

A SHORT GUIDE TO
*The Sacrament
of
Confirmation*



*Halston Street
Parish*



Introduction

Receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation is a milestone in a young person's life. At baptism they received the Holy Spirit for the first time and now through the Sacrament of Confirmation the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are sealed in them.

This booklet aims to help you work with your child as they prepare for this very important day. This is a family event and it's important that the young person feels accompanied and supported by their family and friends as they prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

When a young person presents themselves as a candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation it is also a great source of joy for the entire parish community. The celebration of the Sacraments within our parish is a source of hope for the future. The Sacrament of Confirmation is not the end of your child's faith journey but rather the beginning of the next stage of it.

In this booklet we will answer some key questions relating to Confirmation such as:

- What is a Sacrament and why are these important in our Christian life?
- Who is the Holy Spirit?
- What are the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit?
- What is the ceremony of light?
- Why should I consider taking a pledge?
- What will happen on the day of the Confirmation?
- How can we prepare as a family?

I hope you find this short guide useful as you prepare, as a family, for this very important day. May the Lord guide and support you.

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Contents

1. Sacraments
2. The Holy Spirit
3. The Gifts of the Spirit
4. The Fruits of the Spirit
5. The Ceremony of Light
6. Confirmation Day
7. Preparing as a family



Sacraments

What is a Sacrament?

A Sacrament is the way in which we receive God's Grace into our lives. Sacraments are part of our life journey and our faith journey from Baptism at the very start to anointing of the sick towards the end.

How many Sacraments are there in the Catholic Church?

The Catholic Church has seven Sacraments:

Sacrament	<i>How often can I receive it?</i>	<i>What do I receive from this Sacrament?</i>
Baptism	Only Once	Holy Spirit & your Christian Name
Reconciliation (Confession)	As often as you like once you have made your first confession	God's forgiveness, mercy and healing when we have sinned.
Eucharist (Holy Communion)	Once a day – once you have made your First Holy Communion	The Body of Christ
Confirmation	Only Once	The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit
Matrimony	Mostly only once	Man and woman joined as one before God
Holy Orders	Only once	Priesthood
Anointing of the Sick	Once a month if required	Healing, courage and comfort in times of sickness.

Why is it important for us to receive the Sacraments?

The seven Sacraments are ways in which God enters into our lives. When we receive a Sacrament, we receive God's presence into our lives and in turn we become more aware of God's presence in the world around us. Sacraments are there to help us be better Christians and better people. They are an important part of our journey of faith.

Reflection Time:

Have you ever been to a Baptism, Holy Communion or Confirmation before? What do you remember?

The Holy Spirit

'The Holy Spirit helps us to see others with new eyes, seeing them always as brothers and sisters in Jesus, to be respected and loved'

Pope Francis

Who is the Holy Spirit?

We know from our faith that God is three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When we were Baptised, we were Baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; every time we bless ourselves, we recall our baptism.

What does the Holy Spirit look like?

The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit active and alive in our world today – He is our helper and guide in life. The Holy Spirit is often symbolised as a dove or a flame. These are images that appear in the bible. In one account we hear of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus in the River Jordan (Matthew 3:13-17) and in another of the Holy Spirit descending like flames of fire upon Mary and the Disciples at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4)

Why is the Holy Spirit important to me and our World?

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit who created all that we see and all that we cannot see. Everything out far beyond the furthest reaches of the Universe and every tiny atom that exists is created and cared for by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gives life.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit and fill me with you love.

Guide me and support me throughout my life so that I may be able to live and love as Jesus asked. Help me to be a good citizen of the earth and to care for the wonder of creation that surrounds me.

Help me to be a person of peace so that I may bring peace to our world.
Help me be a good friend so that I can bring your love to all I meet.

Help me be a person who respects others and values the gifts and talents others have to share. Most of all help me to love God with all my heart, all my soul and all my strength.

Amen.

Reflection Time:

How do you think the Holy Spirit helps you in your life? List out some times when you have experienced the presence of God.



The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

*'The Holy Spirit will truly transform us, and with our help.
He wants to transform the World we live in'*
Pope Francis

What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Everyone likes to receive a gift – whether for our birthday, Christmas or maybe even an unexpected surprise from someone. Gifts makes us happy – especially if it's something we have really wanted. The *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* are given to us by God to help us in life. When we first see them, we might have trouble figuring them out, however as we grow and as we begin to use these gifts, we can't imagine living without them.

How many Gifts of the Holy Spirit will I receive at Confirmation?

There are 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit:

Gift of the Spirit	What it means to me
Wisdom	The ability to be able to understand something deeply and make wise decisions in life.
Understanding	The ability to be aware and open to others and the world around us – to be compassionate and have empathy.
Knowledge	The ability to learn and handle information well and to use it to make good choices.
Right Judgement	The ability to weigh things up, look for solutions to problems and make good decisions in life.
Courage	The ability to be strong and courageous in the face of challenges and difficulties.
Reverence	The ability to praise and worship God through prayer and through how we live our lives.
Wonder & Awe in God's Presence	The ability to be amazed in the presence of God and God's creation. Our soul's longing for a relationship with God.

How do the Gifts of the Holy Spirit impact on our daily lives?

They give us the tools we need to face difficult and challenging situations.

They encourage us to grow and develop as members of our Christian community.

They challenge us to be better and more caring people to ourselves, others and the world around us.

Reflection Time:

Take a look at the list of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit – pick two and write down how these gifts can help you in your life

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit

'Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us live our lives according to the mind of Jesus and his Gospel'
Pope Francis

When we think of a fruit we probably automatically think of apples, oranges and other fruits that grow on trees. This is not a bad way to look at the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. Just like fruits that grow on trees the Fruits of the Holy Spirit are nourishing and necessary as part of a health and well-balanced life. There are 12 Fruits of the Holy Spirit, they are:

- Charity (love)** To love God and my neighbour as Jesus commanded.
- Joy** To share joyfulness in the world.
- Peace** To be a person who seeks peace and reconciliation before violence.
- Patience** To give time to others when they need it. To be patient with myself.
- Kindness** To help others especially those most in need.

Goodness	To choose what is good and right in life.
Generosity	To share the gifts and talents that God has given me.
Gentleness	To be someone who walks compassionately in the world
Faithfulness	To keep my promises and finish what I start.
Modesty	To respect my dignity and the dignity of others.
Self-control	To know my limits and what is enough.
Chastity	To be faithful in all of my relationships.

The *Fruits of the Holy Spirit* are signs to us that God is working in us and in our World.

How do we develop the Fruits of the Holy Spirit?

Every single day we have the opportunity to use the *Fruits of the Holy Spirit*. We have to remember that the Holy Spirit is the spirit of God active and alive in us and in our World. This is something very special. Each day we have to make choices in our lives. When we choose to love, to be patient, kind, good, generous, gentle, faithful, modest, controlled and chaste, then we are bringing the *Fruits of the Holy Spirit* to life. When we choose to live in this way, we make decisions that are wise and for the good of ourselves and others. We build strong relationships and live happier lives.

Reflection Time:

Take a look at the list of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit – pick two and write down how these gifts can help you in your life

The Ceremony of Light

*'I am the Light of the World, you who follow me shall not walk in darkness,
but have the light of life'*

Gospel of John 8:12

The Sacrament of Confirmation calls on us to be Jesus' witnesses in the World. The Ceremony of Light is a very important ceremony that takes place in the church in advance of the Confirmation. At the Ceremony of Light, the parents pass on the light of faith to their children – the same light they received on their behalf at their child's baptism. It is a simple yet very powerful ceremony. When the child receives the light, it is a visible sign that they are now ready to begin carrying the light of faith themselves. When your child is preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation they are referred to as a *Confirmation Candidate*.

What happens at the Ceremony of Light?

The Ceremony of Light is divided into three main parts:

Part 1: The Liturgy of the Word

In the Liturgy of the Word, we listen to the readings from the Old Testament and the New Testament. These passages of scripture help us to better understand how God is present in our lives. We also make our prayers to God as we pray for ourselves, our families, friends and the needs of our World.

Part 2: Receiving the Light of Faith

Parents are invited to come forward to light the Baptismal candle. They then take this candle back and present it to their children saying – *Receive the light of faith. Keep it burning always in your heart.* To which you child responds: *I will with God's help.*

Part 3: The Pledge

The candidates are invited to take a pledge to abstain from alcohol and illegal drugs. It is important for you to speak with your child about this important promise before the ceremony. The candidates will be invited to stand, and the pledge goes as follows (The full text will be in the booklet for the ceremony):

Priest: Following the preparation made by you, both at home and in school, we gather here now to witness your promises regarding the use of alcohol and drugs. Have you discussed the question of drink and drugs with your parents and guardians?

Candidates Respond: *We have.*

Priest: Did your parents and guardians promise to help and support you in this promise?

Candidates Respond: *They did.*

Priest: You have decided not to abuse alcohol. I now invite you, in the presence of this community, to make that promise publicly.

Candidates say: *I promise not to take any alcohol until I am 18 and I ask the Holy Spirit to help me to keep this promise.*

Priest: You have also decided not to use or handle dangerous drugs. I invite you now, in the presence of this community, to make that promise publicly.

Candidates say: *I promise always to avoid dangerous drugs, and to help other people to do the same. I ask the Holy Spirit to help me to keep this promise.*

Priest: May the Lord strengthen your promises. May you receive help and support from your families, your friends, and from all the people to keep these promises. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

The ceremony concludes with a special blessing for the candidates and their families.

What do we need to bring to the Ceremony of Light?

Baptismal Candle

Please bring with you your child's Baptismal candle or if you don't have the original any pillar candle will suffice.

Confirmation Name

Your child will be asked to fill out a form at the Ceremony of Light stating their confirmation name and the name of their sponsor. It is important to have a conversation with them before the *Ceremony of Light* to help them pick a confirmation name. We always encourage children to choose a name that's meaningful to them – the name of a saint or someone who is important to them. It's a name they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

Your Confirmation Day

'Be sealed with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit'

At long last, the big day has arrived! Today you will be anointed with the Holy Oil of Chrism and sealed with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. You've done all your preparation, you have received the light of faith at your Ceremony of Light, you've picked your sponsor and you have chosen your Confirmation name. You're ready to go.

Before the Ceremony:

If you are doing a reading or a prayer, make sure to practice it and to read it out loud at home. The more practice the better. Read loudly and slowly. Remember to bring a copy of your reading or prayer with you on the day.

Take some time to pray. Go to a quiet place for a few minutes, take a few deep breaths and pray to God that your heart will be open to receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Say thank you to God for helping you get to this day and for those who have helped you along the way.

Going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is a great way to prepare. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we meet Jesus and experience his compassion and love. We have an opportunity to talk about our challenges and receive God's healing and mercy. Confession is available in our parish church before or after any Mass.

At the Ceremony

Arrive at least twenty minutes before the time of your ceremony. When you arrive at the church, you will be asked to register. You will be given a card with your name, sponsors name and your Confirmation name on it. Hold on to this – you will hand this to the Bishop / Priest when your turn to be anointed comes around.

The confirmation ceremony takes place within the celebration of Mass and it has three parts: the renewal of your baptismal promises, the laying on of hands and the anointing with the holy oil of Chrism.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises - You will be invited to stand and renew your baptismal promises. These promises were made on your behalf by your parents and godparents at your baptism. Now first the first time you stand

and renew your commitment to these promises. The full text will be provided in your booklet on the day.

Laying on of Hands – You remain standing while the Bishop / Priest prays in silence for you. He extends his hands out and asks God to send down his Holy Spirit upon you. It is during this prayer that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Anointing with Holy Oil – You will be invited to come up to the front of the church with your sponsor to receive the anointing. You will be anointed on the forehead. Your sponsor places their hand on your right shoulder. When you arrive up, give your name card to the Bishop / Priest.

You will be shown to your seat and you will sit with your family. We ask you to sit at the end of the row closest to the aisle and your sponsor will sit beside you.

The anointing goes like this:

The Bishop / Priest anoints you on the forehead with the Holy Oil of Chrism and says –

Bishop / Priest: Be sealed with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

You: Amen

Bishop / Priest: Peace be with you.

You: And with your spirit.

You and your sponsor return to your seat.

Photographs / Photographers / Video

The Archdiocese of Dublin has a clear and robust Child Safeguarding Policy and the taking of photographs / video is covered as part of this. The Policy states that 'there should be no taking of photographs / video during First Communion Masses or during Confirmation Masses. There will be ample time available to take photographs before and after the ceremonies.'

Privately hired photographers are not permitted to attend Confirmation Mass for the purpose of taking photographs or creating video.

While you are in the church

We ask you to keep a prayerful quiet while in the church before, during and after the ceremony. When your child has received the Sacrament and returned to their seat, please be mindful of the other children who are yet to receive the Sacrament.

Please follow the guidance of our volunteers at all times.

Preparing as a Family

*“Mother, father, teach your child to pray, to make the Sign of the Cross:
this is a lovely task of mothers and fathers!”*

Pope Francis

Sacraments are both family events and community events. They are a time of great rejoicing for all. Like for all important events, we need time to prepare – food, clothes, hair, decorations – however for the Sacraments we also need time to prepare internally – prepare our hearts and souls to meet Jesus. As well as preparing as individuals, we also need to prepare as a family and a parish community. The Parish prepares by praying for you and your child at Mass, by preparing and decorating the parish church for the ceremony and many people will buy Holy Communion cards and have Masses said for your child. It’s a big day for our entire parish family.



How can you prepare at home?

These are some simple suggestions to help you prepare as a family for this special day.

- **Go to Mass as a family** – this is one of the best things you can do. It helps your child become accustomed to the church and the Mass.
- **Practice the Mass responses with your child** – they have a list of Mass responses in their primary school religion book. The more familiar they are with these, then the more they will feel they are part of the Mass and not just a spectator.
- **Pray with your child** – take time each day to stop and pray with your child. Teach them some simple prayers like the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be.
- **Share Stories** – tell them about what you remember of your Confirmation – maybe even show them some photos if you have them. Encourage them to ask their Grandparents about what it was like for them.
- **Share a Family Meal** – The celebration of the Eucharist is the celebration of a family meal. It can often be difficult to find time for everyone to sit down to share a family meal, yet it is very important. Maybe take some time out of the busyness to prepare and share a special family meal. Invite your child to help with the preparation and let it be a celebration in advance of their special day. Take time to thank God before and after your meals for his goodness.
- **Encourage them** – Take time to ask your child how they are feeling about receiving the Sacraments. Ask them what they've learned about them. What they are most looking forward to. What might be worrying them. Encourage them to see the importance when they will receive the Holy Spirit in a new way in their lives.
- **Create a Sacred Space** – A sacred space is a space in our home that helps us focus on God within our family. This can be as simple as you like – a statue, some flowers and maybe a candle for times of prayer is often enough to remind us that God has a seat at our family table.

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet and to share it with your child. May the Lord bless you and keep you in his care as you prepare as a family for this very special day.

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