

Name: _____

The Faith Journey

These five sessions can be completed in meetings that are determined between the candidate and the sponsor. These sessions need to be done by **February 10th**, so the candidate can turn them in that night.

Session 1

Opening prayer (or a prayer of your own or religious song)

Lord God, you have brought us together as we prepare for this special sacrament of Confirmation. Please open our hearts to help us truly listen to each other as we begin to grow together in Your love. Amen.

Please read the bible passage and fill in short answers to the questions below

Bible Readings/Sharing

Matthew 7:24-28

If you had to describe your own life right now, would you say it's built on rock or shifting sand? Why?

Luke 9:18-21

If you had to answer Jesus' question right now, what would you say? What do you think his response would be?

Matthew 28:19-20

How might we be able to experience Jesus "with us" today? Have you ever had such an experience?

Complete the statements:

I believe Jesus Christ is...

I believe a Christian is...

_____ is someone who I really admire as a Christian because they...

Challenge

Before we meet again, talk with one or both of your parents and ask them about their Confirmation and how their faith has changed over the years.

Closing prayer (use the following or a spontaneous prayer)

Lord, thanks for bringing us together. Often times in our hectic world, we do not take the time to share our true feelings. This time together has been special and I pray that You will be with us through the remaining sessions as we try to share our faith together. We also ask Your help in making a real commitment to share more of our true feelings with our families and all the people who are important in our lives. Amen.

Session 2

Opening prayer (or a prayer of your own or religious song)

Spirit of Love, make me a better Christian, a living testimony of the Father's mercy and power. Strip me, Lord of all roots of bitterness and of false pride. Make me meek and humble of heart as was Jesus, and never let me wound with my words or my actions the dignity of any person. Help me to understand your truths, to open my heart to your words and to love unconditionally as Jesus has taught us. Amen.

To be a responsible, effective member of the faith community, it is necessary to have a basic awareness and acceptance of that community's traditions and practices.

Read each of the following statements, asking your candidate to describe his or her present attitude toward it by choosing one of these three positions:

1. I believe it is true and I think I could explain it to others.
2. I believe it is true but I do not really understand it that well.
3. I am having trouble accepting it as really true.

The pages numbers following the statement will clarify the statement if neither of you can explain it, look in your Catholic Faith Handbook to find an explanation.

Statements:

1. God created and creates the universe and continues to hold it in existence and exercises control over it without interfering with but rather empowering our freewill toward the good. (p.49-52)

Which of the previous positions do you take?

Comments:

2. All humanity participates in sin to some degree and radically needs God's help to do good and to be saved. (p.53-55)

Which of the previous positions do you take?

Comments:

3. Jesus is the only Son of God, fully divine and fully human. (p. 60-61)

Which of the previous positions do you take?

Comments:

4. It is through Jesus, his teachings, his examples, and ultimately his saving death and resurrection that all people have access to the redemption offered by God. (p.87-88)

Which of the previous positions do you take?

Comments:

5. Though all Church and religions can help people find the salvation offered by God through Jesus Christ, the one true Church founded by Jesus upon His apostles is found in the Catholic Church. (p.112-114)

Which of the previous positions do you take?

Comments:

6. Though the Catholic Church has a history that includes faults and weaknesses, it is still the best means I have to know about God and to become the fully-human person God intends me to become. (p.110)

Which of the previous positions do you take?

Comments:

7. The sacraments have the power to put me in contact with the Risen Jesus and to experience His saving actions just as truly as if I had lived and walked with Him two thousand years ago. (p.148)

Which of the previous positions do you take?

Comments:

8. There is an immortal and risen life after death for everyone. (p.358-359)

Which of the previous positions do you take?

Comments:

9. Life after death will be spent either with God and the saved in heaven, or with the damned, eternally separated from God in hell. (p. 358-359)

Which of the previous positions do you take?

Comments:

Challenge

Tell your sponsor the short story your parents told you about their Confirmation day. How do you feel about your up coming confirmation day?

Take one of the previous nine statements that you had a hard time explaining, or that you have trouble accepting is true and look it up in your Catholic Faith Handbook (pages provided). When you meet again with your sponsor, try to re-explain it and defend why you believe, or do not believe the chosen statement.

Closing prayer (use the following or a spontaneous prayer)

Lord, today I resolve to do the good You created me to do, to see the good You created me to see, to be the good that You created me to be. Help me to live as You desire and be an example to those around me. Amen.

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Session 3

Opening Prayer (or a prayer of your own or religious song)

Creator God, as we prepare for confirmation, help us to realize that You made each of us in Your image. Help us to always remember You are here for us, You will never give us more than we can handle. You know what we need before we ask, all we need to do is trust in You. Give us the courage to make You a priority in our life and to listen to Your will. Help us to trust You enough to know You will give us all we need to do as You ask. Amen.

Please read the bible passage and fill in short answers to the questions on the next page.

Bible Readings/Sharing

Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus had to confront temptations about wealth, prestige, and power. What are the temptations that young people really struggle with today? Is there one that you're particularly drawn to? How might you combat that temptation?

Mark 10:46-52

Each of us has one or more "blind spots," parts of the message of Jesus that we have a heard time seeing or understanding. Share one or more of your own blind spots with each other.

John 20:19-29

Thomas can come off as weak and unfaithful, but can you really blame Thomas for doubting Jesus and His Resurrection? Can't doubt even be a good thing at times, something that leads us to seek help and therefore promotes growth? What parts of the Gospel do you struggle to believe, and how might that struggle be an invitation to grow?

In looking at all the challenges and difficulties that people confront in life, what things would you like to be saved from? Is there any way that Jesus or his message could offer people that kind of salvation?

Take turns sharing what you think:

Is God more like...a bridge or a tower?

Is God more like...a picture or a puzzle?

Is God more like...a sofa or recliner?

Challenge

Report on the last challenge—is it more understandable now?

Use the attached pages to write a note to your parent(s) thanking them for one challenge or difficulty they have helped you through. (Sponsor should choose another person to write to if parents are deceased)

Closing Prayer (use the following or a spontaneous prayer)

Holy Spirit, help us to face the challenges and difficulties that we encounter through our lives. Help us to remember that You are always there with us as we confront the temptations of today. Even though we may be a "doubting Thomas" from time to time, help us to be open to You and Your word. Amen.

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Session 4

Opening Prayer (or a prayer of your own or religious song)

Lord, Church can be such a hard word to understand. People have such different ideas of what Church really is. Help us to share our experiences with the Church to this point in our life, as well as, our hopes and dreams of what our Church will be in the future. Show us the way. Amen.

Please read the bible passage and fill in short answers to the questions below

Bible Readings/Sharing

John 14:15-29

Read the entire passage once, then read it again, listening for verses, phrases, maybe even a word or two that strikes a chord in your heart. Then discuss what words or verses stayed with each of you and why.

James 2:14-17

List three concrete, practical ways in which you can express your faith through actions. Compare lists and discuss how you might help each other carry out those actions.

Colossians 3:12-17

This passage would work well in summing up and bringing to a close your pre-confirmation relationship. Consider ways you might use it in a prayerful way.

What things in our daily life enslave us?

In what ways might the Gospel free us from such things?

Challenge

Did you get your letter(s) written? Did you deliver it? Share any reactions you received.

Now, think about your participation in your church...pick one way you could improve your participation and ACT ON IT!

Closing Prayer (use the following or a spontaneous prayer)

Father, it is so easy to say life is too hectic, I don't have to go to church. Please help me to see that I need to make You a priority in my life. If I don't make time for You now, when will I? Help me to reach out to others and make them feel welcome at church. When I complain that Mass is long and boring, help me see that I can change that—someone needs to start the ball rolling—why not Me? Lord, help me find the way. Amen.

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Session 5

Opening Prayer (or a prayer of your own or religious song)

To Jesus, who is the light of the world and the light of my world, too: No matter how dark the darkness is, your light is shining. Help me keep my eyes on your light and not on the darkness that swarms around me. I don't know what your plan for me is, Lord, but I know you have one. Help me hang on until the time is right for you to show it to me. Amen.

Prayer is an essential skill for effective membership in the faith community and for maintaining an overall Christian lifestyle.

Listed below are four elements that affect our ability to pray and common obstacles related to these. Share together how these “problems” affect your own prayer life and try to identify practical things your candidate can do to overcome them.

1. Time
 - a. Can't find time?
 - b. Don't take time?
 - c. Other?

A possible solution:

2. Inner Quiet
 - a. Can't seem to settle down?
 - b. Can't concentrate?
 - c. Other?

A possible solution:

3. External Quiet
 - a. Can't find a suitable place for prayer?
 - b. Can't find a place with a good atmosphere for praying?
 - c. Other?

A possible solution:

4. Aids to Prayer
 - a. Can't find the right book or other aid for praying?
 - b. Don't know how to use the Bible well for this?
 - c. Other?

A possible solution:

Challenge

From the last challenge: Did you work on improving your participation at church?

Discuss with your parent(s) how they see the Catholic Area Parishes Community as a part of their life. Is it just a place to go to church on Sunday or is it a major part of their life? How could it be in the future?

Closing Prayer (use the following or a spontaneous prayer)

Lord God, I only have to answer to You for the way I spend my time on earth. Help me to make the most of the gifts You have blessed me with in service to others in Your name. Help us to realize that we all must work together to make this world a better place and we will receive our just reward with You in the kingdom of Heaven. Lord, bless us in a special way as we conclude these meetings, help us to reach out to further strengthen our faith by continuing this sharing with each other and other important people in our lives. Be with us Lord. Amen.

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Take some time to reflect on your experiences with each other. What were some positives to spending time together talking about your faith journeys?

What did you struggle with?

Which session did you find the most interesting and why?