



## BEGINNINGS

### INTRODUCTION (WITH PARENTS)

#### GOAL

The goal of this session is to welcome and affirm the parents as the primary educators of their teens and to assure the parents that they will be supported every step of the way. This session also highlights the importance of the Sacrament of Confirmation and the policies and guidelines of the parish.

#### KEY CONCEPTS

Parents are the first and primary educators of their children; the Church supports them in this task.

A sacrament imparts a grace — a free gift from God — that helps us respond to God’s call to holiness in our lives.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation leads the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of the Christian life.

#### KEY TERMS

**Confirmation:** One of the Sacraments of Initiation into the Church, together with Baptism and the Eucharist. Confirmation completes the grace of Baptism by a special outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which seal or “confirm” the baptized in union with Christ and equip them for active participation in the worship and apostolic life of the Church.

**Grace:** The free and undeserved gift God gives us to respond to our vocation to become His adopted children.

**Missionary Disciple:** A person who is sent by Church authority to preach the Gospel, or help strengthen the faith already professed, among people in a given place or region.

**Sacrament:** An efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit.

**SCRIPTURE:** Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Matthew 22:36-40, 28:19; John 3:16-17; Acts 1:8

**CATECHISM:** 1127-1131, 1285-1290, 1302-1309, 1996-2005

## ABOUT THIS CONFIRMATION SESSION

The session begins with a fun game where parents and teens team up to compete to answer questions about things from each of their prospective generations. The teaching provides a time to welcome the parents and teens as well as a chance to briefly discuss what to expect during the time of preparation and the importance of the Sacrament of Confirmation. After the teaching, the teens and parents have time for small group questions as well as time to ask one another questions about their own experiences with Confirmation. The session ends with an opportunity for the parents to pray for and ask God to bless their children.

## PASTORAL NOTE

It is important to be aware that this may be the first time in a while that some parents have come to anything at the church. This is a great time to welcome them home and once again present them with the beauty of the faith. It is also important to reassure them that the parish community is there to support them in their parenting. To take it a step further, consider providing a list of ways they can get involved in the parish and learn more about their faith.

## MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

Spotify: “Purpose” (spotify:user:lifeteen)  
Purpose Video: “Fr. Speedy’s Confirmation”

## AS YOU GET STARTED

*If a parent cannot attend the session, consider preparing a handout with the important guidelines and dates for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Send this handout home with the teen so the parents can be made aware of the information covered throughout the session.*

## GATHER

### **Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 min)**

Gather the parents and teens in the main meeting space. Welcome them to the session, introduce the Core Team, and begin in prayer.

### **Generations Game (15 min)**

Have the teens pair off with their parents. Provide each parent-teen pair with a blank piece of paper and a pencil. Either read questions aloud, project questions, or print off questions for the group, and have the parents and teens work together to figure out the answers. The parent-teen pair who gets the most questions right wins. Use the following questions as a starting point and adapt them as necessary depending on your specific group:

1. 1970s: What is the name of the table tennis video game developed by Atari?  
(Answer: Pong)
2. 1970s: What country are ABBA from? (Answer: Sweden)
3. 1980s: What dance move is Michael Jackson known for? (Answer: Moonwalk)
4. 1980s: How does E.T. heal Elliott? (Answer: With his finger)

5. 1990s: What is the first line of the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air theme song? (Answer: Now this is a story all about how my life got flipped, turned upside down...)
6. 1990s: What was the name of Justin Timberlake's boy band? (Answer: \*NSYNC)
7. 2000s: What company does Michael Scott work for? (Answer: Dunder Mifflin)
8. 2000s: Who does Shrek marry? (Answer: Fiona)
9. 2010s: Which member of One Direction was the first to leave the band? (Answer: Zayn)
10. 2010s: What is Eleven's favorite food? (Answer: Eggo waffles)
11. 2020s: Name one of the two albums Taylor Swift created during quarantine. (Answer: Folklore or Evermore)
12. 2020s: What is the name of the leading female big-cat rights activist from Tiger King? (Answer: Carole Baskin)

### **Suggestion**

Select a few parents and teens to play in front of everyone. You can still have them play in parent-teen pairs, or you can play teens vs. parents or every man for himself!

### **Suggestion**

Create a PowerPoint slideshow to go along with each question, including pictures of the items or people who are a part of the question.

### **Video (5 min)**

Play the video "Fr. Speedy's Confirmation" from the *Media Suggestions*.

## **PROCLAIM**

### **"Beginnings" Teaching (10 min)**

#### **Welcome Parents**

*Thank the parents for attending and supporting their teen in the journey toward the Sacrament of Confirmation.*

For some of you, this is your first time at church in a long time. Some of you may be weekly churchgoers and others may fall somewhere in the inbetween. We are so glad that each and every one of you is here, beginning the preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. This is a significant moment in the life of your family. Some of you may have been counting down to this moment for the past several years and others may not know the reason you are here. Regardless of why you are here, we are excited to walk with you and hope that we can all grow in our faith over the coming months.

If you have been away for a while, no matter the reason, we want to offer our sincerest "welcome home." We are glad you are here and are excited to be a part of this journey with you! We are here to support you and your family throughout this process.

As parents, you play a critical role in the education of your children. We know how difficult it is to raise faith-filled children in our post-modern society. Statistics continue to reveal that the fastest growing religion in our country is “nones,” people who do not affiliate with any church. For years, the assumption of the Church has been that if we lose them in college, they will come back when they start having families (for weddings, baptisms, etc.). However, this is not the reality. Living our faith is an important aspect of who we are; a relationship with Jesus changes our lives now and for eternity. Heaven is our ultimate goal, and we want to help you equip your teen to get there.

### **Going Deeper**

On your wedding day, you made a promise to raise your children in the faith, a promise you echoed on their baptism day. Your “parent mission statement” can be found in Deuteronomy. “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with your all your soul, and with your all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children.”

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

God designed the family to be the first place children learn about Him, making you their first and primary teachers.

As a parent, your children follow your lead. If they see you making God a priority, they will make God a priority. This may make you uncomfortable. Some of you may feel like you do not know all of the answers to questions about the faith or some of you may feel like you do not know how to pray well. That is why we are here. We want to walk with you, answer your questions, and help you grow in your understanding of the faith.

The Church says that your witness is irreplaceable. It is not necessarily a witness with words but one that “perseveres throughout a day-to-day life lived in accordance with the Gospel.” Remember, it is as easy as loving God with all your heart, mind, body, and soul and teaching your children to do the same.

*Catechesis Tradendae* 68; Matthew 22:36-40

However, you do not embark on this journey alone. You have us, the Church, in your corner, praying with and for you and cheering you on every step of the way.

*Highlight any catechesis, formation, or prayer experiences your parish offers for adults. Mention the resources available for parents and any other ways your parish ministers to parents.*

## Welcome, Teens

Teens, we are so glad you are here. Even if you are unsure about Confirmation, God, or the Church, you are in the right place. This entire process is about discerning if you are ready to receive this sacrament. Discernment is a means of determining if you are ready to receive the sacrament right now. The good news is that most of you are more ready for this than you might think.

## What Is a Sacrament?

A sacrament is an efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life of grace is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. That is a big definition, so let us break it down.

CCC 1131

Put simply, a sacrament imparts a grace — a free gift from God — that helps us respond to His call to holiness in our lives. The grace received through the sacrament is efficacious. In other words, it will affect change in us if we allow it.

CCC 1129, 1996

### Going Deeper

There are two types of grace — sanctifying grace and actual grace. Sanctifying grace is the grace that comes through the sacraments. Each sacrament bestows on us a unique grace. In other words, the grace you received at your baptism — a grace you only receive once — is specific to that sacrament. The same is true for Confirmation, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and any sacrament we receive once. Even though we only receive the grace once, it will never go away; we can always tap into it.

CCC 1272

### Going Deeper

Sanctifying grace gives us what we need to get to heaven. It causes a change in us and strengthens us to be who God created us to be: saints. The sacraments of the Church are for sinners, people like us. We believe the sacraments affect change — namely, making sinners into saints.

CCC 1274

So, if you are a sinner in need of God's mercy, you are in the right place. Let us not forget that the Church was instituted by Jesus as a means for us (sinners) to get to heaven. The God who loves us sent His Son to save us — not condemn us — not because we are worthy of grace but precisely because we needed His Son.

John 3:17

## **The Process and Guidelines**

This process is all about equipping you to be fully initiated into the very Church Jesus gave us to help us get to heaven. All of you have received the first two Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism and the Eucharist. Now you are preparing to receive your final Sacrament of Initiation: Confirmation.

Confirmation is not graduation; it is not the end but the beginning. You do not become an “adult in the faith.” Rather, Confirmation strengthens the gifts of the Holy Spirit you received at your baptism. These gifts help you share and defend the faith that has been handed down by the apostles.

CCC 1285

### **Going Deeper**

The Sacraments of Initiation, specifically Baptism and Confirmation, have always been connected. In the Western Church, due to the rise of infant baptisms and the geographic growth of the diocese, these sacraments have been temporarily separated. However, the Eastern Church — who uses the word “mystery” for sacrament and celebrates them in a similar way, but not exactly the same way — has kept them united.

CCC 1290

The Church states that “preparation for Confirmation should aim to lead the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit... in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. Catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church... as well as the parish community.”

CCC 1309

To accomplish this, we have outlined several guidelines for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

*At this time, outline the Confirmation preparation process at your parish. Review the guidelines, policies, and expectations of the parents, sponsors, and teens. Highlight important dates as well, such as retreats, service projects, etc.*

## **Conclusion**

The Sacrament of Confirmation prepares you to live out your call as a missionary disciple. A missionary disciple is someone who goes out and shares the Good News with the world — in your home, at your school, with your sports team, or at your workplace. The Holy Spirit equips you with what you need to complete this mission to make disciples of all the nations.

Matthew 28:19

If that seems intimidating or if you do not feel like you are ready, fear not — neither were the first apostles. Remember, they locked themselves in a room, hiding for fear of dying, when the Holy Spirit descended upon them, as promised in Acts: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses.” After receiving the Holy Spirit, the apostles gave their lives witnessing to who Jesus was — witnessing to the Gospel.

Acts 1:8

You may not feel like you are someone who will bring others to Christ, someone who will share the reality that although we are unworthy, God sent His only Son to save us. But if you allow it, the efficacious grace you receive in the Sacrament will give you what you need to share the Good News — to share the Gospel.

Make no mistake, God has a plan for your life, a plan to get you and everyone you know to heaven. There is someone in the world right now whose salvation hinges on you sharing the Gospel with them, and the Sacrament of Confirmation will give you the grace you need to do just that.

We want you to receive this sacrament because we know what its grace can do in your life and the lives of those around you. Therefore, we have set up this process to be as straightforward as possible. Let us know how we can help you during this journey and be confident of our prayers for you and your family.

*Close by bringing up one or two Confirmed teens to share for two to five minutes about their own experience going through the Confirmation process and how transformative it was. Be sure to help the teens prepare ahead of time and practice.*

## **BREAK**

### **Small Group Discussion (5 min)**

Group teens and parents into small groups together so there are three or four families in each small group. Begin in prayer, and use the following questions for a time of discussion, inviting both the parents and the teens to answer each question:

- *Whip Around Question:* Would you rather cover every food you eat in hot sauce or chocolate?
- What did you find most inspirational about the testimony shared during the teaching?
- What excites you the most about this Confirmation process? What are you most unsure about?

### **Parent-Teen Interviews (15 min)**

Ask the parent-teen pairs to find a relatively private space where they can take turns asking one another questions. Project the following questions or print them off for each pair.

For teens to ask parents:

1. What do you remember about your Confirmation?
2. What do you want me to get out of Confirmation?
3. What do you value most about the Catholic Church?
4. Why is faith important to you?
5. Who or what has been an important guide in your faith?

For parents to ask teens:

1. How do you think your faith might change through Confirmation?
2. What is one thing you are looking forward to in the Confirmation process?
3. What is one thing you are hesitant about in the Confirmation process?
4. Who is the person you feel most comfortable sharing your faith with?
5. What is one thing I can do to help you as you prepare for Confirmation?

## SEND

### Parent Prayer (15 min)

Ensure that the parents and teens can all see and hear you from where they did the parent-teen interviews. If they cannot, ask them to move to a spot that allows them to, otherwise ask them to remain where they are in their pairs. Explain to them that, while the Church has many rituals reserved for clergy, holiness is for everyone in the Church. The Church encourages parents to pray with and for their children. Invite the parents to pray with their children and ask God to give them a blessing. Encourage the parents to pray aloud whatever words they would like, but also provide printed copies of the following prayers or project them in case the parents are not comfortable with extemporaneous prayer. After the parents have had the opportunity to pray with their teen and ask God to bless their teens, gather everyone together and close with a few praise and worship songs.

*Loving God, I thank you for the gift of my child \_\_\_\_\_. I am grateful for all the gifts you have blessed them with, especially their \_\_\_\_\_. As they prepare to receive the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, I pray that they \_\_\_\_\_. Please bless our family with the gift of your \_\_\_\_\_ as we help \_\_\_\_\_ in this new chapter in their faith.*

*Now, trace a cross over your teen's forehead as you say the following blessing:*

*God, please bless my child for time and eternity, and may your blessing remain with him/her forever. I ask this in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Close the session by praying an Our Father or Hail Mary together.

### Suggestion

Purchase a Bible for each teen to use during Confirmation preparation. Before asking the parents to bless their teens, invite the parents to come forward and receive a Bible and then have them present the Bible to their teen.

