

Sample Proximate Preparation for Confirmation

Session Two: Service and Mission

Words in *Italics* are for the Leader
Words in **Red** are to be spoken.

Opening Prayer (by the leader):

Lord, we gather together today to deepen our grasp of what it is that our baptism calls us to do. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit which you will receive at Confirmation will strengthen you and enable you to be faithful to this call. May we all be open to your inspirations and be enriched by the mutual sharing that we hope to experience in this session. We ask this through Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Reading: Ephesians 4:1-6

(one of the candidates may proclaim this reading)

Leader: Please take a moment to allow all to reflect silently. Then you may encourage sharing on the Word.

In this reading, Paul is imprisoned just because he was faithfully witnessing to Jesus. But this does not stop him from persevering, regardless of the cost.

From what you have heard, what is this call that St. Paul is speaking of?

From the perspective of those your age, what are some concrete ways that peace and unity can be promoted in today's society?

What in your way of thinking and acting may have to change in order to respond faithfully to your baptismal call to serve?

Leader:

Service is a way to be involved and to grow in our faith, to live as disciples of Jesus in our world today, here and now, according to your particular age. You have already spent time focusing on the meaning and challenges of discipleship for each person trying to live according to God's ways. In this session we will look at service and mission which are very much an integral part of discipleship and living out our baptismal promises.

Jesus came into the world to initiate the values and teachings of His kingdom which in most cases were contrary to the concepts and mentality of the people at that time. At the end of His three years of teaching and preaching, He so selflessly entrusted His life on the cross that one day we may enjoy eternal life with Him in heaven. Forty days after His resurrection, the time had come for the Resurrected Jesus return to heaven. He had taught and initiated what His kingdom should look like but the building of His kingdom

was far from complete. Before returning to heaven, He wanted to leave His task of building the kingdom of God with all of His followers and so we hear Him say: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

We as baptized Catholics are called to be a part of this mission that Jesus is speaking of. Jesus constantly proclaimed the values of love, mercy, forgiveness, peace, justice, dignity of each person, the needs of the poor, etc. These spoke loudly of the values and teachings of His kingdom.

Most often what was it that prophets had to denounce concerning the ways that people of the Old Testament times were living? Over and over they tried to call them away from the injustices they were committing against the poor and marginalized. Throughout Jesus’ life on this earth, He challenged this kind of mentality and action. And He calls us to continue His mission and went so far as to give us His plan of action:

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcome me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me... Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25)

All who are preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation are required to complete a certain number of service hours as an integral part of this preparation. This requirement is a way to enable all who are baptized to come to a deeper realization that each one of us is called to share in Jesus’ mission. Being faithful to these hours of service along with pondering on the words of Jesus should encourage and motivate us to pursue all kinds of ways to be faithful to our call throughout life, not just as a preparation for Confirmation.

Just before the actual conferral of the sacrament of Confirmation, the Bishop will lead you in renewing your Baptismal Promises. At the Easter Vigil and on Easter Sunday all present are led in renewing these promises to keep before our minds and hearts what it means to live as baptized Christians.

Invite the students to form groups and the parents can form their own groupings.

Leader: You will hear: Do you renounce sin, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God? I invite you to share briefly in your groups: What is it that keeps you from living in the true freedom that Jesus offers?

All: Lord, help us to reject any unloving choices that we have made; the sinful failures to love one another, all injustices and violence and whatever disrespects the dignity of all human life.

Leader: You will hear: Do you reject evil, so that sin may have no mastery over you? I invite you to share briefly in your groups: What in your life tries to take you away from your close relationship with the Lord.

All: Lord, we admit that sometimes evil can be attractive. But I personally renew my commitment to turn away from all evil and from allowing any empty promises to deter my staying close to you always. By this promise, I commit myself to greater courage in acting justly and refusing to allow anything to numb my conscience or dull my heart.

Leader: You will hear: Do you reject Satan, the author and prince of sin? I invite you to share briefly: In what ways do you think Satan tries to interfere with your desire to live according to God's ways?

All: Lord, with the accompanying help of the outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, I am ready to renew my promise to reject any of the ways that Satan tries to steer me away from courageously living as a true son or daughter of God.

Leader: And then, you will be asked to profess your faith. Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

All: Lord, you made me and give me life every day. I believe in you, I turn to you, and I place my life and the graces I need each day, in your loving hands.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead, and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

All: Jesus, my Lord and Savior, my life is in your hands. I believe in you, I turn to you, I desire to grow closer to you and in living my life according to Gospel values.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

All: Jesus, you promised not to leave us orphans. I want to be enkindled with the fire of your love, and to be renewed in courage and strength. I believe in and desire to be a part of your work among us. Help me to be a strong instrument of bringing about unity, peace and justice wherever I find myself.

Leader: I invite all to stand. The parents are asked to stand in front of their son/daughter. As I lead this closing prayer experience to call upon God to bless your determination and efforts to respond generously to what you are all called to live, the parents will make the sign of the cross on the particular sense.

Receive the sign of the cross on your forehead: may it remind you of your baptismal call to be active followers of Jesus.

Receive the sign of the cross on your ears: may you be attentive to God's Word and to the unspoken cry for help of so many people.

Receive the sign of the cross on your eyes: may you see the needs of others and the good in others more readily than the negative.

Receive the sign of the cross on your lips: may you speak words of affirmation, encouragement, praise and truth.

Receive the sign of the cross on your heart: may you always realize that your heart is the dwelling place of God and strive to let this conviction guide your words and actions.

Receive the sign of the cross on your shoulders: may you always remember that the Lord shares in all that is involved in your efforts to serve.

Receive the sign of the cross on your hands: may Christ be known to others by the work of your hands.

Receive the sign of the cross on your feet: may your feet take you to wherever you perceive needs and opportunities to serve.

God our Father made you his children by water and the Holy Spirit: may He bless you and watch over you with His fatherly love.

All: Amen.

Leader: Jesus Christ the Son of God promised that the Spirit of truth would be with His Church for ever: may He bless you and give you courage in professing the true faith.

All: Amen.

Leader: The Holy Spirit came down upon the disciples and set their hearts on fire with love: may He bless you, keep you one in faith and love and bring you to the joy of God's kingdom.

All: Amen.