

Sacraments of Initiation

by Maureen A. Kelly

“The sacraments of Christian initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist—lay the foundations of every Christian life...”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1212

History

In the early Christian Church, Christian initiation was presided over by the bishop during the Easter Vigil. Catechumens were baptized, anointed, and then led to the Lord's Supper—all at the same celebration. This initiation event was thought of as a culmination of evangelization and catechesis that was marked by conversion. The neophytes were being initiated into the Paschal Mystery of the death and Resurrection of the Risen Lord and were being made members of his Body, the Church.

Western and Eastern Church Practices

Gradually the Church spread over a large geographic region, the Baptism of infants replaced adult baptism as normative, and the initiation structure was divided. Baptisms were celebrated more than once a year and it became impossible for the bishop to preside at all these events. Since the Western Church kept the celebration of Confirmation for the bishop, the initiation event became separated into three different events. However, the Eastern Church continued to baptize, chrismate, and bring the newly baptized to the table at the same time.

Seven Sacraments

By the thirteenth century, theologians named and defined seven Sacraments. The list remains unchanged today. In the twentieth century, the Second Vatican Council called for the restoration of the catechumenate, recovered the notion of initiation, and restored the order of initiation for unbaptized adults and children of catechetical age. Later the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explicitly grouped the seven Sacraments into three categories: Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist), Sacraments of Reconciliation and Healing (Penance, Anointing of the Sick), and Sacraments in Service to Communion (Matrimony, Holy Orders).

Confirmation: Sacrament of Initiation

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* restored the order of the Sacraments for the unbaptized, and those who are baptized as infants are subjects of the newly revised Rite of Confirmation. Twentieth-century practice has led to a wide difference in when this Sacrament of Initiation is celebrated. In 1910 Pius X recommended in his encyclical *Quam Singulari* that the First Communion of children should not be deferred too long after they had reached the age of reason. At that time, children who had been baptized as infants usually celebrated First Communion in the early teen years, and Confirmation was celebrated at an earlier age. Once children began to fully participate in the Eucharist at an earlier age, the age for Confirmation varied and was not necessarily linked to one's First Communion.

As a result of Rites issued by the Church after the Second Vatican Council, many dioceses and parishes in the United States have adopted the practice of restored order—celebrating Confirmation prior to First Communion. Still others confirm, at varying times—between the ages of seven and sixteen.

Conclusion

Although the timing of initiation has varied over the centuries, each variation aids our understanding. At the heart of initiation and our Catholic identity is the Holy Spirit calling individuals to initial-and-ongoing conversion to the person and message of Jesus, and a fuller participation in his mission as participants in his Church.

The Theology of Confirmation

by Rev. Paul Turner

“... by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.”²

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1285

Initiation

Confirmation is a Sacrament of Christian initiation (CCC, 1285). This is most evident when it is celebrated together with Baptism according to the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. “The conjunction of the two celebrations signifies the unity of the paschal mystery, the close link between the mission of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the connection between the two sacraments through which the Son and the Holy Spirit come with the Father to those who are baptized” (215).

In the Eastern Rites, the priest who baptizes an infant also confirms (or chrismates). The anointing consecrates the newly baptized with the Gifts of the Spirit and constitutes a spiritual preparation for communion, which the child receives in the same ceremony.

In the Roman Rite, if a newborn is not expected to live, a priest who baptizes the child may also administer Confirmation. Such a child does not need to be old enough to undergo preparation. Confirmation is an initiation rite, filling the newborn with the Gifts of God’s Spirit.

Maturity

To be confirmed, a person baptized as an infant in the Roman Rite normally has to be catechized, be properly disposed, and be able to renew baptismal promises (Code of Canon Law 889/2). The person may be as young as the age of discretion, or about

the age of seven (Canon 891). But conferences of bishops may establish another age. In the United States, the age varies from about seven to sixteen. Some people who were not confirmed as children receive the Sacrament as adults. Others receive it shortly before death.

Whenever Confirmation is deferred from infancy, the Church expects that some maturation of faith will have taken place. Still, adult faith should not be confused with the adult age of natural growth, and

baptismal grace does not need ratification to become effective (CCC, 1308).

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Full Communion

The Church confers Confirmation on those who have been validly baptized in other Christian traditions but now join the full communion of the Roman Catholic

Church. In the ceremony, they make a profession of faith in all that the Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God. They are received into full communion, and then the priest administers Confirmation. The new Catholic then receives communion for the first time.

Conclusion

In all these instances, however, two themes remain constant: Confirmation is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and it is given for the sake of bearing witness to Christ.

²LG 11; cf. OC, Introduction 2.

The Rite of Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand and through the words: "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." (26)

In order to keep the fundamental connection of Confirmation to Baptism and the Eucharist as Sacraments of Initiation, there is a renewal of baptismal promises during the celebration of Confirmation and it is preferred that Confirmation be celebrated within the Mass so all can participate in the Eucharist since "Christian initiation reaches its culmination in the communion of the body and blood of Christ." (13)

Order of the Rite of Confirmation within Mass

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word is celebrated in the ordinary way.

Sacrament of Confirmation

Presentation of the Candidates

The pastor, another priest, deacon, or catechist presents the candidates for Confirmation. Usually each candidate is called by name and comes forward with his or her sponsor or parent.

Homily or Instruction

The bishop gives a brief homily to help the whole assembly understand the meaning of Confirmation.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

The candidates stand and renew their baptismal promises before the bishop or priest.

The Laying on of Hands

The bishop and the priests who will minister the Sacrament of Confirmation lay hands on all the candidates by extending their hands over them. The bishop alone prays the prayer asking God for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Anointing with Chrism

Each candidate goes before the bishop. The sponsor places his or her right hand on the candidate's shoulder and gives the candidate's name to the bishop, or the candidate may give his or her own name.

The bishop dips his right thumb in the chrism and makes the Sign of the Cross on the candidate's forehead.

Bishop: *[Name], be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Candidate: *Amen.*

Bishop: *Peace be with you.*

Candidate: *And also with you.*

Prayer of the Faithful

Prayers are offered for those who were confirmed, their parents and godparents, the Church, and the world.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

At the conclusion of the Prayer of the Faithful, the Liturgy of the Eucharist continues according to the Order of Mass except that

- the profession of faith is omitted
- some of the newly confirmed may bring the gifts to the altar

Blessing

Instead of the usual blessing, the bishop prays a special blessing or prayer over the people.

History of Confirmation

by Rev. Paul Turner

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

On Pentecost the disciples of Jesus huddled in a room, mourning a loss, fearing the future. Suddenly a sound as of wind and tongues as of fire appeared. The Holy Spirit came and empowered them to spread the Good News of resurrection and redemption (See *Acts 2:1–4*.)

Ever since the first Pentecost, Christians have experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in special ceremonies. In the Catholic Church, Confirmation is administered with an anointing with chrism, the imposition of hands, and prayer.

The early Church practiced “handlaying.” (See *Hebrews 6:1–2*, *Acts 8:14–17*, *Acts 19:5–7*.) The Apostles proclaimed that God anoints Christians. (See *2 Corinthians 1:21–22*; *1 John 2:20, 27*.) If the first baptismal rites did not include anointing, later ones did, supported by images from these texts.

Patristic Period

By the fourth century, Baptism took place within a Eucharistic liturgy over which a bishop presided, often at Easter or Pentecost. Infants as well as adults were baptized, anointed, and given a share in communion in the same ceremony.

Saint Ambrose of Milan wrote that in the anointing, “God the Father has signed you, Christ the Lord has confirmed you and given the pledge of the spirit in your hearts . . .” (*The Mysteries 7:42*). He was the first to say that anointing “confirms.”

“Confirmation”

By the fifth century, priests administered a simpler version of the baptismal rites to the sick, travelers, or those living far away. A bishop completed the rites later, and his arrival became an anticipated event. His actions were called “Confirmation” because he was *ratifying* the baptism someone else had performed. Soon the meaning of the word expanded to a *strengthening* with the Gifts of the Spirit.

During the Middle Ages, whenever a bishop baptized people, he also confirmed them and offered First Communion. When a priest baptized, he offered

communion immediately (even to infants), and Confirmation followed later. No special preparation was required.

Thirteenth Century

Several developments occurred in the 13th century. The practice of giving communion to infants disappeared. Seven was proposed as the earliest age to receive Confirmation; preparation included catechetical study. The ritual was amplified in two ways: the bishop gave a light slap to the person’s cheek, in imitation of the ceremony inducting a knight; and the bishop could assign a new name if the person had one that was not “Christian.” The slap disappeared in the 20th century. The giving of a Confirmation name continued regionally by custom; it does not appear in the liturgy and law of the universal Church.

First Communion and Confirmation

In the following centuries, the age for First Communion rose. Some people were confirmed before First Communion; others after. Infant Confirmation was acceptable only in emergencies and in mission countries where some priests confirmed those they baptized.

At the start of the 20th century, the age of First Communion was lowered to seven and the age of Confirmation remained the same. It came to be called a sacrament of Christian maturity.

Priests received permission to confirm in additional circumstances: in danger of death, when baptizing an adult (or one no longer an infant), and when receiving a baptized person into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

Conclusion

With the diversity of practices in regard to Confirmation, it is important to remember what is essential about the sacrament: in Confirmation Catholics experience the original Christian Pentecost; they are filled with the Holy Spirit, and they tell the world about resurrection and redemption.

Adolescent Development and Faith Growth

by Tom East

“As Jesus with the disciples of Emmaus, so the Church must become today the traveling companion of young people...”

*Blessed Pope John Paul II, Youth Sent to Proclaim True Liberation,
World Youth Day 1995, Philippines 2*

Adolescents are on a journey that takes them from the protected environment of childhood to the choice-filled world of adulthood. The word “adolescence” comes from the Latin word, “*adolescere*,” which means to grow up. Adolescence typically begins at age ten or eleven and continues through the mid-twenties. During the first several years of this stage, young people experience the physical changes of puberty. Their social world expands, and they engage in more complex social situations. Family continues to be a major influence and source of support even as peers and the community become more important. Over the course of these years, youth encounter a variety of experiences, engage with different communities, learn about many topics, and grow in a variety of skills and abilities.

This journey of adolescence takes young people on a path toward responsible adult living. As people of faith, we know that the path of this journey is not random; our loving God created each young person in love and has a plan for each one’s life. We are called to accompany youth on this journey so that will become faithful adult disciples. When Jesus accompanied the disciples on the road to Emmaus, he listened to their questions, he explained the truths of faith, he revealed himself to them in the breaking of the bread, and he sent them forth to tell others. This is the job description of the faith community, and, in particular, the job of the ministry leader and catechist who is acting on behalf of the Church community.

“When Jesus accompanied the disciples on the road to Emmaus, he listened to their questions, he explained the truths of faith, he revealed himself to them in the breaking of the bread, and he sent them forth to tell others. This is the job description of the faith community, and, in particular, the job of the ministry leader and catechist who is acting on behalf of the Church community.”

To walk with youth, we must learn their questions and understand their experiences. Each one’s story will be unique, but many of the patterns of development are shared. Within the junior high and high school years, adolescents of two different age groups share some of the same developmental tasks and changes.

Young Adolescents

Young adolescents, ages ten to fifteen, are typically in middle school, junior high school, or the first years of high school. During these years, they experience a rapid series of physical changes. Emotional and social changes that accompany puberty can be challenging or overwhelming. Intellectually, young people move from concrete thinking toward abstract thinking. Abstract thinkers are able to imagine the consequences of actions and “what might happen if.” Abstract thinking is critical for faith growth and moral development.

This is a time when youth begin to develop their identity and express their individuality even as they strive to belong within their peer group. This quest is often expressed in their clothes and physical appearance, as well as their style of communication and choice of peer groups to associate with. Friendships and belonging to the community are of huge importance to them.

As young people change, their families go through the transition from being a family with children to being a family with youth. In families there is a

re-negotiating of patterns of communication, recreation, chores, and relationships at this time.

Youth also experience faith in new ways; they continue to experience faith primarily through their senses and their direct experiences, but they begin to recognize God's presence in a new way within the community.

To accompany young adolescents and help them grow in faith:

- Provide gentle, patient, and consistent guidance and presence for them in gatherings.
- Provide clear presentations of faith content and clear directions for activities.
- Explore the practical implications of faithful living.
- Help them reflect on values and identity as people of faith.
- Build community with young adolescents and provide opportunities for informal interactions with peers and caring adults.
- Help youth and parents negotiate the transition to adolescence and develop new patterns for communicating and sharing faith.
- Provide inspiring and affective prayer and retreat experiences.
- Engage youth in service to make faith practical and hands-on.

Older Adolescents

The older adolescent, ages fourteen to eighteen, is typically in high school and experiences continued physical changes as well as more complex social, intellectual, and emotional situations. This is a time when youth are focused upon developing their identity and are grappling with a variety of questions about authority, gender identification, and self-concept. They are finding themselves. As they develop their identity, they are looking for role models and mentors. They are developing a personal moral code and are growing in their capacity for mutual, more intimate relationships.

Parents remain an important influence, but the approval of peers and people whom they admire gains influence. Because they are searching and exploring so many new domains in life, youth often question faith and assumptions they have held since

childhood. In a sense, youth are unpacking the faith that has been handed to them by their parents and those who love them. In this process, they seek out consistency and can seem negative or aggressive in their questioning. This experience is often disturbing and jarring to adults who care about youth. We can mistakenly see the questions as a rejection of faith. However, when youth question, they are not necessarily rejecting faith or the community; they are taking the necessary step of appropriating faith knowledge and practice into their lives. As a community of faith, we are called to surround them with love, care, and patience as we allow them to live the question.

To accompany older adolescents and help them grow in faith:

- Provide them with opportunities to explore their gifts and grow in their social skills within a safe, loving environment.
- Create an environment where they can interact with peers and caring adults to develop deeper relationships.
- Promote Catholic faith identity as they grow in the development of their overall identity.
- Provide faith formation that promotes understanding of the faith and builds a young person's sense of belonging in the community.
- Make faith practical by applying faith teachings to the everyday challenges and situations of adolescent life.
- Help youth prepare for the future by providing opportunities to name faith values and principles that can guide planning for young adulthood.
- Provide practical help for youth and parents in developing new patterns of communicating and sharing faith.
- Provide a safe environment where they can ask questions and be connected to resources for exploring faith.
- Deepen young people's understanding of Catholic social teachings and our call to stand with the poor and the outcast.
- Engage youth in opportunities for Christian leadership, ministry, and service on behalf of those in need.

Preparing Youth for Confirmation

Youth need the strengthening and grace that come from celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Successful Preparation of youth for Confirmation occurs when it matches with their life journey and developmental changes. It helps them understand and be ready to receive the gift that God has planned for them in the sacrament. In some cases, preparation programs confuse rather than clarify the nature of Sacrament. When Confirmation preparation programs are seen as the last chance to get all of the faith information into young people's heads before they are out of reach, the process can become burdensome and overloaded with required elements and expectations. Instead of focusing on what God is doing through the Sacrament, youth and families can misunderstand the Sacrament as something that youth "earn" by completing a rigorous course of study and activities.

Some communities consider Confirmation to be a celebration of a young person's choice for God and faith. Youth are asked to make a commitment and choose Confirmation. By their nature, youth are asking questions and are searching and exploring their faith. It is not a good time to *overemphasize* young people's choice and commitment to the future.

God has already chosen each young person; the Sacraments are gifts from God that will strengthen youth to continue to choose God in each action and intention. Honor the God-given development of youth by providing simple, but thorough preparation for the sacrament that emphasizes God's actions in their lives along with the community's love and care for them.

Walking with Youth

The faith community walks with youth as they change, grow, ask questions, and search out their path toward adulthood. To help youth grow in faith, provide clear presentation of the faith that resonates from lived experience. Love young people in Christ's name on behalf of the broader community. Allow them to ask questions and seek understanding while they are surrounded with patient love and care. In these actions, youth will see our loving God revealed and will be ready to be sent forth as young disciples.

Important Questions and Answers

Here are some basic questions candidates should be able to answer before Confirmation. Often the bishop or presider at Confirmation will take some time to ask the candidates questions during the celebration. You may want to check ahead of time to confirm what the process is with the bishop or priest who is going to confirm at your parish. A printout of these questions and answers can be found online at www.osvcurriculum.com under *Confirmation Source Book*, Reproducible Resources.

Name the Sacraments of Initiation?

The Sacraments of Initiation are Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

What does initiation mean?

Initiation means to become a member. The Sacraments of Initiation join us to the dying and rising of Jesus and make us members of his Body, the Church.

What is a covenant?

A covenant is a solemn and mutual agreement between people or between God and a human being or community.

Why do we make baptismal promises?

We make baptismal promises to remember our Baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

What does the word “church” mean?

Church means a convocation or assembly of people who are called together by God’s word and the Sacraments.

What is a Sacrament?

A Sacrament is a visible sign of God’s invisible presence. There are seven Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. They were instituted by Christ. By participating in Sacraments, we receive grace, which is a sharing in God’s own life.

Why is the Church referred to as a sacrament?

The word “Sacrament” comes from a Latin word that means *a visible sign of a hidden reality of God’s salvation*. Jesus Christ, who is the mystery of salvation, founded

the Church and dwells within it. The Church is the Body of Christ and a visible sign of God’s union with humans and our union with him. So, even though it is not one of the seven Sacraments instituted by Christ, the Church is still often referred to as a Sacrament.

What is a disciple?

A disciple is a follower. We are disciples of Jesus.

What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?

Confirmation, together with Baptism and the Eucharist, completes the grace given in Baptism and gives us the fullness of the Holy Spirit by bestowing the fullness of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which strengthen and seal us for ministry and mission.

What are the effects of Confirmation?

It increases the grace of Baptism; deepens our relationship with God, the Father; binds us more closely to Christ; increases the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in us; unites us more closely to the Church; and gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to witness to Jesus and the cross.

What are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are powers and inclinations to act in ways that help us grow in our relationship to Jesus, God’s Son, and give us the help to lead an active Christian life in the world.

Name the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgment, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence, and Wonder and Awe

What is evangelization?

Evangelization is the process of bringing the Good News of Jesus to others.

What is conversion?

Conversion is a process of moving away from sin and moving toward God.

What is chrism?

Chrism is the holy oil used to anoint candidates at Confirmation and Holy Orders.

What does the anointing in Confirmation mean?

It means we are chosen to participate in God's mission of bringing the Good News of Jesus to others.

What is the name of the bishop(s) of your diocese?

Answers will vary.

What is the Trinity?

The Trinity is the name of the Church's basic dogma that there are three divine Persons in one God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

What is the primary work of each Person of the Trinity?

God the Father is the Creator; God the Son is the Redeemer; God the Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Holy Trinity.

What are some titles of the Holy Spirit?

Some titles of the Holy Spirit are Advocate, Paraclete, Comforter, Sanctifier, Helper, and Guide.

What are some symbols of the Holy Spirit?

Some symbols of the Holy Spirit are water, cloud and light, wind, fire, seal, dove, and finger of God.

What is the Incarnation?

The Incarnation is the name of the Church's doctrine that explains that God became fully human in Jesus.

Who is the Blessed Virgin Mary?

Mary is the Mother of God's Son, Jesus. She was born without sin (Immaculate Conception) and was taken body and soul to heaven at her death (Assumption).

What is the Rosary?

The Rosary is a meditative prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The word "rosary" comes from a Latin word that means *garland* or *bouquet*. A rosary is a series of beads connected by a crucifix. The beads are divided into five decades of ten beads. The purpose of the Rosary is to help us remember certain important mysteries in the history of our salvation, and to thank and praise God for them. There are twenty mysteries in the Rosary. They are divided into five Joyful Mysteries, five Luminous Mysteries, five Sorrowful Mysteries, and five Glorious Mysteries.

How do you pray the Rosary?

1. Pray the Sign of the Cross and say the Apostles' Creed.
2. Pray the Our Father.
3. Pray three Hail Marys.
4. Pray the Glory to the Father.
5. Say the first mystery; then pray the Our Father.
6. Pray ten Hail Marys while meditating on the mystery.
7. Pray the Glory to the Father.
8. Say the second mystery; then pray the Our Father. Repeat 6 and 7 and continue with the third, fourth, and fifth mysteries in the same manner.
9. Pray the Hail, Holy Queen.

What is a saint?

A saint is a person who led a holy life for the glory of God and who now enjoys eternal life with God in heaven.

What is holiness?

Holiness is a quality possessed when one shares in God's life. God is the source of all holiness.

What is a sin?

Sin is an offense against God or the Church.

What is the difference between a mortal and a venial sin?

Mortal sin is a very serious offense against God or the Church. The sinner turns completely away from God or the Church. Venial sin is a less serious offense. It weakens but does not destroy the relationship with God or the Church.

What is real presence?

Real presence is the term used to describe the unique presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. We believe that Jesus is truly and wholly present in the consecrated bread and wine.

What is mission?

A mission is a task one is sent to do. The mission of the baptized Christian is to continue the work of Christ in the world according to God's plan.

Pacing Plans

Immediate Preparation Confirmation Pacing Plan: Half Year

		Candidate Sesiions	Parent/Sponsor/ Mentor Sessions
Jan.	Week 2		Catechist Orientation
	Week 3		Parent Orientation
	Week 4	Retreat**	Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (1) Sponsor Orientation*
Feb.	Week 1	Journey with the Spirit (1)	Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (2)
	Week 2	Believe with the Spirit (2)	Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (3)
	Week 3	Gifted with the Spirit (3)	Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (4)
	Week 4	Empowered by the Spirit (4)	Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (5)
Mar.	Week 1	Retreat**	
	Week 2	Anointed by the Spirit (5)	Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (6)
	Week 3	Sanctified by the Spirit (6)	Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (7)
	Week 4	Guided by the Spirit (7)	
	Communal Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation		
	Week 1	Retreat**	
Apr.	Week 2	Challenged by the Spirit (8)	Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (8)
	After Easter: Celebration of the Sacrament		
	Mystagogical Session		

*The timing of the sponsor orientation should be determined by how and when sponsors are chosen in the program.

** There are three retreat offerings for both the Younger and Older Adolescent in this Source Book: a Family Retreat, a Candidate Retreat, and a Candidate and Sponsor/Mentor Retreat. The retreats are designed so they may be offered at any stage of the preparation process. You may choose to do all three retreats or just one or two of them depending on your schedule or the needs of the candidates. The pacing plan has been set up to give you the option to choose which retreats you use and when.

Immediate Preparation Confirmation Pacing Plan: Full Year

		Candidate Sessions	Parent/Sponsor/ Mentor Sessions
Aug.	Week 3		Catechist Orientation
	Week 4		Parent Orientation
Sept.	Week 1		Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (1)
	Week 2	Journey with the Spirit (1)	
	Week 3		Sponsor Orientation*
Oct.	Week 1		Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (2)
	Week 2	Believe with the Spirit (2)	
Nov.	Week 1	Retreat**	
	Week 2		Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (3)
Dec.	Week 1	Gifted with the Spirit (3)	
	Week 2		Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (4)
Jan.	Week 1	Empowered by the Spirit (4)	
	Week 2		Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (5)
Feb.	Week 1	Anointed by the Spirit (5)	
	Week 2	Retreat**	
	Week 3		Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (6)
Mar.	Week 1***	Sanctified by the Spirit (6)	Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (7)
	Week 2	Guided by the Spirit (7)	
	Week 3	Communal Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation	
	Week 4		Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (8)
Apr.	Week 1	Challenged by the Spirit (8)	
	Week 2	Retreat**	
After Easter: Celebration of the Sacrament			
Mystagogical Session			

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*** In the two-semester plan, the sessions for March are meant to coincide with Lent.

A Six-Session Plan

		Candidate Sessions	Parent/Sponsor/ Mentor Sessions
Aug.	Week 3		Catechist Orientation
	Week 4		Parent Orientation
Sept.	Week 1		Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (1)
	Week 2	Journey with the Spirit (1)	
	Week 3		Sponsor Orientation*
Oct.	Week 1		Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (2)
	Week 2	Believe with the Spirit (2)	
Nov.	Week 1	Retreat**	
	Week 2		Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (3–4)
Dec.	Week 1	Gifted with the Spirit (3) Empowered by the Spirit (4)	
Jan.	Week 2		Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (5–6)
Feb.	Week 1	Anointed by the Spirit (5) Sanctified by the Spirit (6)	
	Week 3	Retreat**	
Mar.	Week 1		Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (7)
	Week 2	Guided by the Spirit (7)	
Communal Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation			
	Week 4		Adult or Liturgical Catechesis (8)
Apr.	Week 1	Retreat**	
	Week 2	Challenged by the Spirit (8)	
After Easter: Celebration of the Sacrament			
Mystagogical Session			

*The timing of the sponsor orientation should be determined by how and when sponsors are chosen in the program.

** There are three retreat offerings for both the Younger and Older Adolescent in this Source Book: a Family Retreat, a Candidate Retreat, and a Candidate and Sponsor/Mentor Retreat. The retreats are designed so they may be offered at any stage of the preparation process. You may choose to do all three retreats or just one or two of them depending on your schedule or the needs of the candidates. The pacing plan has been set up to give you the option to choose which retreats you use and when.

Liturgical Catechesis

by Rita Feronne

Introduction

From ancient times, liturgy has been the heartbeat of the Church. Through it the Christian people gather for worship, their life in Christ is renewed, and they are sent out in mission. Again and again, at Sunday Eucharist, in the Sacraments, and in the Liturgy of the Hours, the Church is called to share in the mystery of Christ and to go forth to be leaven in the world. In the words of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, “the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the source from which all its power flows.” (10).

Catechesis that leads people to a deep and fruitful experience of the liturgy is therefore of the utmost importance. The *General Directory for Catechesis* asserts boldly that “Catechesis is intrinsically bound to every liturgical and sacramental action [CT 23]” (30). It calls liturgical catechesis “an eminent kind of catechesis³” (71). Indeed, because of the liturgy’s central role in the Church’s life, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls liturgy “the privileged place for catechizing the People of God” (1074).

Catechesis and Liturgy

This truth is being discovered today with new vigor. In the era before the Second Vatican Council, not much effort was made to link catechesis with the liturgy. Historical circumstances had led the Church to focus almost exclusively on the self-sufficiency of the Sacraments to do what they did (*ex opere operato*). Little weight was given either to the experience of the liturgy or to catechesis concerning it. Fortunately, the Church is now in a position to reclaim the deeply traditional relationship between catechesis and liturgy, through the practice of a genuinely liturgical catechesis.

What Is Liturgical Catechesis?

Liturgical catechesis is a way of forming people in the Christian life. It is made up of three moments:

Preparation for the Liturgy

In order to participate fruitfully in the liturgy, the faithful must understand the liturgical signs and symbols and the experiences of God’s people that gave rise to them. They must also come to the liturgy with the proper dispositions of heart. Liturgical catechesis therefore includes not only instruction *about* the liturgy, but also everything that fosters conversion, openness to God’s will, and the desire for union with Christ and his Church.

Participation in the Liturgy

The liturgical celebration itself contains much teaching. The Scripture readings, the homily, the prayers, and the sacred texts spoken in the liturgy are rich expressions of Catholic faith. The signs and

symbols also teach, without words. By full, active, and conscious participation in the liturgy, the faithful learn on a deep level what it means to be children of God and brothers and sisters to one another in Christ. They are formed in the prayer of the Church, and in the ways of God.

Reflection on the Liturgy

The lessons that liturgy teaches, however, can be lost if there is no reflection on them later. The third moment of liturgical catechesis, therefore, takes place after the celebration. Using the actual experience of worship as the starting point, liturgical catechesis moves “from the visible to the invisible, from the sign to the thing signified, from the ‘sacraments’ to the ‘mysteries’” (CCC, 1075). Because liturgical catechesis draws people into the mystery of Christ, it is sometimes called *mystagogy*.

“The faithful must understand the liturgical signs and symbols.”

³CT 23. Cf. SC 35 ad 3; CIC 777, 1 and 2.

Liturgical Catechesis: An Example

Thus, a preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation should include not only catechesis on the signs and rituals of the celebration, but also invite reflection on the power and presence of the Holy Spirit and cultivate a desire for receiving the fullness of the Gifts of the Spirit. The celebration itself might open up the meaning of the Scripture, or some aspect of God's invitation to be anointed. Reflection afterward might call attention to the bishop's gesture and words of anointing or the candidate's feeling of being chosen for mission and service.

Liturgical catechesis serves an important function in the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation and indeed all the Sacraments are key moments in life when faith can deepen, and awareness of God's redemptive work can crystallize. Liturgical catechesis helps individuals and communities to enter into these sacramental events wholeheartedly, and receive from them an abundance of God's grace.

Likewise, the regular celebration of the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, and Penance also provide many occasions for liturgical catechesis. By preparing to celebrate, active participation in the liturgies themselves, and reflection afterward, the beneficial effects of these celebrations are harvested and integrated into the whole of Christian life.



For Reflection

- Describe a time when a liturgical experience uncovered something for you about God, the Church, or your own spiritual life.
- What are some ways your parish could be more intentional about doing liturgical catechesis?

Sacraments: Celebrations of Unity and Diversity

by C. J. Willie, S.C.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that “the mystery of Christ is so unfathomably rich that it cannot be exhausted by its expression in any single liturgical tradition” (1201) and “the celebration of the liturgy, therefore should correspond to the genius and culture of the different peoples” [cf. SC 37–40] (1204).

The celebration of the Sacraments, the center of the liturgical life of the Church, highlights both the unity and diversity of the Catholic Church. The Sacraments are celebrated throughout the Church in every country and across many cultures as signs of God’s love and continuing desire to deepen his relationship with his people. They are tangible reminders of the universality of the Church in that all Catholics everywhere have the privilege of participating in its sacramental life.

At the same time, the Church recognizes that it is also a Church of many faces and languages; a Church of many cultures and life experiences; and that the outward expressions of the reception of the Sacraments must reflect the strengths and beauty, the ritual and symbolism of each culture. The Good News of Jesus Christ is intended for people

of all cultures and, therefore, all catechesis must be grounded in the cultural environment in which it is presented.

This recognition of both the universality of the Sacraments and diverse cultural traditions necessitates an understanding of the cultural heritages of those who are preparing for the Sacraments. Catechesis is most effective when it touches the lives of the learners in such a way that it leads to personal transformation. This can only take place when both the material and environment reflect and welcome students of all cultures.



A Model of Diversity

Jesus was a model teacher. He taught in the synagogues, in towns and villages, on the hillsides, and from a boat. He understood the people to whom he was speaking. He knew their cultures and used that understanding to share his message about the Kingdom of God. He taught people wherever he found them with words and examples that touched their lived experiences. He asks the same of us—that we, too, will understand the people to whom and with whom we are speaking. He asks that we, too, take the time to know their cultures and use that understanding to share his message.

As the *General Directory for Catechesis* states:

“We can say of catechesis, as well as of evangelization in general, that it is called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures. [CT 53] Catechesis ... proposes the Gospel ‘in a vital way, profoundly, by going to the very roots of culture and the cultures of mankind’ [EN 20].” (202,204)

The Sacraments represent significant milestones in life and will be truly meaningful and transformational only when they are embedded in and flow from the rich cultural traditions in which those who prepare and celebrate are immersed.

“The Church recognizes that it is also a Church of many faces and languages; a Church of many cultures and life experiences; and that the outward expressions of the reception of the sacraments must reflect the strengths and beauty, the ritual and symbolism of each culture.”

Cultural Pluralism

The United States Bishops in *The National Directory for Catechesis* state: “Just as all races, ethnicities, and cultures in the world are represented in the population of the United States, so too do they find a home within the Catholic Church. Each group brings its own language, history, customs, rituals, and traditions ‘for building up the body of Christ’ (Ephesians 4:12). Since persons can only achieve their

full humanity by means of culture, the Catholic Church in the United States embraces the rich cultural pluralism of all the faithful, encourages the distinctive identity of each cultural group, and urges mutual enrichment. At the same time, the Catholic Church promotes a unity of faith within the multicultural diversity of the people.”⁴

Tapping into the cultural heritages of those preparing for the Sacraments and incorporat-

ing elements that continually expand their understanding of the universality of the Church will provide new threads of multicolored hues and strengths with which to weave a tapestry that reflects the wonder of our relationship with God, with each other, and with all of creation.

For Reflection

- How much diversity do you experience in your parish community?
- In what ways are distinctive cultural groups recognized and respected in your parish?

⁴ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *National Directory for Catechesis*. Washington, D.C. USCCB, p. 29

The Role of the Family

“Family members learn more of the Christian life by observing each other’s strengths or weaknesses than by formal instruction.”

National Directory for Catechesis, 29D

The family is the most significant community in any person’s life, especially that of a young person. It is through the relationships experienced in a family that we come to perceive what is of value. The most basic instincts, intuitions, and feelings about the world around us are established in our earliest years as members of a family. It is within this structure that we develop a way of relating to others, ourselves, and the world in general. This provides the basis for our beliefs and, for people of faith, our ultimate relationship to God.

Within the Church, there has always been a tremendous respect for the place of the family. The early Church began in house churches, which were the heart of the Christian community. It can be assumed that in these house churches, intergenerational groups gathered, and the call to ministry and a sense of mission developed as members of families engaged in meditation on the Scriptures, the breaking of the bread, and serving the needs of the early Church. Through these relationships, ministers were first called to use their personal gifts to serve the needs of the larger community and witness to the Person and message of Jesus. It is still true today that the family is the most intimate experience of Church, the place where love, forgiveness, and trust should first be encountered.

“The most basic instincts, intuitions, and feelings about the world around us are established in our earliest years as members of a family.”

Parents and Sacrament Preparation

For young people to have faith, parents must first have faith. The adage, “faith is caught, not taught,” is true especially for the domestic church. Simply put, parents teach most effectively by example. They profoundly affect the faith of young people by attending first to their own faith and religiosity. As they actively seek growth in adult faith and in the Sacrament of Matrimony, when they invest themselves in the life of the parish community and work for peace and justice in the world, parents model faith for young people while deepening their own.

Call to Celebrate: Confirmation takes seriously the ongoing faith development of the parents and family members through the variety of resources it provides. Whether the parent is very involved in the life of the Church or just coming back, the **Journey Together** pages in the *Candidate Book*, which also include sponsor/mentor activities, provide opportunities for discussion and action within the family. The parent/adult catechesis sessions, the sessions designed for family-centered catechesis, and the retreats will also assist them in their journey.

For Reflection

- When have you experienced your own family as a domestic Church?
- In what ways can your parish support the family as a faith community?

The Role of the Sponsor/Mentor

As a rule there should be a sponsor for each of those to be confirmed. These sponsors bring the candidates to receive the sacrament, present them to the minister for the anointing, and will later help them to fulfill their baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit whom they have received. . . . it is desirable that the godparent at baptism, if available, also be the sponsor at confirmation...the option of choosing a special sponsor for confirmation is not excluded.

Rite of Confirmation, 5

Who the sponsors are and what roles they play may vary from parish to parish and diocese to diocese. Taking the Rite as a guide, the sponsor (be they a godparent or a special family friend) is called to present the candidate for Confirmation and later help the candidate live out his or her baptismal promises. (Note that a parent may present his or her child, but according to Canon Law, cannot serve as the sponsor; see Can. 874 §1 5°.) No mention is made of the sponsor being involved in the preparation. However, it has become the practice in most parishes and dioceses throughout the United States to have sponsors participate in varying ways during the formal preparation process. Often in cases where persons who are going to act as sponsors cannot be part of the process, a parish will call upon other parishioners to act as mentors.

The most important roles of Confirmation sponsors are to journey with the candidates and guide them as they prepare to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit in this Sacrament of Initiation and to continue to help them live out their mission as fully initiated Christians when the celebration is completed. In this role, Confirmation sponsors can be likened to spiritual coaches or mentors. They listen attentively to candidates and affirm their strengths. They point out ways candidates might grow and become better in the practice of faith. They introduce them to parts of parish life that candidates might get involved in. It is important throughout the process that the sponsor/mentor shares his or her own faith journey with the candidate.

Depending on the parish program, the sponsor may:

- attend some of the catechetical sessions
- participate in retreats or service projects
- spend time with candidates doing the activities on the **Journey Together** pages in the *Candidate Book*, which will guide the sponsor and candidate in sharing how the teachings and practices of the Church relate to their own lives

Sponsors act in the name of the Church. They represent the Church. So they have a responsibility to witness to the faith through their actions and practice of Roman Catholicism. They also are called upon to connect the candidates to the Church community by making sure candidates know they are welcome and that their gifts and talents are important to the Church.

Call to Celebrate: Confirmation has been developed to assist the sponsor/mentor to feel confident and competent in fulfilling that role through using the resources available, including the *Sponsor & Mentor Handbook*. Among many of the useful features, the *Sponsor & Mentor Handbook* contains information to guide the sponsor/mentor in using the **Journey Together** pages with the candidate. These pages, which appear in the *Candidate Book*, provide wonderful opportunities for interaction and conversation between the sponsor/mentor and the candidate. Other resources include a retreat for sponsors/mentors and candidates (see pages 103–105 for younger adolescents or pages 109–111 for older adolescents).

The Role of the Assembly

“Among the symbols with which liturgy deals, none is more important than this assembly of believers.”

Environment and Art in Catholic Worship, 28

What Is the Assembly?

The term “assembly” comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which in Scripture is the word that was used to translate the Hebrew word *qahal*, which described both the divine call to a gathering as well as the people who respond and come together in a community event. In the Old Testament, an assembly was the group gathered together by the Lord for life in the presence of the Lord. In the New Testament, it gradually came to be used for the Church. In liturgical use today, it refers to the people assembled for liturgy and it highlights the fact that we believe that the Church is most realized when it gathers for worship.

The documents of Vatican II affirm that

- the liturgy is the primary means where the faithful can express in their lives and show to others the mystery of Christ and the Church (SC, 2)
- the Church is a Sacrament and most fully expresses itself in the liturgical assembly (LG, 1, 28)

“An assembly’s mere attendance at liturgy is profoundly inadequate. Participation is not merely an option, but a liturgical expectation.”

There is also the traditional principle *lex orandi legem credendi statuit*, which means the rule of prayer establishes the rule of faith. The term also expresses the connection between the Church’s faith life and the liturgical celebrations of the assembly. In other words, what the assembly does, says, and celebrates is the faith of the Church.

The Assembly at Prayer

The liturgy of any Sacrament unifies the gathering of the faithful and places them on an ongoing and focused journey to meet the Risen Christ. Through prayers, gestures, and symbols, those gathered express their faith convictions and commitments. An assembly’s mere attendance at liturgy is profoundly inadequate. Participation is not merely an option, but a liturgical expectation. Members of the assembly are not an audience at a drama, but, like the actors, they have a specified role to play at each gathering, a role that is primarily shown through gesture, singing, prayers, and responses. The assembly acts as one body praying and giving expression to faith—the Body of Christ.



Adolescents in the Assembly

As for adolescents in the assembly, they are full participants and should be encouraged to engage fully in their role. Good catechesis will inform young people that the assembly as a whole ministers. How the assembly participates in doing its work will always instruct young people as to what and how the assembly believes. Participation in the assembly is one of the ways that faith is handed on to the next generation and sustained. It is important that young people be called forth to participate as hospitality ministers, readers, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. It goes without saying that what an involved, enthusiastic assembly teaches differs from that which an uninvolved, passive assembly teaches.

The Assembly and Sacrament Preparation

Recent trends in catechesis, including lifelong catechesis and liturgical catechesis, have drawn the assembly into a more participatory role in sacramental catechesis. **Call to Celebrate:**

Confirmation provides several ways to enhance and support the role of the assembly:

Sunday Connection: Bulletin Inserts, Prayer of the Faithful, and Parish Blessings may be found in this book for each session of **Call to Celebrate: Confirmation**. They are designed to alert the assembly to the event of Sacrament preparation and to give them simple ways of joining in their own reflection on the themes of each session (see pp. 31–32).

Parish Assemblies for each theme presented for Confirmation are developed around a celebration and a catechetical session for those members of the assembly who would like to deepen their experience of the sacrament. These celebrations and liturgical catechetical sessions are found in the following pages of this book.

The Role of the Catechist

“Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, catechists powerfully influence those being catechized by their faithful proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the transparent example of their Christian lives.”

National Directory for Catechesis, 29E

Catechesis is the name given to all of the ecclesial activities that bring individuals and communities to faith. In this broad context, there are many who do the work of sacramental catechesis in both formal and informal ways. Parents are catechists, the community catechizes, and those involved in the ministries of liturgy and pastoral care also play a catechetical role.

The model of catechesis for sacrament preparation presented in **Call to Celebrate: Confirmation** involves formal catechesis of adults, adolescents, families, and sponsors/mentors. Persons who are selected to fulfill these roles should be faith-filled persons who have a deep regard and love for the sacramental life of the Church. Since catechists are first and foremost witnesses of faith, they need to possess a capacity to communicate with the age level of the group whom they are catechizing.

“Since catechists are first and foremost witnesses of faith, they need to possess a capacity to communicate with the age level of the group whom they are catechizing.”

Catechists echo the word by what they say and by how they say it, as well as by who they are and how they live. Through their words and the environment they create, catechists enable those who are being instructed to be led to a deeper understanding of the Sacraments. **Call to Celebrate: Confirmation**

recognizes that formal catechesis may take place in the home, in a classroom, in a parish setting, with an intergenerational group, or at a retreat, and provides resources unique to all settings.

In **Call to Celebrate: Confirmation** catechists are called upon to preside, proclaim the word, listen, reflect, and teach. Their ministry is a gift to each young person, adult, and/or family member, because through their service,

those being catechized will come to a deeper appreciation of the Sacrament of Confirmation and the signs, symbols, and rituals associated with it. This will lead them to a fuller experience of the Holy Spirit and the Church.



Catechist Formation

This *Confirmation Source Book* provides a catechist orientation session and a catechist training session for those involved in formal catechesis (see pages 33–36). The orientation session is designed to familiarize the catechists with the vision and scope of the process and to acquaint them with the basic resources available to them. The training session provides a way to assist the catechists to deepen their understanding of the meaning of the Sacrament, using content and methods that they will carry into the catechetical session.

In addition to these sessions, articles are provided to assist the catechist in understanding the young persons whom they are catechizing, the meaning of the Sacrament of Confirmation, the roles of family and the assembly, and the aspect of incorporating cultural diversity, which will enrich the catechists as they prepare for and carry out their call. The *Catechist Edition* for **Call to Celebrate: Confirmation** also presents step-by-step lesson plans, additional resources, and background on the theme of each session.

Ongoing Support of Catechists

All catechists need ongoing support and their needs will vary. It is important that the catechetical leader who oversees the program uses creativity and imagination to adapt these resources to the specific needs of the catechists in any given situation.

- Plan to hold the orientation and training sessions at times convenient for the catechists.
- Plan individual and/or group meetings with catechists to share ideas, answer questions, and provide additional help.
- Create a catechetical center for additional resources in an accessible place. These resources and supplies for catechists and young people should include items that are suggested in the *Catechist Edition*, along with other pertinent articles, books, or audiovisual materials.
- Continue to affirm the catechists on a regular basis.

The Role of the Prayer Leader

Call to Celebrate: Confirmation is based on a process of liturgical catechesis, which is the activity of bringing communal faith to consciousness through participation in and celebration of the rites of the community. It has a solid historical tradition in our Church, since liturgy has long been regarded as the Church's "school of faith," an expression that recognizes the formative value of ritual celebration on participants. The story of Emmaus (see *Luke 24*) shows that it is precisely in the ritual "breaking of the bread" that the disciples come to know and understand the mystery of Jesus. A significant part of your role as catechist is as leader of prayer.

The Celebration

Each of the celebrations is built around a procession, song, a Scripture reading, and a ritual action. Take time to carry out the procession reverently and slowly. Involve young people in song, either by leading it yourself, using the *Songs of Celebration: Confirmation* CD, or inviting a song leader into your group. Have a Bible available to proclaim the Scripture. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the ritual action ahead of time so that you are able to be fully engaged in it with young people during the celebration. The celebration is in the *Candidate Book*, but if you find that having young people use the book during the celebration is distracting, you may wish to do the celebration without books and guide the young people's responses.

Leading Prayer

During the celebration you are the leader of prayer. The way you preside is important. Here are some tips:

- Learn the script ahead of time. Be familiar with it so that you are able to lead and be present with the young people without being distracted or fumbling for "what comes next."
- Use your body to communicate. Stand tall. Use broad and expansive gestures. Be aware of your facial expressions and tone of voice.
- Watch your timing. Let there be silence between parts of the prayer. Take time with each candidate during the ritual actions. Do not be afraid of pauses or silence. They often lead young people to deeper prayer and reflection.

The Prayer Space

It is very important for you to take care to prepare the prayer space ahead of time and to lead the celebration in a way that will call young people to prayer, participation in the ritual action, and reflection after the celebration.

The prayer space needs to be a place where the movement of processions and rituals are easily and reverently celebrated. Prepare it ahead of time. You may choose to set aside a space in your meeting place, or you may find the church or another room to be more suitable.

When you have chosen a space, arrange it in such a way that young people can move easily and can see and hear everything that is happening. Decorate the space with plants or flowers. Always have large clear bowl with holy water, a Bible and stand, and a candle available. Check your planning page each week to be sure you have everything you need for the celebration.

“Liturgy has long been regarded as the Church's 'school of faith,' an expression that recognizes the formative value of ritual celebration.”

The Role of Service and Service Projects

“Since the Church’s life is apostolic, catechumens should also learn how to work actively with others to spread the gospel and build up the Church by the witness of their lives and by professing their faith.”

RCIA, 75.4

While the candidates for Confirmation are not catechumens, they are involved in the process of initiation and a full catechesis for initiation calls for participation in apostolic witness and service. Also, the call to discipleship received in Baptism points to service as a way of life for the disciple who is committed to participating in the Kingdom of God. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord” (Luke 4:18–19). The role of service in a Confirmation process needs to be looked at from both these perspectives. It is initiatory and it is formative for mission.

A Way of Life

Many Confirmation programs require a certain number of hours of service. Others require some service but do not put a time requirement on it. Is there a right or wrong way to incorporate service into the process?

No. But there is a basic principle to guide you in structuring or developing the role of service in a parish program, that is: what is important is that the candidates get a feeling and experience of service as a normal way of life for the fully initiated Christian. The stress on service projects should not be presented primarily as a requirement for Confirmation but as an ongoing response to serve and care for the needs

of all humans and all of creation. Service is best presented in the context of “This is what we do. This is our way of life. It is our call. You are apprenticing.”

Young People and Service

As a matter of fact, young people today *are* service oriented. They want to do for others and they see people from all walks of life and faith traditions doing service. Their sports and entertainment heroes and heroines are constantly placing “causes” before them. Many of the candidates are already doing service such as cutting grass for an incapacitated

neighbor or going with parents to serve meals to the homeless, but they may not consider it or connect it to the Gospel message of service. Their consciousness needs to be raised in order to make the connections. One of the ways to do this is to have them continue doing what they are already doing but be more mindful of it by praying before

the activity and reflecting or journaling about it later. It is possible that if candidates see service as a requirement they may think of it as a burden rather than something that can be rewarding and satisfying. You may ask them to think about the things they most enjoy doing or the things they are really good at and then think about how they might engage in that activity for the service of others.

“What is important is that the candidates get a feeling and experience of service as a normal way of life for the fully initiated Christian.”

Sunday Connection

Bulletin Inserts, Prayer of the Faithful, and Parish Blessings

Session 1 Journey with the Spirit

Bulletin Insert During the week, our young people who are preparing to celebrate Confirmation will be reflecting on the promise of their Baptism and the Sacraments of Initiation. Join them by reflecting on the effect belonging to the Church has on your daily life.

Prayer For young people preparing for Confirmation, that they may be encouraged by the living faith of this assembly.

Parish Blessing God, our loving Father, these young people come before you as your children. They belong to you. Send the Holy Spirit upon them as they begin this time of preparation so that they may come to know your presence in all they do. We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord.

Session 2 Believe with the Spirit

Bulletin Insert During the week, our young people who are preparing to celebrate Confirmation will be reflecting on faith as a gift and a journey. Join them by reflecting on your own journey of faith.

Prayer For young people preparing for Confirmation, that they may grow in faith and be enabled to see the world with the eyes of faith.

Parish Blessing God, our loving Father, these young people come before you knowing the great love you showed by sending your Son who gave his life that we might live as children of light. Send the Holy Spirit upon them to show them how to give their lives in love and service to others. We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord.

Session 3 Gifted with the Spirit

Bulletin Insert During the week, our young people who are preparing to celebrate Confirmation will be reflecting on the mystery of the Trinity and the gift of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Join them by reflecting on the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Prayer For young people preparing for Confirmation, that they may believe more fully in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Parish Blessing God, our loving Father, these young people gather with us, your people, to give you glory. Send the Holy Spirit upon them to help them live lives of strong faith and recognize you in all the ways you show yourself to them. We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord.

Session 4 Empowered by the Spirit

Bulletin Insert During the week, our young people who are preparing to celebrate Confirmation will be reflecting on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Join them by reflecting on how you are using the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in your daily life.

Prayer For young people preparing for Confirmation, that they may be open to receiving the fullness of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Parish Blessing God, our loving Father, these young people come before you open to receiving the fullness of the Gifts of your Spirit. Send your gifts in abundance that they may be instrument in realizing the fullness of your Kingdom. We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord.

Session 5 Anointed by the Spirit

Bulletin Insert During the week, our young people who are preparing to celebrate Confirmation will be reflecting on the meaning of being anointed and set aside for God's service in today's world. Join them by reflecting on your own anointing in Baptism and Confirmation and examining your response to being set apart by that anointing.

Prayer For young people preparing for Confirmation, that they may be strengthened by the anointing of the Holy Spirit to go out and bring the Good News of Jesus to those they meet.

Parish Blessing God, our loving Father, these young people come before you ready to be anointed. Send the Holy Spirit upon them that they may be a sign and witness to all they meet of your presence in the world. We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord.

Session 6 Sanctified by the Spirit

Bulletin Insert During the week, our young people who are preparing to celebrate Confirmation will be reflecting on their call to holiness and the role of the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier. Join them by reflecting on your own call to holiness and the witness of holiness you see in others.

Prayer For young people preparing for Confirmation, that they may be strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit to witness to others by lives of holiness.

Parish Blessing God, source of all holiness, these young people come before you knowing their fragility and weakness, but hoping in the power of your goodness. Send the Holy Spirit upon them so they will grow more fully into the image of your Son Jesus. We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord.

Session 7 Guided by the Spirit

Bulletin Insert During the week, our young people who are preparing to celebrate Confirmation will be reflecting on the role of the Holy Spirit in the growth of their conscience and the call to be forgivers and reconcilers. Join them by reflecting on what it means for you to be guided by the Holy Spirit in the choices you make and in your own mission of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Prayer For young people preparing for Confirmation, that they will continue to remember God's constant forgiveness and his will for us to be missionaries of reconciliation.

Parish Blessing God, our loving Father, these young people come before you seeking the goodness of your mercy and forgiveness. Send the Holy Spirit upon them to help them know you as always kind and merciful. We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord.

Session 8 Challenged by the Spirit

Bulletin Insert During the week, our young people who are preparing to celebrate Confirmation will be reflecting on how the Eucharist changes us and the Holy Spirit helps us live out our mission. Join them by reflecting on your experience of living out the mission of your Baptism.

Prayer For young people preparing for Confirmation, that they may be strengthened to go forth and live as disciples.

Parish Blessing God, our loving Father, these young people come before you ready to do your will. Send the Holy Spirit upon them that they may be a sign and witness to all they meet of your presence in the world. We ask this blessing through Christ our Lord.