

## Sample Proximate Preparation for Confirmation Session Four: Rite of Confirmation

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

### **Prayer:**

*This can be used as a gathering prayer or as a prayer before dismissal from the catechetical session. Please set the mood allowing for a prayerful experience. Depending on space and availability, the catechist might want to dim the lights and light a candle, or perhaps set up a particular section of the meeting space to gather for prayer.*

**Leader:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Loving Holy Spirit, guide us on our Christian journey as we explore the Rite of Confirmation. Open our hearts and minds to Your Word and will.

*Reader (you may choose one of the candidates to proclaim this reading):*

### **Peter's Speech at Pentecost** Acts 2:14-27

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them, "You who are Jews, indeed all of you staying in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to my words. These people are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 'It will come to pass in the last days,' God says, 'that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. Indeed, upon my servants and my handmaids I will pour out a portion of my spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy. And I will work wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below: blood, fire, and a cloud of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and splendid day of the Lord, and it shall be that everyone shall be saved who calls on the name of the Lord.' You who are Israelites, hear these words. Jesus the Nazorean was a man commended to you by God with mighty deeds, wonders, and signs, which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him. But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it. For David says of him: 'I saw the Lord ever before me, with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed. Therefore my heart has been glad and my tongue has exulted; my flesh, too, will dwell in hope, because you will not abandon my soul

**Leader:** Please take a moment to reflect silently. Then-

**As a faithful Christian community gathered here today we remember these special intentions. Please respond "Lord, hear our prayer."**

*Reader (you may choose one of the candidates to offer these intentions)*

- 1.) For our church leaders, that they will continue by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to bring us closer to the true faith in Jesus Christ. We pray to the Lord.
- 2.) For those receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, that they will be open to the Holy Spirit leading them in their faith journey. We pray to the Lord.
- 3.) For vocations, that those who the Holy Spirit is calling to religious life will answer this special calling. We pray to the Lord.

*Leader:* As we gather today, let us remember that just as Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, so will you be when you receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

**Lesson:**

## **Rite of Confirmation**

Leader:

*In this lesson you will instruct the candidates to better understand the Rite of Confirmation as well as their role in the Rite. Keep in mind that added resources for this session are the **National Directory for Catechesis** and the text provided for your religious education program and approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCC).*

Catholic Christians come from a deep and rich tradition in encountering God through the various sacraments. The Roman Catholic Church believes in Seven Sacraments:

The Sacraments of Initiation- Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist

The Sacraments of Healing- Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick

The Sacraments of Service- Marriage and Holy Orders

What is a Sacrament? Sacraments are holy, visible signs instituted by Christ of an invisible reality, in which Christians can experience the healing, forgiving, nourishing, strengthening presence of God that enables them to love in turn; this is possible because God's grace works in the Sacrament (Youcat 105). These are effective signs of God's love. They change us for the better.

*Ask the candidates the following questions:*

**Why do you think we need sacraments?**

*As the candidates respond orally, you may want to write the responses on a board where all of the other candidates can see and share in the thoughts of the group. This allows for not only faith sharing but also cooperative learning experiences.*

*Continue by saying-*

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, “The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are *necessary for salvation*. ‘Sacramental grace’ is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament. The Spirit heals and transforms those who receive him by conforming them to the Son of God. The fruit of the sacramental life is that the Spirit of adoption makes the faithful partakers in the divine nature by uniting them in a living union with the only Son, the Savior.” (1129).

Just as someone always is and remains a child of their parents (and not just “sometimes” or “a little bit”), so also through Baptism and Confirmation one forever becomes a child of God, Christ-like, and a member of His Church. Just as Holy Orders isn’t merely a job that one can retire from, the same is true for Confirmation. Confirmation leaves an indelible mark on our souls. That is something that cannot be taken away. Those who receive this sacrament are changed forever (Youcat 106). This indelible mark on the soul “perfects the common priesthood of the faithful, received at Baptism” (CCC 1305). Those confirmed receive the grace and the power to witness their faith in Christ to the world in the name of the Church (Stasiak 126).

As with all sacraments in the Roman Catholic faith there are Rites that are used in the Sacrament of Confirmation. These Rites have both matter and form, or a physical sign and a spoken sign. In the Roman Catholic Faith the essential rite of Confirmation is anointing the forehead of the baptized with sacred chrism, together with the laying on of the minister's hand and the words: *‘Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti’*, “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit” (CCC 1320).

The words of the sacramental rite, especially those words that are considered the form of the sacrament, are most important. It is these words that give form and meaning to the “visible words” of the symbols and gestures. It is for this reason that the Church provides the essential words, rather than relying upon the education, imagination, or ability of the Bishop during the Sacrament of Confirmation. That is why the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “no sacramental rite may be modified or manipulated at the will of the minister (in the case of Confirmation the minister would be the bishop) or the community” (CCC1125). The sacraments do not “belong” to a particular minister or particular community; they belong to the Church because they are the actions of the Church (Stasiak 27).

The Ordinary Minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation is a bishop. As Confirmation Candidates, you should be looking to do good works and live as Christians outside of your own parish community. The coming of the bishop symbolizes that he represents the diocese as a whole. As members of the Church, you belong to a Church with a vast, rich history (Stasiak 127).

Confirmed people experience a growth in the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and wonder and awe. These gifts help them grow deeper spiritually, in order to deepen their faith and grow closer to God.

At this time, we will look to Scripture to hear what Scripture tells us about being filled with the Holy Spirit.

*Instruct one of the confirmation candidates to read Acts of the Apostles 2: 1–43. This will correspond with Activity and the Handout for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. You may ask the candidates to do this individually or in small cooperative learning groups.*

*When they have completed this activity, please allow for some time to have the candidates share their responses with the larger group.*

*Continue by saying-*

In the reading from Acts of the Apostles that we just heard, we encounter Peter and the other Apostles right after they are filled with the Holy Spirit. It must have been a very overwhelming experience for them. This experience led them to want so badly to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. Think of it this way. If your favorite athlete or musician came to you, you would want to tell everyone about that experience. Well the apostles encountered someone greater than anyone else ever created, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit gave them the passion to go and spread the Word of Jesus. Those who have received the Sacrament of Confirmation are called to live a life according to Jesus and to become role models not only in their parish, but also in the greater community.

## **Activity**

### **Rite of Confirmation**

Please take some time and reflect on the following questions.

Reflect on which of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit requires the most attention and openness to God in order to live it.

Share what you think is the most difficult responsibility of being a confirmed Christian and a member of the Church. What is the most exciting responsibility? What is the most rewarding responsibility?

What does it mean to you to belong totally to Christ?

What do you do spiritually to prepare for confirmation?

What does being confirmed mean to you in your spiritual life?

What do you hope it means for other young people?

How does being anointed with oil connect you with God?

## THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

### Handout

Wisdom: Through wisdom, the wonders of nature, every event in history, and all the ups and downs of our life take on deeper meaning and purpose. The wise person sees where the Spirit of God is at work and is able to share that insight with others. Wisdom is the fullest expression of the gifts of knowledge and understanding.

Understanding: The gift of understanding is the ability to comprehend how a person must live her or his life as a follower of Jesus. Through the gift of understanding, Christians realize that the Gospel tells them not just who Jesus is; it also tells them who we are. The gift of understanding is closely related to the gifts of knowledge and wisdom.

Right Judgment: The gift of right judgment is the ability to know the difference between right and wrong and then to choose what is good. It helps us to act on and live out what Jesus has taught. In the exercise of right judgment, many of the other gifts – especially understanding, wisdom, and often courage – come into play in the Christian’s daily life.

Courage: The gift of courage enables us to take risks and to overcome fear as we try to live out the Gospel of Jesus. Followers of Jesus confront many challenges and even danger – the risk of being laughed at, the fear of rejection, and, for some believers, the fear of physical harm and even death. The Spirit gives Christians the strength to confront and ultimately overcome such challenges.

Knowledge: The gift of knowledge is the ability to comprehend the basic meaning and message of Jesus. Jesus revealed the will of God, his Father, and taught people what they need to know to achieve fullness of life and, ultimately, salvation. The gift of knowledge is closely related to the gifts of understanding and wisdom.

Reverence: Sometimes called piety, the gift of reverence gives the Christian a deep sense of respect for God. Jesus spoke of his Father, God, as “Abba,” a very intimate name similar to “daddy” or “pappa.” Through the gift of reverence, we can come before God with the openness and trust of small children, totally dependent on the One who created us.

Wonder and Awe: The gift of wonder and awe in the presence of God is sometimes translated as “the fear of the Lord.” Though we can approach God with the trust of little children, we are also often aware of God’s total majesty, unlimited power, and desire for justice. A child may want to sit on the lap of his loving Father, but sometimes the believer will fall on her knees in the presence of the Creator of the universe.

(Taken from *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*, by Brian Singer-Towns et al. Winona, MN: Saint Mary’s Press, 2004, pages 374–375. 2004 by Saint Mary’s Press.