



SESSION 20 SPEAK

GOAL

The goal of this session is for the teens to see the communion of saints as their extended family, to understand what it means to be a witness of the faith, and to get to know a few modern saints.

KEY CONCEPTS

Confirmation calls us to be witnesses of faith and provides us with the graces to do so.

Being a witness means being a martyr; martyrdom does not necessarily mean dying for the faith, but requires a willingness to sacrifice and suffer for truth.

When learning how to become better witnesses, we should look to the examples of other members of the Church — particularly Mary and the saints.

KEY TERMS

Martyr: A witness to the truth of the faith, in which the martyr endures even death to be faithful to Christ.

Saint: The “holy one” who leads a life in union with God through the grace of Christ and receives the reward of eternal life.

SCRIPTURE: 2 Timothy 1:6-8, Acts 2:1-11, Matthew 16:24-27

CATECHISM: 954-959, 963-969, 1302-1304, 2471-2474

ABOUT THIS CONFIRMATION SESSION

The Gather is a fun game of Family Feud, which helps emphasize that this is a session about family, namely the communion of saints. The Proclaim teaches about the important role Mary and the communion of saints play in the teens’ lives. The Break gives the teens an opportunity to get to know a saint from our modern era more personally. The Send is a group prayer during which the teens ask the saints to pray for them through one of the Church’s oldest prayers, the Litany of Saints.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment for this session should emphasize that the saints are our extended family members. It should demonstrate that they are people to whom we can relate, have conversations with, and seek advice from. Think family reunion! Have framed pictures of saints around the room or in scrapbooks. Include pictures of modern-day saints, as well as pictures of saints skiing, hiking, being silly, etc. to demonstrate that they are more like us than we may think.

AS YOU GET STARTED

For a more dynamic environment, consider setting up a photo booth. Have pictures of saints around the edges so the teens can stand in the middle and take a picture with their “extended family.” Encourage the teens to post their photos on social media and include a creative hashtag such as #familyreunion, #extendedfamily, #communionofsaints, or #myfamilyisthebest.

*For a more personal Send, consider inviting each teen to invoke the intercession of a particular saint and then use the *Litany of Saints* handout to lead the group in the Litany of Saints. As the teens leave, offer them a prayer card for the saint who stood out to them the most.*

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

Family Feud (15 min)

Prior to the session, poll your Core Team, parish staff, or a parish ministry group to come up with the answers for the Family Feud game. Gather the teens in the main meeting space and instruct them to remain with their Confirmation small groups. Read a Family Feud question aloud. After the question has been read, give the small groups 20 to 30 seconds to write an answer on a piece of paper. Read the correct answer after the time is up and tell the teens how many points they receive based on their answer. For example, if they had the number one answer, they receive five points; if they had the number two answer, they receive four points, etc. The small group with the most points at the end of the game wins. Consider giving the winning team a family-themed prize like grandma’s chocolate chip cookies.

Use the following sample questions to get started, but be sure to add your own:

- Name the most classic family vacation.
- Name something often associated with the youngest child in a family.
- Name something a five-year-old might pray for.
- Name something an eight-year-old might bring with them when they stay at grandma’s house.
- Name the least favorite household chore of every teen.
- Name an occasion when parents let their kids eat candy.
- Name something kids bring home from school.
- Name an excuse a teen gives for not having their homework completed.
- Name a famous sitcom family.

- Name the oldest thing in your parent’s house.
- Name a children’s TV show that teaches a valuable life lesson.
- Name something a parent might do if their child’s pet goldfish dies.
- Name the best game to play with your family.
- Name something you would not want to leave in the house when you go on a family vacation.
- Name a take-out food a family might have for dinner.
- Name another term for “mother.”
- Name an app every teen has on their phone.

PROCLAIM

“Speak” Teaching (15 min)

Be a Martyr

Confirmation is a brand new stage of our lives within the Church. As with any new chapter, it brings new challenges. One of these new challenges is being a better witness of faith.

CCC 1303-1304

Read Acts 2:1-11.

While Jesus was on Earth, the apostles were witnesses of faith. They brought people to Christ, learned from His teachings, and watched as He performed miracles. But at Pentecost, the apostles became witnesses of faith in a totally new way. Receiving the Holy Spirit turned the apostles into leaders in faith rather than followers. The Spirit’s graces enabled them to boldly proclaim the Gospel themselves.

CCC 1302

Confirmation transforms us in the same way. Since our baptism, we have been witnesses of Christ. But in Confirmation, the Holy Spirit gives us many new graces, including new strength to share and defend the faith.

CCC 1303-1304

When someone is a “witness of faith,” they share the faith in their words and actions. In writings from the earliest days of the Church, the words “witness” and “martyr” were used interchangeably. Martyrs are those who are faithful to Christ to the point of dying for their faith.

CCC 2471-2474

Read Matthew 16:24-27.

It is unlikely — though not impossible — that we will be asked to die for Christ. But fearlessly speaking about and living our faith will cause us to suffer at times. The graces from Confirmation enable us to endure that suffering and willingly lay down our lives for Christ, even if martyrdom is not asked of us.

For added discussion, play the video “Hero to Zero” to illustrate how we may want to be heroic; a witness of faith (or heroic action) requires the willingness to sacrifice, otherwise we simply are cowards or hypocrites.

Consider explaining the terms “red martyrdom” and “white martyrdom.” Discuss how both require death — white martyrdom in a spiritual sense and red martyrdom in a physical sense.

Sponsor Me

When you get confirmed, you will receive graces to make you a better witness of faith. But what does that practically mean? How do you live every day as a witness of faith? When learning anything new — like how to ride a bike, for example — it helps if someone teaches us that skill or provides an example we can follow. In learning how to be witnesses of faith, it makes sense to look to people who have lived and are living the faith.

Ask the teens to identify someone who is a good witness of faith.

Christ knew we could not live the faith on our own, so He established the Church to unite all of the faithful and enable us to support one another as we grow in holiness. For our faith to flourish, it is vital that we surround ourselves with people who live the Catholic faith well.

In Confirmation, we choose a sponsor who shows us how to be a witness of faith. Unlike other role models in our lives, we do not choose our Confirmation sponsors simply because we admire their personalities or talents. A confirmation sponsor must be committed to accompanying you as you both grow in faith together.

Christ and the Church have established the framework for living an authentic Catholic life. But even within that framework, being a witness of faith looks slightly different for each person. Confirmation sponsors should understand the challenges you face in your faith and call you to holiness through those struggles.

Tell the teens about whom you choose as your Confirmation sponsor, why you chose them, and how they have helped you.

When looking for witnesses of faith, it is easy to automatically think of those around us. It is drastically important for us to have people in our lives who are good examples of faith, but we should not forget that there are three stages of the Church — three groups who can help us as we follow Christ.

CCC 954

Friends In High Places

As Catholics, we know that death is not the end. When we die, we hope to be with Christ in heaven; so the Church is not just those on Earth, but also those who are in purgatory and in heaven.

CCC 954-955

Consider exploring the titles of the three stages of the Church: church triumphant, church suffering, and church militant.

Each of the three stages of the Church can help us in different ways. Members of the Church on Earth — like our Confirmation sponsors — are obviously with us here and now. It is easy to communicate with them and receive their help when we need support in our

faith. They have special insights and advice on how to witness to the faith well amid the challenges of our modern society.

Use CCC 958 to explain our spiritual connection to those in purgatory.

As you prepare for and receive Confirmation, and begin living your role in the Church in a new way, always look to those who have gone before you in faith like the Blessed Mother and the saints in heaven. We need to continue to pray for those seeking heaven like the souls in purgatory and those on Earth.

Consider using CCC 958 to explain our spiritual connection to those in purgatory.

Those in heaven — the saints — offer us something incredibly precious. The saints are the ultimate witnesses of faith. They have faced the challenges of this life and remained faithful to Christ and the Church through it all. But the saints offer us much more than just their example. Of all of the members of the Church, the saints are the most united to Christ, as they are joined with Him in heaven. They want to spend eternity praising God and helping the Church on Earth.

CCC 956-957

Constantly present before God in heaven, the saints continually intercede for us and share God's graces with us as we face our daily struggles. Just as the members of the Church on Earth can help us grow closer to Christ, the saints — who have an even deeper connection to God — want to help us grow in friendship with the Lord.

CCC 956-957

In Confirmation, we bring two witnesses of faith into our lives in new ways. We not only choose a Confirmation sponsor, but we also choose a new name — a saint whom we seek to imitate and whose intercession for us becomes that much more personal. As you look for a Confirmation saint, ask the Lord which saints He wants you to know better. Keep your eyes and ears open for saints who may be reaching out to you.

When looking for a sponsor, we mentioned the importance of someone who knows you well and can call you on to holiness in specific ways. The same is true of a confirmation saint! Look for a saint with whom you hold things in common. We have many saints in the Church, so you are bound to share similar hobbies and life circumstances with someone.

Among the saints is one particular saint who is the perfect witness of faith. Someone who, unlike the other saints, lived a perfect life while on Earth, giving us a perfect example of how to follow Christ. Someone whose intercession for us and friendship with us is totally unique.

CCC 967-968

Invite the teens to guess who in heaven is pre-eminent among the saints.

Mary is not only Jesus' mother, she is our mother, too. She followed Christ as He established the Church, remained with the apostles as they continued to share the Gospel, and continues to care for the Church even after her Assumption into heaven. Mary's perfection

may seem intimidating, but she loves us perfectly, loves Christ perfectly, and wants nothing more than to bring us into her perfect love. As we learn to be better witnesses of faith, Mary is our greatest ally.

CCC 963-966, 969

As you prepare for and receive Confirmation, and begin living your role in the Church in a new way, always look to those who have gone before you in faith: the Blessed Mother, the saints in heaven, the souls in purgatory, and those on Earth. The Church is a family; we all exist to support one another. Everyone in the Church needs your witness of faith as much as you need theirs.

CCC 959

BREAK

Meet Your Extended Family (25 min)

Prior to the session, set up several saint/blessed stations. Include a picture, candle, and one of the *Saint Stations* handouts for the corresponding saint or blessed at each station. Divide the teens into their Confirmation small groups. Assign each small group a station, or combine multiple small groups for a given station. Instruct the groups to head to their assigned station and select one teen to light the candle. Invite a teen to read the summary of the saint or blessed and then have another teen read the quote and prayer. After about five minutes, instruct the teens to rotate to the next station. Continue until all of the small groups have visited every station.

SEND

Litany of Saints (10 min)

Gather the teens in the main meeting space. Introduce the prayer activity, using the following as an example:

The Litany of Saints is one of the oldest prayers of the Catholic faith, dating back to the fifth century. As the faithful, we pray it on the Feast of All Saints, during the Easter Vigil, and during the ordination masses of bishops, priests, and deacons. In this prayer, we ask God for His divine protection and implore numerous saints by name to pray for us. Just as we might ask our grandmother, or perhaps an aunt or uncle, to pray for us during a difficult time, we use this prayer to ask our extended family in heaven to intercede for us.

Prior to the session, print out copies of the *Litany of Saints* handout or project it on a screen. Lead the teens through the prayer to close the session.