

SOME IDEAS FOR CONFIRMATION PREP ACTIVITIES

Compiled by the Confirmation Age Working Group

A few interactive activities designed to be used within the 6-8 sessions of immediate Confirmation prep:

Session #1: What is Baptism? Why is it important? (Baptismal Promises?)

Baptismal Roleplay:

- Explain to your group that tonight's session is going to explore baptism. Remind them that in the first session, they discussed some of the common misunderstandings of Confirmation. Confirmation is not when they "confirm" their choice to be Catholic. It means they are "confirming" the identity and grace they received in the Sacrament of Baptism. Since it has been a long time since we were all baptized, we are going to do a role-play baptism to help us understand this event and connect more with it.
- Break your small group up into groups of five. Within each group of five should self-assign roles: a priest, 2 parents and 2 godparents.
- This is an experience the small group leader will have to help facilitate.

Role-Play Guide

- Step 1. Have the priest ask the parents what name they have given their child. The parents should make up a name and say that to the priest. The priest asks them what do they want from God's Church. The parents should reply "Baptism".
- Step 2. Have the priest take the baby and pour water over its head three times using the sea shell. The priest should say "(Baby's name), I baptize you in the name of the Father (pour some water), and the Son (pour some water) and the Holy Spirit (pour some water).
- Step 3. Have the priest take the Chrism (oil) and say to the baby "We now anoint you with the Chrism of salvation, so that you may remain as a member of Christ, Priest, Prophet and King, unto eternal life." Everyone says amen. The priest then places some oil on the crown of the baby's head using his thumb.
- Step 4. The priest says, "(Baby's name) you have become a new creation and have clothed your self in Christ. May this garment be a sign to you of your Christian dignity." Have one of the godparents dress the baby in a white garment.
- Step 5. Have the other godparent light a candle light a candle and stand next to the baby. The priest says, "Parents and Godparents, this light is entrusted to you

to be kept burning brightly so that your child, enlightened by Christ, may walk always as a child of the light.”

- After the role-play has ended, have everyone switch roles. The goal is for everyone to have a turn as the priest and pretend to baptize the baby.

Baptism Research:

Before your small group meets on this session, assign them the homework of interviewing their family about their own baptism day: who was there? What do they remember from the day? Why did their parents have them baptized? Did anything memorable happen that day? If the candidates can bring something from their baptism to small group next week (a picture, their baptismal garment, their baptismal candle, some of the holy water they were baptized with, etc), that is helpful (but not required).

- At the small group session on baptism, invite each participant to share a little bit about what they learned.
- Follow up with a discussion in the small group with the following questions:
- Why do you think your parents had you baptized? (If there are children who were not baptized as infants, ask them to share a little bit of their story)
- What are some common elements we have heard in everyone’s stories?
- Has your baptism had a tangible affect in your life? Why or why not?

Exploring the Baptismal Promises

Have your small group break up into smaller groups. Explain to your small group that at baptisms and at certain times of the year, we recite our baptismal promises. These promises reflect that baptism is an amazing gift, but it’s a gift we have to actively use in our daily life.

Each smaller group of children will be given one of these promises and will come up with one or two concrete ways to live out that promise.

Here are some questions to help guide the small group:

- 1). Do you renounce (reject) sin, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?
 - Sin rob us of our freedom by causing us to love less. How can we love more?
 - Is there one sin our society seems to struggle with that we need freedom from?
 - Are we grateful for being children of God instead of just creations of God? What’s the difference?
- 2). Do you renounce (reject) the lure of evil, so that sin may have no mastery over you?

- Why does evil seem so attractive at times?
- What do we need to have more courage to fight against in our world?
- How do we prevent our hearts from becoming numb to other people's pain?

3). Do you renounce (reject) Satan, the author and prince of sin?

- Why is Satan the enemy of God?
- What specifically do we need to do to resist the devil?
- Should we trust the devil? Why or why not?

4). Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

- Why is it important God reveals Himself first as Father rather than "Master" or "King" or even "creator"?
- How can we thank God for the gift of life?
- Should we trust God? Why or why not?

5). Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

- How is Jesus your savior?
- What does it look like to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?
- How is your life different because Jesus conquered death?

6). Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

- How can you have a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit?
- Why is the Church a gift to us?
- Do we forgive others in the same way that Jesus forgives us?

Renewal of Baptismal Vows (lay leader led unless a priest is available)

- Dim the lights in your room, light a candle and place a basin of Holy Water near the front of the room.
- Explain to your small group that you are going to invite them to renew their baptismal promises. The reason we renew our promises throughout the year is to remind ourselves what we believe and how we are called to live. They should answer each question with a firm "I do."

- Small Group leader: *If your faith makes you ready to renew your responsibility, then, mindful of your own Baptism, renounce sin and profess faith in Christ Jesus, the faith of the Church, in which you were baptized:*
- *Do you renounce sin, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?*
- *Do you renounce the lure of evil, so that sin may have no mastery over you?*
- *Do you renounce Satan, the author and prince of sin?*
- *Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?*
- *Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?*
- *Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?*
- Small Group leader: *This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- All: *Amen.*
- After renewing their promises, invite the children to come forward and sign themselves with Holy Water.
- Close the renewal by Praying the Our Father together.

**Alternative Idea to Roleplay* - The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has Baptism works in all three levels of Atrium (1:3-6;2:6-9;3:9-12). The method of presenting a work in Atrium has much of the same content described above but the presentation is very particular - it is very slow, very quiet (actions and words are always separate. If you are moving you aren't speaking, and vice versa), in a way that adds solemnity and helps the children to developmentally understand that this is worth paying attention to. After the presentation, the child is invited to work with the materials that are shown. This method of presentation cultivates the quiet - the children learn to make space in their hearts and minds for silence (which then hopefully continues into their life outside the atrium), to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Session #7: The Rite of Confirmation, what does it mean?

Confirmation Roleplay Activity:

- Transition into this activity by reminding them that last week they explored the signs and symbols of Baptism. Confirmation is the sacrament where their baptismal identity is "confirmed" or validated. They receive a fresh outpouring of the Spirit who deepens and intensifies the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- Explain to your small group that just like with the sacrament of Baptism, they are going to get to Role-Play receiving the sacrament of Confirmation. Unlike

Baptism however, this is not a Sacrament they have experienced yet. They will experience the role-play and then unpack what the symbols mean.

- Select one lucky child to be the Bishop and let him get dressed in costume (this is a pretty good one: <https://a.co/d/1Xgxm8r>) . Once the child is dressed explain to the candidates that the Confirmation liturgy will have two distinct parts: the renewal of the Baptismal vows and the anointing
- *Step 1: Renewal of Your Baptismal Vows.* Remind the candidates that Confirmation is a verification of their Baptism. So the first step is to renew their Baptismal promises. This is what we did last week:
 - Bishop: Do you renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his empty promises?
 - Confirmandi: I do.
 - Bishop: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?
 - Confirmandi: I do.
 - Bishop: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?
 - Confirmandi: I do.
 - Bishop: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who today through the Sacrament of Confirmation is given to you in a special way just as he was given to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost?
 - Confirmandi: I do.
 - Bishop: Do you believe in the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?
 - Confirmandi: I do.
 - Bishop: This is our faith. This is the faith of the church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - Confirmandi: Amen.
- *Step 2: Anointing and Laying on of Hands*
- Next have the candidates lined up to be anointed by the Bishop. The Bishop anoints the forehead with “chrism” (olive oil infused with essential oil chrism: <https://a.co/d/eHJd4vj> or this candle works really well for a smell: <https://a.co/d/eaNN4MY>) saying:
 - Bishop: “X, be sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.”
 - Newly Confirmed: Amen.
 - Bishop: Peace be with you.
 - Newly Confirmed: And with your spirit
- Explain to your students (candidates?) before starting this part of the Role-play that X is the name the students (candidates?) are taking at their Confirmation. Their name can be

the name they were baptized with since Baptism (Confirmation?) is “confirming” what happened in their baptism. However, if God leads them to a deeper relationship with a particular saint, they may take that Saint’s name as a way of reflecting what a profound impact this saint has had on their lives.