



Candidate's Handbook

The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.

—John 14:26

Candidate's Name



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Candidate's Handbook

Confirmed in a Faithful Community

A Senior High Confirmation Process

Immediate Preparation Edition

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Welcome!

About This Handbook

This book has been created to make your experience of the process of preparation for Confirmation more enjoyable, fruitful, and memorable. Here's what you will find in this handbook:

Summaries and Additional Insights

The core of each chapter is the summary of the content presented during the Confirmation sessions. The summaries will help you track the program's content, recall information as you need it, or catch up on material if you happen to miss a session.

You are encouraged to read and reflect on the material beyond the formal sessions. Take time at home to read, reflect, and pray on what you are learning in preparation for the reception of the sacrament.

A Chance to Think and Share

The handbook includes a number of short writing exercises—some intended to be strictly personal, such as the journal-writing exercises, and others to be worked on with the other candidates in your group. During the sessions your leader will give you instructions on when and how to complete those exercises, but if your leader does not direct you to do all of them, you may want to do them on your own when you get a chance.

An Invitation to Pray

Prayer is a central part of the process of preparation for Confirmation. This handbook includes resources for both personal and group prayer. Your leader will use many of these resources during the group prayer services that are part of most sessions. Again, if your leader skips some sessions, you might want to privately read the prayers from the skipped sessions.



The Catholic Connection

A recurring feature of this handbook is the Catholic Connection. The Catholic faith is remarkably rich, so much so that in this program, we can barely scratch the surface of the many beliefs and practices that distinguish Catholics. We have to make sure we cover “the basics” of Catholicism. The Catholic Connection essays provide additional insights into how Catholics understand and celebrate those basics. Occasionally during the sessions, the leader may refer to these sections and comment on them. More often, though, you will be encouraged to read and reflect on them on your own.



Heart Links

Sprinkled throughout the handbook are brief readings, poems, and short stories that relate to the themes under discussion. They are intended to catch your attention, to provoke thought, or to offer additional insights. Sometimes they’re just for fun! If you find yourself stuck for an idea during the times set aside for journal writing, try browsing through the Heart Links for inspiration. To find them, look for the link icon.



Bible Bytes

Some verses or passages from the Bible are so significant and memorable that we want you to take special note of them. That’s what the Bible Bytes are for. Whenever you see one, take a minute to read it. Some day when you need them most, you may “hear” these verses echoing from your memory bank.



Catechism Quotes

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a valuable resource for learning about the Catholic faith. Though it is intended primarily as a reference for bishops, priests, and others who are charged with the task of teaching, laypeople have found it inspirational as well. Throughout this handbook we use excerpts from the *Catechism* to shed additional light on a topic and to provoke thought.

Something to Catch Your Eye . . . and Mind

We hope this book becomes important to you and helps make your Confirmation preparation a special experience. Remember, too, that you’ll be able to keep the handbook at the end of the Confirmation process. So consider it a record and keepsake of the whole experience, one that we hope will be of lasting value to you.



Guided and Strengthened by the Holy Spirit

Every facet of Jesus's life, ministry, and mission was guided, indeed driven, by the Holy Spirit. But who is this Spirit? And what does it mean to be guided by the Holy Spirit? These questions are the focus of this session.

Images of the Holy Spirit

We have never seen the Holy Spirit so we use images to describe and better understand the presence and action of the Spirit in our lives and in the world.

One common image of the Holy Spirit is derived from the meaning of the term *spirit*. The word *spirit* is the English translation of the Hebrew *ruah* and the Greek *pneuma*, which refer to dynamic unseen forces like wind and breath. Wind can be a gentle, refreshing breeze or a powerful gale capable of reshaping everything in its path. Breath means life. Without it we cease to live. When we say the Holy Spirit is like wind or breath, we are saying that the Spirit of God is a dynamic, transforming power and the source of life.

Other images or symbols of the Holy Spirit include water, fire, oil, a cloud, light, a dove, and a hand.

Water signifies the life-giving action of the Spirit in Baptism. Jesus likened the Holy Spirit to rivers of living water that flow out of the hearts of believers (John 7:38).

Fire signifies the power of the Spirit to transform. Just as fire changes whatever it touches, so, too, does the Spirit of the Lord.

The ritual of anointing with oil signifies the gift of Christ's loving presence through the Holy Spirit. The name *Christian* comes from Christ, meaning "the anointed one."

The images of a cloud and light symbolize that the Holy Spirit reveals God the Father's presence (like light) but also hides his full glory (like a cloud). These images appear in scriptural accounts such as Jesus's baptism, the Transfiguration, and Jesus's Ascension.

The dove appears in the Scriptures as a sign of the Father's gift of his Spirit. When Jesus came out of the water after his baptism, the Holy Spirit came

The Spirit whom we experience and celebrate in Confirmation is the same Spirit who was present at the creation of the world.



Christ has no body now on earth but yours; yours are the only hands with which he can do his work, yours are the only feet with which he can go about the world, yours are the only eyes through which his compassion can shine forth upon a troubled world. Christ has no body on earth now but yours.

—Saint Teresa of Ávila

down upon him in the form of a dove. That is why Christian art often uses a dove to depict the Holy Spirit.

Laying or imposing hands on someone is a sign of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures recount that Jesus healed and blessed people by laying his hands on them.

The Holy Spirit: Third Person of the Trinity

Each divine person of the Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is the one God; there is only one Godhead. The Holy Spirit is truly God. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, faith is kindled in us and the new life that comes from God is communicated to us. Through the Scriptures and Tradition, we know that the Holy Spirit is one of the three persons of the Trinity. Though he was the last of the three persons to be revealed, he has been active in the world since Creation. The Spirit, whom we experience and celebrate in Baptism, the Eucharist, and Confirmation—indeed all the sacraments—is the same Spirit who was present at the creation of the world (see Genesis 1:1–2); the same Spirit who spoke through the prophets of the Old Testament; the same Spirit who came upon Jesus at his baptism (see Luke 3:22) and enabled him to confront and defeat the power of evil during his temptations in the desert (see Luke 4:1–2); the same Spirit of healing love who nourished the sick and hurting at the touch of Jesus; the same Spirit who inspired Jesus to trust in the promises of his Father even as he faced death on the cross; the same Spirit who descended on the Apostles at Pentecost (see Acts of the Apostles 2:2–8); and the same Spirit who has guided the Church toward truth and love over the last two thousand years and enables us to share in the communion of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit will continue to be at work with the Father and the Son until the plan for our salvation is complete.

The Holy Spirit is united with the Father and the Son in an unbreakable bond of love. When the Father sends his Son, he always sends the Spirit. The mission of Jesus Christ and the mission of the Holy Spirit are inseparable, yet their work is distinct. It is Jesus whom we see, a visible image of the invisible God, but it is the Holy Spirit who, while never drawing attention to himself, reveals the Son and the Father. When we pray the Nicene Creed, we confess belief in the Spirit in this way: “We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, *who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets* [emphasis added].”



In every liturgical action the Holy Spirit is sent in order to bring us into communion with Christ and so to form his Body. The Holy Spirit is like the sap of the Father's vine which bears fruit on its branches. The most intimate cooperation of the Holy Spirit and the Church is achieved in the liturgy. The Spirit, who is the Spirit of communion, abides indefectibly in the Church. For this reason the Church is the great sacrament of divine communion which gathers God's scattered children together. Communion with the Holy Trinity and fraternal communion are inseparably the fruit of the Spirit in the liturgy.

—*Catechism*, no. 1108



God's love has been poured
into our hearts through the
Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

—Romans 5:5

Belief in the Holy Spirit also means believing that the Son of God is present and active in our lives today. When we feel the power of God's forgiveness, sense that he is asking us to do something, speak of his action in our lives today, or see him at work in the lives of other people, it is by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are also talking about the presence of the Spirit of God when we speak of the Father giving us gifts or charisms. "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:4–7). The Holy Spirit has given each of us gifts and a corresponding challenge, that is, to use them for the sake of others and to build up the Church, the Body of Christ.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is an amazing gift and a great source of hope for us. Through the Spirit we come to know God's love and open ourselves to its transforming power. The Holy Spirit gives us the assurance that Christ, the Son of God, is always with us.



Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Leader: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful;

Response: Enkindle in them the fire of your love.

Leader: Send forth your Spirit, and they will be created.

Response: And you will renew the face of the earth.

Leader: Let us pray: Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit, you have taught the hearts of the faithful. In the same Spirit, help us to relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Response: Amen.



The Holy Spirit in Liturgy

When we celebrate sacraments, we call on the Holy Spirit to be present in our midst. Another word for this special kind of call is *epiclesis*, which is Greek for “invocation.” The celebrant, praying on behalf of all the people who are gathered, begs the Father to send the Spirit. Here are some examples from the sacraments of initiation:

Baptism. When blessing the water the celebrant touches it and prays, “We ask you, Father, with your Son to send the Holy Spirit upon the water of this font. May all who are buried with Christ in the death of baptism rise also with him to newness of life” (Rite of Baptism).

The Eucharist. During the Eucharistic Prayer II, the celebrant prays, “Let your Spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy, so that they may become for us the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.” Later, during the same prayer, he invokes the Spirit again in this prayer for unity: “May all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit” (*Sacramentary*, pages 549 and 550).

Confirmation. The bishop prays for the candidates, saying to God the Father, “Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide” (*Rite of Confirmation*, number 25).

Our sacramental prayers of invocation share a common theme. We pray not only that the Holy Spirit will be present and change things, such as the bread and wine in the Eucharist, but that the Spirit of God will change us and bring us into greater communion with him and one another so that we might be the Body of Christ in the world.



A shoot shall come out from
the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall
grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the LORD shall rest
on him,
the spirit of wisdom and
understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and
the fear of the LORD.
His delight shall be in the fear of
the LORD.

—Isaiah 11:1–3

Born of the Spirit

In talking to Nicodemus about the necessity of being born of the Spirit, Jesus said, "The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). Think about ways we encounter wind: gentle breezes that bring coolness, steady winds and gusts that make sailboats move and generate power, violent winds that are capable of reshaping the earth. We cannot see the wind, only its effects. Write about how the Holy Spirit's action in your life can be likened to the power and movement of wind?



Prayer: Communion with God

Our focus in this session is the Catholic practice without which none of the other elements of a Christian life is possible—the practice of prayer. It is so important because through prayer, the Holy Spirit unites us to Jesus Christ and transforms our hearts.

Many definitions of prayer exist, including “talking with God” or “lifting one’s mind and heart to God” or “communicating with God in a relationship of love.”

Communication certainly includes talking and listening. But when people in love with each other or in deep friendship with each other communicate, they do so in a variety of ways:

- ▶ They talk and listen to each other with words. They engage in verbal communication in many ways—most often with short comments and asides by telling stories, or by carrying on extended, deep conversations.
- ▶ They communicate in nonverbal ways too, which is often more effective than verbal communication. They spend time with each other and do things together. They turn to each other for support and comfort when in need or in pain, sometimes just by holding each other. At times they may just sit in silence, or together look at the same sight in wonder and awe. All these are forms of communication in a genuine relationship of love.

There are parallel experiences for all these forms of communication in a love relationship with God, and each one reflects a different kind of personal prayer. In this session we explore just a few of the many kinds of personal prayer.

Forms of Prayer

God wants to be in relationship with you in every aspect of your life—in all your concerns, gifts, faults, and feelings. This gives rise to different forms of prayer—adoration, contrition, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise—that connect to different times and situations in your life.



[Jesus said], “Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. . . . Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

—Luke 11:9–13



The Holy Spirit, whose anointing permeates our whole being, is the interior Master of Christian prayer. . . . To be sure, there are as many paths of prayer as there are persons who pray, but it is the same Spirit acting in all and with all.

—Catechism, no. 2672



For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven; it is a cry of recognition and love, embracing both trial and joy.

—Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, in the *Catechism*, no. 2558



Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD, O my soul!
I will praise the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

—Psalm 146:1–2

Adoration. The first commandment says we acknowledge God alone as Creator and Savior and worship him alone as the source of all blessings in our lives. Prayers of adoration confirm our commitment to God’s primacy in our lives.

Contrition. When we are contrite, we are apologetic. Prayers of contrition are our quiet moments with God to express our sorrow for anything that may have taken us away from him.

Petition. To petition is to make a request. We ask God for something we need. When we pray in this manner, we express an awareness of our relationship with God and our absolute need for him.

Intercession. This is a type of petitionary prayer that focuses on other people instead of ourselves. We ask God for something for someone else. We pray for friends and loved ones as well as enemies. We also pray for people we don’t know, especially those in need of food, shelter, and companionship and all who are suffering.

Thanksgiving. This is a prayer of gratitude for all that God has given us. Saint Paul emphasized its importance: “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Our most full expression of thanksgiving occurs in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Praise. A prayer of praise is a joyful expression inspired by our love for God. Our focus, however, is not on something God has done for us. Rather, we praise and extol God simply because HE IS. We can praise in song, in dance, in word, and in actions.

Christian Meditation

One prayer form that is particularly helpful is called meditation. Meditation engages our thoughts, emotions, imagination, and desires in seeking a deeper union with God. There are many different methods for Christian meditation. One basic method involves these steps:

- **Pick the right time and place.** Choose a regular time to pray when you are normally alert and able to focus. Look for a place where you know you won’t be disturbed during your time of prayer.
- **Prepare to pray by relaxing your body.** Use techniques like “tense and relax” muscle exercises and deep breathing to relax your body so that you can devote your attention to prayer.
- **Choose a word or phrase to focus your attention on God.** Some people like to use one word only, perhaps a favorite name for

God (like Abba), or the name *Jesus*. Others use a short phrase such as “Come, Holy Spirit.”

- ▶ **Connect the sacred words with your breathing.** Silently repeat your chosen word or phrase in time with your breathing. The intent is to use the repetition as an aid to focusing on and remaining open to the presence of God. For example, you might say, “Jesus, my friend,” with each inhalation and “be with me now,” with each exhalation. If you become distracted, simply focus again on repeating your word or phrase.

Experiment with this method of meditation. You may find that those few minutes every day make a lifetime of difference in your relationship with God.



What Is Prayer?

Prayer is a relationship. It is God's action through the Holy Spirit and it is our response. Here's how the American edition of the *Catechism* defines *prayer* in its glossary:

[Prayer is] the elevation of the mind and heart to God in praise of his glory; a petition made to God for some desired good, or in thanksgiving for a good received, or in intercession for others before God. Through prayer the Christian experiences a communion with God through Christ in the Church. (Page 894)

The Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray and is like living water that wells up within us when we pray. The “Spirit is offered us at all times, in the events of each day, to make prayer spring up from us” (*Catechism*, number 2659).



Setting a TRAP for God

One very ancient and helpful evening prayer is called an *examen*, which is related to the term *examination*. But this is a much less scary exercise than the word *examination* might normally suggest!

In Jesus's time people set traps to catch animals for food. The trappers had to be alert and focused in order to catch their prey, just as a pray-er must be prepared to grasp God's message. The TRAP acronym stands for these four steps in the *examen*:

Thank: Thank God for all the good things that happened during the day, trying to name those as clearly as possible.



[Jesus said], “Whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

—Matthew 6:5–8



Work as if everything depends on you.

Pray as if everything depends on God.

—Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Review: Reflect on your attitude and actions during the day. Try to be very honest in assessing both the good as well as the bad or destructive things you did or said or felt.

Ask: For any actions or attitudes that hurt others or kept you from being the person God calls you to be, ask God to forgive you and help you to make amends. Or, ask God to give you what you need, such as guidance when you are facing difficult decisions or challenges.

Promise to change: Make a commitment, with the grace of God, to do better tomorrow.

The regular practice of the evening *examen* is a powerful tool for growing as a disciple of Jesus.

(This section is adapted from Delgatto and Shrader, *Catechetical Sessions on Christian Prayer*, page 64.)



The Lord's Prayer

The disciples said to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). In response, he taught them the Lord's Prayer. This prayer, which is a summary of the Gospel, gets its name because it comes to us from Jesus. The traditional form that we pray in our liturgies is drawn from the Gospel of Matthew (6:9–13):

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name.
 Your kingdom come.
 Your will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our debts,
 as we also have forgiven our debtors.
 And do not bring us to the time of trial,
 but rescue us from the evil one.

After we invoke God by saying "Our Father in heaven," we pray seven petitions. The first three focus on the Father, the one whom we love. We make no mention of ourselves. We pray "hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done." The final four express our desires. We ask, in the fourth and fifth petitions, that the Father nourish us and free us from sin. In the last two, we pray that he will help us be victorious in the struggle of good over evil. When we pray the words of the Lord's Prayer, the Holy Spirit gives them life in our hearts.

Prayer from morning to night

Try to develop a pattern of regular prayer that sets a kind of rhythm for your day. Morning and evening prayer ought to become a personal habit. And it's helpful to have a method of prayer that we can rely on anytime, anywhere.

With the direction of your leader, thoughtfully complete the sentence starters below to help develop a regular pattern of personal prayer that works for you:

My preferred morning prayer is . . .

My chosen anytime, anywhere prayer is . . .

My preferred evening prayer is . . .

Acknowledgments

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Notes

- 8 "Christ has no body . . ." In Thomas Zanzig, *Jesus the Christ: A New Testament Portrait* (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2000), page 245.
- 16 "Work as if everything . . ." In Mark Link, *Vision 2000: Praying Scripture in a Contemporary Way, A Cycle* (Allen, TX: Tabor Publishing, 1992), page 167.
- 18 "What does love look . . ." In Mark Link, *Vision 2000: Praying Scripture in a Contemporary Way, A Cycle* (Allen, TX: Tabor Publishing, 1992), page 19.
- 53 From a message by Pope John Paul II, "Youth: Builders of the Twenty-first Century," December 8, 1984. Quoted in *Origins* 14 (January 10, 1985), page 491.
- 54 Pope John Paul II, "Letter to Families" (given in Rome at Saint Peter's on February 2, 1994), as quoted at www.vatican.va, August 3, 2000.

The antiphon Grail Psalm 1 on page 21 is taken from *Christian Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours*, English translation prepared by the ICEL (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1975), page 683. Copyright © 1975 by Catholic Book Publishing Company. Copyright © 1963 by Ladies of the Grail, administered by GIA Publications. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

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The quotation by Pope Paul VI on page 41 is from “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,” *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness, number 7, at www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat_ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html, accessed September 22, 2005.

The quotation on page 46 is from *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, volume 2, translated by Leo McCauley (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1970), page 170. Copyright © 1970 by the Catholic University of America Press.

The quotation by Pope Paul VI on page 56 is paraphrased from the English version of “Apostolic Constitution *Divinae Consortium Naturae*,” in *The Rites of the Catholic Church*, volume 1A, Initiation (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1988), pages 472–477. Copyright © 1976, 1983, 1988 by Pueblo Publishing Company.

“The Universal Prayer” on page 58 is adapted from the prayer by Pope Clement XI at “Prayers for All Christians,” www.rc.net/wcc/univpray.htm, accessed September 22, 2005.

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Endnotes cited in quotations from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Collationes in decem praeceptis* 1.
2. Cf. *John* 12:49.
3. John Paul II, *Reconciliatio et poenitentia* 16.
4. Cf. *Mark* 16:16.
5. Cf. *Roman Ritual*, Rite of Confirmation (*Ordo confirmationis*), Introduction 1.
6. St. Ambrose, *De myst.* 7, 42: J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina* (Paris: 1841–1855) 16, 402–403.

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