CONFIRMATION STUDY GUIDE

Introduction

In a section on elements of catechetical methodology, the National Catechetical Directory has stressed the need for and the place of memory in the catechet.

“In every age and culture Christianity has commended certain prayers, formulas, and practices to all members of the faith community, even the youngest. While catechesis cannot be limited to the repetition of formulas and it is essential that formulas and facts pertaining to faith be understood, memorization has nevertheless had a special place in the handing-on of the faith throughout the ages and should continue to have such a place today, especially in catechetical programs for the young.” (176,e).

Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation on Catechetics, “Catechesi Tradendae”, pointed out the need for a judicious balance in the use of memory. This balance is “between reflection and spontaneity, between dialogue and silence, between written work and memory work.” In the final lines of this section (55) the Holy Father makes this point:

“What is essential is that the texts that are memorized must at the same time be taken in and gradually understood in depth, in order to become a source of Christian life on the personal level and the community level.”

Confirmation provides an opportune time for including memory as an aspect of the Catechesis that prepares for the reception of this sacrament. To assist catechists who prepare others for Confirmation, we gathered together some questions and answers that could be used in the memory aspect of the Catechesis.

With Pope John Paul II we share his concern that memory can be misused.

“We are all aware that this method can present certain disadvantages, not the least of which is that it lends itself to insufficient, or at times almost non-existent assimilation reducing all knowledge to formulas that are repeated without being properly understood.” (55).

We encourage all catechists preparing others for Confirmation to put this faculty into use in an intelligent and even original way. In this way, those preparing for Confirmation will receive from Catechists not only the ability to understand the sacrament but also the ability to tell others what they understand – an articulate faith understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
The National Catechetical Directory (176,e) includes in the formulations to be committed to memory the following:

**Basic Prayers**

The Sign of the Cross  
Lord’s Prayer  
Hail Mary  
Apostles’ Creed  
Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity  
Acts of Contrition

**The Lists of the Sacraments**

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**The Liturgical Seasons**

Advent  
Christmas  
Lent  
Holy Week  
Easter Triduum  
Easter Season  
Ordinary Time  
(“Proper of Seasons” – Sacramentary)

**The Holy Days of Obligation**

- Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God: January 1  
- Ascension of Our Lord: (40 days after Easter)  
- Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary: August 15  
- All Saints Day: November 1  
- Immaculate Conception: December 8  
- Christmas – Nativity of Our Lord: December 25
FORMULAS AND PRACTICES DEALING WITH THE MORAL LIFE OF CHRISTIANS

THE SPECIFICS OF MORALITY

“The specifics of morality should be taught in light of the Ten Commandments (cf. Appendix A), the Sermon on the Mount, especially the beatitudes, and Christ’s discourse at the Last Supper. Whatever approach is used, students should know the Decalogue as part of their religious heritage. Among the matters to be treated are the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, the theological and moral virtues, the seven capital sins, the traditional formulations concerning the Christian moral life which expresses the wisdom, drawn from experience and reflection, of those who have gone before us in the faith. Catechesis in Christian living should also include what are called the “Precepts of the Church.” (Cf. Appendix B). The Bible and the lives of the saints provide concrete examples of moral living.” (National Catechetical Directory 105).

THE DUTIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS

1. To keep holy the day of the Lord’s resurrection: to worship God by participating in Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation; to avoid those activities that would hinder the renewal of soul and body. For example, needless work and business activities, unnecessary shopping.
2. To lead a sacramental life. This means to receive Holy Communion at least once a year between the first Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday, receiving the sacrament of reconciliation beforehand if serious sin is involved. But this also means that all are urged and expected to receive these sacraments frequently.
3. To study Catholic teaching in preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation, to be confirmed, and then to study and advance the cause of Christ.
4. To observe the marriage laws of the Church; to give religious training (by word and example) to one’s children; to use parish schools and religious education programs.
5. To strengthen and support the Church; one’s own parish community and parish priests; the worldwide Church and the Holy Father.
6. To do penance, including abstaining from meat and fasting from food on the appointed days.
7. To join in the missionary spirit and apostolate of the Church.
THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Ten Commandments of God are of special importance in teaching specifics of morality. The Old Testament, the New Testament, and the long tradition of the Church testify to this. A summary of the Ten Commandments of God is:

1. I, the Lord, am your God. You shall not have other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.
10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

THE BEATITUDES

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- The “poor in spirit” are willing to use their blessings and gifts to help others.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- “Those who mourn” feel genuine sorrow for the victims of injustice and feel called to work for change.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
- The “meek” identify with the poor, oppressed, and powerless and work for respect and dignity for all persons.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
- “Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness” strive to bring about the Kingdom of God.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
- The “merciful show compassion and are as concerned about others as they are about themselves.

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.
- The “pure of heart” are those who genuinely love God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
- The “peacemakers” put aside anger and insults to reconcile with one another.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- “Those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake” stand up for their faith, knowing that following Jesus may sometimes be difficult and demanding.

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SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Wisdom – gives us the ability to think deeply about a situation or problem and to make the best decision. Wisdom helps us to see with the Holy Spirit’s eyes. That vision helps us discover God’s will so we can make the decision that will be best for everyone.

Right Judgment, or Counsel – gives us the ability to judge between right and wrong, good and evil. The Holy Spirit enables us to see what is truly important, what brings life and happiness. The gift of right judgment helps us to decide against those things that bring sadness, depression, worry and death.

Understanding – helps us open our ears, minds, hearts, and hands to the people around us. The gift of understanding helps us become aware of what we can do to help others.

Knowledge – gives us the information we need to live our lives. First it gives us the information we need to make good decisions. The gift also helps us to know God. It allows us to see God as Jesus knew him, as our loving Father.

Courage, or Fortitude – helps us to stand up for what we believe in. This gift of the Spirit helps us to be true to ourselves, to dare to be different, and to live according to what we know to be right.

Reverence, or Piety – has less to do with how we act then with who we are. This gift is also called “holiness”. To be holy, or whole, is to have a good idea of who we are, who God is and what our place is in God’s creation. The gift of reverence helps us participate fully in liturgy, have an active prayer live, praise God continuously, and respect other members of our community.

Wonder and Awe, or Fear of the Lord – allows us to experience all of life as a gift from God. We are amazed at God’s work in the world, and we realize that we are always in God’s presence. This gift encourages us to show our appreciation for the wonders of creation by striving to improve our relationship with God and to respond to the needs of the community.

Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory.

Charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity. (CCC 1832)
Works of Mercy

Corporal Works of Mercy

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Clothe the naked
- Visit the imprisoned
- Shelter the homeless
- Visit the sick

Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Convert the sinner
- Instruct the ignorant
- Counsel the doubtful
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Forgive all injuries
- Pray for the living and the dead

Cardinal Virtues

- Prudence
- Justice
- Fortitude
- Temperance

Theological Virtues

- Faith
- Hope
- Charity

CONFIRMATION QUESTIONS

1. Who is a Christian?
   🕊 A Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ.

2. When did you become a Christian?
   🕊 I became a Christian at Baptism.

3. What is a Sacrament?
   🕊 A Sacrament is an action of Christ Himself, an outward sign of God’s grace and of our faith in Him.
   🕊 A Sacrament is an outward sign, instituted by Christ to give grace.
      (Traditional).

4. What is the purpose of the Sacraments?
   🕊 The purpose of the Sacraments is to sanctify us, to build up the Body of Christ, and to give worship to God.

5. Do Sacraments always give grace?
   🕊 Yes, the Sacraments always give grace if we receive them with the right dispositions.

6. What is Confirmation?
   🕊 Confirmation is the Sacrament in which the Holy Spirit comes to us in a special way to enable us to witness to Jesus Christ both in word and deed as committed Christians.

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7. Who is the Holy Spirit who comes to us in Confirmation?
   🖤 The Holy Spirit who comes to us in Confirmation is the third person of the Blessed Trinity.

8. Is the Holy Spirit God?
   🖤 Yes, the Holy Spirit is God.

9. Is the Holy Spirit equal to the Father and the Son?
   🖤 Yes, the Holy Spirit is equal to the Father and the Son.

10. How does the Holy Spirit come in Confirmation? How does the Bishop Confirm?
    🖤 The Bishop extends his hands over those to be confirmed, and prays that they may receive the Holy Spirit, and anoints their foreheads with Chrism in the form of the cross. Our Confirmation by the Bishop reminds us of the First Pentecost.

11. What is Chrism?
    🖤 Chrism is the oil blessed by the Bishop on Holy Thursday. It is a sign of the strength the Holy Spirit gives us to carry out a mission for Jesus.

12. What does the Bishop say when he confirms?
    🖤 (Name) Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.
    🖤 Newly Confirmed answer: Amen.
    🖤 Bishop: Peace be with you.
    🖤 Newly confirmed answer: And with your spirit.

13. Why does the Bishop anoint the forehead with Chrism in the form of a cross?
    🖤 The Bishop anoints the forehead with Chrism in the form of a cross because the cross shows that the new task or mission will sometimes be difficult and he/she may have to suffer like Christ, his/her leader.

14. The effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation are:
    🖤 An increase in sanctifying grace.
    🖤 A spiritual character (or an active power) that helps the one who receives it to publicly profess and defend the faith.

15. How often may Confirmation be received?
    🖤 Confirmation can be received only once. Like Baptism, Confirmation imprints a spiritual character.

16. What is the character of Confirmation?
    🖤 The character of Confirmation is a spiritual and permanent mark that signifies that the person confirmed is a witness to Christ and a defender of the Faith.

17. Why can Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders be received only once?
    🖤 Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders can be received only once because they imprint on the soul a spiritual mark, called a character, which lasts forever.

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18. Why should all Catholics be confirmed?
   - All Catholics should be confirmed in order to be strengthened against the dangers to salvation and to be prepared better to defend their Catholic faith.

19. What special preparation should we make to receive Confirmation?
   - In preparing to receive Confirmation we should pray, serve others, and know the chief mysteries of our Faith and the duties of a Christian. We need to be instructed in the nature and effect of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

20. What is required to be a sponsor at Confirmation?
   - To be a sponsor at Confirmation a person must be:
     i. A practicing Catholic.
     ii. Already confirmed and able to fulfill the duties of a sponsor.

21. Why are there sponsors at Confirmation?
   - Sponsors at Confirmation present the persons to be confirmed to the Bishop for anointing. They are to help and to support the confirmed persons in their daily witness to Christ in their lives.

22. Which Sacraments are called Sacraments of Initiation?
   - Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist are called Sacraments of Initiation.

23. Why are Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist called Sacraments of Initiation?
   - Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist are called Sacraments of Initiation because Christian Initiation is celebrated in Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. It is through these visible actions (Sacraments) that a person becomes a member of the Church.

24. Explain how these Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are visible signs of initiation.
   - Christians are reborn in Baptism, strengthened by Confirmation and sustained by the food of the Eucharist.

25. The child who is confirmed should be able to describe the First Pentecost.
   - The account may be found in the Scriptures in the Acts of the Apostles Chapter Two.

26. In what form did the Holy Spirit come upon the Apostles at the First Pentecost?
   - The Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles at the First Pentecost in the form of tongues of fire.

27. Name the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
   - The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are Wisdom, Counsel, Understanding, Knowledge, Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord.