



SESSION 16 SIGNATURE

GOAL

The goal of this session is to give the teens an overview of the Sacrament of Confirmation – its purpose, effects, and responsibilities.

KEY CONCEPTS

Confirmation is the perfection of baptismal grace. We receive the Holy Spirit in a unique way, deepening the graces we received at baptism and calling us to participate in the apostolic mission of the Church.

The gift of the Holy Spirit received in the Sacrament of Confirmation is crucial to our lives because it is a relationship with the Holy Spirit that helps us to live out our Christian calling. Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit so we would continue to have access to Him.

In Confirmation, we are “sealed” with the Holy Spirit, giving us both an authority and responsibility within the Church.

KEY TERMS

Chrism: Perfumed oil, consecrated by the bishop, which signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is used for consecration in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders.

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

SCRIPTURE: Acts 8:14-17, Isaiah 11:1-3

CATECHISM: 1290-1292, 1295, 1300, 1302-1305, 1307, 1309-1311

ABOUT THIS CONFIRMATION SESSION

The Gather is an obstacle challenge that provides an interactive introduction to the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Proclaim makes available the scriptural and historical context of Confirmation as well as its purpose, effects, and responsibilities. The Break gives the teens an opportunity to process what they learned about the Sacrament in small groups. The Send is a time for prayer and sharing about why the teens want to be confirmed.

ENVIRONMENT

To highlight the importance of the signs and symbols of the Sacrament of Confirmation, make posters of the following and hang them around the room:

- Seven flames for the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Two hands for the laying on of hands
- A dove for the Holy Spirit
- A mitre for the bishop
- A waterfall for Baptism and graces
- A microphone for evangelization
- Oil in a jar for being sealed
- Two hearts for sponsor and confirmandi
- Dumbbells for strength
- A candle for light for the world

Set up the Gather activity outside, in the back of the meeting space, or wherever is most convenient. Place a tarp on the ground and pour vegetable oil on it so it is slippery. Set up stations for each small group on one end of the tarp. Each station should include a trick candle, a copy of the *Scrambled Words* handout, and a large bucket of water. Write a gift of the Holy Spirit on a wiffle ball — there should be a total of seven wiffle balls for each station — and place them in the bucket of water.

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

“Litany,” Matt Maher (*The End and the Beginning*, Spirit and Song, 2001)

“Open Heaven (River Wild),” Hillsong Worship (*Open Heaven/River Wild*, Hillsong Music Australia, 2015)

“Sophia SketchPad: Confirmation,” Sophia Institute for Teachers (youtu.be/Lu3MoT_egFI)

“Too Cool for Confirmation” (Edge Support: *November 2015*)

AS YOU GET STARTED

For a less messy Gather, consider omitting the vegetable oil from the tarp and placing the wiffle balls in an empty bucket, rather than one filled with water.

For a Break that incorporates the teens’ Confirmation saints, consider adding the following questions to the discussion:

- What is the significance of choosing a saint to journey with you through life?
- Who did you choose to be your confirmation saint? Why did you choose this person? If you have not chosen a saint, what areas of your life can a saint help you live more virtuously?

SUMMIT

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)

Gather the teens in the main meeting space. Welcome them to the session and begin in prayer.

Summit (20 min)

Divide the teens into their Confirmation small groups. Use the modified *Summit* session to lead the teens through a *lectio divina* based reflection on the Sunday readings.

GATHER

Signs and Wonders (15 min)

Gather the teens in the main meeting space and instruct them to find a partner. Have the pairs remove their shoes and place grocery bags over their feet. Use the following to introduce the competition:

The Holy Spirit uses the Sacrament of Confirmation to transform us in many ways, all of which can be explained by signs and symbols. Oil is a sign of strength and preparation and is used to seal us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit; candles represent the light that we are called to be in a world of darkness; water reminds us of our baptism and baptismal promises; and the number seven, besides representing a perfect number, is the number of spiritual gifts we receive.

For this activity, one person from each pair — the confirmandi — will run across the oiled tarp and tag their “sponsor” on the other side. The sponsor must then place their right hand on the confirmandi. While holding this position, they both run back to the other side of the room and demonstrate how the world tries to extinguish the light of Christ by blowing out a candle. Once they blow out the candle, they have to unscramble the words on the Scrambled Words handout. Once they have finished the handout, they will bob for the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. The duo who does this the fastest wins.

Have the pairs line up on opposite ends of the tarp. Countdown from three and then have the teens complete the challenge. Have the Core Team direct the teens throughout the activity and award a prize to the pair who completes the activity the fastest.

Cake Video (5 min)

Play the video “Cake” to transition from the game into the teaching.

PROCLAIM

“Signature” Teaching (20 min)

The Work of the Holy Spirit

Begin with a testimony about the work of the Holy Spirit at a particular moment in your life. The goal is to awaken a desire within the teens for this same Spirit to work in their lives.

The Holy Spirit is the most underrated, underappreciated person of the Holy Trinity. He is rarely mentioned, is often forgotten, and is almost always referred to as a thing rather than a person. This is a tragedy that must be corrected because a relationship with the Holy Spirit is crucial to the Christian life. Without Him, we would certainly be lost. Jesus told the apostles that, with the power of the Holy Spirit, they would do greater things than He Himself did, and Jesus did some pretty amazing things. He healed the blind, cured the lame, and even raised the dead.

But look at the work of St. Peter after he received the Holy Spirit. He converted 3,000 people with just one speech. Scripture does not record Jesus converting that many people at one time. Peter went on to heal many people, but the most surprising healings happened while he was still in Jerusalem: people laid their sick friends in the streets so that Peter’s shadow could touch and heal them. Jesus healed people with words, spit, even His own hands, but we do not ever read

about Jesus healing with merely His shadow. This is the Holy Spirit active in St. Peter's life, and this is the same Holy Spirit offered to all of us today.

CCC 1287; Acts 2:41, 5:15-16

Receiving the Spirit

We first receive the Holy Spirit at our baptism. He comes into our lives, inspires our faith, and gives us strength. The spiritual gifts we receive at our baptism are renewed, strengthened, and completed in the Sacrament of Confirmation. In fact, Baptism and Confirmation are so closely linked that they used to be celebrated together as a "double sacrament." Although these sacraments have been separated into two different celebrations in the West, the Eastern Catholic Church continues to celebrate them as one.

CCC 1285, 1290-1292; 1 Corinthians 12:3

Receiving the Holy Spirit has always been a sign that one is embarking on a mission. Isaiah prophesied that when the Messiah came to deliver God's people, the Spirit of the Lord would rest upon Him. Jesus began His public ministry by being baptized in Galilee, during which the Holy Spirit descended from heaven and rested upon Him. When the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles at Pentecost, they finally embarked on their mission to evangelize the whole world.

Acts 8:14-17; Isaiah 11:2; Matthew 3:13-17, 28:18-20

Ever since Pentecost, Catholics have been passing down the grace of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. This tradition continues today in the Sacrament of Confirmation. The bishop, or a priest whom he delegates, lays hands on the one who is to be confirmed, anoints them with sacred chrism oil, and prays, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Acts 8:15-17, 19:5-6

The words used in this sacrament are very important. The word "sealed" can have different meanings. For example, you might think of sealing a Ziploc bag, or scoring the touchdown that seals your team's victory. But this is not how the Holy Spirit seals us in Confirmation. It is not a closing or an ending. Instead, think of it more as seal a king would use to show that a decree really came from him. By placing his seal on it, he lets everyone know that this document comes from him and, more importantly, that this decree has authority. This is the gift of Confirmation. God, the king of kings, places His seal upon us. We receive the Holy Spirit who gives us the ability to go out and preach the Gospel with authority, just as Peter did at Pentecost.

CCC 1305; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Daniel 6:17-18; Genesis 41:41-42

Our Identity

But that is not the only gift God gives us in Confirmation. God's generosity knows no limits and He pours out grace superabundantly in this sacrament, as in all of the other sacraments. When you are anointed in Confirmation, you become more and more like Jesus, whose titles "Christ" and "Messiah" both mean "anointed one." Since you will become more like Jesus, you can more and more call God your Father.

We live in a time when our identity is often called into question, most often by ourselves. This is especially true for you as teens. At the end of your high school career, you have to make choices that will affect the rest of your life. Perhaps people are already asking you what you want to do after high school, or what you want to do with the rest of your life.

While these are important questions, they can be intimidating because we must figure out who we are before we can answer them. Sometimes we rush the answer and begin to define ourselves by the sports we play, the clubs we are in, or the grades we receive. *Share a testimony about a time when you found your identity in something passing or temporary. Consider examples like sports, music, school clubs, relationships, and jobs. Share how this identity was fleeting and did not satisfy the deepest longings of your heart.*

We find our identity most perfectly in the Sacrament of Confirmation. In Confirmation, God affirms that we are His beloved son or daughter; nothing will ever change that. In Confirmation, God deepens our relationship with His family, the Church, so we never have to be alone — no matter where we go, we will have brothers and sisters in Christ to support us.

CCC 1303

Our Responsibility, Duty, and Preparation

As with all gifts, Confirmation comes with responsibilities and duties. As confirmed members of God's family, conformed more perfectly to Jesus Himself, our prime responsibility is to live out this identity. We must live in a manner worthy of being called God's sons and daughters. Certainly, this means a moral life, but it also means a life dedicated to the proclamation of the Gospel, to evangelization. As confirmed members of the Church, it is our solemn duty to continue to grow God's Kingdom on Earth.

CCC 1303

This great sacrament is celebrated differently in the Eastern Church than in the Western Church. In the East, Baptism and Confirmation, or Chrismation, are celebrated together to better show that Confirmation is a completion of baptismal grace. But in the West, Baptism and Confirmation — except in RCIA — are celebrated separately. The separation of these two sacraments allows us to be better prepared for Confirmation. It also preserves important symbolism within the Sacrament: the role of the bishop. Confirmation not only deepens our relationship with the apostolic Church of Christ, but it also deepens our role in the apostolic mission of evangelization. How appropriate, then, that the bishop — the successor of the apostles — should be the one to administer this sacrament to us. Our preparation is important because of the responsibilities that come with living as a confirmed member of the Church. These duties are not to be taken lightly, so the Western Church has asked us to wait at least until the “age of discretion” to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation.

CCC 1290, 1298, 1307

But preparation is not just about waiting until we are a certain age. One of the best ways we can prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation is to choose a mentor who lives the Catholic way of life. We have mentors for virtually everything else: coaches, music directors, teachers. While I hope that your parents are role models in faith, it is crucial to have a good, Catholic role model other than your parents to help you grow in your faith. For Confirmation, we call this person a sponsor — you will be asked to choose one in the future.

CCC 1311

Consider sharing about a significant role model relationship in your life – if possible the one with your confirmation sponsor if it is a good relationship.

The final step before you receive the Sacrament of Confirmation is to partake in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which allows the grace of Confirmation to be as effective in your life as possible. As we get closer to your confirmation day, you will be asked to confess your sins to a priest so you can be forgiven.

CCC 1310

We know that the Confirmation process can feel a little long, but we want to help you see that it is worth it. We want you to know the goodness God has in store for you in this sacrament and we cannot wait until we can more perfectly call you our brother or sister in Christ.

BREAK

Small Group Discussion (15 min)

Divide the teens into their Confirmation small groups. Begin in prayer and then use the following questions to facilitate a discussion:

- What did you learn about the Sacrament of Confirmation that you did not know before?
- *Read Acts 8:14-17.* What elements of modern-day Confirmation are similar to those found in this Scripture passage?
- It is advised that you go to confession and increase your time in prayer before being confirmed. Why do you think it is necessary to do both? What keeps you from doing either regularly?
- Who in your life exemplifies virtuous, Catholic living? Would you consider asking this person to be your confirmation sponsor? Why or why not?
- What in your life needs to be transformed by the Holy Spirit? Do you believe He is capable of this?
- The Sacrament of Confirmation enables you to do great things in the world. For example, Jesus healed people, but Peter's shadow also healed people. What is something you want the Holy Spirit to do in and through you that is "greater" than Jesus?

SEND

Testify! (15 minutes)

Gather the teens in the main meeting space and then use the following to introduce the activity:

Earlier in the session, we heard that "we receive the Holy Spirit who gives us the ability to go out and preach the Gospel with authority, just as Peter did at Pentecost." After Peter preached, 3,000 people were baptized! The same Holy Spirit who gave Peter the courage and message to speak is in you and me, so we have the ability — and a duty — to bring people to Christ through our words.

At your baptism, your parents and godparents spoke for you, but at your confirmation, you are to speak for yourself. How would you respond if someone asked you, "Why do you want to be confirmed? How does it benefit your life and the lives of those around you?" In sharing your answer, you could help bring people to Jesus.

Give each teen a pen and a piece of paper. Allow time for them to pray and journal about their answers to the following questions: Why do you want to be confirmed? How does this sacrament benefit your life and the lives of those around you? If the teens are unsure of how to answer, encourage them to be real with God and ask the Holy Spirit for an outpouring of the gifts of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge so they can more clearly discern their answer.

After they have finished journaling, invite them to share their reflections with a partner. If time allows, invite a few teens to share their answers with the large group. Close the session with a spontaneous prayer to the Holy Spirit.