

Preparing Families to Celebrate the
Sacraments of Initiation:
Confirmation



The process so far



- Session One: 'Baptism'
- This gave us our 'model' for working with families i.e. follow the pattern of the RCIA and Walk to Emmaus
- Meet as families after Mass to **listen** and **reflect** on our '**lived experience**' of '**family**' & '**belonging**' to help families discern the meaning for their life of faith in the Catholic community
- Themes included **joining** the community of faith; **belonging**; **building community**; **handing on & receiving the 'Tradition'** of the Church; **empowering** for living the Christian life; **vocation** (priest/prophet/king)

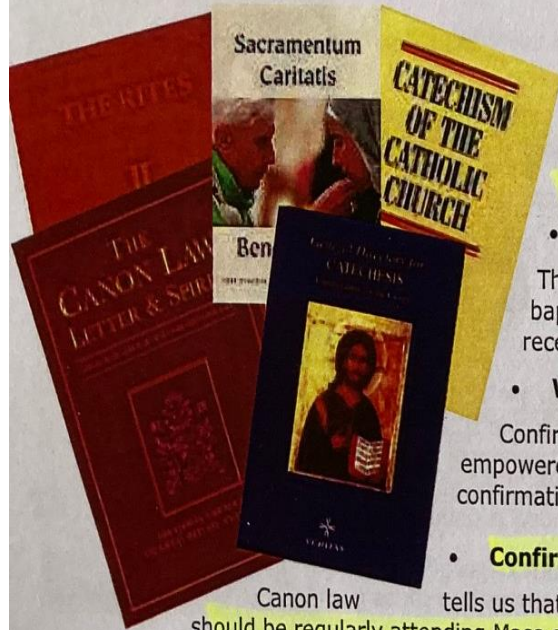
Session 2: Eucharist



- **HISTORY** – links to the Exodus & Passover / journey in faith / Covenant
- **HIS – STORY** – links to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus / the Passover meal
- **OUR STORY** – links to our family and community meals and the purposes they serve
'Remembering' is a 'making present' for us

Some Principles to work to ...

- “ ...what is needed ... is a ***catechesis of evangelisation, impregnated with the Spirit of God*** and offered ***in language adapted*** to the times and the hearers..... Such catechesis helps them discern the gospel and live it in their everyday lives.”
 - (General Directory for Catechesis in Plain English n.194; Bill Huebsch)
- “ The language we use in addressing young people is vitally important to consider. The Church’s jargon must be ***translated into their terms*** so they can meet Christ.”
 - (General Directory for Catechesis in Plain English n. 185; Bill Huebsch)



The Church gives us guidelines about what to include in the programme. She tells us:

- **Confirmation preparation should help us come to know Jesus more deeply --**

The Catechism tells us that the preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian towards a more intimate union with Christ.¹

- **There is a link between baptism and confirmation**

The Introduction to the *Rite of Confirmation* tells us that Confirmation strengthens and confirms what happened in baptism — completing the grace of baptism. This is why the renewal of baptismal promises takes place preceding the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.²

- **Witnessing or Apostolic Work**

Confirmation further initiates our journey of faith. The candidates are admitted to the community with a goal, so they are empowered for that and they are sent to proclaim the good news. The Catechism tells us that the time of preparation for confirmation should help the young people to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life.³

- **Confirmande must be suitably disposed and instructed**

Canon law tells us that the confirmandi must be properly disposed and suitably instructed to celebrate the sacrament.⁴ The candidate should be regularly attending Mass on Sundays with a level of understanding of the Mass commensurate with his/her ability. The Catechism tells us that candidates should celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation by way of their preparation.⁵

- **Catechesis for confirmation should take place in the parish and it should truly reflect the mind of the Church**

We are told that, as with baptism, catechesis for Confirmation should take place within the parish community — since it is the faith community into whose life of prayer and worship the candidates will be more fully initiated.⁶ The children have a right to be taught by catechists who truly reflect the mind of the Church and, in this regard, their parents and catechists have a right to formation in contemporary theology.⁷

- **Families should be part of the process of initiation.** Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion) are key moments not only for the individual receiving them but also for the entire family, which should be supported in its educational role by the various elements of the ecclesial community; he says that parish pastoral programmes should make the most of this highly significant moment.⁸ This why parishes should offer and parents should participate in parish pre-sacramental catechesis.

- **There must be 'content' in the catechesis**

The General Directory for Catechesis tells us that we find content in Scripture, through witness (or apostolic work), in our Creed (our profession of faith, through our lived moral values and in our liturgies and in our prayer.⁹ In fact, the Catechism of the Catholic Church is structured around these same fundamental dimensions (or pillars) of the Christian life.¹⁰

What would you expect your parish formation programme to have covered?

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- The **Pentecost** event
- The work of the Holy Spirit in **Scripture**
- The Holy Spirit is received by asking in **faith**
- The Holy Spirit **strengthens** us in adversity
- The Holy Spirit is **God's guide** with us in life
- The Holy Spirit helps us to **pray**
- The Holy Spirit develops different **qualities of character** in us – 'gifts' and 'fruits'
- The Holy Spirit helps us to recall what Jesus taught and to **witness to Jesus**

An 'away – day' at the end of the confirmation prep. programme



Imagine you are given the task of leading a retreat day for the young people in the parish, to re-cap the essential teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit covered in the programme of preparation for confirmation.

How might you attract their attention and then re-visit the important aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit?

Some practical activities ...

Key idea	Activity Resource	Fun intro.
We wait in faith for the Holy Spirit & we are called to be witnesses	Dup. sheet outlining examples of the activity of the Holy Spirit from Genesis to Pentecost	The spider in the box experiment Faith grows & weakens Witnesses influence our faith
We must pray (talk & listen to God) 'face to face' to sense the Holy Spirit guiding us	Timeline of the life of Jesus Visualisation of the Pentecost event Little school of prayer – candidates summarise their own experiences	Communication exercise back to back The prayer bell exercise The road of life exercise
The gifts & fruits of the Holy Spirit	Match the cards - naming & explaining the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit	Useful gifts Unusual gifts Un-used gifts
The Holy Spirit develops different ministries leaders/prophets/teachers etc.	Character summaries – read individually then share in small groups (record in booklets)	Christians to the crocodiles

Some practical activities ...

Key idea	Activity Resource	Fun intro.
The Holy Spirit at work in the lives of Christians – power for living	DVD material eg 'Team Hoyt' and Oscar Romero (respond in booklets)	Giants, Dwarves and Wizards
Be witnesses to Jesus through servicing others N.B. Develop a 'Faith in Action' award scheme	A record card to be signed for involvement in pilgrimage, prayer/retreat, worship, serving others over time,	Pay – It - Forward
The Holy Spirit will help you to 'remember' all that Jesus taught us		Card memory game

Some house calls are different!
Would you have believed it?

