

## Session 4

# Receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation



Dear Jesus,  
You breathed the Holy Spirit on your Apostles and gave them the gift of your peace. Please prepare my heart to be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation. May your peace always rule my heart and my mind. In your name I pray. Amen.



## Introduction

Signs are important. They tell us about what is going on—helping us know the right direction to take, warning us about danger, or telling us where to find something or how to use it. The sacraments of the Church use signs, too—the words, actions, and materials used in celebrating the sacraments are important signs that tell us about the grace that God is giving to us and what the sacraments are really doing in our souls. In Confirmation, the actions of the laying on of hands and the anointing with oil reveal to us the reality of the grace, power, and presence of the Holy Spirit that we receive in the sacrament.



## Let's Read God's Word

### Jesus Breathes the Holy Spirit on the Apostles

From John 20:19–22

On the evening of Easter Sunday, the Apostles were gathered together. They had locked the doors because they were afraid that the people who had killed Jesus would kill them, too. The Apostles had heard the news of the Resurrection, but none of them had seen Jesus for themselves yet.

Suddenly, Jesus was there in the room with them! He said to his Apostles, “Peace be with you” (John 20:19). Then he showed them the marks of the nails in his hands and the place where the spear had pierced his side. It was really Jesus! The Apostles were very happy to see Jesus.

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you” (John 20:21). Then he told them that he was going to be sending them on a very special mission. The Father had sent Jesus to share the Good News of his love with the world and bring people back into relationship with God. Now Jesus was sending his Apostles out to continue that same mission. But first Jesus had to give them the gift of his Spirit. The Gospel of John tells us what Jesus did next:

“And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,  
‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 19:22).

In the Sacrament of Confirmation, Jesus is breathing the same Holy Spirit on you and giving you the peace and strength of the Holy Spirit to prepare you for a special mission too.



## Let's Talk About It

Why do you think Jesus told his Apostles, "Peace be with you"? What does this have to do with the Sacrament of Confirmation?

# Let's Learn About Our Faith

## Receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation

Before receiving Confirmation, one should be prepared to receive the sacrament, grow in prayer, and learn more about Confirmation about the many ways that Confirmation calls us to live as followers of Jesus. In addition, we need to be in the state of grace (not guilty of mortal sin) in order to receive Confirmation, so we should go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving our Confirmation.

When preparing for Confirmation, it is also important that we know and understand what will be happening when we receive the sacrament. The **Rite** of Confirmation refers to the way the sacrament is conferred: the actions performed, the materials used, and the words spoken. The actions and materials and words of the sacrament are signs that reveal to us the grace that is given in our souls when we receive the sacrament.

The bishop is the **minister** of the Sacrament of Confirmation. This means that the bishop is one who has the authority to confer or perform the sacrament. He has this authority because he is a successor of the Apostles and this also shows that Confirmation goes all the way back to the time of the Apostles. The



bishop, as a leader in the Church, also confers Confirmation to show that Confirmation strengthens our relationship with the Church, and that we are given the mission of the Church to go out and be witnesses to Christ. The bishop can give priests the authority to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation when he is unable to do it himself.

The Rite of Confirmation begins with the renewal baptismal promises and the profession of faith. When



you were baptized, your parents and your godparents made these baptismal promises and the profession of faith for you. Before you are confirmed, you will make these promises and profession of faith on your own. In the baptismal promises and profession of faith, you promise to reject Satan and sin in your life and then profess that you believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The renewal of your baptismal promises also shows that Confirmation completes the graces of your Baptism.

## Key Words

### Rite

The way the sacrament is celebrated, including the words, actions, and materials used in the sacrament.

### Minister

The one who has the authority and power to confer or give the sacrament.

## Key Words

### Consecrate

To set someone or something apart for a special purpose or mission.

### Anoint

To put oil on someone or something. In salvation history, anointing is a sign of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

### Sacred Chrism

A mixture of olive oil and balsam (a sweet-smelling substance that comes from certain trees) that is blessed by a bishop and used in Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and the consecration of a new church.

Next, the bishop lays his hands on those receiving Confirmation. Throughout salvation history, the laying on of hands has been a sign of calling down the presence and power of God on someone. The laying on of hands also meant that someone or something was **consecrated** or set apart for a special purpose or mission. This is how the Apostles called down the Holy Spirit on believers in the early Church, just as we saw in the story of the Apostles Peter and John laying hands on newly baptized Christians to call down the Holy Spirit on them.

The laying on of hands in the Sacrament of Confirmation goes back to the Apostles themselves, but early in the history of the Church, the anointing with a perfumed oil was added to the Rite of Confirmation. When you are confirmed, the bishop lays hands on you in Confirmation, he is calling down

the presence of the Holy Spirit on you, and he is consecrating you for a special mission. Through this laying on of hands, you also receive the fullness of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit to help you live out your mission as a follower of Christ.

The bishop will also **anoint** you with **Sacred Chrism**, making the Sign of the Cross on your forehead with this blessed oil. As he does this, he will say, “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit,” and we respond, “Amen.” This anointing with oil is the sign that you are receiving the permanent mark or seal of the Holy Spirit in your soul and you are being clothed with his power, just like the Apostles received the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.



After the anointing, the bishop will say, “Peace be with you,” to which you respond, “And with your Spirit.” The bishop is repeating the same words that Jesus said to the Apostles when he breathed on them and they received the Holy Spirit. In Confirmation, you receive the same Spirit of peace that Jesus gave to his Apostles.

## Let's Talk About It

What is the meaning of the laying on of hands?

## Key Words

### Messiah

Hebrew word meaning "anointed one" and the title for the promised savior of God's people. Jesus is the Messiah.

### Christ

Greek translation of "messiah" or "anointed one."



## Did You Know?

### Anointing

Throughout salvation history, anointing with oil was a sign that the Holy Spirit was with someone for a special mission. Priests, prophets, and kings were all anointed with oil to show that they had a special mission that came from God. The Hebrew word for "anointed one" is *Messiah*. This is the title that was given to the savior that God promised to send to his people. The Messiah would be the perfect priest, prophet, and king.

In the Old Testament of the Bible, the prophet Isaiah foretold that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the Messiah or the anointed one who would come to save us from sin. (See Isaiah 6:2) When the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan River, he revealed that Jesus is the true **Messiah**—the one on whom the Spirit rests, the Anointed One. Jesus is also called **Christ** because "Christ" is the Greek word that means "anointed one."

We are called Christians (from the Greek word "Christ") because we are also anointed ones. We are anointed with Sacred Chrism in Baptism and Confirmation to show that the Holy Spirit has come upon us and marked us with his seal. This anointing is a sign that we are receiving from Jesus his own Spirit, the Spirit of the Messiah, and through this are receiving a share in Jesus's mission and that the Holy Spirit is with us to give us the power to live out this mission.





## Did You Know?

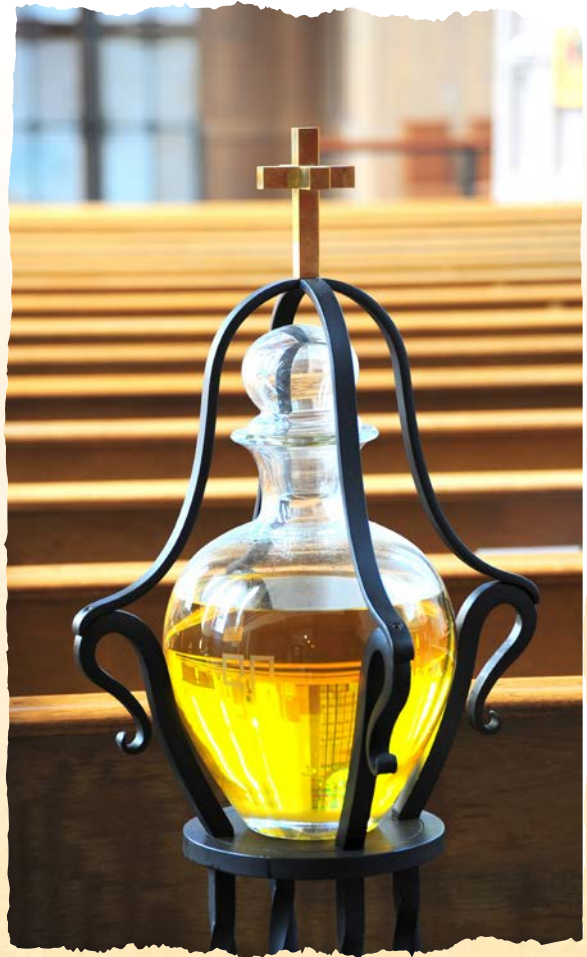
### Sacred Chrism

The word "chrism" comes from the Greek word that means "anointing." Chrism is the name given to a special oil that is blessed by a bishop, usually in a special Mass called the Chrism Mass during Holy Week. It is used in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders. This is why Confirmation is called "Chrismation" in the Eastern Churches. These three sacraments all leave a permanent mark on the soul of the person receiving them. The anointing with Sacred Chrism is a sign of this permanent mark.

Chrism is also a sign of consecration. In Baptism and Confirmation, we are consecrated—or set apart—for the worship and service of God. Chrism is also used when a new church is consecrated.

Chrism is made from olive oil and balsam.

Balsam is a sweet-smelling substance that is made from the sap of certain trees. The sweet smell of chrism is a sign that we are called to bear witness to Christ so that our lives will give off "the aroma of Christ" (or the sweet smell of Christ) in the world, as Saint Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2:15.





## Let's Do Activities

### I Spy the Signs of Confirmation

Each of the sacraments have special words, actions and materials that are signs used in the rites. Search the picture to find the signs and other important elements of the Sacrament of Confirmation. These signs show us in very real ways how God is working in our souls.



### WORD BANK

sacred chrism

be sealed

dove

laying on of hands

gift of the Holy Spirit

bishop

peace be with you

Amen

## I Profess My Faith

As part of your Confirmation rite you will be asked to renew your baptismal promises, because Confirmation completes the grace of your Baptism. This gives you a chance to loudly and clearly say "I DO!" to the promises your parents made for you on the day of your Baptism. Take a minute to read and reflect on the baptismal promises below. Then write "I DO!" on the lines as a profession of your own faith!

**Do you renounce Satan and all his works  
and all his empty show?**

I DO!

**Do you believe in God the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth?**

**Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death,  
and was buried, rose again from the dead,  
and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?**

**Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who came upon the apostles at Pentecost  
and today is given to you sacramentally in confirmation?**

**Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church,  
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?**

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

AMEN!

## Let's Recall and Reflect

What are the signs of the Rite of Confirmation (the actions, materials, and words)? What do these signs reveal about what is happening in our souls at this sacrament?

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What does it mean to be consecrated? What does this have to do with Confirmation?

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**Who is the minister of Confirmation?** The bishop is the minister of Confirmation. The bishop may delegate the authority for the sacrament to a priest.

**What actions does the bishop do during Confirmation?** The bishop lays hands on the ones being confirmed and then anoints their foreheads with Sacred Chrism.

**What words does the bishop say when anointing the forehead with Sacred Chrism?**  
"Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**What is Sacred Chrism?** Sacred Chrism is a mix of olive oil and balsam which is blessed by the bishop. It is used in Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and also the consecration of a new church.

## Story of a Saint



### Saint Katharine Drexel (1858–1955)

Katharine Drexel was born into a wealthy family in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her parents taught her the two great commandments: to love God and to love her neighbor.

After her parents died, Katharine inherited a lot of money. At the age of 33, Katharine founded a religious congregation dedicated to serving Native Americans and African Americans and others who were ignored or looked down upon by many other people of her time. The peace of the Holy Spirit filled Katharine's heart and life. In the power and strength of the Holy Spirit, she brought God's love to many other people.

## Let's Pray

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. Amen.

—Psalm 51:10–11, 15

### Memory Verse

*“[God] has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”*

—2 Corinthians 1:22

## Let's Read a Story

# A Great Race

"It's time for the Camp W Wacky Race," Buck announced to the campers on Friday morning. "The track path circles the cabins."

"That doesn't seem very hard," Kim whispered to Sam. Sam had been chosen to run for the Dove Cabin.

"Runners, please step forward!" Buck called out.

Sam lined up next to Nick. He was the runner for the Fire Cabin. Runners from the other two cabins joined them. Then the cabin counselors put a large box in front of each runner. The boxes were full of weird articles of clothing.

"Put these on," Buck said.

Sam was confused as she put on cowboy boots and a football helmet. Then she fastened big pads to her knees and slid inflated swimming wings on her arms. A belt with pouches of beanbags was strapped around her waist. The other runners wore the same weird things.

Last of all, a large backpack was put on their shoulders. Sam thought hers felt wobbly and squishy.

"Those are filled with water balloons," Buck told them.

"This is crazy," Nick whispered to Sam.

The runners shuffled to the starting line. The whistle suddenly blew.

The four runners waddled onto the path. The equipment knocked and clattered. Sam heard a water balloon pop. Water ran into her right cowboy boot. She tried to run but couldn't. She heard laughter from the campers.

Sam came around the first cabin. The runners were summoned to benches off to the side.

“Sit down, Sam,” a counselor named Holly said and gave her a drink of water. Then she took off Sam’s helmet. “Go!” Holly said.



Sam pushed on around the next cabin. Holly was waiting at another bench. She stopped Sam again. This time Holly took off Sam's beanbag belt. At the next cabin, Holly took off the knee pads and swimming wings. At the next, Sam was given her sneakers to replace the boots. Finally, the backpack was taken from her shoulders.

Sam realized she was in the lead. She now ran fast for the finish line. She heard runners behind her. She glanced over her shoulder. Her foot caught a rock. She stumbled and fell, scraping her knees.

Nick stopped. "Get up!" Nick said, and pulled her up. As Sam found her footing again, a runner from the Wind Cabin raced past.

"Thank you," Sam said to Nick. They ran together. But it was too late. The Wind Cabin runner crossed the finish line. The other campers cheered.

Later, the campers gathered on the lawn. Sam now had bandages on her skinned knees.

"What was the point of that race?" a camper asked Father Cliff.

"Good question!" Father Cliff said. "The Bible says that life is like running a great race. As we run, we often carry things that slow us down—things like sin. But the good news is that we don't run alone. Jesus and His Church helps us get rid of the bad things that hold us back and gives us the things we need to run better. And there are the saints who have gone ahead of us, cheering us on to the finish line."

Father Cliff pointed to Nick. "You stopped to help your sister when she fell. Well done! We should all help each other in the race of life."

Nick smiled. "Does that mean I can ride on the powerboat today?"

Father Cliff laughed and said, "You'll get your reward in heaven."



## Let's Talk About It

What would happen if you were trying to run a long race, but you had the wrong equipment? (Extra bulky clothing, heavy bag, no water, etc.)