

Confirmation Prep Guidelines
April, 1998

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

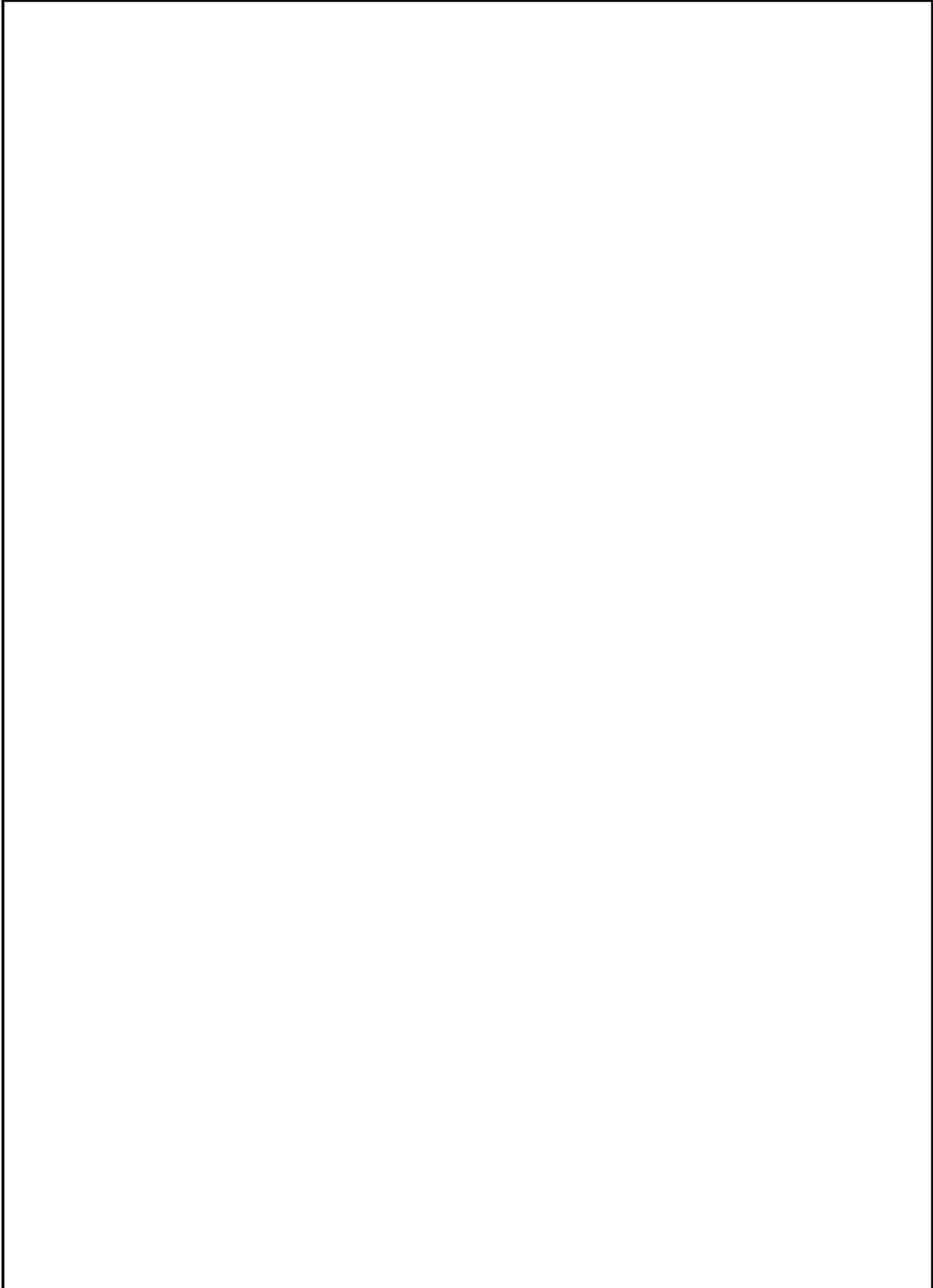
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GUIDELINES FOR CONFIRMATION

1. Confirmation preparation teams should exist in all parishes.
2. Pastor responsibilities include the following:
 - become a member of the parish Confirmation Preparation Team when possible
 - ensure adequate training for the Confirmation team
 - “see that the faithful are properly instructed to receive the sacrament and come to it at the opportune time”- Canon 890
 - interviews conducted by the pastor and/or parish staff before the Rite of Commitment
a decision not to confirm needs to be made by the pastor, along with the parent and candidate, prior to Lent of the junior year. Candidates are encouraged to remain in the process until this time to facilitate an informed decision. No candidate is to be deferred after Ash Wednesday.
 - record the Confirmation data at the church in which the sacrament is celebrated – Canon 895
 - notify the parish of Baptism that Confirmation was conferred – Canon 895
3. Catechesis for Confirmation is to be parish based and family inclusive. It is presumed that candidates participate weekly at Sunday Liturgy and frequently celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is assumed that the candidate receives doctrinal formation in either a Catholic school, parish religious education program, or is adequately home schooled. Catechesis for Confirmation is modeled on the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults. The process is experiential and is part of comprehensive youth ministry.
4. Confirmation formation is to be provided for candidates, family members and sponsors.
5. A parent meeting is to be held at the end of 8th or beginning of 9th grade. Youth may be included. This meeting is designed to inform and enlist parent support for the Confirmation process. Youth should not begin the process until this meeting is attended. In the case where parents refuse support, candidates may enter the sacramental preparation process after a pastoral interview.
6. Sponsors are to be involved in the faith formation of the candidate from the ninth grade, when possible. They are to meet with the candidate 2-4 times during the eleventh grade, review the **Rite of Confirmation** and attend the prayer service/rehearsal with their candidates. They are encouraged to attend the **Faith for the Journey: Baptism** and **Gifted for the Journey: Gifts of the Holy Spirit** Retreats. In the unusual event where sponsors are not geographically present, they are to be catechized regarding the sacrament of Confirmation in creative ways.
7. Retreats are as follows:
 - 9th grade – **Faith for the Journey: Baptism**
 - 10th grade – **Gifted for the Journey: Gifts of the Holy Spirit** and
Stories for the Journey: Parables
 - 11th grade – **Discipleship for the Journey: Christian Story**
8. As part of the faith formation process, it is presumed that candidates are already actively involved in service which is required in Catholic Schools, parish religious education programs, and for those home schooled. Candidates are invited to participate in parish based service. Families and sponsors are strongly encouraged to participate.

9. Rites are as follows:

Rite of Blessing of the Candidates – during the ninth grade at a Sunday Liturgy.
Option: Rite may be prayed at the end of the **Baptism: Faith for the Journey** Retreat.

Rite of Commitment – either at the end of the 10th or beginning of the 11th grade during a Sunday Liturgy.

Rite of Sending Forth for Confirmation – Sunday Liturgy prior to the celebration of Confirmation.

Rite of Confirmation – during the Easter Season.

10. At the **Rite of Confirmation** the sponsor places their hand on the shoulder of the candidate as they are presented to the Bishop. The candidate gives his/her confirmation name to the Bishop. The informational cards with the name of the candidate and the confirmation name are to be given to the person attending the Bishop.

ONGOING FAITH FORMATION PROCESS
YOUTH PREPARATION FOR THE INITIATION SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

First Phase: Call from God

Time: Ongoing from Baptism through childhood and adolescence.
Aim: Assist in deepening an appreciation of the baptismal call.
Content: The faith formation process, begins in the family and continues in the Catholic school, parish program, or home schooling and includes Word, Worship, Teaching, Community, and Service. Conduct initial meeting with parents. The youth with their parents and sponsors participate in the 9th grade **Faith for the Journey: Baptism** Retreat.

**CELEBRATION OF THE RITE OF BLESSING OF
THE CANDIDATES FOR CONFIRMATION**

Second Phase: Formation of the Individual and Family

Time: Following the **Rite of Blessing of the Candidates**, normally the 10th grade.
Aim: Deepen the candidate's, family's and sponsor's understanding of the Christian lifestyle and encourage a response *to the Gospel call* to discipleship in age appropriate ways.
Content: The faith formation process in the family, Catholic school, parish program, or home schooling continues support and formation. The candidates participate in: an interview, and **Stories for the Journey: Parables** Retreat. The candidates with their parents and sponsors participate in the **Gifted for the Journey: Gifts of the Holy Spirit** Retreat.

THE RITE OF COMMITMENT

Third Phase: Preparation and Reflection

Time: Following the **Rite of Commitment** and prior to the **Rite of Confirmation**, normally the 11th grade.
Aim: Prepare for the **Rite of Confirmation**.
Content: The faith formation process continues. Candidates attend the **Discipleship for the Journey: Christian Story** Retreat. The candidates and sponsors meet 2-4 times and attend the prayer service/rehearsal. Candidates, sponsors, and parents review the **Rite of Confirmation**.

THE RITE OF SENDING

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Fourth Phase: Continuing Growth in the Faith

Time: Following Confirmation.
Aim: As confirmed and fully initiated Christians, live out and be faithful to the baptismal and Eucharistic life.
Content: The faith formation process continues. The fully initiated are to become active disciples of Christ.

FIRST PHASE: CALL FROM GOD

TIME: Ongoing from Baptism through childhood and adolescence.

AIM: Assist in deepening an appreciation of the baptismal call.

CONTENT: Affirmation and support of family life helps to ground faith formation

The parish provides and nourishes communal faith development.

It is assumed that youth entering the confirmation preparation process have had faithful attendance in Catholic schools, parish religious education programs / youth ministry or have been faithfully home-schooled from the time of first Eucharist.

Understand Confirmation, a sacrament of initiation, as an affirmation of Baptism which leads to and flows from the celebration of Eucharist.

The liturgical life of the parish should encourage and support the faith journey of children and youth.

Regular participation at Sunday Liturgy is the duty of the baptized. The community gathers around word and sacrament to praise God.

Parents are to attend an informational meeting at the end of their teen's 8th or beginning of the 9th grade. Youth may be invited to attend. This meeting will provide information regarding the Confirmation process and elicit parent support and encouragement.

Service is integral to living and proclaiming the mission of Jesus Christ into which candidates were baptized and eucharized. Parents and sponsors are to encourage a life of Christian service.

Faith for the Journey: Baptism Retreat includes candidates, parents and sponsors.

RITE OF BLESSING OF THE CANDIDATES FOR CONFIRMATION

Explanatory Notes:

- (1) *This Rite is celebrated after the First Phase - Call from God, and before the Second Phase - Formation of the Individual and Family. Ideally, this Rite is prayed at Sunday Mass.*

*If this Rite is prayed at the conclusion of the first retreat, **Faith for the Journey: Baptism**, the prayer leader should begin with the Sign of the Cross, sing a hymn that is in praise of the Holy Spirit, and proclaim a reading from Scripture. The selection of Scripture can come from the Lectionary citation for Confirmation, Numbers 763 t through 767 (pgs. 915-925) A short reflection on Scripture should follow. Otherwise, there should be a silent reflection on God's word. The **Rite of Blessing** would follow as it appears. Following the prayer of blessing, the Rite could conclude with a hymn of praise and thanks.*

- (2) *The **Rite of Blessing** follows the Liturgy of the Word and homily and concludes with the Profession of Faith and General Intercessions. Priests and deacons are encouraged to tie the Holy Spirit and Confirmation into their homilies.*
- (3) *The Pastor and the Director of the Confirmation Process are the normal ministers of this **Rite of Blessing**.*
- (4) *Candidates of Confirmation and their sponsors can be part of the entrance procession and enter after the servers and readers but before the presider.*

Confirmation Director: Father _____, I present to you these baptized young Christians who seek to deepen their Christian commitment and become full members of their Church by receiving the sacrament of Confirmation. They continue their journey of living their call from God first received at Baptism.

Confirmation Director reads the names of each candidate; as their name is called, the candidate with their sponsor and/or parent (s) comes forward in the area of the altar and stands in front of their pastor. Parents are also asked to stand.

Pastor: Dear parents and sponsors of these young people, are you willing to undertake the task of guiding these candidates in their process towards full initiation into the Catholic Church?

Parents and Sponsors: We are.

Pastor: Do you promise to support them by your prayers and example during the intensity of the preparation process and, also, through out their lifetime?

Parents and Sponsors: We do.

Pastor: Would the Confirmation Team please stand. (To Confirmation Team) are you as their catechists willing to verify for our parish community that there is a genuine sense of commitment to following Jesus Christ's way of life within the Roman Catholic Church?

Team: We are.

Pastor: Candidates of the sacrament of Confirmation of our parish, are you willing to continue the process of Christian initiation begun in you at Baptism and continued in the Eucharist?

Candidates: We are.

Pastor: Do you understand that the sacrament of Confirmation is not the completion of your religious education and faith formation but rather a mature commitment to continue to grow spiritually and intellectually as Christian adults?

Candidates: We do.

Pastor: Then may God bring to completion the good work that has begun in Jesus Christ.

The pastor imposes hands (outstretched or touching those to be confirmed); those present are invited to impose their hands over those to be confirmed. The imposition of hands is a liturgical gesture found in the Old Testament, continued in the New Testament, and still used in the Church today. It expresses identity and solidarity between the one imposing hands and the one receiving the imposition. With the pastor and the gathered assembly, those seeking Confirmation are blessed by the believing community.

Lord, our God, look with kindness on these young candidates of the sacrament of Confirmation whom the faith of the Church commends to your tender care. Send your blessing on them so that they may grow in Christian maturity and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, become Christ's witnesses in the world, spreading and defending the faith. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Pastor can invite the assembly to applaud and show their affirmation of the candidates.

The Profession of Faith follows.

Next are the General Intercessions

Possible intercessions in addition to the regular petitions:

--- For these young people that they feel in a concrete way the support of our parish community, **let us pray to the Lord. . .**

--- For the parents, sponsors, catechists and all who have and continue to contribute to the spiritual formation of these candidates for the sacrament of Confirmation, **let us pray to the Lord. . .**

--- For each of us, that we renew again today the commitment made at our Confirmation, **let us pray to the Lord. . .**

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins.

Candidates, sponsors and families could be invited to dress the altar (altar cloth) and to bring up the bread and wine, and monetary offerings in the presentation of the gifts.

SECOND PHASE: FORMATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY

TIME: Following the **Rite of Blessing** of the Candidates, normally the 10th grade.

AIM: Deepen the candidate's, family's and sponsor's understanding of the Christian lifestyle and response to the Gospel call to discipleship in age appropriate ways.

CONTENT: Affirmation and support of family life which helps ground faith formation. The parish provides and nourishes communal faith development.

Faithful attendance at a Catholic school, parish religious education program / youth ministry or homes-schooling provides doctrinal information.

Candidates are to participate in the **Stories for the Journey: Parables** Retreat.

Candidates, parents and sponsors participate in the **Gifted for the Journey: Gifts of the Spirit** Retreat.

Service is a response to the Gospel call to discipleship. Parents and sponsors are to encourage a life of Christian service.

Regular participation at Sunday Liturgy is the duty of the baptized. The community gathers around word and sacrament to praise God.

Interviews with clergy or parish staff will include:

- the renewal of the baptismal commitment
- the meaning of a life of Christian service
- prayer in the life of the youth
- openness to and meaning of the Holy Spirit
- reception and meaning of Eucharist and Penance
- reflection on the importance of the name being chosen

THE RITE OF COMMITMENT

Explanatory Notes:

- (1) *This Rite is celebrated after the Second Phase - Formation of the Individual and Family, before the Third Phase - Preparation and Reflection. Ideally, this Rite is prayed at Sunday Mass.*
- (2) *The **Rite of Commitment** follows the Liturgy of the Word and homily (priests and deacons are encouraged to speak of the Holy Spirit and Confirmation in their homilies), and concludes with the Profession of Faith and General Intercessions.*
- (3) *The Pastor and Director of the Confirmation Process are the normal ministers of this Rite.*
- (4) *Candidates of Confirmation and their sponsors can be part of the entrance procession and enter after the servers and readers and before the presider.*
- (5) *Each candidate will need a candle for this **Rite of Commitment**; their baptismal candle would be preferred.*

Confirmation Director: Father _____, I present to you the members of our parish community preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation. Already baptized into Christ, they choose to seriously begin the final phase of their preparation for the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation. To affirm and strengthen their choice, they turn to you, our leader, and the parish community of (name of parish) at this time.

Confirmation Director reads names of each candidate; as their name is called, the candidate with sponsor and/or parent (s) comes forward in the area of the altar and stands in front of their pastor.

Pastor: Candidates of the sacrament of Confirmation, do you this day make a special choice to seriously commit yourselves to thoughtful and prayerful preparation for the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation.

Candidates: We do.

Pastor: Do you freely choose to follow the Gospel teachings which you have been reviewing throughout the Confirmation process?

Candidates: We do.

Pastor: Do you promise to study, to pray, to serve, and to build community in order to become a young adult witness to Jesus Christ?

Candidates: We do.

Pastor: Parents and sponsors present here today, are you willing to give special encouragement to these candidates in their process of intensive catechetical preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation?

Parents and Sponsors: We are.

Pastor: Members of the parish community, you have heard of these candidates' choice to enter into an intensive preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. Are you willing to help these young people by your witness of Christian living and by your prayers?

Assembly: We are.

Pastor: Take and receive this light from our parish paschal candle.
(Pastor takes a candle now lighted from the Easter candle and extends a light to the first candidate who lights the next candidate's, etc., in a chain-like fashion.)

This light reminds us of your baptismal call to follow Christ. Today this light also tells us of your choice to become a fully initiated witness to Jesus Christ, the Light that has come into this world to dispel the darkness of sin and death. May you burn with love for him and all your brothers and sisters in this world.

We, the parish of (name of parish), pledge to support you in your decision and look forward to the day of your Confirmation when you share with us more fully in Christian adulthood.

The assembly can show their approval and affirmation by applauding.

The Profession of Faith follows.

Next are the General Intercessions:

Possible intercessions in addition to the regular petitions:

- For these young people who have chosen to be confirmed as adult members of the Catholic Church, **let us pray to the Lord. . .**
- For the parents, sponsors, catechists and all who continue to contribute to the spiritual formation of these candidates of the sacrament of Confirmation, **let us pray to the Lord. . .**
- For those fully initiated adults gathered here at Mass who continue to live the life of the Holy Spirit received at Confirmation, **let us pray to the Lord. . .**

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins.

Candidates, sponsors and families could be invited to dress the altar (altar cloth) and to bring up the bread and wine, and monetary offerings in the presentation of the gifts.

THIRD PHASE: PREPARATION AND REFLECTION

TIME: Prior to the celebration of Confirmation, normally the 11th grade.

AIM: Prepare for the **Rite of Confirmation**.

CONTENT: Affirmation and support of family life which helps to ground faith formation.

The parish provides and nourishes communal faith development.

Faithful attendance at a Catholic school, parish religious education program / youth ministry or home schooling for doctrinal formation.

Candidates attend the weekend **Discipleship for the Journey: Christian Story** Retreat. Candidates and sponsors meet 2-4 times and attend the prayer service / rehearsal.

Candidates, sponsors and parents review the **Rite of Confirmation**.

Service is a response to the Gospel call of discipleship. Parents and sponsors are to encourage a life of Christian service.

Regular participation at Sunday Liturgy is the duty of the baptized. The community, gathers around word and sacrament to praise God.

THE RITE OF SENDING

Explanatory Notes:

- (1) *This Rite provides the parish the opportunity to express its joy as the candidates for Confirmation are about to celebrate the **Rite of Confirmation**. They are sent forth to the celebration of Confirmation assured of the parish's care and support.*
- (2) *This Rite is celebrated in the parish church at a suitable time prior to the actual celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation, usually the Sunday before the reception of Confirmation at a regularly scheduled Liturgy.*
- (3) *The Pastor and the Director of the Confirmation Process are the normal ministers of this **Rite of Sending**.*
- (4) *This Rite occurs after the homily and is concluded with the Profession of Faith and General Intercessions. The homily should take into account the imminent celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation and the community's support of these candidates.*

Confirmation Director: Reverend Father, these candidates, whom I now present to you, will be confirmed this (date of Confirmation) at (place of Confirmation) by (celebrant of Confirmation). They have found strength in God's grace and support in our community's prayers and example. Now they ask that they be recognized for the progress they have made in their spiritual formation and that they receive the assurance of our blessings and prayers as they go forth to be confirmed.

Pastor: Those who are to be confirmed, come forward, together with your sponsors.

One by one, the Confirmation Director calls each candidate by name. Each candidate, accompanied by a sponsor (or catechist, or parent (s), comes forward and stands before the celebrant.

Pastor: My dear friends, these candidates, already one with us by reason of their Baptism in Christ, have asked Bishop Joseph to confirm their initiation into the church. Those who know them have judged them to be sincere in their desire. During the period of their catechetical formation they have listened to the word of Christ and endeavored to follow his commands more perfectly; they have shared the company of their Christian brothers and sisters in this community and joined them in prayer.

And so I announce to all of you here that our community ratifies their desire to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Therefore, I ask their sponsors to state their opinion once again, so that all of you may hear.

He address the sponsors, catechists, and/or parent (s):

Pastor: As God is your witness, do you consider these candidates ready to receive the sacrament of Confirmation?

Sponsors and
(catechists or parent (s): We do.

When appropriate in the circumstances, the celebrant may ask one of the catechists or sponsors to briefly testify to the readiness of the candidates.)

When appropriate in the circumstances, the celebrant may also ask the entire assembly to express its approval of the candidates by applauding.)

Pastor: And now, my dear young people, I address you. Your own sponsors (and this entire community) have spoken in your favor. The Church, in the name of Christ, accepts their testimony and sends you to Bishop Joseph (or name of minister of Confirmation), who will exhort you to live in deeper conformity to the life of Christ.

The imposition of hands is a liturgical gesture found in the Old Testament, continued in the New Testament, and still used in the Church today. It expresses identity and solidarity between the one imposing hands and the one receiving the imposition. With the pastor and the gathered assembly, those seeking Confirmation are blessed by the believing community.

Father of love and power, it is your will to establish everything in Christ and to draw us into his all-embracing love. Guide these candidates in the days ahead: strengthen them in their vocation, build them into the kingdom of your Son, and seal them with the Spirit of your promise.

R. Amen.

The Profession of Faith follows.

Next are the General Intercessions.

Possible intercessions in addition to the regular petitions:

--- That these candidates may be freed from selfishness and learn to put others first,
let us pray to the Lord:

--- That these candidates may share with others the joy they have found in their friendship with Jesus, **let us pray to the Lord:**

--- That our community during this Easter season, may grow in charity and be constant in prayer,
let us pray to the Lord:

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins.

Candidates, sponsors and families could be invited to dress the altar (altar cloth) and to bring up the bread and wine, and monetary offerings in the presentation of the gifts.

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION **(At Mass During the Easter Season)**

After the Opening Hymn, the Sign of the Cross, and Greeting, the Bishop will sprinkle the assembly with Easter Water. This Sprinkling Rite recalls our common call to follow Christ, a call first received at Baptism. The Glory to God should be sung.

The Liturgy of the Word will reflect on the mystery of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. Following the Gospel proclamation, the **Rite of Confirmation** begins.

The **Rite of Confirmation** contains the following parts:

- (1) **The Presentation of the Candidates to the Bishop**
Pastors normally present each candidate by name to the Bishop.
- (2) **The Homily or Instruction**
The Bishop addresses the candidates and sponsors on the realities of God's life-giving Spirit in Confirmation.
- (3) **Renewal of Baptismal Promises**
The candidates stand and renew their baptismal promises to the Bishop.
- (4) **The Laying of Hands**
The imposition of hands is a liturgical gesture found in the Old Testament, continued in the New Testament, and still used in the Church today. The Bishop calls down the Holy Spirit on those to be confirmed.
- (5) **The Anointing With Chrism**
The Oil of Chrism, a particularly fragrant oil, calls to mind the holiness and sweetness of God and of Christ. The strengthening power of the Holy Spirit is conferred in Confirmation by the anointing with Chrism.

Making a sign of the cross with Chrism on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, the Bishop says: (Name) , **be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit**. The newly confirmed responds: **Amen**.

The Bishop says: **Peace be with you**. The newly confirmed responds: **And also with you**.

- (6) **General Intercessions**
The Deacon is the usual liturgical minister to pray the intercessions. These petitions invoke God to watch over the Church, our society, the poor and sick, and especially, those newly confirmed in the Holy Spirit.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist follows. The newly confirmed can dress the altar (altar cloth) and bring the bread and wine, and possible monetary offerings (for the poor) in the presentation of the gifts.

All are invited to the holy table to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Mass concludes with a special blessing from the Bishop.

FOURTH PHASE: CONTINUING GROWTH IN FAITH

TIME: Ongoing

AIM: As confirmed and fully initiated baptized Christians live out and be faithful to the baptismal and Eucharistic life.

CONTENT: Affirmation and support of family life which helps ground faith formation.

The parish provides and nourishes communal faith development

To live the **GOSPEL CALL** to discipleship and evangelization in Jesus Christ.

Regular participation at Sunday Liturgy is the duty of the fully initiated.

As fully initiated Christians they are expected to live out the church's life of service and ministry founded in the Holy Spirit.

Participate in adult faith formation programs.

Fully initiated Christians are invited to serve the community as readers, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, and psalmists.

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BULLETIN INSERTS EXPLAINING THE CONFIRMATION PROCESS

Confirmation Preparation Process

Confirmation is a parish event. We greet fully initiated members into our community of faith. Sponsors and families of the candidates of the sacrament of Confirmation are very important to the process of sacramental preparation. There are four phases to Confirmation preparation in the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese. First, the candidate lives out the call from God initially received at Baptism. Second, there is a phase of formation of the individual and family deepening the understanding of Christian discipleship. Third, there is the phase of preparation and reflection on the liturgical celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation. Fourth, the newly confirmed along with sponsors and families live out faithfully the baptismal and Eucharistic life.

Confirmation Preparation Process

Each sacrament has preparation before it is celebrated. Candidates, sponsors and families commit to a three year process of preparation before celebrating the sacrament of Confirmation. The parish community with its pastor assumes responsibility to prepare candidates, sponsors and families for the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation. This sacramental preparation is a serious process. Like the process of Christian Initiation, those seeking Confirmation progress to the celebration of the sacrament over the course of time. Scripture, worship, teaching, community and service are essential parts of the process.

Confirmation Preparation Process

The Confirmation of an individual celebrates the faith of the Christian community. The Holy Spirit challenges and strengthens the newly confirmed to assume full responsibility as a Christian pilgrim. Our parish supports those involved in the process of preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. The parish will provide catechesis, prayer, service, and communal support throughout the process. The confirmed Catholic is nourished at the Eucharistic table and, as a fully initiated Christian, lives as an active disciple of Jesus Christ. Sealed in the Holy Spirit, the confirmed believer evangelizes and spreads the Good News of the kingdom of God.

CANONS

CANON 840- The sacraments of the New Testament, instituted by Christ the Lord and entrusted to the Church, as they are the actions of Christ and the Church, stand out as the signs and means by which the faith is expressed and strengthened, worship is rendered to God and the sanctification of humankind is effected, and they thus contribute in the highest degree to the establishment, strengthening and manifestation of ecclesial communion; therefore both the sacred ministers and the rest of the Christian faithful must employ the greatest reverence and the necessary diligence in their celebration.

CANON 843-§ 1 The sacred ministers cannot refuse the sacraments to those who ask for them at appropriate times, who are properly disposed and are not prohibited by law from receiving them.

§ 2. Pastors of souls and the rest of the Christian faithful, according to their ecclesial function, have the duty to see that those who seek the sacraments are prepared to receive them by the necessary evangelization and catechetical formation, taking into account the norms published by the competent authority.

CANON 845- §1 The sacraments of baptism, Confirmation, and orders cannot be repeated since they imprint a character.

§2 If, after diligent investigation, there is still a prudent doubt whether these sacraments mentioned in d 1 have been truly or validly conferred, they are to be conditionally conferred.

CANON 879- The sacrament of confirmation impresses a character and by it the baptized, continuing on the path of Christian initiation are enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church; it strengthens them and obliges them more firmly to be witnesses to Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith.

CANON 880- § 1 The sacrament of confirmation is conferred through anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the imposition of the hand, and through the words prescribed in the approved liturgical books.

§2 The chrism to be used in the sacrament of confirmation must be consecrated by a Bishop, even if the sacrament is administered by a presbyter.

CANON 881- It is desirable that the sacrament of confirmation be celebrated in a church and during Mass, but for a just and reasonable cause it may be celebrated outside Mass and in any worthy place.

CANON 882- The ordinary minister of confirmation is the Bishop; a presbyter who has the faculty by virtue of either the common law or a special concession of competent authority also confers this sacrament validly.

CANON 889- §1 All baptized persons who have not been confirmed and only they are capable of receiving confirmation.

§2 Outside the danger of death, to be licitly confirmed it is required, if the person has the reason, that one be suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew one's baptismal promises.

CANON 890- The faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time; their parents and shepherd of souls, especially pastors, are to see to it that the faithful are properly instructed to receive it and approach the sacrament at the appropriate time.

CANON 891- The sacrament of confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful at about the age of discretion unless the conference of bishops determines another age or there is danger of death or in the judgment of the minister a grave cause urges otherwise.

CANON 895- The names of the confirmed with mention of the minister, the parents and the sponsors, the place and date of the conferral of Confirmation are to be noted in the Confirmation register of the diocesan curia, or, where the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop has prescribed it, in a book kept in the parish archive; the pastor must advise the pastor of the place of baptism about the conferral of Confirmation so that notation be made in the baptismal register, in accord with the norm of **Canon 535 §2**

GRADE LEVEL OVERVIEW OF THE CONFIRMATION PROCESS

- Eighth Grade**
1. Parent meeting. Youth may be invited to attend.
 2. Faithful attendance at faith formation classes either at a Catholic High School, parish religious education program or home schooling.
 3. Parents and sponsors are to encourage a life of Christian service.
- Ninth Grade**
1. Faithful attendance at faith formation classes and involvement with service either at a Catholic High School, parish religious education program or home schooling.
 2. Youth/parent/sponsor **Faith for the Journey: Baptism** Retreat.
 3. **Rite of the Blessing of the Candidates for Confirmation.**
 4. Parents and sponsors are to encourage a life of Christian service.
- Tenth Grade**
1. Faithful attendance at faith formation classes and involvement with service either at a Catholic High School, parish religious education program or home schooling.
 2. Youth **Stories for the Journey: Parables** Retreat.
 3. Candidate/family/sponsor **Gifted for the Journey: Gifts of the Spirit** Retreat.
 4. **Rite of Commitment**
 5. Interviews (See pg. D-9)
 6. Parents and sponsors are to encourage a life of Christian service.
- Eleventh Grade**
1. Attendance at faith formation classes either at a Catholic High School, parish Religious education programs or home schooling.
 2. Candidate weekend **Discipleship for the Journey: Christian Story** Retreat.
 3. 2-4 sponsor/candidate sessions.
 4. Youth/family/sponsor review of the **Rite of Confirmation.**
 5. Youth and sponsors are to attend the rehearsal.
 6. Parents and sponsors are to encourage a life of Christian service.
 7. **Rite of Sending.**
 8. **Rite of Confirmation.**
- Twelfth Grade**
1. Fully initiated Catholics are expected to attend some type of ongoing Christian faith formation. Ex. adult education classes
 2. Reflection on the **Rite of Confirmation.**
 3. Parents and sponsors are to encourage a life of Christian service.
 4. Participation as readers, Eucharistic ministers and psalmists.
 5. Filled with the Spirit fully initiated believers share time, talent, and treasure with the faith community.

GUIDELINES FOR THE CONFIRMATION OF ADULTS

1. Pastors are responsible for the Catechesis of those adults who were baptized Catholic and have not been fully initiated.
2. The pastor or the initiation team will develop a process that is modeled on Christian Initiation.
3. The amount of preparation for Confirmation depends on the amount of previous catechesis. For example:
 - A. The person who is catechized (completed Catholic high school, a religious education program, or was properly home schooled) needs to meet with a sponsor similar to the high school process, and review the **Rite of Confirmation**.
 - B. The person who is partially catechized (completed catechesis through grade school) needs adequate catechesis to understand the baptismal call to a disciple of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church. The above requirements are also necessary.
 - C. Un-catechized adults who received Baptism and possibly Eucharist need the catechetical component of Christian initiation or an adult faith formation process.
4. The adult may be confirmed at the Easter Vigil.

Permission is needed from the Bishop if the adult is a baptized Catholic.

Resources:

Of Water and the Spirit, by Joanne Parnell Mongeon, Benziger Publishing Co, 1989

Believing in Jesus, Fr. Leonard Foley, St. Anthony Messenger Press

HISTORY OF CONFIRMATION

Scripturally, the only reference to an initiation rite is to a water baptism for the forgiveness of sins and the imparting of the Holy Spirit. In I Cor. 12:13 Paul says that, "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." Any reference to the laying on of hands was charismatic not liturgical.

In the early part of the 3rd century, the writings of Tertullian and Hippolytus refer to a post baptismal anointing and the imposition of hands by the bishop. Throughout the Roman Empire of the 4th century, a dramatic increase in the number of Christians occurred. Since bishops could not be physically present to baptize, local priests became the ordinary ministers of Baptism. Later, the bishop anointed the baptized as a sign of strengthening and fortification by the Holy Spirit.

Also during this time, Augustine of Hippo developed his doctrine of original sin. As a result, the Baptism of infants became the norm for sacramental initiation. Baptism was performed soon after birth and Confirmation was conferred by the bishop as soon as practically possible. This further complicated the relationship between baptismal washing and the imposition of hands and anointing by the bishop.

By the 5th century in the western church, the term "Confirmation" was applied to the anointing with chrism in the sign of the cross. This anointing performed by bishops and priests, conferred the Holy Spirit and gave the additional strength needed for the battle against sin.

Charlemagne in the 8th and 9th centuries demanded uniformity of ritual practice throughout his domain. He decreed the use of the Roman sacramentary and mandated that Baptism be conferred at Easter and Pentecost. He returned the anointing of Confirmation to the bishop.

Medieval theologians had no difficulty in accepting Confirmation as one of the seven sacraments as decreed by the Second Council of Lyons in 1274. They did, however, have some difficulty in explaining the theology of Confirmation as well as the "matter" and "form" of the sacrament. Thomas Aquinas clarified church policy regarding the sacrament. The "matter" of Confirmation was the anointing with chrism and the "form" as the words pronounced by the bishop during anointing. He also taught that the sacramental character of Confirmation produced spiritual growth and perfected the spiritual strength of those confirmed.

There was a gradual shift in the age of Confirmation from infancy in the time of Augustine to age 7-12 as set by the Council of Trent in 1547. Theologically, Confirmation was not seen as necessary for salvation, but "armed and prepared those when called upon to fight for the faith of Christ." After the Council of Trent, there was no practical change in Confirmation until after Vatican Council II.

The "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," of Vatican II decreed that "The rite of Confirmation is to be revised and the intimate connection which this sacrament has with the whole Christian Initiation is to be more lucidly set forth." #71 No specific age was given for the sacraments of initiation.

In April, 1972, the National Council of Catholic Bishops decided not to choose a specific age for the United States. Each bishop was allowed to set an age for his diocese. On September 1, 1988, Bishop Joseph directed the age of Confirmation for the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown to be 16.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

The following guidelines will assist parents:

1. To provide a nurturing and Christian presence.
2. Pray for and with their child.
3. Attend the Confirmation session in their child's 8th grade year. Youth will not be admitted to participation in the confirmation process until this meeting is attended. In the case of unresponsive parents, a youth who desires to participate in this Confirmation process may do so after a meeting with the pastor.
4. Participate in the following retreats and sessions:
 - 9th Grade - **Faith for the Journey: Baptism** Retreat
 - 10th Grade - **Gifted for the Journey: Gifts of the Holy Spirit** Retreat
5. Attend the **Rite of Blessing of the Candidates** and the **Rite of Commitment**.
6. Participate in service, when possible.
7. Encourage the Sacrament of Penance.
8. Guide their child in the choice of a sponsor, preferably the baptismal sponsor. (**Canon 893-2**)
9. Assist their child in the selection of a suitable name for Confirmation.
10. Continue support and encouragement of their child after Confirmation.

PARENT INTRODUCTORY MEETING

The purpose of this meeting is to inform the parents about the Confirmation process and elicit their support for and encouragement of their teen. Youth can be confirmed without parental support, attendance and guidance but this is not desirable.

1. Opening Prayer
2. Purpose of the meeting (stated above).
3. Explain the theology of Confirmation (pg. D-43) stressing the completion of Baptism and the ongoing identity with Eucharist.
4. Review the Guidelines for Confirmation (pg. D-1).
5. Review the Grade Level Overview (pg. D-27).
6. Answer any questions.

*This session may be videotaped and later shown to parents who are unable to attend.

I, _____, understand the extent of the Confirmation process and will ensure that my son/daughter attends all required sessions, retreats, rites and gives service. I will attend all required Sessions and retreats with my son/daughter and encourage and support them throughout the process. I further will ensure that he/she participates at Sunday Liturgy and attends Christian formation in Catholic school, religious education program/youth ministry or through home schooling.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Confirmation

Canons 879-896 discuss the sacrament of Confirmation.

Those to be confirmed must have been baptized.

“Persons who because of developmental or mental disabilities may never attain the use of reason are to be encouraged either directly or, if necessary, through their parents or guardian, to receive the sacrament of Confirmation at the appropriate time.” *#16 Guidelines For Celebration Of The Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities.*

Candidates for Confirmation who are mentally or physically disabled should be included within the parish Confirmation process, whenever possible. It is important for the faith community that these persons are fully initiated.

The Sacramental Prep Office can be contacted for the specific resources needed for confirmation formation.

SERVICE: GUIDELINES

When we are baptized into the Catholic Christian community we are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ as his disciples. Jesus spent his life serving others and, as his followers, we too must serve.

Whether we serve alone or as part of a group, what is important is that we use our gifts, talents and interests to love others and help them in their time of need. For youth, service can also help them discover more about themselves, give confidence, raise self-esteem and put them in contact with good role models and mentors.

1. The life and ministry of Jesus is the model for Christian service. Youth are to know and understand this concept and be able to relate his/her service to scripture.
2. Reflections are required because it will help the youth understand, integrate and learn from the experience. The reflection can be written or oral, individual or a group. An example of reflection questions are found on the next page.
3. Youth are encouraged to select service that will be meaningful for them. The same service may be done throughout the time of Confirmation preparation.
4. Service can be given either individually or as part of a group.
5. Service can be rendered to the parish, community, or family.

*See Guidebook for Catechetical Faith Formation Pg. C-5 for service suggestions.

Resources:

Giving and Growing, by Frances Hunt O'Connell, St. Mary Press, 1990

Learning to Serve, Serving to Learn, by Joseph Moore, Ave Marie Press, 1994

SERVICE REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Before performing the service what were your expectations? Were you looking forward to it? Why or why not?

2. Briefly summarize your service, telling who you served, how often, what you did, etc.

3. Listed below are several gospel passages having to do with the theme of service. Choose one:
 - The Beatitudes - Mt. 5:3-12
 - Vine and the Branches - Jn. 15:1-17
 - Good Samaritan - Lk. 10:20-37
 - Workers in the Vineyard - Mt. 20:1-16

What does one of the above passages have to do with your service?

4. Did this service impact you spiritually? Why or why not?

5. What are you called to do as a result of your service?

6. How were your parents and/or sponsors involved in your service? What did their involvement teach you?

SESSION AND RETREAT INFORMATION
FOR THE CONFIRMATION PROCESS

Information Included in this Section:

General Instructions for Retreats

Faith for the Journey - 9th grade Baptismal Retreat

Gifted for the Journey - 10th grade Gifts of the Holy Spirit Retreat

Stories for the Journey- 10th grade Parable Retreat

Discipleship for the Journey - 11th grade Christian Story Retreat

GENERAL INSTRUCTION FOR RETREATS

1. Each retreat follows the same format.

We...our experiences

...listen...scripture gives us a deeper understanding of the significance of our experiences. Scripture stories are the lens we use to reflect on our stories of daily living.

...with faith...share the wisdom and teaching of the church

...for the journey...what we have learned as a result of this process.

2. The retreats may be used as written, parts of a retreat may be used in existing retreats, or the “necessary catechetical components” may be incorporated into your own retreat.

Note: All sessions and retreats must be incorporated into the Confirmation process. The necessary catechetical components for each retreat are to be used. These “catechetical components” are listed on the back of the cover page for each retreat.
3. Adult facilitators for retreats can be assisted by youth and young adults. The witness and role modeling of youth and young adults is very important to the faith formation.
4. Two to three facilitators are recommended for each retreat. Facilitators are not necessarily the persons who share their Christian stories. If separate storytellers are present, the facilitators should share their stories briefly.
5. All summaries and the “Review of the Process” are presented by an adult facilitator.
6. Flip charts, large sheets of paper, or a large blackboard are to be used for each retreat. Participants should be able to see all the written material.
7. Appropriate Christian and contemporary music should be used throughout all retreats. Some examples of where music may be purchased are : the Franciscan Store, Loretto; The Friar’s Shop, Logan Valley Mall; or the Lamb’s Way, Altoona.
8. The prayer table, placed where it can be seen by all, must be used and should be covered with an appropriate colored cloth and contain a bible, candle and cross. You may want to “set the table” during the opening song of the opening prayer service.
9. Participants will be asked to bring pictures and/or objects necessary to each retreat. Participants should be given specific directions for the use of the pictures and objects prior to the retreat.
10. Small groups may be prearranged.

FAITH FOR THE JOURNEY: BAPTISM

9TH Grade

Objective: To help families and their individual members reflect on the connection between baptismal faith and everyday life.

5:00– 5:10 PM	Welcome and Ice Breaker
5:10– 5:25 PM	Gathering
5:25– 6:00 PM	Opening Prayer Service
6:00– 6:15 PM	Snack Break
6:15– 6:30 PM	1st section We
6:30– 6:45 PM	2nd section..... Listen.....
6:45– 7:15 PM	3rd section.... With faith....
7:15– 7:20 PM	4th section..... For the journey.
7:20– 8:00 PM	Closing Prayer

Materials for the retreat

Each family is to bring their child's baptismal picture or baby picture.

Each participant is to bring an object that reflects a new beginning in their life such as a new job or friend, changing schools or jobs, a birth or death, a new pet, etc.

NECESSARY CATECHETICAL COMPONENTS

1ST SECTION- We.....

The importance of new beginnings for our life journey.

Baptism, the beginning of our Christian life, initiates us into the community of believers, the church. Through Baptism, we are freed from sin and reborn as sons and daughters of God.

The sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, are necessary for full initiation into the Catholic Church.

2ND SECTION-..... LISTEN.....

Understanding the scripture stories of our ancestors in faith helps us to identify our call to discipleship.

Importance of our baptismal name.

We are called to live our baptismal commitment to faith in Christ, community and service.

3RD SECTION-.....with faith.....

Baptismal symbols and ritual actions: Paschal candle, water, white garment, oil and anointing with the sign of the cross, give meaning to our Christian lives.

4TH SECTION-..... for the journey.

The importance of Christian faith for our daily lives.

GATHERING TIME (10 minutes)

Welcome by Pastor or Facilitator (Introduction of facilitators if necessary)

ICE BREAKER

Directions: Stand up if.....

- You are wondering what this retreat has to do with Confirmation.
- You would rather be someplace else.
- You are wondering why your parents and sponsors are here.
- As a parent/sponsor, you are wondering why you are here.
- You wished this process was in 8th grade so you would get it over with.
- You as a candidate/parent/sponsor, hope to learn more about your faith during the Confirmation process.

Table Introductions (15 minutes)

Directions: Gather participants into groups of 6-8 people. Invite the parents to share the pictures of their child's Baptism or baby picture with the group. All participants are to share objects of their new beginnings, such as care keys, an object representing a new house or job, etc., as a means of getting to know each other.

Opening Prayer Service (35 minutes)

Directions: Introduce the prayer service and begin with an opening prayer. Prayer table should contain a bible, cross and a large bowl of water. The Paschal candle should be present.

Song example: **"Song of the Body of Christ", "We are Companions on the Journey"**. etc.

Facilitator- shares a Baptismal story of personal significance, relevant Scripture reading, and places an object from a Baptism and a relevant picture on the prayer table. Explains why the particular Scripture reading was selected.

- invites about one-third of participants to place the teens' pictures and the objects of a new beginning on the prayer table

Facilitator- shares a Baptismal story of personal significance, relevant Scripture reading, and places an object from a Baptism and a relevant picture on the prayer table. Explains why the particular Scripture reading was selected.

- invites about one-third of participants to place the teens' pictures and the objects of a new beginning on the prayer table

Facilitator- shares a Baptismal story of personal significance, relevant Scripture reading, and places an object from a Baptism and a relevant picture on the prayer table. Explains why the particular Scripture reading was selected.

- invites the remainder of participants to place the teens' pictures and the objects of a new beginning on the prayer table

After having placed their pictures and objects on the prayer table, invite all to stand. A facilitator says the following or similar prayer:

We come together, Lord, to share our new beginnings and who we are as a family of faith in Jesus Christ. Help us to see who we are and to understand our new beginnings as challenges for growth, challenges which can make our lives more rich and meaningful. We ask this through Christ or lord. **All** : Amen

Snack Break (15 minutes)

First Section..... We..... (15 minutes)

Directions: Facilitator/s share some of their new beginnings- birth, new job, house, marriage, graduation, new relationships, etc. Distribute booklets and ask participants to complete the cover. Ask them to open to page 2 “New Beginnings.” They are to jot down a few new beginnings from their own life. (Option: play reflective music). Share these new beginnings with two other people in your group. Ask for some new beginnings from the entire group and put them on the flip chart under.....**We....**

Facilitator summarizes: New beginnings involve uncertainty, change in responsibility, learning new rules, growth, flexibility, new relationships and a different focus. We are challenged to grow through these changes. Baptism is such a new beginning. It is the first sacrament of initiation. Does anyone know what the other two sacraments of initiation are? Since Baptism frees us from sin we are reborn as sons and daughters of God: we have a new identity. The name we were given at Baptism is important to our Christian life. It is by this name that we respond to the call of Christ, are received into the community of faith and accept the mission of the church to proclaim the Good News announced by Jesus Christ. The church community, therefore, becomes our Christian family at Baptism.

Jesus, when he lived on earth, also had new beginnings. A few of Jesus’ new beginnings: such as leaving home, His Baptism by John, the calling of the apostles, etc. are named. He, like us, was challenged through new beginnings to growth and change.

Second Section..... listen..... (15 minutes)

Facilitator writes.....**listen.....**on the first flip chart.

Direction: Think about stories from Scripture that involved a new beginning. [Give two or three examples Such as the calls of Abraham (Gen.12), Moses (Exodus:4), Mary (Luke 1:26ff), the Apostles (Mt 4:18ff), and Paul (Acts: 9) or any of the healing stories.]. When any names have been changed such as Saul to Paul, Abram to Abraham, Cephas to Peter, etc. the facilitator stresses the importance of the change of the name to the call of the person. Take a few minutes and name a few Scripture stories in your booklet at the bottom of page 2.

Direction: Ask parents to share with their youth why their name was chosen. Invite them to list the positive characteristics of the person for whom he/she was named.

Then ask the group to share their ideas of scripture stories in which they see new beginnings and list them on the flip chart under.....**listen.....**

Participants are instructed to take one of their new beginnings stories and find a scripture that relates to it. To guide the process, refer back to the facilitators’ stories and the scriptures they chose. After completion, participants share their relevant scripture stories with the small group. Other group members may add their scripture suggestions to each others’ stories.

Facilitator Summarizes: Each of us has many new beginnings in our life. These new beginnings are important for both our daily lives and our journey of faith. To help us focus on our faith journey we can reflect on the stories of Scripture. These stories help us to understand the many new beginnings of people in the bible and to learn from them. Our ancestors of faith experienced God's call through the circumstances of daily life just as we do. They, as we, have to decide whether to answer God's call. For Catholics, our call is to live our baptismal commitment to faith, community and service. Our baptismal names are important to who we are and how we view ourselves. It is by our name that we are called to love and service in the name of Jesus Christ.

Third Section.....with faith... (30 minutes)

Facilitator writes**with faith...** on the second flip chart.

Direction: As we experience new beginnings, it is important to see God's will present in these events. To aid this reflection, facilitators are to explain how God was present in the story of their new beginning shared in the **First Section**.

Direction: The Catholic Church has many traditions which help us see God present in our daily lives. Turn to **page 3** in your booklet. (The facilitator should read the directions. It would be helpful to play reflective music. **(Allow 5 minutes)** Instruct participants to share their reflection with two other people in their group. **(Allow 10 minutes)**

Explain: Reflect on the symbols of your new beginning gathered on the prayer table. Just as these symbols have meaning for a new beginning in your life, Christians have symbols which are important for faith. What are the symbols of our Christian beginning, Baptism? (List their answers on the flip chart under.....**with faith**.....Make sure Paschal candle, water, white garment, oil and the anointing with oil, sign of the cross, and the naming of the child are mentioned. As each symbol is listed, explain its significance [**refer to enclosed handout page 6**].

Facilitator Summarizes: As human beings, we relate and find meaning for our lives through symbols. Each symbol you brought tells a story. It speaks about what is important to you and what helps give meaning to your life. The symbols of Baptism tell us and the world about us as Christians. These symbols speak about what is important to us and what gives meaning to our Christian lives.

Scripture uses symbols to teach us about God and our responsibility as Christians. **(Facilitator may use the following scripture as an example.)**

“You are the light of the world.” (Mt 5: 14)

“No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.” (Jn 3:5)

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me.” (Is. 61:1)

“May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Gal 6:14)

The power of symbols is their ability to connect us with each other and with our God.

Review of the Process (5 minutes)

Explain:

We.....refers to an experience, in this case **new beginnings**.

.....listen.....refers to connecting that experience to one of the Scripture stories of a new beginning such as (give an example used by the facilitator). Scripture can help us understand our new beginnings.

.....with faith..... refers to what we know about our God, especially through the Christian tradition. Baptism initiates us into the Christian community using symbols and ritual.

.....for the journey.....is the final step. It refers to any new insight or understanding as a result of today's experience.

Fourth Section.....for the journey. (15 minutes)

Explain: To continue to help you make deeper connections between your new beginnings and you faith journey, we are going to do a guided meditation on the Baptism of Jesus followed by a few reflection questions on **page 4** of your booklet. (These questions and the sharing with family members will occur during the prayer service.)

Prayer Service

Direction: The prayer service will contain guided meditation followed by a signing with water.

Facilitator: We begin: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Lead a guided meditation on the Baptism of Jesus. (A facilitator either can refer to the resource list or lead the guided meditation structured around the questions on **page 4** in the booklet.) Participants are asked to **journal on page 4**. When they are finished, family members are asked to gather and share their answers with one another.

Signing with water and Concluding Prayer:

(Song: Play a baptismal song such as **“Come to the Water,”** by John Foley, S.J., **“One Lord”** by Scott Soper or **“You are Mine”** by David Haas.) As a song is played, the participants may come forward and bless themselves or parents could sign their children from the bowl of water on the prayer table. The facilitator is to mention that we sign ourselves with water in the name of each person of the Trinity to remember our baptismal commitment. After each person signs themselves, they are to gather in a circle around the prayer table.

The following or similar prayer is prayed:

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world, who chose to live among us. Just as we see before us the sacred symbols of our Baptism mixed in among the symbols of our new beginnings, help us to know that you are with us during our everyday lives. Cleanse us from sin as we renew our baptismal commitment of love and service.

Ask participants to join their hands and recite the **Our Father**.

Facilitator: Lord Jesus, accompany us as we begin anew. We ask this in the name of the Lord.

All: Amen

RESOURCES

Name Tags

Pencils

Booklets for each participant

2 flip charts with dark markers or 2 large pieces of poster board, placed where everyone can see them

prayer table- covered with a white cloth and set with the symbols of Baptism: a cross, the Paschal candle, bowl of water, white garment, oil and a bible.

Snacks

“Symbols- Ritual” handout- (page 6)

Guided meditation on the Baptism of Jesus

Guided Meditation for Youth on Sacramental Life, 1993, by Jane Arsenault and Jean Cedor, St. Mary’s Press. Available as a printed text (pages 11-15) and audio cassette.

Guided Meditations for Teens, by Sydney Ann Merritt, Resource Publications, 1997. (The questions on page 4 of booklet would need to be changed to agree with this meditation

SYMBOLS – RITUAL

Anointing with Holy Chrism symbolizes a calling to and strengthening in the power of Christ to serve in God's name.

Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens used in the first part of the baptismal rite, is a sign of healing and a sign that the child will be open to the life of the church. When Baptism is celebrated at Sunday Mass this anointing could possibly occur before Mass begins.

Blessing of the Water helps us to reflect on the saving mystery of God's love within our tradition and in our lives.

Candle stands for Christ, the light of the world. It is lighted from the Paschal Candle, used during the Easter Season.

Chrism expresses the child's call to live as a member of the Body of Christ, the Church. This is the same oil used in Confirmation and Ordination.

Exorcism is the prayer, delivering children from original sin, that strengthens them in the Spirit of Christ.

Gathered Community welcomes the baptized into the Christian family.

Name is important and says who we are as special and unique. The name chosen should have Christian and/or family significance.

Pouring of the Water or Immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit represents a rebirth to new life in Christ. This is a death to sin and rising to life in Christ.

Profession of Faith is prayed by the parent/s, godparents, family members, and the entire assembly as they renew their own baptismal vows stating our shared beliefs and relationship with God.

Signing the Child with the sign of the cross is a symbol of the salvation brought about by the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. It also symbolizes the Christian faith that we share and into which the child is being initiated.

Water is the primary symbol of Baptism, the symbol of life and death. Water is necessary for life and changes everything it touches. But water can also bring destruction and death. It is, therefore, a basic element in our lives and is one of the oldest religious symbols. In Baptism, the baptized dies to sin and death and is reborn into the life of Christ.

White Garment recognizes the new life in Christ of the baptized. The baptismal garment should be placed on the infant at the appropriate time of the rite. There is no need to put a bib or other cloth over the white baptismal clothing.

Word of God, the Scriptures, is the focal point for all Christian celebrations. Listening to the Word proclaimed, reflecting on its meaning and renewing our acceptance of God's word as a guiding force in our lives, is central to the Christian journey begun at Baptism.

**GIFTED FOR THE JOURNEY
GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
10th Grade**

Objectives: To help teens and their parents and sponsors reflect on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and their importance for everyday life.

5:00-5:10 PM	Welcome and Ice Breaker
5:10- 5:25 PM	Gathering
5:25-6:00 PM	Opening Prayer Service
6:00- 6:15 PM	Snack Break
6:15- 6:30 PM	1 st section We.....
6:30- 6:40 PM	2 nd sectionlisten.....
6:40- 7:10 PM	3 rd section with faith.....
7:10- 7:40 PM	4 th sectionfor the journey.
7:40- 8:00 PM	Closing Prayer

Materials for the Retreat:

Each family is to bring a family picture.
Each participant is to bring a gift they have received. This gift should be from a significant person or reflect a significant event in life.
The baptismal candles of the candidates may be used for the closing prayer service.

Note: It is helpful to have a parent and their teen/young adult tell a story.

NECESSARY CATECHETICAL COMPONENTS

1ST SECTION- We.....

Explore the presence of God in ordinary life experiences of youth and their families
Explain the activity and importance of the Holy Spirit for our lives.

2ND SECTION-.....listen.....

Scripture stories are a means to understanding life experiences and the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit.

3RD SECTION-..... with faith.....

An understanding of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The importance of the teachings of the church, especially the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as a help to youth and parents on their journey of faith.

The role of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

4TH SECTIONfor the journey.

To begin to help youth and parents understand and share their experiences of the activity of the Spirit of God in their lives.

GATHERING TIME (10 minutes)

Welcome by Pastor or Facilitator (Introduction of facilitators, if necessary)

ICE BREAKER

Directions: Gather participants into groups of 6-8 people. Have department and mail order catalogues on each table. Ask groups of 2-3 at each table to cut the most useless gift in the catalogue. Each small group then selects the most useless gift for the table. Ask 1 person from each table to show the picture to the entire assembled group. The pictures could be taken by a facilitator and assembled into a collage.

Table Introductions (15 minutes)

Directions: Ask the families at the tables to share their family pictures with each other. Each participant is then to share the gift they brought and the significant person or event symbolized by the object.

Opening Prayer Service (35 minutes)

Directions: Introduce the prayer service and begin with an opening prayer. Prayer table should contain candle, a bible, and a cross. The table can be set during the opening song.

Song: appropriate to the theme

Facilitator- share you family picture, gift, and relevant Scripture reading. (Begin to tell a story that relates to the gift you brought to share. The story will be used later to discuss the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Before the scripture is read, explain why you picked the scripture.) Place your picture and gift on the prayer table.

-Invites about 1/3 of the participants to place their pictures and gifts on the prayer table.

Facilitator- share you family picture, gift, and relevant Scripture reading. (Begin to tell a story that relates to the gift you brought to share. The story will be used later to discuss the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Before the scripture is read, explain why you picked the scripture.) Place your picture and gift on the prayer table.

-Invites about 1/3 of the participants to place their pictures and gifts on the prayer table.

Facilitator- share you family picture, gift, and relevant Scripture reading. (Begin to tell a story that relates to the gift you brought to share. The story will be used later to discuss the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Before the scripture is read, explain why you picked the scripture.) Place your picture and gift on the prayer table.

-Invites about 1/3 of the participants to place their pictures and gifts on the prayer table.

After all the pictures and gifts have been placed on the prayer table, facilitators invite all to stand. A facilitator prays the following or similar prayer.

Holy Spirit, Spirit of Jesus, thank you for the special gifts you have given us and for the people and experiences of which they remind us. Open our minds and hearts to your inspiration so that we can live holier lives. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **All:** Amen

Snack Break- (15 minutes)

First Section We. . . . (15 minutes)

Direction: Distribute the booklets and ask participants to write their names on the cover and open to page 2, “The Holy Spirit, Active In Our Lives”. Ask participants to write a story that relates to the gift brought. This story should contain the significance of the gift and the person who gave it. Other important details are to be added. (Allow 5 minutes.) During this activity a facilitator writes **We. . . .** on the flip chart.

The facilitator asks the entire group to share the theme of some of the stories they have shared about the objects brought. It is helpful if both happy experiences such as birthdays and anniversaries and sad experiences such as illness or death are mentioned. List some of these experiences under **We. . . .** on the flip chart.

Facilitator Summarizes: All of us have had experiences that are important to us. The objects we brought can help us remember these persons and events. These objects become symbols for us because of the deeper meanings they represent. As Catholics, we believe in a loving, caring, compassionate God, who is with us at all times. All events of our lives and the symbols we brought are holy because they represent a love relationship built on our relationship with God. The Holy Spirit helps us to develop the eyes of faith and recognize this action of God in our lives.

One way God helps us to understand God’s Spirit present with us during all the events of our lives is through the faith stories told in the bible. These ancestors of faith, who met God through the events of daily life, model the presence and activity of God for us. The stories from Scripture can help us to understand how God is active in our lives and how the Spirit shares gifts with us.

Second Section. . . . listen. . . . (10 minutes)

Facilitator writes. . . . **listen. . . .** On the flip chart.

Explain: There is a person in the bible who shared many experiences with Jesus. He was a fisherman called to become an Apostle. He denied Jesus and yet became the leader of the early church. Looking at Peter’s faith journey can help us reflect on our own journey of faith.

Direction: Ask the large group to list some of the stories from Peter’s life. These are to be listed under **listen. . . .** On the flip chart. (The resource list on page 7 will help guide this discussion.) Facilitators relate their stories to one of the stories of Peter. This step is important to help participants to also make the connection between their story and the story of Peter.

Direction: Ask participants to review the story they wrote on page 2 and reflect silently on the stories of St. Peter listed on the flip chart. Ask them to share the story of Peter and its relation to their story with the group. (Note: if participants are having a difficult time relating their story to one of St. Peter’s stories, ask them to think of a personal story which can be related to one of the stories of Peter.

Facilitator Summarizes: Peter at times acted with wisdom and understanding given by the Spirit, but also at times lacked courage, denied Jesus and fled into hiding. The stories we have of him in the bible are stories which reflect our own faith journey. There are times when we are wise and act with wisdom or fortitude and other times we lack courage and doubt and flee. Confirmation focuses upon the Holy Spirit who dwells within and among the members of the Church, making believers more fully aware of the implications of the paschal mystery, the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those confirmed, also must realize that they are led to a fuller and deeper incorporation into the life of the Christian community. The gifts of the Holy Spirit aid this understanding and incorporation.

Third Section with faith. . . . (30 minutes)

Facilitator writes **with faith.** on the flip chart.

Explain: Each one of us brought a gift and placed it on the prayer table. This gift is important to us for many reasons. Maybe it reminds us of a special time or person in our lives, or maybe the gift itself has significance for us. Whatever the importance, it was freely given out of love for us.

God gifts us in the same way, freely and out of love. These gifts, gifts of the Holy Spirit, provide us with all we need for our life's journey of faith.

Direction: Turn to page 3 in your booklet. The gifts of the Spirit are listed and an explanation of each is presented. Read this information. (Participants may take turns reading out loud.)

Facilitator/s continue their story and relate it to one of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Direction: Each table is given an event from the life of St. Peter and the scripture passage where it is to be found. (These are listed on page 7 "Peter".) Someone in the small group reads the passage to the group. List what gift or gifts were used or not used in the scripture passage. (Note: you must include at least one post resurrection scripture quote and the story of Pentecost. It is helpful to distribute the same stories that were listed on the flip chart in the Second Section.

Direction: Give the group about 15 minutes to complete the task. When finished, the facilitator asks someone at each table to report on the findings of the group. Presenters should limit their reports to 1-2 gifts; 2-3 minutes. As participants give their reports, write the gift of the Spirit after the events from Peter's life previously listed in the Second Section. Make sure that the information given is correct, clearly understood and all the gifts are listed.

Facilitator Summarizes: At Pentecost, Peter was transformed. Prior to Pentecost, as we have seen, Peter lacked courage and denied Jesus. After Pentecost, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, courageously proclaimed the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Confirmation calls us to be transformed like Peter. We, like Peter, are called to use the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to guide our lives and to teach others by word and example how to follow Jesus. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit and the sustaining nourishment of Eucharist that we are guided, strengthened and sanctified.

Fourth Section for the journey. (30 minutes)

Explain: Now that we have explained the gifts of the Holy Spirit and their relation to the life of St. Peter, let us look at our own stories. It is important how and when God is active in our lives. To continue this process we will look back to the story by one of the facilitators at the beginning of the First Section. (Briefly repeat the story and ask the group which gifts were used or were not used in the incident. Write this information under **for the journey** on the second flip chart.)

Direction: Ask participants to write the gift/s present or absent in their story on page 2 of the booklet. Turn to page 4 in the booklet and answer the questions listed. When they are finished, parents and teens are asked to go off together and share their answers.

Review of the Process (5 minutes)

Explain:

1. **We** refers to a relational experience, in this case one which is symbolized by the object you brought.
2. **. listen.** Refers to connecting that experience to one of the Scripture stories, In this case the story of Peter.
3. **. with faith.** Refers to what we know about God, especially through the Christian tradition. The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are important to our Catholic faith because they empower us to live as disciples of Jesus and proclaim the Kingdom of God.
4. **.** for the journey is the final step. It refers to any new faith insight or understanding as a result of today's experience.

Prayer Service

Direction: Bring booklets for the closing prayer.

Facilitator: We begin in the name of

All: Amen.

Reading: Corinthians 12: 3-11

Directions: After the readings, "Come Holy Ghost" or another appropriate song is sung . During this song, all will come forward and take a candle (possibly the baptismal candle for the teens) from the end of the table. Walk along the table that has 7 large candles (each with a gift of the spirit painted on it) and discern which gift you feel you would like strengthened in yourself. Light your candle from that flame and return to your place. Hold your lit candle for the remaining time as a symbol that the Holy Spirit is with you.

Recite the Our Father.

Prayer:

All: We thank you for the gift of your Spirit, Lord. Help our family to feel God's love through the love we take home today. With the power of the Holy Spirit help us to see and respond to each others Needs. Help us to support and encourage on e another as we struggle in this world to bring about the Kingdom of God. Above all, help us all to live as the Body of Christ in the world. Amen.

RESOURCES

Each family is to provide a family picture.

Each participant is to come with a gift which has been given to them that has special significance. They will be asked to write a brief story about the significance or special circumstances associated with it.

A Bible at each table.

2 flip charts—dark markers—or two large sheets of poster board placed where everyone can see them

name tags

“Peter”—page 7—sections cut apart for distribution (please copy the original) or copy Scripture quotes on index cards

Prayer table:

- covered with a cloth, possibly red or white
- should include a cross, candle and bible
- candles for each participant- teens could bring their baptismal candles

Music should be played during quiet times

Magazines, scissors and poster board for the ice breakers

PETER

(Make a copy and then cut apart on the dotted lines)

THE CALL- LK. 5: 1-11

WALKING ON WATER- Mt. 14 : 22-23

TRANSFIGURATION- Lk. 9: 28-36

PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD- Lk. 22:31-34

WASHING OF THE DISCIPLES FEET- Jn. 13:1-11

AGONY IN THE GARDEN- Mt. 26:36-46

ARREST OF JESUS- Jn 18:1-11

PETER'S DENIAL OF JESUS- Mk. 14:66-72

EMPTY TOMB- Jn 20:1-10

PENTECOST- Acts 2: 1-11

POST RESURRECTION APPEARANCE- Jn. 21:1-14
Jn. 21: 15-19

PETER'S SPEECH AT PENTECOST- Acts 2: 14-41

PETER CURES A CRIPPLED BEGGAR- Acts 3:1-10

STORIES FOR THE JOURNEY: PARABLES 10TH Grade

Objective: To connect everyday life experiences to the parables and beatitudes as guides for Christian life.

5:00- 5:10 PM	Gathering Time
5:10- 5:25 PM	Table Introductions
5:25- 5:45 PM	Opening Prayer Service
5:45- 6:00 PM	Snack Break
6:00- 6:15 PM	1 st section We
6:15- 7:00 PM	2 nd section listen.
7:00- 7:30 PM	3 rd section with faith.
7:30- 7:45 PM	4 th section for the journey.
7:45- 8:00 PM	Closing Prayer

NECESSARY CATECHETICAL COMPONENTS

1ST SECTION- We

The importance of life experiences for the faith journey.

2ND SECTION- listen

The importance of Scripture, in particular the teachings of Jesus, for faith formation.

3RD SECTION- with faith. . . .

The beatitudes as a model for our lives.

4TH SECTION- for the journey

To help youth integrate the beatitudes into their daily life.

GATHERING TIME (10 Minutes)
Welcome by Pastor or Facilitator (Introduction of facilitators if necessary)

ICE BREAKER

Directions: Assemble participants into one large circle. Explain that each person is to introduce himself or herself in the context of an ongoing story. Have the first person begin with, "Once upon a time," his or her name, and something about themselves. For example:

First person: Once upon a time in the land of Fop, there lived a Waz called (youth's name) who liked to ski and play the trumpet.

Second person: One day (youth's name) came to the land of Waz and decided to start a soccer team.

Each person is to add to the story until everyone is introduced and tells something about themselves.

Table Introductions (15 minutes)

Directions: Gather participants into groups of 3-4 people. (Groups can be pre-arranged and a facilitator may be necessary for each group) Each table group is to adopt a name that reflects God's love. Give each participant a booklet. Have them write their name and the table name in the appropriate spaces. On the cover of the booklet, they are to draw or write something that represents their life or is important and a value to them. When finished, they are to share their book covers with the group. One person from each small group introduces the small group to the large group by their table name.

Opening Prayer Service (20 minutes)

Directions: Introduce the prayer service and begin with an opening prayer. Song: refer to "General Instructions for Retreats". While the song is playing, youth and adults are to set the prayer table with a cloth, bible, candle and a cross.

Facilitator- beginning of a personal story, relevant Scripture reading that is not a parable, placing of a picture or object that reflects the story told on the prayer table.

Facilitator- beginning of a personal story, relevant Scripture reading that is not a parable, placing of a picture or object that reflects the story told on the prayer table.

Facilitator- beginning of a personal story, relevant Scripture reading that is not a parable, placing of a picture or object that reflects the story told on the prayer table.

After all the pictures/ objects have been placed on the prayer table, a facilitator says the following or similar prayer:

We gather, Lord, to reflect on our stories and the special people, places and events in them.
Open our eyes and hearts to see you present at all times in our lives. Help us to have a greater appreciation of Scripture and a better understanding of the church for our lives of faith.

All: Amen.

This is a two part story. Part 1 is used in the opening prayer service.

First Section We. . . . (15 minutes)

Facilitator writes **We. . . .** on the first flip chart.

Explain: All of us have special people, events and places in our lives. To help reflect on these, open your booklets to page 2. Answer the questions. When all are finished, have the small groups share the answers to each question.

Directions: Ask the entire group to share the type of experiences they have listed under question #1 (What did you enjoy doing together?) and places listed under #3 (A place you enjoy being) in the booklet. The answers are listed on the flip chart under **We. . . .**

Facilitator summarizes: Each of us has many experiences of special people, places and events. These experiences have helped to form us into the people we are today. When we are going through these experiences we do not usually understand how important they are to us.

A way to begin to understand how people, places and events shape our lives is to use the stories from Scripture. Reflecting on personal experiences helps us to grow. Jesus told his followers parables to help them understand how difficult life can be and the significance of Christian life.

Second Section listens (45 minutes)

Facilitator writes **listens. . . .** on the flip chart.

Direction: One or two facilitators continue telling part two of their story, their parable. A relevant parable is read after each story.

Participants are to be in their small groups. Snacks should be given as the youth work on projects.

Explain: Each one of us has many stories that are reflected in the parables. It is important that we learn to use these scripture stories to help us reflect on the experiences of our daily lives.

Directions: Open your booklet to page 3 where you will find a list of parables. (Participants can use other parables if they prefer.) You can either start with one of the group's stories on page 2 in the booklet, or use another one that has come to mind. Start with one of your stories, and using a parable as a guideline, write a contemporary group parable. Each parable must have a moral and a title. Make sure the moral of your parable is clear. You are to compose this parable using one of the following: written story; cartoon/illustration; skit; music; or newspaper story. (It may help the groups to focus by giving one of parables on resource page 6 to each group.)

Directions: After teens have completed their parable activity they are to present their parable to the entire group. All participants are to guess the parable of Jesus used as the model. The parable used is to be written on the flip chart underlisten. . . . Include the moral after the parable. Any visual aid used by the groups is to be placed on the prayer table after each presentation.

Facilitator Summarizes: Jesus used parables to teach his followers about the deeper, God centered meaning of their lives. By using our stories and writing them as a parable with a moral, we understand the importance of our life experiences to the development of our faith. The teachings and traditions of the church also help us to learn and live these deeper meanings.

Third Section with faith. . . . (30 minutes)

Facilitator writes with faith on the second flip chart.

Explain: Morals require us to be open and challenge us to live gospel attitudes and values; to become merciful, loving, forgiving and just. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus teaches ways of being and acting that his disciples should follow. The Church teaches that these Eight Beatitudes (be-attitudes = attitudes of being) are foundational to following in the footsteps of Jesus and living as a committed Christian.

Directions: Have participants turn to page 3 in their booklet which lists the beatitudes. With the large group read through them and briefly explain each beatitude. Use the preview stories by the facilitators as examples for the appropriate beatitude.

Divide the students into 8 or more groups. Each group is to be given beatitude and correlating parable. (If your group is small, each group will have more than one beatitude.) The number before the parables and the number before the beatitudes, both on page 3 of the booklet, correspond. (It is helpful for the students to have them use the same parable story used earlier. They are to decide how the beatitude is reflected in the parable.) After completion, they are to rewrite the beatitude in their own words. (Example- For the first beatitude, blessed are they who listen to a friend in pain, for they share the compassion of God.) This beatitude will be included in the closing prayer service. Groups need to select one youth who will read their beatitude and one who will read the beatitude of Jesus during the prayer service.

Facilitator summarizes: Jesus knew that following him would be difficult so he gave us the parables. He also gave us the beatitudes as a model for our lives. By living the beatitudes, we continue the work and message of Jesus.

Review of the Process

Explain:

We refers to an experience from our lives, such as what you wrote on the flip chart.

. . . . listen refers to connecting our life experiences to Scripture stories, in this case parables.

. . . . with faith refers to what we know about God from our Christian tradition. The beatitudes are an important teaching of the Catholic church, which help guide our lives.

. . . . for the journey is the final step. It refers to some new faith insight or understanding as a result of today's experience.

To help you reflect on your parable connection, turn to page 4 in your booklet and answer the questions there. Your answers will not be shared.

Fourth Section- for the journey.

Closing Prayer

Music such as "Blest are They," can be played. Invite all to gather around the prayer table and sing.

Facilitator- Pray the following or similar prayer.

Lord, we gather here after listening to and studying your word. Teach us how to follow you more closely by living the beatitudes in our lives.

The first scriptural beatitude is read followed by the first beatitude by a youth. Each beatitude is read until all are finished.

Facilitator- Let us join together in the prayer Jesus taught us: **Our Father . . .** (all)

Conclude with the following or a similar prayer:

Lord, we have gathered together this evening to learn how to follow you more closely by reflecting on your parables and attitudes for life, the beatitudes. Help us to learn that as we follow your teachings, we become one of your blessed. Let us go forth to serve the Lord in justice and truth.

All: Amen

RESOURCES

Booklets, pencils, markers

Flip charts, dark markers or poster board placed where everyone can see them

Bibles for each participant

Group facilitators- 12th grade & older, if necessary

Prayer table covered with a cloth, candles, bible, and cross

Catholic Update “The Beatitudes” C1291- facilitator resource

Music may be purchased at the Franciscan Mission Store, Loretto, the Friar’s Shop, Logan Valley Mall, or The Lamb’s Way, Plank Road, Altoona

Materials for table names

Materials for producing parables in section 2

PARABLES

Rich Fool – LK 12:16-31- Danger of materialism

**Vine and the Branches- JN 15:1-17- love one another, community,
Discipleship**

Unforgiving Servant- MT 18: 23-35- justice, faith

Workers in the Vineyard- MT 20: 1-16- graciousness of God, justice

Good Samaritan- LK 10: 25-37- mercy, help everyone

Sower and Seed- MK 4: 1-20- fruitfulness, hear and obey God's word

Prodigal Son- LK 15:11-32- forgiveness, reconciliation

Parable of the Weeds- MT 13: 24-30- justice, patience

**DISCIPLESHIP FOR THE JOURNEY:
CHRISTIAN STORY RETREAT
11th GRADE**

Objective: To enable youth to know and understand their Christian story and to share it with others.

Friday

7:00-7:30 PM	Welcome and Ice Breaker
7:30-9:30 PM	1st section We
9:30-10:00 PM	Evening Prayer Service
10:00-11:00 PM	Snack and Social
12:00 Midnight	Lights Out

Saturday

7:30-8:00 AM	Morning Prayer
8:00-9:00 AM	Breakfast and Free Time
9:00 AM-12:00 Noon	2nd section. . . .listen.
	Optional: Sacrament of Penance
12:00 Noon-1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00-5:00 PM	3rd section. . . .with faith
5:00 PM	Dinner
6:00-8:00 PM	Affirmation Exercises
8:00 PM	Movie/snacks
10:00 PM	Night Prayer
12:00 Midnight	Lights Out

8:00 AM	Breakfast
8:30-9:00 AM	Cleaning and Packing
9:00-10:00 AM	4th section. . . .for the journey.
10:30-11:30 PM	Closing Liturgy

Materials for the retreat:
Each participant is to bring a picture of their friend(s), team, club, etc.

NECESSARY CATECHETICAL COMPONENTS

1ST SECTION - We.

The importance of family, friends, and Jesus for our personal and spiritual development.

The qualities of friendship and the importance of these qualities for our personal and spiritual development.

2ND SECTION - listen.

The importance of scripture in understanding the qualities Jesus possesses and to develop a clearer understanding of the human and divine Jesus.

The significance of the masks we wear and their negative and positive qualities. The masks worn and their qualities are important for understanding and relating to Jesus and others.

Acknowledging individual sinfulness - confession, if possible.

Understand the relationship between individual sinfulness and suffering to the cross.

3RD SECTION - with faith.

The call of Jesus to share our individual gifts and talents with the church, the body of Christ.

The importance of self-discovery for individual growth and communal participation.

The important qualities of a Christian community.

The importance of Confirmation, a sacrament of initiation.

4TH SECTION-. for the journey

To begin to help youth share an experience of Christ in their life.

GATHERING TIME

Welcome by Facilitator (Introduction of facilitators, if necessary.)

Ice Breaker/s

Any game that will involve the entire group (or 2 groups if group is over 35) and set a relaxed atmosphere. Example: Have the group sit in a circle. They are to introduce themselves using the 1st initial of their first name. That initial should be the first letter of a positive adjective which describes them: Caring Carol, Joyous John. Several ice breakers may be needed depending on the group. (See Resources)

Prayer Cloth: Hang a plain large piece of fabric (may be a plain bed sheet). Ask participants throughout the retreat to write or draw significant or spiritual insights on the cloth. This will be used as an altar cloth for Mass or a table covering for the closing prayer service.

Table Introductions

Directions: Divide the large group into smaller groups of 5-7 people. Groups may be prearranged, counted by number, etc. Each participant receives a copy of the booklet. Each group should decide on a team name and logo which reflects a confirmation theme. The group name and logo is placed on the front cover of the booklet. Each group is to introduce themselves using their name, the group name, and logo to the entire group.

Next, members of the small group will introduce the people in their picture to their group. They should share what they like best about their friend/s, team, club, etc.

First Section We

A. Family Tree

Explain: Each one of us is a member of a family. Our families are important to us. Our family has helped to form us into the person we are and to shape who we are becoming. To help think about our families, we are going to ask you to complete a family tree on pg. 2 of your booklet.

Direction: (Facilitators should have their family tree completed as an example.) Participants can cut out colored leaves or leaves can be pre-cut to symbolize each family member. Participants are to complete their family trees in their small groups. When all are finished, have them share in the small group their family trees and tell why the leaves were arranged as they were or why certain colors were selected. (30 minutes)

B. Friendship

Explain: Another important experience is that of friendship. You have already shared the picture of your friend/s, team, etc. with your group. Open your booklets to the top of pg. 3 and list the qualities a good friend/s possesses. (Allow about 5 minutes for this.)

Direction: When all are finished ask youth to share with the entire group the qualities of friendship and list them under We on the flip chart.

C. The Importance of Friends and Family

First Speaker: A youth, young adult, or adult is to present the talk on "The Importance of Friends and Family." See resource list, section B, pg. 8.

D. Qualities of Friendship

Explain: The qualities we have listed on the flip chart are important to us as people. They help us to grow emotionally, physically and spiritually. The qualities of friendship we experience are important, but also important are the qualities of friendship we possess. It is important to know how we are friends to others. On the bottom of pg. 3 list the qualities you possess as a friend. Pick the one quality you see as most important and write it under I am _____. Then share with your group how you live that particular quality.

E. Jesus' Qualities of Friendship

Explain: We have been taught how Jesus lived his life and the way he related to people. He demonstrated many qualities that are important for us to emulate in our daily lives. Turn to pg. 4 in your booklet and individually list the qualities you think Jesus possessed. Next, as a group, decide on the 5 most important qualities of Jesus and prepare to give an explanation of the quality from the life of Jesus. List them on the bottom of pg. 4.

Each group is to report the 5 qualities of Jesus and give an example from the life of Jesus to the entire group. List Jesus' qualities next to the qualities of a friend under **We** on the flip chart. Make the connection between the similar qualities that youth and Jesus possess.

F. Second Speaker: A youth, young adult or adult presents the talk, "Jesus in Friends and Family." See resource, section B ,pg. 8.

Facilitator: Summarize by making the following points:

1. There are similarities between the qualities of a friend and the qualities Jesus possesses.
2. As human beings, we can sometimes disappoint our family or friends, but Jesus, being God, will always love, forgive, and trust us.
3. Jesus, being God, is with us at all times and in all places.
4. Stories about relationships with friends and family can help us to see Jesus in our lives at all times and in all places.
5. Family, friends, and Jesus are important for our personal and spiritual development.

Options: A video may be shown to reinforce one or all of these points. See resource list, section C, pg. 9.

Evening Prayer Service

Direction: Introduce the prayer service and begin with an opening prayer. Prayer table should contain a bible, candles, and a cross. Song: see "General Instructions for Retreats".

Facilitator - share a picture of a friend, a story about friendship, and relevant Scripture reading.

Place his/her picture on the prayer table.

- invites about 1/3 of the participants to place their friend/team picture on the prayer table.

Facilitator - share a picture of a friend, a story about friendship, and relevant Scripture reading.

Place his/her picture on the prayer table.

- invites about 1/3 of the participants to place their friend/team picture on the prayer table.

Facilitator - share a picture of a friend, a story about friendship, and relevant Scripture reading.
Place his/her picture on the prayer table.

- invites about 1/3 of the participants to place their friend/team picture on the prayer table.

After all the pictures have been placed on the prayer table, the facilitator will lead a guided meditation which will help youth look at Jesus in their lives. See resource list, section C, pg. 9. After the meditation, have teens open to pg. 5 of the booklet and answer the questions.

In the large group discuss the answers and affirm youth's experiences.

Close the evening prayer service with an Our Father or other suitable short prayer and a song.

Option: Current videos that fit the theme.

Remind youth to write or draw insights on the prayer cloth.

Saturday Morning Prayer Service (30 minutes)

See resources list ,section D, pg. 9.

Second Section listen

Explain: Last evening we talked about the importance of family and friends. We began to look at Jesus and the qualities we see in him. One place we can find out more about Jesus is the bible. The scripture stories about Jesus are important to us because through them we learn who Jesus was, how and what he taught, and the manner in which he lived. From scripture we learn more about our own faith and the centrality of Jesus for our faith formation.

First Speaker: "Jesus As a Friend" See resources, section B, pg. 8.

Explain: Last evening we talked about the qualities of a friend, our qualities, and the qualities of Jesus. We are going to use scripture stories to help us further reflect on these qualities.

Direction: Divide youth into the same small groups. Give each group one scripture passage from resource pg. 10. They are to read the verse and identify the qualities of friendship Jesus exhibited in the passage. Each small group is to create a portrait of Jesus using words, art or song to be shared with the entire group.

Have each group introduce themselves with their table name and share their portrait of Jesus. After each group presents their portrait of Jesus, the large group identifies a quality of friendship (trusting, honesty, willing to help, etc.). List the quality under. . . .listen. . . .on the flip chart.

Each participant will spend a minimum of 10 minutes journaling quietly about the quality or qualities exhibited in the scripture passage just studied and how it has/have been experienced in a personal relationship in their life. Youth are to put their reflections on pg. 6 of the booklet.

NOTE: if the following points have not been covered in the previous discussion, include them.

Explain: Our portraits of Jesus are not complete; something is missing. We need to consider that out of his unconditional love for us, Jesus suffered for our sins. But what does this really mean? It means that Jesus the 2nd person of the Trinity:

- will be with us through all pain and suffering
- forgives us for the sins we commit
- will give us the grace to forgive others the pain and suffering they have inflicted on us

- by his suffering and death, Jesus saved us from our sins, thus enabling us to live with him for all eternity
- taught us that we, like him, will have to suffer.
- teaches that many of our sufferings are a result of our sin or the sins of others.

Explain: Connecting into the sins and faults of our lives is often difficult for many reasons. For instance, we often wear masks to hide our sinfulness and to pretend we are someone we are not.

Optional: Watch a video such as the "Velveteen Rabbit." After viewing, discuss the major points. For example, how did the rabbit become real? Who helped the rabbit become real and how? Why is it important to become real?

We are all called to be real, to recognize and give up those masks which prevent healthy growth. What are some masks that prevent healthy growth?

Second Speaker: "Masks" - see resource list ,section B, pg. 8.

Direction: Facilitators and participants will make masks. Give each person a blank mask. On one side of the mask use pictures, words, etc. from magazines to portray the "real you". On the other side put pictures, words, etc. that represent the masks you wear. When finished share in a large group the "real you".

When the mask exercise is completed, a facilitator should refer the youths to the side of the mask on which they portrayed the masks they wear. The possible sinfulness of this side of their masks should be explored. Connections are to be made between the sins they commit and their need for confession and reconciliation. Ask the young people to take their masks into confession to help guide their confession. After they return from confession, participants can symbolically burn the mask, pin the "real you" side of the mask on a banner, etc.

Prayer Service - See resource list, section D, pg. 9.
Remind youth to write or draw insights on the prayer cloth.

Facilitator Summarizes: Reinforce the point made in each presentation. The stories about Jesus in the bible show us the qualities of friendship which are important. We listed these qualities under **listen.** These qualities teach us how to live as a Christian and to love, care and forgive others. As humans, we fail and sin, but Jesus Christ is always ready to forgive us. However, we must be willing to admit our sins and ask for God's forgiveness. Confession is an important step in forgiveness and reconciliation. Through the sacrament of Penance we admit our sins, ask for forgiveness, state a firm intention not to sin again and are reconciled with others and the church. Jesus' suffering, death on the cross , and resurrection save us from our sins and make reconciliation with God and others possible. This is one of the important teachings of the Catholic church.

Lunch

Third Section with faith.

Community building games - see resource list, section E, pg. 9.

Focus: To provide physical activity that exhibits qualities necessary for a healthy Christian community.

Teams can be formed using the small discussion groups, combining groups, or forming new groups. Games should last 1-1 ½ hours. Give youth a break when finished.

Direction: Facilitator gathers the participants into a large group. Write . . .with faith. . .on the flip chart.

Explain: The church is the Body of Christ. Just as the body has many parts, each with its own function, the church is comprised of many people, each with their own gifts and talents. All are called to use these talents and gifts to serve Christ within the community.

What qualities such as leadership, trust, fun, etc. were important during the game playing? These same qualities are also important in the building and support of the church community. Many of these qualities are also the qualities Jesus has and teaches us to develop in our lives. These are listed underlisten Jesus lived in community and called all to understand the importance of the church for our faith life and growth.

Speaker: "The Importance of the Faith Community." See resource list, section B, pg. 8.

Explain: The church and the Christian community are important to the formation, growth and nurture of our faith. Why? Our initiation into the church began at Baptism. What are the other two sacraments of initiation? Why is an initiation ceremony important? What symbols and rituals are used for initiation? (A parallel may be drawn to initiation ceremonies common to groups in which youths participate.)

As fully initiated members of the Catholic church, we become more aware of and are strengthened by the Holy Spirit. We are led to a fuller and deeper life in the church. What are the privileges of full initiation? (Youth can serve as Eucharistic ministers, readers, and baptismal and confirmation sponsors.) What is expected of those who are fully initiated? (Include ongoing formation, service, active participation in the worship life of the community, and evangelization.)

Remind participants to write or draw their thoughts on the prayer cloth.

BREAK

Explain: Your relationship with your family, friends, God and the church will be influenced by how you see and feel about yourself. The masks we discussed this morning can help protect or project how you feel about yourself. The community building games affirmed some of your gifts and talents. Discovering who you really are takes honesty and self reflection. To help you reflect and learn more about yourself, turn to pages 7 and 8 in your booklet and answer the questions. When this is completed, share your answers with your small groups.

DINNER

Affirmation Exercise

Explain: When you were asked to bring a picture with you this weekend, some of you brought group or team pictures. Groups and teams are important to us for many reasons. To help reflect on these reasons, open your booklets to pg. 9 and list groups to which you belong. After you list the groups, answer, "What do you gain from belonging to these groups?" (This list will identify the needs youth have in their lives.)

Direction: After youth have completed pg. 9, ask them to share what they gain from belonging to a group. List their answers on the flip chart underwith faith. . . .

Explain: Think now about our Catholic community. Name a time when you or your family had your needs met by the church, a group in the church, or an individual member. List these on the flip chart in a separate column underwith faith. . . . (These answers should be similar to those teens previously listed under.....with faith.....Make that connection)

Facilitator summarizes: As humans we have a need for relationships. We satisfy this need by belonging to groups. An example of a communal relationship is the small group with whom you have been sharing.

Another group we belong to, because of our Baptism, is the Church. We need other people with whom to pray and worship God, people who care for us and have similar Christian values.

Explain: Another aid to the formation of community is to affirm the positive qualities of others. Because affirming one another's gifts is important, we will engage in an affirmation exercise. We will each receive a tee-shirt. On the front of the tee shirt each person will write his/her positive qualities. (Allow time for this.)

Direction: All participants are then to put on the tee shirts over their clothing. On the back of the tee shirts everyone is to write on everyone else's shirts something positive about that person using words or phrases. Music can be played. Ex. "Companions on the Journey". When completed, everyone is to take off the tee shirts and read what was written on the back. On pg. 10 of their booklet, participants are to list the qualities on the back of the tee shirt which told them something new about themselves.

Parent Letters - see resource pg. 11

Explain: In addition to having our peers affirm us, parents are important to all of us. We have asked your parents (sponsors or other significant adults) to write you a letter telling you which one of your gifts or talents is important to them and why. We ask you to read these letters alone and then write a response to the letters.

Direction: Response letters may be given to the parents by the youth or mailed by the facilitator.

BREAK

Movie/snacks. Examples are, "Beauty and the Beast," "Mr. Holland's Opus," "Driving Miss Daisy," or "It's a Wonderful Life." An appropriate introduction before and discussion afterwards should occur to reinforce retreat themes.

Night prayer- see resource list, section D, pg. 9

Fourth Section for the journey.

Facilitator summarizes: On Friday we started with "We. . . ." our experiences of family, friends, and God. Saturday morning under ". . .listen . . ." we looked at scripture stories of the qualities of friendship Jesus portrayed. Saturday afternoon and evening we explored the Catholic community under ". . .with faith. . ." Then discuss the importance of God, family and friends to our lives. Trust, forgiveness, a healthy self-esteem and being affirmed by family, friends and the Christian community are important for forming a relationship with God.

The faith and practice of the Catholic church, as the community of believers, forms and nourishes our faith. Now we will begin to look at the last section ". . .for the journey." This section will help us reflect on what we have learned or more clearly understood this weekend.

Explain: The meaning of the life of Jesus and his message is summed up in I Jn 4:7-21 in the Bible. Read this section and then ask: What does this section tell us about God? Jesus the Son? the Holy Spirit? What are we commanded to do? (To love one another) How can we do this? (We show our love by serving others).

Speaker: “Using positive qualities to serve others.” See resource, section B, pg. 9.

Direction: To help you reflect on how this retreat has helped you more fully understand your story and your baptismal call to discipleship of love and service. Turn to page 11 in your booklet and answer the questions there.

Direction: Have youth share their answers in their small group.

Optional: As individuals or in large or small groups, the youth could commit themselves to performing service to be completed after the retreat. When youth understand their baptismal call, they will understand the call to service.

Explain: We have shared some of our faith stories with you this weekend. Several speakers have shared their reflections about their faith and personal experiences. It is important for you to begin to share how you live out your faith with others. No one will come to know God or the person of Jesus unless each of us begins to share your faith. This sharing is an important part of what it means to be a fully initiated Catholic Christian.

To help begin to share your faith experience with others, turn again to page 11 in your booklet. Reflect on your answers there. Pick one of them and on page 12 expand it to about a one minute presentation. We will ask you to read what you write as part of a communion meditation at liturgy or as a part of the closing prayer service.

Preparation for liturgy or prayer service

Closing Prayer Service or Liturgy

Liturgy:

- can be placed anywhere during the retreat subject to the availability of a priest
- each youth should have a ministry or plan a part of the Mass
- use the prayer cloth as an altar cloth

Closing Prayer:

- use the prayer cloth as a prayer table covering
- include themes of discipleship or service
- incorporate the written faith stories of all present.

RESOURCES

A. Materials needed:

1. Each participant is to provide a friend/s/team/club picture.
2. Flip charts with dark markers
3. Videos/VCR
4. Bibles for everyone
5. Large piece of plain, light colored fabric which is appropriate to the liturgical season.
6. Masks for everyone. Use paper plates, bags or design your own.
7. Parent letters for each youth; sponsor's or other significant adult's letters may also be included.
8. White tee shirts and dark markers for everyone.

B. Talk Outlines:

First Section

- a. The importance of friends and family
 - Why are friends and family important? Think of individual people.
 - Give a specific story about how a friend or family member was there for you.
 - How did you see God present in this experience?
- b. Jesus in friends and family
 - Tell one story about how you saw or came to know Jesus better through a situation involving a friend, family member or situation.
 - What helped you recognize the presence of Jesus?
 - How has this incident affected your relationship with your friend/family and Jesus?

Second Section

- a. Jesus as friend
 - Share some of your values and lifestyle before Jesus became important to your life.
 - Why and when did you begin to see Jesus as your friend?
 - Share how this friendship has changed or influenced your values and lifestyle.
- b. Masks
 - List specific masks you wear. With whom and when do you wear them?
 - Why do you wear these masks?
 - Share how your Christian beliefs influence your masks.

Third Section

- . Importance of the faith community
 - Tell a story in which the faith of an individual in your parish or a group/organization of the parish influenced your faith commitment.
 - What happened?
 - Why was this important to you?
 - How was your faith/relationship with God affected?

Fourth Section

Using positive qualities to serve others

- List two to three positive qualities you possess
- Give specific examples telling how you served or met the needs of others using each quality

C. Resources

Resource for Friday night guided meditation. The Jesus Difference, by Kiernan Sawyer, SND, Ave Maria Press, 1987 pages 26-27.

Videos: Franciscan Communications - "Storyteller"
"Bridges"
"A Eucharistic Parable"
"The Choice"

Tabor - "Anxious Hearts"

Third Section - "Connect - Gifted with the Spirit," Section 1.

D. Prayer Services

Prayer Service Models, by Karen Jessie, Kimberley Langley, and Robert Meany, The Center for Learning, '89

The Jesus Difference, by Kiernan Sawyer, SND, Ave Maria Press, '87

Searching for Faith: Teen Assemblies, Retreats and Prayer Services, by Mary Ann Hakowski, St. Mary's Press.

Growing With Jesus, by Maryann Hakowski

E. Games

Sardines - One person hides in a place large enough for the entire group. As each person finds the hiding place, he/she remains there. The last person to find the group then hides, beginning the process again.

Ideas - from Youth Specialties, Zondervon Publishing

Creative Gaming - Books 1, 2, & 3, St. Mary's Press, '82

Creative Resources for Youth Ministry, by Wayne Rice and Mike Yaconelli, St. Mary Press, '91

QUALITIES OF FRIENDSHIP - Facilitators Guide

Scripture Quotes

Martha and Mary - LK 10:38-42

Temptations of Jesus - MT 4:1-11

Woman Caught in Adultery - JN 8:1-11

Agony in the Garden - MT 26:36-46

Samaritan Women - JN 4:4-42

Wedding at Cana - JN 2:1-10

Road to Emmaus - LK 24:13-35

Washing of Feet - JN 13:1-20

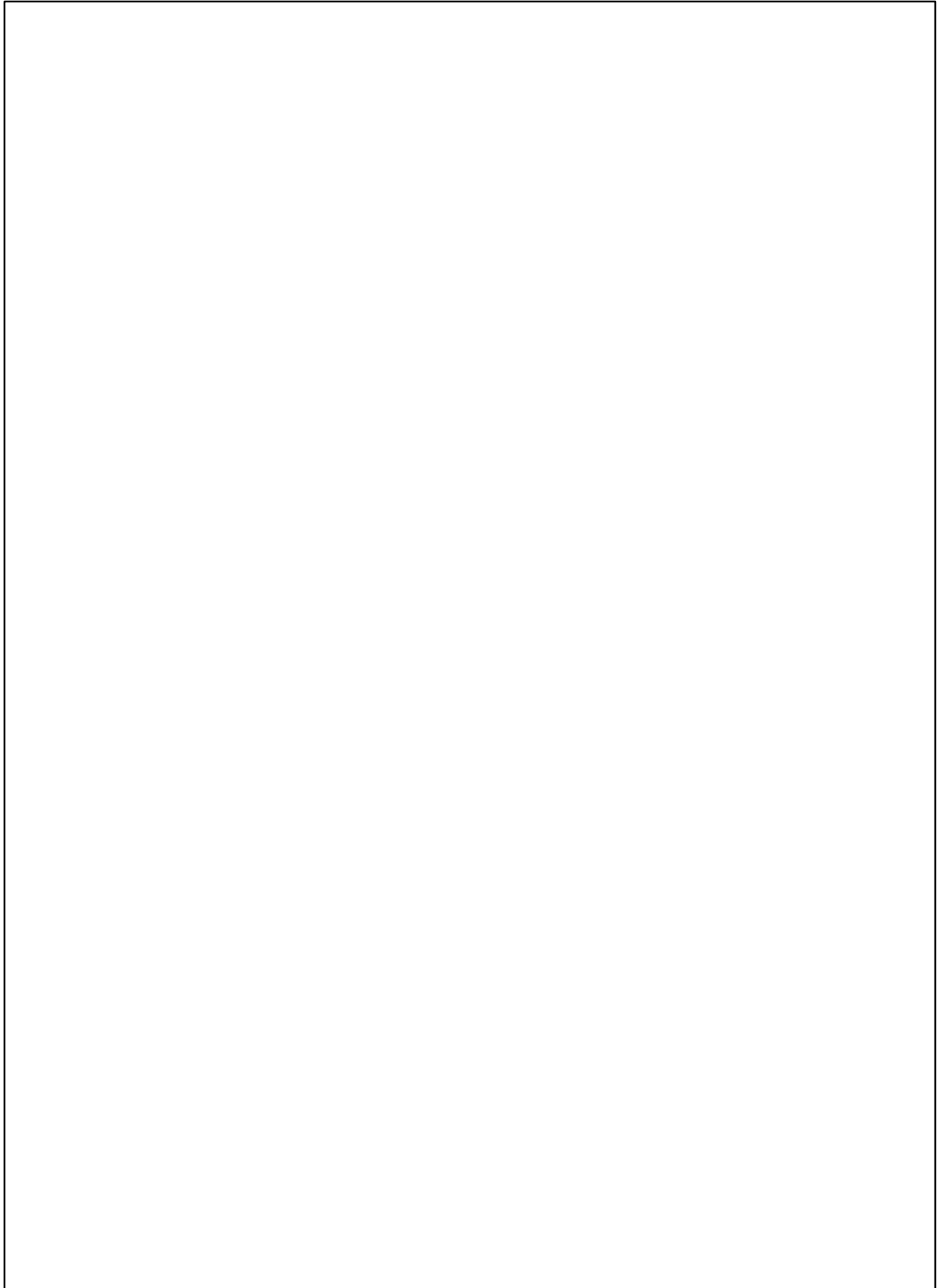
Feeding of the Five Thousand - MT 14:14-21

Return of the Twelve - MK 6:30-33

Walking on Water - MT 14:22-33

Suggestions for Parent Letters

1. The purpose of this letter is to have the parent/godparent, etc. affirm the Confirmation candidate. Teens often feel very negative about themselves and it is important for them to hear from people they love why they are special.
2. Parents are to reflect on the gifts and talents of their child. Think about such things as what they are good at; what they like to do; how they are helpful; why they are special to you, etc.
3. Select one thing about them and name it in the letter. Tell your son/daughter how important this gift or talent has been to you personally, to the family, and to others.
4. After youth read your letter they will be asked to write a response in return.



SPONSORS

Canon 892 - As far as possible a sponsor for the one to be confirmed should be present; it is for the sponsor to see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with this sacrament.

Canon 893 - §1 To perform the role of sponsor, it is necessary that a person fulfill the conditions mentioned in Canon 874.

Canon 874 - To be admitted to the role of sponsor, a person must:

874-1° be designated. . . ., by the parents or the one who takes their place or, in their absence, by the pastor or minister and is to have the qualifications and intention of performing this role

874-3° be a Catholic who has been Confirmed and has already received the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken;

874-4° not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;

874-5° not be the father or the mother of the one to be baptized.

Canon 893 - §2 - It is desirable that the one who undertook the role of sponsor at baptism be sponsor for confirmation.

1. Confirmation sponsors have three main tasks. The first is to answer the candidate's questions about the church. The four sessions with the candidate will aid this discussion, but sponsors should be available to answer questions throughout the process. Second, sponsors are to help the candidate know the community better and the community the candidate. At the **Rite of Confirmation**, sponsors are asked by the bishop to state the readiness of the candidate to participate in Christian discipleship and the mission of the Church. Thirdly, Confirmation sponsors are expected to model faith by a faith-filled life. As Christian role models sponsors should be available and support candidates on their journey of faith. Sponsors also support parents in the faith formation promised at Baptism.

2. It is desirable that the baptismal sponsor be the sponsor for Confirmation. The completion of Baptism is more clearly evident. **Canon 893- §2**

3. The Confirmation sponsors have the following duties:
 - Pray for the candidate.
 - Participate in service with the youth, when possible.
 - During the 11th grade meet two to four times with the candidate, encourage the reception of the Sacrament of Penance, attend the meeting to review the **Rite of Confirmation**, and attend the prayer service/rehearsal.
 - Attend the **Rite of Blessing** of the Candidates and the **Rite of Commitment**, when possible.
 - Bring the candidate to receive the sacrament and present them to the bishop for anointing.
 - Continue support and role modeling after Confirmation to help the youth fulfill their baptismal promises.

4. Requirements for Sponsors

1. Be an adult 18 years of age or older.
2. Be a fully initiated Catholic who lives and practices the Catholic faith.
3. Be free of any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared.
4. Be other than the father or the mother of the Confirmation candidate.
5. Have a letter of eligibility from one's own pastor.

Resources:

Confirmation Sponsor Manual, by Richard Reichert, Brown ROA, 1997

SPONSOR SESSION INFORMATION FOR THE CONFIRMATION PROCESS

Information Included in this Section:

- A. Sponsor/Candidate Meeting Form**
- B. First Sponsor Meeting Information
Dependency Diagram**
- C. Second Sponsor Meeting Information**
- D. Third Sponsor Meeting Information**
- E. Fourth Sponsor Meeting Information**

SPONSOR/CANDIDATE MEETING FORM

This is to attest that I did meet with _____
(Name)

whom I will be sponsoring for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Our meetings were:

DATE	TIME
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____

Sponsor Signature

Please write a reflection on your meetings with your candidate.

Sponsor 1

Sponsor 2

First Sponsor Meeting

Topic: Dependency

1. Begin with a prayer.
2. Read Scripture and commentary (following page).
3. Have student write, "First Sponsor Meeting" on a journal page.
4. Dependency Diagram:
 - a. Tell student to list 3 healthy dependencies in his/her life in their journal. Sponsor fills out attached sheet. Share together.
 - b. Have student list 1 unhealthy dependency and why they feel that it is unhealthy in their journal. Sponsor fills out appropriate section on the attached sheet. Share together.
5. Part of our Christian journey is to come to a deeper realization that we can always depend on God.
 - a. When it is difficult for you to depend on God? Have student write question and answer in journal. Sponsors answers on attached sheet. Share together.
6. Close with a prayer.
7. Set a date and time for next meeting.

Scripture:

Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:3

Commentary:

There are two ways of being poor. In this early chapter of his Gospel, Matthew is not talking about poverty that comes from having no money or living in destitute conditions. The type of poverty that Matthew says brings true happiness is a different kind. For we all know that to be without material possessions is no guarantee of a joyous life. Perhaps a better word to substitute for "poverty" in this passage would be dependency. We all know how good it is to be dependent on people, such as friends or family. We may not often think about experiences of being dependent, yet we have these experiences all the time. For example, if it were not for our alarm clock or our mother or father we would not have awakened this morning on time. Do we ever stop to realize that small area of dependency in our lives? Do we stop to think how dependent we are on the food that we eat each day to keep our bodies in good health? In our modern society we take for granted so many things like electricity, the telephone, and the television set that we are often not even aware of our reliance on them.

In this brief line from his Gospel, Matthew is talking about a type of spiritual dependency. Some of us delude ourselves by thinking we are not dependent on anything or anyone, not simply for material goods but for more important things as well. Do we ever stop to realize this?

Dependency Diagram

Three healthy dependencies in my life

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

One unhealthy dependency in my life is:

When is it difficult for you to depend on God?

Give an example of when you depended on God:

Second Sponsor Meeting

Topic: Values

1. Begin with a prayer.
2. Read Scripture and commentary on next page.
3. Have student write, "Second Sponsor Meeting" on a journal page.
4. List of values
 - a. Ask candidate to list 7 values (things that are important) in their journal. Sponsor lists them on this sheet.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

When finished, look over your list and select the two things you value most. Candidate and sponsor share them and tell why.

5. One value that we should have or grow toward is that of an ever deepening relationship to Jesus and an understanding of the Holy Spirit. Complete the exercise on the following page and then share. Give a second copy to your candidate.
6. Close with a prayer.
7. Set date and time for next meeting.

Scripture: **The Parable of the Hidden Treasure**, Matthew 13:44-46

“The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man happens to find a treasure hidden in a field. He covers it up again, and is so happy that he goes and sells everything he has, and then goes back and buys that field.”

The Parable of the Pearl

“Also, the Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man is looking for fine pearls, and when he finds one that is unusually fine, he goes and sells everything he has, and buys that pearl.”

Commentary:

These two short parables illustrate that the values we have need to be cherished, sacrificed for, protected, and put in a place of priority above everything else. Values are one’s beliefs and behaviors chosen freely after serious thought. We cherish them, are willing to publicly affirm them, and act on them. Hopefully for Christians their values reflect those of the Gospel.

EXERCISE

Jesus and Me

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
ME											JESUS

Place your name on the point on the spectrum which best represents your closeness or distance from Jesus.

Two obstacles that keep me from Jesus are:

- 1.
- 2.

An area about my relationship with Jesus that confuses me is:

One way I know I could grow closer to Jesus:

Discuss the importance of the Holy Spirit for your life. Cite a specific example of the activity of the Spirit in your life.

Third Sponsor Meeting

Topic: Prayer Life

1. Begin with a prayer.
2. Read Scripture and commentary on the next page. Both the candidate and sponsor are to answer the questionnaire and then discuss their answers.
3. One prayer form is that of writing. The sponsor is to write a prayer for his/her candidate below. The candidate is to write a prayer telling God why he wants to be confirmed in his/her journal.

4. Closing prayer. Sponsor and candidate are to share their prayers.
5. Set a date and time for last meeting.

Scripture: Matthew 6:5-8

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites! They love to stand up and pray in the houses of worship and on the street corners so that everyone will see them. I assure you, you have already been paid in full. But when you pray, go to your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you. When you pray, do not use a lot of meaningless words, as the pagans do, who think that God will hear them because their prayers are so long. Do not be like them. Your Father already knows what you need before you ask him.”

Commentary:

In this reading from Matthew, Jesus is stressing the difference between saying our prayers (reciting words) and praying (conversing with God). Reciting prayers is important especially for communal worship, but for us to really connect in with God we must learn to “go to your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen.”

Questionnaire for Third Sponsor Meeting

1. Do you believe that God is interested in you and what you do? Why or Why not.
2. When do you pray?
3. If you believe that God, “already knows what you need before you ask him,” then what do you pray about? Why do you tell God about your needs?
4. My favorite place for prayer is.
5. Mass is a Catholic’s primary communal prayer form. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not.

Questionnaire for Third Sponsor Meeting

1. Do you believe that God is interested in you and what you do? Why or Why not.
2. When do you pray?
3. If you believe that God, “already knows what you need before you ask him,” then what do you pray about? Why do you tell God about your needs?
4. My favorite place for prayer is.
5. Mass is a Catholic’s primary communal prayer form. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not.

Scripture: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

“The same day Jesus left the house and went to the lakeside, where he sat down to teach. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it, while the crowd stood on the shore. He used parables to tell them many things.

‘There was a man who went out to sow. As he scattered the seed in the field, some of it fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some of it fell on rocky ground, where there was little soil. The seeds soon sprouted, because the soil was not deep. When the sun came up it burned the young plants, and because the roots had not grown deep enough, the plants soon dried up. Some of the seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, But some seeds fell in good soil, and bore grain; some had one hundred grains, others sixty, and others thirty.’

And Jesus concluded, ‘Listen, then, if you have ears! Listen then and learn what the parable of the sower means. Those who hear the message about the Kingdom but do not understand it are like the seed that fell along the path. The Evil One comes and snatches away what was sown in them. The seed that fell on rocky ground stand for those who receive the message gladly as soon as they hear it. But it does not sink deep in them, and they don’t last long. So when trouble or persecution come because of the message, they give up at once. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear the message, but the worries about this life and the love for riches choke the message, and they don’t bear fruit. And the seed sown in good soil stands for those who hear the message and understand it; they bear fruit, some as much as one hundred, others sixty, and others thirty.’ ”

Commentary :

Commitment is the name of another challenge. Many people today want to avoid being pinned down about anything. But because of our Baptism into the Catholic faith, we become members of a community. This community supports, nourishes, and strengthens us so that we can “bear fruit”, but also asks something from us in return.

Confirmation is a sealing of the Baptism promises made by our parents. It is the completion of our initiation into the Catholic church.

Topic 3: PRAYER

Question and Answer Exercise:

1. Do you believe that God is interested in you and what you do? Why or Why not?

2. When do you pray?

3. If you believe that God, “Already knows you and what you need before you ask him,” then what do you pray about?

4. My favorite place to pray is . . .

5. Do you agree that a Catholic’s primary communal prayer form is the MASS? (Circle) YES or NO. Discuss your answer especially if it is NO.

CANDIDATE SHOULD WRITE:

Why I Want To Be Confirmed Prayer:

Prayer of Thanks to Sponsor:

Sponsor 14

Topic 4: COMMITMENT

Answer as honestly as you can:

1. What kind of soil do you see yourself as? Why?

2. What do you need in order to strengthen your relationship with Jesus? (pray, study, reconcile relationships etc.)

3. Do you the Candidate want to make this commitment to follow Jesus as a Catholic Christian?

4. If you said YES, how did this make you feel?
CANDIDATES ONLY:

SYMBOLS AND RITUAL ACTION

Anointing With Chrism symbolizes a calling to and strengthening in the power of Christ to serve in God's name. Confirmation is conferred through the laying on of hands and the anointing with Holy Chrism. The Chrism is placed by the sign of the cross on the forehead by the bishop with the words: "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Assembly those gathered for the Rite of Confirmation speak of God's presence and love. Those assembled have helped in the preparation of the baptized for Confirmation and have supported their journey to this celebration. The assembly welcomes the fully initiated Christians.

Chrism, the oil consecrated by the bishop, used at Baptism, Confirmation and Ordination. This is a particularly fragrant oil that strengthens the anointed in the Holy Spirit.

Laying on of Hands, the imposition of hands is a liturgical gesture found in the Old Testament, continued in the New Testament, and used throughout the centuries in the Church. The Bishop lays on hands, calling down the Holy Spirit on those to be confirmed.

Name is important and says who we are as special and unique. Candidates for Confirmation can retain their baptismal name for Confirmation. The name chosen should have Christian and/or family significance. We tap the great reservoir of the communion of saints and take the name of someone who is a model/example of Christian living.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises by the candidates attest to their belief as Catholic Christians, a belief first received at their Baptism.

Signing of those to be confirmed with the sign of the cross is a symbol of the salvation brought about by the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. The cross is the sign of faith. The confirmed are anointed with the sign of the cross, a sign of our faith and salvation.

Word of God, the Scriptures, is the focal point for all Christian celebrations. The Bible grounds our identity as children of God.

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Focus: To review the Rite, with emphasis on the Creed, symbols and ritual action.

NECESSARY ELEMENTS

1. Confirmation as a fuller and deeper incorporation into the life of the Christian community entered at Baptism, a strengthening for discipleship and loving service. The person is sealed indelibly with the Holy Spirit as completing initiation into Christian life.
2. The place of Confirmation within the sacramental system. The seal and character of Confirmation.
3. Review of the Liturgy and Rite
 - A. Sign of the Cross
 - B. Sprinkling Rite (a reminder of Baptism)
 - C. Proclamation of the Word
 - D. Rite of Confirmation:
 1. Presentation of the Candidates to the Bishop
 2. Homily
 3. Renewal of baptismal promises (creedal statement)
 4. Laying on of hands
 5. Anointing with chrism
 6. General Intercessions
 - E. Communion Rite
 - F. Concluding Rite

Resources:

The Rites

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part Two, Section Two, Article Two

“The Rite of Confirmation”, pg. D-15

“Symbols and Ritual Action”, pg. D-41

“Theology of Confirmation”, pg. D-43

THE CONFERRAL OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION ***Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown [Revised 04/16/00]***

The ordinary minister of Confirmation is the Bishop. In this way, there is a clear reference to the first pouring forth of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. After the Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, they themselves gave the Spirit to the faithful through the laying on of hands. Thus the reception of the Spirit through the ministry of the Bishop shows the close bond that joins the confirmed to the Church and the mandate received from Christ to bear witness to him before all.

Given the importance of the Sacrament of Confirmation as the completion of Baptism and initiation into the Church, the Candidates should be prepared well in regard to its meaning and place within the life of the Church. They should be able and willing to speak accurately about their Faith.

Accordingly, the ritual within which the Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred takes on a very special importance. Pastors and other clergy of the Candidates' parishes should make every effort to be present. This serves as a sign of support and encouragement to the Candidates.

Following is a list of items that should be reviewed and to which reference should be made when preparing Candidates for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Certain sections should be brought to the attention of the Candidates themselves.

1. On days when ritual Masses are permitted, the RITUAL MASS FOR CONFIRMATION with its proper readings is to be used. The color of vestment is red. However, concelebrants wear white stoles over their albs. If the ritual Mass of Confirmation is not used (even though allowed), one of the readings (other than the Gospel) may be taken from those provided in the Lectionary for Confirmation. The Mass of the particular day, its readings, and its color of vestments are used when ritual masses are not allowed. This includes the Octave of Easter, Sundays of the Easter Season, the Ascension of the Lord, and Pentecost Sunday.
2. The CANDIDATES with Sponsors are to process into the church with the Bishop, immediately following the cross and candles. They are to sit in the front of the church, along with their sponsors (usually in the row directly behind them). It is highly recommended that the Godparent of Baptism also be the Sponsor at Confirmation, since the two sacraments are connected (along with the Eucharist) as sacraments of initiation into the Church.
3. The SCRIPTURE READINGS are to be proclaimed by men and women fully initiated into the Church. This is in accord with the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and the directives of this Diocesan Church. Pastorally speaking, the candidates to be confirmed are nervous enough without the anxiety of having to proclaim a scripture reading.
4. The READERS are always a part of the procession, following the Deacon with the Book of Gospels.
5. After the Gospel Proclamation and while everyone is seated, the Pastor PRESENTS THE CANDIDATES for Confirmation, simply speaking in the name of the parish and calling each Candidate by name. Each candidate stands and remains standing, as his or her name is called. If someone other than the Pastor (Deacon, Catechist) presents the candidates for Confirmation, the Pastor publicly introduces the presenter to the Bishop.
6. The Bishop dialogues with the candidates during the HOMILY. The candidates should not hesitate to respond for fear of making a wrong statement. The ability of discussing one's faith with some ease is important to an appropriate witness of one's beliefs. The Candidates should be instructed in this regard.
7. The dialogue HOMILY TOPICS may include the following:
 - the life of the particular Candidate's saint and how that can be imitated in today's society
 - the Church: its identity, its mission, and its structure
 - the sacramental system of the Church, names and purpose, including the Sacraments of Initiation
 - the role of the Holy Spirit within the Church

8. After the Homily, the Bishop (standing in front of the Assembly) questions the candidates (standing in place) in regard to the renewal of their BAPTISMAL PROMISES and accepts their PROFESSION OF FAITH. The Candidates should be instructed to respond clearly and audibly to their parts. At the end, the whole Assembly responds with an “Amen”.
9. The Bishop then, along with those who will be administering the Sacrament with him (if any), LAYS HANDS on the candidates by extending hands over the entire group. The whole Assembly responds clearly and audibly with an “Amen”.
10. The Deacon then holds the Chrism at the left of the Bishop. Other Priests and/or Deacons on each side collect the information cards from either the Sponsor or Candidate. The Priest or Deacon reads the CONFIRMATION NAME of the Candidate for the Bishop. Unless a Candidate decides not to take on a different name other than their own, or in rare cases the first name of an admired relative, he or she should have been encouraged to select a name of a Saint of either sex who can be admired and emulated. This includes names of appropriate Old Testament personages. The Candidate is to be ready to share with the Bishop some facts about the particular person whose name he or she is taking.
11. The Bishop with miter and pastoral staff ANOINTS each of the Candidates as they approach him, the Sponsor standing behind and having placed his/her right hand on the Candidate’s right shoulder. (If other Priests assist the Bishop, the Deacon brings all the containers of Chrism to the Bishop who in turn hands one to each of the Priests.)
12. In an audible voice, the Candidate answers “AMEN” after being anointed. After the bishop says: “Peace be with you,” the candidate says: “AND ALSO WITH YOU.” There is to be no music or singing during the anointing in order for the Assembly to hear the words of anointing.
13. A bowl of water (other than that used for the Offertory), some lemon, and a towel are to be provided for the WASHING of HANDS after the anointing.
14. Even on a Sunday, the Profession of Faith is omitted, since it has already been made. The Bishop introduces the GENERAL INTERCESSIONS (which are led by the assigned Deacon) and prays the concluding prayer at the chair.
15. It is very appropriate that at least some of those confirmed be involved in the PRESENTATION of the GIFTS.
16. ADDITIONS, such as the distribution of certificates to the newly confirmed, are to take place outside of the liturgical celebration.
17. The Bishop will not pose for formal GROUP PICTURES. Group pictures (without the Bishop) can very easily take place in the Parish at the Rite of Sending. However, the Bishop will be available at the front of the church after the Confirmation for INDIVIDUAL PHOTOS taken by the families. Consequently, there will be no recessional. However, a verse or two of a closing hymn should be sung. This can also be very symbolic of the newly confirmed having become fully initiated into the Church, represented by the Assembly, into which they now mingle.
18. It is important to realize that the church is a sacred space, requiring a certain level of RESPECT and QUIET that is appropriate for such an area. This holds true throughout the photography session, as well.
19. In accord with Canon 895, the OFFICIAL RECORD of the Confirmation for all candidates is to be kept at the place (cathedral/church) where the Confirmation took place. The Rector/Pastor of that cathedral and/or church is the one that is to include the total count for the “General Statistics Report”. Should a record be kept also in the Parish of the Candidate, that Pastor is NOT to include the count on the “General Statistics Report”, unless the Confirmation actually took place there.
20. It is the responsibility of the Pastor of the Parish of the Candidate to notify the PARISH of BAPTISM, sending the appropriate information. The Rector/Pastor of the place where the Confirmation took place is responsible only for the Candidates of that Parish.

THEOLOGY OF CONFIRMATION

“Those who have been baptized continue on the path of Christian initiation through the sacrament of Confirmation. In this sacrament they receive the Holy Spirit whom the Lord sent upon the Apostles on Pentecost. This giving of the Holy Spirit conforms believers more fully to Christ and strengthens them so that they may bear witness to Christ for the building up of his body in faith and love.”
(Rite of Confirmation, 1-2)

Confirmation cannot be understood properly apart from the process of Christian initiation which also involves the celebration of Baptism and Eucharist. As a result of widespread evangelization involving the vast geographical spread of Christianity, the final anointing of Christian initiation (reserved to the that the Church has come to know as Confirmation was separated from the celebration of Baptism early in the fifth century C.E. Subsequently, first Eucharist was also delayed since its celebration was proper only after Confirmation. The lowering of the age of first Eucharist early in the 20th century, with the goal of encouraging more frequent communion, further removed Confirmation from the other sacraments of initiation in the minds of many believers.

The liturgical renewal of the Second Vatican Council insisted upon the recovery of the ancient intimate connection between Confirmation and the other sacraments of initiation with special regard for Baptism. Both Baptism and Confirmation celebrate Christ’s paschal mystery, i.e., his dying and rising, Baptism focuses upon initial incorporation into that mystery, while Confirmation focuses upon the Holy Spirit who dwells within and among the members of the Church, making believers more fully aware of the implications of the paschal mystery. It provides the Church with the opportunity to celebrate the Spirit’s gifts and presence as they are manifested in the lives of the initiates.

No sacrament is restricted to one day of celebration which is very much removed from the rest of human life. Sacraments assist believers in assessing where they have been, and where they hope to be in terms of the life long process of conversion. In particular, the process of conversion precedes and follows the ritual celebration of Confirmation. Those persons who are confirmed must realize that they are led to fuller and deeper incorporation into the life of the Christian community they entered at Baptism.

The unique element of Confirmation in fostering conversion involves the active discernment of membership in God’s Household as a turning away from selfishness and toward others by a process of loving service. In the signing with the oil of Chrism, a spiritual seal is imprinted. Those confirmed receive the “mark”, the seal of the Holy Spirit. This seal marks our total belonging to Christ, our enrollment in his service for ever, as well as the promise of divine protection at the end of time. The effects of the sacrament of Confirmation is 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 the person with power so that the believer may be his witness. This “character” perfects the common priesthood of the faithful, received at Baptism. And the confirmed receives the power to publicly profess faith in Christ.
(Catechism of Catholic Church, #1293-1305)

Accordingly, the celebration of Confirmation naturally leads to and flows from the celebration of Eucharist which gives voice to the praise of Christians for God’s gift of himself in the whole of the Christ-event, including the sending of the Spirit. All who join together to celebrate this sacred meal seek the wisdom and courage to offer themselves without reservation to love others into freedom, thereby building up the Body of Christ.

6-10-97
Fr. Robert Mazur
Director of Liturgy

CONFIRMATION: WHEN TO CONFIRM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

CHILDREN

	1	2	3	4	5
CATEGORIES					
Who's coming into the Church?	Unbaptized child of catechetical age. (Ages 7-13)	Unbaptized child below catechetical age. (Age 6 or below)	Child of catechetical age baptized in another religion (Ages 7-13)	Child of catechetical age baptized a Catholic. (Ages 7-13)	Child below catechetical age baptized a Catholic or baptized in another religion. (Age 6 or below)
Who may confirm?	The priest who baptizes. (In every instance) R.C.I.A. 305	The Bishop or his delegate.	The priest who receives him/her into full communion. R.C.I.A. 308	The Bishop or his delegate.	The Bishop or his delegate.
When?	Immediately after baptism U.S. Statutes 14, 18 & 19	Junior year of high school.	Immediately after his/her reception. R.C.I.A. 308	Junior year of high school.	Junior year of high school.
Process used?	R.C.I.A. adapted for children. (R.C.I.A. 252-330)	Diocesan Confirmation Guidelines	R.C.I.A. adapted for children. (R.C.I.A. 473-504)	Diocesan Confirmation Guidelines	Diocesan Confirmation Guidelines

Taken from: Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown
Christian Initiation Guidelines - Appendix III