

PURPOSE

A Transformative Plan for Confirmation TABLE OF CONTENTS

BEGINNINGS: Introduction to the confirmation process (parent and teen session)

- Parents are the first and primary educators of their children; the Church supports them in this task.
- A sacrament imparts a grace — a free gift from God — that helps us respond to God’s call to holiness in our lives.
- Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation leads the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of the Christian life.

SEEKING: What is our desire?

- We are all created with inherent desires and spend our lives trying to discover and fulfill them.
- When we try to fill our deepest longings with things other than God, we often feel unfulfilled and disappointed.
- There is something greater in store for us. Our earthly desires point us in the direction of our heavenly yearning.

REASONS: Faith and reason

- Sacred Scripture is more like a library of several books from various genres than a single book. There are four different “senses” or methods of reading: literal, moral, allegorical, and anagogical.
- God created us to know Him. The gift of reason, or intellect, is geared toward that knowledge. As the author of all truth, God would not reveal Himself in a way that is contrary to the gift of right reason, for that would be contradictory to His plan.
- The Church has always encouraged reason and science and has sought to unify what we can know through science with what God has revealed to us.

REVEAL: Is God real?

- God’s existence is philosophical, not scientific. Science can only tell us about the measurable, physical world. God, because He is infinite and pure spirit, cannot be measured by science.
- God, in His infinite goodness and wisdom, chose to reveal Himself to us in time so that we could know and love Him.
- God does not merely reveal Himself to us, He also nourishes us and sustains us so that we might experience the goodness of life.

BREATH: Does a relationship with God matter?

- God created us through love. We are sustained by the love of God.
- God is a personal God, never ceasing to draw us closer to Him.
- The fullness of life is found in acknowledging God's love and responding to it.

BROKENHEARTED: Why is there evil and suffering in our world?

- When we live in a relationship with God, we come to know God's greatness and want to live our lives for Him.
- The problem of evil is a challenge to our faith and there is not a simple answer.
- There is no way to escape the reality of suffering. The difference between Christianity and all other world religions is that we worship a God who suffers with us and desires to bring good out of it.

FAULT: Our goodness and the fall

- God created us for complete and total unity with Him. This is our original purpose.
- When man and woman chose knowledge over God's will, sin entered the world and took root. Sin has continued to poison, distort, and tempt human hearts over the centuries.
- We were created by God and, as a result, the desire for God is written on our hearts. God continually seeks to draw us closer to Him.

PRODIGAL: Why believe in Jesus – the Incarnation

- The story of salvation is our story, just as our personal family history is our story, so we should make every effort to truly understand it.
- God's heroes are ordinary people whose only claim to fame is that they trusted in and were faithful to Him.
- Jesus is the culmination of God's centuries-old plan and work. We have the opportunity to know, appreciate, and love this gift, or to forget and disregard the sacrifice of the one true God.

MORE: Why believe in Jesus – the life of Christ

- Jesus' mission was to bring about the Kingdom of God. He did so by teaching, working miracles, and most importantly, forgiving sins.
- Jesus came for the meek: those questioning the existence of God, the sinners, the broken-hearted, the enslaved, the overlooked.
- Jesus asks us, "Who do you say that I am?" We must offer a response; our response determines our relationship with Him.

NEW: Why believe in Jesus – Passion, Death, and Resurrection

- Jesus' death at Passover is a direct connection to the original Passover and Exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Just as the Israelites were slaves, humanity was enslaved to sin and death.
- Jesus' death defeated the power of sin and death. By His blood on the cross, we are freed from slavery, just as the Passover lamb saved the Israelites from death.
- Christ's Resurrection proved that death had been defeated. Death no longer has power over us.

TRANSFORMATION: The Gospel message and the Acts of the Apostles

- The Good News is not just a piece of interesting information; it is a message that the world changed through Jesus' death and Resurrection.
- This new reality was proclaimed boldly by the early Church thanks to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the apostles at Pentecost and on every community who converted.
- The death and resurrection of Christ the final word for those who accepted the Good News. Nothing else mattered: not status, wealth, family, friends, suffering, or even death. The followers of Christ believed there was more to life in Christ.

FOUNDATION: Why be a part of the Catholic Church?

- Jesus intentionally established the Church and gave Peter special authority to govern, which he passed down to successors in order to guide and govern the Church with the aid of the Holy Spirit.
- The Church has been sent to all nations with the mission of making disciples. The Church exists to evangelize.
- The Church is the universal sacrament of salvation. Its purpose is to lead people to heaven.

BURN: The Holy Spirit in the Catholic Church

- The personhood of the Holy Spirit is difficult to understand, but is revealed to us in Scripture, tradition, and through the prophets.
- The titles of the Holy Spirit give insight into His role in our lives and in the life of the Church.
- Looking at the Sacraments of Initiation, we learn that the Church cannot be separated from the workings of the Holy Spirit.

SOURCE: The Mass and the Eucharist

- The Mass is often underappreciated but is the most perfect and beautiful celebration of our Catholic faith.
- The Last Supper was the first fruits of the Mass; it has been handed down over the centuries and has roots in Scripture.
- In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, Christ literally becomes one with us by offering His body for us to consume.

ENTER: The Sacrament of Baptism

- The water of Baptism literally washes away all of our sin, especially our original sin – that mark left on our souls, inherited from our first parents when they decided to turn their hearts away from God’s will.
- Baptism leaves an “indelible mark” on the soul. This means that through Baptism, a permanent change of the very essence of the individual takes place. Forever, in this life and in the next, the baptized soul is sealed with the mark of belonging to Christ.
- It is through Christ that we have life, and through our baptism that we are brought to new life by His death and Resurrection.

SIGNATURE: The Sacrament of Confirmation

- 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.

CALLED: Foundations of discipleship

- If we look at the example of the disciples, we see that we must first get to know Jesus by spending time with Him. It is through time spent with Him that the disciples learned His teachings and built an intimate friendship with Him, which allowed them to love and worship Him.
- The Church has given us the tools we need to live out our call to discipleship. We find our strength and courage in the Sacraments of Confirmation, Reconciliation, and the Eucharist.
- Jesus is calling each of us to be a disciple. By spending time in prayer, frequenting the sacraments, and using our gifts to glorify God, we can become the disciples we are called to be.

POWER: The Holy Spirit in a life of discipleship

- By our baptism, we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Our relationship with the Holy Spirit grows through prayer, silence, the sacraments, and Scripture.
- The gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit are evidence of His work in our lives and are needed in our daily lives.

MEANING: Our vocation

- Catholics use the word “vocation” a lot, but many teens do not know what it actually means; it includes both universal and particular vocations.
- Each person has the same universal vocation: the call to holiness. We must respond to this vocation during every moment of our lives.
- Our particular vocation is a specific and individual vocation from God, a calling to live out His will for our lives. This includes the Sacrament of Marriage, the Sacrament of Holy Orders, and consecrated life.
- Teens should begin discerning their particular vocation by asking God what He wants for their lives and learning more about the different vocations within the Catholic Church.

SPEAK: Witnesses of faith

- 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.

PATHWAY: Morality

- Morality is objective and defined by God alone. Since God created us, God knows the best path to our happiness. Jesus is the definitive revelation of God’s moral teaching.
- The Church guards the teachings of Christ, including His moral teaching. The Church cannot change these teachings but is required to interpret them for our modern situation. The Church has the authority, given by Christ, to define morality.
- We live a moral life by growing in virtue and avoiding vice. When we become deficient or lack a particular virtue, we tend to engage in vice and fall into sin.

UNITED: Social Justice

- Christ calls us to live out justice, a virtue that puts us in right relationship with God and one another.
- True justice starts by diving into sacramental graces and the power of prayer but does not end there.
- As we seek to bring justice to the world, we should follow the guidance of the Church not only in her teachings, but in her actions, too.

NATIONS: Evangelization

- Evangelization is about spreading the good news that Jesus Christ has come into our world, has given each of us the chance to be reunited to God the Father, and has saved from our sins.
- The Church exists to evangelize; each of us, in our identity as Christians and members of the Church, share in this mission of evangelization given to us by Jesus Christ in the Great Commission.
- Our personal testimony, the way that God has worked in real and concrete ways in our lives, is the most powerful way that we can share the Gospel with the world and those we encounter.

MY PURPOSE: Ongoing Relationship with the Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity, promised to be our advocate sent from the Father after Jesus ascended into heaven.
- The fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to us as aids as we live fully alive in Christ and share Him with those we encounter.
- In the Spirit, we come to know our true identity as sons and daughters of the Father, called into new life in Christ.