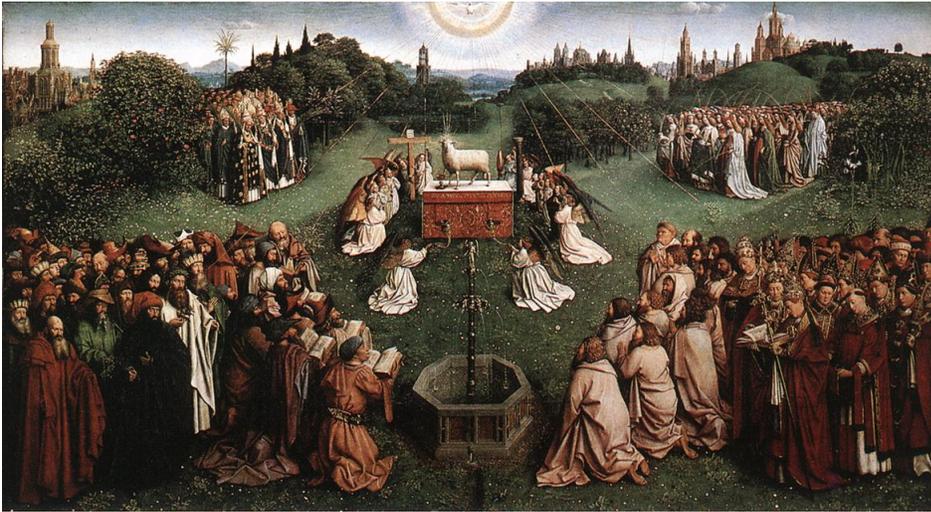
Uncle Ben said in Spider-Man, “With great power comes great responsibility.” What “power” does Confirmation give you, and how will you use it responsibly?

How can we continue to grow in our faith and fully participate in the Church after Confirmation (and not seeing it as “Graduation”)?

Lesson - Patron Saints

Scripture Reading – Revelation 7:9-10

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!”



What is a patron saint? A patron saint is “A saint or blessed who, since early Christian times, has been chosen as a special intercessor with God for a particular person, place, community, or organization.”⁶⁵

Why is a patron saint important? “The name is important because God knows each of us by name, that is, in our uniqueness as persons. In Baptism a Christian receives his or her own name in the Church. It should preferably be the name of a saint who might offer the baptized a model of sanctity and an assurance of his or her intercession before God.”⁶⁶ If we choose a different name for confirmation than our baptism name, then it should be a great model of holiness, an example for us to reach for.

When and why did the Church start this practice of patron saints? The Church has been doing this since the beginning of Her establishment. It started in the church when Jesus changed Simon’s name to Peter. “The custom arose from the biblical fact that a change of personal name indicated a change in the person, e.g., Abram to Abraham, Simon to Peter, Saul to Paul; and from the practice of having churches built over the tombs of martyrs.”⁶⁷ At our baptism and confirmation we take on the name of a saint or blessed as a special intercessor.

Who can have a patron saint? Really anyone can have a patron saint at anytime, but in specific cases a person gains a patron saint when they are brought into the body of Christ (i.e. Baptism and Confirmation).

When do I get a patron saint? Pretty much the same as the answer before, we can have a patron saint any time in our lives, but we take a patron saint at our baptism and confirmation.

Can I keep the same saint name that I received at Baptism for Confirmation? Yes, absolutely. At one time,

⁶⁵ Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 410

⁶⁶ Compendium to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 264

⁶⁷ Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 410

confirmation was administered right after baptism. When this was done the person would keep the same name for both sacraments.

Can I only have one patron saint for confirmation? Yes. When we are being sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit we are sealed with our first name and our patron saint name. We should only choose one patron saint.

Does my patron saint have to be the same sex for confirmation? It is recommended to choose a patron saint of the same gender.

Does the saint have to be canonized? No. the patron can either have received the title of a canonized saint or beatified blessed **Why?** Because we believe that a blessed is in heaven, and has at least one miracle attributed to them. They are only one step away to sainthood. We could be the person to help take a blessed and have them be canonized as a saint!

Am I stuck with just one patron saint for the rest of my life? If someone means they are “stuck” with only one saint for the rest of their lives and they cannot admire other saints and take them on as a personal patron then no, of course not. However, once we are confirmed with our patron saint then we cannot go back and change that name. But we can add other saints to our favorites list. Many times we have “playlists” for certain music that we love. So too we have saints playlists. We can ask for certain saints intercessions for a time, and then go to other saints. Our baptismal and confirmation name however will stay the same, and we should always ask for their intercession.

How do I choose the right patron saint? There is no one right answer for this question. Here are some suggestions: First, confirmation candidates should speak with their parents, sponsor, Godparents, and/or trusted other friends and family members that are faithful practicing Catholics. They can be valuable in helping in the discernment process, and pray for you in your decision. We recommend that whoever it is, the person is someone that we admire and wish to emulate. We want to be inspired by their life because their life should draw us closer to Jesus. We should choose someone that will make us stretch and grow in our faith. It should be someone who will definitely challenge us to be saints too.

Here are some resources to look into when deciding on a patron saint:

www.catholic.org/saints

www.etwn.com/saintsHoly

www.sacred-texts.com/chr/lots/index.htm

www.daughtersofstpaul.com/saintday/index.html

www.ascensionpress.com/

There are also hundreds of books that can help choose the right patron saint for each person.

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