



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 live 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 Engage is a modified *Summit* session followed by an interactive game where teens have to brainstorm creative ways to solve problems. The Reflect makes available the scriptural and historical context of Confirmation as well as its purpose, effects, and responsibilities. The Respond gives the teens an opportunity to process what they learned about the sacrament. The teens also have time for prayer and to share why they want to be confirmed. The session ends with the Come, Holy Spirit prayer.

ENVIRONMENT

Gather in a comfortable environment where you all are able to sit in a circle facing one another. Consider meeting somewhere at the parish or at a local coffee shop, but always consult and follow your diocesan safe environment rules.

MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

Purpose Video: “Cake” (resources.lifeteen.com)

Edge Video Support November 2015: “Too Cool for Confirmation” (lifeteen.com)

Sophia Institute for Teachers: “Sophia SketchPad: Confirmation” (youtube.com)

AS YOU GET STARTED

For a Respond that incorporates the teens’ Confirmation saints, add 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?

ENGAGE

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)

Welcome the teens to the session, and begin in prayer.

Summit (20 min)

Use the modified *Summit* session to lead the teens through a lectio divina based reflection on the Sunday readings.

Prove it (15 min)

Before the session, fill a bag with random items from your home or office (a highlighter, sticky notes, a book, a t-shirt, etc.). Create a list of scenarios, such as the following, that involve a problem, and write them on notecards:

- A water pipe just burst in your house.
- You are hiking and it started pouring rain.
- You just got a flat tire.
- You are at the zoo and accidentally let a monkey out of its cage.

Have one teen choose a notecard with a scenario; this teen is the judge for the round. Have everyone else select a random item from the bag without looking. Each teen makes a case to the judge as to how to solve the problem in the scenario using the item they selected. The judge then chooses who they believe made the most compelling case and awards a point to that person. Give multiple teens a chance to be the judge. The teen with the most points at the end of the game wins.

REFLECT

“*Signature*” Teaching (20 min)

Use the following as a guide for a time of reflection:

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 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

- 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?
- Have you ever experienced the Holy Spirit working in your life in a powerful way? What happened?

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 a 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

- Why do you want to be confirmed? What does Confirmation mean to you at this point in your life?
- What role do you play in the mission Jesus gave to the disciples and the Church?
- How can the Holy Spirit help you on this mission?

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

- What aspects of your life define your identity? Do some hold more value than others? How so?
- Why could it be problematic if we put more value and worth in parts of our identity that are fleeting or could change?
- What can you do to grow in your understanding of your deepest identity as coming from God?

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 1307).

CCC 1290, 1298

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 your relationship with a significant role model. Share about 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 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.

- Who in your life exemplifies virtuous, Catholic living?
- What in your life needs to be transformed by the Holy Spirit? Do you believe the Holy Spirit is capable of this?

- Does the idea of sharing your faith in Jesus with others scare or intimidate you? Why? Have you shared your faith with others in the past? What was that experience like?

RESPOND

Scramble Activity (15 min)

Instruct the teens to find a partner. Give each pair a copy of the *Scramble Words* handout, and have everyone start the activity at the same time. The goal is for the pairs to successfully unscramble the words in the shortest amount of time. When all of the pairs are finished, go over the answers and briefly recap the definition of each word as you go.

Testify! (15 min)

Use the following to introduce the next 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 piece of paper and a pen. 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 the teens to share their answers with the rest of the group.

Closing Prayer (5 min)

Pray the Come, Holy Spirit prayer together, and give any final comments or instructions for upcoming meetings.

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. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.