

## Overview Questions Concerning the Video as a Whole

### How is Confirmation the Perfection of Baptism?

Although, in the West, Confirmation is usually received as a teenager, several years after making First Communion, the Catholic Church considers it the second of the three Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism being the first and Eucharist the third).

Confirmation is regarded as the perfection of Baptism, because, as the introduction to the Rite of Confirmation states: by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.

### What are the effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The Sacrament of Confirmation confers special graces of the Holy Spirit upon the person being confirmed, just as such graces were granted to the Apostles on Pentecost. Like Baptism, therefore, it can only be performed once, and Confirmation increases and deepens all of the graces granted at Baptism.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church lists five effects of Confirmation:

1. Confirmation roots us more deeply as children of God which makes us cry "Abba! Father!"
2. Confirmation unites us more firmly to Christ.
3. Confirmation increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us.
4. Confirmation renders our bond with the Church more perfect.
5. Confirmation gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross.

### What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel (Right Judgment), Knowledge, Piety (Reverence), Fortitude (Courage), Fear of the Lord (Wonder & Awe)

## **In the Roman Catholic Church, who is the ordinary minister of Confirmation?**

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church points out, "The *original minister* of Confirmation is the bishop." Each bishop is a successor to the apostles, upon whom the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost—the first Confirmation. The Acts of the Apostles mentions the apostles imparting the Holy Spirit to believers by the laying on of hands (see, for example, Acts 8:15-17 and 19:6).

The Church has always stressed this connection of Confirmation, through the bishop, to the ministry of the apostles, but she has developed two different ways of doing so.

## **What is the matter and form of the Sacrament of Confirmation?**

Many people think of the laying on of hands, which signifies the descent of the Holy Spirit, as the central act in the Sacrament of Confirmation. The essential element, however, is the anointing of the person being confirmed with chrism (an oil mixed with a perfume called balm that has been consecrated by a bishop), accompanied by the words "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit" (or, in the Eastern Catholic Churches, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit"). This seal is a consecration, representing the safeguarding by the Holy Spirit of the graces conferred on the Christian at Baptism.

## **When is Confirmation administered in the East Catholic Church?**

In the Eastern Catholic (and Eastern Orthodox) Churches, the three sacraments of initiation are administered at the same time to infants. Children are baptized, confirmed (or "chrismated"), and receive Communion (in the form of the Sacred Blood, the consecrated wine), all in the same ceremony, and always in that order.

Since the timely reception of Baptism is very important, and it would be very hard for a bishop to administer every baptism, the bishop's presence, in the Eastern Churches, is signified by the use of chrism consecrated by the bishop. The priest, however, performs the confirmation.

## **When is Confirmation administered in the West Catholic Church?**

The Church in the West came up with a different solution—the separation in time of the Sacrament of Confirmation from the Sacrament of Baptism. This allowed infants to be baptized soon after birth, while the bishop could confirm many Christians at the same time, even years after baptism. Eventually, the current custom of performing Confirmation several years after First Communion developed, but the Church continues to stress the original order of the sacraments, and Pope Benedict XVI, in his apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, has suggested that the original order should be restored.

# **Lesson I: Being Catholic**

## **I Student Learning Objectives**

- 1. The students will relate that they enter into the Church through Baptism, the fundamental sacrament, and are fully initiated through Confirmation and Eucharist.**
- 2. The students will reflect on the meaning of key passages from scripture which unfold the foundation and meaning of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.**
- 3. The students will learn the specific concepts about the Sacrament of Confirmation.**

## **II. Key Concepts of DVD Session One**

- 1. The 7 sacraments connect us with God. Through the sacraments we receive God's graces.**
- 2. Initiation in the Catholic Church means that we become members of the church and work to live out our faith.**
- 3. The three sacraments of initiation are Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.**
- 4. Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are brought into the family of Jesus.**
- 5. The Sacrament of Eucharist provides our spiritual nourishment and helps us live out our faith.**
- 6. Through the Sacrament of Confirmation we are fully initiated in the Church and become full participants.**
- 7. Confirmation in the Diocese of Pittsburgh normally takes place in the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade.**
- 8. At baptism our parents made a commitment to the Church for us. With the Sacrament of Confirmation, we are old enough to know about commitment to the Church and make that commitment on our own.**

**(DVD – Session I)  
Specific Concepts about Confirmation**

**1. Age:**

- Confirmation in the Eastern Church occurs right after a child is baptized and is usually administered by the priest.
- Confirmation in the Western Church occurs anywhere from age 8 to adulthood.
- In the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Confirmation takes place in the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade and is administered by the bishop.
- Children older than 2<sup>nd</sup> grade sometimes receive the Sacrament of Confirmation along with adults at the Easter Vigil. This is part of the Christian initiation process (RCIA).

**2. Preparation:**

- It is important to be prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation. It helps us better understand the commitment we are making—to realize what it means to serve the church.
- We never stop learning about our faith. Confirmation is not an end but a beginning that helps us live out our faith.
- Prayer is an essential part of our faith. We should pray often for ourselves and others. Prayer keeps us connected to God and our faith.

**3. Important aspects about the celebration of Confirmation**

- The bishop is the usual celebrant of the Sacrament of Confirmation. As a member of the priesthood, the bishop is connected in a special way to Jesus Christ and his apostles.
- The profession of faith is important because it relates back to our baptism. Our parents professed the faith for us then, we now make our own profession of faith when we are Confirmed.
- We receive the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation. During the celebration, the bishop raises his hands (imposition of hands) over the candidate and asks the Holy Spirit to come down upon him/her.
- The Confirmation sponsor places his/her hand on the candidate's shoulder to show support.

**(DVD – Session I)**

**Specific Concepts about Confirmation (Continued)**

- **The Confirmation name (a saint’s name) is chosen because we need good models of the faith who can help us. We never go through life alone – we always need the help of others.**
- **The bishop takes the special oil of chrism and places it on the forehead saying “Be sealed with the Holy Spirit.” The candidate says “Amen” which means “yes!”**
- **The oil symbolizes God’s strength – chrism has a sweet smell to it which says our relationship with God is warm and shows how pleased God is with us.**



Before beginning this lesson, make copies of the **Opening Prayer** located in the Student Packet for each student.



## OPENING PRAYER

### Sign of the Cross

**Leader:** The God of power and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ has freed us from sin and brought us to new life through water and the Holy Spirit.

**All:** God has given us a new birth by water and the Spirit.

**Leader:** We pray that through the power of this compelling Spirit we might know the unity that is ours—sisters and brothers of a common family, called to witness God’s unconditional love.

**All:** As children of one God, with this shared hope and faith, may we work together to bring the healing presence of Christ to our world.

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** Matthew 3:11, 13-17

*I (John the Baptist) am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire...*

*Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?” Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened (for him), and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove (and) coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*

**Reflection:** Jesus insisted on being baptized by John in front of the crowd of people who had gathered there. Why do you think Jesus did this? What message was Jesus trying to relate to those who witnessed his baptism?

## Lesson II:

### I Student Learning Objectives

1. The students will relate God's plan for life and how they are to live out their faith through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
2. The students will reflect on the meaning of key passages from scripture that relate how life is to be lived as Jesus plans and teaches.
3. The students will learn the meaning of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and their practical connection to them as they live out their faith.

### II. Key Concepts of DVD Session Two

1. Confirmation gives the person being confirmed a permanent character that connects them to Christ and to the Church. We can never be "un-confirmed." It is a once in a lifetime experience.
2. No matter what we do in the future, we always belong to Jesus Christ and his Church.
3. Confirmation therefore should not be a one-day experience but a call asking us how we are going to live out our faith. How are we going to use our gifts as a part of the Church?
4. The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are: Wisdom, Understanding, Council, Knowledge, Piety, Fortitude and Fear of the Lord.
5. Wisdom is knowing the mind and heart of God—what He wants us to know and understand about Him (i.e. recognizing God's forgiveness when I sin).
6. Understanding is getting to know myself—my gifts and my vices (i.e. we have to own up to be forgiven).
7. Council is right judgment—knowing the right thing to do. Realizing that we need help in making good choices—good decisions in our lives.
8. Knowledge is coming to know more about God and His Church. The Bible helps us to understand and know more about God. We also come to know (experience) God through the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, through the catechism and through the teachings of the Church.



## Key Concepts of DVD – Session 2 (Continued)

9. **Piety (Reverence)** is learning a sense of prayer and working on our own spirituality and holiness. To understand the importance of prayer in our daily lives.
10. **Fortitude (Courage)** is to have the courage to stand up for what is right. Do we have the courage to live up to what we say we believe when faced with a problem in our lives? It is not always easy to be a follower of Jesus – to face peer pressure. Fortitude gives us the strength to deal with adversity, helping us to realize that it's not by our own power, but by the power of the Holy Spirit.
11. **Fear of the Lord (Wonder and Awe)** means to have an awesome respect for God—respecting/valuing human life and all of God's creation.

