

Adult Confirmation
I Believe in the Holy Spirit

Opening Prayer and Reflection

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 worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.



Gathering Prayer

Lord, send us your Holy Spirit and fill our hearts with the fire of your love.

Renew in us the gifts of your wisdom and compassion, your forgiveness and love, that we may serve as Jesus served. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pray and reflect upon one of these Scripture verses that describe the effects of the Holy Spirit.
(Give 10 minutes for individual reflection. Then another 10 minutes for one on one sharing)

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|---|------------------|
| ✎ The creation of humanity. | Genesis 2:7. |
| ✎ The story of Elijah. | Kings 19:9-13. |
| ✎ Dry Bones. | Ezekiel 37:1-14. |
| ✎ The story of Nicodemus. | John 3:1-8. |
| ✎ The Holy Spirit's descent at Pentecost. | Acts 2:1-4. |

How does the Holy Spirit act to transform people's lives in the following Scripture selections?
Divide into groups of small sharing groups of 3-4 people. Assign one reading to each group.
Allow 10 minutes for group work and then ask one person from each group to share the group's insights with the large group.

✎ Acts 2:5-13

✎ Acts 3:1-10

✎ Acts 9:1-19

✎ Acts 10:44-49

How has the Holy Spirit transformed your life?
Allow 3-5 minutes for personal reflection.

Responsory (Pray antiphonally.)

Left: Holy Spirit of *wisdom*
Show us the path of life.
Right: Holy Spirit of *fortitude*,
Help us to work for the coming of the reign of God.
Left: Holy Spirit of *piety*,
Teach us to pray with open hearts.
Right: Holy Spirit of *knowledge*,
Lead us to everlasting truth.
Left: Holy Spirit of *understanding*,
Help us to choose aright.
Right: Holy Spirit of *wonder and awe*,
Open our eyes to the presence of God. Amen.

Content Outline

Introduction: Who is the Holy Spirit?

Before the first moment, all that might be, could be, should be, was but a thought tucked in the mind of God. Before the first moment, time was not and confusion was. Before the first moment, all was in darkness. Before the first moment, the earth was only a void, covered with waters that swirled and raged.

Then, at the first moment, the Holy Spirit, like a brooding dove, hovered lovingly. The Holy Spirit transformed the darkness into light and life. Like a steadying wind, the Holy Spirit calmed the molten seas. From the first moment, the Holy Spirit never stopped coursing through creation. Throughout history, the Spirit touched the lives and hearts of individuals, filling them with the power of God's love.¹

I. The Holy Spirit in Scripture and Experience

1 Corinthians 12:3 *No one can say, "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.*

Gal. 4:6 *God has sent the Spirit of God's Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"*

CCC 683 This knowledge of faith is possible only in the Holy Spirit: to be in touch with Christ, the Holy Spirit must first have touched us. The Spirit comes to meet us and kindles faith in us.

Genesis 1:1-2 RUAH

Genesis 2:7 the breath of life

¹ *Christian Initiation*. Benziger Sacramental Preparation Series, Benziger Publishing Company: Mission Hills California. 1995. P. 28.

Prepared by the Division of Evangelization and Catechesis
Archdiocese of Baltimore, MD

Joel 3:1-2 I will pour out my spirit upon you

Isaiah 61 The spirit of the Lord God is upon me...

Luke 1:26-35 Annunciation. The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most high will overshadow you.

Matthew 3:13-17 Baptism of Jesus...Spirit of God descended like a dove and hovered over him.

Luke 4:16-21 Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.

John 14: 12 ...whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.

John 14:16-17 I will ask the Father and he will give you another Paraclete—to be with you always, the Spirit of truth...

John 14:23-26 Jesus said, “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love her, and we will come to her and make our dwelling with her...I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.”

John 16:7 But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. (The condition of the Holy Spirit’s coming is Jesus’ going. I am going through Calvary—that is the price of the Spirit.

John 16:13 But when he comes, the Spirit of truth; he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming.

John 19:30 When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, “It is finished.” And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

Matthew 28:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Acts 1:4 ...for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the holy Spirit.

Acts 2:1-13 Coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Disciples

Acts 2:32-32 *God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. Exalted at the right hand of God, he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured it forth, as you see and hear.*

Romans 5:5 *...hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

Ephesians 1:18-20 *May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for all who believe, in accord with the exercise of his great might, which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens.*

Mother Teresa...Contemplation is not a matter of doing but being. It is the possession of our spirit by the Holy Spirit breathing into us the plenitude of God and sending us forth to the whole creation as his personal message of love. Contemplation is pure joy.

Rev. Ray Bourque...The Holy Spirit makes saints out of us the day we fall in love with God.

CCC 688 We know the Holy Spirit in the Church (also USCCA, p. 203)²:

- ✠ In the scriptures
- ✠ In Tradition
- ✠ In the Magisterium
- ✠ In the sacramental liturgy, through its words and symbols, in which the Holy Spirit puts us into communion with Christ—epiclesis.
- ✠ In Prayer
- ✠ In the charisms and ministries by which the Church is built up
- ✠ In the signs of apostolic and missionary life
- ✠ In the witness of saints

A. Titles of the Holy Spirit CCC 692

- John 14:15, 26, 15:26, 16:7 The Paraclete (one who is called to one's side)
"consoler"
- John 16:13 "The Spirit of truth".
- Gal. 3:14, Eph.1:13 The Spirit of the promise
- Rom. 8:15, Gal. 4:6 The Spirit of adoption
- Rom. 8:9 The Spirit of Christ
- 2 Corinthians 12:13 The Spirit of the Lord
- Rom. 8:9 Spirit of God
- 1 Peter 4:14 the Spirit of glory

B. Symbols of the Holy Spirit CCC 694-701

- ☀ Water Creation, Baptism, signifies birth and the fruitfulness of life

² USCCB, *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (USCCB Publishing, 2006).

- ☀ Anointing (Messiah means ‘Anointed One’).
- ☀ Fire—transforming energy of the Holy Spirit’s actions
- ☀ Cloud and light—OT, the cloud, now obscure, now luminous, reveals the living and saving God while veiling the transcendence of God’s glory.
- ☀ Seal—The Father has set his seal of Christ and seals us in him. (John 6:27)
Some use it to express the indelible “character” of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders.
- ☀ The Hand—Jesus blesses and heals by laying hands on them. The Apostles’ imposition of hands brings the Holy Spirit. Sacramental epiclesis.
- ☀ Finger—It is by the finger of God that Jesus cast out demons in Luke 11:20. If God’s law was written on tablets of stone “by the finger of God, then the “letter from Christ” entrusted to the care of the apostles is written “with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts.
- ☀ The Dove—The flood, Jesus’ baptism

C. The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Humanly speaking a genuine gift is given freely, out of love and not out of necessity; its reception is occasion for gratitude and joy. In the divine freedom to be present to all creatures, empowering them to birth and rebirth in the midst of the antagonistic structures of reality, the Spirit is intelligible as the first gift, freely given and giving. The Spirit’s loving in the world is gracious and inviting, never forcing or using violence but respectfully calling to human freedom, as is befitting a gift.

Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is*, p. 143.

Jesus was the image of God, living without reservation by the breath or spirit of God, so that he was the prototype or pattern in whom all things were made, the new creation in whom the world could be redeemed.

It was in dying that Jesus breathed forth his Spirit into his followers, but on condition that they would receive the Spirit by becoming a community of creative and redemptive love. John 14:15-16. It was not a gift that Jesus could give to his followers singly. It was to the community that must gather that he entrusted the continued living of his life in the world, and he assures them that, although they do not now remember or understand all his teachings, the Spirit will cause to remember and understand. John 14:26...the Spirit will be within them.³

The Spirit was revealed as presence and power in Christian life.⁴

This is not intended only for the apostolic age. It is the gift that we claim for the Church in all ages, pouring itself out wherever the followers of Jesus assemble in his name, trying to become a community of creative and redemptive love among themselves and towards others. We claim that we know God not only indirectly through God’s works in creation and history, not only by hearsay through the community’s recollection of Jesus

³ Hellwig, Monika, *The Christian Creeds, A Faith to Live By*. Pflaum Press: Dayton, OH. 1973. P. 84.

⁴ DeSiano, Frank, CSP, *Presenting the Catholic Faith: A Modern Catechism for Inquirers*. Paulist Press: Mahwah, NJ. 1987. P. 44.

Christ... We claim that we know God because the breath of God really breathes within and among us, because God has become for us an intimate experience of our own lives, transforming us and bringing us to immediate participation in God's self-revelation.⁵

Ramifications

Our whole way of life is a constant invitation to a radical conversion in the Spirit. Every time we baptize someone, we give her/him the commitment of the community that the community will draw this person into the circle of its creative love, lifting her/him above the network of sin in the world and giving her/him opportunities to live by the light of the Risen Christ and in the Spirit. If adult, we ask of her/him a complementary commitment to live in the community, sharing its task of redemption.

Every time we confirm someone, we are praying that the Spirit may come upon her/him so that she/he will actively participate in the Church, that is, in building it up as a community of creative and redemptive love and in sharing its mission to testify to the world.

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- ✠ Wisdom The gift that helps us see and see love others and ourselves as God does.
Wisdom 7:7-11.
- ✠ Understanding: The gift that helps us grasp how immeasurable is God's love for us, for the earth, for all creatures; and to fully appreciate the Word of God.
Luke 24:13-35. The Disciples on the road to Emmaus.
- ✠ Knowledge: The gift that helps us to know what to believe and what not to believe and to know God more intimately.
Luke 7:18-22. Jesus fulfills Isaiah's prophecy.
- ✠ Counsel: The gift that strengthens in us our ability to advise and guide one another as we respond to God's guidance in our lives and helps us to make the right personal decisions. *Matthew 19:16-22. The Rich Young Man.*
- ✠ Fortitude: God tells us in the scriptures, "Be not afraid." Courage or fortitude helps us endure difficulties and sufferings and to trust that "all things work together for the good of those who love God. *Acts 5:27-42.*
- ✠ Reverence: This gift directs human hearts toward God and enables us to revere one another as children of God. *Luke 18:9-14. The Pharisee and the Tax Collector.*
- ✠ Wonder and Awe: This gift instills in us a sense of wonder at the enormity of God's love and its power in our lives. *Luke 8:22-25. The Calming of the Storm at Sea.*

⁵ Hellwig, op cite. P. 84

Confirmation, as a sacrament of initiation, celebrates and brings about a fuller, deeper initiation into the *life* of Jesus. One of its effects is that "it unites us more firmly to Christ" (C.C.C., #1303).

"I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). "Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27).

Confirmation also celebrates and brings about a fuller, deeper initiation into the *way of life* of Jesus. This sacrament "gives the Holy Spirit in order to... associate us more closely with [the Church's] mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds" (C.C.C., #1316).

"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another" (John 13:34, cf. 15:12). "The entire Law of the Gospel is contained in the *"new commandment"* of Jesus, to love one another as he has loved us" (C.C.C., #1970).

Explore with the candidates what living like Jesus (loving as Jesus loved) would mean for them, in their lives.

Be sure they understand that their relationship with Jesus is both the best guide to knowing what to do, and the taproot of the grace and ability to do it. "The central factor in the formation of conscience and sound moral judgment should be Christ's role in one's life" (N.C.D., #190). "Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Living as Adult, Lay Disciples (USCCA, p. 207).

Candidates should not be left, after looking at what it means to be an adult, lay Catholic, a disciple, with the impression that it is something unrealistic, beyond them, unattainable, too difficult. One way to help avoid this impression is to look at some of the resources available to all Catholics, resources that serve as helps along the way in our life of faith.

What are some of the resources we can identify for people?

Scripture

- √ If your parish has a Scripture study program, such as the Little Rock Scripture Study Program or the Threshold Bible Study, or small faith communities that pray with the lectionary, let candidates know about it, and invite them to participate in the programs or groups. If the sponsors are involved, have them offer to bring the candidates with them, so that they will feel welcome.

- √ The books, pamphlets and videos on Scripture are innumerable. There are several Catholic Update issues, and Liturgical Press pamphlets (Collegeville, MN), on Scripture which you could give to the candidates and discuss with them. Perhaps you have a parish lending library with some readable volumes on the Bible.

Enable candidates to realize (a) that reading the Bible is not only a good thing to do, but is a richly nourishing resource for Christian living, and (b) that they can read the Bible, and need not fear it, because there are people to read and discuss it with and resources to help them understand it.

The Liturgy and Sacramental Life (*USCCA*, pp. 204-207).

When it is given real care and attention, and celebrated with style, grace, artistic competence, and active participation, the liturgy can really be what the Council says it is, the "source" and "summit" of the Christian life, the "fount from which all [the Church's] power flows" (Vatican II, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, #10). The Council calls people's full and active participation "the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit" (*ibid.*, #14).

Answer any questions candidates may have regarding the Mass and the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.

Prayer

By using various prayer forms during the preparation sessions you will enrich the candidates' experience of prayer. Present the need for and various ways of prayer, both explaining them and using them with the candidates -- *e.g.*, the liturgy of the hours, centering prayer; forms of lectio divina for today, and other ways to pray with Scripture; the rosary; prayer groups; etc. For reference and ideas, use Prayernet's pamphlet on prayer.

Parish Adult Faith Formation Opportunities

Be sure candidates are aware of the full range of adult education opportunities available for them in the parish and in the archdiocese.

Opportunities for Ministry

Share the seven themes of Catholic social teaching.⁶

1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person
2. Call to Family, Community and Participation
3. Rights and Responsibilities
4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
6. Solidarity

⁶ Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1998).

7. Care for God's Creation.

What are practical ways candidates can promote these in order to bring about a more just world?

How can we help transform the world in Christ?

Look at your parish bulletin to see what activities of the parish promote these themes. Identify community groups that are working to create "a civilization of love."

Preparing for the Rite

RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Presentation of Candidates
Homily
Renewal of Baptismal Promises
The Laying On of Hands
The Anointing with Chrism
General Intercessions
Lord's Prayer
Solemn Blessing

The History of the Sacrament

- + Meaning of Confirmation in the Early Church
 - Fulfillment, completion of Baptism
 - Sign of Spirit's role in initiation
 - Sealing or *confirmation* of election
 - Ordination to priesthood of the faithful

Vatican Council II called for revision of sacramental rites. SC 71

"The rite of confirmation is to be revised and the intimate connection which this sacrament has with the whole of Christian initiation is to be more lucidly set forth."

Pope Paul VI: Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation

From what we have recalled, it is clear that in the administration in the East and West, though in different ways, the most important place was occupied by the anointing, which in a certain way represents the apostolic laying on of hands. Since this anointing with chrism well represents the spiritual anointing of the Holy Spirit, who is given to the faithful, we intend to confirm its existence and importance.

Prepared by the Division of Evangelization and Catechesis
Archdiocese of Baltimore, MD

As regards the words which are pronounced in confirmation, we have examined with due consideration the dignity of the venerable formula used in the Latin Church, but we judge preferable the very ancient formula belonging to the Byzantine rite, by which the Gift of the Holy Spirit himself is expressed and the outpouring of the Spirit which took place on the day of Pentecost is recalled. We therefore adopt this formula, rendering it almost word for word.⁷

⁷ Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation. 1971

The Renewal of Baptismal Promises.

*We believe in one God,
The Father, the Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,*

A brief presentation on the Creed should include a discussion on the Trinity and the meaning of God revealed in relationship. Discuss:

1. What is your image of the Creator God? What does St. John mean when he says, “God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him”? (1 John 4:16).
2. How would you answer the question of Jesus, “And you, who do you say I am?”
3. Which gift of the Holy Spirit have you been given for the good of the community?

Prayer of Laying of Hands

Although the laying of hands on the candidates, which is done with the prescribed prayer before the anointing, does not belong to the essence of the sacramental rite, it is nevertheless to be held in high esteem...⁸

Just before the anointing with chrism, the bishop and all of the assembled priests stand facing the candidates; the presiders extend their hands over the candidates while the bishop prays the solemn prayer for the gifts.⁹

*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.*

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:

Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

Practice with the candidates and sponsors the responses to the anointing.

- + Sponsors stand in back of candidate with hand on the candidate’s shoulder.
- + The bishop says, *(Name), be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
- + The candidate responds, *Amen.*
- + The bishop shakes hand of candidate, saying, *Peace be with you.*
- + The candidate responds, *And also with you.*

⁸ The Rite of Confirmation #9.

⁹ The Rite of Confirmation. #25.

Come, Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill us with the clear light of your wisdom. Help us to pray for what we need to follow Jesus faithfully. Help us to use the gift of wisdom to serve one another. Help us to see that wisdom is a gift to all those you have gathered, not just a few. Give us the wisdom to embrace the truth wherever we may find it.

Come, Holy Spirit, make alive in us the gift of understanding that we may grasp how immeasurable is your love for us, for the earth, for all creatures. Help us to understand how we might better live our faith in our ordinary, everyday lives. Guide us as we struggle with the difficult moral and spiritual issues of our time.

Come, Holy Spirit, **nourish in our hearts the gift of counsel that we may know when to speak and when to be silent. By your gift of counsel, strengthen in us our ability to advise and guide one another as we respond to your guidance in our lives. Help us, as a community of faith, to counsel our society in ways of love, not condemnation.**

Come, Holy Spirit, fill us anew with your gift of courage. Help us to see that life's sufferings and troubles are temporary. Help us always to see the light of each new dawn. By your gift of courage, may we face each new day with the determination to act in all things with love.

Come, Holy Spirit, increase in us your gift of knowledge that we may know you more intimately. Help us to see more clearly what to believe and not to believe. We live in such a complex time! When our limited human knowledge reveals so many gray areas between right and wrong, help us to recognize how you would have us act so that our behavior may show forth your infinite love.

Come, Holy Spirit, increase in us your gift of wonder and awe. Help to see with the eyes of faith God's tremendous love for us. Through this gift, deepen the spirit of prayer in our lives, and help us to share more generously our time, talent, and financial resources.

Come, Holy Spirit, bring a new birth to the countless families that make up the foundation of the Church. Heal and renew marriages, parent-child relationships, and all the human intimacy that constitutes family life. Help family members feel God's love for them through their love for one another.

Come, Holy Spirit, open our hearts to receive and use the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our parishes. Help us to see and respond to the needs of our people. Help us to support and encourage the variety of vocations found in our parishes. Above all, help us all to be the Body of Christ in the world.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and we shall be reborn. And you shall renew the face of the earth.