

*Faith
First*

PREPARING
FOR

CONFIRMATION

**Using Faith First Junior High
Liturgy and Morality**

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Junior High
Liturgy and Morality**

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How to Use This Booklet

The preparation for Confirmation is a grace-filled time. *Preparing for Confirmation* will assist you in using **Faith First® Junior High Liturgy and Morality** to prepare students for celebrating the sacrament of Confirmation.

Preparing for Confirmation focuses on four chapters in **Faith First Junior High Liturgy and Morality**. These chapters present concepts that are an essential part of a sound catechesis for sacramental preparation for Confirmation. It is suggested to use Chapters 3, 5, and 7 as part of the preparation for the celebration of Confirmation. Chapter 11 can be used as part of this preparation, or it may be presented after the celebration of Confirmation to help the students discover the life-long decision that each of us makes to live out our baptismal promises. Chapter 5 has been divided into two lessons. Thus there are a total of five lessons that can be used for Confirmation preparation. A prayer ritual, an activity page, and a family page are included for each of the lessons. A Confirmation retreat program is also included.

Preparing for Confirmation is simple, clear, and easy to use. The booklet consists of five pages for presenting each of the lessons. On the first page for each lesson, you will find a brief background essay that places the chapter in the context of preparation for Confirmation. This page also contains the objectives for the lesson and a list of helpful resources that can be used to enrich the teaching of the lesson.

The second page of the lesson is a step-by-step process for teaching the lesson. This lesson plan contains materials not included in the **Faith First Junior High Liturgy and Morality Catechist Guide** and focuses on the presentation of the lesson as part of the sacramental preparation process. The third page is a ritual prayer. Each lesson begins with ritual prayer in which the students celebrate the theme of the chapter with words and actions. The fourth page is a reproducible activity. The activities help the students apply and integrate the faith themes of the lesson into their daily living. The fifth page is a reproducible handout that provides families the opportunity to remember, share, pray, and participate in their children's preparation for and the celebration of Confirmation.

The final section of this booklet contains a suggested plan for a Confirmation retreat. The plan can be used for a full-day retreat or adapted to be used in a shorter time period.

Using Chapter 3— Let Us Give Thanks to the Lord Our God



Preparing for Confirmation

Faith is both God's invitation to believe and trust in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—and our response to that divine invitation. The story of a Christian's life gives witness to that divine invitation and our response to it.

Chapter 3 of **Faith First Junior High Liturgy and Morality** provides you and the young people and their families with the opportunity to reflect on Christ being always present and active in his Church. Christ is present and active in the liturgy and through the sacraments. In the liturgy, Christ actively re-creates and makes present those events that give us meaning and life. Christ acts through the sacraments to share the life of God with people of every historical age. By the action of Christ and the activity of the Holy Spirit, the sacraments offer the gifts of new life, forgiveness, strength, commitment, and hope.

The focus of this chapter is liturgical prayer, which is the public, communal prayer of the Church. It is different from personal private prayer and devotional prayer. Liturgical prayer is the principal form of prayer that we use whenever we gather as the Body of Christ. The Church has a very rich tradition of liturgical prayer, which includes celebration of the Eucharist and the other sacraments, the Liturgy of the Hours, blessings, and other rites. Celebrating liturgical prayer will help the students keep God at the center of their lives.

Objectives

- Explain the relationship between the Triune God as celebrated in the liturgy and professed in the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.
- Compare the profession of faith as professed at Mass and in the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.
- Discuss how we share in God's life when we celebrate sacraments.
- Identify the signs and symbols of the sacraments looking for common elements.
- Review the liturgical year of the Church.

Resources

- The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum concilium*) 10–11
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 202, 238, 240, 243–48, 663, 694–701, 731, 2003

Materials Needed

- Prayer Ritual—Sign of the Cross—Symbol of the Trinity
- Worksheet—The Rite of Confirmation—Liturgy of the Word
- Family Page
- Copy of Baptismal Promises from the Rite of Confirmation

Begin the lesson . . .

Lead the candidates in the celebration of ritual prayer found on page 6 of this booklet.

Guide Page 81

Student Page 33

Use **DISCOVER**

Tell the students that they are now preparing for an important celebration in their faith life. They will soon celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation.

Guide Page 82

Student Pages 34 and 35

Use **INTRODUCE** and **INVOLVE**

Explain that the Holy Trinity is the focal point of all the liturgical celebrations in the Church.

Guide Page 83

Student Page 35

Use **EXPAND** and **INTEGRATE**

- Make sure the students understand the role of each person of the Trinity in the liturgy.
- Explain to the students that we profess our faith in the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation and when we profess the creed at Mass.
- Review the Nicene Creed and Apostles' Creed found on page 354 of the student book with the students. Use the information in the "Memo" to explain that the Sign of the Cross is also a statement of faith.
- Discuss with the students the ritual signing of the cross that was celebrated in the opening ritual prayer.

- Tell the students that they will profess their faith as part of the rite of Confirmation by renewing their baptismal promises. Review the baptismal promises with the students. Compare the statements of faith in the baptismal promises with the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed.

Guide Page 84

Student Pages 36 and 37

Use **SHARE** and **INVOLVE**

- Explain the meaning of the term "Paschal mystery."
- Write the word "sacrament" on the board. Have the students list under this heading what they know about the sacraments.
- Discuss with the students that the reception of the sacraments changes our life and makes us sharers in the life of God.
- Emphasize that the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders imprint an indelible character, or mark, on our soul. Explain that because we receive an indelible character, the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders can be received only once.
- Explain that chrism is the holy oil used for anointing in Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders.

Guide Page 85

Student Page 37

Use **EXPAND** and **INTEGRATE**

Discuss what it means to say that sacraments are effective signs of grace.

Guide Page 86

Student Pages 38 and 39

Use **EXPLORE** and **INVOLVE**

- Emphasize that the Liturgy of the Word is a part of every sacramental celebration.
- Review the Scripture readings for the sacrament of Confirmation that are suggested in the Lectionary. Use the worksheet "Liturgy of the Word" to help you with this discussion.

Guide Page 87

Student Page 39

Use **EXPAND** and **INTEGRATE**

Discuss the importance of actively participating in Sunday Liturgy.

Conclude the lesson . . .

- Discuss pages 40–43 (guide pages 88–91) with the students.
- Use **REINFORCE** on page 44 (guide page 92).
- Close with a prayer, using "And Now We Pray" or another prayer of your choice.

Ritual Prayer

You will need

- A recording of instrumental music or words and music for an appropriate hymn
- A large cross
- Bible or Lectionary

Ritual Prayer—Sign of the Cross—Symbol of the Trinity

Gathering

Place a large cross in the prayer area. Have the students come forward silently and gather around the cross. Invite the students to settle themselves and to become aware of God's presence within and among them. You may wish to play a recording of instrumental music or sing an appropriate hymn.

LEADER: Let us begin by praying the Sign of the Cross.

ALL: In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

LEADER: God, our loving Father,
we gather around the cross
of your Son, Jesus.
Open our hearts to the Holy Spirit.
We ask this through your Son,
Jesus Christ.

ALL: Amen.

Scripture Reading

LEADER: Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us listen to the word of God by signing our forehead, lips, and heart with the sign of the cross.
May we remember your word in our thoughts. *(Invite the students to make the sign of the cross on their forehead.)*

May we remember your word when we speak. *(Invite the students to make the sign of the cross on their lips.)*

May we remember your word in our hearts. *(Invite the students to make the sign of the cross over their heart.)*

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

READER: Proclaim or invite a volunteer to proclaim aloud Acts of the Apostles 2:41–47 from the Bible. Conclude the reading, saying,

READER: The word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Ritual

LEADER: Invite each student to come forward and trace the sign of the cross on their forehead. Do this ritual in silence so that the emphasis is on the sign of the cross.

Closing

LEADER: God, our loving Father,
today we gather around the cross
of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Send us the Holy Spirit
to help us remember to follow Jesus
every day.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.



The Rite of Confirmation- Liturgy of the Word

Which readings would you choose for the Liturgy of the Word if you were planning the Confirmation liturgy?

The readings for the rite of Confirmation can be taken from the Mass of the day or from the following readings suggested in the Lectionary. Use a Bible or the Lectionary to find and read each of these passages from Scripture.

Then choose one reading from each group. Briefly summarize the reading and tell what that reading says to you about the meaning of the sacrament of Confirmation.

Old Testament Readings:

- Isaiah 11:1-4
- Isaiah 42:1-3
- Isaiah 61:1-3, 6, 8-9
- Ezekiel 36:24-28
- Joel 2:23; 3:1-3

The reading I chose is

New Testament Readings:

- Acts 1:3-8
- Acts 2:1-6, 14, 22-23, 32-33
- Acts 8:1, 4, 14-17
- Acts 10:1, 33-34, 37-44
- Acts 19:1-6
- Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
- Romans 8:14-17
- Romans 8:26-27
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-13
- Galatians 5:16-17, 22-23, 24-25
- Ephesians 1:3, 4, 13-19
- Ephesians 4:1-6

The reading I chose is

Gospel Readings

- Matthew 5:1-12
- Matthew 16:24-27
- Matthew 25:14-30
- Mark 1:9-11
- Luke 4:16-22
- Luke 8:4-10, 11-15
- Luke 10:21-24
- John 7:37-39
- John 14:15-17
- John 14:23-26
- John 15:18-21, 26-27
- John 16:5-7, 12-13

The reading I chose is

TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

Remembering Together

In this chapter your child learned that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit came to the disciples as Jesus promised. The Holy Spirit is with the Church today. This week discuss these or similar questions:

- How can we welcome the Holy Spirit into the life of our family?
- How do we show others that the Holy Spirit is guiding us to live as followers of Jesus Christ?
- What are some ways we continue the work of Jesus Christ?

Sharing Together

Choose one of these activities to do together or design a similar activity of your own:

- Read John 14:15–31. Talk about how the Holy Spirit helps your family live as a Christian family.
- Write a prayer to the Holy Spirit. Pray the prayer together every day for a week.

Praying Together

The Holy Spirit is our helper, teacher, and guide. Learn and pray this prayer. Make it a prayer your family prays often.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts
of your faithful.
And kindle in them the fire
of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and
they shall be created.
And you will renew
the face of the earth. Amen.

Getting Ready Together

During the Rite of Confirmation the candidates will profess their faith by renewing their Baptismal promises. Recall that at Baptism the parents and godparents professed the faith for their child. Talk with your child about what we believe as Catholics. Pray together the profession of faith in the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed found on page 354 of the student book.

Using Chapter 5—Baptism and Confirmation

Part I: Baptized into New Life

Preparing for Confirmation: Baptized into New Life

There are three sacraments of Christian initiation that lay the foundation of every Christian life. They are Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Through Baptism we are joined to Christ and begin our initiation into the Church, the Body of Christ. Confirmation strengthens Baptism and is necessary for the completion of the baptismal grace. Celebrating Eucharist renews our baptismal inheritance, nourishes us with the Body and Blood of Christ, joins us most fully to Christ and to one another, and is the pledge of eternal life.

Baptized with water and the Spirit, we are joined to Christ the Risen Savior and reconciled with God. We become members of the Church and are marked forever as belonging to Christ. We receive the gift of God's love, the Holy Spirit. Both original sin and personal sins are forgiven in Baptism. We receive the grace to avoid sin and live as children of God. Through Baptism we enter a permanent relationship with God. That is why a person can be baptized only one time.

Present this chapter in two sessions, discussing Baptism in this session and Confirmation in the next session. Include the rite of the blessing with water in your presentation of this chapter to celebrate and recall that at Baptism the young people were marked with the sign of the cross and claimed for Christ. The cross is the symbol of Christ's love for the Father and for all people.



Objectives

- Explain what it means to be initiated into the Church through the Sacraments of Initiation.
- Identify the essential parts of the celebration of the sacrament of Baptism.
- Describe the ritual signs and symbols of Baptism.
- Explain what is meant by the spiritual character received in Baptism.

Resources

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 405, 790, 798, 903, 1113, 1121, 1235–45, 1246, 1256, 1266–67, 1272, 2340
- *Echoes of Faith* video, *Liturgy and Sacraments*, Segment 3: “Sacraments of Initiation”

Materials Needed

- Prayer Ritual—Blessing with Water
- Worksheet—Living the Faith
- Family Page
- Copy of the Rite of Baptism

Begin the lesson . . .

- Explain that the study of Chapter 5 will take place in two sessions. Point out that the first session will focus on the sacrament of Baptism and that the next session will focus on Confirmation.
- Lead the candidates in the celebration of the ritual prayer found on page 11 of this booklet.

Guide Page 115
Student Page 59

Use **DISCOVER**

Focus students on the relationship between Baptism and Confirmation.

Guide Page 116
Student Pages 60 and 61

Use **INTRODUCE** and **EXPLORE**

- Review with students the Sacraments of Initiation, emphasizing that the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist join us to Christ and make us members of the Church.
- Discuss what it means to be a member of the Body of Christ, the Church.

Guide Page 117
Student Page 61

Use **EXPAND** and **INTEGRATE**

- Remind the students that Baptism was the first sacrament that they received. Tell them that Baptism must be celebrated before any other sacrament can be received.

- Discuss that Baptism is our birth into new life.
- Explain to the students that Baptism forgives original sin as well as personal sin. This is a good time to review the difference between original sin and personal sin.
- If time permits, review the ritual and prayers of the celebration of Baptism, using a copy of the rite of Baptism. Point out and explain the symbols of the sacrament: the water, the white garment, the candle, and the oil.
- Explain to students that in Baptism they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is the same gift of the Holy Spirit which will be renewed in the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation.
- Use the worksheet “Living the Faith” to help the students understand the ways that the gift of the Holy Spirit helps people in the Church live their life in Christ.

Guide Pages 118 and 119
Student Pages 62 and 63

Use **EXPLORE, INVOLVE, EXPAND,** and **INTEGRATE**

- Take the time to discuss with the students any questions they may have about the sacrament of Baptism.
- Relate the students’ preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation to the RCIA process.
- If time permits, read the prayer that accompanies the anointing after Baptism:

The God of power and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ / has freed you from sin / and brought you to new life / through water and the Holy Spirit. / He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation, / so that, united with his people, / you may remain for ever a member of Christ / who is Priest, Prophet, and King.

Rite of Baptism for Children 62

- Explain that the titles “Priest,” “Prophet,” and “King” summarize the ministry of Christ. Point out that in the Old Testament priests, prophets, and kings of God’s people were anointed with oil. This anointing was a sign that God had chosen them and was with them to do their work of serving and guiding God’s people in living the Covenant. (For example, recall the story of Samuel’s anointing of Saul with the words, “The LORD has anointed you ruler over his people” [1 Samuel 10:1].)

Conclude the lesson . . .

- Close by singing a song or saying a prayer to the Holy Spirit. You may use “The Prayer to the Holy Spirit” found on page 353 of the student’s book (page 496 of the guide).
- You might wish to use the prayer that accompanies the anointing after Baptism as an alternative closing prayer.

Ritual Prayer

You will need:

- A recording of instrumental music or words and music for an appropriate hymn
- A large bowl of water (if you do not gather at the baptismal font)
- Bible or Lectionary or Book of the Gospels

Ritual Prayer— Blessing with Water

Gathering

Gather the students around the baptismal font in the church. Invite them to settle themselves and to become aware of God's presence within and among them.

Alternative: Play a recording of instrumental music or an appropriate hymn. Gather the students in the prayer area around a table on which there is a large bowl of water. Invite the students to settle themselves and to become aware of God's presence within and among them.

LEADER: Let us begin as we were baptized.

ALL: *Make the sign of the cross, saying,*
In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

LEADER: God, our loving Father,
you are with us as we come together
in prayer.
Open our hearts to the Holy Spirit.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

Scripture Reading

LEADER: Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us listen to the word of God by signing our forehead, lips, and heart with the sign of the cross.

READER: A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

ALL: *Reverently make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and over their heart, and then say,*
Glory to you, Lord.

READER: *Proclaim or invite a volunteer to proclaim aloud Matthew 3:13–17 from the Bible. Conclude the reading, saying,*

READER: The gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Ritual

LEADER: Each of you will come to the baptismal font (or to the bowl of water). When you do, thank God for the gift of your baptism. Dip your right hand into the water and bless yourself, making the sign of the cross. *As each student comes to the water, say, (Name), be blessed by this water and remember the gift of your baptism.*

Closing

LEADER: God, our loving Father,
we thank you for the gift of our
baptism.
You welcome us into your Church.
Send us the Holy Spirit
to help us live as children of God.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

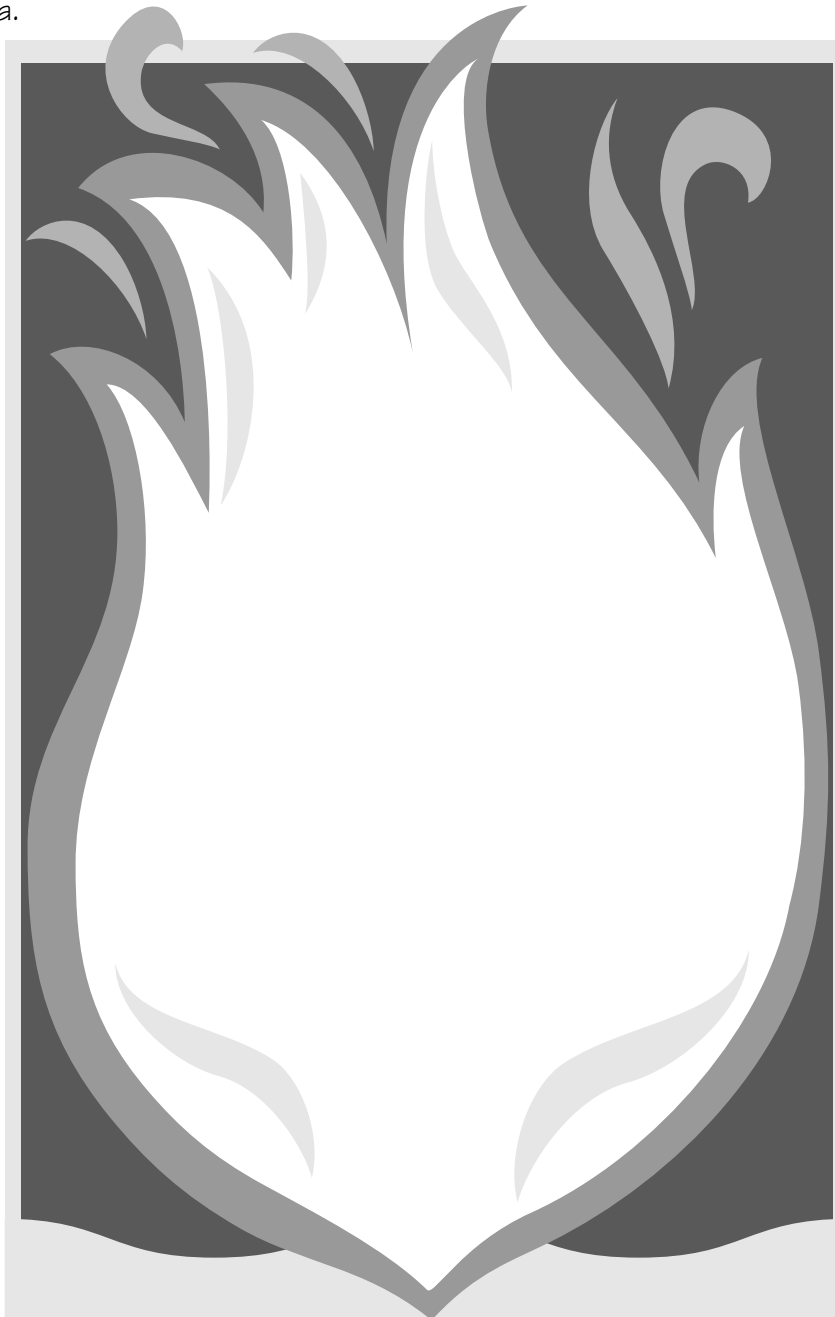
ALL: Amen.

Living the Faith

The Church is the Body of Christ, the People of God, the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are joined to Jesus Christ and become full members of the Church through the celebration of the three Sacraments of Initiation.

The Church recognizes people whose lives gave witness to their faith in Jesus Christ. Some of those followers of Christ are Saint Paul, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Katharine Drexel, Blessed Pope John XXIII, and Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

Choose one of these Christians or another follower of Christ whom you know or have learned about. Reflect on why you chose that person. What did she or he do to live their faith in Christ? Write the person's name on the line. In the flame write or draw what that person did.



TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

Remembering Together

In this chapter your child learned about Baptism and the difference that being baptized makes in our lives. This is a good time for your family to share stories about family baptisms. Share mementos and memories about your child's baptism. Include:

- the reasons you chose your child's baptismal name.
- the date of the Baptism and the name of the church.
- the names of the godparents.
- the name of the priest or deacon.
- the names of other people who celebrated with your family.

Sharing Together

Choose one of these activities to do together or design a similar activity of your own:

- Have family members choose one thing they can do to live as followers of Jesus Christ at home this week.
- Make thank-you cards for your child's godparents or someone else who has helped your son or daughter grow in faith.

Praying Together

Pray this or a similar prayer at family meals or at other family prayer times this week:

God, our loving Father,
through the waters of Baptism
we become followers of Jesus Christ
and members of the Church.

Send us the Holy Spirit
to help us learn to live as
your children.

We ask this in the name of Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.

Getting Ready Together

At Baptism our parents chose godparents who would help us on our journey of faith. This is a good time to share ideas about your child's Confirmation sponsor. A Confirmation sponsor has a vital role in a person's preparation for Confirmation and in the future faith life of a confirmed Christian. Share ideas about why your child's sponsor was or will be chosen.

Using Chapter 5—Baptism and Confirmation

Part 2: Witnesses for Christ



Preparing for Confirmation: Witnesses for Christ

In Baptism and Confirmation, we are joined to Christ and anointed and filled with the Holy Spirit. Baptism unites us firmly with Christ. Confirmation completes Baptism and strengthens us to share in Christ's mission. It increases in us the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are necessary for living a truly successful life on earth.

Confirmation fortifies us to live our faith. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit help us keep our eyes focused on God. They guide us in remaining faithful to our baptismal promises, in living with dignity as children of God, in growing in love for God and other people, and in supporting our fellow pilgrims on this earthly journey.

The essence of the rite of Confirmation is the anointing of the baptized with chrism on their forehead as the bishop, or priest delegated by the bishop, simultaneously lays his hand on the head of the one being confirmed, saying, "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit" (*Rite of Confirmation* 27). The celebration of Confirmation continues the initiation of the baptized into the Church. Joined more closely to the Body of Christ, the Church, the baptized are more strictly obligated to spread the faith, both by word and by deed, and to strive to live as true witnesses of Christ. (See *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* 11.)

This lesson continues the immediate preparation of the young people for the sacrament of Confirmation by focusing on the rite and effects of Confirmation.

Objectives

- Describe that Confirmation completes Baptism and strengthens us as members of the Body of Christ, the Church.
- Discuss that Confirmation renews in us the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- Explain the ritual symbols of Confirmation.
- Explain the effects of celebrating the sacrament of Confirmation.
- Review the rite of Confirmation.

Resources

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 1113, 1212, 1285, 1287, 1293–1296, 1289, 1297, 1302, 1303, 1312–1313
- **Faith First** video, *Liturgy and Morality*, Segment 2: *The Visual Bible™*, "The Story of Pentecost"

Materials

- Prayer Ritual—Laying on of Hands
- Worksheet—The Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Family Page
- Copy of the rite of Confirmation

Begin the lesson . . .

Lead the candidates in the celebration of the ritual prayer found on page 16 of this booklet.

Guide Page 120

Student Pages 64 and 65

Use **SHARE** and **DISCUSS**

- Explain to the students that Jesus promised that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to be our advocate. Tell the students that an advocate is someone who stands by a person's side and speaks up for them.
- Explain to the students that Christ, as head of the Church, pours out the Spirit among his members to nourish them, to heal them, and to send them forth to bear witness to the Father.
- Remind the students that the Holy Spirit appeared to Jesus' disciples on the feast of Pentecost. Pentecost is the birthday of the Church.
- Show the **Faith First** video, *Liturgy and Morality*, Segment 2: *The Visual Bible™*, "The Story of Pentecost."
- Call the student's attention to the coming of the Holy Spirit as wind and fire. Discuss with the students the symbols of wind and fire for the Holy Spirit.
- Discuss with the students the change in the disciples after receiving the Holy Spirit. Emphasize the ways the disciples used the gifts of the Holy Spirit to continue to work for Christ.

Guide Page 121

Student Page 65

Use **EXPAND** and **INTEGRATE**

- Discuss with the students the importance of receiving the sacrament of Confirmation as the completion of our initiation into the Church. Recall that

Confirmation completes the grace of Baptism and strengthens us to use our gifts and talents to continue the work of Christ.

- This is a good time to review the rite of Confirmation with the students. Together go through the prayers, responses, and actions that will take place in the Confirmation liturgy. This will help the students more actively participate in the liturgy.
- Explain the essential rite for celebrating Confirmation: "The sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit" (*Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation*).
- Point out the photograph on page 64. Tell the students that this depicts the invoking of God to send the sevenfold Gifts of the Holy Spirit during the rite of "Laying on of Hands." The memo "Baptism and Confirmation" found on page 115 of the guide will help with this discussion.
- Use the worksheet "The Gifts of the Holy Spirit" to expand the discussion of the sevenfold Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- Remind the students that at Confirmation they will be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Form seven groups and assign one of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to each of the seven groups. Have each group create and present a skit that illustrates how students their age can put the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to work in their lives today.
- Explain that after the laying on of hands, the bishop anoints each candidate with the holy oil, chrism. Use pages 10 and 11 of

the student book (guide page 50) to help you with an explanation of chrism and blessed oils.

- Review with the students the words that the bishop says as he anoints them with oil. Practice the response that each candidate will make as the bishop offers a sign of peace.
- Ask the students to identify ways in which the Holy Spirit helps us to be more like Christ.
- Explain the role of the Confirmation sponsor. A sponsor is someone who gives spiritual help and encouragement to a person who is preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. A sponsor gives an example of how to live the Christian life, how to be a follower of Jesus and a member of the Church. A sponsor also encourages us, especially when it seems difficult, to live out our faith. Because Confirmation continues and deepens the grace of Baptism, it is fitting for the confirmation sponsor to be one of the young person's baptismal godparents.
- Brainstorm a list on the board of the qualities of a Confirmation sponsor. Invite the students to think about who they chose to be their Confirmation sponsor.

Conclude the lesson . . .

- Discuss pages 66–69 (guide pages 122–125) with the students.
- Use **REINFORCE** on page 70 (guide page 126).
- Have the students compile a composite description of the characteristics of a confirmed Christian.
- Close with a prayer, using "And Now We Pray" or another prayer of your choice.

Ritual Prayer

You will need

- A recording of instrumental music or words and music for an appropriate hymn
- Bible or Lectionary

Ritual Prayer— Laying on of Hands

Gathering

Gather the students in the prayer area. Play a recording of instrumental music or an appropriate hymn. Invite the students to settle themselves and to become aware of God's presence within and among them. Remind the students that at Baptism they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and the grace to live as children of God.

LEADER: Let us begin as we were baptized.

ALL: *Make the sign of the cross, saying,*
In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

LEADER: God, our loving Father,
you are with us as we come together
in prayer.
Open our hearts to the Holy Spirit.
We ask this through Jesus Christ
our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

Scripture Reading

LEADER: Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us listen to the word of God by signing our forehead, lips, and heart with the sign of the cross.

READER: A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

ALL: *Reverently make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and over their heart.*

READER: *Proclaim or invite a volunteer to proclaim I Corinthians 12:4–13 from the Bible.*

Conclude the reading, saying,

READER: The word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Ritual

LEADER: *Invite the students to come forward one at a time. Place your open hands on the head of each one, silently pray, and conclude by saying aloud,*
Remember that the Holy Spirit is always with you.

CHILD: Thanks be to God.

LEADER: *After you have completed this ritual, say aloud,*
Let us now pray the prayer Jesus taught us.

ALL: Our Father . . .

Closing

LEADER: *Hold your hands outward, palms down, extended over the students, and pray,*
God, our loving Father,
we thank you for sending us
your Holy Spirit.
Fill us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit
to help us live as children of God.
We ask this through Jesus Christ
our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

At Confirmation the Holy Spirit strengthens the baptized with seven special gifts to live their baptism.

Read about each of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Put a check next to the gift or gifts that can help you live as a follower of Jesus Christ. Choose one gift and write or draw how it can help you to live your faith in Jesus Christ.

Wisdom

helps you to love God with all your heart.

Understanding

helps you to learn about your faith in God.

Right judgment

helps you to make decisions to live the faith.

Courage

helps you to love God and others, especially when it is difficult.

Knowledge

helps you to see yourself and others as images of God.

Reverence

helps you to honor and respect God, and all people as children and images of God.

Wonder and awe

help you to trust and obey God.

TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

Remembering Together

In this chapter your child learned that Confirmation strengthens us to live our baptism. The Holy Spirit strengthens the baptized with seven special gifts to live as children of God and disciples of Jesus Christ. This week discuss these or similar questions with your child:

- How might the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit help us live as a Christian family?
- When might we help one another use the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?
- What do we do that shows we believe that the Holy Spirit is our helper and teacher?
- Why is it important for our family to use the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Sharing Together

Choose one of these activities to do together or design a similar activity of your own:

- Place seven pieces of paper, with one Gift of the Holy Spirit written on each piece, in a basket. Place the basket near the doorway of your home. Each morning have each family member take a piece of paper from the basket, read it, place it back in the basket, and strive to use that gift several times during the day.
- Name a situation in the world that you learn about from watching television that goes against what Jesus

taught. Describe how using one or several of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit might help people work together to change that situation to be more in harmony with what Jesus taught.

Praying Together

Pray this prayer or a similar prayer at family meals or at other family prayer times this week:

LEADER: Holy Spirit, gift of the Father
and the Son,

ALL: be with us.

LEADER: Holy Spirit, our advocate,

ALL: be with us.

LEADER: Holy Spirit, our teacher,

ALL: be with us.

LEADER: Come, Holy Spirit,
set our hearts on fire with
the power of your love.

ALL: Amen.

Getting Ready Together

At Baptism, you and the godparents signed your child's forehead with the sign of the cross. Your child was also anointed with oil. At Confirmation, your child will again be anointed with sacred chrism with the words, "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." Talk with your child about ways Confirmation will strengthen the anointing and gifts first received at Baptism.

Using Chapter 7—Eucharist

Preparing for Confirmation

The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life” (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 11). The whole spiritual good of the Church is contained in the sharing of the Body and Blood of Christ. Christ touches us, becomes one with us, and loves us in a very tangible way. When we receive the Eucharist, we receive Christ’s Body and Blood and a pledge of eternal life.

Eucharist is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation. Christian initiation means “to admit to sacred rites, to share in the mysteries.” Christian initiation that takes place in the Sacraments of Initiation is a sharing in the mystery of Christ, a union with him in his dying and rising and the sending of the Holy Spirit so that we henceforth live in him and for him. In sharing his life, we become members of his Body, the Church.

Saint Paul frequently writes about our participation in the mystery of Christ, a participation that enables us to live in Christ and be incorporated in him. (See Romans 6:3–4.) Paul goes on to speak of the Eucharist in the same way—as incorporation in the mystery of Christ that forms us into his living Body, the Church. (See 1 Corinthians 10:16–17.)

Christian initiation, then, is incorporation into Christ, sharing fully in his death and resurrection and sending of the Holy Spirit. Because we are in him and are joined to his body, we belong to each other in his Church.

Objectives

- Describe that the celebration of Eucharist makes it possible for us to share in the Paschal mystery of Jesus.
- Explain what is meant by the true presence of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.
- Identify that the different elements of the Mass constitute a single act of worship.
- Explain that the celebration of Eucharist renews in us a life of grace and makes us closer to Christ and to one another.

Resources

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 1324, 1352–1354, 1365–1366, 1377–1378, 1407
- **Faith First** video, Grade 2, Segment 7: *The Visual Bible*™, “The Lord’s Supper”

Materials

- Prayer Ritual—Sharing a Sign of Peace
- Worksheet—Eucharist—Give Thanks
- Family Page
- Copy of the Sacramentary or a missalette



Begin the lesson . . .

Lead the candidates in the celebration of the ritual prayer found on page 21 of this booklet.

Guide Page 147

Student Page 83

Use **DISCOVER**

- Recall that Eucharist is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation.
- Explain that the celebration of Eucharist completes our initiation into the Church. Point out that in the past the Church had celebrated the Sacraments of Initiation in this order—Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist. This is the order of the celebration of the sacraments at the Easter Vigil today.
- Emphasize that Eucharist is the sacrament that is at the center of the life of the Church.

Guide Page 148

Student Pages 84 and 85

Use **INTRODUCE** and **EXPLORE**

- Ask a volunteer to read aloud Luke 22:19–20. Emphasize that through the power of the Holy Spirit we share in the Paschal mystery every time we celebrate Eucharist.
- If time permits, show the **Faith First** video, Grade 2, Segment 7, *The Visual Bible™*, “The Lord’s Supper.”

Guide Page 149

Student Page 85

Use **EXPAND** and **INTEGRATE**

- Reinforce our faith in the ways that Jesus Christ is present with his body, the Church, in the celebration of the Mass.
- Emphasize the unique way in which Christ is present under the appearances of bread and wine. Answer any questions the students may have about their understanding of the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Guide Page 150

Student Pages 86 and 87

Use **EXPLORE** and **INVOLVE**

- Review the parts of the Mass, using “Celebrating Mass” found on page 359 in the student book (guide page 502).
- Have the Sacramentary available or distribute copies of a missalette to the students to help in the review of the Mass. Ask the students to identify the parts of the Mass that show the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Guide Page 151

Student Page 87

Use **EXPAND** and **INTEGRATE**

- Review the Gifts of the Holy Spirit which are received in Baptism and renewed in Confirmation. Discuss how these gifts touch the lives of all who participate in the celebration of the Mass.
- Emphasize the connection between the Eucharist and service. Use the section “Love and Serve” found on guide page 151 to help with this discussion.

Guide Page 152

Student Pages 88 and 89

Use **EXPLORE** and **INVOLVE**

- Ask a volunteer to read aloud John 15:15. Invite the students to write two or three sentences that explain what that passage means to them.
- Allow time for the students to share and discuss their responses.
- Discuss what it means to live in communion with God. Explain that Eucharist is the spiritual food that nourishes the unity of the Body of Christ, the Church.

Guide Page 153

Student Page 89

Use **EXPAND** and **INTEGRATE**

- Discuss the Eucharist as a sacrament of forgiveness. Make sure they understand the difference between forgiveness of venial sins and mortal sin. This may also be a good time to review the need for celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Help the students connect the Eucharist with their everyday life. Use the information in the memo “One with Christ” found on guide page 153 to help lead this discussion.

Conclude the lesson . . .

- Discuss pages 90–93 (guide pages 154–157) with the students.
- Use **REINFORCE** on page 94 (guide page 158).
- Close with a prayer, using “And Now We Pray” or another prayer of your choice.

Ritual Prayer

You will need

- A recording of instrumental music or words and music for an appropriate hymn
- Bible or Lectionary or Book of the Gospels

Ritual Prayer— Sharing a Sign of Peace

Gathering

Gather the students in the prayer area. Play a recording of instrumental music or an appropriate hymn. Invite the students to settle themselves and to become aware of God's presence within and among them.

LEADER: Let us begin as we were baptized.

ALL: *Make the sign of the cross, saying,*
In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

LEADER: God, our loving Father,
you give us the gift of new life in
Jesus Christ, your Son.
Open our hearts to your word.
Send us the Holy Spirit to help us
share the gift of Jesus with others.
We ask this through Jesus Christ
our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

Scripture Reading

LEADER: Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us
listen to the word of God
by signing our forehead, lips, and
heart with the sign of the cross.

READER: A reading from the holy gospel
according to John.

ALL: *Reverently make the sign of the cross on
their forehead, lips, and over their heart,
and then say,*
Glory to you, Lord.

READER: *Proclaim or invite a volunteer to proclaim
John 14:15–27 from the Bible. Conclude
the reading, saying,*

READER: The gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Ritual

LEADER: We are all children of God.
Let us pray as Jesus taught us:

ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in
heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass
against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

LEADER: Jesus gave the gift of his peace to his
followers. Let us share that gift of
peace with one another.

ALL: *Share a sign of peace.*

Closing

LEADER: God, our loving Father,
you have given us the gift of your
Son, Jesus Christ.
Send us the Holy Spirit
to help us share Christ's love and
peace with others.
We ask this through Jesus Christ
our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

Eucharist—Give Thanks

God is the source of all of our gifts and blessings. The greatest gift God gives us is his Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life for us for the forgiveness of sins. At the celebration of the Eucharist we thank God for all his gifts, especially for the gift of Jesus Christ.

Think about all your gifts and blessings. Using the letters that spell the words *Give Thanks*, write the names of some of the gifts that God has given you. An example for the letter *G* has been given to help you get started.

God's Love

THANKS

TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

Remembering Together

In this lesson your child deepened their understanding of the Eucharist and discovered its relationship to the Sacrament of Confirmation. At Mass we receive the Bread of Life. Jesus gives us the gift of himself. We receive the grace to live as peacemakers and share ourselves with others. Use these or similar questions to discover and live this important belief of our faith:

- How do we share peace with one another at church?
- How do we share peace with one another at home?
- How do we share peace with our neighbors?

Sharing Together

Choose one of these activities to do together or design a similar activity of your own:

- Create a banner with the words “We Are All One in Jesus” on it. Display the banner in your home.
- Share a sign of peace with one another at the beginning of your next family meal.
- Brainstorm ways that your family can

be peacemakers with one another. Choose one thing that everyone will agree to do. Do it together.

Praying Together

Pray this or a similar prayer at family meals or at other family prayer times this week:

God, our loving Father,
today we share in the peace
of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Send us the Holy Spirit
to help us share the gift of Jesus
by living as peacemakers.
We ask this through Jesus Christ
our Lord. Amen.

Getting Ready Together

The celebration of Confirmation takes place within the context of the Mass. The rite of Communion takes place after all the candidates have been anointed. This would be a good time to review the Liturgy of the Eucharist and emphasize the ritual activities, prayers, and responses of the communion rite.

Using Chapter 11—One Person’s Decision



Preparing for Confirmation

God’s invitation to live a life of faith calls us to a lifelong commitment. A life of faith involves both the search for understanding the meaning of the mysteries of the faith of the church community and the living a way of life—our life in Christ. The desire and willingness of a baptized person to respond to the grace of the Holy Spirit and make such a commitment is an essential requirement for receiving the sacrament of Confirmation.

In Baptism we make promises that we commit to live out the rest of our lives. When the Church baptizes infants, these promises are made in the infant’s name by their parents and godparents. Those baptized as infants renew these promises in their own name during the rite of Confirmation.

All the baptized are joined to Jesus Christ. Our relationship with Christ guides the way we live as disciples of Christ. The vision or discipline that guides our living our life in Christ is called our spirituality. Spirituality is the way we relate to God, to other people, to ourselves, and to the world. Our spirituality flows from the core faith beliefs and values that form our lives.

This lesson focuses on the decision that each of us makes to live out our baptismal promises, to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today. Chapter 11 can be used as part of the Confirmation preparation, or it may be presented after the celebration of Confirmation to help the students discover the life-long decision that each of them has made to live as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Objectives

- Explain the reaction of Jesus’ disciples to his teaching about wealth and the kingdom of God.
- Describe what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Describe the ways Confirmation strengthens us as disciples of Jesus.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the values for living a simpler life.

Resources

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church: 737–741, 1285*
- **Faith First** video, Grade 4, Segment 5: *The Visual Bible™*, “Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount” and “The Rich Young Man”

Materials

- Prayer Ritual—Anointing with Oil
- Worksheet —Followers of Jesus
- Family Page

Begin the lesson . . .

Lead the candidates (or newly confirmed) in the celebration of the ritual prayer found on page 26 of this booklet.

Guide Page 213 **Student Page 133**

Use **DISCOVER**.

- Have the students recall those people who helped them prepare for the celebration of Confirmation. Discuss the role these people might have played in leading the candidates toward the celebration of Confirmation.
- Discuss ways in which the students can use their talents to become the person God has created them to be. Refer to the Memo, “Being First” on guide page 213 to help with this discussion.
- Ask the students to identify ways in which the sacrament of Confirmation helps them become a disciples of Jesus Christ.

Guide Pages 214 and 215 **Student Pages 134 and 135**

Discuss the “Bible Background” pages with the students.

Guide Pages 216 and 217 **Student Pages 136 and 137**

Use **EXPLORE** and **INVOLVE**.

- Discuss the dangers of being attached to wealth and possessions.
- If time permits, show and discuss the **Faith First** video, Grade 4, Segment 5: *The Visual Bible™*, “Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount” and “The Rich Young Man.”
- Invite the students to make a list of their most favorite worldly possessions.
- Ask the students to reflect on the story of the rich man in

Mark 10:18–31. Have the students review their list of possessions. Ask whether they would be able to give away all their favorite possessions and follow Jesus. Be sure to respect the privacy of the students.

- Use **EXPAND** and **INTEGRATE**.

Guide Page 218 **Student Pages 138 and 139**

Use **EXPLORE** and **INVOLVE**.

- Discuss what it means for a person to give up everything to be a follower of Jesus Christ.
- Remind the students that it is only by the grace of the Holy Spirit that we are able to become true disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Have students complete the activity in “Bright Ideas” on guide page 218.

Guide Page 219 **Student Page 139**

Use **EXPAND**.

Ask the students to identify someone in their life whom they see as a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Have them identify and share the gifts and talents they see in this person that make them true followers of Jesus Christ.

Use **INTEGRATE**.

- Explain the Old Testament teaching on wealth. Use the Memo “Poverty and Possessions” found on guide page 219 to help in this explanation.
- Discuss how Jesus’ teaching on wealth differs from the Old Testament understanding of wealth.

Guide Pages 220 and 221 **Student Pages 140 and 141**

Discuss the “What Difference Does This Make in the Church?” pages with the students.

Guide Page 222

Student Pages 142 and 143

Use **RECALL** and **EXPLORE**. Use the “Bright Ideas” on pages 222 and 223 of the guide as an activity for the students. List on the board the five qualities of a simple life. Discuss these qualities with the students. Assign the students to small groups and have each group create one of the five value posters.

Guide Page 223 **Student Page 143**

Use **INTEGRATE** and **DECIDE**. *Optional:* Expand the discussion that service is an integral part of being a follower of Christ by using pages 278 and 279 of the student book (guide pages 402 and 403). These pages discuss two models—herald and servant—that can be used to describe service to the Church.

Conclude the lesson . . .

- Use **REINFORCE** on page 144 (guide page 224).
- Use the poem “What Can You Do?” found on page 143 of the student book for the closing prayer.

LEADER: Lord Jesus,

we want to be your disciples. We ask that you show us the way.
(Invite twelve students to each read one of the statements in the poem “What Can You Do?”)

LEADER: Spirit of God, we ask you to guide us as we strive to become true followers of Jesus. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ.

ALL: Amen.

Ritual Prayer

You will need

- A recording of instrumental music or words and music for an appropriate hymn
- Olive oil, fragrant oil, a small bowl
- Bible or Lectionary or Book of the Gospels

Ritual Prayer— Anointing with Oil

Gathering

Gather the students in the prayer area. Play a recording of instrumental music or an appropriate hymn. Invite the students to settle themselves and to become aware of God's presence within and among them.

LEADER: Let us begin as we were baptized.

ALL: *Make the sign of the cross, saying,*
In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

LEADER: God, our loving Father,
you give us the Holy Spirit to be
our helper and guide.
Send us the Holy Spirit
to open our hearts
to listen to your word.
We ask this through Jesus Christ
our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

Scripture Reading

LEADER: Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us
listen to the word of God
by signing our forehead, lips, and
heart with the sign of the cross.

READER: A reading from the Acts of the
Apostles.

ALL: *Reverently make the sign of the cross on
their forehead, lips, and over their heart.*

READER: *Proclaim or invite a volunteer to proclaim
Acts of the Apostles 2:1–42 from the
Bible. Conclude the reading, saying,*

READER: The word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Ritual

LEADER: *Mix olive oil and a few drops of a
fragrant oil in a small glass bowl, which
you have placed on the prayer table. Tell
the students that you will rub the oil on
the palms of their hands. Point out that
this action is called anointing. Invite the
students to process forward, using these
or similar words:*

*I invite you to come forward in
procession. I will anoint the palms
of your hands. After I have anointed
your hands, please respond,
“Thanks be to God.” Then rub
your hands together and rub the oil
into your hands.*

*Anoint the palms of each student's
hands, saying,
Go in peace to love and serve
the Lord.*

CHILD: Thanks be to God.

Closing

LEADER: God, our loving Father,
today our hands were anointed with
oil to remind us that at Baptism we
were anointed as followers of
your Son.

*Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit
who helps us live as Jesus taught us.
We ask this through Jesus Christ
our Lord.*

ALL: Amen.

Followers of Jesus

Our church family gathers for Mass each week on Saturday evening and on Sunday. The priest and other ministers process into the church behind a cross. The cross reminds us of Jesus' love for us. Processing behind the cross reminds us that we are followers of Jesus Christ.

What other things does your parish do that shows it is a community of followers of Jesus Christ? On the vertical beam of this cross list those things. On the horizontal beam describe how one of those things helps you live as a follower of Christ.

Followers of Jesus

TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

Remembering Together

In this chapter your child learned about one person's decision to follow Jesus. Think about how the first Christians lived as followers of Jesus and how Christians live today. This is a good time for you to talk about your own parish community. Review the name or names of:

- your church, or parish community.
- your pastor.
- other special people you know at church.
- the things the people of your parish do together to help one another and the people of your community.

Sharing Together

Choose one of these activities to do together or design a similar activity of your own:

- The first followers of Jesus shared their food and other possessions with one another. Find out how your family can donate to a local food collection or shelter or parish service group that serves people in need.
- Look at the pictures in a family photo album. Point out those photos that show people following Jesus.

- Find out how your family can join in welcoming new members into your parish community. Choose one thing that you will do together to be welcoming.

Praying Together

Pray this or a similar prayer at family meals or at other family prayer times this week:

God, our loving Father,
today we gather together in honor
of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Send us the Holy Spirit
to help us follow Jesus every day.
We ask this through Jesus Christ
our Lord. Amen.

Getting Ready Together

Together with your son or daughter review what it means to celebrate Confirmation and become a disciple of Jesus.

After the Celebration of Confirmation

Recall with your child their experience of the rite of Confirmation. Talk to your child about what it is like for them to know that they have been blessed by God with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Discuss ways they can use these gifts to continue to live their lives as followers of Jesus Christ.

A Confirmation Retreat

Note: This retreat is designed for an entire day. By using only the shaded sections, the retreat can be completed in a shorter time period.

Materials Needed

- Name tags
- Brightly colored markers
- Newsprint
- Tape
- Pencils
- Bible
- Candle
- Basket
- Prayer table
- Copies of the blackline master handouts
- Letter paper and envelopes

Welcome and Gather

Greet each of the participants individually as they arrive. Provide name tags and brightly colored markers and invite the participants to create and decorate a name tag that identifies and describes them.

When everyone has arrived and finished making their name tags, welcome them. Present a brief overview of what will happen at the retreat. Use these or similar words to welcome the participants:

I am happy that you are with us at this retreat. Does anyone know what a retreat is? Retreat comes from a French word meaning “to withdraw.” There will be some quiet time and some prayer time, but we will also be active in groups. There will be time to get to know a little more about yourself and to discover ways God is working in your life now.

We will talk about Confirmation and ways that the Gifts of the Holy Spirit will be an active and vibrant part of your life. We will tell some stories. We will hear some people tell their stories. And we will do some fun things!

Let’s begin. (Lead the participants in the icebreaker activity.)

Icebreaker Activity

Ask all the participants to sit on chairs, which are arranged to form a large circle. Tell the participants that you will make a statement, and if that statement applies to them, they are to get out of their chair, and rush to sit in a different chair on the other side of the circle.

Use some statements that can apply to some of the participants, such as “Everyone with brown eyes.” Use other statements that can apply to all of the

participants, such as “Everyone who is in junior high.” Use some fun statements that will get the participants laughing, such as “Everyone who has a piece of useless junk in their pocket.”

After you make the first few statements (and the participants get the idea of how the game is played), remove one of the chairs. This will leave one participant without a chair to sit on. Have that person stand in the middle of the circle, make the next statement, and run to find a chair when others move. Remember that not all participants will move with each statement. Conclude the activity by saying, “Everyone who is preparing for Confirmation.” (Be sure at this time to replace the chair that you removed.)

All the participants should now be sitting on different chairs than the ones they were sitting on when they first arrived. Allow a few minutes for the participants to chat and laugh about the activity and to begin to settle down a bit.

Summarize, saying these or similar words:

That was a fun way to discover how each of us is different from one another, but each of us also has one very important thing in common with one another: Each of us has been blessed by God and created by God in his image and likeness.

Prayer and Scripture Reading

Invite the participants to stand and listen as you read the parable of the talents.

Leader: A reading from the gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, Lord.

Leader: (Read Matthew 25:14–30.)

The word of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Ask the participants to be seated and distribute copies of the handout on page 32. Allow sufficient time for the participants to reflect on and answer each of the questions. Invite volunteers to share how they responded to the questions. Then conclude with one of the participants reading this prayer:

God, our Father, open our minds and hearts to the teachings of the Spirit. May we use our talents to spread the message of Jesus, your Son. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Story

Have the participants sit comfortably as you tell this story.

There was a young boy named Gianni who lived in a small village nestled in the mountains of northern Italy. Tucked into the hills were rock quarries containing marble. Every day Gianni would walk to school, winding his way through the narrow streets of the village past all the stores and shops and houses. On his way home, he always paused and spent some time at the workshop of Giuseppe the sculptor. It was fun to watch him work as he used his hammers and chisels. Gianni was especially excited one day when a large block of glistening white marble appeared in Giuseppe's workshop. Every day, Gianni would rush out of school to stand at the door of Giuseppe's workshop. Gianni watched curiously as the block of marble slowly changed its shape. Then one day when Gianni gazed into the workshop, there it was, looking straight at him—a huge statue of a lion. He was amazed and turned to Giuseppe and asked, "How did you find the lion in that big piece of marble?" "Easy," responded Giuseppe. "I simply chipped away everything that was not the lion."

Connection

Discuss the story with the participants. Use these or similar points:

1. You cannot always tell who a person is or what a person is like by merely looking at the person's outside. Looking beyond the outside of a person (chipping away at the marble) can help us discover who a person really is.
2. Each person has strengths and weaknesses.
3. Growing as a responsible Christian includes discovering our qualities, developing those qualities, and using them to live our faith. God works in us and through us to build on the gifts that each of us has been given.

Explain that at this retreat today, we are going to spend some time reflecting on the gifts that God has given us. The challenge now is to work with the Spirit and develop our gifts. Let's begin by identifying those positive qualities that are important for a person to have.

Group Activity

Introduce the group activity by asking the participants to talk about people whom they respect and admire. Use these or similar words:

All of you know people you respect and admire. Who is someone you look up to? Who are some well-known people you look up to? What other people do you look up to? Which saints do you look up to? Think about why you look up to these people. Think about some of the qualities these people possess that you admire. Talk about some of the positive qualities that these people possess.

Divide the participants into groups of four or five. Have each group brainstorm and list on a sheet of newsprint at least five qualities they look for in persons whom they admire. Then have the group choose and circle the three most important qualities on this list.

Gather the whole group together. Discuss and share the top three qualities circled from the list made by the individual groups. From this discussion have all the participants decide on the five most important qualities for them as a group. Write these on a sheet of newsprint.

Presentation: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Use these or similar words to begin a discussion of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Together, we have identified qualities that we look for and admire in other people. How do we discover that someone has one or more of these gifts? It is because we see people using their gifts. We cannot see wisdom, but we can see the ways that people act wisely.

We too are called to develop our gifts in the same way as the people in the parable of the talents. Three people received gifts and were accountable for their gifts to their master. We must develop our gifts and talents. The Holy Spirit dwelling within us helps us do this.

Give a copy of the handout on page 33 to each participant. Discuss and explain the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Allow time for the participants to quietly reflect on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and to respond to the questions.

Activity

Have the participants create a skit that depicts people their age using the Gifts of the Spirit. Form seven

groups and assign one of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to each of the seven groups. Encourage the participants to role-play a situation that portrays the use of the gift of the Holy Spirit assigned to their group.

Personal Witness to the Gifts of the Spirit

One aspect of the Church's life is the faithful living their baptism by sharing their gifts. Illustrate a situation of someone giving witness to Christ by sharing their gifts. This could be done in several ways. For example:

1. Invite one or several of the group leaders of the retreat day to share their reflections on what the Holy Spirit means to them.
2. View and discuss a video that shows how people use the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in their lives.
3. Invite the participants to role-play the story of some of the people who are important in the history of the Church.

Activity: Identifying Your Gifts

Involve participants in an activity that will help them identify the gifts that others see in them and the gifts that they see in themselves. Have them write a letter that will be used in the closing prayer celebration, thanking God for these gifts.

- Tape a cutout copy of the flame from the handout on page 34 to each participant's back.
- Tell all the participants to walk around the room and write on each other's flame a positive quality that they see in that person.
- After sufficient time, have the participants sit down in a comfortable position and take the list of positive qualities from their backs. Let them read the list.
- Play some appropriate music for reflection. Invite each participant to reflect on what these gifts and qualities mean to them.
- Distribute letter paper and envelopes and invite the participants to write a letter to God. This letter should include three parts: naming some of their gifts, thanking God for their gifts, and telling ways in which they will use these gifts.
- When everyone has completed writing the letter, tell the participants that they will offer their letter to God during the closing prayer.

Closing Prayer Celebration

Gather the participants for prayer. Play a recording of reflective music to help the participants focus. On the prayer table place an open Bible, a candle, and a basket.

Leader: Light and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord!

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Let us give thanks to God our Father, always and for everything.

All: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reader: (Proclaim Matthew 5:14–16.)

Leader: Let us spend a few minutes quietly reflecting on the words of Jesus and the meaning of those words for our lives. Think about all that we did together at this retreat, and reflect on ways that you can be lights to the world.

After some time for quiet reflection, continue playing music and invite the participants to bring the letter that they wrote to God and reverently place it in the basket. When all the participants have placed their letter in the basket, invite everyone to sing.

Response: (Sing “We Are the Light of the World” [Jean A. Grief, GIA Publications, 7404 South Mason Avenue, Chicago, IL 60638] or another appropriate song.)

All: (Provide a copy of the handout “Prayer to the Holy Spirit” on page 35. Have the participants take the prayer home as a reminder of the retreat day.) Pray the “Prayer to the Holy Spirit.”

Leader: Good and gracious God,
thank you for blessing us with your gifts.
Fill us with your Holy Spirit
so that we can truly see these gifts
and use them to bring the good news of Jesus
to the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus our Savior
and Brother.

All: Amen.

Invite all to share a sign of peace with one another, encouraging one another to be lights to the world, using these or similar words:

(Name), peace be with you. Go forth and be a light to the world.

The Parable of the Talents

Matthew 25:14-30

1. What is the one thing you remember about the parable of the talents?

2. What would you say to the master when he returns?

3. What would the master say to you in response?

Sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit

At Confirmation we are sealed with the sevenfold Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Read and reflect on the description of each of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Choose one of the Gifts. Write about or illustrate a situation in the three panels that shows how that gift might enable a young person to live their faith.

Wonder and awe, or fear of the Lord enables us to acknowledge the greatness and power of God through our trust and obedience to God.

Wisdom enables us to value God above all creatures and to make decisions based on that value.

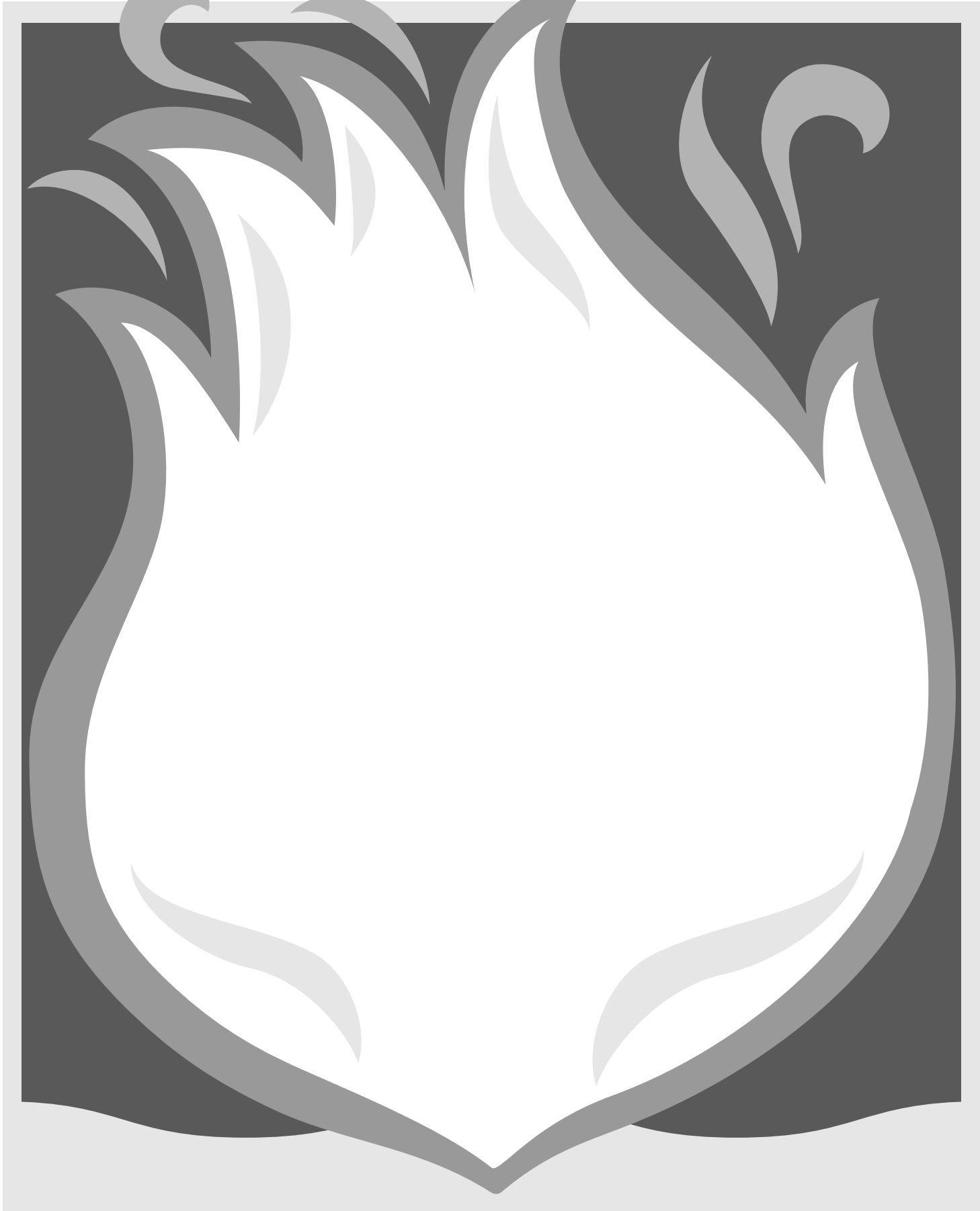
Reverence, or piety, enables us to honor and respect God and all people as children and images of God.

Understanding enables us to discover the meaning of our faith and to live according to its teachings.

Right judgment, or counsel, enables us to make practical decisions to live our faith.

Courage, or fortitude, enables us to overcome obstacles that stand in our way of loving God and others.

Knowledge enables us to see God, reflected in all creatures and to praise him.



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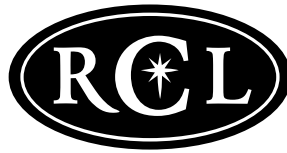
Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come,
Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts
of your
faithful.

And kindle in
them the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit
and they shall be created.

And you will
renew
the face
of the
earth.



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