

A High School Confirmation Program

saint mary's press

Anointed in the Spirit

Catechist Guide

Rita Burns Senseman

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Introduction

Welcome to Anointed in the Spirit

Anointed in the Spirit is a Confirmation program for high school students. This program is designed to guide their preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation through a process of liturgical catechesis that focuses on the Rite of Confirmation. By drawing themes from the Rite of Confirmation, sessions 1 through 8 prepare the candidates for full participation in the Sacrament. Two additional sessions are intended to support reflection after the celebration of Confirmation. This catechist guide provides fully designed plans for all ten sessions.

In addition to this guide, the Anointed in the Spirit program includes the following:

- a candidate handbook with eight chapters that correspond to the eight preparation sessions as well as three appendixes that provide the following:
 - a collection of prayers
 - a summary of Catholic beliefs
 - a list of saints and their causes
- a program director manual, which contains helpful guidance on all aspects of leading a Confirmation program
- a guide for sponsors

This introduction to the catechist guide includes the following:

- an overview of the catechist guide
- tips for leading the sessions
- information about the role of the catechist
- information about the theology of Confirmation

Overview of the Catechist Guide

Anointed in the Spirit uses an approach called liturgical catechesis. This involves a three-part process: (1) preparation for Confirmation, (2) participation in Confirmation, and (3) reflection after the celebration of Confirmation.

Preparation for Confirmation

This catechist guide includes eight sessions designed to prepare the candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Rite of Confirmation is

the point of departure for the sessions. Each one focuses on an aspect of Confirmation. The candidate handbook has a chapter that corresponds to each one of these sessions. (Consult with your program director for information about additional steps that may be part of your parish's Confirmation program, such as a retreat, service work, or conversations with sponsors.)

Here is an overview of the preparation session topics:

Session 1: Being a Candidate

The first session relates to the presentation of the candidates (*Rite of Confirmation*, 21) and enables the participants to explore the idea of being a candidate and being presented to the bishop.

Session 2: Baptism: Waters of New Life

This session invites the participants to reflect on their own celebration of Baptism and explore the significance of Baptism for their lives. Deepening one's understanding of the meaning of Baptism is an important part of preparing for Confirmation because of Confirmation's close relationship to Baptism.

Session 3: Renewing Baptismal Promises

This session prepares the candidates for the Renewal of Baptismal Promises that takes place during Confirmation (*Rite of Confirmation*, 23). The participants consider the nature of Baptismal Promises and explore the meaning and significance of renouncing sin and professing faith in God.

Session 4: The Laying On of Hands

This session explores the meaning and significance of the laying on of hands in the Rite of Confirmation (*Rite of Confirmation*, 24–25). The candidates hear the story of Pentecost, review symbols of the Holy Spirit, and recognize the working of the Holy Spirit in the world.

Session 5: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The focus of this session is the consecratory prayer in which the bishop asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit upon the candidates and to give them the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (*Rite of Confirmation*, 25). The participants work with a variety of scenarios as a way to deepen their understanding of how the gifts work in their lives.

Session 6: Being Anointed by the Holy Spirit

This session explores the anointing with Sacred Chrism, the central symbolic action in the Rite of Confirmation (*Rite of Confirmation*, 26). The participants explore the meaning and significance of Confirmation's outpouring of the Holy Spirit for their lives and for their role in the mission of the Church.

Session 7: The Eucharist: The Heart of the Church's Life

This session discusses the significance of celebrating Confirmation within the Mass, the usual practice unless there are special circumstances (*Rite of Confirmation*, 31). The session also provides a review of what happens during Mass and engages the candidates in an exploration of the Paschal Mystery.

Session 8: Celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation

This session is the last one before the celebration of Confirmation. It functions as an immediate preparation for the celebration by providing a brief walk-through of the rite and offering a process for reflecting on the Word that will be proclaimed at Confirmation.

The Celebration of Confirmation

The preparation period leads to the high point: the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Reflection after the Celebration of Confirmation

Sessions 9 and 10 are designed for use during the weeks following the celebration of Confirmation. This part of the process is called *mystagogy*, which means "reflection on the mystery." The purpose of the mystagogical sessions is to deepen the participants' understanding of the Sacrament and lead them outward into mission.

Session 9: Mystagogy I: Reflecting on the Rite of Confirmation

This session gives the participants an opportunity to reflect on Confirmation and further explore its meaning and significance for their lives.

Session 10: Mystagogy II: Reflecting on God's Word

Session 10 provides a mystagogical reflection on one of the readings from the celebration of Confirmation. A session extension introduces the

participants to *lectio divina* and encourages them to make prayerful reading of the Scriptures a regular part of their lives as fully initiated Catholics.

Essential Sources

The guide includes two appendixes: (1) *Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation*, and (2) *Rite of Confirmation*. Because the point of departure for the program is the Rite of Confirmation, it is important for catechists to be familiar with these foundational documents on the Sacrament. We make this convenient for you by providing them.

Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation

This document was promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1971. It provides information about the origins and history of the Sacrament and describes the essence of the Sacrament.

Rite of Confirmation

This is the Church's official liturgical text for the Sacrament of Confirmation. In the appendix, we provide paragraphs 1 to 33, which include the introduction to the rite and chapter 1, "Rite of Confirmation within Mass." This ritual text is the foundation for the sessions in this guide.

We recommend that you read the *Apostolic Constitution* and the *Rite of Confirmation* before you begin preparing for the sessions. Then when you prepare for each session, you will see that each has a background reading section listing specific paragraphs from the appendixes. In these cases, rereading small portions will be helpful to you.

Tips for Leading the Sessions

This catechist guide has been designed to help make your preparation for leading the sessions as effective as possible, while providing flexible options requested by many catechists. This section reviews features of a typical session and provides you with important background information and tips for using the sessions effectively.

Overview, Objectives, and Time Frame

At the beginning of each session, you will find a brief overview that tells you what to expect in that session. This is followed by a summary of the session's objectives. Next, a section titled "At a Glance" provides a session outline with time frames for each part of the session. Each core

session includes a set of main activities that fill 60 minutes. The core sessions include five steps, and most follow this pattern:

- A. welcome and prayer
- B. an activity to spark interest
- C. a teaching activity
- D. a life application
- E. a closing prayer

The sessions also provide optional session extensions, each 15 minutes long:

- an optional life application activity
- an optional journal activity

Materials and Preparation

Besides becoming familiar with the session steps and activities, you will need to do some minimal advance preparation for the sessions. For example, you may need to gather some supplies, make photocopies of handouts, and do some background reading. This preparation is outlined at the beginning of each session in the section titled “Materials and Preparation.”

A few supplies are needed in most sessions. They are listed here, rather than repeated in every session:

- a Bible
- pens or pencils, one for each participant
- a large whiteboard and markers or a chalkboard and chalk
- copies of the *Anointed in the Spirit Candidate Handbook*, one for each candidate
- supplies for creating a prayer space (see details in the next section)

Enthronement

We recommend that you set up a simple enthronement or display featuring key items and symbols related to Confirmation.

The focus of the enthronement is the Bible. We suggest “enthroning” the Word of God, meaning to hold it high in a place of honor. This is the first principle when you are designing and setting up the enthronement: the Word of God is preeminent. The other pieces that may surround the Bible are subordinate. Thus the enthronement helps to draw the participants’ attention first to God’s Word and second to other symbols related to the session topics.

Each week you'll need these items for the enthronement:

- a small- to medium-size table
- a cloth to cover the table, varying the color according to liturgical season
- a Bible
- a large white candle (or appropriate liturgical color) and matches (if allowed)

You may want to use a box or something under the cloth to boost the Bible to a position higher than the other items on the table. There may be other items listed for the enthronement for particular sessions, such as a large bowl of water or a container of oil. Try not to clutter the enthronement with unnecessary items. Noble simplicity is a quality of good liturgy and is a helpful principle for setting up the enthronement.

Prayer

Prayer is part of every session. It is an important component of the program, not only because it echoes the ritual elements of the session but also because “prayer should be the ordinary environment for all catechesis” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, p. 61). Prayer is incorporated in several ways in each session:

- **Catechist Prayer.** This prayer is intended for the catechist to use during preparations for the session.
- **Opening Prayer.** Each session includes an opening prayer. You will notice that each includes the prayer “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.” (This is a familiar Lasallian prayer of the Christian Brothers, and Saint Mary’s Press is a Lasallian ministry.)
- **Closing Prayer.** Each session includes a 5- or 10-minute closing prayer service. Each session also provides the option of having everyone read a short prayer together from the candidate handbook—a good option if you are running behind and don’t have time for the full prayer service.

The Proclamation of God’s Word

For many sessions, the section titled “Preparation Tasks” asks you to recruit volunteers to read from the Scriptures during prayer or at some other time during the session.

A little preparation will help the readers feel comfortable in their role. Try to follow these preparation steps:

- As the participants arrive, recruit the designated number of readers.
- Show the readers where in the Bible to find their readings and point out where they are to begin and end.
- Instruct the readers to begin by saying, “A reading from (*name of the book from the Bible*).” End the reading by saying, “The Word of the Lord.”
- Instruct the readers to read slowly and loudly.
- Be prepared to help the readers practice pronunciation, if necessary.
- Give the readers instructions about when to come forward and where to stand. Ask them to pause reverently after reading before returning to their seats.
- Give the readers instructions for (re)placing the Bible on the enthronement. (*Note: During prayer it is better for the readers to pick up the Bible from the enthronement and use it for the proclamation, rather than carrying a Bible from their seats.*)
- Ask the readers to spend a few minutes reading on their own before the session begins.

Remember that involving the candidates as leaders in the prayers is important and is worth the extra preparation work for the catechist.

Note: If you have access to the *Lectionary for Mass* for weekdays, please note that many of the readings selected for the prayers in this program are drawn from the Confirmation readings in the *Lectionary*. You might consider reading from the *Lectionary* when applicable as a way to illuminate the connection between the session prayers and the Rite of Confirmation (see 764–769 in the *Lectionary*).

Activities

Many types of activities are used in this program. The activities are designed to engage the multiple intelligences of high school-aged learners. Some young people learn best by listening, others by seeing, and others through hands-on activity. In addition, many older adolescents respond well to insightful discussion and appreciate practical applications to their daily lives.

To keep the sessions running smoothly, you must be familiar with the activities and their aims. This will enable you to give clear instructions and effectively manage the transitions between steps. You will also need to

prepare in advance to summarize the key doctrinal points covered in the sessions. You will see that many sessions direct you to specific sections in the candidate handbook or include talking points to guide you. Talking points are clearly marked in the manual with this symbol: ►

Optional Activities

Each session includes several optional activities. In addition to the 15-minute optional session extensions mentioned earlier, you will find the following:

- **Discussion Starters.** These are questions that can be woven into the session at various times.
- **Media Connections.** Many sessions suggest songs or films that complement the session.
- **Other Options.** Periodically you will see notes that offer options for implementing particular steps.

Small-Group Activities

When forming small groups or pairs for particular activities, provide specific instructions about how the groups or pairs are to be formed rather than leaving this to the participants. This will help to ensure that no one feels excluded.

Using the *Anointed in the Spirit Candidate Handbook*

The candidate handbook is a vital part of each session. It contains images, prayers, explanations, and journaling space that the participants will use in the sessions. Each candidate should have his or her own copy of the *Anointed in the Spirit Candidate Handbook*. Instructions for using the candidate handbook are clearly indicated in the catechist guide. In some cases, you are instructed to invite the participants to reference something in the handbook. In other cases, the guide suggests that you refer to it as a source of information to help you lead the session.

Consider some of the following ways to expand the participants' use of the handbook:

- Send the candidate handbook home with the participants with instructions for completing a "Living as a Disciple" sidebar or a journaling page. This provides a good opportunity for deeper reflection than may be possible during the sessions.

- Have the participants take the candidate handbook home after each session and review the chapter you covered. Encourage the candidates to discuss the material with a parent or their sponsor.
- Make use of the many “Catholic Connection,” “Jesus Connection,” and “Did You Know?” articles in the handbook. These present material that the candidates’ regular religious education program, apart from Confirmation preparation, should have already covered. These are included, however, so that you have a handy way of encouraging review of central aspects of Catholic teaching.
- Make use of images in the book as focal points to introduce or enhance discussion of a topic.
- Involve parents by sending the candidate handbook home with a simple assignment that the participants are to complete with their parents’ help. This can be a good way for the parents to see the handbook and be involved in their teen’s preparation.
- Invite the candidates to share the handbook with their sponsors as a way to enhance the sponsors’ connection to the preparation process.
- Help the participants become familiar with the different types of side-bars as well as the prayers, the summaries of Catholic beliefs, and the list of saints found in the handbook’s appendixes.

The Role of the Catechist

Your role is vital. You are leading young people to one of our Church’s most sacred and holy mysteries, the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Sacrament of Confirmation is the celebration of the outpouring of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. And, like all the Sacraments, Confirmation is a celebration of the Paschal Mystery—the work of salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ through his Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension.

How does one lead another person into a sacred mystery? Although we can certainly teach about some aspects of a sacred mystery, part of the mystery is beyond words. This is where signs, symbols, and rituals come in. Sacred signs, symbols, and rituals speak to us in a language deeper and richer than words alone. They speak of God’s action in our lives in a way language cannot. That is why this program uses the signs, symbols, and rituals of the Confirmation liturgy to lead the participants to a deeper understanding of the sacred realities they represent. This preparation helps them enter into the celebration and fully participate in the Sacrament.

After the celebration of Confirmation, the newly confirmed reflect on the mystery. This relates to the second part of your role. You are called on to be a mystagogue. This means you help the

newly confirmed unpack or explore their sacramental encounter with God. Once they have been confirmed, they will see the central signs and symbolic actions from a new perspective. They have participated in the sacramental mystery; they have not just been taught about it.

Confirmation

As one who is helping candidates to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation, it is helpful for you to understand the meaning and significance of Confirmation. Reading the two appendixes and the background reading suggestions in each session will prepare you well. Here are a few themes that you will see unfold during the sessions:

- *Confirmation is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit.* In the Rite of Confirmation, the baptized receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Sacrament is conferred through the anointing of the forehead with Sacred Chrism, a laying on of the priest's or bishop's hand, and the words "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." (See *Rite of Confirmation*, 9.)
- *Confirmation is a Sacrament of Christian Initiation.* Through the Sacraments of Christian Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist—we are united with Christ and the Church. We are united with Christ's Death, Resurrection, and glorification. Confirmation completes, or perfects, Baptism.
- *Confirmation makes us more like Christ and strengthens us for mission.* By the power of the Holy Spirit, Confirmation makes us more like Christ. Filled with the Holy Spirit, and made more like Christ, we are strengthened to assume more responsibility as disciples of Jesus Christ. Confirmation propels us outward in mission for the life of the world.

Thank You

Thank you for making the commitment to help prepare our young people for this important step in their lives of faith and in their lives in the Church.

1

Being a Candidate

Session Overview

This session explores what it means to be a candidate for Confirmation. A poster-making activity introduces the idea of candidacy and serves as a means to introduce the candidates to the parish community. After a discussion on being called and chosen by God, the participants become familiar with the various requirements of Confirmation by completing a “Candidate’s Checklist Activity.” Two optional session extensions invite the candidates to consider in more depth what it means to be called by God.

Objectives

Enable the participants to do the following:

- understand the significance of being a candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation
- explore what is expected of Confirmation candidates

At a Glance

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer	(5 minutes)
B. Being a Candidate	(15 minutes)
C. Called and Chosen	(15 minutes)
D. Candidate’s Checklist Activity	(15 minutes)
E. Closing Prayer	(10 minutes)

Optional Session Extensions

Called by Name	(15 minutes)
Journal Activity: Responding to the Call	(15 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

Materials Needed

Gather the following items, one for each participant:

- sheets of newsprint or poster board
- sets of markers

Gather the following additional items:

- a marker
- two copies of a list of the candidates' names
- a Bible marked at 1 Samuel 16:1 and Isaiah 42:1–13
- a large pillar candle
- recorded music and appropriate player (optional)

Preparation Tasks

- On a sheet of newsprint or poster board, make a sample poster announcing a Confirmation candidacy. For example, if one of your candidates is named Cameron, make a poster that reads "Cameron for Confirmation" (or you can plan to reference the image on page 14 of the candidate handbook).
- Arrange to have the posters the candidates complete displayed in the parish.
- Prepare a chart on the board with the following coded responses for "Candidate's Checklist Activity."
 - C: This will be "C"hallenging for me.
 - E: This will be "E"asy for me.
 - F: I am looking "F"orward to this.
 - H: I will need "H"elp with this.
 - I: I will need more "I"nformation.
- Be sure you are well informed about each of the requirements for Confirmation, as well as any additional requirements your parish may have. During the "Candidate's Checklist Activity," the candidates may ask you questions about the requirements.
- Be prepared to discuss the story of the call of David in 1 Samuel 16:1–13.
- Recruit a volunteer to read 1 Samuel 16:1 during the opening prayer and Isaiah 42:1–3 during the optional closing prayer service.
- Recruit two volunteers to read a list of the candidates' names during the optional closing prayer service. Help them practice pronouncing the names before the session.
- Contact your priest or deacon if you would like him to do the blessing during the optional closing prayer service.

Catechist Prayer

Good and gracious God, you have called your people to be your own. Thank you for calling me to the ministry of catechist and for entrusting me with these young people. Help me as I guide the candidates in responding to your call. Help me to be always faithful to your Word and to your call to follow your Son, Jesus Christ. May the Holy Spirit show me the way as I prepare and lead this session. I ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Background Reading

- *Anointed in the Spirit Candidate Handbook*, chapter 1
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1285, 1306–1311 (who receives Confirmation)
- 1 Samuel 16:1–13, Isaiah 42:1–3
- *Rite of Confirmation*, 11–12, 21

Session Steps

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Welcome** everyone and make any announcements.
2. **Light** the candle, **make** the Sign of the Cross, and **lead** everyone in saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.”
3. **Open** with these comments:
 - Congratulations! You are candidates for Confirmation. This session will help you understand what that means. We will begin with a short Scripture reading about someone who was chosen by God from among many candidates for an important mission.
4. **Invite** the designated reader to proclaim 1 Samuel 16:1. Then pause for a moment of silence.
5. **Comment:**
 - God chose one of Jesse’s sons to be King of Israel. We’ll talk during the session about what it means to be chosen and called by God and about how that applies to your candidacy for the Sacrament of Confirmation.
6. **Pray** the following opening prayer:
 - Let us pray. God of all people, thank you for calling these young people of *(parish name)* to be candidates for the Sacrament of

Confirmation. May the Holy Spirit be with us and guide us throughout this session and always. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Close with the Sign of the Cross.

B. Being a Candidate (15 minutes)

1. **Hold up** the Confirmation candidacy poster (if you made one) or ask the participants to open their handbooks to page 14 and look at the image on the page. Using these or similar words, explain that this session will explore the idea of being a candidate:
 - As mentioned in the opening, you have all been chosen as candidates for Confirmation. During the celebration of the Sacrament, you will each be presented by name to the bishop as a candidate for Confirmation.
2. **Connect** the notion of being a Confirmation candidate with other types of candidates, using these or similar words:
 - Have you ever been a candidate for student council or class president? Or have you ever been a candidate for a music award

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Being a Candidate



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Think about the various elections held early in the year at school for positions such as class offices, student council representatives, and yes, the annual election for homecoming queen and king. These elections mean that there are candidates for the various positions. Maybe you've even been a candidate for student council, class treasurer, drama club president, or some other office. Whether you've been a candidate or supported a candidate, you probably realize that being a candidate is pretty important.

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or MVP on your team? Or do you know anyone who has been a candidate for an elected office?

Encourage the participants to share their experiences of being candidates or of knowing candidates.

3. **Lead** the participants to see the significance of being a candidate. Use these or similar words:

- We named several different kinds of candidates. In each instance, it was an honor to be named as a candidate.
- Whether you're a candidate for President of the United States or Sophomore Class President of Washington High School, or whether you're a candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation, being a candidate means that you are being considered for something important, like an honor or a new responsibility. Usually a person or group nominates candidates. But in the case of Confirmation, you do not have to be nominated, and you do not have to campaign for a position or office. Instead, God has chosen you and called you to the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- God's call comes through the Church. That is, the Church enables you to hear God's call. The Church wants everyone to complete their Christian initiation through the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Confirmation will complete your initiation into the Church. It adds to the gift of new life you received in Baptism by deepening your relationship with God—the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, there is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon those being confirmed. Through the action of the Holy Spirit, the Father, united with Christ, accomplishes great things for us:
 - Our relationship with the Father grows deeper.
 - We are united more firmly with Jesus Christ.
 - The Gifts of the Holy Spirit increase in us.
 - Our connection with the Church increases, and we are better able to continue the Church's mission.

- The Holy Spirit gives us a special strength to be witnesses to the Christian way of life through what we say and what we do.
4. **Explain** to the participants that before Confirmation they, as candidates, will be introduced to the parish community. **Invite** them to make posters introducing themselves. Let them know your plans for displaying the posters. **Suggest** the following ideas for the posters, **writing** notes on the board as you talk so the participants have something to refer back to while they work:
- your name (**write** “name”)
 - illustrate five things about yourself (e.g., family, interests, achievements, extracurricular activities) and write a caption for each (**write** “five things” on board)
 - illustrate one new thing you hope to do as a confirmed Catholic (e.g., being a lector or usher, getting involved in teaching younger kids, doing more social action or community service) and write a caption (**write** “a hope” on board).

Distribute the newsprint or poster board and the markers. **Observe** the participants’ work and make a mental note of some of the things they hope to do.

Note: An alternative is to have the candidates work in small groups of three to five to create a single poster that introduces all of the small-group members. The poster heading might be “Meet Some (*parish name*) Candidates.”

5. **Invite** the participants to share their poster with the large group. **Conclude** by summarizing your observations about what the candidates hope to do after being confirmed and by offering relevant information about how your parish will help them prepare for Confirmation (see “What the Parish Promises” on page 16 of the candidate handbook).

C. Called and Chosen (15 minutes)

1. **Distribute** Bibles. **Explain** that the group is going to read the rest of the account of God choosing a new king for Israel. **Direct** the participants to locate 1 Samuel, chapter 16, in their Bible. **Call** on several volunteers to read 1 Samuel 16:1–13 aloud. After the reading, **review** the main points of the story:

- The Lord told Samuel that he would show him which of Jesse's eight sons to anoint King of Israel.
- Jesse brings seven of his sons to Samuel, but none are the chosen one.
- Samuel asks if there is another son. Even though David is a fine young man, his choice was not expected.

2. **Lead** a discussion by asking the following questions:

- When did God decide which of the sons was to be king? (*Before Samuel even went to Bethlehem, God had chosen David to be king.*)
- How did God decide who should be king? (*God looks at the heart. God doesn't judge as people judge.*)
- How did God confirm his choice of David? (*God told Samuel to anoint David with oil, and the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David.*)

Conclude with these or similar comments:

- At your Confirmation, the bishop will anoint you with a holy oil called Sacred Chrism. God will confirm his choice of you by increasing and deepening the Gift of the Holy Spirit he gave to you at Baptism.
- David responded to God's call and became a great king. With his kingship came a lot of responsibilities. As a confirmed member of the Church, you'll have greater responsibilities too. Your responsibility now, though, is to be fully prepared to receive the Sacrament. Let's talk about some of the things you need to do as a candidate for Confirmation.

D. Candidate's Checklist Activity (15 minutes)

1. **Introduce** this activity with a brief discussion, using these or similar questions:

- Think back to the Sacraments you have received. What did you do to prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation for the first time?
- How did you prepare for your First Communion?

What Is Asked of You

Even though candidates for Confirmation do not campaign, the Church does ask that you be prepared and that you meet certain requirements. Here's a checklist of guidelines:

A Candidate's Checklist

- I am a baptized Catholic.
 - I have not been confirmed before.
 - I am over the age of seven (or other age set by my bishop).
 - I want to live as a disciple of Christ and be a witness to the Christian way of life for others.
 - I am willing to seek guidance about the Christian life from my Confirmation sponsor.
 - I want to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and complete my initiation into the Church, which began with my Baptism.
 - I am willing to pray more often in order to be better prepared to receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation.
 - I am capable of renewing my baptismal promises. (We'll talk more about baptismal promises in chapter 3.)
 - I am willing to receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation before receiving Confirmation to make sure I am in the state of grace (see the "Catholic Connection" sidebar on page 21).
 - I attend Mass regularly.
 - I am willing to spend time preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation and learning more about its meaning and significance for my life.
- Your parish or diocese probably has some additional guidelines or requirements, so check with your catechist or parish leader.



- Based on your own experience, what would you expect to be required of you before you celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation?

Jot their replies on the board. **Ask** the candidates to open their handbooks to page 17 and look at the checklist. Explain that each item describes something the Church requires for Confirmation. **Point out** that everyone here has already fulfilled the first three requirements. **Read** through the remaining requirements. As you do so, **ask** the candidates to circle or underline the key phrase in each, for example: live as a disciple, seek guidance, complete my initiation, pray more often, and so on.

2. **Display** the chart of coded responses that you have prepared. **Read** the statements on the chart to the group:

- C: This will be challenging for me.
- E: This will be easy for me.
- F: I am looking forward to this.
- H: I will need help with this.
- I: I will need more information.

3. **Explain** the instructions:
 - On your own, reread the requirements in “A Candidate’s Checklist” (except the first three). Respond to each requirement using the code on this chart. For example, if you always seem to be too busy to pray, praying more often in preparation for Confirmation may be challenging. You would mark that requirement with a “C” for challenging.
4. **Direct** the participants to mark each item on the checklist using the code. When they have finished, **ask** a few candidates to share and explain their responses.
5. **Provide** information as needed for any items the participants code with an “I” (need information) response. **Ask** the candidates to identify someone with whom they could work on any items they code with an “H” (need help) response. **Encourage** them to seek help and guidance from family members and sponsors.

Refer to the “Catholic Connection” sidebar on page 21 when discussing the requirement to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
6. **Review** any of the requirements that were not discussed in the course of the activity. If you haven’t done so already, **provide** written information about any additional requirements your diocese or parish may have. Be sure to clarify for the candidates which requirements are based only on diocesan or parish norms.

Note: If time allows, invite the participants to turn to the “Living as a Disciple” sidebar on page 16 of the handbook and jot notes about things they need to do to prepare for Confirmation.

Note: If the candidates ask questions about catechumens or adult Confirmation candidates in your parish who work with a different set of requirements, you may find it helpful to review the “Candidates for Sacraments” section on page 20 of the handbook.
7. **Conclude** by summarizing the following information:
 - We do not have to earn God’s gifts. That is not at all the point of spending some time in preparation as a candidate for Confirmation. The time of preparation is meant to help you be open to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation.

- God promises to love us, and God always keeps his promises! So even if you don't do all the things you say you'll do, God will always do what he says.
 - God calls each of us at all times and pours out his love upon us. The challenge for us is to recognize his love and his call and to respond with faithful living.
8. **Invite** the candidates to take their handbooks home and review chapter 1. **Encourage** them to discuss the chapter with a parent or their sponsor. **Be prepared** to field any questions the candidates may have at the start of the next session.

E. Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

Ask the participants to turn to page 25 of the handbook and lead them in saying the prayer in the "Lord, Hear My Prayer" sidebar, or lead the following prayer service:



1. **Draw** everyone's attention to the enthronement of the Bible. Pause for a moment of silence.
2. **Begin** by making the Sign of the Cross and praying:
 - In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All: Amen.
 - The grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all, now and forever.
All: Amen.
3. **Invite** the designated reader to proclaim Isaiah 42:1–3. Then pause for a moment of silence.
4. **Comment** briefly:
 - The prophet Isaiah tells us of God's chosen one. The chosen one is a servant of others. We hear Isaiah tell us that God will put his spirit upon the one he has chosen. My friends, God has chosen you for the Sacrament of Confirmation. You have been chosen as servants of God.
 - In anticipation of your Confirmation, when you will be presented to the bishop and called forth, please stand in your place as your name is called.

Zacchaeus to respond to Jesus' call, and because he did, his encounter with Jesus transformed his life.

When God calls each of us, it is personal. He wants us to respond, and he gives us the grace that enables us to do so.

Standing before the Bishop

So there you'll be, called by name and standing before the bishop. The bishop is the minister of Confirmation. (We'll talk more about him in chapter 6.)

After you've been called, the bishop will give the homily, during which he'll explain the Scripture readings and talk about the meaning of Confirmation.

After the homily, the bishop will ask you some questions, but that's for the next chapter. For now let's concentrate on what it means to be a candidate.

Being a Candidate

A candidate is a person preparing for an important role, responsibility, office, or position. You've been called by God to be a candidate and prepare for Confirmation. It's a significant moment in your life, and you'll want to take it seriously. But don't be overwhelmed by what you are being asked to do. Accept and enjoy all the special support from your parish, your sponsor, and your family as you prepare to be confirmed. Remember, Confirmation is a once-in-a-lifetime celebration. Do everything you can to prepare well!

Lord, Hear My Prayer

C

O God,
 You call all people of the earth to yourself.
 You have called me to be a candidate for Confirmation.
 Help me to answer your call by gladly fulfilling the responsibilities of my candidacy and by being the best candidate I can possibly be.
 I pray that during this time I'll deepen my relationship with you and your Son, Jesus Christ.
 I pray that the Holy Spirit will help me and guide me in all I do. Amen.

Being a Candidate 25

5. **Invite** the designated readers to come forward and read the names of the candidates.
6. **Bless** the candidates (or if you invited a priest or deacon to do this, invite him forward). If you are presiding, use the following blessing:
 - You have been called and chosen as a candidate for Confirmation. May this time of preparation deepen your faith and open your heart to the power of the Holy Spirit. May the almighty and merciful God bless and protect us (*bless yourself with the Sign of the Cross as you say the following*) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.
7. **Close** with song (see the "Media Connections" section).

Optional Session Extensions

Called by Name (15 minutes)

This session extension works best after step C, “Called and Chosen.”

Materials Needed

Gather the following items, one for each small group of four or five:

- sheets of 8½-by-11-inch paper
- pens or pencils

Preparation Tasks

- Fold a sheet of paper so there are three columns or sections to the paper. At the top of each column, write one of the three headings:
 - Called to Do Something
 - I’m in Trouble
 - Other Reason
1. **Introduce** this activity by referring to the story of King David’s being called. Then **explain** to the participants the importance of being called by name using these or similar words (see pages 23–25 of the handbook):
 - When you are called by God, it is very personal. God is calling you to himself. God is calling you out of the crowd, just as he chose David out of Jesse’s eight sons. We see many examples of this in the Bible. God called Samuel by name (see 1 Samuel 3:1–10). Jesus called Zacchaeus down from the tree (see Luke 19:1–10). Jesus also called Lazarus by name: “Lazarus, come out!” (John 11:43).
 - Being called by name means that someone wants you! A friend, a parent, a teacher, a coach wants something from you or wants you to do something. Let’s look at the times we are called by name and why.
 2. **Divide** the large group into small groups of four or five. **Give** each group a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. **Direct** the groups to choose someone to record their responses. Then **provide** the following instructions about the activity and folding the paper:

- The recorder should fold the paper into three sections like this. *(Show your example of the trifolded paper.)* Unfold the paper and write the following headings at the top of each column:
 - Called to Do Something
 - I'm in Trouble
 - Other Reason
 - Think of all the various times you are called by name. Place each example in one of these categories. For example: Your Dad calls out during the game, "Madi, get the ball!" You would write this example under "Called to Do Something."
 - You have 5 minutes to think of as many examples as you can of someone calling your name.
3. After 5 minutes, **ask** the participants to think about God calling them to the life of faith. **Encourage** them to identify similarities and differences between the examples on the paper and God's call.
 4. **Call** the small groups back into the large group, and **invite** volunteers to share some of the similarities and differences they identified.

Journal Activity: Responding to the Call (15 minutes)

This session extension works best after step C, "Called and Chosen," or after the optional session extension "Called by Name."

Materials Needed

Gather the following items, one for each participant:

- Bibles



1. **Distribute** the Bibles and ask the candidates to open their handbooks to page 26. **Read** the journal activity instructions aloud and make sure everyone can find the "Called by God" chart on page 19. **Ask** everyone to read about at least two people listed in the chart.

Called by God

Baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit, we become members of Christ's Body, the Church. God continues to call us throughout our lives to deepen our relationship with him and strengthen our bond with the Church.

In the Sacrament of Confirmation, there is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon those being confirmed. Through the action of the Holy Spirit, the Father, united with Christ, accomplishes great things for us:

- Our relationship with the Father grows deeper.
- We are united more firmly with Jesus Christ.
- The Gifts of the Holy Spirit increase in us.
- Our connection with the Church increases, and we are better able to continue the Church's mission.
- The Holy Spirit gives us a special strength to be witnesses to the Christian way of life through what we say and what we do.

And, rest assured, God always keeps his promises. So even if you don't fulfill all your responsibilities and commitments or do all the things you say you'll do, God will always do what he says because God's promises are trustworthy and eternal.

We do not have to earn God's gifts. All of God's gifts are freely given, including the grace of Confirmation. "Earning" Confirmation is not at all the point of spending some time in preparation as a candidate for Confirmation. The time of preparation is meant to help candidates be receptive to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. God calls each of us at all times and pours out his love upon us. The challenge for us is to recognize his love and his call and to respond with faithful living.

The Scriptures are filled with accounts of people who heard God's call and responded with faith.

Here are a few of those people and the verses where you can read about them.

Biblical People	Scripture Verses
Abraham	Genesis 12:1-9
Moses	Exodus 3:1-12
Samuel	1 Samuel 3:1-10
Isaiah	Isaiah 6:1-8
Jeremiah	Jeremiah 1:4-10
Mary	Luke 1:26-38
The First Disciples	Matthew 4:18-22
Matthew	Matthew 9:9-13
The Samaritan Woman	John 4:4-42
Saul	Acts of the Apostles 9:1-19



Jesus approached Matthew at his tax collection booth, saying, "Follow me."

© Brooklyn Museum/Corbis

2. **Invite** the participants to form pairs and share one or two insights from their reading that may help young people be faithful disciples. If time allows, **encourage** volunteers to share in the large group.

Discussion Starters

- Review the posted candidate requirements for Confirmation (or look at the checklist on page 17 of the handbook). How do you feel about these requirements? How will they help you be a disciple of Jesus Christ?
- What's important about your name? Is there a story behind why your parents gave you your name?

Media Connections

- The song “God Has Chosen Me,” by Bernadette Farrell (OCP Publications, 1990), works well as a conclusion to the closing prayer.
- The movie *Remember the Titans* (2000, 120 minutes, rated A-II and PG) is based on true events and tells the story of an African American coach who is called upon by the community to lead a football team that has recently been forced to integrate. A clip from the beginning of the movie, when the coach responds, works well after step C, “Called and Chosen.”
- The animated movie *Prince of Egypt* (1998, 99 minutes, rated A-II and PG) tells the story of Moses’ call and his leading of the Hebrew people out of slavery and across the Red Sea. The early part of the movie that describes Moses’ call by God and his encounter with the burning bush works well after step C, “Called and Chosen.”

2

Baptism: Waters of New Life

2

Session Overview

This session explores the meaning and significance of being baptized and helps the participants see the relationship between Baptism and Confirmation. A brainstorming activity gets the candidates thinking about the life-giving and the destructive power of water. In the second activity, the ambiguous nature of water is related to Baptism. Then the participants deepen their understanding of Baptism by creating everyday scenarios of “dying and rising to new life.” The session extensions provide the candidates with opportunities to reflect on their own Baptisms and the role of their godparents.

Objectives

Enable the participants to do the following:

- explore the life-giving and the destructive power of water and the significance of this for understanding the meaning of Baptism
- understand the effects of Baptism
- identify patterns of dying and rising in everyday life

At a Glance

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer	(5 minutes)
B. Water Brings Life and Death	(10 minutes)
C. Holy Waters of Baptism	(15 minutes)
D. Dying and Rising: Creating Scenarios	(20 minutes)
E. Closing Prayer	(10 minutes)

Optional Session Extensions

Baptism Mind Map	(15 minutes)
Journal Activity: A Letter to My Godparents	(15 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

Materials Needed

Gather the following items:

- an extra large, clear bowl filled with water
- a Bible marked at Exodus 14:21–31
- a marker
- at least four blank index cards
- scrap paper and pencils
- recorded music and appropriate player (optional)

Preparation Tasks

- Recruit a volunteer to read Exodus 14:21–31 during the opening prayer.
- Write each of the following items on a separate index card:
 - A. One of your friends starts drinking every weekend. You are very concerned, and you try to talk to him but it doesn't seem to help.
 - B. A portion of your town is flooded, including your neighborhood. You lose most of your things, which is hard for you to accept.
 - C. Your best friend moves out of state. You talk and text a lot, but when she mentions new friends, you feel distant and cut off.
 - D. Your dad is diagnosed with a serious disease. He can't do all the things he used to do.

Note: If you have more than four small groups, create additional cards with your own “dying and rising to new life” ideas.

Catechist Prayer

God of life, out of love you have created Heaven and earth and all the peoples of the earth. Through the power of your holy waters you made me one of your own. As I was baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, may I live a life of love. May I reflect the image of Christ to those I catechize. By his grace, may we all draw closer to you. I ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Background Reading

- *Anointed in the Spirit Candidate Handbook*, chapter 2
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1262–1274 (effects of Baptism), 694–696 (symbols of the Holy Spirit)
- Exodus 14:21–31
- *Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation*, 1–3

Session Steps

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Welcome** everyone and make announcements.
2. **Light** the candle, **make** the Sign of the Cross, and **lead** everyone in saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.”
3. **Open** with these comments:
 - In this session, we’re going to look at the first initiation Sacrament we all receive: Baptism. A person must be baptized to be confirmed. Understanding the meaning and significance of Baptism is necessary in order to grasp the meaning and significance of Confirmation. Confirmation will complete the process of your initiation that began with your Baptism. One of the ways we’ll explore Baptism is by talking about water. In our opening prayer, we will hear an important Old Testament story in which water plays a key part.
4. **Invite** the designated reader to proclaim Exodus 14:21–31. Then pause for a moment of silence.
5. **Comment:**
 - We hear in the Book of Exodus how the Red Sea was a source of both life and death. By parting the Red Sea, God brought freedom, and therefore new life, to the Israelites. The same waters brought death to the Egyptians and an end to the slavery endured by the Israelites. Today we’re going to talk about water and how it can cause death and sustain life and how both aspects of the power of water relates to Baptism and Confirmation.
6. **Pray** the following opening prayer:
 - God of life, by the power of the Holy Spirit you brought the Israelites through the waters of the Red Sea from slavery to freedom, from death to new life. Bless our gathering today as

we explore the wonder of the holy waters of Baptism, through which we are created anew. We ask this in your name, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Close with the Sign of the Cross.

B. Water Brings Life and Death (10 minutes)

1. **Walk** over to the large bowl of water. Using your fingertips, playfully **sprinkle** water droplets onto some of the candidates as you ask them to think about their experiences with water.
2. **Invite** the participants to brainstorm ways people use and encounter water. **Challenge** them to name as many ways as possible. **Recruit** a volunteer to record the ideas on the board. If the candidates need help getting started, ask them to turn to page 27 in the handbook and read the first paragraph. If you notice that the participants are identifying only positive, life-giving experiences or uses of water, ask them to look at the image on page 28 of the handbook and then point out a few additional examples of water being destructive (flooding, drowning, rip tides, tidal waves).

A

B

A

2

Baptism: Waters of New Life

What comes to your mind when you think about water—summer days at the lake, the pond at Grandpa’s farm, gulping from your water bottle after a hard practice, a hot shower, walking along the seashore, swimming with friends, washing the car? Maybe some less positive things come to mind too, like devastating floods, thunderstorms with hail and high winds, hurricanes, and stories of people drowning or getting caught in strong currents?



Water is naturally fun and refreshing, yet mysterious and dangerous. What makes water so intriguing?

Water Brings Life and Death

First, let’s consider the positive and reflect on water as a source of life. It refreshes, renews, and sustains us. It’s in most everything we drink and eat, from sports drinks and smoothies to apple slices and bowls of pasta. We cook, bathe, and clean with it. We swim and play in it. You probably know that approximately two-thirds of the human body is made up of water and that approximately 70 percent of the earth’s surface is covered with water. Indeed, we’re not exaggerating when we say that water is cen-