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Visit www.harcourtreligion.com
to find Research Links, Q & As,
Activities, and Life Connections.

Rite of Confirmation

"This makes clear the specific importance of confirmation for sacramental initiation, by which the faithful 'as members of the living Christ are incorporated into him and configured to him through baptism and through confirmation and the eucharist' [AG no. 36]."

Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation
Pope Paul VI, The Rites, p. 474

Catechism Connection

To deepen your own background and reflection on the gift of faith, refer to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 26, 144, 153–165.

Resources

Tell Me a Story: The Role of Narrative in the Faith Life of Catholics*

Rev. Robert Hater
Twenty-Third Publications
Describes how stories can enrich our faith practices and our understanding of Church teaching.

The Catholic Source Book*

Rev. Peter Klein
Harcourt Religion Publishers
Referenced to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, this book contains the essential teachings, beliefs, prayers, practices, and traditions of the Catholic Church.

Here I Am, Lord: The Letters and Writings of Ita Ford

Jeanne Evans, Ita Ford
Orbis Press
Describes the life of this martyr from her own writings and reflections.

Embracing the Leper

Gerard Straub
The San Damiano Foundation
St. Anthony Messenger Press
A look at solidarity in the human family from a human perspective.



*Available at www.harcourtreligion.com

Background

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.



John 16:13

connected through the spirit

What a promise we have received from Jesus! The Holy Spirit will lead his disciples into all truth. Cell phones and the wireless networks for computers work well only when the signal is strong enough to enable a connection. We have all experienced the frustration that occurs when we are out of signal range. The connection or relationship we have with God need never be out of range. The "signal strength" of our faith stays strong when our personal faith is nurtured by the Church through the action of the Holy Spirit. We have tremendous back up, so that our connection to God is never really severed, unless we ourselves choose to downplay, misuse, or ignore it.

A living reality

Jesus made this promise, that his disciples, as a group, would be led into all truth. Pentecost sealed this promise. It is a promise continued in the life of the Church today. As a community—one body formed by the gift of faith—we share in this tremendous potential for understanding and handing on the truth as revealed by God the Father in Christ. The Church, the whole People of God, continues to embrace, penetrate more deeply, and live more fully the gift of divine revelation. New ways are found to articulate ancient teachings, and the challenge of living out the faith in an ever-changing modern world is met because we are connected to our Triune God and one another. The heritage we have received from Jesus is a living reality that finds constant growth so that we ourselves, and our world, might be saved.

-  What are the things that most threaten your personal connection to God in the Church? How do you counter these things?
-  When have you most strongly felt the impact of the heritage you have received from Jesus as his disciple?



Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, help me to see and make connections to the truth that is revealed in the Scripture and in the life of Jesus, that I may grow closer to living the life to which the Father calls me. Amen.

Session Planner

	OBJECTIVES	SESSION PROCESS	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
Celebrate	15 minutes Pages 15-17 Preparation Reflection: faith RITUAL FOCUS Receiving a Candle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To experience a celebration of the word including Receiving a Candle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on the experience of faith Celebrate the opening prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the meaning of faith and believing and recall a significant moment of faith 	PROGRAM RESOURCES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Songs of Celebration: Confirmation CD OTHER RESOURCES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bible, table, white cloth, candle, large glass bowl of holy water, small candles or tapers for each candidate
	Pages 18-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore the meaning of the ritual action To explain the gift of faith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the activities Read about and discuss Paschal Candle Explore the gift and effects of faith 	★ Reflect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates reflect on the experience of receiving the lit candle and appreciating the community of faith 	
Remember	30 minutes Pages 20-21 FAITH FOCUS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does faith do? To explain that faith helps us see things differently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the Gospel of John and signs of faith Proclaim the Scripture story Matthew 8:23-27 Complete the activity 	★ Share <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates discuss Scripture passages and complete an open-ended sentence 	PROGRAM RESOURCES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> copies of Graphic Organizer 2, p. 28A OTHER MATERIALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bibles, parish bulletins OTHER RESOURCES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> parishoner witness (optional)
	Pages 22-23 FAITH FOCUS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the role of the community in faith development? To describe the role of the community in faith development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss personal and communal faith Explore ways the local parish supports faith development Discover what the Rite says about being a witness of faith Read about and discuss cloud and light 		
Live	15 minutes Pages 24-26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage candidates to reflect on the lives of witnesses of faith from the past and present To present the integration of the Catholic social principles into daily life To assist candidates in integrating the session through reflection and action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read about and discuss how Ita Ford and Ann S. displayed the Gifts of the Spirit Discuss the Catholic social teaching: Solidarity of the Human Family and the spiritual discipline of Christian decision making Introduce the activity Pray the closing prayer 	★ Respond <p>Candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete their reflections practice faith sharing 	PROGRAM RESOURCES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation Stories of Celebration Video/DVD (optional) OTHER MATERIALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embracing the Leper* Video/DVD (optional)
Journey Together	Pages 27-28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review different parts of the Journey Together pages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the candidates to meet with their sponsor or mentor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested activities for sponsor/mentor and candidate 	PROGRAM RESOURCES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsor & Mentor Handbook, p. 19

Plan Ahead

- ☐ Review the Session Planner.
- ☐ Gather program resources and other materials.
- ☐ Identify candidates to read aloud portions of the text.
- ☐ Think about faith and the Light of Christ and what they mean to you in your own spiritual life.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Notes

Preparing the Session

My Journey

Celebration Prepare yourself for the reflection prior to the celebration by

- ▶ reflecting on the image of cloud and light illustrated on page 15
- ▶ reflecting on experiences of faith and believing that you can share with the candidates

Christian Decision Making Read *Journeys Past* and *Journeys Today* (pages 24–25) and notice the importance of decision making in the stories of Ita Ford and Ann S.

- ▶ How do you make important decisions?
- ▶ In what ways do you consider God's will when making a decision?
- ▶ What part does reflection on Scripture have in your decision making?
- ▶ Who or what else do you consult when making a decision?

enriching the session

Communal Faith Invite a parishioner who has been through a pivotal time (birth, illness, teen children leaving home, death, divorce, raising kids) to come and speak to the group about how he or she experienced the deepening of faith through the support and sharing of the members of the parish faith community. Ask him/her to include the following:

- ▶ an appropriate description of the event
- ▶ how he/she reached out to the community
- ▶ the way he/she experienced the support of the community
- ▶ the role the praying community played in the experience

Catholic Sources Go online to www.harcourtreligion.com/confirmation/program/index.html and look under Resource Links for a link to the New Advent site. Find the Athanasian Creed and compare it to the Apostles' Creed, and the Nicene Creed, both of which can be found in *The Catholic Source Book*.*



*Available at www.harcourtreligion.com

Believe

with the spirit

Celebrate

2
Session

Use of the phrase "I have great faith in . . ." implies trust and confidence. Something about the person, the experience, or the object leaves the speaker with no doubt that he, she, or it will come through for them.

When I believe, I set my heart on something or someone.

Have faith. This phrase is often used to encourage people to stand firm in the knowledge or hope that a circumstance or a situation will turn out for the good.

Which of the three expressions above best describes or comes closest to how you experience your faith in the Risen Christ?

Recall an experience when your faith in the Risen Christ helped you to stand firm.

15

Objective

To prepare for the celebration by reflecting on faith and believing

Faith and Believing

Ask candidates to reflect on the words, images, and questions on page 15.

Share your own experiences of reflection on the image of cloud and light, as well as thoughts on faith and believing.

Encourage candidates to share the reflections or experiences that the images and questions evoked in them.

Invite them to prepare for the celebration by silently reflecting on their own experiences of faith and believing.

Reflection

Faith and believing The first step in liturgical catechesis is preparation. Here you invite candidates to prepare for the celebration by reflecting on their own experiences and knowledge of faith and believing in order to help them begin to enter into the meaning of the celebration and the ritual action of Receiving a Candle. Since the instructional phase of the process follows after the celebration, use this time to assist candidates in focusing on their experiences of faith and believing by asking clarifying questions or making affirming comments.

Objective

To experience a celebration of the word including Receiving a Candle

Preparation

Familiarize yourself with the movements of the ritual focus for Receiving a Candle. Prepare the prayer space ahead of time. You will need:

- ▶ a Bible
- ▶ a table covered with a white cloth
- ▶ a candle and a large glass bowl filled with holy water
- ▶ small tapers or candles for each candidate

Use the *Songs of Celebration*: Confirmation CD, track 2, to practice the suggested song "We Believe" or one of the optional music suggestions on page 17.

Select candidates to carry the candle and the Bible in procession and to read the General Intercessions. If the group of candidates is large, select another catechist to assist in the ritual of receiving the candle.

Gathering Rite

Procession with the Word

Invite candidates to assemble with their books for a procession.

- ▶ Direct the group to follow the people carrying the unlit candle and the Bible.
- ▶ As you process, lead candidates in singing, using the *Songs of Celebration*: Confirmation CD, track 2.
- ▶ When all are assembled, light the prayer candle.
- ▶ Begin prayer, and lead candidates in the Sign of the Cross.

Follow the order of prayer on pages 16–17.

gathering rite

Procession with the Word

Sing together.

We believe, we believe, we believe.

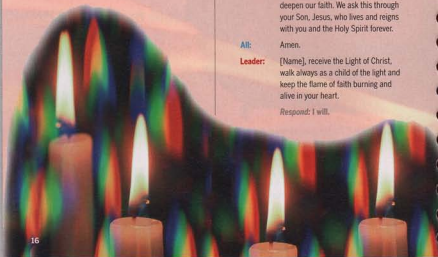
"We Believe," © 1983, 1994, Bernadette Farrell,
Published by OCP Publications

Leader: Let us pray.

All: Pray the Sign of the Cross together.

Leader: Lord, our God, we gather together as a people who believe in you and your promises. Open our hearts to know you more and believe in you more fully. Guide us to seek and find you as you continue to make yourself known to us through the Holy Spirit. We give you praise and thanks for the gift of our faith and the presence of the Holy Spirit in us.

All: Amen.



celebration of the word

Leader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, Lord.

Leader: Read Matthew 17:14–21.
The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflect silently.

What does the Gospel tell us about the power of faith? What image of nature describes your faith today?

RITUAL FOCUS

Receiving a Candle

Come forward as directed.

Leader: Heavenly Father, at Baptism, we entered into the faith of the Church. We received the Light of Christ. Hear our prayer as we recall our Baptism and seek to deepen our faith. We ask this through your Son, Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit forever.

All: Amen.

Leader: (Name), receive the Light of Christ, walk always as a child of the light and keep the flame of faith burning and alive in your heart.

Respond: I will.



Liturgical Background

Christ is our light Why do we receive a lit candle at Baptism? The Church community has always associated Christ with light. The teachings of Jesus give light to the mind, because they show divine truth. His example illuminates the path to walk as faithful followers. His death and Resurrection fill us with joy and dispel the darkness of sin. In Scripture Jesus calls himself "the light of the world" (John 8:12).

Each newly baptized Christian receives a lit candle to show that the light of the Risen Christ has been shared with each of them personally in the Sacrament of Baptism. The lit candle symbolizes a living faith, shining for all to see. It represents an Easter faith, bright with hope in the Resurrection. It is also a reminder that all the baptized are called to bear witness to Christ until he comes again.

General Intercessions

Leader: Let us pray:

Reader 1: That we will come to a deeper appreciation of the faith we received at Baptism, we pray to the Lord.

All: Hear us, O Lord.

Reader 2: That God will bless us with open eyes and hearts that will come to believe in him more fully and love him more faithfully, we pray to the Lord.

All: Hear us, O Lord.

Reader 3: That we will find, in this community of faith, support and strength to live as children of the light, we pray to the Lord.

All: Hear us, O Lord.

Reader 4: That in faith we will become more responsive to the needs of others, we pray to the Lord.

All: Hear us, O Lord.

Leader: Let us pray as Jesus has taught us:

Pray the Lord's Prayer together.

going forth

Leader: God, our Loving Father, we stand before you in faith. Send your Holy Spirit that we may act as witnesses of that faith to those around us. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Sing again the opening song.



17

celebration of the word

Proclaim the word and invite candidates to silently reflect on the question on page 16.

You may also wish to have candidates share their responses to the reflection with a partner.

RITUAL FOCUS

Receiving a Candle

- ▶ Invite candidates to come forward in one or two lines. If the group is large, have two people lead the ritual.

General Intercessions

- ▶ Invite selected individuals to pray the intercessions.
- ▶ Say or sing the response.

going forth

- ▶ Lead candidates in the closing prayer.
- ▶ As candidates process back to their seats, have them sing have them sing "We Believe" from the Songs of Celebration: Confirmation CD, track 2 or one of the optional music suggestions.

Optional Music Selections

"Here I Am Lord"

© 2001, Daniel L. Schutte, Published by OCP Publications

"If You Believe and I Believe"

Zimbabwean Traditional © 1991 Iona Community, GIA Publications

"We Believe"

Kevin Johnson © 2005, Lion and Lamb Publishing



Ritual Background

Receiving a candle At the beginning of the Easter Vigil, a new fire is kindled, and from it the Paschal Candle is lit. This large wax candle, symbolizing the Risen Christ, is then carried into the church joyfully, as the people sing "Thanks be to God!" in response to the words, "Christ our Light." At every celebration of Baptism, the Paschal Candle is present. From it, individual baptismal candles are lit for each of the newly baptized. The ritual of receiving a lit candle reminds us that Baptism is intimately connected to the Easter mystery. It is not just any candle. It is a symbol of our sharing in the light of the Risen Christ.

A family member or godparent usually hands on the baptismal candle to a newly baptized child of catechetical age or an adult, or he or she holds it if the newly baptized is an infant. Handing on the candle shows the important role of the godparent in passing on the faith of the community.

Objective

To explore the meaning of the ritual action of Receiving a Candle

To explain the gift of faith

Liturgical Catechesis

The purpose of this section is to help candidates reflect on their experience of the signs, rituals, prayers, and gestures of the celebration and to lead them to express their own meaning of the experiences. Allow candidates to share their experiences without commenting on them.



Reflect

on the Celebration

- ▶ On the board or chart paper, write the following questions: What did you see? What did you hear? What did you do?
- ▶ Guide candidates to review the celebration by reflecting on what happened in the prayer.
- ▶ Invite candidates to summarize what the celebration taught them about faith and the Light of Christ.

Your Confirmation Reflections

- ▶ Invite candidates to silently reflect and write their responses on a sheet of paper or in their own personal notebooks.
- ▶ Have volunteers share their responses with a partner.

Faith Sharing

- ▶ Organize candidates in pairs or small groups and assign each group an intercession for discussion.
- ▶ Invite a spokesperson from each group to share the highlights of their discussion.

Follow the order of prayer on pages 26-37.

Light of Christ



Reflect

on the Celebration

Your Confirmation Reflections

Use the following phrases as prompts for reflection:

- *During the celebration, I was thinking about...
- *The call to "walk always as a child of the light"...
- *The image of faith as a flame...

Faith Sharing

With a partner or in a small group, review the four General Intercessions from the celebration. Discuss your experiences and thoughts about appreciating one's Baptism and about the need for a community of faith.



SIGNS OF FAITH

Paschal Candle: Light is a primary symbol for Catholics. It is used throughout the Scriptures to describe God's presence and to show that believers have the responsibility to be light for the world.

- ▶ The Lord preceded the Israelites into the desert at night as a column of fire. (See Exodus 13:21.)
- ▶ We walk in the light of the Lord. (See Isaiah 2:5.)
- ▶ Believers must let their light shine. (See Matthew 5:14.)
- ▶ We are all children of the light. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:5.)
- ▶ God is the source of all light. (See Revelations 22:5.)

- ▶ Read the Scripture passages cited above. How would you relate them to your daily living?

Another name for the Paschal Candle is the Easter candle. It is a tall, white candle. During the Easter Vigil, the priest cuts a cross in the candle and traces the Greek letters Alpha above the cross and Omega below, which symbolizes that Jesus is the beginning and the end. Then he carves the numerals of the calendar year into the candle and lights the candle from the Easter fire. While the church is still in darkness, the Paschal Candle is carried in procession into the church as a symbol of the Risen Christ. The candles of the assembly are lit from the Paschal Candle. The Paschal Candle is lit at all the Masses of the Easter season, from Easter through Pentecost, and at Baptisms and funerals throughout the year.

- ▶ The lighting of the Paschal Candle at the Easter Vigil tells a story of faith. List what you think are the important parts of the story.

18



Teaching Tip

Brainstorming This is a technique to use with groups for everything from making a list to solving a problem. Here are three different ways to brainstorm:

- ▶ **Freewheeling brainstorm**—used to encourage free association among group members. Group members call out their ideas spontaneously, and a selected person records each idea as it is suggested.
- ▶ **Round-robin brainstorming**—used for an orderly brainstorming session that gives each member a chance to speak. Members take turns, in order, offering a single idea until everyone has had a chance to add to the list. The leader or recorder writes down each member's idea.
- ▶ **Slip method**—used when confidentiality is an issue or when you're brainstorming ideas about several subjects at the same time. Members write ideas down on a separate piece of paper rather than sharing them out loud. The ideas are collected, organized, and presented back to the group.

enlightened by christ

During the Baptism of a child, the priest or deacon refers to the Easter candle, which represents the presence of the Risen Christ in the world, and says, "Receive the Light of Christ." Then one of the parents or godparents lights the child's baptismal candle from the Easter candle. The priest tells the parents and godparents to keep the light "burning brightly." He prays that the "flame of faith" will be kept alive in the child's heart. The more the child comes to know the Risen Christ and grows in relationship with him, the more faith grows and the more he or she sees things through the life and teachings of Jesus.

faith and light

Light is one of the many images and words the Church uses to describe the mystery of faith. Faith is our free response to God, who first shares his great gift of love, and to all that he tells us about himself in revelation.

Revelation involves God's communication of himself in the Old and New Testaments, and especially through his own Son, Jesus Christ.

We begin to see and understand life better through the light of faith. We can see what we are called to be and do as disciples. Faith is a way of seeing—enlightened by the Risen Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, we grow to see the world as God does.

The Holy Spirit helps us see and hear with the eyes and ears of faith. Through faith, we can discover new possibilities for ourselves and new strengths and talents. We see the world in a different way from those who do not believe.



19

REFLECT

When difficult or senseless things happen, how does your faith help you see things differently from people who do not have faith?

SIGNS OF FAITH

Paschal Candle Obtain permission to bring the Paschal Candle into the session and have the candidates examine the marks that have been made during the Easter Vigil.

- ▶ Invite a volunteer to read aloud the first column of text on page 18.

- ▶ Have candidates write their responses to the first question in their books or on a separate sheet of paper.

- ▶ Ask candidates to silently read the second column of text and brainstorm the important parts of the story of faith.

enlightened by christ

Summarize the text for candidates.

REFLECT

- ▶ Share some examples of how faith helps you see things differently (examples: attitude to those in need, right to life, value of marriage, respect for creation) to begin the discussion.
- ▶ Allow candidates time to read the text and reflect on the questions.
- ▶ Ask volunteers to share their responses.

faith and light

- ▶ Write the words **faith** and **revelation** on the board or on chart paper.
- ▶ Explain each concept.
- ▶ Stress that revelation is the communication of God's own self to us and faith involves our response to that revelation.
- ▶ Select a volunteer to read aloud the last paragraph on the page.

Additional Activity

Being still Candidates are often caught up in activity and external stimuli and do not take much time for quiet and reflection, which will help them become more aware of God's presence in their own lives. Propose that they focus on taking time each day during this preparation time to be still and to establish conscious contact with the God who discloses himself to them. Suggest the following practices:

- ▶ Set a consistent time each day.
- ▶ Begin with a five-minute time slot and gradually increase it.
- ▶ Find a quiet spot inside or outdoors.
- ▶ Begin the time of prayer by taking slow, deep breaths and concentrating on the presence of God.
- ▶ Be still and pay attention.
- ▶ Keep a journal of thoughts and feelings about these quiet times.

Objective

To explain that faith helps us see things differently

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

- ▶ Distribute Bibles.
- ▶ Direct candidates to silently read the text. Then have pairs work together to find the seven miracles in the Gospel of John. (See the Scripture Background box below for answers.)
- ▶ Invite volunteers to explain how each of them is a calling forth of faith.

FAITH FOCUS

What does faith do?

List responses on the board or on chart paper.

- ▶ Summarize the first paragraph of the text.
- ▶ Select two candidates to read the Gospel: one taking the part of Jesus, the other the part of Nicodemus.
- ▶ Discuss the last paragraph on the page using the questions: When is it easy to believe and when is it difficult?

2. Discuss candidates' responses to the question. (Answers will vary.)

Seeing and Believing

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

The Gospel of John The style of the Gospel of John is very different from the styles of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This Gospel does not have parables or the Sermon on the Mount. In the Gospel of John, Jesus addresses these audiences: the disciples, the crowds, and his opponents. When reading this Gospel, pay attention to whom Jesus is speaking and notice how differently he approaches each group. Seven miracles are found in this Gospel, and five of the seven are described only in the Gospel of John. All the miracles are intended to call forth faith on the part of those who see them. Sometimes the miracles are followed by a debate with some of the Pharisees.

FAITH FOCUS

What does faith do?

The Gospel of John uses many symbols and images to describe the Good News and the kingdom. Light and darkness are two of these symbols. In the beginning of the Gospel, we hear that Jesus was a light that came into darkness. Later we read that when Jesus instructed Nicodemus about faith, Jesus talked about light and darkness again and referred to himself as the light of the world. In the story of the Man Born Blind, Jesus used light, darkness, and seeing to teach about the mystery of faith. The Jewish people would not believe the man's testimony about Jesus. They drove him out of the town. Jesus found him and said:

"Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind."

—John 9:35-39

Maybe it was easier for the man born blind to believe in Jesus because he had experienced the miracle of having his sight restored. But the Pharisees had seen the *miracle*, and they still did not believe. Faith is a gift of God, but it has two sides. God continues to make known his presence and to call humans to a faithful relationship with him. We must choose to recognize and respond to his presence.

- When have you recognized and responded to God's call to faith?



20



Scripture Background

Gospel of John Jesus is portrayed throughout all four Gospel accounts as one who works miracles. In the Gospel of John, these miracles also function as clues to the true identity of Jesus. The fourth Gospel describes miracles as signs that point the way to the significance of Jesus. Seven signs are reported in this Gospel:

- ▶ water turned into wine (2:1-11)
- ▶ ridding the official's son of fever (4:46-54)
- ▶ curing the invalid (5:1-9)
- ▶ feeding the great crowd (6:5-13)
- ▶ walking on water (6:16-20)
- ▶ bestowing sight to the man born blind (9:1-7)
- ▶ raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44)

The number of these reported signs might itself be deliberate on the part of the author of the Gospel. Seven signs parallel the biblical account of seven days of creation—as if to say that in Jesus himself we are made a new creation.

faith and fear

The Pharisees were not the only people who had a difficult time believing in Jesus; sometimes the Apostles questioned and doubted.

REFLECT

What events and/or occurrences in your life have helped you believe in Jesus? What things might have made it more difficult to believe?

Jesus stills the storm

And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"

And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

—Matthew 8:23-27

1. What is Jesus' message to the Apostles about belief?

2. How can this reading help your faith?

Share the Word

With a partner or in a small group, select two of the Scripture passages below. Read and discuss what they tell you about faith. Then write a paragraph to complete the open-ended sentence that follows.

Matthew 14:28-33	Mark 4:35-42	John 20:24-29
Matthew 15:21-28	Luke 18:35-43	Acts 3:1-10
Matthew 26:69-75	John 14:1-26	Hebrews 11:1-2

These Scriptures helped me see that faith and believing . . .

21



Cultural Background

Fishing It may seem unusual that the disciples who were fishermen—and therefore accustomed to water—would be so terrified of a storm. In Jesus' day many people never learned to swim. Fishing could be a risky business, especially because storms on the Sea of Galilee could catch boaters totally unaware due to bowl-like mountains that funnel the wind onto the waters. The disciples' terror was very real. A capsized boat could mean death. This experience definitely made a lasting impression on them. Versions of this episode appear in each of the synoptic Gospels. (See Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:36-41, and Luke 8:22-25.) While other people may be a conduit for healing and miracles, Jesus also does what God alone does when he calms the raging waters (Psalm 107:29-30).

REFLECT

- ▶ Allow some silent time for reflection.
- ▶ Ask the group to share their reflections with a partner.

faith and fear

- ▶ Discuss reasons the Apostles may have questioned or doubted Jesus.



Jesus stills the storm

Matthew 8:23-27

- ▶ Invite a strong reader to read the Scripture passage.
- ▶ Direct candidates to close their eyes or bow their heads and picture themselves in the reading.
- ▶ Re-read the story slowly.
- ▶ Invite candidates to share their thoughts and feelings as they pictured themselves in the reading.

1. Discuss the questions. (Answers will vary.)

Share the Word

- ▶ Organize the large group into smaller groups.
- ▶ Explain the directions and distribute Bibles and Graphic Organizer 2 on page 28A.
- ▶ Have candidates work in their small groups to read and discuss the Scripture passages.

- ▶ When the discussion is finished, have candidates work on their own to complete the Graphic Organizer and the open-ended sentence in their books.

Quick Review

- ▶ Faith enlightens us.
- ▶ Faith replaces fear.

Objective

To describe the role of the community in faith development

FAITH FOCUS

What is the role of the community in faith development?

List responses on the board or on chart paper.

DISCUSS

Discuss the question in the large group.

- ▶ Summarize the first paragraph of text on this page and emphasize the idea of lifelong faith.
- ▶ Ask candidates to share how their faith might be different in ten years.

If you have invited a parishioner to share his or her experience of communal faith, this would be an appropriate time to invite your guest in.

communal faith

- ▶ Write the word **communal** on the board or on chart paper.
- ▶ Direct candidates to read the first paragraph and find one reason why it is important to belong to and participate in the Church.
- ▶ Using the first set of bulleted items, discuss how the local parish embodies these communal aspects. You may wish to have some parish bulletins available for candidates to peruse for examples.
- ▶ Introduce the second set of bullets.
- ▶ Tell candidates to read the bullets silently and then rate themselves, on a scale of 1–5 (with 5 being the highest), on how well they are actively growing in their faith.
- ▶ Have them share their ratings with a partner, if they feel comfortable doing so.

Personal Faith

DISCUSS

What role does belonging and participating in a Church have in a person's faith journey? What about in your faith journey?

FAITH FOCUS

What is the role of the community in faith development?

Faith is a lifelong relationship with God. Each of us has a very personal and unique relationship with him. As your faith continues to deepen, you will see things from a different point of view. You will grow in your trust of God and feel more connected to him and his plan for you and the world. This is what the Sacraments of Initiation celebrate—your new connections and deepening bonds with God and the Church.

communal faith

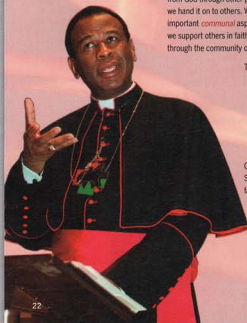
While faith and the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation are personal acts, they are much more than that. They are actions of the Church. Just as we cannot live alone, we cannot believe alone. We receive our faith from God through other people like our parents and family members, and we hand it on to others. We are all links in the chain of faith. Faith has an important **communal** aspect—we are carried by the faith of others, and we support others in faith through our beliefs, prayers, and actions. It is through the community of the Church that our faith is fed and supported.

The Church

- ▶ teaches us the language of faith through prayer and doctrines (official teachings)
- ▶ preserves the memory of Jesus' words and actions in the Scriptures and sacraments
- ▶ proclaims and maintains the mysteries of faith in the creeds

Guided by the Church and inspired by the Holy Spirit, we grow in both our personal and communal faith through actions such as these:

- ▶ talking to God
- ▶ reading and thinking about the Scriptures
- ▶ participating in the communal worship of church, especially in the sacraments
- ▶ going out in service to those in need
- ▶ learning more in parish programs



Facilitator Background

Faith development Faith is a gift of God, but it also requires a human act. Faith involves God's call and a response on our part. Faith is a theological virtue from God, enabling us to believe in him and all he has revealed to us. Faith develops in stages.

- ▶ **Experienced faith**—In the early years, a child experiences and takes on the faith of significant adults in his or her life.
- ▶ **Affiliative faith**—As their world expands, the faith of children and adolescents is affected by their peer groups and the outside world. It is nurtured by being involved in rituals of the larger community and being active participants in the life of the community.
- ▶ **Searching faith**—This stage of faith development occurs when people "leave home" both literally and figuratively. Crises can and do move people back and forth into this stage from owned faith.
- ▶ **Owned faith**—In this stage an individual takes upon himself or herself the values and beliefs of faith as one's own because it is what he or she chooses to believe and act on.

completion of baptism

The Holy Spirit began the journey of faith with you at Baptism. In Confirmation you will again be blessed with the special Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Confirmation is necessary for the completion of the grace of Baptism. During his homily, the bishop or priest who will confirm you will remind you of your Baptism. He will talk about the importance of your responding to faith in your life.

In these or similar words, he will say the following:

You have already been baptized into Christ and now you will receive the power of his Spirit and the Sign of the Cross on your forehead. You must be witnesses before all the world to his suffering, death, and Resurrection; your way of life should at all times reflect the goodness of Christ....

Be active members of the Church, alive in Jesus Christ. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, give your lives completely in the service of all, as did Christ who came not to be served but to serve.

So now before you receive the Spirit, I ask you to renew the profession of faith you made in Baptism or your parents or godparents made in union with the whole Church.

Rite of Confirmation, 23

The Sacrament of Confirmation joins you more closely to the Church and gives you a special strength of the Holy Spirit, which will help you share and explain your faith with others in word and action.

CATHOLIC SOURCES

Creeds All Christian creeds refer to the three Persons of the Trinity and are developed from baptismal rituals. These three creeds, or professions of faith, have been used by the Church:

- The Athanasian Creed, which stresses belief in the Incarnation and the Trinity
- The Apostles' Creed, which is the earliest and simplest expression of Christian belief
- The Nicene Creed, which is a continuation of the creeds drawn up at the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople. It summarizes salvation history, and it is the creed ordinarily professed at Sunday liturgies.

CATHOLIC SOURCES

- ▶ Explain that creeds are brief formulae of the Church, or short statements of belief.
- ▶ Read aloud the Athanasian Creed. Have the candidates compare it to either the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed, both of which can be found in *The Catholic Source Book*.*

completion of baptism

- ▶ Invite volunteers to read aloud the text.
- ▶ When they have finished reading, direct their attention back to the words of the Rite, discuss:
 - the meaning of being witnesses
 - what being an active member means for candidates.

SYMBOL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Cloud and Light Have a volunteer read the text.

- ▶ Have candidates write their answers in their books.

SYMBOL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Cloud and Light In the Old Testament, the images of cloud and light often appear together when the Lord is revealing himself. With Moses on Mount Sinai (see Exodus 24:15-18), the meeting tent (see Exodus 33:9-10), and the wandering in the desert (see Exodus 40:36-38), the cloud that reveals Yahweh is both radiant and murky. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit "overshadows" the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation (see Luke 1:35); at the Transfiguration (see Luke 9:34-35) the cloud overshadows Jesus, Moses, and Elijah; Peter, James, and John hear a voice from the cloud that says: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" (Luke 9:35).

- ▶ Cloud and light are almost opposites. Why are they good images for the Holy Spirit?

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Catholic Sources

Catechesi Tradendae The word *catechesis* comes from a Greek word that means to "echo" or "resound," to teach or instruct about the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is an essential process, aimed at maturing initial faith and instructing a person through a systematic knowledge of Jesus and Church teachings. It is an ordered and systematic initiation into God's revelation, manifested in Jesus Christ, that brings people and communities to deeper faith. It hands on the faith of the community through a variety of ecclesial activities, such as instruction, liturgy, prayer, and action for justice.

In this apostolic exhortation, John Paul II says:

Whatever be the level of his responsibility in the Church, every catechist must constantly endeavor to transmit by his teaching and behavior the teaching and life of Jesus.... Every catechist should be able to apply to himself the mysterious words of Jesus: "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me [John 7:16]." (6)

Quick Review

- ▶ We grow in faith by being part of the Church.
- ▶ The Sacrament of Confirmation joins us more closely to Christ and the Church.



*Available at www.harcourtreligion.com

Objective

To encourage candidates to reflect on the lives of witnesses of faith from the past and present

To present the integration of the Catholic social principles into daily life

To assist candidates in integrating the session through reflection and action

JOURNEYS PAST

Ita Ford

► Direct candidates to silently read the time line and to look for:

- ways Ita was supported by the communal faith of the Church
- how Ita brought her light to the world

► Discuss their responses in the large group.

YOUR JOURNEY

Faith in Action

Solidarity of the Human Family

► Ask candidates to silently read the text and connect it to the life of Ita Ford.

You may wish to show *Embracing the Leper* to enrich the session and give an example of one person's solidarity with the poor.



Encourage candidates to visit www.harcourtreligion.com to discover more about Catholic social teachings.

Witnesses of Faith

JOURNEYS PAST

- 1940** Ita is born in Brooklyn, New York.
1960 She graduates from Marymount College.
1961 She enters the Maryknoll Sisters.
1964 Ita leaves Maryknoll Missionary Order due to health problems and works awhile as an editor.
1971 She reappplies to Maryknoll and is accepted.
1972 Assigned to the missions in Chile, Ita goes with her friend Sister Carla.
1980 In March, Ita and Carla respond to a call from El Salvador's Bishop Oscar Romero—just before his assassination. In June, they begin working at the Emergency Refugee Committee in Chalatenango. In August, while returning a political prisoner to his home, Ita and Carla are caught in a flash flood. Carla drowns after pushing Ita to safety. Maura Clarke becomes Ita's new missionary partner. At a closing liturgy on December 1 in Nicaragua, Ita reads this passage from one of Archbishop Romero's final homilies: "Christ invites us not to fear persecution because,



Ita Ford
(1940-1980)

believe me, brothers and sisters, the one who is committed to the poor must run the same fate as the poor, and in El Salvador we know what the fate of the poor signifies: to disappear; be tortured, to be held captive—and to be found dead."

The following day, Ita and Maura return to El Salvador and are picked up by missionaries Dorothy Kazel, an Ursuline sister, and Jean Donovan, a layperson. After the women leave the airport in San Salvador, several members of the National Guard of El Salvador stop their vehicle and take the four women to an isolated spot where the soldiers rape and murder them.

"Am I willing to suffer with the people here... Can I say to my neighbors, 'I have no solutions to this situation; I don't know the answers, but I will walk with you, search with you, be with you?'"

YOUR JOURNEY

Solidarity of the Human Family

Faith in Action

The Light of Christ in us at age seventeen may not be as bright as Ita Ford's at age thirty-two or when she began her missionary work with the poor in Chile. But "this light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!" Like Ita Ford, we can choose to believe that God calls us to be in solidarity with others who are hurting. We can contact Maryknoll's Office of Global Concerns about their work overseas and find out how we can be in solidarity with one of their projects. Maybe together, with others around the world, we can work with such faith and courage that we will move the mountain of injustice at least a little in our lifetime.



Visit www.harcourtreligion.com to discover more about Catholic social teachings.

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Faith in Action: Catholic Social Teaching

Solidarity of the Human Family Since God is the source of all human life, all people are united in one human family. Practicing the principle of solidarity is more than feeling concern or sadness when others suffer misfortune. It is a serious and constant commitment for the good of all our brothers and sisters, whether they are our biological brothers and sisters or our brothers and sisters in the human family. We practice the principle of solidarity when, regardless of our nationality, race, ethnic roots, or how rich or poor we are, we live as members of one human family, knowing that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, and it is our responsibility to contribute to the common good.



Visit www.harcourtreligion.com/confirmation/program/index.html and look under Resource Links for a link to the Maryknoll Missionary or Catholic Relief Services for more information on this topic.

Journeys today

Living Witness

I am a doctor at a family clinic for the poor in a large Midwestern city. As I see it, I got here by making small choices. In fact, I see my whole life as a series of small choices.

In high school I was very influenced by the Sisters of Loreto, especially in the way they integrated justice and civil rights. In those years, I began to see that there were no boundaries that separated me from any other human being.

I wanted to be a medical missionary. So I chose to go to medical school. During my residency in the deep south, I became aware of terrible injustices and divides between people because of race and economic differences. It threw me off balance and I realized I could not be a doctor there. So I left and went to an inner city hospital that dealt with a bigger world and confronted the inequity of education, healthcare, and benefits. That choice provided me with wonderful mentors who taught me how to think, solve problems, and be creative when it came to caring about others.

When I finished my residency, I went to Thailand to work in a refugee camp. I was a missionary at last, but I soon realized that it was not my calling. It did not fit me and when something doesn't fit, I have learned it is not what God is calling me to. I made the choice to return to the States and found a medical setting where there were no boundaries that separated the poor from good medical care.

Ann S.



Journeys today

Living Witness

- ▶ Have the candidates silently read the text and look for the parts of the story they most identify with.
- ▶ Discuss:
 - the importance of the choices we make
 - the role of mentors in one's life
 - knowing God's call

You may wish to show the story of Dr. Ann Sly from *Confirmation Stories of Celebration*, Segment 3.

YOUR JOURNEY

Faith Walk

- ▶ Encourage the candidates to silently read the text and reflect on the importance of Christian decision making.



Christian Decision Making

This is a process of making choices and decisions that are based on faith and the desire to do God's will. It involves being open to the Holy Spirit's guidance and calling on him to lead or enlighten people as to what God wants them to do and be. These are some questions to ask when you are making decisions:

- > Is my choice governed by love of God, self, or others?
- > Does it use or enhance the gifts and talents God has given me?
- > Does it flow from the teachings of the Scriptures and Church doctrine?

Faith Walk

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Faith Walk

Christian decision making God made humans and gifted them with reason and free will. As a result, we have the ability to choose how we will act. It is this freedom that gives us dignity and control over our own lives. Freedom makes us responsible for our actions and allows us to grow in virtue. At the same time, freedom holds out the possibility of sinning. The capacity to choose between good and evil rests in one's conscience, which is informed by the Holy Spirit and the values of the Church. To make good Christian decisions, one needs to rely on the Holy Spirit and the Church.

Respond in Faith

Your Confirmation Reflections

- Use background music to create quiet reflective time.
- Have candidates complete the written reflection.

Faith Sharing

- Organize the large group into smaller groups of three or four for silent reflection and discussion.

closing prayer

- Gather candidates around the prayer table.
- Begin with the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray the prayer aloud together.
- Lead candidates in singing "We Believe" or one of the optional suggestions on page 17.

Solidarity of the Human Family

Ask candidates to silently read the text and connect it to the life of the Lord.

You may wish to show candidates how I agree to enter the world and give an example of one person's solidarity with the world.



Encourage candidates to visit www.hrcatholic.org to discover more about Catholic social teachings.

Respond in Faith

Your Confirmation Reflections

*Think about the people and events of your life as a faith journey and sketch a map or path naming the people, places, rest stops, destinations, and detours that have been part of your journey.

*Write about one thing you learned in this session that you want to pay attention to for your own faith development.

Faith Sharing

In small groups discuss the part of this session that

- most interested you
- most challenged you

Spend some time in group silence thinking about what this session is calling you to change or strengthen in your relationship with God, yourself, or others. At the appropriate time, share this with the group.

closing prayer

Come, Holy Spirit,

Open my eyes that I may see the events of my life through the eyes of faith.

Open my ears that I may hear the word of God spoken to me.

Open my heart that I may grow more in love with God who has loved me first.

Open my hands and move my feet in faith to serve others.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord.

Amen.



Respond in Faith Together

FAITH FOCUS

Discuss the following beliefs together. Focus on how these beliefs have or could have an effect on your lives today. Refer to the lesson if necessary.

- ▶ Faith is based on God's great gift of revelation. Among other things, revelation tells us that God the Father communicated himself and his plan for all creation by sending us his own Son, Jesus.
- ▶ Faith has two sides: God's call and our response.
- ▶ Being a member of the Church strengthens and supports our faith.

RITUAL FOCUS

During the celebration, the candidates received a candle and were reminded of the call to be children of the light. At the end of your time together, pray together for one another using these or similar words:

*May Christ always be our light.
May we walk always as children of the light.
May we see life through the eyes of faith.
May our journey of faith bring light to others.
Amen.*

ACT TOGETHER

At the conclusion of the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, the bishop or priest will say these words:

*This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church.
We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Bible of Confirmation, 23*

Together select two persons from the parish community who are witnesses of faith. Set up a conversation with them to discuss how they nurture their faith and how and why they are proud to profess it in their daily lives.

Your Plan Write about your conversation:

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Respond in Faith Together

Review the parts of the Journey Together pages with the candidates.

Encourage them:

- ▶ to review and discuss the **FAITH FOCUS** statements with their sponsor or mentor.
- ▶ to ask their sponsor or mentor to pray the prayer in the **RITUAL FOCUS**.
- ▶ to do the **ACT TOGETHER** activity with their sponsor or mentor.

Journey Together

with your sponsor or mentor

Respond in Faith Together

Review the parts of the Journey Together pages with the candidates.

Encourage them:

- ▶ to share their reflections on **BEING CATHOLIC** with their sponsor or mentor.
- ▶ to review and discuss the **FAITH WALK** with their sponsor or mentor.
- ▶ to complete the **TOGETHER** activity with their sponsor or mentor.

Journey Together

with your sponsor or mentor

BEING CATHOLIC

Together: Discuss these quotes from famous Catholics. Focus on how they apply to your life.

"Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe."

— Saint Augustine

"A strong, lively faith is the foundation of all virtue."

— Catherine McAuley

"Faith has to do with things that are not seen, and hope with things that are not in hand."

— Saint Thomas Aquinas

Faith Walk

Christian decision making: Talk about the story in *Journeys Today*.


- ▶ Identify areas in your life where making more decisions based on faith would help you.
- ▶ Discuss how the Scriptures and Church doctrine affect your daily decision-making.

Together: Reflect on your own faith journey. Recall the people and events that have been significant in the deepening of your faith.

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Looking Ahead

For Session 3, you will need:

- ▶ a Bible for each candidate
- ▶ a large glass bowl filled with holy water
- ▶ a candle
- ▶ a prayer table
- ▶  Songs of Celebration: Confirmation CD
- ▶ copies of Graphic Organizer 3 on p. 42A for each candidate
- ▶ optional video/DVD:
 - Endless Exodus