

Confirmation First Meeting Agenda

This meeting is typically held about 6-9 months prior to the date of Confirmation. Candidates and their parents should attend. The Pastor should also be present.

Purpose:

- I. To help the candidate, family, priest, and/or parish staff in charge of confirmation preparation to discern the candidate's readiness and receptivity to the sacrament of confirmation.
- II. To discuss the expectations and practical details of the sacrament as well as the preparation process.
- III. For the candidates, families, priest, and parish staff to get to know each other better.

Sample Agenda

Beginning Activity: What is Confirmation?

- Have some time for an ice breaker activity before or as the session begins (such as a brief discussion or even a simple meal). (Optional)
- Discuss what they think confirmation is and what they expect from the process. This can be done as a self-reflection activity, as a large group discussion, or between parents and their children.

Talk – *What is Confirmation? What does Confirmation do for me?*

- Witness – consider having a person who has been confirmed come in to give a brief testimony of what the process was like and how they have continued to live out their faith after confirmation.
- Offer a brief history of the sacrament.
- Address what the Sacrament does for a soul and how Confirmation connects to Baptism and the Eucharist.
- Here is a top ten list of what Confirmation does for us (these come from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1285-1291. These are in no particular order):

1. Confirmation completes the Sacraments of Initiation, and without Confirmation a person is not fully initiated into the Catholic Church. If we are not a full member you cannot receive the fullest benefits belonging to the Body of Christ the Church. It would be like going to boot camp for the Marines and not completing all 13 weeks of boot camp. If someone completed only 11 weeks then left then that person cannot say they are a marine. When we receive all the Sacraments of Initiation we become a soldier for Christ; the Church Militant.

2. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit, This means that we are sealed, marked for eternal life. We are anointed for a purpose, for God; for heaven. We have a mark forever on our soul, the same permanent mark and character that is given at baptism and holy orders.

3. We should get confirmed to enter into a sacramental marriage. Can. 1065 §1. Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before they are admitted to marriage if it can be done without grave inconvenience. There are certain exceptions, but they must get approval by the Bishop in order to have a valid sacramental marriage.

4. The increase of the Spirit is given to us: Faith, Hope, and Charity are given in baptism. Faith, Hope and Charity direct our whole lives. Hope is the goal; helping to keep our eyes on the finish line, which is heaven. Faith is our tool, our guide. It is the right road, which takes us to heaven and charity. Charity is the action of having the courage to actually walk on the road to keep walking during hard times, and to lead others to walk on the road of faith toward heaven.

5. We are strengthened in the gifts of Fortitude, Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Piety, Fear of the

Lord, Counsel. You are given the fruits of the Holy Spirit including Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Benignity, Goodness, Longanimity, Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Continency and Chastity. We first receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit at our Baptism, but in confirmation they are strengthened and perfected.

Activity – Memorize the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

An easy way to memorize the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit is the acronym: “WUCKPuFF”.

W isdom

U nderstanding

C ounsel

K nowledge

P iety

u (disregard. It helps make the funny word)

F ortitude

F ear of the Lord

6. We have claim to divine assistance for the rest of our lives. This means that we can always call upon God to help us. We can remind God (although He really doesn't need reminding, but sometimes we like to think this way) that through our Confirmation He promised us strength we can always call upon Him. This gift is perpetual, which means it is not just for one day, but rather whenever we need His assistance. The strength available at all times will help us to courageously confess the name of Christ and carry our Cross. Psalm 92 says, “To me you give the wild-ox's strength; you anoint me with the purest oil (we are anointed at Confirmation and the Bishop says be sealed with the Holy Spirit). My eyes looked in triumph on my foes; my ears heard gladly of their fall.” We are given the strength to do battle against the enemies of Salvation

7. We are strengthened in our role as prophet, priest and king, which we were given at baptism. Prophet or teacher – we adhere to the true faith, profess the faith we communicate the faith. Priest – we accept suffering as Christ did, we are willing to do penance. King – we are a leader, leading others to Salvation, we have a good character, one that can withstand bad examples (peer pressure) and seduction, we have a strong personality.

8. We are given a mission, and sent out with a purpose. Just as Christ was sent by the Father and just as Christ sent the first apostles, we too are called; we are chosen. Every baptized person, confirmed by the Spirit has a mission to bring others to Christ, this is to be done with the help of others, a collective witness, the body of Christ.

9. We have a Confirmation patron, a Saint who gives you personally an example of holiness and you are assured of their constant intercession for life.

10. Finally, we must realize we are basically weak without Confirmation. Saint Pope John Paul II called confirmation the gift of strength. Confirmation is not to be taken lightly, in fact it is a sin to neglect Confirmation, especially in these evil days when faith and moral are exposed to so many and such violent temptations. The gift of strength is such a great gift, it must be cherished and embraced for it is the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Lord the giver of Life who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

The Expectations/Requirements for Confirmation Preparation

Explain the expectations of the candidates, their parents, and the sponsors throughout the preparation process.

- **Pre-Interview with Priest/Delegate(s):** This is to explore what the candidate has learned and help them respond to the grace of the sacrament. This is also a chance for the priest and/or parish staff to get a sense of the candidate's and the candidate's family's readiness and receptivity to the sacrament and preparation.
- **Preparation Sessions:** The expectation is that candidates will attend all sessions. How will they make up for missed sessions? Explain the sessions and hand out the schedule.
- **Continuing Formation:** Explain that the expectation for all sacraments is that we continue to learn and grow in faith. Provide opportunities for continued formation in the parish and diocese.
- **Sponsor Selection and Involvement:** A confirmation sponsor is meant to be a mentor and guide and so should be 1) a witness of strong faith for the candidate and 2) be someone who the candidate can share with, learn from, and consult regarding the interior life as well as ask questions about the Church's teachings.
 - **Canon 892:** As far as possible the person to be confirmed is to have a sponsor. The sponsor's function is to take care that the person confirmed behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the duties inherent in the sacrament.
 - **Canon 983:** A person who would undertake the office of sponsor must fulfill the conditions mentioned in canon 874, which reads:
 - To be admitted to undertake the office of sponsor, a person must: be appointed by the candidate for Baptism, or by the parents or whoever stands in their place, or failing these, by the parish priest of the minister; to be appointed the person must be suitable for this role and have the intention of fulfilling it;
 - Be not less than sixteen years of age, unless a different age has been stipulated by the diocesan bishop, or unless the parish priest of the minister considers that there is a just reason for an exception to be made;
 - Be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has received the blessed Eucharist, and who lives a life of faith which benefits the role to be undertaken;
 - Not labor under a canonical penalty, whether imposed or declared
 - Not be either the father or the mother of the person to be baptized.
 - A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community may be admitted only in company with a Catholic sponsor, and then simply as a witness to the Baptism.
- **Sponsor Meetings:** It is highly recommended in addition to whatever the sponsor feels is necessary, throughout the preparation process; confirmandi will be given four different meetings with their sponsors. These will be given out each month and are to be turned in the following month.
- **Confirmation Retreat:** God desires to be with you and speak to each of you throughout this preparation process. It is important to always make time to getaway in order to be more attentive to what God is desiring to do in us. *Share with everyone the list of options and parish expectations regarding the retreat.*
- **Participation in the life of the Church:** Attending mass every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation, and receiving the Sacrament of Penance regularly.
- *Discuss any catechetical requirements for those who haven't been regular religious education attendees.*
- *Cover any other logistical points specific to your parish preparation process.*

Time for Questions

Prayer/Discernment

- Take some quiet time for prayer

- Scripture (choose some appropriate passage(s) regarding commitment to the process and give some time for prayerful meditation on the passage(s))
- Question to pose and reflect:
 - What are your impressions of the requirements we've talked about?
 - Realistically consider the time and commitment for this preparation?
 - Can you commit to your fullest to this process?
 - How will Confirmation preparation affect your other activities?
- Consider offering a time for a commitment or non-commitment to Confirmation preparation. This can be done through an official registration form, having the candidates that are ready to say "yes" to this commitment come forward for a prayer and blessing from the priest, etc.

Closing

- Offer a sign-up form for individuals to sign-up to meet with the parish DRE, YM, or Pastor regarding any further questions or concerns.
- Make a sign-up form available for the pre-interviews.
- Close in a final prayer