

Christ is the Center of our Confirmation Ministries with Youth

Archdiocese of Seattle
Presented by Tom East

1

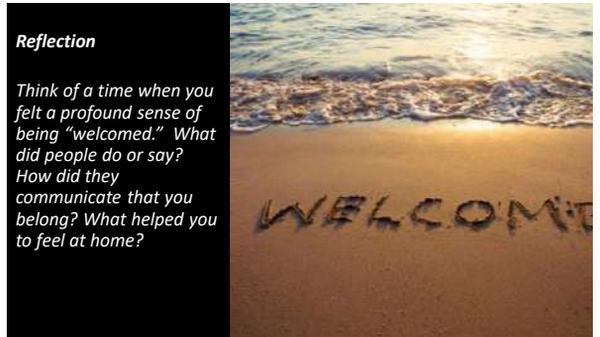


Opening Prayer –
Be the Welcome of God

2



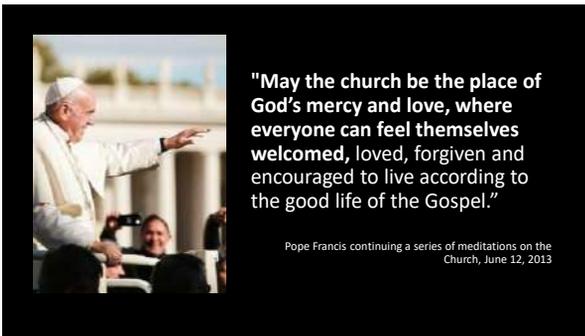
3



Reflection

Think of a time when you felt a profound sense of being “welcomed.” What did people do or say? How did they communicate that you belong? What helped you to feel at home?

4



"May the church be the place of God's mercy and love, where everyone can feel themselves welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live according to the good life of the Gospel."

Pope Francis continuing a series of meditations on the Church, June 12, 2013

5



"And in order to make others feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged, the church must have open doors so that all might enter. And we must go out of those doors and proclaim the Gospel."

Pope Francis continuing a series of meditations on the Church, June 12, 2013

6



“What is God’s plan? It is to make of us all a single family of his children, in which each person feels that God is close and feels loved by him, as in the Gospel parable, feels the warmth of being God’s family.”

Pope Francis, Address, May 21, 2013

7

Prayer Response:

Make us Your Welcome, Oh God.

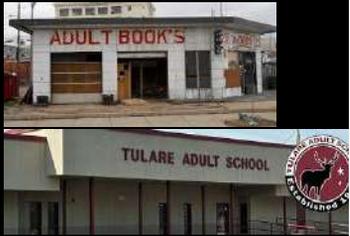


8

adulting:
verb
To do grown up things and hold responsibilities such as: a 9-5 job, a mortgage, a car payment or anything else that makes one think of grown-ups

9

Vision for Adulthood



10

You Could be Holy



11



12



Sharing Question 1

Recall an experience of your own confirmation or the confirmation of your child or loved one. What is something that you remember? Why is this meaningful to you?

13



Sharing Question 2

Recall an experience of confirmation preparation that is meaningful to you. Why is this experience meaningful? What does this tell you about confirmation?

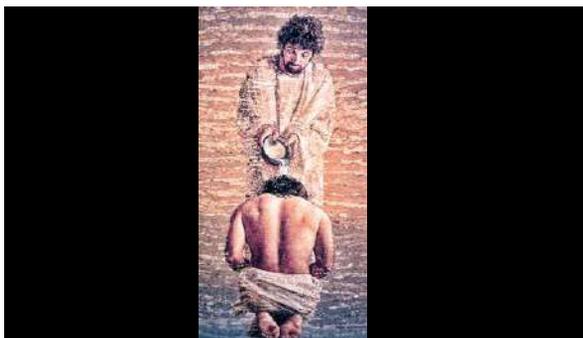
14



15



16



17



18



19



20



Sacramentum → Sacrament

We see in this history the roots to our understanding of sacrament:

- It is about our direct relationship with God. In our understanding, it is about our acceptance of God's grace, God's unmerited gift of love and promise of presence.
- It is about our new life in Christ, joining in his life, death and resurrection.
- It is about new responsibilities and new rights as members of the Christian community.
- The water bath and anointing with oil signified new life and strengthening.



21

History of Confirmation - Initiation into the Christian Community

- First Century Christians were baptized with water and the laying on of hands by a bishop.
- In the Second Century, an anointing with oil was added to the laying on of hands in the rite of baptism.

"Wherefore we are called Christians on this account, because we are anointed with the oil of God."
Theophilus of Antioch, To Autolytus, 1:12



22

Early Church

- By 300 AD, with the growth of infant baptism, Bishops were no longer able to preside at each Baptism.
- 412 AD Pope Innocent I insists on Bishop anointing separate from baptism. This is the first time we hear the term, "Confirmation".

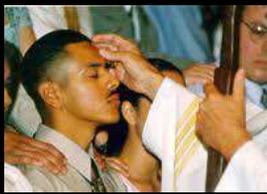


23

Baptismal – Crown of Head



Confirmation - Forehead



24

Developments




- 1517 – Martin Luther
 - Protestant Reformation
 - Focus on Two Sacraments
- 1565 – St. Charles Borromeo
 - Confirmation Name
- Early 20th Century – Pope Pius X
 - lowered the age for First Holy Communion

25

What does all this mean?



- Confirmation developed within our history as the Roman Catholic Church.
- Confirmation is directly connected to Baptism and Eucharist as a sacrament of initiation.
- The separation of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation provides for a clear “communion” between the confirmed and the Bishop.
- The age for reception of Confirmation has varied through the centuries and continues to vary from diocese to diocese and parish to parish.

26

→ Confirmation is Unified with Baptism /Eucharist

The sacraments of Christian initiation constitute a unity because “they establish the foundations of Christian life. The faithful born new by Baptism are strengthened by Confirmation and are then nourished by the Eucharist.”



Directory for Catechesis, 2020, # 70

27

→ Baptism and Confirmation are Ordered to Eucharist

It must be reiterated in fact that “our reception of Baptism and Confirmation is ordered to the Eucharist.”



Directory for Catechesis, 2020, # 70

28

It's All About Baptism

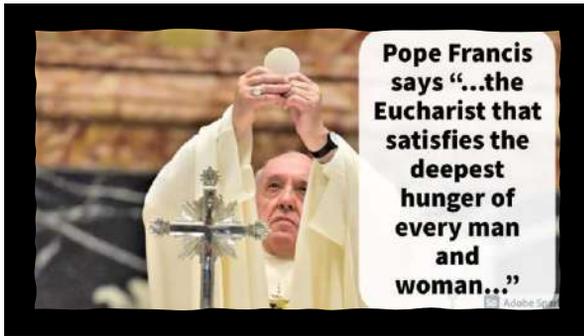


29

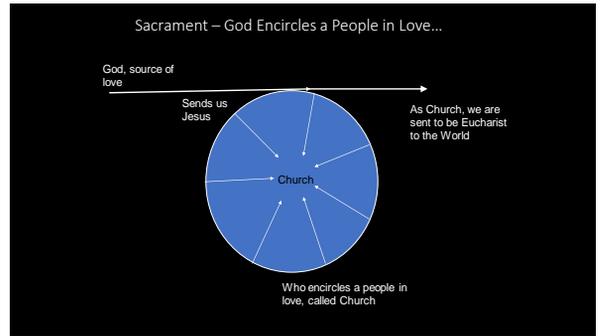


“The way that I knew I need oxygen to breathe, I knew I had to learn about Jesus Christ and his teachings.” -Eun Soo Jackie Kim '18

30



31



32

Confirmation

- awakens a our experience of **Baptism** and points us toward our sharing in Eucharist.
- **strengthens us in the Holy Spirit** for our journey of discipleship and for active participation in the body of Christ.
- **renews the entire Body of Christ.**

33

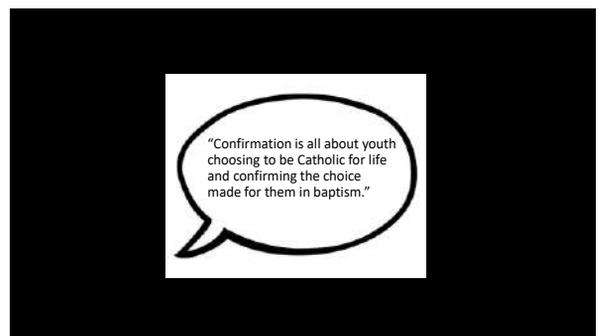


34

Force Fitting the Sacrament of Confirmation

- Mandatory Youth Ministry
- Continued catechesis / faith formation with adolescents
- The way to engage families

35



36

Martin Luther - 1517

- ▣ Protestant Reformation
- ▣ Focus on Two Sacraments
 - ▣ Baptism and Eucharist
- ▣ Later, Confirmation was developed in the Lutheran church as a non-sacramental rite of passage for older adolescents.



37

No ratification needed.

- 1308 Although Confirmation is sometimes called the "sacrament of Christian maturity," we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth, nor forget that the baptismal grace is a grace of free, unmerited election and does not need "ratification" to become effective.



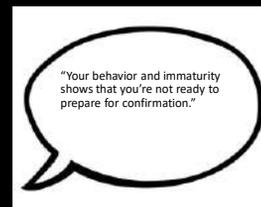
38

Confirmation is Part of the Way God Wants to Love you

God wants to love you in lots of ways, Confirmation is one of those ways.



39



40

Sacrament of Strengthening

"Confirmation is connected with the Latin verb firmare, which means 'to make firm or fast, strengthen, fortify, support, encourage, animate, strengthen in resolution, secure, affirm, help stand firm'"

Anselm Grün, OSB
The Seven Sacraments, 2003, p.90



41

Confirmation

- Unmerited Grace
- We are privileged to help youth prepare to receive this gift



42

Preparing to Receive a Gift

“Faith is a gift, the Holy Spirit is a gift, and sacraments celebrate the unmerited grace of God. Confirmation celebrates what God does, not what teens have shouldered.”

Rev. Paul Turner, Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions: *FDLC Newsletter*



43

If Confirmation is a gift, we prepare by

- Knowing the giver (Jesus)
- Knowing more about what we are receiving
- Open our arms (and our heart)



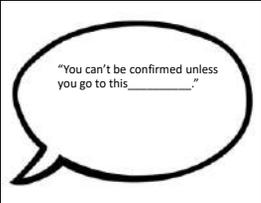
44



45



46



47

Doors always wide open



The Church is called to be the house of the Father, with doors always wide open. ...Everyone can share in some way in the life of the Church; everyone can be part of the community, nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason...

Pope Francis – *Evangelii Gaudium*, # 47.

48

Doors always wide open

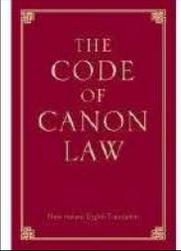


Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. But the Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems.

Pope Francis – *Evangelii Gaudium*, # 47.

49

Canon Law



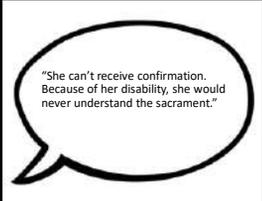
- Can. 843 §1. Sacred ministers cannot deny the sacraments to those who seek them at appropriate times, are properly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving them.
- §2. Pastors of souls and other members of the Christian faithful...have the duty to take care that those who seek the sacraments are prepared to receive them by proper evangelization and catechetical instruction, attentive to the norms issued by competent authority.

50



Not a Tollbooth

51

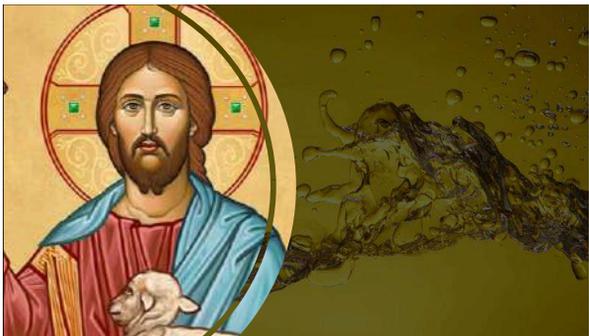


"She can't receive confirmation. Because of her disability, she would never understand the sacrament."

52



53



54

Confirmation Strengthens disciples to



- Live their baptism
- *New Life in Christ*
- Grow in their openness to the Eucharist
- *The Presence of Christ*
- Be strengthened in the Holy Spirit
- *The Promise of Christ*
- Be Bound to the Church
- *The Body of Christ*

Christ is the Center of Confirmation Ministries

55

Pope Francis

"thank the Lord for the grace of our confirmation," the Pope urged them to ask "that, filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, we may always mirror Christ's presence in our relations with others, our openness to those in need, and our living witness to the Gospel message of joy and peace."



Vatican City, Wednesday audience, Jan 29, 2014.

56

Rediscover the Richness of Confirmation

...It is important to **rediscover the richness of this sacrament**, to grasp its link with the personal vocation of every baptized person and with the theology of charisms, to take greater care over the way it is presented pastorally, so that it does not become a formal and insignificant moment...



Final Document of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment, 2018, #61

57

Awaken the encounter

...It happens that **young people are helped to have a powerful experience of God, an encounter with Jesus** that touched their hearts. But the only follow-up to this is a series of "formation" meetings featuring talks about doctrinal and moral issues, the evils of today's world, the Church, her social doctrine, chastity, marriage, birth control and so on. ...



212: Christ is Alive – Christus Vivit April 2, 2019

58

Awaken the encounter – Don't Bore Them

... As a result, **many young people get bored, they lose the fire of their encounter with Christ and the joy of following him**; many give up and others become downcast or negative. Rather than being too concerned with communicating a great deal of doctrine, **let us first try to awaken and consolidate the great experiences that sustain the Christian life.**



212: Christ is Alive – Christus Vivit April 2, 2019

59

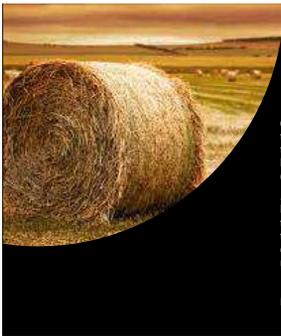
Diana Butler Bass




Believe Behave Belong

Belong Behave Believe

60



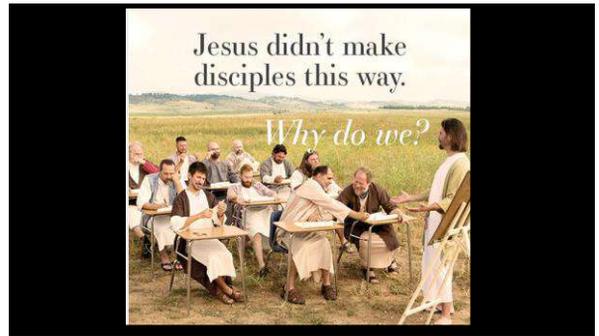
Proclaiming Christ

Our tendency today is to unload the entire bale of hay — to instruct converts in the whole doctrine of Christ, before they are even initiated, and ask that they assent to all of it, before they are baptized or received into the Catholic Church.

...we should get back to the original plan of proclaiming the basic *kerygma* — repentance, baptism and the faith that that implies — and then continue instruction in the deeper things after the enlightenment that baptism brings. It is too easy, they argue, for people to get lost in the weeds and miss the essential point.

Msgr. Charles Pope/National Catholic Register, July 2021

61



Jesus didn't make disciples this way.

Why do we?

62



Sharing the Pieces of the Puzzle

63



Getting Caught Up in the Love of the Game

64



Getting Caught Up in the Whole Story

65



Know the Giver – Jesus Know the Gift – the Spirit promised by Jesus

Prepare them to Receive the Gift of Confirmation

Open Your Arms and Your Heart

66



Discussion

Confirmation empowers disciples to:

- **Live their baptism**
- **Grow in their openness to the Eucharist**
- **Be strengthened in the Holy Spirit**
- **Be Bound to the Church**

- What are the strengths in our current Confirmation ministries?
- What are the challenges and areas to grow in our current Confirmation ministries?

67



How do we transform our Confirmation ministry so that everything is designed to help young people encounter Christ, and live as disciples nourished by Eucharist?

68

Journey of Adolescence



69

Focus on Encounter, Discipleship, and Proclaiming Christ



70



Personal Encounter With Jesus

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them...

Evangelii Gaudium, #3

71



72



Provide an Experience

- Make faith **hands on** and **heart on**.
- Something to **do** and something to **care about**.

73



74

Kingdom Builders

- Forms Youth as "Kingdom Builders"
- Divides Confirmation candidates into teams.
- Gives each team \$100.00 to "build the Kingdom"
- Provides formation and walks through process of youth choosing their project.
- Teams implement projects.
- Youth reflect on discipleship, and present project to the parish.

75

Empower Parents and Renew Family Faith



76



Family → Reference Point

The Synod insisted that "the family continues to be the principal point of reference for young people. Children appreciate the love and care of their parents, they give importance to family bonds, and they hope to succeed in forming a family when it is their time."

262- Christ is Alive – Christus Vivit, April 2, 2019

77

Parents are Primary Influence

1% of youth ages 15-17 were highly religious in the mid to late 20's.

82% of their children were active as young adults.

When parents attached little importance to religion,

When parents talked about faith at home, attached great importance to it, and were active in faith,

78



Create Space for Conversation

79

Supporting / Renewing Parent's Faith

- Connect to Adult Education / Faith Sharing
- Parallel Programs
 - Faith Formation
 - Retreats for Parents
- Connect to Confirmation Ministry

80

Engage the Parish in Confirmation Ministry

#3

81



The Parish Accompanies Young People

The community has an important role in the accompaniment of young people; it should feel collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging and challenging them.

243- Christ is Alive – Christus Vivit
April 2, 2019

82

Communicate a Vision for Confirmation



- Pastor
- Parish Staff and Leadership
- Confirmation and Youth Ministry Teams
- Parents
- Youth

83

Getting the Parish Onboard with Christ Centered Confirmation Ministries



- Communicate a vision to the parish before, during, and after the celebration of Confirmation.
- Have Confirmed youth witness to children preparing for First Communion.
- Communicate about the Holy Spirit and Confirmation at Pentecost.
- Utilize the communities and life of the parish in your preparation.

84

Connect the Parish with the Candidates

- Introduce Young People
- Connect Parish Members as Prayer Partners
- Engage Youth in Ministries
- Involve Parish Ministries in Confirmation Ministry
- Invite Parish Members to Help with Confirmation – Create New Roles



85

Accompany Young People as they Prepare for Confirmation



86

In such places... the **person-to-person contact indispensable for passing on the message can happen**, something whose place cannot be taken by any pastoral resource or strategy.



218- *Christ is Alive – Christus Vivit*
April 2, 2019

87

Young people are more disconnected than ever from their communities

Springtide – Belonging Research –2020

- ▶ Nearly 40% of young people don't have anyone to talk to
 - ▶ Attending religious groups or gatherings doesn't have any affect unless they have a relationship with an adult who cares
- ▶ 20% of young people who attend a religious service at least once a week feel completely alone
- ▶ The secret is in the relationships.

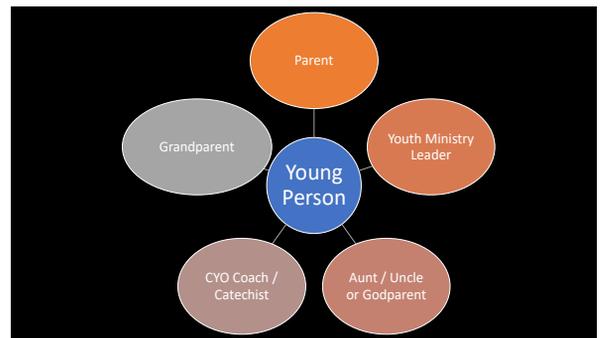
88



Accompany

- Walk Side by Side
- Share Bread
- Listen
- Empathize
- Consistency
- Accountability

89



90

Accompaniment Model for Confirmation

- Retreat Day
- Faith Mentors
- Individualized Spirituality Plan
- Engagement and Reflection
- Discernment



91



Connect Faith Companions to Confirmation Preparation

- At the beginning of the process
- Before / after retreats
- Connected to liturgical seasons
 - Advent / Lent / Easter
- Two months before Confirmation
- One month before Confirmation
- In the week of Confirmation
- One month after Confirmation
- Anniversary of Baptism / Confirmation / Saint Feast Day

92



Questions

- How are things going?
 - Issues / Interests/ People / Communities
- How are you and God?
- What do you believe?
- What is your experience of prayer?
- What does Confirmation mean to you?
- Who are the people of faith who you admire?
- Who is a support for you?
- What can I pray for, for you?

93

Witness Faith to Candidates

#5

94

The Need for Genuine Witnesses

“When we meet Christ and accept His Gospel, life changes and we are driven to communicate our experiences to others. ...the Church needs genuine witnesses: men and women whose lives have been transformed by meeting with Jesus, men and women who are capable of communicating this experience to others.”



Saint John Paul II
World Youth Day - Toronto, 2002

95



“This is the essence of witnessing: simply sharing your personal experiences regarding the Lord. In a courtroom, a witness is not expected to argue the case, prove the truth, or press for a verdict. That is the job for attorneys. Witnesses simply report what has happened...You may not be a biblical scholar, but you are the authority of your life. And it's hard to argue with personal experience.”

Rick Warren, A Purpose Driven Life, Zondervan Publishing: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2011, 2012, page 288

96



Be my witnesses

- Share the story of God in your life.
- Your life is your witness.
- Be true to your values.
- Sometimes our witness is subtle and sometimes we are called to be bold.

97



Witness Faith to Candidates

- Engaging a faith witness element
 - As a catechist
 - As a faith companion to youth
- Bringing in witnesses from the community
- Engaging and preparing youth as faith witnesses
- Providing faith witnesses and engaging youth in faith sharing and affective prayer throughout Confirmation ministries.

98

Discussion Questions

Consider the five elements:

1. Encounter / Discipleship
2. Families / Parents
3. Parish Relationship
4. Accompaniment
5. Witness

Of these five elements, which one seems most urgent? Why?

How do we build our Confirmation ministry so that everything is designed to help young people encounter Christ, and live as disciples nourished by Eucharist?

What is the first step in your parish to move in this direction?



99

We made a promise.



100

Role of the Holy Spirit



Chaos to the Order



Order to the Chaos

101

In my life



The Holy Spirit brings Chaos to the order when the order is not leading toward God. The Spirit spurs me to break patterns that lead from God.



The Holy Spirit brings Order to the Chaos when the order leads to God. The Spirit spurs me join in the ordering of all creation according to God's love and plan.

102

Pray Twice a Day

Chaos to Order → Order to Chaos

- Once for the Confirmation Ministries and the Youth of your parish.
- Once for yourself and your teammates.



103

Let us pray

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you freed us from sin
and gave us new life.
Send your Holy Spirit upon us
to be our helper and guide.

In Jesus name we pray.

All Amen

Prayer is drawn from the Rite of Confirmation



104