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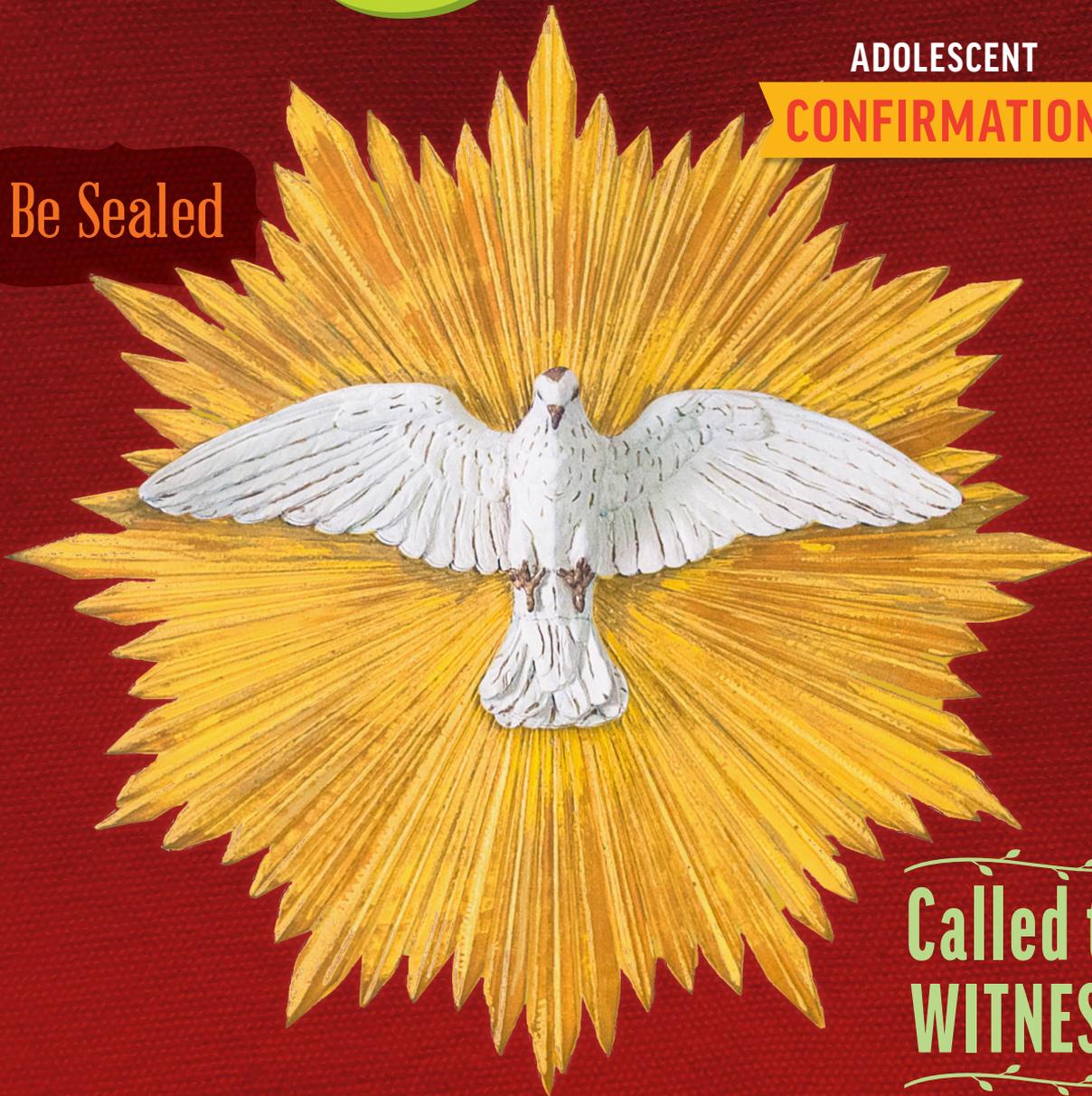
OUR SUNDAY VISITOR

Encounter *with* Christ

ADOLESCENT

CONFIRMATION

Be Sealed



Called to
WITNESS

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Nihil Obstat

Msgr. Michael Heintz, PhD.

Censor Librorum, Diocese of Fort Wayne–South Bend

Imprimatur

✠ Most Rev. Kevin C. Rhoades

Bishop of Fort Wayne–South Bend

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HOW CANDIDATES UNDERSTAND THE LESSON

Middle school is a time of rapid growth—physically, intellectually, and emotionally. This growth prompts self-reflection and self-consciousness. It's important for candidates this age to realize that, while we are all different, each one of us is wonderfully made, and we are all called by God to be a part of his work.

Discerning Our Call We often ask young people at this level what they would like to be, but we rarely ask where they feel God might be calling them. It's important for us to realize that we can only be truly happy when we discern his call and pursue it.

Choices They Make Help the Confirmation candidates appreciate that God knows each of them by name and wants to share his plan with them. Encourage them to consider how the choices they make move them closer to, or farther away from, what God has planned. This sometimes calls for difficult and drastic choices, such as when the first disciples left their lives behind and followed Jesus. At other times, it is choosing between something good . . . and something better.

The Holy Spirit

Reflection for Catechists

As Catholics, we believe in one God in Three Divine Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Of the three, people may feel they know the least about the Third Divine Person. This is ironic, since it is the Holy Spirit who is perhaps closest to us. Saint Paul tells us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (see I Corinthians 6:19). It is this Person of God who dwells inside us, guiding us to do God's will and interceding for us to the Father (see Romans 8:26–27).

The Holy Spirit helps us hear and follow God's call in our lives. God calls each of us by name (see Isaiah 43:1), just as Jesus called each of his Apostles. Listening to and following God's call is a lifelong process. It sometimes means going against what others expect of us, or even what we had planned for ourselves. It is within our God-given nature to seek happiness, but we often seek it in the wrong places. The only way to achieve true happiness is to do that for which we were created.

We learn and understand God's plan for our lives as we grow in our friendship with him. This usually begins in an initial encounter with God, a moment of conversion in which we recognize our need for him and decide to give our lives to him. It continues as we listen to his voice, through Scripture, Sacred Tradition, the counsel of trusted friends and family, and the events and opportunities of our lives.

- How do prayer, the Sacraments, and obedience to God's will help you grow closer to Christ?
- How do you continue to listen for God's voice, so you can discern his call in your life?

Scripture Background

This unit opens with a passage from Psalm 139. Here, the psalmist praises the Creator for his life and because God knows his "very self." God is with us at all times, guiding us according to his plan.

The primary Scripture passage used for this unit is Jesus' calling of the disciples. In this passage, we can readily see that Jesus chose ordinary people. It is striking that he does not seek out disciples among the religious leaders of the day, for example, the scholars and teachers of the Law. Instead, he chooses fishermen, tradesmen, and even the tax collector. This drives home the point that God can use anyone. He calls whomever he will, and gives them what they need in order to fulfill the call.

Also featured is the connection between Isaiah 11 and Matthew 3—the promise that the Spirit of God would rest upon one of Jesse's descendants and the promise fulfilled at the baptism of the Lord, when the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus.

Objectives

- Reflect on God’s presence in our lives as expressed in the words of Psalm 139
- To introduce the key themes of the unit and to reflect on God’s presence in the candidates’ lives



Let Us Pray

Invite the youth to gather in the prayer space. Begin by praying the Sign of the Cross. Have a volunteer read the leader’s part, then prompt the group to join in praying aloud the part marked “All.” Afterward, direct the candidates to take their seats.

Lead into the session with the following or similar words:

“Jesus called his first disciples after their return from a day of work as fishermen. He calls each of us, too, as we go about our daily lives, and he is always with us. Let’s listen to what the psalmist says about God’s relationship with us.”



Scripture

Guide the candidates through a reflection on the verses of Psalm 139.

- You might wish to play instrumental music during the reflection.

Invite the young people to be still, close their eyes, and quiet themselves. Encourage them to humbly open their minds and hearts to what God is saying to them. Also let them know there will be time to silently reflect on the reading, then you’ll have a couple of discussion questions for them.

- Proclaim the Scripture as the candidates listens. Allow for several minutes of silent reflection.
- *Ask:* What did you hear God say to you today?
- Call on volunteers to respond.
- *Ask:* What does this psalm say to you about God’s presence in your life?
- Call on volunteers to respond.

Have you ever thought...

Share that God, as our loving Father, is always present in our lives. He never abandons us. He is patient and understanding even when we do not welcome or respond to his love.

- Read aloud both questions in this section and call on volunteers to respond.

Getting Started

Use page 8 to introduce the key themes of this unit.

- Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Getting Started paragraphs.
- *Ask:* What are some ways you can listen to Jesus speak to you?
- Invite several volunteers to respond. Possible responses include: through prayer, at Mass, in Sacred Scripture.

As we study the call of the Apostles, young adolescents will want to discuss the many “calls” they hear in their daily lives. These include the call of peers and the need to be accepted by them, the call of academic pressures and the desire to succeed, and the call of social networking and the desire to “see and be seen.”

Help the candidates recognize that because of the many demands on their time and attention, they may not be tuned in to Jesus’ call to them or his presence in their lives. Help the young people learn to be aware of Jesus’ presence and voice by sharing the following points:

- Sometimes we need to be intentional in making room for Jesus in our lives. We need to make time to pray and even to just be still and be in God’s presence.
- Jesus is always near, but he often speaks to us in a whisper and not in a loud or insistent way. We have to cut through the noise of daily living to hear him.

ACTIVITY

God’s Presence in My Life

Read aloud the first paragraph from this activity on page 8.

- Have the candidates work on their own to complete the activity.
- Consider beginning by sharing with the group your own responses.
- Call on volunteers to share their responses to the first two items.

Catechist Reflection

On page 4 of the Candidate’s book, there is an explanation for the young people about authenticity in their Christian lives. When society offers worldviews that are adverse to our Catholic faith, we are called to be real witnesses to the faith. Prayer and the Sacraments will help protect us from worldviews hostile to our faith. God alone is our source for what is true, good, and beautiful. Take some time to reflect on that and discuss with the candidates how the world sometimes works to dilute our Christian faith.

- How do you present authenticity in your Christian witness to the world?

Symbol of Our Faith

Call on a volunteer to read aloud the text on page 9 about the bishop's crosier.

- Ask if the candidates have ever seen their bishop or another bishop—perhaps at a friend's or relative's Confirmation—carrying a crosier.
- Emphasize that the crosier symbolizes the bishop's role as shepherd of his flock—that is, of all the members of the Church in his diocese.

Encounter with Christ

Invite a volunteer to read aloud "Encounter with Christ."

Emphasize the teaching on vocations. Ensure that the candidates understand that God has a plan for each of us. We all have various vocations as clergy, religious sisters and brothers, or lay men and women. Each of these is vital to building the God's Kingdom. Bishops, priests, and deacons serve Christ and his Church through the Sacraments and teaching. Religious serve the Lord and people throughout the world. And lay people serve the Church by directing their lives to the will of God. Many lay people serve the Lord by living their life in Holy Matrimony. (See CCC, 898.)

- *Ask:* Who in your life can help you come to know God's plan for you?
- Call on volunteers to respond.

Optional Activity

Distribute writing paper and tell the candidates that they will be writing a poem reflecting on their hopes and dreams.

- Provide the following guidelines: The poem or letter must be at least eight lines long. It must include at least two lines addressed to God. It must conclude with a commitment related to hopes or dreams in general or to a specific hope or dream.
- Call on volunteers to share their poems with the group.

Objectives

- Develop an understanding of Jesus' call of the first Apostles
- Reflect on this event from the perspective of the Apostles who were called by Jesus

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

Have the candidates silently read the two introductory paragraphs on page 10.

- Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Scripture from Luke Chapter 5:4–11.
- Lead a discussion of the Scripture, using the following questions:
- What did Jesus tell Simon, James, and John would change in their lives? (He said they would be fishers of men.)
- What did Jesus mean by this? (That their work would be to help others know about God)

ACTIVITY

Imagine

Invite the candidates to write their responses to the Imagine questions.

- Call on volunteers to share their responses.

Optional Activity

Extend the Imagine activity by having the young people imagine that Jesus is here today to choose disciples.

- Have the youth work in four groups to identify occupations or trades in our contemporary culture from which they would not expect Jesus to choose disciples.
- Where would the initial call take place for each occupation?
- What would concerns be for the people called?

Jesus' Call and the Holy Spirit

Read aloud the first paragraph on page 11. You may wish to have the candidates read John 14:16–17 in their Bibles, or to read the passage aloud to the class.

- Explain that *Advocate* is one of the titles for the Holy Spirit.

Our Trinitarian Faith

Have a volunteer read aloud the text.

- Discuss why, for some people, the Holy Spirit might be the least well-known Person of the Trinity.
- *Ask*: How can knowing more about the Holy Spirit help you grow in faith?
- Invite volunteers to respond.
- Emphasize that the Holy Spirit is sent “by the Father in the name of the Son, and by the Son in person,” (CCC, 244).

Celebrating the Sacrament

Read aloud the text.

- *Ask*: How does the calling of the candidates by name during the Rite of Confirmation evoke Jesus' calling of the first disciples?
- Call on volunteers to respond.

ACTIVITY

Expand the discussion about why the Holy Spirit may be the least known Person of the Trinity.

- Organize the group into either three or six smaller groups.
- Assign one Person of the Trinity to each group or to a pair of groups.
- Direct each group to choose someone to take notes. Then have the group members work to identify as many facts as possible about the Person of the Holy Trinity assigned to their group. Explain that information they name can include titles, characteristics, Church teaching, and events from Scripture.
- Allow sufficient time for the candidates to complete their lists. Then invite the groups to share with everyone—in the order of the Persons of the Trinity—the facts they named. (Be sure to correct any wrong or inaccurate information.)
- Call on volunteers to name facts about the Persons of the Trinity that they did not previously know. Especially encourage the young people to identify new facts about the Holy Spirit.

Objectives

- Explore how the Holy Spirit was at work in the lives of holy people
- Explore the words of the prophets inspired by the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit in the History of God's People

Summarize the first two paragraphs on page 12 for the group.

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Scripture passage from Isaiah 11:1–3a.

- Point out that this passage names Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which they will learn about in a later unit.
- Point out, too, that the Holy Spirit inspired the *inerrant* Word of God in the Bible. Be sure the candidates understand the meaning of inerrant when describing Sacred Scripture. The *Catechism* teaches that Scripture faithfully and without error teaches the truth that God wanted to share for our salvation.
- *Ask*: About whom is this passage speaking? (The passage is speaking about Jesus.)

Have the candidates read the remaining text to themselves.

- *Ask*: What are some times in Scripture when we see the Holy Spirit working in Mary's life? (The Holy Spirit prepared Mary for her role as the Mother of God; Mary conceived Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. Mary was present with the Apostles at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon them.)

Go to the Source

Organize the candidates in pairs or small groups.

- Distribute Bibles (one per pair or small group).
- Have the candidates read Matthew 3:13–17, about the baptism of Jesus. Then have the pairs or groups discuss how the passage is connected to the passage from Isaiah.
- Allow time for discussion, then invite a spokesperson from each group to share a key insight about the passage with the larger group.

Optional Activity

Consider this group activity to increase the candidates' understanding of the major Old Testament prophets. This activity will help strengthen the young people's familiarity with the books of the Bible.

- First organize the class into six groups. Then distribute Bibles, one per candidate.
- Assign each group one of the following prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, Micah.
- Direct the groups to use their Bibles to learn about their assigned prophet and to work together to identify at least three important facts about him. Explain that they can use the introduction to their assigned book of the Bible for some important information, such as the period when the prophet wrote, key themes of his writing, and important events the prophet addressed.
- Call on a spokesperson from each group to share their findings.

Symbols of the Holy Spirit

Read aloud the introductory sentence at the top of the chart on page 13.

- Call on volunteers to take turns reading about the symbols of the Holy Spirit. For each symbol, invite volunteers to share examples from Scripture, Tradition, or the liturgy and Sacraments of when we encounter that particular symbol. (Examples include: At Baptism, we are baptized with water; at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire; we are anointed with the seal of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation.)

The Spirit Helps Us Hear God's Call

Invite volunteers to read aloud the paragraphs.

- Read aloud the reflection question: "How is Jesus calling you today?" Allow time for silent reflection.
- *Ask:* What are some ways you can hear Jesus' call in your life each day?
- Call on volunteers to share their responses.

Objectives

- To reflect on how Jesus calls each of us today
- To consider what discipleship means and how to grow as disciples
- Consider ways to live out what has been learned
- Explore the faith life of Saint Clare of Assisi

Connect: From Head to Heart

ACTIVITY

Read aloud the reflection questions. Invite the candidates to write their responses.

- Call on volunteers to share what they have written.

If time allows, direct the candidates to complete the drawing activity about the Holy Spirit.

Optional Activity

Expand the “Head to Heart” activity on page 14 using the Reflection below.

- Read aloud the introduction below that begins with “Jesus calls,” then ask volunteers to read aloud some or all of the Scripture passages. For each passage, ask the following or similar questions:
 - What are some times in your life when you can follow Jesus’ example?
 - What can make it challenging to follow Jesus’ example?
 - What was a time when you followed Jesus’ example as presented in this passage? How did that strengthen you as a disciple?

Reflection

Tell the candidates: Jesus calls us each day to live as his disciples. He teaches us how to live through his own example, handed down to us in the Gospels. Obedience to God’s will guides us to true freedom and happiness. Here are some passages that show the way to live, as taught and lived by Jesus himself.

Have the candidates work independently or in groups and read the following passages. Then have them summarize what is said in each passage.

- Taking time to pray: Mark 6:45–46
- Obedience to God’s will: Luke 22:41–42
- Caring for those in need: Matthew 9:27–31
- Forgiving enemies: Luke 23:33–34
- Resisting temptation: Matthew 4:1–11
- Speaking out against wrongdoing: Matthew 21:12–13

The Grace to Guide Us

Read aloud this section on page 15.

- *Say:* The first disciples left everything to follow Jesus. You don’t have to give up everything, but that doesn’t mean that discipleship is always easy. Yet the Holy Spirit will always give you the guidance you need, if you open your heart to his presence.

- Remind the candidates that discipleship means accepting Jesus' invitation to believe in him by learning about him and living according to his teachings.
- Point out the word "discipleship" in the acrostic. Then call on volunteers to take turns reading aloud the words and what they mean in our lives.
- Have the candidates take turns choosing one of the words from the acrostic and its explanation and telling how they can make it part of their lives.

Optional Activity

Help the group visualize the meaning of discipleship by acting out skits related to the theme, if time allows.

- Organize the young people into groups of four or five.
- Instruct the group members to work together to develop a skit on discipleship. Explain that their skit can present ways of living as disciples or can focus on Jesus' call to discipleship and our response.
- Allow time for the candidates to develop their scripts and practice their skits. Encourage them to assign a role to every member of the group.
- Invite the groups to take turns presenting their skits.

Saint Clare of Assisi

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the text on page 16 about Saint Clare.

- *Ask:* How is Saint Clare an example for young people today?
- Call on volunteers to respond.
- Point out that we can learn a lot from her example such as Saint Clare's devotion to the Eucharist, her openness to God's call, and the way she helped lead others to God.

Taking the Message Home

Have the candidates read the text to themselves.

- To help in Taking the Message Home, remind the candidates of sources that all Catholics can use to guide us in facing difficult challenges, including Sacred Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the teachings of the Church, which gives the authentic interpretation on the word of God as expressed in Scripture or Sacred Tradition.
- *Ask:* What are some ways you can teach the Good News through your words and actions in the coming week?
- Invite volunteers to respond.
- Encourage the youth to commit to at least one way to share the Good News through their words, and one way to share it through their actions.
- Ask the young people to write an answer on a slip of paper to this question: What part of this unit did you find most important in strengthening your faith and why?
- Have them save the slip of paper for the unit prayer.



Unit Prayer

Gather around a prayer table with a Bible, a candle, and a container of Holy Water or some other sacred place.

Catechist: Let us take a deep breath and become aware of the presence of God with us. Let's begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Catechist: We have been reminded of God's great love in the creation of the world and in his calling to each of us by name. As we prepare to fully enter into the Church and our relationship with God, the Holy Spirit opens our hearts. He helps us to see what we need to grow closer to him. Please take out your slips of paper and read what you found most important from this first unit lesson. Remember what you wrote in prayers at home by yourself and with your family. Consider how your ideas can take root in your parish and community.

[Individually, each candidate reads what he or she wrote and why.]

Catechist: Loving Father, we thank you for opening our hearts and minds to what you are saying to us in our lesson. We pray that we will continue to be aware of what your Holy Spirit is prompting us to know, and how we are being called to live. Help us to follow the example you set for us through Jesus Christ your Son. Together, let us pray Glory Be to the Father.

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world with out end. Amen.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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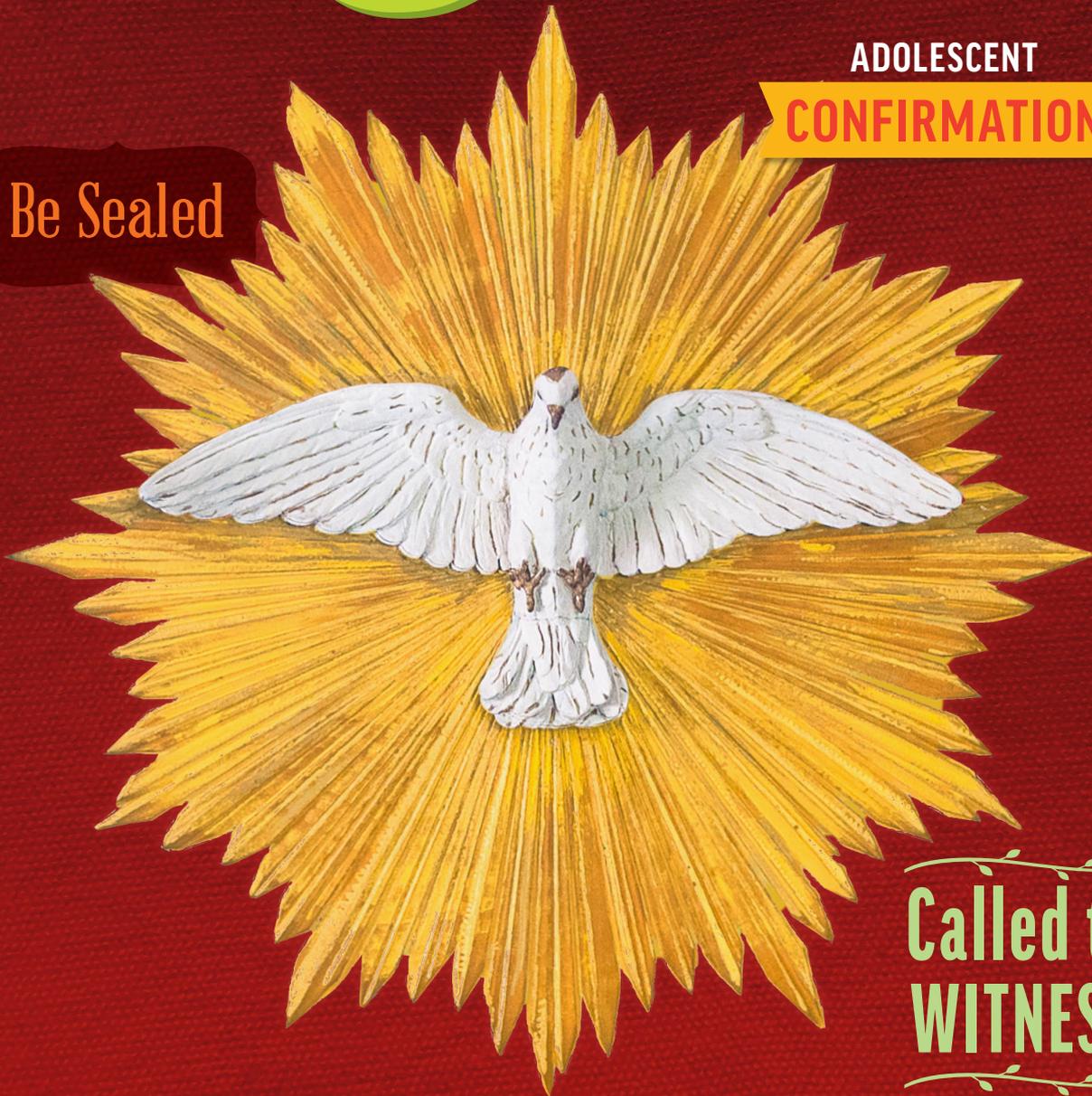
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The Sacraments in the Life of the Church

HOW CANDIDATES UNDERSTAND THE LESSON

Most Catholic middle-school aged youth do not remember their Baptism, since it likely happened when they were infants. They have probably seen a few Baptisms, and they might have been told something about their own Baptism, but the promises made on that day were promises their parents made on their behalf.

Baptism and Identity

Middle school is an important time of life for identity formation. Candidates this age are thinking about who they are and what kind of adults they might be. This provides the catechist with a natural opportunity to point out the link between Baptism and our identity as sons and daughters of God.

Abstract Reasoning

Fortunately, young people this age have a better grasp of theological language that makes them more able to see connections between the Baptismal promises and their everyday lives. Make this connection explicit through conversations about the choices we make and the inheritance we share as faithful disciples.

Reflection for Catechists

In the Sacrament of Baptism, God invites us into the Paschal Mystery of his Son, Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus died, was buried, and rose again, we die to our old selves, are buried in the baptismal waters, and rise again to new life. Through Baptism, we receive the “spirit of adoption” (Romans 8:15), and we become brothers and sisters, with God as our Father.

Baptism also frees us from sin. We are cleansed of Original Sin, the sin committed by our first parents, and its effect on all of humanity. Those who are baptized after the age of reason (usually around age 7) are also forgiven of any personal sins.

Through Baptism, we receive *sanctifying grace*, God’s Divine Life within us that makes us his friends and adopted sons and daughters, and *actual grace*, which is the help God gives us to do a particular good act or to avoid evil and grow in holiness.

We have great dignity as God’s children created in his image and likeness. The grace given to us in the Sacrament of Baptism provides us an opportunity to be all that God made us to be. Let the young people see that you still learn about the faith.

- What does it mean to be a child of God and a member of his Church?
- How can I personally renew my baptismal commitment to follow Jesus?
- Describe your desire to grow in holiness.

Scripture Background



The Scripture story used in this unit is the Gospel of Matthew’s account of The Great Commission, Jesus’ commissioning of his Apostles before his Ascension into Heaven. The Gospels according to Matthew and Mark feature an account of this event, while the Gospel of Luke highlights a conversation between Jesus and the Apostles in which he refers to the work they will do (see Luke 24:47). In these passages, we can see the foundation of the Church’s work of evangelization—handing on the Good News of Jesus to others. We can also see the emphasis on Baptism as the initial response to the Christian message and the beginning of life in Christ.

Later in the Discover section, a passage from Saint Paul’s Letter to the Galatians (see 3:26–29) is featured. This text emphasizes the unity and equality we share as baptized members of the Church. At the time of Paul’s writing, the understanding that Gentiles could also be People of God was still new. Paul emphasizes the relationship between God’s covenant with Abraham and the Baptism of the New Covenant, saying that all who are baptized become “Abraham’s descendant, heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29).

Objectives

- To reflect on the joy and peace we can experience in the presence of God
- To introduce the key themes of the unit and to reflect on the call to share the Good News



Let Us Pray

Have the candidates gather in the prayer space.

- Begin by praying the Sign of the Cross.
- Start the prayer with Dear Lord, and then together pray aloud the prayer on page 17.
- Direct the candidates to take their seats for the Scripture reflection.

Invite the young people to think about a particularly beautiful and peaceful place they have visited. Explain that the beauty and peace they experienced there can give them insight into the wonder and joy of being in God's presence.



Scripture

Explain that our culture can present difficulties, Christians can live the faith and find joy as well as bring others to the faith.

Point out Psalm 84 on page 17. The writer's heart and soul long for the living God. The writer rejoices at living in the Kingdom of God.

Discuss the peace that comes from dwelling with God, living the faith, and finding joy and peace despite our secular culture. The Have you ever thought questions can start the discussions, which will benefit from your sharing how the Lord's joy and peace of your faith rise above societal challenges.

Guide the candidates through a reflection on the verses of Psalm 84 :2–5. You may wish to play instrumental music during the reflection.

- Invite the candidates to close their eyes and quiet themselves.
- Encourage them to open their minds and hearts to what God is saying to them.
- Proclaim the Scripture as the group listens.
- Allow for several minutes of silent reflection.
- *Ask:* What did you hear God say to you today?
- Call on volunteers to respond.

Have you ever thought . . .

Point out the photo of the bird building a nest and ask how it's connected with Psalm 84.

- Say we all have a longing for God who takes care of us and wants us to be close to him. Living according to God's will ensures that his joy and peace will prevail in you no matter what life brings.
- Have the candidates take out some paper and write down their thoughts and answers for the two questions.
- Ask for volunteers to share their answers.

Getting Started

Use page 18 to introduce the candidates to the key themes of this unit.

- Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Getting Started paragraph.
- *Ask:* What does Jesus' instruction to "make disciples of all nations" mean in the world today?
- Invite several volunteers to respond. (Possible responses: bringing Jesus' message of love and mercy to all people, especially those who suffer; being models of Christian charity for others; sharing the Gospel message with others; inviting others to see what the Church is all about.)

ACTIVITY

Help for the Mission

Read aloud the activity directions.

- Have the candidates make notes in the graphic organizer for the activity.
- Encourage them to reflect on their responses and then write their impact statement in the space provided at the bottom of the page. They should choose a practice they take part in regularly and discuss its impact on their lives.
- Call on volunteers to share their answers.

Optional Activity

Share with the candidates that today we have countless means to reach other people to teach the Good News.

- Organize the young people in groups of three or four.
- Have groups work together to identify ways for spreading the Gospel today that were not available to the first disciples. Explain that their lists can include media, technology, transportation, and anything else that facilitates our ability to visit with or talk to people around the world.
- After the candidates have completed their lists, have the teams take turns sharing their lists with everyone.
- *Ask:* How is our work of evangelizing easier today than it was for the Apostles? How might modern advances make it more challenging?

Symbol of Our Faith

Summarize the text about holy water on page 19.

- Point out that blessing with holy water is usually accompanied by the Sign of the Cross.
- *Ask:* Why is blessing ourselves with holy water a reminder of our Baptism?
- Call on volunteers to respond.

Encounter with Christ

Invite a volunteer to read aloud “Jesus Is Always with Us.”

- *Ask:* How do you think the Apostles felt when Jesus’ promised that he would always be with them? Why?
- Call on volunteers to respond.
- What does Jesus’ promise mean to you personally?

Catechist Tip

Proclaiming the Word of God Repeating and displaying short passages from the Bible allows God’s Word to take root in the hearts of your young people. Matthew 28:19–20 is a powerful message from Jesus. It contains an instruction and a promise: “Go . . . make disciples” and “I am with you always.” Your group will read more from this passage, known as the Great Commission, later in the unit. For now, you may wish to have the candidates locate the passage in their Bibles, with a volunteer proclaiming verses 19 and 20 aloud. This will increase the candidates’ familiarity with the passage and open their hearts to a greater understanding of its meaning.

Objectives

- Develop an understanding of the Great Commissioning
- Reflect on what it means to teach others to observe all that Jesus has commanded

Sent Forth to Share the Good News

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Scripture from Matthew’s Gospel on page 20.

- Lead a discussion of the Scripture, using the following questions:
 - What did Jesus commission the Apostles to do?
 - Jesus said to teach others “to observe all that I have commanded you.” What are some specific teachings that might be included here? (Possible answers include the Beatitudes, the Great Commandment, forgiving one another, or any other of Jesus’ teachings from the Gospels.)

The Sacrament of Christ

Have the candidates remain in their groups to read this section together.

- When they are done, they can work on these questions:
 - Describe what a Sacrament is?
 - How is the Church a Sacrament? Make sure to use the Eucharist in your explanation.

Have each group write its answer to the last question on the board or on a large sheet of paper so everyone can see.

- Work out the best answer and leave it on the board or on its own sheet of paper.

ACTIVITY

Reflect

Invite the candidates to work in small groups to answer the Reflect questions.

- Call on volunteers from each group to share their responses.

Optional Activity

Responding to Jesus' Call

If time allows, consider using this activity to help the group deepen its understanding of the Great Commission and how each member takes part in this mission. An Internet connection or newspapers and current events magazines will be needed.

- Organize the young people into small groups.
- Distribute resources.
- Instruct the groups to research and choose a region of the world that is in need of hearing the Gospel message.
- Have them develop an “evangelization plan” that tells how they will help the people of their chosen nation or region hear the Gospel. Explain that they will share their plan with everyone.
- Tell the groups to include the following information in their plans: country or region they will evangelize, and why it is in need of evangelizing; an objective (that is, their goal in a brief statement); team members and their assigned roles; specific actions the team will carry out; resources they will need to complete their mission.
- Call on a spokesperson from each group to share its evangelization plan.

The Seven Sacraments

Call on volunteers to read aloud the text on page 21.

- Ask the following or similar questions:
 - What does it mean that visible rites in the Sacraments make present the actions of God?
 - How do the Sacraments strengthen us in avoiding sin? (They give us God’s grace and forgiveness.)
 - Explain sanctification.
- Explain that after Baptism, two other Sacraments especially give us the grace to avoid sin: Reconciliation and the Eucharist. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we are forgiven of mortal and venial sins and receive the gift of God’s grace that leads us to conversion. When we receive the Eucharist we are spiritually nourished. We are drawn more closely to Christ and forgiven of venial sins.
- Explain that the Sacraments form in us an “integrity of life,” meaning that our integrity or strong morality flows from our Baptism. As Christians, we try to fulfill that call to holiness. This is important because our moral actions reflect our faith as the Lord’s disciples.
- Tell the candidates that it is important to know that to properly receive the Eucharist, there is a need to observe at least a one-hour fast before Communion. In addition, to prepare for the holy moment of the Eucharist, we should examine our conscience, and anyone who knows they have committed a grave or mortal sin, must take part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Communion.

Sanctifying and Actual Grace

Read aloud the text at the bottom of page 21.

- Point out that the word *efficacious* shares a common root with the word *effective*—meaning “successful in producing a desired result.” Explain that the Sacraments bring about what they signify: they bring God’s forgiveness, healing, nourishment, strength, and so on. They aren’t just a sign of God’s life and love, they give us a share in his life and love.
- Review the definition of the word *grace* on pages 19 and 20.
- *Ask*: What are some examples of grace at work in your life? Consider sharing an example from your own life experience.
- Call on volunteers to respond.

Optional Activity

If time allows, use the following activity to expand the discussion about how God’s grace is at work in our daily lives.

- Distribute white or light-colored construction paper and colored pencils or markers.
- Direct the candidates to write the letters of the word *grace* in a decorative style vertically on the left side of their paper.
- Have the young people write a phrase about grace starting with each letter. Phrases can describe grace or how it is at work in their lives.
- Call on volunteers to share their statements for each of the letters.
- Display the acrostics around the classroom throughout the study of this unit.

Objectives

- Learn about Baptism and the effects of the Sacrament
- Reflect on the meaning of the baptismal promises

Baptism Washes Away Our Sin

Read aloud the first two paragraphs on page 22.

- Talk with the candidates about their Baptisms or the Baptisms of family members. Invite the young people to tell whether they were baptized as infants or as older children. If any were baptized at an older age and can recall their Baptism, invite them to talk about the experience.

Read aloud the remaining text.

- Share the following additional points with the group:
 - In Baptism, we are born to new life in Christ and are saved from sin.
 - Baptism is the first Sacrament through which we are united to Christ.
 - As baptized Christians, we are called to witness to Christ in all aspects of our lives.

Discuss the purple question: How can we express thanks for the gift of Baptism?

Go to the Source

Organize the candidates into small groups for the Go to the Source feature.

- Distribute Bibles (one per small group), poster board (one sheet per group), and colored pencils or markers.
- Have the candidates read Galatians 3:26–29, about being baptized in Christ. Then have group members work together to complete their posters.
- Invite the groups to present their posters.
- Following the presentation, ask: “If we are ‘clothed’ in Christ, what good habits should we adopt?”
- Call on volunteers to respond.

Celebrating the Sacrament—Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Have a volunteer read this paragraph at the bottom of page 22.

- Have the candidates describe what is going on in the photo as it relates to this feature.
- Explain that now we will look more closely at how those baptismal promises impact our lives.

“I do”

Read aloud the paragraphs on page 23.

- Point out that the baptismal promises reflect the statements of the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds, which we pray at Mass. Then turn to the Baptismal Promises section on Live page 24. Call on a volunteer to read the bishop’s parts, with the rest of the class joining together to respond “I do.”
- For each statement, invite volunteers to explain in their own words what the statement means. Clarify any misunderstandings, and provide further instruction on any statements the candidates do not fully grasp.

Steps in the Rite of Confirmation

Have the group read this section back on page 23 quietly while you write the four steps of the Rite of Confirmation on the board.

- When you and the candidates have finished, have them turn their books over and ask what each of the steps signifies. You might have to prompt them.
- Ask what are the essential steps for the Sacrament of Confirmation. (Answer: The essential action and formula for Confirmation are found in the fourth step: Laying on of the hand while anointing with Chrism and the essential formula).

Objectives

- Learn about Baptism through interviews
- Reflect on how to live the mission as Jesus' disciples each day
- Consider ways to live out what has been learned
- Explore the faith life of Saint Francis Xavier

Baptismal Promises

Give the candidates time to read and reflect on the Baptismal Promises to Keep chart on page 24.

- Ask volunteers to share their ideas on specific actions to live each promise.

ACTIVITY

Keeping Promises

Have the candidates work alone in answering these questions at the bottom of page 24.

- Explain that they are answering these for themselves and should reflect on them again later at home in their prayers and with their families. Consider how your ideas can work in your parish and the larger community.

Optional Activity

Baptism Interviews Organize the candidate in pairs. Invite them to interview one another about their Baptisms. Note: If time allows for it, some of this activity should be assigned ahead of time, including bringing in photos of their own Baptisms and discussing what family members said about that day.

- After all the candidates have been interviewed, invite volunteers to share reasons to be grateful for Baptism.
- Invite volunteers to answer the question, "What does it mean for you to be a son or daughter of God?"
- Provide further enrichment about the Sacrament by sharing with the candidates the Catechist Background text below on godparents.

Catechist Background

When someone is baptized into the Catholic Church, he or she must have a sponsor, called a godparent. Traditionally, two godparents are chosen—one of each gender—but only one is required. The godparents must have been baptized and confirmed and must be practicing Catholics. Godparents have an important role, especially when the person being baptized is a baby or child. Godparents, representing the community of believers as well as a more mature faith, are asked what they ask of the Church. The godparents' response is faith. Godparents support their godchildren by teaching them about the Catholic faith, helping them prepare to receive the other Sacraments, and being models of what it means to live as a disciple of Jesus in the Church. It is recommended that a Confirmation candidate choose one of his or her godparents to be the Confirmation sponsor.

Listening with Our Hearts

Read aloud the first two paragraphs on page 25.

- Invite a volunteer to read Saint Henry Newman's reflection.
- Following the reading, allow time for silent reflection.

ACTIVITY

Connect

Have the candidates work on the Connect activity, then invite them to compose prayers to the Holy Spirit.

- Conclude by giving the young people the chance to offer their prayers, either silently or aloud.

Additional Activity

Saints Who Answered the Call If time allows, consider using this activity to expand the candidates' understanding of what it means to go to all nations to teach and baptize, and to provide examples of those who have answered this call to a heroic degree. Internet access or books about the saints will be needed for this activity.

- Organize the young people into six groups.
- Discuss how the Saints and their intercession inspire and help our ongoing growth in holiness.
- Assign each group one of the following saints: Paul, Thomas the Apostle, Augustine of Canterbury, Marianne Cope, Francis Xavier, and Frances Xavier Cabrini.
- Direct the candidates to research their assigned saint and prepare a summary that includes the following information: when the saint(s) lived; place of origin; where he or she traveled to bring the Good News and baptize; an important achievement.
- Invite the groups to take turns presenting their summaries.

Saint Francis Xavier

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the text on page 26 about Saint Francis Xavier.

- *Ask:* How did Saint Francis Xavier respond to Jesus' call to go to all nations and teach and baptize?
- Call on volunteers to respond.
- Share with the candidates that even though Saint Francis and many other saints, provide a heroic example of living Jesus' teaching, they don't have to go to extremes to live as good disciples of Jesus. Explain that they can teach about Jesus and lead others to him through even very simple actions, such as showing kindness, not going along with peers making an immoral choice, or attending Mass on Sunday.
- Read aloud the following words from a prayer attributed to Saint Francis Xavier, and invite the young people to silently reflect on the words: "Do not permit that your Son ... remain unknown..., but with the help of your saints and the Church, ... make them know him ... who is our salvation."

Take the Message Home

Read aloud the text.

- *Ask:* What are some ways you can strengthen and nurture your faith this week? Who can you invite to share in one faith-building activity?
- Invite volunteers to respond.
- Encourage the candidates to commit to following through on at least one way to share the Good News through their words, and one way to share it through their actions.
- Emphasize that Sacred Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the magisterial teachings of the Church are all sources that can guide us in facing difficult challenges.

Prepare and Pray

- Direct the candidates to write an answer on a slip of paper to this question: What part of this lesson did you find most helpful in strengthening your faith and why?
- Have them save the slip of paper for the unit prayer.



Unit Prayer

Gather around a prayer table, or in another sacred space, with a Bible, a candle, and a container of holy water.

Catechist: Let us take a deep breath and become aware of the presence of God with us. Let's begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Catechist: We have explored our Baptism and examined how we can now make our own those promises made for us by our parents. We have seen how each sacramental celebration is an encounter with the living Christ, most especially in the Eucharist. We have also been made aware of how we may fit into the Church's mission given by Christ to go and make disciples. Please take out your slips of paper and read what you found most important from this unit.

[Individually, each candidate reads what he or she wrote and why.]

Catechist: Loving Father, we thank you for opening our hearts and minds to what you are saying to us in our lesson. We pray that we will continue to be aware of what your Holy Spirit is prompting us to know, and how we are being called to live. Help us to follow the example you set for us through Jesus Christ your Son. Together, let us pray Glory Be to the Father.

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C A T E C H I S T G U I D E

DIGITAL BOOK

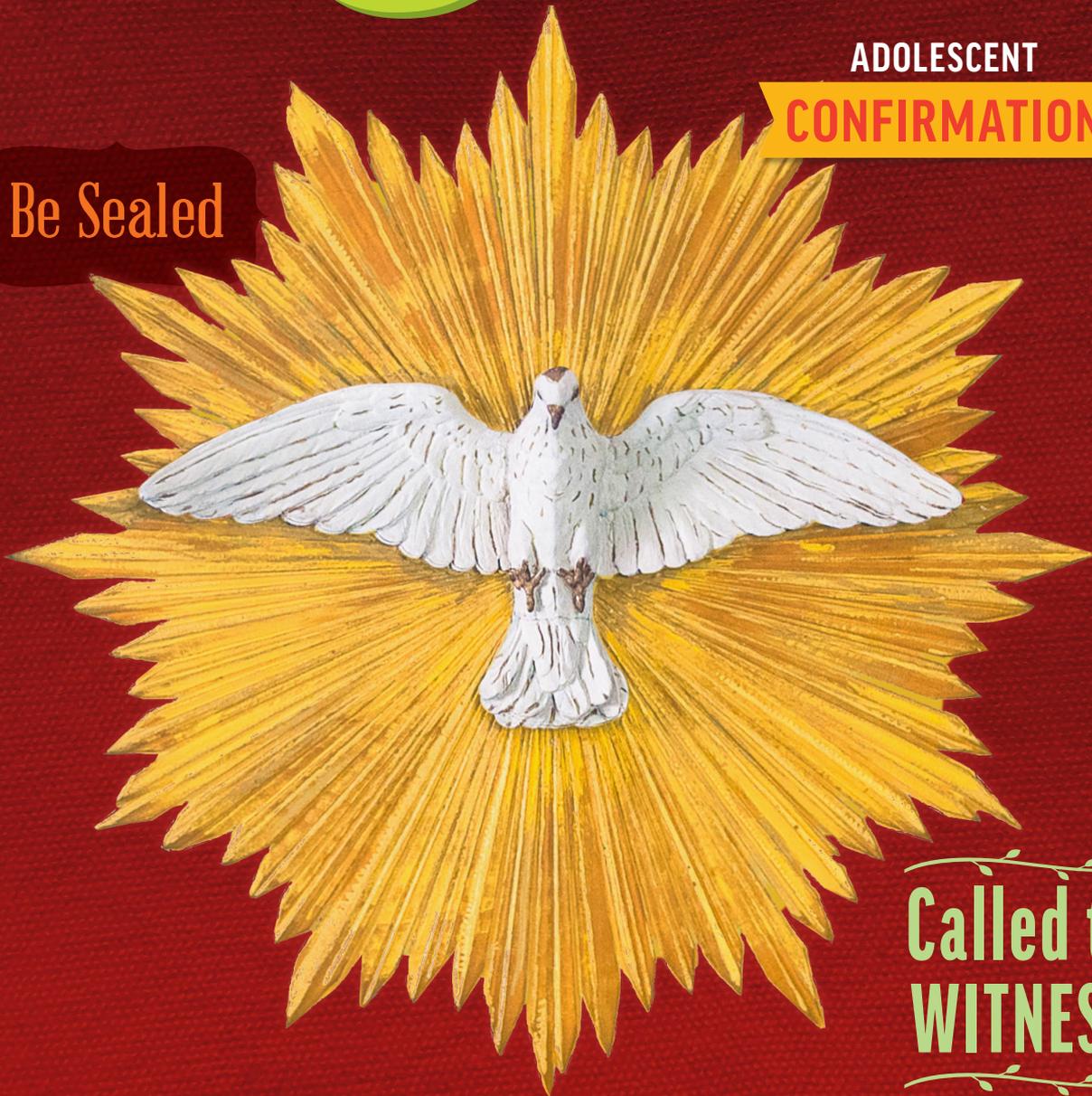
OUR SUNDAY VISITOR

Encounter *with* Christ

ADOLESCENT

CONFIRMATION

Be Sealed



Called to
WITNESS

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Nihil Obstat

Msgr. Michael Heintz, PhD.

Censor Librorum, Diocese of Fort Wayne–South Bend

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✠ Most Rev. Kevin C. Rhoades

Bishop of Fort Wayne–South Bend

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Confirmation Preparation

HOW CANDIDATES UNDERSTAND THE LESSON

Confirmation candidates at this age should know that the laying on of hands in the Sacrament of Confirmation is a sign passed down from the Apostles, and it is not just symbolic. The Holy Spirit actually comes down upon those who are confirmed, sealing them with the Gift of the Spirit.

Going Forward While some candidates and their families might see Confirmation as a completion of formation in the faith, it is important to emphasize that they are making an intentional decision to go forward in their faith—to continue to grow toward Christian maturity.

Need for Precision In the Rite of Confirmation, the laying on of hands is sometimes confused with the laying on of hand when the anointing with Sacred Chrism occurs. In the laying on of hands, the bishop extends his hands as he asks for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Soon after, the bishop anoints each candidate with Chrism as he says the essential formula.

Reflection for Catechists

“Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord’s own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist,” the *Catechism* tells us (CCC, 1322). Celebrating Confirmation within the Eucharist emphasizes the unity of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist start our lifelong journey of faith formation. Confirmation leads to union with Christ and the Holy Spirit, so we can accept and bear the responsibilities of being Christian.

In Baptism, we have been joined to Jesus’ Paschal Mystery. Just as he died, we die to sin. Just as Jesus was resurrected, we have been raised to new life. Confirmation completes our Baptism, and seals us with the Gift of the Holy Spirit. We have been anointed—to serve, to spread the Good News, and to live as sons and daughters of God.

In the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 19, Saint Paul encounters people who had been baptized but had not yet received the Holy Spirit. He lays his hands on them, and the Holy Spirit comes upon them. We continue this tradition of the laying on of hands, and we go forth, sealed with the Holy Spirit.

- What do I remember about my Confirmation?
- How have I continued to grow and learn in my faith following my initiation into the Church?

Scripture Background



In the Book of Acts, Chapter 2, a mighty wind roars and tongues of fire descend on the heads of Jesus’ Apostles. The Apostles are emboldened by the Holy Spirit and speak to the crowds who have gathered for the Jewish Feast of Weeks. As Saint Peter begins to speak, everyone present hears him in his or her own language, despite the fact that people had gathered from many nations. Peter offers three pieces of evidence that Jesus was the Son of God—the first being prophecy from Scripture, the second being the miracles and signs Jesus worked, and the third being what the crowd was experiencing in that moment. Peter calls the crowd to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, and says they too will receive the Holy Spirit. About three thousand people are baptized that day.

In this Scripture, we can clearly see the Holy Spirit’s role in making the truth known about Jesus Christ and leading others to him. The explosive growth of the Church on the day of Pentecost and in the subsequent years is evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit, who gave those early Christians the strength and courage to hand on the faith in a time of tremendous persecution.

Objectives

- To reflect on the gifts we receive from the Holy Spirit and how they can be a light in our lives
- To introduce the key themes of the unit and to reflect on what it means to be sealed with the Holy Spirit



Let Us Pray

Invite the candidates to gather in the prayer space.

- Begin by praying the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray together the short prayer under Let Us Pray.
- Direct the young people to take their seats for the Scripture reflection.



Scripture

Guide the group through a reflection on the verse from the Gospel according to Luke. You may wish to play instrumental music during the reflection.

- Invite the candidates to be still and close their eyes. Encourage them to open their minds and hearts to what God is saying to them.
- Proclaim the Scripture from Luke 11:33–36 as the young people listen.
- Allow for several minutes of silent reflection.
- *Ask:* What did you hear God say to you today?
- Call on volunteers to respond.

Have you ever thought . . .

Have the candidates reflect on special talents or gifts God has given them, such as in music, math, athletics, or even social gifts, such as the ability to make friends easily or to feel empathy for others.

Ask: What gifts has the Holy Spirit given you? Which of these do you sometimes keep hidden?

Have volunteers respond to the questions in the text.

Getting Started

Use page 28 to introduce the candidates to the key themes of this unit.

Invite a volunteer to read aloud both Getting Started paragraphs.

- *Ask:* Have you ever felt anxious or afraid about a particular situation, but then unexpectedly found the strength you needed to face it?
- Invite several volunteers to respond.
- Share that the Apostles also felt anxious and afraid, hiding out until the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit gave them the courage to tell everyone who would listen about the Lord. Their faith-filled action overcame any worries about what society thought, and it had a great affect on those who heard them..

ACTIVITY

Sealed with the Holy Spirit

Read aloud the Create activity directions.

- Explain to the candidates that, like the Apostles who were anointed with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they will be anointed with the Holy Spirit at Confirmation.
- Invite the candidates to design their seals. Because this activity requires some abstract thinking, you may wish to brainstorm with the young people for words and symbols to represent the seal of the Holy Spirit.
- Call on volunteers to show and explain their seals to the class.

Catechist Background

Anointing with Sacred Chrism and the Seal of the Holy Spirit In the Rite of Confirmation, anointing with Sacred Chrism signifies and imprints a spiritual seal. Here is how the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains it:

“By this anointing the confirmand receives the ‘mark,’ the seal of the Holy Spirit. A seal is a symbol of a person, a sign of personal authority, or ownership of an object (Cf. Gen 38:18; 41:42; Deut 32:34; CT 8:6). . . . A seal authenticates a juridical act or document and occasionally makes it secret (Cf. 1 Kings 21:8; Jer 32:10; Isa 29:11).

“Christ himself declared that he was marked with his Father’s seal (Cf. Jn 6:27). Christians are also marked with a seal: ‘It is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has commissioned us; he has put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee’ (2 Cor 1:21–22; cf. Eph 1:13; 4, 30). This seal of the Holy Spirit marks our total belonging to Christ, our enrollment in his service for ever, as well as the promise of divine protection in the great eschatological trial” (Cf. Rev 7:2–3; 9:4; Ezek 9:4–6) (CCC, 1294–1296).

Symbol of Our Faith —Sacred Chrism

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the text about Sacred Chrism.

- Read aloud the definition of *Sacred Chrism* on page 29.
- Point out that in Biblical and other ancient symbolism, anointing also symbolizes abundance and joy; it cleanses (as in the anointing after a bath) and limbers (as in the anointing of athletes). Anointing with oil is also a sign of healing, since it soothes wounds.
- Call on volunteers to tell how each of these symbols reflects the spiritual meaning of anointing with Sacred Chrism in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Encounter with Christ

Invite a volunteer to read aloud “Encounter with Christ.”

- *Ask:* What does it mean to say we are “buried in the waters of baptism?”
- Call on volunteers to respond. Help the young people understand that at Baptism our “old selves” die and we are reborn as children of God.

Optional Activity

Use this activity to reinforce the candidates’ understanding of the Paschal Mystery.

- Organize the candidates into four groups.
- Distribute poster board (one sheet per group), art supplies, and Bibles (at least one per group).
- Assign each group one aspect of Christ’s work of salvation through the Paschal Mystery—his Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension.
- Have the members of each group work together to design a poster that represents their subject in words and images. Encourage the young people to include a Scripture quote in their posters.
- Invite the groups to take turns presenting their posters.
- Display the posters around the room.

Objectives

- Read the Scriptural account of Pentecost
- Imagine and reflect on the experience of being present at Pentecost
- Learn about the celebration of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation and the Laying on of Hands

Sharing the Holy Spirit

Have a volunteer read the two paragraphs under Sharing the Holy Spirit on page 30.

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Scripture from Acts of the Apostles.

- Lead a discussion of the Scripture, using the following questions:
 - “What were the visible signs of the Holy Spirit’s presence at Pentecost?” (Noise, wind, tongues of fire)
 - “What were the visible effects of the Holy Spirit’s descent on the Apostles?” (Speaking in tongues; all in the crowd understanding them regardless of their language)
 - “What was the effect on those in the crowd?” (Many accepted the Good News and nearly three thousand were baptized that day)
 - Share with the candidates more about the Holy Spirit from the Catechist Background feature below.

ACTIVITY

Imagine

Have candidates silently read the instructions.

- Invite the young people to write responses.
- Call on volunteers to share what they have written.

Catechist Background

Throughout the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit plays an important role in God’s work of salvation. In the Book of Exodus, we see the Holy Spirit at work in the Israelite’s exodus out of Egypt, when God guides them through the desert with a column of clouds and a column of fire (see Exodus 13:21). Other Old Testament references to the Holy Spirit are associated with the prophets, who deliver God’s message when the “spirit of God” comes upon them (see 2 Chronicles 15:1). The Holy Spirit’s greatest participation in God’s work of salvation can be witnessed in the New Testament. To realize the Incarnation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary conceived Jesus, our Savior.

The Sacraments of Initiation

Have the candidates silently read the text on page 31.

- *Ask:* Why do we call Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist the Sacraments of Christian Initiation? (Because through them we become full members—are fully initiated into—the Church)
- Share with the candidates that in the early Church, Baptism and Confirmation were celebrated together, in the same liturgy, but over time the two Sacraments came to be celebrated separately, with Baptism taking place in infancy and Confirmation following, sometimes years later, after the celebration of First Eucharist. Explain that in some dioceses there has been a move to return to what is known as the “restored order” for celebrating the Sacraments of Christian Initiation, in which Confirmation is celebrated closer to the time of Baptism, before First Eucharist.
- Discuss how the Eucharist is the source and summit of our life of faith. Participating in Mass, receiving Holy Communion, and taking part in Eucharistic Adoration keeps us closely united with Christ and the Catholic Church. Remind the young people about Mass times and any times for Eucharistic Adoration in your parish.

Celebrating the Sacrament

Read aloud the paragraph about the Laying on of Hands.

- Explain that we use the term “laying on of hands” when bishops and priests are extending their hands over a person or a group of people being blessed or prayed over. In the celebration of Confirmation, the Laying on of Hands occurs as the bishop calls upon the Father to send his Holy Spirit upon those to be confirmed, bestowing upon them his seven Gifts.

Reinforce the candidates’ learning, if time allows, about the Sacraments of Christian Initiation with the following optional activity.

Optional Activity

- Organize the young people into small groups.
- Distribute three sheets of drawing paper, colored paper, and scissors to each group.
- Explain that each group is to design a logo or symbol for each of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Encourage the candidates to be creative but to also reflect facts about the Sacraments.
- Invite the groups to take turns presenting their logos or designs.
- Consider, if time allows, having the young people display their logos in the classroom.

Objective

- Explore the essential elements, the preparation, the minister, and the requirements for the Sacrament of Confirmation

Frequently Asked Questions about Confirmation

Call on volunteers to read aloud each question and answer on page 32.

- Pause after each question and answer to review what has been read and reinforce key points or clarify any points that are misunderstood.
- Use the following or similar questions to review what has been read:
 - “What age is usually considered the ‘age of discretion?’” (Seven)
 - “Although the bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation, when is the parish priest the minister of the Sacrament?” (At the Easter Vigil, for people becoming Catholic through the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults)
 - “What are the essential elements of the Rite of Confirmation?” (Anointing with Sacred Chrism along with the formula to be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.)

Go to the Source

Organize the young people into small groups.

- Distribute Bibles (one per group).
- Have the groups read Acts 8:14–17 and discuss what the passage means and how it is connected to the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Invite a spokesperson from each group to share their group’s understanding of the passage as it relates to Confirmation.

Laying on of Hands

Invite volunteers to read aloud the text on the Laying on of Hands.

- Remind the candidates of the passages from Chapter 8 of Acts of the Apostles they read earlier, in which the Apostles laid hands on those who had already been baptized.
- Explain that the Laying on of Hands with the prayer for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit is different than the next part of the Sacrament, when the minister anoints with Sacred Chrism *by* laying on the hand and praying for each candidate to be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit. This anointing by laying on the hand is also an essential part of the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Orders. It is the same gesture in the Anointing of the Sick, but a different holy oil is used (the Oil of the Sick).

Give the candidates time to reflect on the questions at the bottom of the page: What will it mean to you to be a son or daughter of God? How will you use the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

ACTIVITY

Traditions of Confirmation

Distribute copies of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* or provide access to the resource via the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (<https://www.usccb.org/sites/default/files/flipbooks/catechism/>)

- Organize the candidates into groups of three or four.
- Have the young people read paragraphs 1290 to 1292 of the *Catechism* and respond to the Describe questions on page 33 of their texts.

Extend the learning on traditions of Confirmation using the following activity. The activity will require Internet access or resources on the Eastern Catholic Churches.

Organize the candidates in pairs or small groups.

- Distribute resources (if using). Direct the pairs or groups to conduct research to learn about the celebration of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation in the Eastern Catholic Churches.
- Explain that the Roman Catholic Church is made up of twenty-four Churches in all: the Latin Church and twenty-three Eastern Catholic Churches. Instruct the candidates to write an eyewitness report describing reception of the Sacraments in an Eastern Catholic Church.
- Have them write their reports as journalists on the scene, relaying all the details that can help others learn about the celebration of the Sacraments.

Objectives

- Learn about the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit and how they strengthen us to live as Jesus' disciples
- Reflect on preparation for Confirmation and the choice of a sponsor
- Explore the life of Saint Gemma Galgani
- Consider ways to live out what has been learned

Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Review the definition of *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* on page 29.

- Read the first paragraph on page 34, then call on volunteers to take turns reading each of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit as described by Pope Francis.
- Point out that the descriptions of the gifts come from the words of Pope Francis in talks he gave during his General Audiences in spring 2014.
- Strengthen the group's understanding of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit using the following or similar questions.
 - Which gift, in particular, was evident in Saint Stephen at the time of his martyrdom? (Fortitude)
 - Which gift especially helps us accept God's will when it differs from our personal desires? (Wisdom)
 - Which gift helps us worship God through the liturgy and Sacraments and in our prayers? (Piety or Reverence)
 - Which gifts help you recognize God's greatness? (Knowledge and Fear of the Lord or Wonder and Awe)
- Engage the candidates in a discussion about the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Discuss some challenging situations they may encounter and how the Gifts of the Holy Spirit can help them in those circumstances.

ACTIVITY

From Head to Heart

Invite the candidates to write their responses to the Connect: From Head to Heart questions on page 35.

- Call on volunteers to share their responses.
- Use this time to make sure the candidates have spent the appropriate amount of time preparing for Confirmation with their sponsors.

ACTIVITY

Listening with Our Hearts

Read aloud the opening paragraph of the Create section on the bottom of page 35.

- Read the first question and give some moments for reflection. Then ask for volunteers to share their thoughts.
- Direct the candidates to take a few minutes to create an image that expresses an emotion they felt that drew them closer to God.

Catechist Reflection

“The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). These words, spoken by Jesus to a religious leader named Nicodemus, sum up the way the Holy Spirit works.

- What are some times in your life when you experienced the Holy Spirit at work in your life, leading you on a path you had not planned for or expected?
- How did this lead to a positive outcome for yourself or others?
- How can you be more open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in your life?

Optional Activity

This optional activity will allow the candidates to reflect on keeping their baptismal promises even when it means standing apart from peers and friends.

Share with the young people the words of the following old American Spiritual, called “The Lonesome Valley.” Then invite them to write a third stanza—in first person—about a personal experience of the “lonesome valley.”

*Jesus walked that lonesome valley.
He had to walk it by himself.
Nobody else could walk it for him.
He had to walk it by himself.*

*You must walk that lonesome valley.
You’ve got to walk that lonesome valley.
Nobody else can walk it for you.
You’ve got to walk it by yourself.*

Saint Gemma Galgani

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the text on page 36 about Saint Gemma Galgani.

- Ask the following or similar questions:
- What are some challenges Saint Gemma faced during her lifetime?
- How did these challenges affect her faith?
- What can you learn from Saint Gemma's example?
- Share with the young people that although Saint Gemma's life and experience may seem remote to the modern world, her example of faithfulness to and love for God is timeless. The circumstances and challenges may change, but love for God should always guide our lives and the choices we make.

Take the Message Home

Read aloud the text.

- Ask: How will you witness to your faith this week at home, in the parish, and in your community?
- Have the candidates take turns naming one way mentioned in the text or another idea for ways to show the faith that they will put into action this week.
- Encourage the young people to follow through on the actions they have identified. Members of the group may wish to revisit this question on their own in the coming week to see how they are doing in putting their plans into action.

Prepare for Prayer

Ask the candidates if there are any questions about any of the content they learned in Unit 3.

- Have the candidates write on a piece of paper their answer to the following question: "What part of this unit did you find most helpful in strengthening your faith and why?"
- Have them save the slip of paper for the Unit Prayer coming up.

Optional Activity

Choosing a Sponsor An important and necessary step in preparing for Confirmation is choosing a sponsor. If candidates haven't taken this step yet, consider sharing the following information to help the young people discern a sponsor.

- A sponsor is a confirmed Catholic in good standing with the Church, who will help support and mentor the candidate as he or she prepares for Confirmation.
- To show the unity of Baptism and Confirmation—which completes the grace of Baptism—a good person to serve as a Confirmation candidate's sponsor would be one of their godparents.
- The sponsor will stand at the young person's side to present him or her as a candidate for Confirmation.



Unit Prayer

Gather around a prayer table, or in another sacred space, with a Bible, a candle, and a bowl of holy water.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Catechist: We have looked back at the beginning of our Church on the Day of Pentecost when the number of people entering the Body of Christ grew daily. We discussed how the Sacrament of Confirmation is the beginning of our full initiation into the Church. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit help us live as disciples of Jesus Christ. Please take out your slips of paper and read what you found most important from this unit.

[Individually, each candidate reads what he or she wrote and why.]

Catechist: Dear Father, we thank you for giving us knowledge about yourself and making us aware of our purpose in the world you created. Help us to always follow in the footsteps of your Son with the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit. Together, let us pray the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray:
Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit
you have taught the hearts of your faithful.
In the same Spirit, help us to choose what is right
and always rejoice in your consolation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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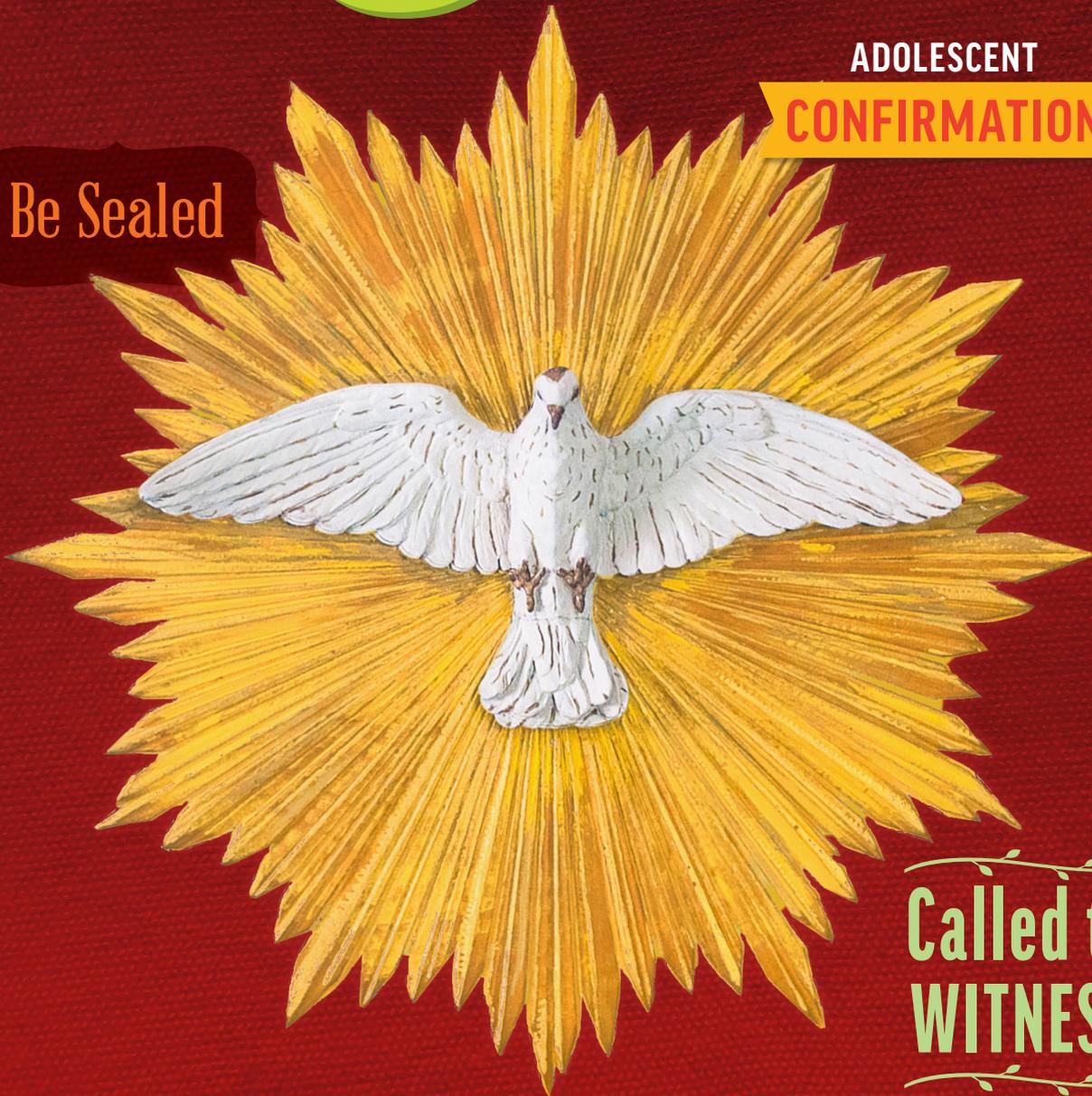
OUR SUNDAY VISITOR

Encounter *with* Christ

ADOLESCENT

CONFIRMATION

Be Sealed



Called to
WITNESS

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Nihil Obstat

Msgr. Michael Heintz, PhD.

Censor Librorum, Diocese of Fort Wayne–South Bend

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✠ Most Rev. Kevin C. Rhoades

Bishop of Fort Wayne–South Bend

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The Spirit-Filled Life

HOW CANDIDATES UNDERSTAND THE LESSON

Middle-school age youth often feel insecure and even powerless to affect the world around them. Their physical and intellectual growth leads to a desire for more independence and autonomy, but in reality, adults decide much of their daily activities for them.

Tools from God It can be empowering for young people to know that God has a unique plan for their lives, and that he will give them the abilities they need to follow that plan. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit give us the wisdom and insight to discern God's plan, and they also give us the tools, such as courage, that we will need in order to follow it.

Think about God's

Plan Continue to encourage the candidates to think about God's plan for their lives. Have them reflect on what decisions will lead them closer to, or away from, that plan. They will only be truly happy when they are using their God-given abilities to serve God and others. As they do this, they will see the Gifts of the Holy Spirit begin to bear fruit in the world around them.

Reflection for Catechists

The Sacrament of Confirmation has important effects. It strengthens our relationship with God the Father, drawing us closer as his children. The Sacrament unites us more firmly to Jesus Christ, and it perfects our bond with the Church, drawing us closer to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Confirmation strengthens the *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* in us, which we covered in Unit 3—wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety (reverence), and fear of the Lord (wonder and awe). These gifts guide us to discern God's call and purpose for our lives as well as help us live as People of God.

The Sacrament of Confirmation completes our Baptism and marks our full initiation into the Church. The *General Directory for Catechesis*, our guidebook from the Vatican for how to hand on the faith, calls the Christian life a "process of continuing conversion" (56). Confirmation is the beginning of a lifelong journey as fully initiated members of the Catholic Church.

Finally, Confirmation gives us special strength to be Christ's witnesses in the world, especially for the young people in our care. We share our faith both through our words and through our actions. In particular, we live out our faith through our God-given vocations, his call and purpose for our lives.

- How have I witnessed or shared the faith in the past week?
- How do I use the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in my everyday life?

Scripture Background



The primary Scripture passage for this unit is the account of Saint Stephen, one of the first seven deacons appointed by the Apostles to serve God's People. He is chosen after the Apostles look for people who are "filled with the Spirit and wisdom." Saint Stephen works signs and wonders among the people and speaks with wisdom. Some members of the synagogue debate Stephen, but his wisdom and spirit are too strong for them. They chase him out of the city and stone him to death.

In this unit, candidates are also invited to explore Saint Paul's Letter to the Galatians 5:22–23. This passage lists the Fruits of the Holy Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are fruits that grow in the lives of every Catholic when we allow the Gifts of the Spirit to take root. Saint Paul reminds us that against these things "there is no law," meaning that we are always free to show these Fruits of the Spirit in our lives, and in doing so we will give the world a glimpse of what it is like in Heaven.

Objectives

- To reflect on overcoming fear and being open to God’s voice
- To introduce the key themes of the unit and to reflect on what it means when God speaks to us



Let Us Pray

Invite the young people to gather in the prayer space.

- Begin by praying the Sign of the Cross.
- Read the opening prayer starting with Dear Lord . . .
- Direct the group to sit down for the Scripture reflection.



Scripture

Assign three young people to be readers.

- Guide the group through a reflection on the reading from 1 Kings 19:8–9, 11. You may wish to play instrumental music during the reflection.
- Invite the candidates to be still, close their eyes, and quiet themselves. Encourage them to open their minds and hearts to what God is saying to them.
- Read aloud the leader’s part of the Scripture reading, then have the three readers proclaim their parts.
- Allow for several minutes of silent reflection.
- *Ask:* What did you hear God say to you today?
- Call on volunteers to respond.

Read aloud the “Have you ever thought . . .” questions.

- Call on volunteers to respond.

Getting Started

Use page 38 to introduce the young people to the key themes of this unit.

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Getting Started paragraphs.

- *Ask:* When was a time in your life that your faith was at odds with the attitudes of people around you, even of close friends? Are you satisfied with the way you resolved the tension between the two?
- Invite several volunteers to respond.
- Point out that Elijah and Saint Stephen, whom the candidates will read about shortly, provide two examples of holy people who stood firm in their faith even in the face of fear or threats.

ACTIVITY

Freedom from Fear

Have the candidates silently read the opening paragraph and respond to the questions in the Reflect activity.

- Call on volunteers to share their responses with the group.
- Have the candidates write their prayers or reflections. Encourage them to take a moment for silent reflection ahead of writing.

Symbol of Our Faith

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the text about fire as a symbol of the Holy Spirit on page 39.

- Lead the group in a brainstorming session for positive associations with fire. Then ask the group to name emotions for which fire might be a fitting symbol.
- *Ask:* Which of these do you think might be seen in the flames that came to rest on the heads of the Apostles at Pentecost?
- Call on volunteers to respond.

Encounter with Christ

Invite a volunteer to read aloud “Encounter with Christ” on page 39.

- Ask the following or similar questions:
 - What did Saint Paul mean when he described the Church as the Body of Christ? (That although the Church is made of many members, we are all one, led by Christ, the head of the Church.)
 - How does this analogy help you understand the importance of your own role and participation as a member of the Church? (Accept reasonable answers.)
- Call on volunteers to respond.

Optional Activity

Use this prayer of Saint Teresa of Ávila to help the candidates reflect on what it means for them to be members of the Body of Christ.

Write or display this prayer:

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

- Distribute drawing paper and colored pencils.
- Have the group create a work of art that expresses the message of the prayer. Explain that their artwork can isolate a single line or depict the overall message of the prayer. Encourage the young people to use words and images in their artwork.
- Invite volunteers to share their artwork with the group and explain its message.
- Discuss with the Confirmation candidates how this prayer helped them understand what it means to be part of the Body of Christ.

Objectives

- Explore the martyrdom of Saint Stephen
- Reflect on how the courage of Saint Stephen is a model for followers of Christ today

Stephen Becomes First Martyr

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the first two paragraphs, then another to read the Scripture from Acts of the Apostles on page 40.

- Lead a discussion of the Scripture, using the following or similar questions:
 - How is Stephen described in this Scripture passage? (As a man of great faith, filled with grace and power)
 - Why do you think some were angered by Stephen’s wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke? (Answers will vary)
 - What do you think gave Stephen the courage to stand firm in his faith even to the point of death? (Accept reasonable answers)
 - How does Stephen’s courage inspire you? (Answers will vary)
- Share information about modern-day followers of Christ who suffer or are killed for their faith from the Catechist Background feature below.

ACTIVITY

Connect

Have the group break up into individuals and work on the Connect activity on their own.

- Have them answer each question or statement in the activity on page 40.
- Pair the young people up to share their answers.
- Have each person share with the group, as appropriate, something about their partner’s experience.

Catechist Background

Many people in the early Church suffered and were killed for their faith. Among them were Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saints Perpetua and Felicity, and countless others persecuted under Roman rule. Throughout the centuries, and in all parts of the world, holy people have given up their lives for the faith. They found joy by living the faith despite the cultures that rejected them. Unfortunately, persecution of followers of Christ is not a thing of a bygone era. In fact, recent years have seen a dramatic increase in the persecution of Christians. In numerous countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, where Christians are often a minority, they suffer what is at times extreme oppression, mistreatment, and even death for their faith. Talk with your group about the plight of persecuted Christians in the world today. Provide specific examples of countries where this takes place, or have the young people conduct research on the subject and share their findings. Discuss challenges to living the faith in our own culture.

Sharing the Good News

Have a volunteer read the first paragraph on page 41.

- Begin a discussion centered on the last sentence of the first paragraph.
- *Ask:* Has anyone invited someone to see what Jesus or the Church is about? If the answer is yes, have people share stories. If it is no, discuss why not or if they know someone who might be interested and talk about how to invite the person.
- Have another member of the group read the last two paragraphs.
- Read the quotation from the *Rite of Confirmation*, 33.
- *Ask:* Why is the effect of Confirmation to share our faith so important? (It is essential that we bring the Gospel message to others so they may gain interest. Then we can invite them to see for themselves what Jesus and his Church have to offer.)
- *Ask:* How does the Rite of Confirmation show the importance of sharing our faith? (The final blessing asks us to keep in our hearts the Good News of Christ so we can share it with the world.)

Celebrating the Sacrament

Ask the young people to describe the essential rite, or act, of the Sacrament of Confirmation before reading this section.

- Then ask what is the essential formula.
- Read the paragraph and compare their responses to official Church practice.

Optional Activity

Have the candidates use their religious imagination to develop a realistic story about how the effects of Confirmation could transform the world. Get them started by asking how they could do this in their everyday lives, then what consequences could transform lives. Continue looking at consequences until they feel the world is transformed for the better. Consider having a group write the narrative and either display it or have it published in a school or local publication.

Objectives

- Discover how the effects of Confirmation will impact the lives of those who receive the Sacrament
- Explore the Saints' role in helping us live as Jesus' disciples

Go Forth as Disciples of Christ

Divide the young people into pairs.

- Assign each pair one of the bulleted additional effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation on page 42.
- Tell the young people that each pair will state the effect as written on the page, then each pair will explain in their own words how to go about experiencing the effect.
- Help the pairs that struggle to come up with ways to experience their effects.
- Have a spokesperson stand up for each pair, state what the effect is, and include at least one way people may experience this effect of the Sacrament.
- Discuss why a humble heart is vital to being receptive to the Holy Spirit.
- *Say:* Sometimes in our society being humble is seen as negative, but it's essential to allowing the Holy Spirit to guide our hearts.
- Explain that when we are humble, we appreciate that God is the source of all that is good. Pride and envy, the opposites of humility, keep us from letting the Holy Spirit work through us.

Go to the Source

Read aloud the directions centering on Galatians 5:22–23.

- Have the candidates work in pairs to read and discuss *Catechism* paragraph 1832.
- Review the definition of *Fruits of the Holy Spirit* on page 39, then have members of the group think about people who exemplify these qualities and discuss them with partners. Encourage the candidates to consider people they encounter in their daily lives as well as holy people they have read or heard about.
- Call on volunteers from each pair to share an example or two of the people they discussed.
- Be sure the candidates have a list of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity. These are also listed on page 3 of the Candidate Books.

ACTIVITY

The Effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation

Ask what happens to a person who has the life-transforming encounter of the Gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed in Confirmation?

- Listen to the responses.

Read aloud the activity directions on page 43.

- Have the candidates complete the fill-in-the-blank Identity activity. Direct them to pages 41 and 42 for any answers that challenge them.
- Call on volunteers to share their responses.

The Saints Are Our Heroes in Faith

Call on volunteers to read aloud the text on page 43.

- *Ask:* How does the Letter to the Hebrews describe the Saints? What does this mean? (As a cloud of witnesses that cheer us on as we run the race. This means that the Saints are with God in Heaven and witness what happens on Earth. They provide support and help us in living the Christian life.)
- Invite the candidates to share their chosen Confirmation names. Have them take turns telling the Saint's name and something about the Saint, and why they chose that particular person.

Optional Activity

Have the young people reflect on the following Scripture readings and ways that we act as disciples of Jesus. They can reflect on their own, then meet with a partner and talk about their thoughts.

- We serve one another, humbly and unselfishly: John 13:4–17 and Luke 14:12–14.
- We detach ourselves from riches and possessions: Matthew 6:24; Luke 12:13–21; Matthew 19:16–30; Luke 18:18–29; Mark 10:17–31.
- We serve the poor: Luke 1:52–53; Luke 16:19–31; Matthew 25:31–46.
- We pray always and with complete trust in God: Matthew 6:5–15; Matthew 7:7–11; Luke 11:2–4; Luke 18:1–14.

Objectives

- See through the eyes of Saint Ambrose how we can live the gifts we receive at Confirmation
- Learn about the tradition of choosing a Confirmation name and discuss names the candidates have chosen
- Explore how Saints have set an example for our lives and to choose one Saint as a personal example for Confirmation
- Explore the life of Saint Vincent de Paul
- Consider ways to live out what has been learned in this unit

Living the Gifts We Receive

Read aloud the introduction and the quotation from Saint Ambrose on page 44.

- Call on volunteers to identify the Gifts of the Holy Spirit named in the passage.
- Have volunteers read aloud the remaining text.
- Ask the following or similar questions:
 - What is Saint Ambrose admonishing his listeners to do? (To recall that they have been anointed with the Holy Spirit and that they have been given special gifts that they must guard and live by)
 - What does it mean to actively accept the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and to live them?
 - What are some ways you can witness to your faith in your daily life?
 - What are ways you can witness through important life decisions?

Catechist Background

The Holy Spirit guides us in the way of love. The Saints provide us with vivid and often exceptional examples of what it means to follow the way of love. Yet for each of us, being more firmly rooted in that way of living comes with daily practice and the forming of good habits—virtues—that over time are strengthened in us and become second nature.

In the First Letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul wrote about the way of love with great clarity and simplicity. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1–8 and reflect on Saint Paul’s words. Share this passage with your group and discuss some examples of how the Saints exemplify the different qualities of love described in the passage.

ACTIVITY

From Head to Heart

Have the candidates complete the activity.

- You may wish to brainstorm with the class for Saints they have learned about ahead of starting the activity.
- Call on volunteers to share their responses to the four questions.
- Give the candidates time to write a prayer to the Saint they have chosen.

Optional Activity

Have the candidates create prayer cards that they can use for prayer and reflection in preparation for Confirmation.

- Distribute drawing paper and colored pencils.
- Have each candidate fold the drawing paper in half horizontally.
- Instruct them to create a prayer card that features artwork as well as an original prayer.
- Encourage the young people to reflect on what they have learned in this unit and to incorporate it into their artwork and prayer.
- Have the candidates take their prayer cards home and pray the prayers they have written as part of their Confirmation preparation.

Saint Vincent de Paul

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the text about Saint Vincent de Paul on page 46.

- Ask the following or similar questions:
 - What are some reasons that the Church honors Saint Vincent de Paul? (He founded religious orders and devoted his life to the care of the poor)
 - What can we learn from Saint Vincent de Paul's example?

Share with the group that today an organization called the Society of St. Vincent de Paul serves the poor in countries around the world. Members of the society, called Vincentians, strive to grow spiritually by offering service to individuals in need. If your parish has a Saint Vincent de Paul ministry, share some information about the ministry and the services it provides. Consider having a volunteer from the Society visit the group.

Take the Message Home

Read aloud the text on page 46.

- *Ask:* How can you affirm your commitment to be a follower of Jesus this week?
- Have the candidates take turns responding.
- Encourage the young people to follow through on the way they have been a "child of light" to someone this week.
- Ask the candidates to consider how their ideas could take hold in their families, parish, and community. How can the light be celebrated so it can light the way for as many people as possible?

Prepare for Prayer

Ask the group if there are any questions about any of the content they learned in Unit 4.

- Tell the young people to write on a piece of paper their answer to the following question: What part of this unit did you find most helpful in strengthening your faith and why?
- Have them save the slip of paper for the Unit Prayer coming up.



Unit Prayer

Gather around a prayer table with a Bible, a candle, and statues or images of Mary and other Saints.

Catechist: Let us become aware of the presence of God with us. Let's begin with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Catechist: We have discovered how the effects of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit will strengthen us for our journey of discipleship. We have seen that the Sacrament of Confirmation will impact our lives as we begin our lifelong journey as a disciple of Christ and as a full member of his Church. We have also explored the lives of Saints, including Saint Stephen, Saint Ambrose, and Saint Vincent de Paul, to see how we can follow their example. Please take out your slips of paper and read what you found most important from this unit.

[Individually, each candidate reads what he or she wrote and why.]

Catechist: Dear Father, we thank you for giving us knowledge about yourself and making us aware of our purpose in the world you created. Help us to always follow in the footsteps of your Son, our Mother Mary, and all your Saints, with the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.