

A High School Confirmation Program

saint mary's press

Anointed in the Spirit

Program
Director
Manual

Rita Burns Senseman



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Welcome!

Anointed in the Spirit is a Confirmation preparation program for high school-aged youth. This program leads them through a process of liturgical catechesis that focuses on the Rite of Confirmation. They take part in a preparation process whose source and summit is the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. After receiving Confirmation, the newly confirmed reflect on the liturgical celebration of the Sacrament and deepen their understanding of the mystery they have received.

Whether you use this program as an immediate preparation for the Sacrament or you use it over a longer period of time, this engaging new liturgical approach to sacramental catechesis not only will please your candidates and their parents but also will fully prepare your high school candidates to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In the pages that follow, you will find a fuller description of liturgical catechesis and how it prepares teens for Confirmation.

The Anointed in the Spirit program includes three other components to accompany this manual:

- The candidate handbook supports the preparation sessions and includes Catholic prayers, a list of Catholic beliefs and practices, and a list of saints.
- The catechist guide contains a description of liturgical catechesis, detailed session plans for the eight preparation sessions and two mystagogy sessions, the *Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation*, and numbers 1 through 33 of the *Rite of Confirmation*.
- The sponsor booklet offers suggestions and guidelines for the Confirmation sponsor, including step-by-step directions for five guided sponsor-candidate conversations.

Overview of the Program Director Manual

In this manual, you will find information specifically designed to help you organize an effective preparation program.

In addition to the discussion of liturgical catechesis in chapter 1, “Program Overview,” you will find an outline of the structure of Anointed in the Spirit, including information on what is covered in each candidate session. Chapter 1 also contains a detailed description of the other components in the program.

In chapter 2, “Celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation with Adolescents,” you will find a brief history of the Sacrament of Confirmation, a summary of the theology of the Sacrament, and a description of the roles of parents, sponsors, catechists, and the parish in the preparation process.

Chapter 3, “Getting Started,” includes guidelines for planning program elements, such as engaging the candidates in service, inviting them to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, and planning a candidate retreat. The chapter ends with a checklist for getting started, to help you organize your planning.

Chapter 4, “Designing Your Confirmation Program,” helps you put together the preparation process in a way that best fits your parish culture. The chapter includes planning considerations and concrete models for scheduling options. In this chapter, you will also find an outline for doing liturgical catechesis with the entire parish community. Various scheduling options are shown.

Chapter 5, “Training Session for Catechists,” is designed to help catechists understand the program rationale and its liturgical approach to preparation. It can be presented as an evening session or over a longer period of time. Excerpts from pertinent liturgical and catechetical documents are provided.

Chapter 6, “Orientation Session for Parents and Candidates,” offers everything you need to provide parents and candidates with an overview of the program.

In chapter 7, “Orientation Session for Sponsors and Candidates,” you will find detailed plans for leading a session for the sponsors and the candidates. The session provides an opportunity for sponsors to learn about their role and, at the same time, spend time with their candidates. Adaptations are provided for an orientation session for sponsors only.

Chapter 8, “Overnight Retreat,” provides a fully developed plan for an overnight retreat. The retreat participants explore the symbol of fire in human experience, Scripture, and the life of the Church, and reflect on the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Chapter 9, “Preparation for the Confirmation Liturgy and for Mystagogy,” offers planning tools for leading a committee in arranging and rehearsing the Confirmation liturgy. The chapter also offers guidance for planning mystagogy sessions with candidates, and with the wider parish community, to allow for reflection after the Confirmation liturgy has taken place.

In appendix A, you will find the *Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation*. Pope Paul VI promulgated this document in 1971. It describes some of the origins and history of the Sacrament and explores the “essence” of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Appendix B consists of numbers 1 through 33 of the *Rite of Confirmation*, the Church’s official liturgical text for the Sacrament of Confirmation. This is the ritual text that is the foundation for the entire program.

The Program Director Role

You have a vital role as the director of Confirmation preparation. You are the “program manager” and are central to the success of the program. Your commitment and hard work, and the example of discipleship you provide to the parish are much appreciated. Anointed in the Spirit will give you the background and materials you need to provide an effective and enriching Confirmation preparation program.

1

Program Overview

Program Rationale

As described in the introduction, this program is based on the Rite of Confirmation and is organized according to the principles of liturgical catechesis. This first chapter opens with a description of liturgical catechesis and how it is used in Anointed in the Spirit. An explanation of why liturgical catechesis is particularly effective with adolescents follows. (See chapter 5, “Training Session for Catechists,” for more information on liturgical catechesis and its theological foundations.) Finally, in this chapter you will find detailed descriptions of the other components that accompany this manual.

Liturgical Catechesis

In liturgical catechesis, the liturgy itself teaches. The ritual elements of the Confirmation liturgy lead the candidates toward full participation in the celebration of the Sacrament. By reflecting on the symbols that will be part of the celebration, the candidates prepare to fully enter into the liturgical celebration. Liturgical catechesis prepares them to grasp the realities the symbols point to. Understanding the movement of the liturgy allows them to more actively and more consciously enter into the sacramental celebration.

Although there are many ways to describe liturgical catechesis, for our purposes in this program, it can be described as catechesis that (1) leads to and prepares for liturgy, (2) includes the liturgical celebration itself, and (3) reflects back on the liturgy (this activity is called *mystagogy*). Let’s look more closely at those three steps now.

The Three Steps of Liturgical Catechesis

Step 1: Prepare for the liturgical celebration. Each of the eight candidate preparation sessions takes one of the ritual elements of Confirmation and builds toward the celebration of the Sacrament:

- Session 1, “Being a Candidate,” introduces the “Presentation of the Candidates,” from the *Rite of Confirmation* (see 21). The session familiarizes the candidates with the significance of being candidates and being presented to the bishop.
- Session 2, “Baptism: Waters of New Life,” is a reflection on the Sacrament of Baptism. In this session, we are doing mystagogy (step 3 of liturgical catechesis—reflecting back on a Sacrament). Because Confirmation perfects and seals Baptism, recalling and reflecting on Baptism properly prepares the candidates for Confirmation.
- Session 3, “Renewing Baptismal Promises,” continues the baptismal theme by exploring the meaning and importance of the Renewal of Baptismal Promises that occurs during Confirmation (see *Rite of Confirmation*, 23).
- Session 4, “The Laying On of Hands,” examines the next major ritual moment in the sacramental celebration, the bishop’s laying on of hands. This ritual gesture is full of meaning and history.
- Session 5, “The Gifts of the Holy Spirit,” focuses on the bishop’s prayer that is prayed during the laying on of hands. This prayer asks for the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- Session 6, “Being Anointed by the Holy Spirit,” is based on number 26 of the *Rite of Confirmation*. This hands-on session allows for the candidates to see, touch, and feel oil—vegetable oil, that is! But then they apply their learning to the sacramental sign of anointing with Sacred Chrism.
- Session 7, “The Eucharist: The Heart of the Church’s Life,” is grounded in the unity of the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation. This unity is made clearer when Confirmation is celebrated during the Mass (see *Rite of Confirmation*, 31).
- Session 8, “Celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation,” is the immediate preparation for the sacramental celebration. It is an overview of the liturgical celebration.

You will find more information about the structure and content of each session later in this chapter, in the description of the catechist guide. Anointed in the Spirit also offers resources to prepare the broader parish community to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation (see p. 40 of this manual).

Step 2: The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The liturgy itself is the central step of liturgical catechesis. This grace-filled, sacramental moment is the pinnacle of the process. In chapter 9 of this manual, “Preparation for the Confirmation Liturgy and for Mystagogy,” you will find detailed instructions for leading a team in the work of preparing the Confirmation liturgy.

Step 3: Mystagogical reflection on the celebration of Confirmation. The third part of liturgical catechesis is mystagogical. *Mystagogy* means “to reflect on the mystery.” In this case, a mystagogical reflection on the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation means that the newly confirmed reflect on *their experience* of Confirmation. They reflect on the meaning of the Sacrament they now have received. Two mystagogical sessions follow the eight preparation sessions. They are to be used after the reception of the Sacrament. The purpose of the mystagogical sessions is to deepen the participants’ understanding of the Sacrament and lead them outward into mission.

Anointed in the Spirit also provides a mystagogical session that offers an opportunity for those in the wider parish community to reflect on their own experience of Confirmation (see chapter 9, “Preparation for the Confirmation Liturgy and for Mystagogy,” of this manual).

Why Liturgical Catechesis?

Confirmation is a sacred celebration, a once-in-a-lifetime moment, a grace-filled sacramental moment, a transformative moment. Indeed, the Church tells us that all the Sacraments are transformative. And the catechesis that surrounds the Sacraments helps us to prepare for, and subsequently understand, the transformation that takes place. Moreover, as Pope John Paul II tells us, catechesis is “intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity” (*On Catechesis in Our Time*, 23).

Anointed in the Spirit directly links the Sacrament to the catechesis that precedes and follows the sacramental celebration. Liturgical catechesis prepares the candidates to enter into the liturgy. Then the liturgy itself forms them in faith. And after the liturgy, liturgical reflection (mystagogy) helps the newly confirmed to more fully understand that which they have received and to respond faithfully.

For adolescents, focusing on the rituals, signs, and symbols of liturgical catechesis is an engaging and imaginative way to prepare for the Sacrament. Exploring the meaning found in the concrete symbols of water, oil, and laying on of hands allows them to think more deeply about God’s presence and

action in their lives. Anointed in the Spirit provides the candidates with solid Church doctrine on Confirmation, but the candidates approach the teachings through the liturgical symbols, making the concepts more accessible.

Components of Anointed in the Spirit

Candidate Handbook

Anointed in the Spirit features a full-color candidate handbook that plays a vital part in the preparation process. It contains images, prayers, explanations, and journaling space that the candidates use throughout the sessions. Each candidate and catechist should have his or her own copy. Instructions for using the candidate handbook are clearly laid out in the catechist guide. The candidate handbook includes one chapter for each of the eight preparation sessions in the catechist guide. (The two mystagogy sessions draw material from the liturgical celebration itself.) The session plans direct the catechist to invite the candidates to open their handbooks at various points to look at images, read short selections, review charts, complete activities, or say prayers together. The presentation of the candidate handbook is youth-friendly, using stories and examples to help the candidates understand the information and relate it to their lives.

Each chapter in the candidate handbook includes a number of special features or sidebars:

Jesus Connection

The “Jesus Connection” sidebars serve to highlight the Christological dimension of the Catholic faith and help the candidates grow in their understanding of who Jesus is and his importance for their lives.

Did You Know?

These sidebars expand on ideas from the chapter. For example, the chapter on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit includes a “Did You Know?” sidebar on the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The chapter on the laying on of hands includes a sidebar on symbols of the Holy Spirit.

Catholic Connection

The “Catholic Connection” sidebars review central concepts, such as the Trinity, the Church, and the Sacraments.

Right from the Rite

This feature highlights quotations from the *Rite of Confirmation* and the *Rite of Baptism for Children* that enhance the chapter and help the candidates make connections between their preparation and the sacramental life of the Church.

Living as a Disciple

The celebration of Confirmation challenges the candidates to assume a larger responsibility for carrying out the Church’s mission. The “Living as a Disciple” feature helps the candidates identify concrete ideas for participating in this mission and provides writing space for the candidates’ thoughts.

Lord, Hear My Prayer

This feature offers a short prayer for the candidates to pray on their own or with the group as the closing prayer for the session.

Journal

Each chapter concludes with a journal page. The catechist can incorporate the journal activities into the sessions as part of 15-minute session extensions or suggest that the candidates complete these activities on their own.

Scripture Quotations

This feature highlights a selection of Scripture quotations, which help the candidates see some of the connections between the Scriptures and topics addressed in the program.

Resources for Further Formation

The candidate handbook also includes three appendices:

“Catholic Prayers” This is a collection of prayers that the candidates can use on their own or that the catechist can invite the group to use together during a session. The sponsor booklet contains the same collection of prayers, making it easy for the sponsors and the candidates to pray together.

“Catholic Beliefs and Practices” This section provides a handy summary of Catholic beliefs and practices. For a more in-depth review of Catholicism, the catechist can direct the candidates to *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*, Second Edition (Saint Mary’s Press, 2008).

“Patron Saints and Their Causes” This list may be especially helpful for candidates who choose not to use their baptismal names for Confirmation. It provides a starting point for considering options. The catechist should be prepared with suggestions for more in-depth exploration of the saints’ biographies.

Catechist Guide

The catechist guide complements the candidate handbook and supports the catechist’s work with the candidates. The guide provides detailed plans for eight preparation sessions, followed by two mystagogical sessions, designed to take place after Confirmation. The guide also provides the catechist with a description of the overall program and her or his role in the process of liturgical catechesis.

Step-by-Step Session Plans

Each preparation session in the catechist guide corresponds to a chapter in the candidate handbook. The core session is designed to fill 60 minutes. In addition, each session includes optional 15-minute session extensions for catechists wishing to extend the session beyond 60 minutes to 75 or 90 minutes. The session steps follow the same general pattern:

- welcome and prayer
- an activity to spark interest
- a teaching activity
- a life application
- a closing prayer
- an optional life application activity
- an optional journal activity

Some sessions include reproducible handouts that support the activities. Each session includes optional activities, in addition to the 15-minute session extensions:

- “Discussion Starters” that can be woven into the session at various times
- “Media Connections” that suggest songs or films that complement the session
- other options for implementing particular steps

Foundational Elements in Every Session

Sacred Scriptures The Word of God is preeminent in our lives as Catholics. Indeed, the Church exhorts us to read the Sacred Scriptures to deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2653). Thus, all the sessions include readings from the Scriptures. Usually these readings are selected from those recommended for use in the *Rite of Confirmation*, allowing the rite itself to guide the formation process.

Prayer Similarly, prayer is essential for forming Christians in faith. By praying with our young people, we not only raise our minds and hearts to God, but we teach them how to pray. “When catechesis is permeated by a climate of prayer, the assimilation of the entire Christian life reaches its summit” (*General Directory for Catechesis*, 85). Various forms of prayer are used in the sessions. Four prayer times appear in every session:

- A “Catechist Prayer” is included for use before each session.
- Each session opens with a simple prayer acknowledging God’s presence.
- A simple closing prayer found in the candidate handbook is suggested for ending each session.
- Each session also provides the option for a closing prayer service that echoes the ritual element of the session—perhaps a ritual symbol or gesture or one of the *Lectionary* readings for Confirmation.

Catechism of the Catholic Church The sessions in the catechist guide include references to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that the catechist can incorporate into the session.

Documents for the Catechist

The catechist guide also includes the same two appendixes found in this manual: (1) “*Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation*” and (2) “*Rite of Confirmation*, 1–33.” Because the point of departure for the program is the Rite of Confirmation, catechists who are familiar with these foun-

dational documents on the Sacrament will feel more confident as they lead the sessions. By grounding themselves in the Rite of Confirmation, catechists will be more effective in their role of leading adolescents to the Sacrament.

Sponsor Booklet

The booklet for sponsors includes the following features to ensure that sponsors and candidates have a positive experience:

- information about Confirmation and an overview of what will happen at the celebration of the Sacrament
- a discussion about the role of the sponsor in the Confirmation process
- practical ideas to help the sponsor build a relationship with his or her candidate
- guidance for effective conversations with young people
- five guided conversations, with step-by-step instructions, on the topics of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and faith
- an overview of the central characteristics of Catholicism
- a collection of prayers (same as in the back of the candidate handbook)

Sponsors and candidates may use the five guided conversations when they meet on their own. However, if you will routinely hold gatherings for sponsors and candidates together, these conversations may be a resource for you or the catechist.

A Successful Program

Almost everything you need for a successful Confirmation preparation program is found within the pages of this manual for coordinating a new and exciting liturgical approach to Confirmation preparation. All you need now are some good catechists and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, both of which are found right within your own parish! Enjoy Anointed in the Spirit.

2

Celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation with Adolescents

This chapter addresses the twofold focus implied by its title: Confirmation and adolescents. First, we discuss high school–aged youth and why the high school years are a good time to celebrate Confirmation. Second, we address the history and theology of Confirmation, which must be understood in order to properly celebrate the Sacrament. Third, we address the people who bring it all together—the ministers of Confirmation. You, as the director, coordinate the process, but it is the parish, the parents, the sponsors, and the catechists who actually bring the young people to the Sacrament. First, let’s take a look at the candidates.

High School Confirmation

The bishops of the United States determined that each bishop could decide for his own diocese the age for the reception of Confirmation. Various times are appropriate for celebrating the Sacrament, and each bishop is free to do what is best in his locale. If you are planning to use this program, then your local bishop must have decided that high school is a good time for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Check with your diocesan office for the history and the specific reasons why this particular age was chosen for your diocese.

Confirming young people during their high school years has several advantages. Teens are gaining independence as individuals and as social persons. This is an opportune time for the Church to influence their faith development and to reassure them of the continuing love and support of the Church as well as the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit.

The communal dimension of Confirmation, and of preparation for the Sacrament, is another reason why Confirmation during high school is beneficial. During the high school years, young people depend more and more on their peers. Their friends increasingly influence and support them, and Confirmation preparation brings them together in faith to experience and share an awesome event. Developing relationships with adults, other than their parents, who care about them is also important for high school–aged youth.

Establishing relationships with a sponsor and other adults involved in the Confirmation program is a great opportunity for teens.

In addition, many teens ponder significant questions about life and faith. Confirmation preparation offers them the opportunity to explore their questions as they learn more about Church teaching and engage in developmentally appropriate theological discussion and reflection.

Keep in mind that high school–aged youth are busy people. But they are also capable of organizing and prioritizing their time and activities. Present Confirmation as a once-in-a-lifetime, not-to-be-missed opportunity to become more like Christ and to receive the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Most adolescents also understand the importance of completing what they begin. Confirmation, as the seal and perfecting of their Christian initiation, enables them to take more responsibility for the mission of Christ to the world. A parish committed to inviting youth into fuller participation in the community will be awed by their generous response.

The greatest benefit to confirming adolescents is probably the simplest reason of all: grace. The Sacrament is efficacious, and as teens become young adults, they will face decisions and challenges that will require the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit—wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and wonder and awe—help them deal with the situations they encounter. As “Helper and Guide,” the Holy Spirit will help the participants as they continue to develop their self-identity and discover their pathway in life. The Holy Spirit strengthens and helps our young people in ways we cannot even imagine!

Whether we are in adulthood, adolescence, childhood, or even in infancy, Confirmation strengthens us with the power of the Holy Spirit. This foundational understanding, along with other insights about Confirmation, developed over centuries.

A Brief History and Theology of Confirmation

Knowledge of the theology of Confirmation is essential for those leading the candidates to the Sacrament of Confirmation. That theology can best be understood in the context of the history of the Sacrament.

Biblical Beginnings

Even though the Trinity was not fully revealed in the Old Testament, there are certainly many references to the Spirit. The Spirit is active at creation and

throughout salvation history. The prophet Isaiah references the Spirit when he foretells the coming of the Messiah. Furthermore, the institution of the Sacrament of Confirmation can be seen in Jesus' action in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism. Later, Jesus gave the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit to his Apostles on Easter Sunday (see John 20:22) and at Pentecost (see Acts of the Apostles 2:1–4).

Early Church

In the earliest days of the Church, Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist were celebrated together as the ritual for Christian initiation. In these early days, the bishop presided at Christian initiation. As Christianity grew, it became impossible for bishops to preside at all Baptisms. Gradually, the priests became the ordinary ministers for Baptism and the Eucharist, while the anointing (which later became known as Confirmation) was reserved for the bishop. At this point, the Churches in the East and the Churches in the West handled things differently. The Churches in the East are of several types: there are Eastern Orthodox Churches that are separate from the Catholic Church, but there are also Eastern Catholic Churches, such as the Armenian Catholics and the Chaldean Catholics. The Churches in the West are the Roman Catholic Churches.

Eastern Catholic Churches

In the Eastern Churches, the Sacraments of Christian Initiation have always been celebrated together in the same ritual. This means that whether a person is an infant or an adult, she or he receives Baptism, Confirmation (known in the East as Chrismation), and the Eucharist together. The Eastern tradition clearly emphasizes the unity of the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation.

Roman Catholic Churches

In the Western Churches, a post-baptismal anointing was reserved for the bishop. The baptismal rite, celebrated by a priest, included an anointing with Chrism. But the anointing by the bishop was done later, when the child was older. In this light, it's easy to see how Confirmation is a "perfecting" or a "completion" or a "sealing" of Baptism. This tradition also emphasized the unity of the newly confirmed with the bishop, and through the bishop, with the universal Church.

Confirmation Today in the United States

As Roman Catholics, we follow the tradition of the Western Churches. When a child is baptized as an infant, Confirmation is delayed until sometime later. In most dioceses, Confirmation takes place during the middle school or high school years.

Arguably the most significant modern development for the Sacrament of Confirmation came as a result of the Second Vatican Council. In the Council's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, the bishops called for a reform of Christian initiation. The reform was to be a "restoration" of the unity and integrity of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist (see Aidan Kavanaugh, *Confirmation: Origins and Reform*, p. 81).

Among the outcomes of the Second Vatican Council's call to reform Christian initiation were specific liturgical reforms of the Rites of Baptism and Confirmation. The reform of the Rite of Baptism began with the restoration of the adult catechumenate (the process of preparing for Baptism and entry into the Church). From this came the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (1972) which, among other things, emphasizes the unity of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (see Kavanaugh, p. 84).

This restored catechumenate has been established as the norm and paradigm for Christian initiation. The revised Rite of Confirmation (1971) is to be understood in light of its broader context in Christian initiation, linked to the other initiation. With this context in mind, let's now look at the theology of Confirmation.

Theology of Confirmation

"Those who have been baptized continue on the path of Christian initiation through the sacrament of confirmation" (*Rite of Confirmation*, 1).

Confirmation Is the Full Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

From the very beginning, becoming a Christian meant receiving the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is signified in the Rite of Confirmation by an anointing with Sacred Chrism, a laying on of hands, and the words "be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit" (*Rite of Confirmation*, 27). A more complete description of the ritual signs essential to Confirmation is found in chapters 4, 5, and 6 of the candidate handbook and the catechist guide.

Confirmation Is a Sacrament of Initiation

Through the Sacraments of Christian Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist—we are united with Christ and his Church. We are united with Christ’s Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension—that is, to the great Paschal Mystery. We are also united to the Church, the Body of Christ: Confirmation completes or perfects Baptism.

Confirmation Makes Us More Like Christ

As Confirmation completes or perfects Baptism, the power of the Holy Spirit makes us even more like Christ. We are configured to be more like Christ so we can better carry out his mission. 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.

One key aspect of the mission of the Church is to celebrate the Sacraments. You are one of the many people involved in this part of the mission.

Ministries of Confirmation (The Role of the Community)

“One of the highest responsibilities of the people of God is to prepare the baptized for Confirmation” (*Rite of Confirmation*, 3).

The Parish

As a local manifestation of the “people of God,” the parish is responsible for providing the best Confirmation preparation possible. That’s why you’ve chosen Anointed in the Spirit for your high school candidates. Besides supporting the chosen director and catechists and providing materials for the candidates, what else can the parish do to fulfill its responsibility to prepare the baptized for Confirmation?

Celebrate Liturgy Well

One of the most important responsibilities the parish has is to celebrate liturgy well—all liturgy, but particularly the Confirmation liturgy. Indeed, “pains should be taken” to give the Confirmation liturgy a “festive and solemn character” (*Rite of Confirmation*, 4). This means that a great deal of effort needs to go into drawing up and carrying out the plans for Confirmation.

As the director you will want to start planning early. You'll definitely need to work with your pastor, liturgist, liturgy committee, and musician to plan the liturgy. You may want to recruit parents and sponsors to work with the aforementioned in a Confirmation liturgy committee. You will also need to check with the diocesan office to learn about local guidelines for the celebration of the Sacrament.

In addition, consider preparing the parish for the celebration. Full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy depends on some preparation and reflection within the assembly. Even if many parish members won't attend the Confirmation celebration, whole-community catechesis can help everyone understand the significance of the Sacrament. (Chapter 4 of this manual, "Designing Your Confirmation Program," includes detailed plans for simple liturgical catechesis for the parish.)

Be a Sacrament

Confirmation is the Sacrament your young people are looking forward to, but the parish is also a Sacrament for the candidates—the sign of Christ in the world. The parish is the model of what it means to be Christ for others. Through worship, service, evangelization, and catechesis, the parish provides an example of discipleship for the candidates.

Provide Opportunities for Apostolic Service

In developing their Christian identity and along with it their sense of mission, teens are seeking opportunities to live out their faith through service. Showing them the Christian way of life is not enough; the parish needs to provide opportunities for the candidates to work alongside others to further learn the Christian way of life.

Pray

The parish has a special role to play in praying for the candidates. The parish is their family, their community: the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ is most evident during Sunday worship. Thus, the prayer of the faithful at Mass is an especially important way to exhibit our belief in God's goodness and power. Many of the typical ways we pray for candidates are listed here along with some other ideas you may not have considered:

- Conduct a special celebration of the Word for the candidates. Include in the celebration candidates for First Communion, Baptism, and reception into full communion.

- Create a prayer card based on the “Holy Spirit Prayer of Saint Augustine” (found on handout 7–D in chapter 7 of this manual). Rephrase it to make a prayer for the candidates. Or ask the candidates to design a prayer card. Distribute the prayer cards to students in the religious education program, to students in the Catholic school, and to other groups in the parish.
- Create an oversized card and place it in a gathering area at church. Invite parishioners to write prayers and notes of support to the candidates.
- Invite the candidates’ parents to form a prayer group that meets regularly to pray for the candidates.
- Ask members of parish groups to pray for the candidates. Those participating in religious education programs, those on the hospitality committee, or people involved in other groups might choose a candidate to pray for every day.

The Parents or Guardians

“The initiation of children into the sacramental life is ordinarily the responsibility and concern of Christian parents” (*Rite of Confirmation*, 3).

Parents, or others who are responsible for raising young people, have a dual responsibility when it comes to the initiation of their children. First and foremost, they are the ones primarily responsible for their children’s faith development. Second, they are also members of the faith community, which has a responsibility to initiate children.

As members of the faith community, and as “primary catechists,” the first way parents can help to prepare their children for a Sacrament is “by their active participation in the celebration of the sacraments” (*Rite of Confirmation*, 3). Young people best learn the sacramental way of life by living it. As the program director, you are in a position to impress on parents the importance of weekly participation in the Eucharist and regular participation in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. (*Note:* Throughout this manual, the term *parents* is used to refer to those who are responsible for the candidates’ upbringing. But you and the catechists may use different language if you are aware of other family structures among your candidates.)

Although regular celebration of the Sacraments by families is encouraged, we also recognize that adolescence is a time of transition for young people. Teens are transitioning into adulthood and are in the process of gaining independence from their parents. Thus, the parents’ role in Confirmation

preparation may not be as great as it was during preparation for the Eucharist or Penance and Reconciliation. Indeed, the Confirmation sponsor may be more involved than the parent. Be conscious of this dynamic as you schedule time for the candidates, their parents, and their sponsors.

Nonetheless, parents are the “primary catechists” for their children and have important responsibilities. Communicating expectations for parents, such as those listed here, will help the parents to understand their role in their child’s Confirmation program:

- Participate in a parent orientation session. This session (see chapter 6 of this manual, “Orientation Session for Parents and Candidates”) provides an overview of Anointed in the Spirit, including parent expectations.
- Provide a baptismal certificate for the candidate.
- Discuss with the candidate his or her choice of a Confirmation sponsor and, if necessary, help the candidate coordinate contact with the sponsor.
- Assist the candidate in deciding whether to choose a new Confirmation name or to honor his or her baptismal name. Share with the candidate any relevant stories associated with his or her baptismal name.
- Support attendance policies for the sessions and encourage the candidate throughout the preparation process.
- Join the candidate in celebrating the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and other nonsacramental penance services that may be available.
- Join the candidate in service opportunities, if possible.
- Be aware of the schedule for events, such as retreats, rehearsal, and the celebration of Confirmation, and consider assisting with necessary tasks.
- Discuss parish expectations for Confirmation attire.
- Pray with and for the candidate.

In addition to these items, you may want to include additional expectations that are specific to your parish.

The Sponsor

“These sponsors bring the candidates to receive the sacrament . . . and will later help them to fulfill their baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit who they have received” (*Rite of Confirmation*, 5).

The sponsor’s role is to support the candidate in her or his faith and help her or him to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ. It is an ancient custom of the Church for a sponsor to bring the candidate to receive the Sacrament and present the candidate to the bishop or minister of the Sacrament. Presenting the candidate to the bishop implies that the sponsor testifies to the candidate’s worthiness and readiness for the Sacrament.

Note that the revised *Rite of Confirmation* (5) and *Code of Canon Law* (canon 893.2) recommend that the godparent, or sponsor at Baptism, be the sponsor for Confirmation. This practice “expresses more clearly the link between baptism and confirmation” (*Rite of Confirmation*, 5) and makes the role of supporting the candidate in the Catholic way of life more effective. The sponsor must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church; thus it may not be possible to follow this recommendation in all cases. A summary of further requirements for sponsors is found on page 11 of the sponsor booklet, but you will want to check your own diocesan guidelines.

The sponsor booklet explains *how* a sponsor supports a person’s journey of faith throughout a lifetime. Chapter 7 of this manual, “Orientation Session for Sponsors and Candidates,” includes a breakout session for sponsors with a review of the sponsor’s role, as well as a review of the safe environment guidelines found on page 14 of the sponsor booklet. For now, an overview of the sponsor’s role is given here:

- Participate in a sponsor orientation session (see chapter 7 of this manual). This session provides an overview of Anointed in the Spirit, including sponsor expectations.
- Present the candidate to the bishop during the celebration of Confirmation.
- Participate in the rehearsal, day of reflection, or retreat as required by the parish.
- Support and guide the candidate in the Catholic way of life. Be a model of discipleship.
- Spend time with the candidate as possible and appropriate.

- Be aware of the schedule for events such as retreats, rehearsal, and the celebration of Confirmation.
- Pray for and with the candidate.

The Catechists

Choosing the right catechists is imperative to the program. Anointed in the Spirit requires catechists who are willing to lead liturgical catechesis and mystagogical reflection. This means that the catechists understand the formative value of the liturgy. And they must appreciate the meaning of ritual. Often this requires some training or retraining. Chapter 5 of this manual, “Training Session for Catechists,” provides detailed instructions for training.

Anointed in the Spirit makes strong connections between sacramental signs and life experiences. The catechists need to be able to see the connections between the sacred signs and the life of a typical teen. The catechists need to appreciate the holy mystery in the experiences of today’s teens. Let’s face it: some adults are better with adolescents than with people in other phases of life. Parishioners who can explain Catholic theology to adults may not be as effective when working with teens. So think about it and pray about it before you select the catechists.

The Program Director

You are the program director. You make all the pieces work together, keep everyone and everything on schedule, encourage collaboration, and, even if you have no liturgy background, you insist on good liturgy! This means that there is a “festive and solemn” celebration of Confirmation but also that solid liturgical principles are employed throughout the prayer services of each session.

As the program director, you have many components to coordinate. After you become familiar with the philosophy and various pieces of the program, you’ll want to decide what format or design fits best with your parish. Is an eight-week format with two mystagogical sessions after Confirmation the best format for your parish, or is a one-year format best? You will find various design options in chapter 4 of this manual, “Designing Your Confirmation Program.” Rest assured that the Holy Spirit is with you as you adapt and design your program to best suit your high school candidates.

3

Getting Started

This chapter will help you get started with Anointed in the Spirit. Earlier chapters have described in detail the components of the program and the approach to catechesis that provides the basis for the program. This chapter discusses planning for additional program elements such as engaging the candidates in service and planning a retreat. The chapter ends with a checklist for getting started, to help you organize your planning.

3

Service, Reconciliation, and a Retreat

In addition to the program elements already discussed, you will want to plan service experiences, a celebration of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, and a retreat experience.

Service

There is no doubt that serving others, especially people who are poor or in need, is central to the Gospel message and therefore at the heart of the Christian way of life. For adolescents, participation in service is a vital part of Christian formation.

As adolescents become full members of the Catholic Church, they should learn more about what it means to be a member of the community. As they are formed amid the larger community, they “learn how to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church” (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, 75.4). In other words, Confirmation candidates learn by working along with others. A desire to serve others is certainly *caught* more than *taught*.

If your Confirmation program includes a service component, you will want to find the right balance between encouraging and requiring participation in service activities. Requiring the candidates to complete service hours can suggest that the Sacrament of Confirmation must be earned. Yet Sacraments are free gifts. All baptized persons are to be confirmed, albeit at the appropriate time and with proper preparation (see *Code of Canon Law*, canon 890). Approaching service as an opportunity to work for justice and to

give of oneself to others can be effective with adolescents. Try using an invitational approach to encourage the candidates to participate.

Here are some points to consider as you determine how Christian service fits with your parish traditions and this preparation program.

Confirmation and the Eucharist

Both Confirmation and the Eucharist send candidates forth in mission. Each week the Eucharist sends the candidates forth strengthened and nourished to continue the mission of Jesus Christ in their own age-appropriate ways. Confirmation gives them the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit to strengthen them for a larger role in the mission of Christ as full members of the Catholic Church. Ideally their experience serving others during the preparation process will teach some important lessons about taking on a larger role in the Church's mission.

Many candidates are likely already involved in some type of service. If that is the case, find ways to build on what they are already doing. Help them understand the call to serve others and explore how they can use their gifts and abilities for the sake of others. Be sure to avoid implying that the Sacrament of Confirmation must be earned by meeting service requirements.

Apprenticeship

The best Christian formation involves apprenticeship. Newer members of the Church are like apprentices who learn the Christian way of life by working alongside "master" Christians. Plan service opportunities in light of this, involving adults who are experienced in whatever type of work is to be done. For example, if the candidates will be helping a local food pantry by collecting, organizing, or distributing food, arrange for them to meet the adult leaders of the pantry. Invite the leaders to talk to the candidates about their work and how they see it in relation to their faith.

Choice

Another way to approach Christian service is to involve the candidates in choosing and planning what they might do. You can invite them to submit a proposal for something they would like to do alone, with a small group, with the large group, or with a sponsor or parent. Then you can consider how you, a catechist, or a program team member might help set up and organize the activity.

Time is allotted for this activity in chapter 7 of this manual, "Orientation Session for Sponsors and Candidates." Handout 3-A, "Service Project Proposal," at the end of this chapter, guides the candidates in developing a proposal

for a service project. The handout can be used in conjunction with the sponsor training session, or it can be used independently at any point in the program.

Families

Invite the families of the candidates to participate in service projects together. This can be a great way to involve parents in their teenager's preparation.

Service after Confirmation

Signal that serving others is a way of life by organizing some service options after the celebration of Confirmation. After all, we catechize around the notion that Confirmation empowers us for mission. Offering service opportunities after the reception of the Sacrament gives the newly confirmed a chance to put into action the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

3

Celebrating the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

The Church strongly encourages everyone to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation before celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation. Indeed the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that the candidate "must be in the state of grace" and "should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit" (1310). This topic is addressed in chapter 8 of the candidate handbook. Please note that the retreat outlined in chapter 8 in this manual includes the option of celebrating the Sacrament of Penance or a nonsacramental penitential service.

Penitential Services

Foster a desire for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation by planning a nonsacramental penitential service. The *Rite of Penance* includes an appendix with a number of sample penitential services. These services are nonsacramental and are designed to foster the spirit and virtue of penance and to help in preparing for a more fruitful celebration of the Sacrament of Penance (see *Rite of Penance*, Appendix II, 1).

The *Rite of Penance* cautions leaders to make clear to the participants that these penitential services are not the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. These services include an examination of conscience, but they do not include confession and absolution. These are liturgical celebrations that call the participants to conversion and renewal. In this way, they help the candidates prepare

for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, which in turn prepares them for Confirmation.

You'll find the *Rite of Penance* in *The Rites of the Catholic Church: Volume One* (Liturgical Press, 1990). Notice that among the penitential services that comprise Appendix II is a penitential service designed specifically for young people (starting with paragraph 54). The entire celebration is outlined. Celebrating this penitential service with the candidates would be an excellent way to prepare for a pre-Confirmation celebration of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. You might include the sponsors and parents and other family members in the celebration. You might also want to invite other members of the parish to join the candidates in prayer.

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

Again the penitential services just described are not sacramental. They are intended to lead to the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Consider providing the candidates an opportunity for a communal celebration of the Sacrament. Although individual celebration of Penance and Reconciliation is certainly an option, a communal celebration shows more clearly the ecclesial nature of penance.

Providing options is always a good idea as well. You may invite the candidates to participate in a communal celebration with individual absolution as well as provide them with information about celebrating the Sacrament individually. We cannot "require" anyone to receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, but we can invite and encourage. Planning a communal celebration of the Sacrament with the candidates, sponsors, and parents will do a great deal to encourage its reception.

Lastly, the parent orientation session (see chapter 6 of this manual) offers an opportunity to invite and encourage parents (and sponsors) to celebrate Penance and Reconciliation with their candidates.

Planning a Retreat for the Candidates

Retreats can be fun, faith-enriching, and rewarding experiences for Confirmation candidates. Many parishes have great success offering a Confirmation retreat. It is an opportunity for the candidates to "get away" from the distractions, pressures, and routines of everyday life, using a format of extended reflections, activities, and prayer experiences. Retreats provide opportunities for the candidates to get to know one another and to spend more time focusing on their relationship with God and their role in the Church.

Check with your diocesan office about specific retreat requirements set forth by your bishop. Chapter 8 of this manual offers a fully designed overnight retreat for high school candidates.

If an overnight retreat is more than you wish to undertake, session 8 in the catechist guide, "Celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation," can provide the basis for a retreat day. This session brings together all the ritual elements of the Confirmation liturgy, thus lending itself nicely to adaptation into a retreat. Consider expanding the 90-minute session plan (the 60-minute core session plus both 15-minute session extensions) by adding some or all of these elements:



- *Include a meal.* An evening retreat can begin with dinner. A Saturday morning retreat can end with lunch. Consider including the candidates' families and sponsors in the meal.
- *Invite the sponsors to participate in the retreat.* The activities in session 8 would work well with the sponsors, particularly the reflection on God's Word followed by the "walk and talk." The sponsors could also be very helpful to the candidates during the portion of the session when the candidates are invited to develop their action plans.
- *Integrate rehearsal for liturgy.* If the sponsors are present and the retreat is timed shortly before Confirmation, consider holding the rehearsal in conjunction with the retreat. More will be said later in this manual about scheduling (see chapter 4, "Designing Your Confirmation Program") and liturgy rehearsal (see chapter 9, "Preparation for the Confirmation Liturgy and for Mystagogy").
- *Extend the time for prayer.* Adding music and preaching to the opening or closing prayer services would enhance the candidates' prayer experiences. Arrange to celebrate the prayer services in the chapel or in the main worship area. Work with a parish musician on planning. Invite a parish priest, deacon, or other qualified parishioner to preach after the readings. Consult with the parish liturgist for other ways to appropriately enhance the prayer times.
- *Add time for recreation.* Give the candidates some time to relax and just enjoy being together. In the spirit of community building, plan some free time or organize physical activities outdoors or in the gym.
- *Go off-site.* Going to a retreat center, another parish, a park, or somewhere other than your regular meeting place adds to the specialness of the event. It helps to give the candidates a sense of getting