

CONFIRMED



in the JOY of the



SPIRITS



A Confirmation Journal for Teens

Inspired by

SAINTLY HEROES

TONY PICHLER *and* PAULA RIEDER



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Contents

Introduction	1
<hr/>	
The Gifts of the Holy Spirit: An Overview	3
<hr/>	
1. The Gift of Wisdom <i>Henri Nouwen</i>	5
2. The Gift of Understanding <i>Pope Francis</i>	10
3. The Gift of Counsel <i>St. Thomas More</i>	15
4. The Gift of Fortitude <i>Cesar Chavez</i>	21
5. The Gift of Knowledge <i>St. Thomas Aquinas</i>	25
6. The Gift of Piety <i>St. Ignatius of Loyola</i>	31
7. The Gift of Wonder and Awe <i>Pierre Teilhard de Chardin</i>	36
<hr/>	
The Fruits of the Holy Spirit: An Overview	40
<hr/>	
8. The Fruit of Charity <i>St. Teresa of Calcutta</i>	42
9. The Fruit of Joy <i>Sr. Thea Bowman</i>	47
10. The Fruit of Peace <i>St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross</i>	50
11. The Fruit of Patience <i>St. Kateri Tekakwitha</i>	55
12. The Fruit of Kindness <i>St. Maximilian Kolbe</i>	60
13. The Fruit of Goodness <i>Catherine de Hueck Doherty</i>	64
14. The Fruit of Generosity <i>Dorothy Day</i>	68
15. The Fruit of Gentleness <i>Thomas Merton</i>	73
16. The Fruit of Faithfulness <i>St. Peter Claver</i>	79
17. The Fruit of Modesty <i>St. Thérèse of Lisieux</i>	83
18. The Fruit of Self-Control <i>Joseph Cardinal Bernadin</i>	86
19. The Fruit of Chastity <i>Mary, the Mother of God</i>	90



Introduction

TWO PEOPLE ARE TRAVELING DOWN A ROAD, TALKING TO EACH OTHER ABOUT THE EVENTS THEY HAD JUST WITNESSED—the killing of their friend. This is not the latest fiction story that will serve as the basis for a Netflix series. This is the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus that is found in the Gospel of Luke. It is this story that helps us to understand our own faith journey—especially during this time of preparation for the sacrament of confirmation.

These disciples of Jesus were trying to deal with the crucifixion of Jesus and make sense of it. Sometimes life is like that. We face some incredibly difficult challenges. But the two followers of Jesus did not face this challenge alone. They had each other. And we don't have to face our challenges alone either. We have each other too.

At other times, life gives us some really awesome experiences. And we do not always experience these alone either. We have parents. We have friends. We have companions on the journey.

In the same way, this journey to the sacrament of confirmation invites you to travel with others as well. You will have your parents, teachers, sponsor, and the entire parish community on the road with you.

On the road to Emmaus, the two disciples encountered the risen Christ. As you journey toward the sacrament of confirmation, you too will encounter the risen Christ in a special way.

It was in the breaking of the bread that the eyes of the two disciples were fully opened and they recognized Jesus in their midst. You have the opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist each week with the parish community and will continue to receive the strength and courage you need to continue on in the transformation of the world.

Finally, the two disciples were on fire when they recognized Jesus. In the same way, while the Holy Spirit has always been with you, guiding you on the journey of your life, in confirmation the Spirit will come to you in a special way. The prayer of the church community is that your heart will be burning with this faith and that you will be inspired to share your life and faith with those whom you encounter.

Classes, textbooks, retreats, service opportunities, conversations with a sponsor, catechists, and your parents are all available to help you on the journey. Lean on them! And know that they will guide you on the right path.

There are other disciples, other people of faith on the journey, who have come before you and can show you the path in a profound way. In this resource, you will encounter nineteen guides to help you. Each of them has a story to tell you, some wise words to live by, and an example to follow. Hopefully, you will be inspired by their stories and lives as you ask for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Unlike many journeys you'll take, this is one trip that will last a lifetime. We have never fully arrived at life in the Spirit as we follow the example of Jesus. We explore this dimension of our faith very intensely and intentionally during this period of our life, but we know that we will always be deepening our faith in the risen Lord. This preparation for confirmation will be quite a journey! Enjoy the ride!

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

AN OVERVIEW

WHAT IS THE BEST GIFT YOU HAVE EVER RECEIVED? Was it the latest game system? The newest version of a cell phone? Your first baseball glove? That outfit that you still love to wear? Or was it the gift of a sense of humor? Or the ability to learn languages easily? The ability to communicate in a public setting? No matter what the best gift was—object or attribute—this journey of confirmation promises an even better gift or, in this case, gifts!

The prophet Isaiah, foretelling the gifts of a future leader whom Christians identify with Jesus, names six gifts from Spirit of the Lord. Here are the words of Isaiah:

*The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him:
a spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
A spirit of counsel and of strength,
a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD.* **ISAIAH 11:2**

You are preparing to receive the Spirit of the Lord in a special way at confirmation. The Holy Spirit will enter your life in a special way and promises the best gifts you could ever receive:

**Wisdom • Understanding • Counsel • Fortitude
Knowledge • Piety • Wonder and Awe**

As you prepare for confirmation by attending classes, participating in service to others, making a retreat, journeying with a sponsor, and participating in your parish program, pay special attention to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in your life. The Spirit gives you life and love.

In the following pages you will be introduced to each of these gifts of the Holy Spirit. For each gift, you will also be introduced to a model of faith who can inspire you to live that gift in your life. Reflection questions will help you to ponder how you already have recognized the gifts of the Holy Spirit in your life. And you will be encouraged to take action using this particular gift in your life and preparation as a confirmation candidate.

Through the sacrament of confirmation, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are strengthened in you and help you to become a stronger witness to your faith in Jesus Christ. These are gifts that no friend or relative can wrap up and give to you following the celebration. Rather, these gifts will guide your faith, values, and actions for a lifetime! Come Holy Spirit, come!

The Gift of Wisdom

MODEL
OF FAITH

Henri Nouwen



HENRI NOUWEN IS KNOWN AS THE GREAT “WOUNDED HEALER.” Born in 1932, Nouwen became a priest, a professor at Yale and Notre Dame, and a distinguished author. But the one aspect of his life that captures the most attention and gets chronicled in his countless books is his search for peace in his own life and his ability to pass on wisdom to others on the journey.

In 1974 Nouwen spent a year at a Trappist Abbey in search of a new direction for his life. This time moved him to believe that service as a missionary in Latin America was to be his true calling. Yet, after spending time in Bolivia and Peru, he returned to the United States, still in search of a direction in his life.

The turning point came in 1986. He was invited to live in a L’Arche community in Toronto, Canada, and serve as its chaplain. L’Arche houses are residential communities for adults who have cognitive and developmental disabilities. Those who live in community provide daily care for the residents. This was what Nouwen was ultimately called to, living the rest of his life caring for Adam, a man who could not talk or care for himself. It was in bathing, feeding, and dressing Adam that Nouwen found the peace that he could

share with the world in his future writings.

Nouwen died of a heart attack in 1996. He left behind a library of classic works that continue to provide wisdom for all who read them.

The Gift of Wisdom

What exactly is wisdom? Unfortunately, many times we do not realize we have wisdom. It is not something we can order at a fast-food restaurant. It is not available on Amazon.

The words of Henri Nouwen

“Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone’s face? Did I say words of healing? Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love? These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and the life to come.”

Rather, wisdom is—pure and simple—something that we acquire through living life.

Think of wisdom as a math equation.

$Knowledge + lived\ experience = wisdom$. A fast-food restaurant employee can know everything there is to know about how to handle an angry customer. She may have read all of the books available on the topic. She may have attended a workshop or seminar entitled “How to Handle Angry Customers.” In other words, she may have plenty of knowledge about handling angry customers. But until she adds the experience of actually *dealing* with angry customers—that person who gets a cold hamburger, or is missing french fries with his order—the employee will not have the wisdom of how best to handle angry customers. It is

wisdom that is gained when she adds her knowledge to the actual experience of dealing with angry customers.

Grandparents, parents, coaches, teachers, an aunt, or an uncle are often the wisdom figures in our lives. They have gained valuable experience and knowledge through their years. This accumulation of experiences can often be very valuable when we enter into a situation that we have not yet encountered ourselves. If we are really open to listening, we can soak up the wisdom of these respected people in our life. Then, we can apply that wisdom to the situation we are in.

But here is the catch! As we go through life and experience various situations, we will be gaining wisdom. We might then become the wisdom figures sought out by a friend or younger brother or sister when they encounter a difficult situation. Then we can pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance as we impart this wisdom to them.

Maybe you will be one of those people who are termed “wise beyond their years.” These people have a unique ability to be in tune with life and lived experiences to such a degree that they can incorporate the learning from these situations into future encounters with life. When a person is able to

The words of Henri Nouwen

“ Each day holds a surprise. But only if we expect it can we see, hear, or feel it when it comes to us. Let’s not be afraid to receive each day’s surprise, whether it comes to us as sorrow or as joy. It will open a new place in our hearts, a place where we can welcome new friends and celebrate more fully our shared humanity.”

do this, it is then that we say that she or he is “wise beyond their years”! May that person be *you*!

Here is a prayer, written by the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, that asks for that wisdom we all seek:

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.*

Reflect

Wisdom is radiant and unfading, and she is easily discerned by those who love her, and is found by those who seek her. She hastens to make herself known to those who desire her. **WISDOM 6:12-13**

Who is a wisdom figure in your life? How does he or she show this wisdom to you?

In what areas of your life do you seek further wisdom?

Act

Imagine that you are seeking a wisdom figure in your life. If you were to create a want ad for the local newspaper, what knowledge, skills, and life experiences would you require of such a person? Create your advertisement in the space provided:

The Gift of Understanding

MODEL
OF FAITH

Pope Francis



JORGE MARIO BERGOGLIO WAS BORN IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, ON DECEMBER 17, 1936. After some early health difficulties and with his mother not necessarily agreeing to his vocational calling, he became a Jesuit priest in 1969. He quickly became a leader in the Jesuit religious order. In 1992 he became a bishop. In 1998 he became archbishop of Buenos Aires, his hometown. And on March 13, 2013, Archbishop Bergoglio became the 266th pope to lead the Roman Catholic Church, taking the name of Francis after his model of faith, St. Francis of Assisi. In the years following, Pope Francis has led this church of over a billion people with the gift of understanding, shepherding his flock with care, compassion, and humility.

The Gift of Understanding

A teen says to a parent: "You just don't understand me!!!"

A teacher says to the students: "You will need to understand this algebraic equation. It will be on the test."

One friend says to another: "You really understand where I'm coming from, don't you?"

A good definition of theology is "faith seeking