

# **Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth**

## **Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation Resource Package**

**More resources and information can be found at:**

<https://fwdioc.org/sacrament-of-confirmation>

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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 any and 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 is helpful in assisting parishes meet those formational needs of the individual confirmandis.

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 Department 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. Please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Youth Ministry to assist in developing a model for preparation that will best meet the needs of those in your parish and the overall efforts of evangelization within the parish.

# **Section One: Diocesan Policy & Guidelines**

## **Preparation Guidelines**

We are including the Guidelines for the Preparation and Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The guidelines are intended to offer guidance to pastors and parish leaders involved in the process of preparation.

<https://fwdioc.org/sacramental-guidelines-confirmation.pdf>

If you have any questions regarding these documents or any other part of the preparation process for Confirmation, please do not hesitate to contact Victoria Ramon at 817-945-9352 or [vramon@fwdioc.org](mailto:vramon@fwdioc.org).

## **Section Two: 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.

### **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. This meeting is when the parish lays out all of the various expectations, communicates details of the preparation process (forms, certificates, etc.), 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 and sets 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 to 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 should prepare for the Sacrament following the diocesan guideline of no more than 6 months of preparation 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, religious education, 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

#### **Prior to 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 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 prior to 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* 1285-1321. These are in no particular order):

1. Confirmation completes the Sacraments of Initiation. Baptized Catholics are full members, although they have not received full sacramental initiation. The confirmed are "more perfectly bound to the Church" (#1285) and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are increased.

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.

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 actually 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, 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 are promised divine assistance for the rest of our lives. Through our Confirmation, He promises us strength we can always call upon. 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 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. In addition to our Baptismal patron, we have a Confirmation patron, a Saint who gives you 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 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 in religious education 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 who 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 in order to be more attentive to what God is desiring 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 in 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 really 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 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 candidates reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Here are some examples that might call for a further conversation about postponing reception of the sacrament:

- 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
- Lack of interest in attending 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
- 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 receiving the sacrament will depend on each person on a case-by-case basis. In some instances it will only take a few meetings and others it may take several months. No matter the case, there needs to be a process setup for the young person to be in a place to complete 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 for 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 prior to 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 Him. For example, if 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 it shows his affection to desiring to know her better and in turn he is able to serve her better that 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 you 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 to make an informed decision to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. This interview should be done one-on-one with the candidate to ensure there are no outside pressures.

### **Questions**

**Here are some questions for the candidates to ask themselves 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?
- 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:**

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

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

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**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 prior to 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 to receive or not 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 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 of 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 will be one-on-one with the confirmand 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

# Section 3: Confirmation Sessions

## Explanation and Information for Confirmation Sessions

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 in the “Appendix” section, you will find twelve (12) 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 Fort Worth.

Please remember that the aims, as stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, in preparing an adolescent 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 Religious Education 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

## **Section 4: 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 highly 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.

### **List of Lessons for Confirmation Sessions and/or Retreats**

There are eight (8) lessons that are provided that can be used for confirmation sessions, meetings, and/or retreats throughout the confirmation process. 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. If you have any questions about the lessons below please contact Victoria Ramon ([vramon@fwdioc.org](mailto:vramon@fwdioc.org)).

## 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):

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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

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"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<sup>SEP</sup>

*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**<sup>SEP</sup>

*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

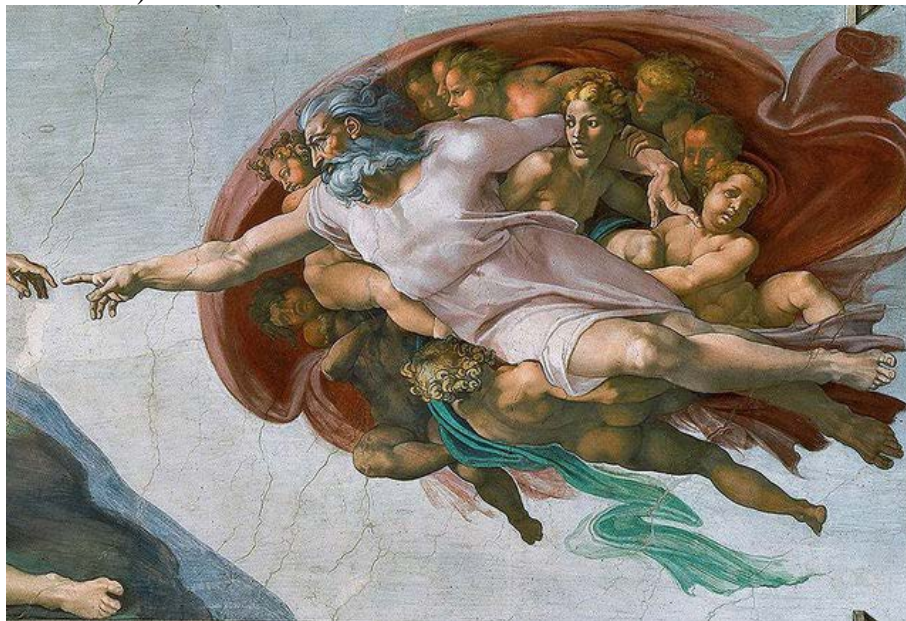
## **Counsel**

*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 must be a canonized saint. If the baptismal name is not that of a canonized 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)			
<b>BAPTISMAL INFORMATION</b>			
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**

It is highly recommended that parishes provide a retreat or at the very least a day of reflection as part of the preparation process. As per the directive of Bishop Olson, a parish may not have an overnight Confirmation Retreat. 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 Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry can provide recommendations or assist in organizing one of these retreats (working out schedules, finding speakers/presenters, etc.) as needed.

### **Confirmation Retreat FAQ's**

#### **Q. Does the Diocese require a Confirmation Retreat?**

It is highly encouraged that all candidates attend a retreat that meet the criteria found in the Preparation Guidelines. It is understood though that there may be times where candidates may not be able to attend a retreat or have to miss a planned retreat for various reasons. In these cases, parishes are encouraged to offer some sort of alternative or supplement. However, if all avenues have been exhausted, 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 depending on where they are at in their faith journey.

#### **Q. Does the diocese offer Confirmation Retreats?**

The diocese does not offer confirmation retreats. However, there are other organizations, including parishes within the diocese that allow candidates to attend their confirmation retreats that the diocese can direct you towards. If a Pastor has questions regarding certain retreat/conference opportunities or specific organizations offering to put on a Confirmation Retreat, please contact the Office of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry.

## 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 3:2<sup>1</sup>*

- 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:

- What are the biggest obstacles to believing in God's answers to the deepest questions in your heart?

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<sup>1</sup>The 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 confirmandi.

- 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**----

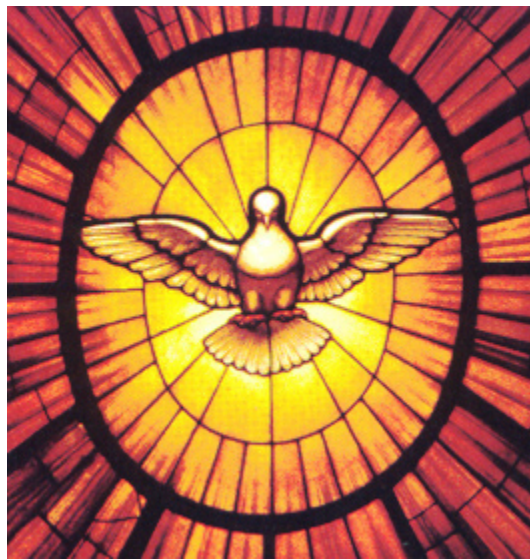
1. God has given you the great gift of his love, meaning, and even his own divine life so we can live in friendship with him
2. Now we have a particular task so we can give it all back to him, which is the point of the sacrament of confirmation
3. You will be sealed and sent forth with new grace and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

## List of Lessons for Confirmation Sessions and/or Retreats

### 1 – The Holy Spirit: Spirit of Truth

#### **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.”*



#### **Lesson**

*“the Spirit of truth”*

“From Advent until today, the Church has had us consider the magnificent manifestations of God’s mercy toward men: the Incarnation, the Redemption, Pentecost. Now she directs our attention to the source of these gifts, the most Holy Trinity, from whom everything proceeds.”[1]

Many times when we think of the Holy Trinity we can sometimes think of the Holy Spirit as an after thought. We see God the Father as the head; someone who is great and almighty, which He is. We see Jesus as the Son of God. Our perception of Jesus is a bit easier because Jesus dwelt among us; He was flesh and bone. However, the Holy Spirit is not physically seen as the Son, but is just as powerful as the Son. The Holy Spirit is vitally important to everything we do and everything we are. As Jesus states, the Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of Truth”.

**Who is the Holy Spirit?** The Holy Spirit is “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]

### **How is the Holy Spirit “the Spirit of Truth”?**

The Holy Spirit in His very essence is truth. The Holy Spirit always was, is, and ever shall be. 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 was in the beginning, each person in, and each person every shall be. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth because He is the first to awaken faith in us and to lead us to know God the Father and Jesus Christ who is the manifestation of the Truth [3].

The Spirit of Truth has revealed Himself in many ways. One of the primary ways was at the Annunciation when the angel Gabriel announces to Mary the Word of all Truth would become man and dwell among us by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, overshadowing her and conceiving the Son of God in her womb. (cf. Lk. 1:26-38) The next way is the one stated in the Gospel Reading which corresponds to this lesson where Jesus promises the coming of the Holy Spirit. He (Jesus) and the Father would send forth the Holy Spirit to reveal the fullness of Truth to not just the apostles, but the whole world. (cf. John 16:12-15) Finally, we see at Pentecost when Jesus fulfills this promise by sending the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and Mary like tongues of fire. They were filled with the Spirit of Truth to go out and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth as Jesus commanded them to at the end of Matthew's Gospel. (cf. Acts. 2:1-13; Mt. 28:28-20)



### **Does the Holy Spirit have any other titles other than “Spirit of Truth”?**

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

In today's Gospel reading, we read of two titles that were given for the Holy Spirit; The Advocate and Spirit of Truth. There are other titles of the Holy Spirit. 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. If you 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. If you are crunched for time you can also 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 Spirit of Adoption** (Romans 8:15)

**The Spirit of Christ** (Romans 8:9)

**The Spirit of the Lord** (2 Cor. 3:17)

**Spirit of God** (Rom 8:9, 14; 15:19; 1 Cor 6:11; 7:40)

**Spirit of Glory** (1 Peter 4:14)

### **How does the Spirit of Truth lead me within my life?**

The same Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, that came upon the Apostles; the same Spirit that was promised by Christ, is the same Spirit that comes upon each and every one of us at our Baptism and Confirmation. He is the one that leads us in all truth. By our very design, we seek out truth [4]; to find out who we are, why we are here, and what is our purpose. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, is the one who guides us to find these answers not in an idea or theory but rather in a person: Jesus Christ. We are strengthened by the Holy Spirit to be able to be true witnesses of Jesus Christ to spread and defend the faith by our words and deeds [5].

### **Lesson Notes**

[1] Father Gabriel, Divine Intimacy pg. 585

[2] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary, 255

[3] cf. CCC 684

[4] cf. CCC 27

[5] cf. CCC 1285

## 2 – Fruits of the Holy Spirit/Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Survey)

### Gospel Reading – John 15:1-8

*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

*“bear much fruit”*

Just as we cannot do good work separate from Christ, we also cannot bear fruit separate from Christ. “A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit.”[3] More fruit is grown when the days are longer, because there is more sunlight. The disciple, who is in the Light of Christ more, bears more fruit. “The light of Christ is an endless day that knows no night. Christ is this day, says the Apostle; such is the meaning of his words: Night is almost over; day is at hand.”[1]

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.”[2]

**What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?** The fruits of the Holy Spirit are Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Fidelity (Faith), Modesty,

Self-Control and Chastity.[3] 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.[4]

**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, 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. [5]

**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.[6]

**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. [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 peoples are respected. In peace human coexistence is characterized by brotherly solidarity.[7]

**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.[8]

**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.[9]

**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." [10]

**Self-Control** – The act, power, or habit of having one's desires under the control of the will, enlightened by right reason and faith. [11]

**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. [12]

### **Discussion Question**

***What do each of these look like in our life? How can we recognize them in the life of the disciple?***

*The Lesson/Survey on Gifts of the Holy Spirit can be found in the Appendix*

### **Lesson Notes**

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[1] Saint Maximus of Turin; Office of Readings; Fifth Sunday of Easter

[2] Catechism of the Catholic Church – Glossary

[3] Gal. 5:22-23

[4] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.; *Modern Catholic Dictionary*

[5] YouCat (Youth Catechism); 309

[6] YouCat (Youth Catechism); 285

[7] YouCat (Youth Catechism); 395

[8] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.; *Modern Catholic Dictionary*

[9] *ibid.*

[10] *ibid.*

[11] *ibid.*

[12] YouCat (Youth Catechism); 220



## **3 – Sacraments**

### **What is a Sacrament?**

Sacraments are outward signs of inward sanctifying grace to the soul instituted by Jesus Christ and entrusted to the Church. [1] Christ instituted seven of them: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Holy Matrimony, Holy Orders, Anointing of the Sick.

“The sacraments of the New Testament were instituted by Christ the Lord and entrusted to the Church. 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. Accordingly, in the celebration of the sacraments the sacred ministers and the other members of the Christian faithful must use the greatest veneration and necessary diligence.” [2]

### **What is the purpose of Sacraments?**

The purpose of the sacraments are to sanctify men, to build up the Body of Christ and to give worship to God. The sacraments are dispensed *after* a person has received the faith; in other words sacraments presuppose faith because by the words and objects used the sacraments help nourish, strengthen, and express the faith. This is also why they are called “sacraments of faith.” [3]

It is Christ that is giving the grace. Grace is always primary. The leper shows faith. Faith is secondary. The new law is one of grace (the Sacrament) 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.” (Eph. 2:8-10) 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.” (Mt. 5:17) In Jesus the “old” becomes “new”, for “the one who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’” (Rev. 21:5)

### **Why are the Sacraments so important in the Catholic Church?**

Referring back to the definition of a sacrament they are instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church because the Church was established and instituted by Jesus Christ (cf. Mt. 16:18). The Catholic Church is “the sacrament of Christ’s action at work in her through the mission of the Holy Spirit. [4] It is in and through the Sacraments that we are brought into the Church which is the Body of Christ, and it is where grace is dispensed from because it is united with the head, Jesus Christ. [5] 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 seven Sacraments to strengthen us in the Church but also because of its union with Christ they manifest to the world.

### **How can we allow the work of Christ, through the Sacraments, have the most impact in our life?**

The work of Christ through the Sacraments will act or have an impact in proportion to our disposition. The more we have faith and are open to the grace that God wishes to give us the more we will be given. The beauty of the Sacraments is that they are effective and grace

filled for us, 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.

### **What helps us to receive the Sacraments, so that we may get the most out them?**

To help us do this [receive the Sacraments well], the Church makes use of solemn ceremonies in administering the Sacraments. The Council of Trent thus explains the part played by these ceremonies:

1. They surround these Holy Mysteries with a religious respect.
2. They help to make the Sacraments more effective by, in some sense, picturing them before our eyes, at the same time imprinting the holiness they produce more deeply in our hearts.
3. They excite in our souls sentiments of faith and charity, which dispose them in the best possible way to receive all the fruits of a Sacrament. All the Sacraments produce sanctifying grace, which heals our souls and raises them to a supernatural state.

### **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. “This council exhorts Christians, as citizens of two cities, to strive to discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the Gospel spirit. They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities. For they are forgetting that by the faith, itself, they are more obliged than ever to measure up to these duties, each according to his proper vocation. Nor, on the contrary, are they any less wide of the mark, who think that religion consists in acts of worship alone and in the discharge of certain moral obligations, and who imagine they can plunge themselves into earthly affairs in such a way as to imply that these are altogether divorced from the religious life. This split between the faith, which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age.” [6]

### **Lesson Notes**

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[1] cf. CCC 1131

[2] Code of Canon Law – 840

[3] CCC 1123

[4] CCC 1118

[5] cf. CCC 1119

[6] Council of Vatican II; Gaudium et Spes; Section 43

## 4 – The Rite of Confirmation: Matter and Form

### **Gospel Reading – Mark 7:31-37**

*Again he left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "Ephphatha!" (that is, "Be opened!") And [immediately] the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. He ordered them not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and [the] mute speak."*

### **Lesson**

The deaf and mute man's "ears were opened" and then "he spoke plainly". In the Sacraments our eyes see the matter or element and our ears hear the form or word. How many times do we see but not hear, when it comes to the Sacraments? The seeing and hearing of the Sacraments should remove from us any "speech impediment" thus enabling us to live out the Sacraments in our life and be a witness to the life and love of Jesus Christ.

"Every Sacrament consists of two things: **matter**, which is called the *element*, and **form**, which is commonly called the *word*... The word, he says is joined to the element, and it becomes a Sacrament. By the words *sensible thing*, therefore, the Fathers understand not only the matter or element, such as water in Baptism, chrism in Confirmation, and oil in Extreme Unction [anointing of the sick], all of which fall under the eye; but also the words which constitute the form, and are addressed to the ear." [1]

### **What is the importance of the matter?**

We are physical people and therefore signs and symbols are important. "Often Jesus asks the sick to believe (Mk 5:34, 36; 9:23). He makes use of signs to heal: spittle and the laying on of hands, (Mk 7:32-36; 8:22-25) mud and washing (Jn 9:6-7). The sick try to touch him, 'for power came forth from him and healed them all.' (Lk 6:19, Mk 1:41; 3:10; 6:56). And so in the sacraments Christ continues to 'touch' us in order to heal us." [2]

Signs also teach us, helping us understand that while there is an outward sign, there is an inner grace. Jesus not only brings new meaning to the signs of creation but He also gives new meaning to the signs of the Old Testament as He is the fulfillment, that the Old Testament signs point to. "He performs healings and illustrates his preaching with physical signs or symbolic gestures (Jn 9:6; Mk 7:33; Mk 8:22). He gives new meaning to the deeds and signs of the Old Covenant, above all to the Exodus and the Passover (Lk 9:31; 22:7-20) for he himself is the meaning of all these signs." [3]

### **What is the importance of the form?**

The form is vitally important. If form or word is not added to matter or element, the Sacrament is null. For example without the words of consecration, the bread and wine, remain bread and wine. "In our Sacraments, on the contrary, the form is so definite that any, even a casual deviation from it renders the Sacrament null." [4] In the Gospel of the deaf and mute man Jesus adds the word, "Ephphatha!" to the matter "spit" and both spiritual and physical healing take place. If Jesus had not added the word "Ephphatha!", there would have only been "spit". The form or word is the command given. The form and

word in the Sacraments is the word of God. The power and authority of the Sacraments lie in the form and word.

### **What is the matter or element for the Sacrament of Confirmation?**

The sacrament of confirmation must use chrism which was consecrated by a Bishop, even when confirmation is being administered by a priest. [5]

### **What is Sacred Chrism?**

Chrism Oil is 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?**

Confirmation, The head of a person during Baptism, Consecration of a Bishop, Consecration of Chalices, consecration of altars, Blessing of Bells, and Dedication of a Church; in which last most imposing ceremony, the bishop pours out the chrism on the twelve crosses which are to attest to all succeeding ages the glory of God's house.

### **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, 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 form or word for the Sacrament of Confirmation?**

*"Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit"* In the extraordinary form of the Roman Rite the word "confirm" is actually used: *"I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father; and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."*

### **Where is the proof that Christ instituted the Sacrament of Confirmation?**

Jesus promised to send the advocate; this promise was foretold in the Old Testament, instituted by Jesus and confirmed by the apostles in the New Testament. This came to fruition at Pentecost.

Scripture: John 16:7; Acts 2:1-4 Isaiah 11:1-2; Romans 5:5; Ephesians 4:30

### **What are the effects of receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation?**

The following are the effects of receiving Confirmation[6]:

1. Enriched with the gift of the Holy Spirit and linked closer to the Church.
2. Increase of Grace (Completion of Baptismal Grace)
3. Increase in character of a Soldier of Christ

### **Where should Confirmation be celebrated?**

Confirmation should be conferred during Mass. However, if there is a reasonable cause (example an extremely large Confirmation class), this is permissible to be celebrated apart from Mass. [7]

### **Who can administer Confirmation?**

The primary person to minister the sacrament is a Bishop, primarily the Bishop of the diocese from which a person lives. Another Bishop from another diocese can confirm but must have the permission of the diocesan bishop first. Also, a priest may administer the sacrament of confirmation if permitted by the diocesan Bishop. [8]

### **Who can receive Confirmation?**

Any baptized person who has use of reason, has been suitably instructed, is at the proper age of discretion (unless the diocese has decided on a different age), and are able and ready to renew the baptismal promises can receive the sacrament of Confirmation. [9]

### **What is the end goal in receiving the Sacraments?**

The end, the goal is to be united with Jesus Christ in and through His Church. "...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." The Sacraments are the means of Salvation.

### **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. One, we cannot seek a Sacrament but ignore salvation. Two, we cannot 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. Non-Catholics have been accused of seeking salvation without Sacrament, Catholic have been accused of seeking Sacrament without salvation. 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 Confirmation, but then do not attend Mass or be instructed in the faith?

### **Lesson Notes**

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[1] *Catechism of the Council of Trent – Constituent Parts of the Sacraments*

[2] CCC 1504

[3] *Catechism of the Catholic Church - 1151*

[4] *Catechism of the Council of Trent – Constituent Parts of the Sacraments*

[5] *Can. 880.1*

[6] *Can. 879*

[7] *Can. 881*

[8] *cf. Can. 882-888*

[9] *cf. Can. 889-891*

## 5 – Confirmation Completes Baptismal Grace

### Spiritual Reading

From the treatise Against Heresies by Saint Irenaeus, bishop

*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.*

### Lesson

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that Confirmation is the completion and perfects Baptismal grace. [1] Like Baptism, Confirmation imprints an indelible spiritual mark on our souls, and gives the Holy Spirit the ability to root in us more deeply in Christ. [2]

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. Another way to explain this is the example Saint Irenaeus gives.

### **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

**Activity** – *A possible activity is while explaining this example bring some flour and water and demonstrate (or have a volunteer demonstrate).*

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 Lord’s body and blood, but also to transform our lives to make us, in His power, “one body, one spirit in Christ”[3].

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.

### **How is Confirmation “similar” to Baptism?**

One aspect that is similar between the two sacraments is in each one we receive an indelible mark on our soul from the Holy Spirit. We are sealed by God’s grace on our soul. This mark is eternally marked and nothing we can do can remove this mark. Pope Benedict XVI stated, “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.” Homily at the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Youth Day by Pope Benedict XVI

[10]

“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.”[4]

To conclude and to drive this point home, when one is confirmed, that person’s name, the bishop or priest who ministered the sacrament, the parents, the sponsor’s name and the place and date of the confirmation are to be recorded not only in the diocese they received the sacrament of Confirmation, but also must be sent over to where the person received the sacrament of Baptism. [5] This shows the importance of Baptism, but also how Confirmation is intimately connected with Baptism.

### **Lesson Notes**

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[1] CCC 1316

[2] cf. CCC 1317, 1316

[3] Homily at the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Youth Day by Pope Benedict XVI

[4] 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and Ephesians 1:11-14

[5] cf. Can. 895



## **6 – Pentecost: The First Confirmation**

### **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.”

### **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.



### **Lesson**

At the Last Supper, Jesus promised to send the Spirit of Truth, which would stay with the apostles and the Church forever. “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.’” (John 16:12-13) We see in the second reading that this occurs at the first Confirmation during Pentecost when the apostles were all gathered in the upper room and the Holy Spirit descended upon each of them to give them the strength to be witnesses. We can receive the power of the Holy Spirit to be witnesses for Christ and to testify before the world about the mystery of Salvation.

### **What does it mean to be a witness?**

Witness comes from the Greek word *martyros*, this is where we get the word martyr. To be a witness literally means that we are a martyr for truth. We are willing to not only die for truth, but also live it out in our life. Saint Justin Martyr proclaimed the creed of every Christian when he was martyred. At Saint Justin's trial, Rusticus the prefect said, "Let us, then, now come to the matter at hand, and which presses. Having come together, offer sacrifice with one accord to the gods." Saint Justin replied, "No right-thinking person falls away from piety to impiety." [1] This has been also been translated as "No right-thinking person falls away from truth to falsehood." We should move from what is false into what is truth, but never abandon the truth, which the Holy Spirit guides us to, for the errors of falsehood. It is the Holy Spirit that helps us to stay truth to our baptismal vows, "Do you reject all his [Satan's] empty promises." [2]

### **What does the power of the Holy Spirit look like in real life?**

The Holy Spirit, which proceeds from the Father (Source) and the Son (Mediator), is the only true source of real power. In the Creed we say that the Holy Spirit is the "giver of life".

### **What promises power in our world today, what do the powerful people have? How do we distinguish the power of the world, from the power of the Holy Spirit, is there a difference?**

"But what is this 'power' of the Holy Spirit? It is the power of God's life! It is the power of the same Spirit who hovered over the waters at the dawn of creation and who, in the fullness of time, raised Jesus from the dead. It is the power which points us, and our world, towards the coming of the Kingdom of God. In today's Gospel, Jesus proclaims that a new age has begun, in which the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon all humanity (cf. *Lk* 4:21). He himself, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, came among us to bring us that Spirit. As the source of our new life in Christ, the Holy Spirit is also, in a very real way, the soul of the Church, the love which binds us to the Lord and one another, and the light which opens our eyes to see all around us the wonders of God's grace." [3]

### **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 traveled [4]:

### **MAP – Where the 12 Apostles Died**

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?ll=34.307144000000086%2C44.64843799999994&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.

**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. (Acts 12:1-2) 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 events (cf. Acts 1:21-22) 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.

**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.” (Jude v.

20)

**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.

### **Lesson Notes**

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[1] The trial of Saint Justin Martyr (165AD)

[2] Rite of Baptism

[4] Homily at the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Youth Day by Pope Benedict XVI – for the whole homily see, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/homilies/2008/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20080720\\_xxiii-wyd\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2008/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20080720_xxiii-wyd_en.html)

[4] Pope Benedict The Apostles and newadvent.org

## **7 – Confirmation: Our Pentecost and Strength**

### **Scripture Reading – 2 Timothy 1:6-7**

For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control.

### **Lesson**

In the lesson *Power of Pentecost* we see what occurred at the first Confirmation and the effects it had not just on the apostles but on the whole world after Pentecost. The spirit that was given to the apostles, the spirit “of power and love and self-control” that was given to Timothy by Saint Paul, is the exact same spirit that each and every one of us receives at Confirmation.

### **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. [1]

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?” [2] 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.” [3]

### **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.” [4]

### **What does “Confirmation” mean?**

The word confirmation means, “to thoroughly make firm” or “to make solid”. 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.” (1 Peter 5:8-9)

### **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. [5]

### **Why do we need to be confirmed? What do we get from Confirmation?**

See “Talk – *What is Confirmation? What does Confirmation do for me*” in *the First Meeting Agenda of this Resource Packet*

Blessed Pope 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.” [6]

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)  
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 in, “be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48) In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Saint Paul says, “May the God of peace make you perfect in holiness.”

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 receive 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.”

Saint Paul tells Saint Timothy, “I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control. So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor of me a prisoner for his sake; but bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God.” (2 Timothy 1:6-7)

### **Activity – The Chocolate Milk Analogy**

We can make a comparison between Confirmation and chocolate milk. When we make a glass of chocolate milk we pour the chocolate syrup (Holy Spirit) into milk (soul). If we do not “stir into flame” the gift we have been given, it will settle at the bottom and our lives will not provide the rich taste of life that the world desperately needs. We must continually “stir into flame the gift of God” that we received by thanking God for our own Confirmation, recalling it in our mind, asking for the Graces that we were given at Confirmation and using them now in our life.

### **Is Confirmation similar to graduation in the Church?**

Confirmation is the final Sacrament we receive in the Sacraments of Initiation. We then begin to seek out a much higher calling than a job, which is our Vocation. We seek where God wants us to serve Him in our everyday life. We remember that there are seven Sacraments. To be fully initiated into the Church we receive Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist; also known as the Sacraments of Initiation. We live the life of Christ to the full with these Sacraments. When we fail to live life to the full, we have the Sacraments of Healing, Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick. 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. 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. Our ultimate graduation prize is hopefully making it to Heaven.

### **Lesson Notes**

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[1] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 122

[2] Rite of Confirmation

[3] Catechism of the Catholic Church 1288

[4] Roman Catholic Daily Missal [1962]; page 1829

[5] The Church’s Year pg. 301

[6] *L’osservatore Romano*, 8 Apr 92. *Summa Theol. III, q.72, a.5*

## 8 - 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!”



### **Lesson**

#### **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.” [1]

#### **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.” [2] 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.” [3] 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, 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.

### **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?**

A patron Saint should be someone that the candidate look up to and emulate holiness. It is the saints *life* that should resonate with the candidate more than just who they are the patron of. We must avoid choosing a patron Saint just solely on their name or what they are the patron of. While those can be contributing factors it should not be the sole reason. The patron Saint should be someone they look to as an example and call upon for their intercession for the rest of their lives and not just where the candidate is right now in their state in life. Finally, the candidate should be assisted in and through their sponsor primarily along with their parents and the finally their catechists.

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

[www.catholic.org/saints](http://www.catholic.org/saints)

[www.etwn.com/saintsHoly](http://www.etwn.com/saintsHoly)

[www.sacred-texts.com/chr/lots/index.htm](http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/lots/index.htm)

[www.daughtersofstpaul.com/saintday/index.html](http://www.daughtersofstpaul.com/saintday/index.html)

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

### **Lesson Notes**

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[1] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 410

[2] Compendium of the Catholic Church, 264

[3] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 410

# Appendix

## *Glossary of Terms*

**Candidate** – A person who has met the requirements and guidelines in order to begin the process of preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation.

**Code of Canon Law** – The rules (canons or laws) which provide the norms for good order in the visible society of the Church. Those canon laws that apply universally are contained in the Codes of Canon Law. The most recent Code of Canon Law was promulgated in 1983 for the Latin (Western) Church and in 1991 for the Eastern Church (The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches).

**Confirmandi** – Candidate of Confirmation

*see also: Candidate*

**Confirmation** – One of the ensemble of the Sacraments of Initiation into the Church, together with Baptism and Eucharist. 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.

**Ecclesial Method** – A method of catechesis deeply rooted within the Catholic tradition and is effective on imparting the Deposit of Faith in a variety of ministries (Faith Formation, Youth Ministry, Sacramental Preparation, RCIA, etc.). The five stages of the Ecclesial method are the following (in order): Preparation, Proclamation, Explanation, Application, and Celebration.

**Sacrament** – 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. The sacraments (called “mysteries” in the #aster Churches) are seven in number: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance or Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.

**Sponsor** – A practicing Catholic in good standing with the church who is willing to accompany the candidate during the confirmation process and help prepare them to be open to receiving the sacrament (along with the candidates family and church). The person must received all the sacraments of initiation. They must also be in compliance with the diocesan guidelines to be a sponsor.

## 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.

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