

Lesson 1: The Sacrament of Confirmation

Curriculum Goals:

- Understanding of Confirmation as a sacrament of initiation with a special sacramental bond to Baptism and First Eucharist.
- Appreciating the Sacrament of Confirmation as the completion of baptism in which the candidates receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and are strengthened in their resolve to follow Christ. In the Eucharist their initiation is also completed and renewed as they join the community of faithful in receiving the Body and Blood of Our Lord.

Lesson Plan Overview:

1. Intro and Prayer (3 mins)
2. Reflection Activity I: What does it mean to be “Initiated”? (10 mins)
3. Episode 1 of the Confirmation Series: The Sacrament of Confirmation (17 mins)
4. Discussion Questions and/or Worksheet Activity: Confirmation Crossword Puzzle (10 mins-20 mins)
5. Teacher Presentation: The Confirmation Ceremony (20 mins)
6. Closing Activity: Impactful Sacramental Symbols (5 mins)
7. Closing Prayer: (2 mins)

1) Introduction and Opening Prayer

2) Reflection Activity I: What does it mean to be initiated?

Develop an activity in which students are asked to reflect upon a time that they were initiated into a new experience or a new group (Ex: auditioning for a play, making it onto a special team, etc). Examples of possible activities include:

-Think-Pair-Share: The students are invited to think about the prompt, then pair up with someone and share each others’ experiences. When discussion time comes, each students shares what their partner said.

-Teacher-Led Meditation: Ask students to close their eyes and think back on a time that they joined a new group. Ask them to picture the faces of the other people in that group. Ask them to remember what fun activities or special moments they experienced in that group. Ask them how each of these memories make them feel. In closing, invite students to briefly share their thoughts.

The point of this activity is to give the students a chance to share their own personal experiences of what it means to join a new community.

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3) Episode 1 of the Confirmation Video Series: The Sacrament of Confirmation *(These are the Key Points from the Catechism of the Catholic Church that are covered in the video. They are provided here in their entirety as a reference to aid your interaction with students while reviewing the Discussion Questions after viewing the video.)*

- CCC 1212 The sacraments of Christian initiation - Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist - lay the foundations of every Christian life. "The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity." (Paul VI, apostolic constitution, *Divinae consortium naturae*: AAS 63 (1971) 657; cf. RCIA Introduction 1-2)
- CCC 1293 In treating the rite of Confirmation, it is fitting to consider the sign of anointing and what it signifies and imprints: a spiritual seal. Anointing, in Biblical and other ancient symbolism, is rich in meaning: oil is a sign of abundance and joy; it cleanses (anointing before and after a bath) and limbers (the anointing of athletes and wrestlers); oil is a sign of healing, since it is soothing to bruises and wounds; and it makes radiant with beauty, health, and strength.
- CCC 1294 Anointing with oil has all these meanings in the sacramental life. the pre-baptismal anointing with the oil of catechumens signifies cleansing and strengthening; the anointing of the sick expresses healing and comfort. the post-baptismal anointing with sacred chrism in Confirmation and ordination is the sign of consecration. By Confirmation Christians, that is, those who are anointed, share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit with which he is filled, so that their lives may give off "the aroma of Christ."
- CCC 1295 By this anointing the confirmand receives the "mark," the seal of the Holy Spirit. A seal is a symbol of a person, a sign of personal authority, or ownership of an

object. Hence soldiers were marked with their leader's seal and slaves with their master's. A seal authenticates a juridical act or document and occasionally makes it secret.

- CCC 1299 In the Roman Rite the bishop extends his hands over the whole group of the confirmands. Since the time of the apostles this gesture has signified the gift of the Spirit. the bishop invokes the outpouring of the Spirit in these words:

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you freed your sons and daughters from sin
and gave them new life.
Send your Holy Spirit upon them
to be their helper and guide.
Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.
Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

- CCC 1300 The essential rite of the sacrament follows. In the Latin rite, "the sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: '*Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti*' [Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.]." In the Eastern Churches, after a prayer of epiclesis the more significant parts of the body are anointed with *myron*: forehead, eyes, nose, ears, lips, breast, back, hands, and feet. Each anointing is accompanied by the formula: "The seal of the gift that is the Holy Spirit."
- CCC 1316 Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.
- CCC 1321 When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, its connection with Baptism is expressed, among other ways, by the renewal of baptismal promises. the celebration of Confirmation during the Eucharist helps underline the unity of the sacraments of Christian initiation.

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4) Discussion Questions and/or Worksheet Activity: Confirmation Crossword

Lead the group in the discussion questions from the video and/or distribute the worksheets for Confirmation Series Episode 1 and have the students complete them. Feel free to help the students to remember the following key words from the video as they are the terms needed to fill in the crossword:

Door, Chrism, Bishop, Confirmation, Baptism, Godparents, Sponsor, Cathedral, Holy Spirit, Anoint, Forehead, Stand, Sealed, Saint

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5) Teacher Presentation: The Way that Confirmation Makes Us Mature Members of the Church, Key Points *(Use these annotated paragraphs from the Catechism of the Catholic Church to prepare a brief presentation on the topic. Also, feel free to draw on appropriate personal experiences to give witness to your students about how being a Confirmed Catholic has changed your life.)*

- CCC 1285 Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation," whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For "by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed." (Lumen Gentium 11)
- CCC 1296 Christ himself declared that he was marked with his Father's seal. (John 6:27) Christians are also marked with a seal: "It is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has commissioned us; he has put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee." This seal of the Holy Spirit marks our total belonging to Christ, our enrollment in his service for ever, as well as the promise of divine protection in the great eschatological trial.

- CCC 1301 The sign of peace that concludes the rite of the sacrament signifies and demonstrates ecclesial communion with the bishop and with all the faithful.
- CCC 1313: In the Latin Rite, the ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop. Although the bishop may for grave reasons concede to priests the faculty of administering Confirmation, it is appropriate from the very meaning of the sacrament that he should confer it himself, mindful that the celebration of Confirmation has been temporally separated from Baptism for this reason. Bishops are the successors of the apostles. They have received the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders. the administration of this sacrament by them demonstrates clearly that its effect is to unite those who receive it more closely to the Church, to her apostolic origins, and to her mission of bearing witness to Christ

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6) Closing Activity: Gifts for the Beginning

Develop an activity in which students are asked to think about what sort of gifts might be needed to fulfill certain tasks or roles. These could be material gifts (like sports equipment used to play a game or apps on a phone used to complete a task). These could be personal talents (like a strong singing voice to perform in a concert or quick intelligence in a video game). Examples of possible activities include:

-Compare-Contrast Skit: Have students work in pairs to come up with 30-second long skits showing how hard it would be to accomplish a particular task without the right gifts, skills, or equipment. The sorts of tasks that they could act out might include cooking, cleaning, swimming, skiing, racing, canoeing, etc. One member of the pair should pretend that they have all the right skills and equipment. The other person should pantomime trying to do the same activity without any skills or equipment. Tell them to think of it like the infomercials in which the person in black-and-white is hopelessly lost while the person featured in color who has purchased the product is getting by effortlessly.

-Packing List: Students would list out all of the requirements for participating in a particular activity including age, attendance obligations, special uniforms or equipment, particular skills or background experience, etc. To conclude the activity, students should be given a chance to share the one or two items on their list that are most essential and say why.

The point of the activity is to help students understand that we are not called to live out our Christian faith all on our own. God's grace must be with us from the beginning of our Christian journey in order for us to be successful as mature members of His Church. This idea will be reviewed in future classes.

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7) Closing Prayer

Additional Lesson Suggestions:

-You can use this lesson to gauge where the students are in their personal understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation. You could begin class by asking – “What do you know about Confirmation?” This allows you to get some discussion going and give you an idea of what gaps exist and what needs to be corrected.

-Another possibility is to demonstrate Confirmation by “acting out” the rite of Confirmation. Doing so engages the candidates’ senses and can give them a better feel for what is physically going to be happening when they are Confirmed.