

Empowered by the Spirit: The Gift of Confirmation

Exploring Confirmation Together

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is the Sacrament that completes Baptism. At Confirmation the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon us. Anyone who has freely decided to live a life as God's child and asks for God's Spirit under the signs of the laying on of hands and anointing with the Holy Oil of Sacred Chrism receives the strength to witness to God's love both in word and in deed. The newly confirmed person is now a fully-fledged responsible member of the Church.

Confirmation is one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church.

What is a Sacrament?

A sacrament is an encounter with Christ; through the signs of words and actions, He shares His love with us and we share more deeply in His life. These words and actions of the sacraments have their origin in the teaching and actions of Christ Himself.

There are seven sacraments. They are:

- Baptism
- Confirmation
- Holy Communion (or Eucharist)
- Reconciliation (or Penance or Confession)
- The Anointing of the Sick
- Holy Orders (or Ordination)
- Matrimony



PREPARATION FOR CONFIRMATION

Our children preparing for Confirmation and their families are on a journey together, a journey with Jesus as friend and guide. In the Diocese of Leeds we have developed a resource to help you on that journey. The resource is called *Empowered by the Spirit: the Gift of Confirmation*.

An important part of this Confirmation resource is for children to take time to learn and talk together with parents and carers: there will be suggested questions to answer, activities to do and topics to discuss. It's also very important to be praying together as a family at home.

BEFORE THE FIRST SESSION

Parents and carers will:

- Have filled in an enrolment form (catechists will help you further with this)
- Have attended a meeting (or been contacted in some other way) to be given introductory information about the preparation programme
- Been given the folder called *Sacrament of Confirmation: Candidates Resources* which will contain leaflets and cards; inside the folder there are 13 leaflets and 11 cards; the first leaflet is called *Introduction for Parents and Carers* and is for parents and carers to keep and read through
- Have planned to set up a 'Prayer Place' at home where their child can pray: this may simply be at a bedside table covered in a cloth, with a cross, prayer cards and other religious objects (like rosary beads) on it; again, catechists should be able to give more advice about this

Parents and carers should give their child the folder *Sacrament of Confirmation* which contains the leaflets for the preparation sessions.

We recommend **six sessions** (working through parts of 2 leaflets during each session). We will give you advice about which parts of the leaflets you should cover in sessions and which parts to leave out.

For each session there will be two cards for the children to read through after the session, to keep on their Prayer Place and to use during their times of prayer.

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Let's have a look at the leaflets in more detail. Each leaflet follows a similar format.

1. A passage from the Bible

After the opening prayer (which calls on the Holy Spirit to fill us with the fire of God's love) a short quotation from the Bible introduces the theme of the session.

What is the Bible?

The Bible is a collection of writings which helps us to know God more intimately and to journey with Him more closely. The Bible is divided into the Old Testament (which tells the story of God's chosen people) and the New Testament (which tells the story of Jesus, the Saviour, who suffered and died for us and rose from the dead to lead us deeper into the everlasting life and love of God).

2. A quotation from YOUCAT

There will always be a quotation from YOUCAT (the Catechism of the Church for young people) on the theme of the session.

3. A fruit of the Holy Spirit

We show that we have received the great gift of the Holy Spirit by the way that we live our lives. Others should be able to see the fruits of the Holy Spirit at work in us. There are 12 fruits: we will look briefly at one or two of these fruits in each session.

4. Information, discussion and activities

During each session, there will be an opportunity to learn and talk together about the topic of the session and to complete some activities.

5. Prayer

There is always a little section on prayer. Very often the different prayers and types of prayer will be on the cards which should be given out during the sessions. Some of these prayers will be prayed at the end of each session.

What is Prayer?

Prayer is turning the mind and heart towards God. When people pray, they enter into a living relationship with God. Prayer is very important for everyone taking part in our Confirmation programme.

- Friendship grows and deepens through spending time together: prayer is the way we spend time in friendship with God.
- Prayer is a two-way process: when we pray, we are spending time with God, talking with Him and listening to Him - and He listens to us.
- Prayer comes in lots of different forms: we talk to God; we thank Him; we ask Him for things; we say sorry for the wrong things that we have said and done; etc.

6. The saints

In each session we will think about the life of a saint. The saint has been chosen to reflect the session's fruit of the Holy Spirit. The children will be encouraged to find out about other saints by Googling saints' names. They will need to choose a saint to be their patron for Confirmation: during the Confirmation ceremony they will be given a **new name**, the name of the saint they have chosen.

What is a Saint?

A saint is someone who has been recognised by the Church as having lived a particularly good and holy life. Saints help us by their prayers and by setting good examples of how best to live our lives. Each child should choose the name of a saint whose example they want to follow throughout their lives.

7. Things to do before the next time you meet

At the end of each session, several activities will be suggested for the children to do before the next session.

There will usually be a rehearsal before the celebration of Confirmation. Catechists will give more information about this.

Sponsors

Each child will need to find a **sponsor** who will present them for their Confirmation, who will pray for them and who will give them an example of how to live the Catholic faith. The sponsor must be a Catholic, over 16 years of age and practise their faith. Parents cannot act as the sponsor for their own child's Confirmation. A good choice for a sponsor may be a godparent or someone known to the child who is a member of the local parish community.

Online you will find links to download:

- A **card** called ***What happens at Confirmation*** which guides the children through what to do to during the Confirmation ceremony
- A **Glossary** of difficult words used in *Empowered by the Spirit*
- **Stickers** of the fruits to mark when the children complete each session

We do hope that you enjoy this special journey, a journey which will end in our children celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation. May the Lord bless you as together you make this journey.

Important Note for Parents and Carers

- If your child has any special educational needs or disabilities, it is important that you speak personally to a lead catechist and/or the Parish Priest.
- If you have *any* concerns about being involved in this preparation programme, please speak to a catechist and/or the Parish Priest.