

## STUDY GUIDE – Confirmation – Believe ~ Celebrate ~ Live Chapters 4, 5 & 6

At Baptism we are **freed from sin and become members of the church**. We are filled with God's life and made members of the Church. At this same time, our godparents took on the lifelong responsibility of supporting us in our faith.

Candidates for Confirmation affirm their baptismal name to show the connection with their Baptism or choose a special name, usually that of a saint whose example of Christian living he or she can follow.

Candidates also choose a sponsor to support them as they take the step toward full initiation into the Church.

Sponsors

- Must be a practicing Catholic
- Must be already Confirmed
- Must be older than 16 years of age
- Must be able to fulfill their duties

Sometimes the sponsor is the same person as the godparent at Baptism. They play an important role in the celebration of Confirmation. **They offer support to the candidates during the preparation to receive the sacrament.** During the celebration of Confirmation the Sponsors present the candidates to the Bishop and place a hand on the candidate's right shoulder during the anointing with Sacred Chrism.

**The Sponsor commits to the responsibility to always help the candidate to grow in faith and fulfill their baptismal promises faithfully in accordance with the Holy Spirit whom they have received.**

**In the Sacrament of Penance, Jesus forgives those who are truly sorry.** We form our consciences by learning, praying, listening to the Word of God, and allowing ourselves to be opened to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. **The Holy Spirit helps us to fulfill our responsibility to carry on Christ's Mission.**

Ever since **Pentecost**, all of Christ's disciples have been guided by the Spirit to serve God and one another through lives of love and service in the Church.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit make us ready to follow the Spirit's inspiration.

- **WISDOM** is the gift of knowing the right choices to make to live a holy life. The gift of wisdom helps you to avoid the things that could lead you away from God.
- **UNDERSTANDING** is the gift of comprehension, or the ability to grasp the meaning of the teachings of the Church. The gift of understanding helps you be tolerant and sympathetic of others. It helps you sense when someone is hurting or in need of compassion.
- **RIGHT JUDGMENT OR COUNSEL**, is the gift of prudence. The gift of right judgment helps you make choices to live as a faithful follower of Jesus.
- **COURAGE OR FORTITUDE**, is the gift that helps you stand up for your faith in Christ. The gift of courage helps you overcome any obstacles that would keep you from practicing your faith.
- **KNOWLEDGE** is the gift of knowing and enlightenment. The gift of knowledge enables you to choose the right path that will lead you to God. It encourages you to avoid obstacles that will keep you from him.
- **REVERENCE OR PIETY**, is the gift of confidence in God. This gift of reverence inspires you to joyfully want to serve God and others.
- **WONDER AND AWE OR FEAR OF THE LORD** is the gift of wonder and respect that encourages you to be in awe of God. The gift of wonder and awe moves you to so love God that you do not want to offend him by your words or actions.

The twelve virtues that people see in us when we respond to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are known as the **Fruits of the Holy Spirit**. With the help of the Holy Spirit we can show these virtues in our lives. We can draw people to God's love through our example and in that way build up the Kingdom of God on earth.

- **LOVE**: We exhibit the virtue of charity, or love, by our unselfish devotion and care for God and our neighbor.
- **JOY**: We live with joy when we recognize that true happiness comes, not from money or possessions, but from knowing and following Christ.
- **PEACE**: We are freed from worrying about trivial things because of the inner peace we experience with God in our hearts. We work and pray for peace throughout the world.
- **PATIENCE**: We demonstrate patience by treating others with thoughtfulness and tolerance. We know that we can overcome the temptations and sufferings of life because God is always with us.
- **KINDNESS**: We live the virtue of kindness by treating others as we want to be treated.
- **GOODNESS**: We exhibit goodness when we honor God by avoiding sin and always trying to do what we know is right.
- **GENEROSITY**: We demonstrate the fruit of generosity when we share our gifts and possessions with others.
- **GENTLENESS**: Gentle people act calmly and avoid actions that might lead others to anger or resentment.
- **FAITHFULNESS**: We are faithful when we live out our commitment to the teachings of Jesus, the Scriptures, and the Catholic Church.
- **SELF-CONTROL**: We exercise self-control by working to overcome the temptations we face and by trying always to do God's will.
- **MODESTY**: We exhibit modesty by being pure in our thoughts, words, and dress.
- **CHASTITY**: We live the virtue of chastity when we use the gift of sexuality wisely, according to God's plan

**The Sacrament of Confirmation sends us forth in mission to evangelize.** As confirmed Christians, the Holy Spirit gives us the **special strength to spread and defend the faith by our words and actions.** The strength of the Holy Spirit helps us live a sacramental life in the light of God's truth.

**Confirmation completes and perfects our Baptism, by connecting us more strongly to the Church and deepening the strength of the Holy Spirit in us.**

The Parish Community participates in the Sacrament of Confirmation to express the communal belief in Jesus Christ, and to support candidates in their commitment to Christ and the Church. While some parish members are part of the direct preparation of the candidates, **all members are called on to be examples of Christian discipleship and openness to the Holy Spirit.**

As members of Christ's Body on earth, **we can support the ministry of the Church through our works of service.** As Christians, we are called to be **stewards or caretakers**, of our community. **Good stewardship signifies a commitment to following Christ in word and actions using our time, our talent and our treasure.**

Through our Baptism and Confirmation we are united to Christ and we are called to participate in the mystery of Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection. **Christ's unique sacrifice on the cross is our very salvation.**

The liturgy of the Sacrament of Confirmation uses sacred actions called rituals. It is usually celebrated within Mass to clarify its connection with the Eucharist. The increase, deepening and perfection of Baptismal grace in the Sacrament of Confirmation unites us to the holiness of Christ. Whether Confirmation is celebrated within Mass or **outside of Mass (No Liturgy of the Eucharist)**, the presence of the Holy Spirit is brought about through the words and actions used in this sacrament. The signs, symbols and essential elements of Confirmation celebrate the faith of the Church. Most Candidates will be confirmed during the celebration of the Eucharist.

The Presentation of the candidates to the Bishop, before the Homily, shows that the candidates are ready to accept God's call to live their faith more deeply. The Bishop reminds everyone present of their gift of faith, and the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

We renew our baptismal promises **to reaffirm the faith that was professed at Baptism.** The questions asked by the bishop during the Renewal of Baptismal Promises remind all who are gathered that Confirmation completes and perfects Baptism.

Some of the wording in the Renewal of Baptismal Promises comes from the **Creed** and reflects the experience of this renewal at the **Easter Vigil.**

The Church's profession of faith at the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation is a commitment to the Blessed Trinity.

We are sealed with the indelible character of Confirmation in the ritual actions of the sacrament. (**Indelible means permanent, unfading, lasting and enduring**)

How is the Sacrament of Confirmation conferred? (Three Parts)

The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred by the Bishop through (1) laying on of hands and (2) the anointing with chrism (holy oil) on the forehead and (3) with these words - YOUR SAINTS NAME, be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit. You respond - Amen, the Bishop says - Peace be with you and you respond - and with your spirit.

During the Laying on of Hands, the bishop asks the Holy Spirit to come upon the candidates. The bishop prays that the candidates will be strengthened by the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Anointing with Chrism – essential ritual action of the Sacrament of Confirmation, in which we are sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit. The bishop places his hand on the candidates head and tracing the sign of the cross on the candidate's forehead with Sacred Chrism, while calling the candidate by name and saying – Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit and the person who has just been confirmed responds Amen.

The Bishop shares a sign of peace with the newly confirmed and they respond “and with your spirit.”

The Mass continues with the Liturgy of the Eucharist, where all now share in the gift of Jesus present in Holy Communion.

Through the liturgy, the rituals, gestures, signs and symbols invite us into an experience of the mystery of God. The signs, symbols, gestures and words, and actions that have long shown God's presence among his people will be a part of the experience of the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The ritual actions of Confirmation will help the candidates experience God's presence through sight, touch, and smell. After Confirmation, you will be stronger in your faith and experience a deeper sense of being a disciple of Jesus.

The Bishop will testify to his own faith and remind the parish community of their faith.

The bishop and priests from the parish will pray for the Spirit to come upon the candidates.

The whole community will pray together for the candidates and for all the church.

**Through Confirmation the Holy Spirit strengthens us to witness.**

It's important to consider how we can show others that we have been anointed and called to be a witness

Connecting with God in prayer is one way we maintain our Christian lives and continue to grow as Christians. Five forms of prayer:

**Blessing** ~ we are asking for God's power and protection upon a person, a place, an object, or a special activity.

**Intercession** ~ we are asking God for something on behalf of others.

**Petition** ~ a prayer in which we ask God for something for ourselves.

**Praise** ~ a prayer in which we give glory to God because he is God.

**Thanksgiving** ~ a prayer in which we thank God for all of the blessings he has given us.

The same Holy Spirit that strengthens us to witness also fills us in the sacraments with grace. What does God's grace do for us? **It enables us to respond to his presence in our life. It strengthens our relationship with God and our ability to live as he wants us to.**

The Holy Spirit does not make our decisions for us, but helps us make the right decisions. Our gifts or charisms, guide us in what we can achieve for the Church and for God. The Holy Spirit guides our life and vocation. The mission and responsibility of discipleship belongs to all believers. Jesus Christ is our role model and example. We build God's Kingdom by our faithful witness to Christ's presence in the world.

Our personal vocations come from the grace we receive in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Most members of the Church answer the call of vocation as laypeople, or laity. We can come to understand more about our vocation through prayerful discernment.

## **VOCABULARY**

**SPONSOR** – a Catholic who is at least 16 years of age, has received the Sacraments of Christian Initiation, is respected by the candidate for Confirmation and is involved in the candidate's preparation for Confirmation and will help him or her grow in faith..

**STATE of GRACE** - being without mortal sin.

**CONSCIENCE** – our ability to know the difference between good and evil, right and wrong.

**CONVERSION** – turning back to God with all one's heart.

**STEWARDSHIP**– Protecting and caring for the world and its resources in a responsible way , with respect for them as God's gifts.

**RITUAL**– sacred actions in which the faith is celebrated

**SANCTIFY**- to make holy

**LAYING ON OF HANDS** – a sacramental sign of the imparting of the Holy Spirit on a person

**PARACLETE**– name for the Holy Spirit meaning “consoler”, “comforter” or “advocate”

**SOUL**– the invisible spiritual principle of a human being that forms ones nature with the human body. The soul is created by God and is immortal and will never die

**SANCTIFYING GRACE**– grace that heals our human nature, harmed by sin.

**ACTUAL GRACE** – the urgings or promptings from the Holy Spirit that help us to do good and to deepen our relationship with Jesus.

**CHARISMS**– special gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit that are given for the building up of the Church and for the good of all people.

**COMMON VOCATION**– our call from God to holiness and to evangelization.