

my Sacramental Journey

CONFIRMATION

Parish Guide

Supporting parishes as they journey with children and their parents in preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation

CONTENTS

Welcome	3
Topic One: All about me	7
Topic Two: Baptism Hunt	8
Topic Three: In the Beginning: the Holy Spirit in Creation	10
Topic Four: Who is Jesus?	13
Topic Five: God sends the Holy Spirit	15
Topic Six: Sacrament of Confirmation: what happens?	18



*"You meet the Holy Spirit.
He fulfills your heart.
He wants to be strength for your life and your
inner guide.
The Holy Spirit wants to continue in you what
he started at baptism."*

WELCOME!

The new Directory for Catechesis calls the catechist a ‘witness of the faith’ and a ‘keeper of the memory of God’ who ‘introduces others to the mystery of God’ and accompanies them as they ‘mature in their Christian life and journey toward God’ (DC, 80-81, 2020).

If you find yourself reading this parish guide, then this is you! As a catechist or sacramental coordinator, you have an amazing opportunity to share the message of God’s love with children and their families, and to create opportunities for them to personally encounter this love for themselves.

Of course, the family is “where faith is learned and lived” which means parents, as the “first educators”, are the ones best placed to share this faith with their children. For this reason, our primary role as catechists is to equip and support parents so that they can engage their children in sacramental preparation that is rich and meaningful.

So, thank you! In the midst of the many tasks you will do along the way, we are praying for you and the families you walk with. Along the way, we pray that your own faith is enlivened and strengthened!

THE SACRAMENTAL POLICY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE

Regarding Confirmation, The Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane Christian Initiation for Children states:

INTRODUCTION

Christian Initiation incorporates us into Christ and forms us into God’s people. In Baptism, God adopts us as children and makes us a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit. As we are signed with the gift of the Spirit in Confirmation, God brings us to the full stature of the Lord Jesus to continue his mission in the world. At the table of the Eucharist, we are fed on the Sacrament of Christ’s body and blood, and, with the whole Church, take part in the saving offering of Christ on the cross. In the Sunday Mass, those who have been initiated are continually formed by the word of God and affirmed in their belonging to the Church, the Body of Christ.

CONFIRMATION

2. From the year when the children turn eight (Year Three), they are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation administered by the Bishop or his delegate.
7. Celebrations of the Sacraments are not isolated events. They take their place within a process of growth in faith from birth to adolescence. Discernment of a child’s readiness for the Sacraments by the parents and pastor is more important than the child’s age or year level and might mean that the Sacraments are celebrated earlier or later than the norm.
8. It is a collaborative process: parish-based, family-centred and school-supported.
11. It formally begins with a rite of enrolment.
14. A parish program of sacramental preparation should provide opportunities for prayer and reflection, activities and discussion. It may, for example, take place over a four-week period within the family or in parish groups, though the time could be longer. It will need to be preceded by some support and resourcing of the parents.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT PREPARATION FOR CONFIRMATION

With this in mind, Archdiocesan Ministries has prepared the **My Sacramental Journey: Confirmation activity book** designed to help families prepare their children for Confirmation. The topics in this activity book include: All about Me, Baptism Hunt, In the beginning: the Holy Spirit in Creation, Who is Jesus?, God sends the Holy Spirit, and the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Confirmation activity book is accompanied by a Parent Guide and a Parish Guide which provide background information and further ideas.

Each topic in Confirmation activity book is unpacked in the Parent Guide and Parish Guide with Background information, Scripture, Activities, Family Fun ideas, Viewing and Family Prayer ideas to accompany each topic.

Together these resources are designed to be a springboard for conversations and engagement as parents accompany their children through their time of preparation for Confirmation.



OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

The **Bible** is used on a number of occasions throughout the children's preparation. The Contemporary English Version is most commonly used in the Children's Lectionary (the book of scripture readings used in children's masses and children's Liturgy of the Word on Sundays). The New Revised Standard Version is used in the Eucharist activity book. Both of these are appropriate choices for use in the context of sacramental preparation. Bible gateway is a helpful resource for accessing the scriptures online biblegateway.com.

The **Flame of Faith** resources were produced by Archdiocesan Ministries to support families and sacramental teams, especially during this time of preparation. The recourse includes FAQs, and videos explaining each of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, and Penance flameoffaith.org.au. Each parish and community in the Brisbane Archdiocese has its own login details, for further information please contact childrenandfamilies@eb.catholic.net.au

Our Family Prays is a resource produced by Liturgy Brisbane which outlines the Sacraments of Initiation and prayers you could use at home liturgybrisbane.net.au

The **YOUCAT for Kids** is a based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and reproduced for children. It is particularly helpful for adults as they find ways to articulate concepts of faith in child-friendly ways freedompublishingbooks.com.au



Lastly, often accompanying our children through sacramental preparation can stir up questions for us as adults about our own faith and relationship with God. That's a great thing! **More with Jesus**, a 30-day faith exploration booklet can help Catholics reflect on the significance of their baptism. For information about More with Jesus, other adult faith resources and events, or to talk to someone about deepening your faith, just contact the Evangelisation Brisbane office on 3324 3440 or formation@bne.catholic.net.au

PARISH-BASED, FAMILY-CENTRED

The parish supports families as they make their way through the Confirmation activity book (supported by the Parent Guide) by:

- Facilitating Information session for parents including theology and background of the Sacrament of Confirmation, and the organisation of the sacrament within the parish.
- Encouraging families to set up a prayer space at home, including the child's baptism candle if possible.
- Holding the Rite of Enrolment during Sunday Mass (see Our Family Prays, p 52). Children receive their Confirmation activity book at this Mass and parents receive their Parent Guide (or they are provided with this at the Information session).
- Providing resources and ongoing support to the families through a variety of means e.g. regular emails; family workshops; small group gatherings; Children's Liturgy of the Word.

It is suggested that parishes support families in using Confirmation activity book (supported by the Parent Guide) in one of three ways:

- Over about four weeks, families make their way through the Confirmation activity book using the Parent Guide and support from the parish sacramental team. At the end of the preparation time, the parish facilitates a family workshop during which the content of the Confirmation activity book is reviewed and consolidated.
- Over about four weeks, families gather in small groups on a weekly basis and make their way through the Confirmation activity book. The families gather for the 45 minute session each week to discuss key content of each topic and complete the Confirmation activity book at home. At the end of the preparation time, the parish facilitates a family workshop during which the content of the Confirmation activity book is reviewed and consolidated.
- Two or three family workshops, run by the parish, are offered over a four week period. Each family makes their way through the Confirmation activity book during these sessions.

Each parish is encouraged to choose the format which best suits their families and the sacramental team.

TOPIC 1

All about Me

Aim

In this topic, children design a t-shirt that is all about them and the people who are important to them e.g. family, friends, and parish priest. They might do this through drawing or by cutting and pasting photos or other images.

As parents and children talk about the design on the t-shirt, parents affirm their child for the unique and precious gift they are to their family and friends. The children experience being known and loved by God through this time they share with their parents.



Notes

Use this column to keep notes, ideas you may want to share with families or things you may want to change for future sessions.

Sacramental Team Background Information

Developmentally, children of this age are primarily concerned with themselves and those who are close to them. With this in mind, it is fitting to begin this time of preparation with the child themselves.

Through Baptism, children are welcomed into the faith community and claimed for Christ. God's love for them is immense and personal, and primarily encountered through the love expressed by their parents. This page gives children an opportunity to express those things that are important to them and parents an opportunity to affirm the uniqueness of their child, their dignity as children of God and God's love for them as individuals.

Family Prayer Idea

Place a photo of each member of the family in the family prayer space. Invite the whole family to gather around their prayer space. The family may like to light a single candle or a small candle to go with each of the family photos (battery operated candles are a great option for families with small children).

Together say thank you prayers to God for each member of the family. For example, 'thank you God for Ben', 'thank you God for Mary', 'thank you God for Mum', 'thank you God for Dad' etc.

TOPIC 2

Baptism Hunt

Aim

Through this topic, children learn that Baptism is the first sacrament of Initiation and explore their own Baptism. Together with their families, children look for clues of their Baptism, e.g. their baptism candle, certificate, clothes, photos or videos.

As parents and children share the memories and stories from their Baptism, the children's understanding of Baptism increases and their identity as a 'child of God' is affirmed.



Notes

Sacramental Team Background Information

Baptism is the first Sacrament of Initiation. It is “the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments” (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC], 1993, para. 1213). The seven sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony) “touch all the stages and important moments of the Christian life; they give birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian’s life of faith. There is thus a certain resemblance between the stages of natural life and the stages of the spiritual life” (CCC, 1993, para. 1210).

At Baptism, we are welcomed into God’s Church. We receive the Holy Spirit so that we can be formed as a child of God who continues to grow in relationship with God and others. “God adopts us as children and makes us a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit” (Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2015, Introduction). At Baptism, we become a Christian – a child of God called to be a missionary-disciple who shares in God’s life and continues the mission of Jesus in the world.

For most Catholics, their parents chose to have their child baptised as infants. As part of that, parents make a commitment to raise their child to know God and to practise the Catholic faith. Parents play the primary role in their child’s formation as they grow up and learn to live out their Baptismal call in their everyday life and relationships.

Family Fun

Watch the Flame of Faith baptism video together <http://flameoffaith.org.au>. This video outlines what happens during the sacrament of Baptism and describes the symbols of Baptism and their meaning.

Families talk about the child's Baptism and look at videos and photos from the celebration. Share memories and stories from the occasion.

Encourage the families to take a small bottle with a lid with them the next time they visit their local church and collect some holy water to use at home.

Have the children use the middle pages of their MSJ: Confirmation activity book (pages 8-9) to write a story, draw a story board or display some photos from their Baptism.

Family Prayer Ideas

Invite the whole family to gather around their prayer space and light a candle. Use the holy water collected from the church to trace the Sign of the Cross on each other's forehead, saying, 'You belong to Jesus' or 'At your Baptism, you were baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' Be sure to have the children share in tracing the Sign of the Cross on the adult's forehead as well.

Notes



TOPIC 3

In the Beginning: The Holy Spirit in Creation

Aim

Through this topic children learn that the Holy Spirit, with the Father and the Son, is one God (known as the Trinity).

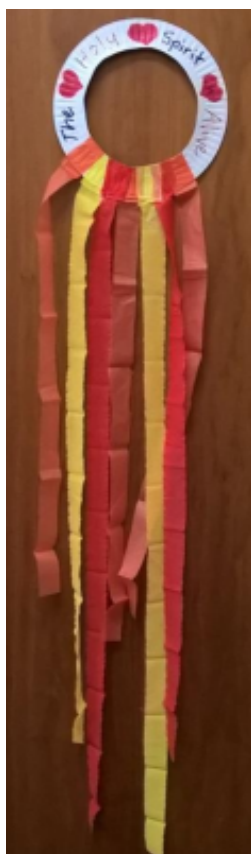
They learn that the Holy Spirit has been present and active from the beginning by exploring the first mention of the Holy Spirit in the bible in the story of Creation (Genesis 1:1-2). The Holy Spirit is God's personal presence here with us.

While there are many images in the bible that help us to understand more about the Holy Spirit, the children explore one in particular, the image of wind, which is found in this story in Genesis. Through the image of wind the children learn that, although we cannot see the Holy Spirit, we can see the effect of the Holy Spirit in ourselves and in the world around us.

Activities such as playing with a kite or pinwheel, provide opportunities for parents and children to talk about the Holy Spirit.

Activities, such as the prayer, provide opportunities for the parents and children to 'feel' the Holy Spirit and to experience God's presence.

Notes



Background Information

The Holy Spirit, with the Father and the Son, is one God.

The Holy Spirit is God, just as the Father is God and the Son is God. The Holy Spirit is the love that flows between the Father and the Son – the love of God, which gives life to everything. This is known as the Trinity, it is a mystery!

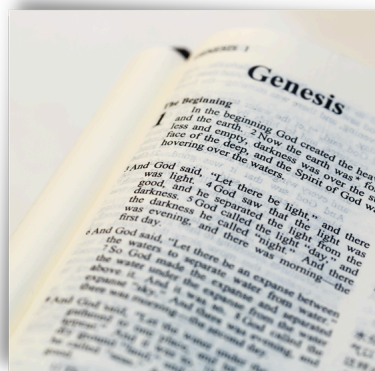
The Holy Spirit was active at the very beginning of Creation (Genesis 1:1-2) and has continued to be active throughout all of history. In the book of Genesis the Hebrew word used for the Holy Spirit is 'ruah' which means vital breath, wind, air and spirit – this gives us a beautiful insight into the Holy Spirit as the very breath of God who permeates all of creation and history.

Further in the Old Testament, we read about how the Holy Spirit came upon the prophets and spoke through them to the people. Through the Holy Spirit, Mary conceived and became the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-28). The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus when he was baptised by John in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:14). The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost, empowering them to become bold witnesses to Jesus (Act 2:1-41). The Holy Spirit is constantly at work in the Church. In a personal way at our baptism, we receive the Holy Spirit who makes a home in us and forms us as children of God. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Holy Spirit gives us the same grace that the disciples received at Pentecost, strengthening us so that we can take our place in the mission of the Church.

Scripture

The story of Creation

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the waters.”(Genesis 1:1-2)



Read the scripture and talk about which word in this sentence tells us that the Holy Spirit is present at the beginning of creation. What is the image of the Holy Spirit?

Family Fun ideas

As a family, play with a pinwheel or fly a kite and talk about how we cannot see the wind but we can see the effect of the wind. In a similar way, we cannot see the Holy Spirit but we can see the effect of the Holy Spirit all around and within us – in the plants, trees, animals, water, sun, moon, and stars; in the people we live and play with; in other people we don't know; and in ourselves.

Use your bible skills to find the scripture from Genesis 1:1-2.

Activity

Invite the child to write a story or poem about flying their kite or pinwheel and add some photos or drawings to it.

Family Prayer

Invite the whole family to gather around their prayer space and light a candle. Pray the prayer found at the bottom of page 7 in your MSJ: Confirmation activity book.

You might also like to try a simple Holy Spirit prayer. Sit comfortably and simply breathe and quietly say the words, 'Come Holy Spirit'. Slowly, repeat this phrase as many times as you like.



TOPIC 4

Who is Jesus?

Aim

Through this topic, children learn more about Jesus' life and teachings by exploring some of the stories found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Through these stories, the children recognise the action of the Holy Spirit at work in Jesus and make connections between these events and the Holy Spirit at work in their own lives.

Sacramental Team Background Information

Way back in the book of Genesis, we read the Creation narratives. These stories give us an insight into God's nature and why God created humankind. The first paragraph in the Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it beautifully:

“God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Saviour. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life” (CCC, para. 1).

God is loving and creative and made humankind to share in God's life and love. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, we read about the many ways God reached out to humankind through the prophets, but all this culminates in the coming of Jesus – a real person who lived in first century Palestine – but a person unlike any other.

Jesus was God in the flesh – the Christ (in Hebrew, Messiah), the Anointed one, the full revelation of God made present for all of humanity.

The Gospels (the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the bible) tell of the life and teachings of Jesus, and of his death and resurrection. Through Jesus, all humankind has access to God and the life-giving relationship that God offers.

Notes

This topic helps children to get to know Jesus through various stories from the gospels. Most children are familiar with the story of the birth of Jesus, but other stories may be less familiar. This is an opportunity for them to hear the stories of his baptism, his first miracle, his healing, his forgiveness, his peace, his love of children. It's also a chance for them to recognise the action of the Holy Spirit at work in Jesus' life.

Scripture

- The birth of Jesus – Matthew 1.18-25; Luke 2.1-7
- The baptism of Jesus – Matthew 3.13-17; Mark 1.9-11; Luke 3.21-22; John 1.29-34
- The wedding at Cana – John 2.1-11
- Jesus stills the storm – Matthew 8.23-27; Mark 4.35-41; Luke 8.22-25
- Jesus cleanses a leper – Matthew 8.1-4; Mark 1.40-45; Luke 5.12-16
- Feeding the five thousand – Matthew 14.13-21; Mark 6.30-44; Luke 9.10-17; John 6.1-15
- Jesus blesses little children – Matthew 19.13-15; Mark 10.13-16; Luke 18.15-27
- Jesus and Zacchaeus – Luke 19.1-10

Family Fun

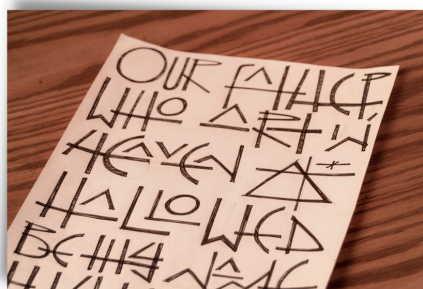
The child makes a video as they interview their family about their favourite stories of Jesus.

Activity

The child selects their favourite story about Jesus and retells it in their own words or with drawing.

Family Prayer

The family gather around their sacred space, an adult lights the candle, and together they pray the prayer that Jesus taught us. Our Father who art in heaven...



TOPIC 5

God sends the Holy Spirit

Aim

Children develop their understanding of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Children will explore:

- Jesus' promise of a special helper.
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- The fruit of the Spirit.

Sacramental Team Background Information

The Holy Spirit, together with the Father and the Son, is God (the third person of the Trinity).

Before he died, Jesus told his friends that God the Father would send a special helper (the Holy Spirit) who would help them live as he had shown them. We read about this in the Gospel of John 14:16-26, 15:26, 16:7.

Then, in the book of Acts, we read about the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The disciples had hidden away out of fear when suddenly, the Holy Spirit came down on them as a loud, rushing wind and tongues of fire. 'They began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability' and 'each one heard them speaking in the native language of each' (Acts 2:4, 6). Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Peter began to preach and the apostles ministered to the crowd that had gathered because of the noise. All were astonished by what they experienced and more than 3,000 came to believe.

The Holy Spirit continues to be active and present today, both in the Church and in the lives of believers.

In the Sacrament of Baptism, we receive the Holy Spirit so that we can be formed as a child of God. At Confirmation, the Holy Spirit strengthens and empowers us, giving us gifts so that we can take our place in the mission of the Church and be living witnesses to Christ and the life that God offers. The Prayer of Invocation, which is prayed by the Bishop over the candidates at Confirmation, lists the gifts of the Spirit taken from the book of Isaiah – wisdom, understanding, counsel/right judgement, fortitude/courage, knowledge, piety/reverence, fear of the Lord/wonder and awe (Isaiah 11:1-3). These are first received in Baptism and strengthened in Confirmation. You can find other gifts, given by the Holy Spirit, in other parts of scripture: Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

Notes



WISDOM

With the gift of Wisdom, we can think deeply about a situation and see things the way God sees them.



FORTITUDE/COURAGE

With the gift of Fortitude, we are strengthened to overcome our fears and to stand up for what we believe in.



COUNSEL/RIGHT JUDGEMENT

With the gift of Counsel, we can recognise what is right and what is wrong - what is of God and what is not.



UNDERSTANDING

With the gift of Understanding, we become aware of the meaning of God's message.



PIETY/REVERENCE

With the gift of Piety, we are able to love God more deeply through our love and care for others and God's world.



KNOWLEDGE

With the gift of Knowledge, we are able to discover and follow God's will in all things.



FEAR OF THE LORD/WONDER AND AWE

With the gift of Fear of the Lord, we are able to be in humble wonder and awe of God's creation, and God's love and compassion for us.

In the book of Galatians, we read about the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23a). These characteristics are evident in the lives of those who actively embrace the Holy Spirit. They become living witnesses to Christ and effective missionary-disciples because the Holy Spirit helps them to be loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, generous, faithful, gentle, and to have self-control.

Scripture

- Jesus promises the Holy Spirit – John 14:16-26, 15:26, 16:7
- The coming of the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:1-4, 6
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit (in the Prayer of Invocation) – Isaiah 11:1-3
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit in other scriptures – Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
- The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – Galatians 5:22-23a

Family Fun

With the help of a grown-up, the child chooses one of the gifts of the Spirit and thinks about how it will help them to live like Jesus. The child writes their prayer asking the Holy Spirit for that gift.

Activity

Thinking about the fruit of the Spirit, the child looks carefully at the members of their family, friends, people they don't know personally, and themselves. They fill each flame with the name of someone they have spotted a fruit of the Holy Spirit and record what they saw the person do.

Family Prayer

The family gather around their sacred space, an adult lights the candle, and they pray together the prayer the child has written.



TOPIC 6

Confirmation: what happens?

Aim

In this topic, the children explore the celebration of Confirmation and the key parts of the rite itself. These include: Renewal of Baptismal Promises, Laying On of Hands, and Anointing with the Oil of Chrism.

Notes

Sacramental Team Background Information



Renewal of Baptismal Promises:

When your child was baptised, you (as parents) and your child's godparents made promises on their behalf. These promises include to reject evil and all that is bad, and to affirm their belief in God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Now that your child is older, they will be asked to renew those promises for themselves.

At Baptism also, your child received the light of Christ. This was symbolically given when your child's Baptismal candle was lit from the Paschal candle (or Easter candle). The Paschal candle is kindled for the first time at each Easter Vigil mass and remains in the church throughout the year as a visible reminder that Jesus is risen from the dead and is always with us. Often, during the Renewal of Baptismal promises at Confirmation, the children will be invited to light their Baptismal candle once again (perhaps this may be done when your child makes their Confirmation).

Laying On of Hands:

In Confirmation, the Bishop (and any other priests who may be concelebrating) lay hands upon each of the candidates and pray for them individually. This practice of the laying on of hands is an ancient one that dates back to the apostles and the early Church. The Bishop then extends his hands over the all the candidates and prays the Prayer of Invocation, asking God to send the Holy Spirit upon each of them.



In the Prayer of Invocation, the Bishop asks that the Holy Spirit give the candidate 'gifts'. These are from the book of Isaiah 11:1-3 (there are other gifts of the Holy Spirit in other parts of scripture).



These gifts are Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord. Each is a charism through which the Holy Spirit acts in the life of each person for the good of all.

Anointing with the Oil of Chrism:

Following the laying on of hands, each of the candidates is anointed with the Oil of Chrism – the same oil with which they were anointed at Baptism. As he traces the cross with the Oil of Chrism on the candidates forehead, the Bishop calls them by name saying, “[name], be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit”.

Oil is a rich symbol which signifies abundance, joy, cleansing and health. Throughout history it has been used to soothe and heal, strengthen and preserve. In the Hebrew Scriptures, those who were chosen and called by God for some special task, were anointed with oil. By this anointing in Confirmation, the candidate receives the ‘mark’, the ‘seal’ of the Holy Spirit who empowers them to be living witnesses to Christ Jesus (CCC, para., 1295).



Scripture

The gifts of the Holy Spirit (in the Prayer of Invocation) – Isaiah 11:1-3
Gifts of the Holy Spirit in other scriptures – Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Family Fun

As part of your preparation, watch the Confirmation video together on the Flame of Faith website <https://flameoffaith.org.au/> this will give you a good idea of what happens during Confirmation.

Activity

Practise the words and gestures of the rite of Confirmation:

Trace the Sign of the Cross on your child's forehead and say, '[name], be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit'.

Have your child respond with 'amen'.

Touch them lightly on the cheek and say, 'peace be with you'.

Have your child respond with 'and with your spirit'.

Family Prayer

Invite your family to gather around your prayer space, light the candle, and pray using the words of the baptismal promises on page 14 of your My Sacramental Journey: Confirmation activity book: I believe in God, I believe in Jesus, I believe in the Holy Spirit.



PARISH REFLECTION

What worked well?

What would you change/ adjust for your parish ?

Tips for your Sacramental team in preparing for next year?
