

Parent Handout

CONNECTING BAPTISM TO CONFIRMATION

In the sacrament of Confirmation God confirms in us and completes the grace He gives us in Baptism. We are bound more closely to Him and His Church. We are given a special strength of the Holy Spirit which helps us to be true witnesses of Christ and to spread and defend the faith by word and deed. (Catechist of the Catholic Church 1285.)

Given the connection of Baptism to Confirmation, let us first take some time to reflect upon your child's Baptism.

1. Recall the day of your child's Baptism. What was the name of the priest/deacon who baptized your child? Do you remember the date (or month/year) of the Baptism? At what parish did the Baptism take place?
2. What name did you give your child at Baptism? What is the significance of this name?
3. Who are your child's godparents? Describe how they have influenced your child's growth in the Catholic faith.
4. When your child was baptized you made a formal commitment – a promise – to lovingly raise them in the Catholic faith. Recall these words: *Parents, you have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and neighbor (RB #39).*

QUESTION: What are some ways that you help your child grow in the Catholic faith?
Some examples:

- My family has a regular routine of prayer.
- We celebrate the day of my child's Baptism each year.
- A Bible, crucifix and other symbols of the Catholic faith are prominently displayed in my home.
- We make it a priority to regularly attend Mass on Sunday as a family.
- Our family has developed good relationships with other Catholic parents and their children.

Your own response: _____

PROFESSION OF FAITH

All of these marvelous ways that you form your child in the Catholic faith are inspiring. They also make a strong statement: I Believe! What do we believe? Let us recall and pray through the Profession of Faith that you made for your child during the Rite of Baptism. As we do each year at Easter, your child will be asked to renew their Profession of Faith at Confirmation:

Leader: Do you renounce sin, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?

All: *I do. Lord, sin is to make a choice that leads me away from you. Help our family to listen carefully to your voice and follow your commandments to honor you and to love others as you love us. Your love frees us from the darkness of sin.*

Leader: Do you reject the lure of evil, so that sin may have no mastery over you?

All: *I do. Lord, evil can sometimes seem so attractive and rewarding! Help our family to be courageous as Christians – setting priorities and a way of living that bring us closer to you.*

Leader: Do you reject Satan, the author and prince of sin?

All: *I do. Lord, by rejecting Satan we reject his empty promises, knowing that real joy can only be found when we follow your commandments. Help us to be faithful to you.*

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

All: *I do. Lord, you are our creator and give us life every day. Help us to be grateful for the life you have given us. Help us recognize your love for us in times of celebration and sorrow, and even as we go about our daily lives. As a family we desire to believe in you, to turn to you, and place our lives into your loving hands.*

Leader: 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?

All: *I do. God our Father, you chose the Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son Jesus. She is a perfect model of faith, obedience, and courage. Your Son Jesus sacrificed His life to save us from sin. He rose from the dead and returned to you in heaven giving us the promise of everlasting life. May the loving choices we make as a family show that we are grateful for Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.*

Leader: 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?

All: *I do. Holy Spirit of God, although Jesus' disciples were filled with fear, you appeared to them with a message of peace, filled them with the fire of your love, and gave them the courage to go out into the whole world to share your message of salvation. We are given this same Spirit in Baptism which is sealed and strengthened in Confirmation and nourished by your precious Body and Blood. We know you love us unconditionally even as we ask for forgiveness when we sin. We never feel alone because you give us our brothers and sisters in the Catholic Church and all the Saints in heaven to be our family in faith. You give us special gifts to help us become more like Jesus. Bless our family, keep us holy and faithful so that we, like Jesus, will be called to heaven and live eternally in your love.*

Leader: Almighty God, continue to bless and strengthen these parents. May they be joyful witnesses of Christ to their children, in their community, and in our world. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let's take a moment of silence to reflect on the profound statements of the Creed (few minutes of silence.) Our Creed begins with the words "I believe." Yet we know that we need others, a community, to grow in faith. The persons who regularly surround your child play an important role in their formation.

THE ROLE OF THE SPONSOR

Your child's Confirmation sponsor is an important member of your community. Recall some of the ways you stated earlier that would help your child grow in the Catholic faith. Then recall the words and our reflection on the Creed, our profession of faith. The role of a godparent and sponsor are the same. Thus, an appropriate sponsor is a person whom your child can look to as a model of Christian discipleship. The sponsor, like the godparent, is a person of faith whose life is a reflection of what (s)he professes to believe.

CONFIRMATION NAME

The name you gave your child at Baptism is the preferred name given at Confirmation. To be baptized by a name shows that God knows us individually and loves each and every one of us. He says "yes" to us and wants us as part of His family forever.

To be confirmed in the name of a saint means that your child is promising to be like that saint, loving and serving Jesus in a very special way. As a family, read stories about some saints and ask the saints to pray for you as you make a decision. We all are called to be saints and your child's name at given at Baptism is an appropriate choice.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

The priest asks the Holy Spirit to transform the bread and wine into a new reality – the Body and Blood of Christ. In the same way, during Confirmation the bishop will lay hands upon your child and ask the Holy Spirit to transform him/her into a new reality.

References from sacred scripture that describe laying on of hands:

Exodus 29:10 (The ancient Israelites extend hands as a sign of blessing)

Numbers 27: 15-23 (Moses lays hands upon Joshua)

Mark 8: 22-25 (Jesus lays hands upon the eyes of the blind man)

Acts 6:6 (Laying on of hands as a sign of mission)

Acts 8: 14-17 (Apostles lay hands upon the people)

ANOINTING WITH CHRISM AND RECEIVING THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

After the laying on of the hands, the bishop will anoint your child with the oil of chrism and say “(child’s name,) be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Being anointed with sacred chrism is a sign of consecration or holiness. It gives us a special strength to be more like Christ and to love His Church.

Like an official seal put on an important document, being “sealed” in this case, means that your child is “imprinted” by the Holy Spirit. God confirms the grace received in Baptism. (S)he is given special gifts which help to be disciples of Christ, to follow His commandments and help others to do the same.

In the Book of Isaiah 11:2-3, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are described. In the passage the gifts are considered ones that the Messiah would have possessed. Through Jesus, we also receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation. (Read Isaiah 11:2 – 3)

Wisdom helps us recognize the importance of others and the importance of keeping God central in our lives.

Understanding is the ability to comprehend the meaning of God's message.

Knowledge is the ability to think about and explore God's revelation, and also to recognize there are mysteries of faith that we cannot fully comprehend.

Counsel is the ability to see the best way to follow God's plan and make the right choices.

Fortitude is the ability to have courage and remain strong, even when our faith is challenged.

Piety (reverence) helps us to be humble before God and be devoted to Him.

Fear of the Lord (awe) is the ability to be amazed by God, to realize He loves us unconditionally and to never want to break our bonds with Him.

Throughout your child’s life these are gifts are ones that will “keep on giving.” They are gifts meant to be nurtured by God through you, your child’s sponsor and, of course, the Church. As these gifts mature, our lives will be fruitful indeed! (Refer to Galatians 5: 22-26: The Fruit of the Spirit)

VIDEO: CONFIRMATION - ONE 'OHANA

Watch the video online at: <http://catholichawaii.org/sacramentvideos>

- 1) Confirmation is not about us confirming our faith in God. It is about God confirming His love for us.
- 2) As a sacrament of initiation, Confirmation, received in its proper theological order (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist) opens the door to receive Holy Communion.
- 3) The Gift of the Holy Spirit received in Confirmation prepares and strengthens us for Christian discipleship. We are to give witness to Jesus.

SEGMENT I:

(Most Reverend Clarence “Larry” Silva, Bishop of Honolulu)

In the sacrament of Confirmation Jesus breathes the gifts of His Holy Spirit into each of us saying, “Peace be with you.”

“Confirmation is a time for new beginnings... It seals and strengthens the promises offered in Baptism.” It opens the door to receive the source and summit of that initiation, the physical encounter with Risen Christ Himself, known as the Eucharist. In receiving the Body and Blood of Christ we are sustained for the journey to live our faith in love and service to others.

SEGMENT II:

“Confirmation is when I become a soldier of Christ (Nathan Barinque, age 7, who cites 2 Timothy 2: 1 - 7)

“Children at the age of reason are ready to receive Confirmation. They’re open to a relationship with the Lord and it may be the best time for them to receive sacraments so that they can continue to grow in their faith and give witness to Jesus.” (Fr. William Kunisch)

It’s just part of learning, you’re always a student – there’s so much to learn about the faith. (Ashley Almuena, young adult confirmed at age 7)

Confirmation is the sacrament that seals us with the gift of the Holy Spirit and makes us stronger followers of Jesus. (Nhan Dao, age 7)

“Children can do marvelous things. They can and should evangelize in their own ways. And how can they do that unless they have first received the Gift of the Holy Spirit? It is so important that they have this Gift of the Holy Spirit from the earliest age so that they can be prepared to not just be consumers of the faith but to be sharers of the faith. (Bishop Larry Silva)

Confirmation is that extra grace from God for us on our journey. (Msgr. Terrance “Terry” Watanabe)

“The sacraments are food for our souls. In Baptism we receive God’s sanctifying grace. It’s like putting a seed in the soil and over time as it is watered and nurtured and taken care of it properly, it grows. In Confirmation you have the fulfillment of what was initially given to you, which is that seed.” (Dallas Carter)

At a tender age they know that the land is so precious. It’s our life. When they grow they will also, like plants, mature in faith. (Fr. Santiago “Bong” Agoo)

It is helping them to understand how important it is to be concerned about other things and then hopefully translate that into being concerned about other people. Faith... is supposed to change our lives. (Msgr. Terry)

Confirmation is a part of life and a continuation of their ongoing formation in the faith. (Rosa Lefu’a)

(Nurturing our faith is like nurturing a garden) It is just like when you’re working with the people. (The way) you nurture (plants) in the farm it’s the same thing – (it’s the way) you nurture the people in the parish, in the community, and in the Church. (Dcn. Jerome Vito Lefu’a)

The laborers are few but the harvest is great. We really need to labor in the vineyard of the Lord. (Fr. Bong)

SEGMENT III:

The good life is serving others, learning more about God and what he is trying to ask of us. (Timothy Almuena, young adult confirmed at age 7)

Wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord

It is the power of the Holy Spirit that transforms the bread and wine into the body/blood of Christ. In the same way, it is the power of the Spirit in the sacrament of Confirmation who transforms us into the body of Christ so that we can reach out to others. We take these attributes that are God’s own attributes and make them present in the world. (Bishop Larry)

It’s not just about them receiving the Body of Christ but that we are a bigger ‘ohana, receiving the Body of Christ. (Kalae Martin)

AFTER THE VIDEO

What one idea or statement from the video caught your attention? Explain.