

MY CONFIRMATION CATECHISM

Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Twelve conversations for young Catholics preparing for Confirmation

Ages approximately 11–16 · To share with a parent, carer or parish mentor

My name _____

My parish _____

Confirmation date _____

St Mary's · St John Bosco · St Edward's

To the adult accompanying the candidate

This catechism is for baptised young Catholics, principally aged eleven to sixteen, preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is designed to be used in an honest conversation with a parent, carer or parish mentor. The parish priest and current diocesan guidance govern the individual preparation and admission to the sacrament.

Young people deserve clear Catholic teaching, but also room to think, ask difficult questions, and express their faith in their own words. The book is written for adolescents: do not turn it into a children's worksheet or a test of whether someone can repeat phrases perfectly.

No additional lesson plans are needed. Read one conversation at a time, pausing where necessary. Around twenty minutes may be enough; some subjects naturally invite a longer discussion. The twelve conversations need not correspond to twelve weeks.

Every conversation follows six simple steps

1. Begin together — start with a question from ordinary life.
2. Read together — explore the teaching slowly and honestly.
3. Talk and understand — discuss four questions, using the suggested answers.
4. Remember — learn one concise doctrinal answer.
5. Pray together — turn what has been learnt towards God.
6. One small step — put the teaching into action during the week.

The suggested answers explain the meaning to look for; they are not scripts to be recited. A candidate may answer in their own language or by another suitable means of communication. Disability, reading ability, shyness or anxiety should not become an artificial barrier to sacramental life.

Private matters are private. Use imaginary situations when discussing sin. No parent, mentor or group leader should ask young people to disclose their actual sins. If a safeguarding concern arises, follow current diocesan and parish procedures.

The grace of Confirmation

Confirmation is a sacrament instituted by Christ. It deepens baptismal grace, imprints an indelible character and gives a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit for Christian witness. It is not a reward for attendance, a graduation from Catholic life, or merely the public ratification of Baptism.

Candidates should be prepared to receive Confirmation in the state of grace. Give them a real opportunity for sacramental Confession beforehand. Continuing Sunday Mass, prayer, the Eucharist, charity and parish belonging are essential to formation.

A short opening prayer

Jesus, send your Holy Spirit upon us. Help us to understand your truth, speak honestly, grow in friendship with you and live what we learn. Amen.

A word to the young person

You are preparing to receive a wonderful gift of Jesus Christ: the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Holy Spirit whom you received at Baptism will be given in a special outpouring to strengthen you as a disciple and witness.

You may already pray regularly, or you may be trying to begin. Some teachings may be familiar; others might raise questions. That is all right. Ask those questions. Find out what Catholics believe and why. You do not have to pretend that every part of faith is easy.

Confirmation is not about showing everyone how religious you are. It is about receiving God's grace and learning to live from it: at Mass, in Confession, at home, at school, with friends, and in the choices you make when nobody is watching.

The Church wants to accompany you, not pressure you into giving a rehearsed answer. Take the conversations seriously, but never be afraid to say, "I do not understand yet" or "Could you explain that?"

The Holy Spirit does not promise an easy life; he gives grace to follow Jesus faithfully. That is a gift worth asking for.

The twelve conversations

- 01 The Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life
- 02 The Promise and Pentecost
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- 09 Virtues, Fruits and Charisms
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- 11 Witness, Spiritual Combat and Mission
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Practical guides included

- A. The Rite of Confirmation Step by Step
- B. The Seven Gifts and Twelve Fruits
- C. Choosing a Sponsor and a Patron Saint
- D. Prayers and a Catholic Rule of Life
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CONVERSATION 01 / 12

The Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life

THE IMPORTANT TRUTH

The Holy Spirit is truly God, the third Person of the Most Holy Trinity, who gives life and makes us holy.

Begin together

Ask: "When people speak of the Holy Spirit, do they mean a person, a feeling, or a kind of power?" Allow a real answer before beginning. There is no need to pretend the mystery is easy.

Read together

God has revealed himself as the Most Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There are not three gods. There is one God, and within the one divine nature there are three distinct, equal and eternal divine Persons. The Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God. We worship and adore the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son.

Sometimes people speak about the Holy Spirit as though he were merely a warm feeling, an energy or a symbol like the dove or fire. The symbols are helpful, but the Holy Spirit is not a thing. He is a divine Person, who knows and loves, who guides the Church, and who works within us. Because he is God, we can pray to him, adore him and ask him for help.

The Holy Spirit was active in creation, spoke through the prophets and overshadowed the Virgin Mary at the Incarnation. Jesus promised that the Father would send the Advocate, the Spirit of truth, to teach and guide his disciples. This is the same Holy Spirit who came upon the Apostles at Pentecost.

Baptism gave you new life in Christ. When you live in sanctifying grace, the Holy Trinity dwells in your soul. The Holy Spirit helps you understand the faith, turn away from sin, pray, grow in the virtues and love God more deeply. Without grace, no one can make himself or herself holy by effort alone.

Confirmation will not introduce you to a stranger. It will give a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit whose life you received at Baptism. It strengthens your baptismal grace and equips you to belong to Christ more firmly and bear witness to him.

You need not feel an extraordinary sensation to know that God has acted. Sacraments are Christ's effective actions, not tests of our emotions. The Holy Spirit is faithful even when prayer feels quiet or ordinary.

Talk and understand

Why is the Holy Spirit more than a feeling?

Because he is a divine Person, truly God, who knows, loves and acts.

How many gods do Christians worship?

One God in three distinct divine Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

What does the Holy Spirit do in a soul living in grace?

He dwells within it, sanctifies it and helps the person love and follow Christ.

Do I have to feel something extraordinary for Confirmation to be real?

No. The sacrament acts through Christ's power, not through the strength of my feelings.

Remember**Who is the Holy Spirit?**

The third Person of the Most Holy Trinity, true God with the Father and the Son.

Pray together

Come, Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life. Teach me to know you as God, to listen to your guidance and to welcome the grace you give. Amen.

One small step

Pray the Glory Be slowly every day, adoring the Father, Son and Holy Spirit equally. Read John 14:15–17 with your parent or mentor.

For the adult: Do not reduce the Holy Spirit to an emotion. Let the candidate speak frankly about prayer, uncertainty and what it means to believe in a divine Person.

Scripture and Catechism: John 14:15–17; Romans 8:9–17; CCC 683–747

CONVERSATION 02 / 12

The Promise and Pentecost

THE IMPORTANT TRUTH

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, and at Pentecost the Apostles received strength to proclaim him courageously.

Begin together

Ask: "Have you ever known something was right but found it hard to say or do?" Think about the difference between knowing the truth and having the courage to live it.

Read together

Through the prophets, God promised that his Spirit would be poured out on his people. Jesus taught his disciples about the Holy Spirit, calling him the Advocate and the Spirit of truth. He promised that the Spirit would guide them, teach them and remain with them.

After the death and Resurrection of Jesus, the Apostles knew he was Lord. Yet they had also been frightened and uncertain. Before his Ascension, Jesus told them to wait for the promised gift: they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they would become his witnesses.

At Pentecost, as recounted in Acts 2, a sound like a powerful wind filled the house and tongues as of fire appeared. The Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter stood up and proclaimed that the crucified Jesus had risen. People from many nations heard the mighty works of God.

Pentecost did not simply give the Apostles a private, comforting experience. It strengthened them to speak publicly, to teach, to baptise and to build up the Church. The same Peter who had once denied Jesus became a courageous witness to him. This courage was a gift of grace, not merely a change in personality.

Confirmation is linked to this gift of Pentecost. Through the Church's sacramental ministry, the baptised receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit so that their own faith may become steadfast and fruitful. We are sent to witness in ordinary circumstances: school, friendships, family life, sport, online and in the parish.

Christian witness does not mean being loud or argumentative. It means that the truth of Christ becomes visible through words spoken with charity and actions shaped by his commandments. The Holy Spirit gives courage and also gentleness.

Talk and understand

What did Jesus promise the Apostles?

The gift and power of the Holy Spirit to guide them and make them witnesses.

What happened at Pentecost?

The Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaimed Christ boldly.

Why is Pentecost connected with Confirmation?

Confirmation gives a special outpouring of the same Holy Spirit for Christian witness.

Must a Christian witness always speak publicly?

No. We witness through truthful words, charity, courage and ordinary fidelity.

Remember**How is Confirmation related to Pentecost?**

It gives a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit to strengthen us as witnesses of Christ.

Pray together

Holy Spirit, as you strengthened the Apostles, give me courage to follow Jesus when it is difficult, and kindness in the way I speak of him. Amen.

One small step

Read Acts 2:1–11 and choose one situation in which you need the courage to act as a Christian this week.

For the adult: The comparison is not between shy and confident personalities. The Spirit strengthens different people to bear witness according to their gifts and circumstances.

Scripture and Catechism: Acts 1:6–9; Acts 2:1–41; Joel 2:28–29; CCC 731–741

CONVERSATION 03 / 12

The Sacraments of Christian Initiation

THE IMPORTANT TRUTH

Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist belong together as the sacraments of Christian initiation.

Begin together

Ask: "Does receiving Confirmation mean you have finished being Catholic?" Discuss what happens when a person completes a stage of training but is only beginning to use what was learned.

Read together

Christ gave his Church seven sacraments, and three of them form the one beginning of Christian life: Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist. These are called the sacraments of Christian initiation. They are not three unrelated ceremonies.

At Baptism, God forgives sin, gives sanctifying grace, makes us his adopted children and unites us to Christ and his Church. Baptism is already a real and complete sacrament. It leaves a permanent spiritual mark: you already belong to Christ.

Confirmation does not make your Baptism valid, as though your parents or godparents had made a decision that was incomplete until you approved it. Nor is Confirmation a public declaration that you have become an independent adult. It is a further sacrament in which Christ strengthens and brings baptismal grace to its completion.

The Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. In Holy Communion, the risen Jesus Christ truly gives himself to us as spiritual food. The Eucharist completes Christian initiation and continually nourishes the life of grace begun at Baptism and strengthened in Confirmation.

In the Latin Church these sacraments are sometimes received at different ages. This does not change their unity. Young people preparing for Confirmation should understand its close connection to the Baptism they have already received and the Eucharist which they continue to receive.

Sometimes Confirmation is described as a sacrament of Christian maturity. This means maturity in grace, a stronger capacity to live as a disciple of Christ. It does not mean you must already be a model Catholic or have achieved spiritual perfection before receiving the sacrament.

Confirmation is a gift of God, not a graduation, a reward for attendance, or a final event after which religious education ends. It is a beginning of greater responsibility and deeper discipleship.

Talk and understand

Which sacraments belong to Christian initiation?

Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist.

Does Confirmation make a previous valid Baptism real?

No. Baptism is already real; Confirmation strengthens and completes its grace.

Why is the Eucharist so important?

Because Jesus truly gives us himself and nourishes our life in grace.

Is Confirmation a graduation from the Church?

No. It strengthens us to live our Catholic faith for the rest of our lives.

Remember**What does Confirmation do to baptismal grace?**

It strengthens and brings to completion the grace given in Baptism.

Pray together

Heavenly Father, thank you for the new life you gave me in Baptism. Draw me closer to Jesus in the Eucharist, and prepare me to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit's gift in Confirmation. Amen.

One small step

Find out the date and place of your Baptism. Offer a prayer for your godparents and consider how you will continue practising your faith after Confirmation.

For the adult: Avoid speaking as though Baptism were merely an incomplete promise by parents. Explain how all three initiation sacraments belong together even when celebrated years apart.

Scripture and Catechism: Matthew 28:19; John 6:51–58; CCC 1212, 1285, 1322–1327

CONVERSATION 04 / 12

Confirmation in Scripture and Tradition

THE IMPORTANT TRUTH

Christ instituted Confirmation; the Church recognises its apostolic pattern in prayer, the laying on of hands and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Begin together

Ask: "If a friend says that Confirmation is a ceremony the Church invented much later, what evidence would you look for?" Open a Bible together at Acts 8.

Read together

When Catholics say a sacrament was instituted by Christ, we mean that it belongs to the saving work he gave his Church, not that the Church may invent whatever ceremonies she wishes. The Church receives the sacraments from Christ and faithfully celebrates them.

The Acts of the Apostles gives us important evidence for Confirmation. In Samaria, people had already received Baptism. Peter and John came to them, prayed for them and laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. See Acts 8:14–17. In Acts 19:5–6, Saint Paul also lays hands on baptised disciples and the Holy Spirit comes upon them.

These passages show that there was a giving of the Spirit associated with apostolic prayer and the laying on of hands, distinct from Baptism. From the earliest centuries, the Church has also used sacred anointing as a sign of the Spirit's strengthening and consecrating work.

The Church has handed on this sacrament through Sacred Tradition. The outward form has been celebrated somewhat differently in East and West, but the same essential gift is confessed: the baptised receive the Holy Spirit's strengthening seal.

The sacrament is often called Confirmation because it strengthens, Chrismation because of the sacred anointing, and sealing because it places a permanent spiritual character upon the soul.

This matters when defending the Catholic faith. We do not believe merely because a practice is familiar, nor do we treat the Bible as if the Church had no history. Sacred Scripture and apostolic Tradition belong together as the Church hands on what Christ entrusted to her.

Talk and understand

Where do we see the Apostles giving the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands?

Especially in Acts 8:14–17 and Acts 19:5–6.

What do Catholics mean by Sacred Tradition?

The living handing-on of the apostolic faith and sacramental life.

Why is Confirmation also called Chrismation?

Because the person is anointed with sacred chrism.

Is Confirmation simply a later ceremony made up by Christians?

No. The Church celebrates a sacrament instituted by Christ and handed on from apostolic times.

Remember**What does Scripture show about Confirmation?**

The Apostles prayed and laid hands upon the baptised so they might receive the Holy Spirit.

Pray together

Lord Jesus, keep me faithful to the faith of your Apostles. Help me receive your gift with understanding and live it with courage. Amen.

One small step

Read Acts 8:14–17 and Acts 19:5–6. Write or explain in a sentence what these accounts show about Baptism, the Apostles and the Holy Spirit.

For the adult: Let the candidate ask questions about Scripture and Church history. Explain the difference between the essential sacrament and the development of its liturgical expression.

Scripture and Catechism: Acts 8:14–17; Acts 19:5–6; CCC 1286–1292

CONVERSATION 05 / 12

The Minister, Matter and Form

THE IMPORTANT TRUTH

In the Latin Church, the bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation; the sacrament is conferred through anointing with chrism and the prescribed words.

Begin together

Ask: "Why might a sacrament have particular words, signs and ministers instead of everyone inventing their own version?" Think about how gifts entrusted by Christ are received rather than redesigned.

Read together

The sacraments are not religious performances. They are acts of Jesus Christ celebrated through his Church. That is why the Church is careful about who celebrates them and what words and signs are used. The words, signs and minister matter because Christ has entrusted the sacraments to his Church.

In the Latin Church, the ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop. The bishop succeeds the Apostles and his ministry shows the close connection between Confirmation and the apostolic Church. When the bishop confirms, we can see that our faith is not something invented only by our parish or generation.

A priest can also confer Confirmation when Church law gives him that faculty or competent authority grants it. This happens, for example, when a priest admits a baptised Christian into full communion with the Catholic Church. In danger of death, a priest can confirm someone who has not yet received the sacrament.

The essential rite in the Roman Rite is the anointing of the forehead with sacred chrism, done by the laying on of the minister's hand. The words are: "N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." The candidate answers "Amen", freely receiving the sacramental gift.

Chrism is fragrant olive oil mixed with balsam and consecrated by a bishop. It is a sacred sign of anointing and consecration. We do not bring an ordinary bottle of oil and choose our own words, because the sacrament is given through the Church's authorised rite.

This may sound technical, but it teaches us something deeply personal: God has given definite, trustworthy signs by which he acts. We do not need to invent a way for him to come close to us. He has already provided it.

Talk and understand

Who ordinarily confirms in the Latin Church?

The bishop, as successor of the Apostles.

Can a priest ever confirm?

Yes, when Church law or competent authority gives him the faculty.

What is used to anoint the candidate?

Sacred chrism consecrated by a bishop.

What does the minister say?

“N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Remember**What is the essential rite of Confirmation in the Roman Rite?**

Anointing the forehead with sacred chrism by the laying on of the hand, using the sacramental words.

Pray together

Holy Spirit, make me attentive to what Jesus gives through his Church. Bless our bishop and priests, and prepare me to receive the sacrament with faith. Amen.

One small step

Learn the words “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit” and practise answering “Amen” clearly. Pray for the diocesan bishop.

For the adult: Keep the difference between the ordinary minister (bishop) and priests with the faculty clear. The parish rehearsal will explain local details.

Scripture and Catechism: Acts 8:14–17; CCC 1293–1301, 1312–1314

CONVERSATION 06 / 12

Anointing, Chrism and the Spiritual Seal

THE IMPORTANT TRUTH

Anointing with sacred chrism shows that the Holy Spirit consecrates us to Christ and marks us permanently as his own.

Begin together

Ask: "What do the words 'marked' or 'sealed' suggest?" Think about belonging, responsibility and a promise that lasts beyond a single day.

Read together

Anointing has a long history in Sacred Scripture. Kings and priests were anointed for service to God and his people. The name Christ means "Anointed One". Jesus is the Messiah, the one filled with the Holy Spirit, who fulfils all the promises of God.

In Confirmation the minister uses sacred chrism, a fragrant oil consecrated by the bishop. Oil has long been associated with strength and healing. Its fragrance can remind us that a holy life spreads the "good fragrance" of Christ through kindness, truth and good example.

The minister first prays for the candidates and invokes the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit. Then each candidate is anointed on the forehead with the sign of the Cross as the minister says the sacramental words. The laying on of the hand is expressed in the anointing itself.

Confirmation gives an indelible spiritual character: a lasting seal on the soul. This means that the sacrament can never be repeated. It also means that Confirmation is not merely the memory of a ceremony or a feeling that can fade. Christ has marked you for himself and strengthened your place in the Church's worship and mission.

The seal is a gift, not a guarantee that your choices will always be faithful. We remain free, and we may neglect grace through sin or indifference. But God's seal remains; through repentance and the sacraments we can return to the life he calls us to live.

After the anointing the minister gives the sign of peace. This expresses communion with the bishop and the Church. The confirmed person is strengthened not for a private project, but for life as a member of Christ's Body.

Talk and understand

What does sacred chrism signify?

The consecrating and strengthening work of the Holy Spirit.

Why is a fragrant oil used?

Its fragrance can represent the witness of a holy Christian life.

What does the spiritual seal mean?

Christ marks me permanently as belonging to him and serving his Church.

Can the seal of Confirmation disappear?

No. The sacramental character remains, even if grace is neglected.

Remember**What is the spiritual character of Confirmation?**

A permanent seal of the Holy Spirit that consecrates us to Christ and cannot be repeated.

Pray together

Lord Jesus, you are the Anointed One. Through the Holy Spirit make my life a witness to your truth, compassion and holiness. Amen.

One small step

At Sunday Mass, notice the Sign of the Cross and pray: “Let my words and actions show that I belong to Christ.”

For the adult: Help the candidate distinguish a lasting sacramental character from emotional confidence or outward enthusiasm.

Scripture and Catechism: 2 Corinthians 2:14–15; Ephesians 1:13; CCC 1293–1305

CONVERSATION 07 / 12

The Effects and Character of Confirmation

THE IMPORTANT TRUTH

Confirmation deepens baptismal grace, binds us more closely to the Church and gives special strength to spread and defend the faith.

Begin together

Ask: "Suppose someone mocks your faith or pressures you to do something wrong. What sort of strength would help you remain faithful without treating that person badly?"

Read together

Confirmation is not simply a symbol of commitment. It truly gives grace, because Christ acts through the sacrament. The Holy Spirit roots us more deeply in our identity as children of the Father, unites us more firmly to Jesus Christ and increases his gifts within us.

The sacrament also strengthens our bond with the Church. We do not follow Christ alone. We belong to his Body, share the faith of the Apostles and have a part in the Church's mission of worship, witness and service.

The Catechism teaches that Confirmation gives special strength to spread and defend the faith by word and action, to confess Christ's name boldly and never be ashamed of the Cross. This is not a command to argue with everyone. A Christian witness is truthful and courageous, but also patient, fair and charitable.

Consider what this might mean at school. You may be asked why Catholics believe the Eucharist is truly Jesus, why the Church teaches difficult moral truths, or why you still go to Sunday Mass. You need not know every answer, but you should be willing to learn, explain calmly what you do know, and ask for help when you do not.

Witness may also mean refusing to join in bullying, telling the truth when it would be easier to lie, resisting harmful online behaviour, helping an isolated person or choosing to pray when nobody else expects it. The grace of Confirmation is meant for this ordinary faithfulness.

Because Confirmation imprints a permanent spiritual character, it is received only once. Its fruits, however, should continue to grow throughout life as we cooperate with grace. The sacrament is a beginning of stronger discipleship, not the end of learning.

Talk and understand

Does Confirmation really give grace?

Yes. Christ strengthens baptismal grace through the Holy Spirit.

How does Confirmation change our relationship with the Church?

It binds us more perfectly to the Church and her mission.

What is the special strength of Confirmation for?

Spreading and defending the faith through words and actions.

Can I grow in the grace of Confirmation years later?

Yes. Its lasting gift should bear more fruit as I pray, repent and live in charity.

Remember**What are the chief effects of Confirmation?**

A special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, deeper baptismal grace, a closer bond with the Church and strength for witness.

Pray together

Holy Spirit, make me a faithful witness. Give me courage to speak the truth, humility to keep learning and love for every person I meet. Amen.

One small step

Prepare a calm, two-sentence answer to the question “Why do you want to be confirmed?” Give an honest answer, not one copied from someone else.

For the adult: Affirm that a reserved candidate can witness just as truly as an outgoing one. Avoid treating Confirmation as a public speaking test.

Scripture and Catechism: Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 1:6–8; CCC 1302–1305

CONVERSATION 08 / 12

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

THE IMPORTANT TRUTH

The seven gifts make us ready to recognise and follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Begin together

Ask: "If you could ask God for help with one difficult choice at the moment, what kind of help would you need?" Listen without pressuring the candidate to share private matters.

Read together

Isaiah speaks of the Spirit resting upon the promised Messiah. The Church names seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. These gifts are present in fullness in Jesus Christ and help us become more like him.

Wisdom helps us love what matters most and judge things in God's light. Understanding helps us enter more deeply into the truths of faith. Counsel helps us recognise a good decision and act rightly when circumstances are confusing.

Fortitude gives strength to do what is right and endure what is difficult. Knowledge helps us see the created world and our responsibilities in relation to God. Piety helps us love and worship the Father as his children and show genuine reverence for holy things.

Fear of the Lord can be misunderstood. It does not mean that God wants his children to live in terror. It means loving reverence, wonder before God's holiness, and a sincere reluctance to offend the One who loves us.

The seven gifts do not eliminate the need to study, think, seek good advice or practise virtue. They make us more ready to respond to the Holy Spirit. God does not normally replace our judgement with a dramatic sign; he forms us so that our choices become wiser and more loving.

In Confirmation these gifts are increased and strengthened. Do not treat them as a list of words for an examination. Ask how they shape real life: what wisdom means online, how counsel helps in friendship, why fortitude matters when pressured, and how piety changes prayer.

Like other gifts of grace, they are given for holiness. Their purpose is to draw us closer to Christ, not to make us feel important.

Talk and understand

Can you name the seven gifts?

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

Which gift helps me act courageously when something is difficult?

Fortitude.

Which gift helps me make a right decision?

Counsel, aided by prayer and good judgement.

Does fear of the Lord mean panic or terror?

No. It means loving reverence for God and reluctance to offend him.

Remember**What are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit?**

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

Pray together

Come, Holy Spirit. Give me wisdom to love God, counsel to choose rightly, fortitude to persevere and a heart filled with reverence for you. Amen.

One small step

Choose one gift you especially need. Ask for it in prayer each morning and use it in one concrete decision this week.

For the adult: Invite real examples, but respect privacy. A young person need not disclose personal temptations, relationships or problems to a group.

Scripture and Catechism: Isaiah 11:1–3; CCC 1830–1832

CONVERSATION 09 / 12

Virtues, Fruits and Charisms

THE IMPORTANT TRUTH

The Holy Spirit makes us holy through the virtues, forms good fruit in our lives and gives gifts for service.

Begin together

Ask: "Which matters more: being impressive at something or becoming a good and holy person?" Discuss the difference between a talent and the way we use it.

Read together

God gives different kinds of gifts, and it helps to distinguish them. The virtues are stable habits that shape the way we live. The theological virtues are faith, hope and charity; God infuses them into our souls. The cardinal virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

Faith helps us believe God and his revelation. Hope helps us trust his promises and desire eternal life. Charity helps us love God above all things and our neighbour for God's sake. These are not merely personality traits. The theological virtues bring us into supernatural communion with God.

The Holy Spirit also forms his fruits in a life of grace: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity. These fruits do not appear all at once, and they are not simply emotions. They become visible as we learn to live in Christ.

For example, patience may mean choosing not to send an angry message. Self-control may mean limiting unhealthy online habits. Chastity means respecting the dignity of the body and living sexuality according to God's plan. Faithfulness means keeping promises and being dependable even when nobody notices.

Charisms are particular graces given for building up the Church and serving others. Some are striking; others are ordinary. A person may have the capacity to teach, organise, encourage, serve, lead music or care for those who are lonely. The Church discerns how such gifts should be exercised.

No charism makes someone more valuable than another person. Saint Paul teaches that without charity, even impressive spiritual gifts mean nothing. The best sign of a life filled with the Holy Spirit is not showmanship but growth in love, truth and holiness.

The aim of Confirmation is not to collect spiritual gifts for ourselves. It is to allow the Holy Spirit to shape us into disciples who love God and serve his people.

Talk and understand

What are the three theological virtues?

Faith, hope and charity.

What are the four cardinal virtues?

Prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

What are fruits of the Holy Spirit?

Good qualities formed in a person through grace and faithful cooperation.

What are charisms for?

Building up the Church and serving others, always in charity.

Remember**What matters most in the use of spiritual gifts?**

Charity: every gift must be used to love God and serve others.

Pray together

Holy Spirit, increase faith, hope and charity in me. Form your fruits in the way I speak and act. Help me use every gift for the good of others. Amen.

One small step

Choose one fruit—such as patience, gentleness or self-control—and practise it in a specific situation this week.

For the adult: Speak positively of traditional virtues, including chastity and modesty, but sensitively to the age and circumstances of the candidate.

Scripture and Catechism: 1 Corinthians 12–13; Galatians 5:22–23; CCC 1803–1845

CONVERSATION 10 / 12

Renewing the Promises of Baptism

THE IMPORTANT TRUTH

Before Confirmation we renounce sin and profess again the faith we received at Baptism.

Begin together

Ask: "What does it mean to say 'I believe' when the Church asks about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?" Is it simply remembering the words or choosing to live by the truth?

Read together

During the rite of Confirmation, candidates renew their baptismal promises. They reject Satan, sin and everything opposed to God. They profess faith in the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and the holy Catholic Church. These promises remind us that Confirmation is inseparable from Baptism.

At Baptism, you were truly made a child of God and a member of Christ's Church. That gift did not wait for you to grow older and approve it. Now, as a candidate for Confirmation, you are called to understand the faith more deeply and profess it with sincerity.

This does not mean choosing whichever doctrines you happen to like and inventing a private version of Catholicism. We receive the apostolic faith that Jesus entrusted to his Church. Learning that faith, asking serious questions and seeking understanding are good ways to make the profession more thoughtful.

Renouncing Satan and sin is also real. Being Christian means rejecting whatever separates us from God. We are called to obey the commandments, form our conscience according to Catholic teaching, practise charity and repent when we fail.

Sometimes candidates worry that they are not worthy to say the promises because they still struggle with temptation. No Christian is perfect. A sincere promise is not a claim that you will never sin again; it is a real intention, supported by grace, to turn away from sin and live for God.

The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed help us see the heart of Catholic faith: God the Father, his Son Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, forgiveness, resurrection and eternal life. The Creed is not a list for a memory contest. It tells the story of the God we worship and the salvation we receive.

When you answer "I do" during the rite, let your answer be your own. The Church seeks an honest profession, not a rehearsed performance.

Talk and understand

Why are baptismal promises renewed at Confirmation?

Because Confirmation strengthens the grace already given in Baptism.

What do we reject in those promises?

Satan, sin and everything contrary to God.

What faith do we profess?

The one Catholic and apostolic faith of the Church.

Does making the promises mean I claim to be perfect?

No. It means sincerely intending to follow Christ with the help of grace.

Remember**What do I do when renewing my baptismal promises?**

I reject Satan and sin, and profess the Catholic faith in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Pray together

Father, renew in me the grace of my Baptism. Give me a sincere heart to reject sin, profess the Creed and live as a disciple of Jesus. Amen.

One small step

Read the Apostles' Creed with your parent or mentor. Identify one phrase you understand well and one you would like explained.

For the adult: Allow honest questions rather than demanding polished declarations. Help the candidate see the renewal as a free and thoughtful profession of received faith.

Scripture and Catechism: Matthew 28:19–20; Romans 6:3–11; CCC 1274, 1285, 1309

CONVERSATION 11 / 12

Witness, Spiritual Combat and Mission

THE IMPORTANT TRUTH

Confirmation strengthens us as soldiers and witnesses of Christ to resist sin and defend the truth with charity.

Begin together

Ask: "When the Church calls a confirmed person a 'soldier of Christ', who is the enemy—and who is not?"

Invite examples of how courage can be peaceful and loving.

Read together

Traditional Catholic catechisms speak of the confirmed Christian as a soldier of Christ. This is a strong and honourable image. It tells us that belonging to Christ calls for courage, discipline, loyalty and perseverance. It does not give us permission to be aggressive or cruel.

Saint Paul describes the Christian's struggle as spiritual combat. Our enemies are sin, the temptations of the devil and the ways of the world that oppose God. Other people are not enemies to be hated. They are neighbours whom Christ commands us to love, including when we disagree with them.

Our weapons are spiritual: prayer, the word of God, the sacraments, truth, the virtues, penance and works of mercy. We resist evil by choosing good, seek forgiveness when we fail, and stand firm when it would be easier to compromise.

A young Catholic might face pressure to abandon the faith, laugh at religious belief, join in humiliation online, lie to protect popularity or ignore someone in need. Remaining faithful may require real courage. The Holy Spirit strengthens us for precisely this kind of ordinary witness.

Defending the faith means knowing what the Church teaches and giving reasons for our hope. We should speak truthfully, listen to questions, recognise what we do not yet know and answer with gentleness and reverence. Winning an argument is not the same as helping someone encounter Christ.

Every confirmed Catholic shares in the Church's mission. Some may be called to marriage and family life, some to priesthood or consecrated life, others to service through work, study or care for those who suffer. Mission begins now, in ordinary duties and honest choices.

Being a soldier of Christ is therefore a lifelong vocation: steadfastness in truth, resistance to sin, fidelity to the Church and charity towards every person.

Talk and understand

What does "soldier of Christ" mean?

A Christian strengthened to resist sin and remain steadfast in faith.

Are people who disagree with us the enemy?

No. We must love every person, even when we oppose error or wrongdoing.

What helps us in spiritual combat?

Grace, prayer, Scripture, the sacraments, virtue, penance and charity.

How do we defend the Catholic faith well?

With truthful reasons, patience, courage and respect for others.

Remember**Why is a confirmed Christian called a soldier of Christ?**

Because the Holy Spirit strengthens us to resist sin and witness steadfastly to Christ.

Pray together

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Holy Spirit, make me brave against temptation, truthful in my words and generous in charity. Amen.

One small step

Perform one quiet work of mercy without seeking recognition. If someone asks about your faith, practise giving a clear and gentle answer.

For the adult: Present “soldier of Christ” positively, as the Church’s traditional image of spiritual courage. Make equally clear that people are never targets of hatred.

Scripture and Catechism: Ephesians 6:10–18; 1 Peter 3:15–16; CCC 1303, 1816

CONVERSATION 12 / 12

Preparing, Receiving and Persevering

THE IMPORTANT TRUTH

We prepare for Confirmation through faith, prayer, Confession and sincere intention, then continue living its grace throughout life.

Begin together

Ask: "What would you hope to be different six months after Confirmation?" Encourage practical answers rather than one-day plans about clothes, photographs or celebrations.

Read together

To receive Confirmation, a person must be baptised and not already confirmed. A candidate who has reached the use of reason should be suitably instructed, properly disposed, able to renew the baptismal promises and sincerely intend to receive the sacrament. Your parish priest helps discern this with you and your family.

Confirmation is Christ's gift, not a prize for completing twelve lessons, attending a certain number of meetings or displaying perfect religious knowledge. But we still have a responsibility to prepare well, because grace is meant to be received with an open heart and lived faithfully.

We should receive Confirmation in the state of grace. That means taking sin seriously, making an examination of conscience and receiving sacramental Confession where necessary. If you are uncertain about a sin or worried about Confession, speak privately to the priest. Parents and mentors should help you prepare, but they should never require you to disclose your personal sins to them.

Participating in Sunday Mass, praying each day, receiving Holy Communion worthily, reading Scripture and practising charity are not administrative tasks. They are already the life of a disciple, and Confirmation is meant to strengthen that life.

The parish will explain the practical celebration: the sponsor, the bishop or other authorised minister, the renewal of baptismal promises, the laying on of hands, anointing with sacred chrism, "Amen", the sign of peace and the continuation of Mass. You do not have to remember everything perfectly; the minister and parish will guide you.

After Confirmation, give thanks and continue. Come to Mass each Sunday, pray, go to Confession regularly, receive the Eucharist reverently, keep learning, and use your gifts to serve. Do not treat the sacrament as the last time you need to be involved in the Church.

God's grace does not abandon you when life becomes difficult. If you struggle or fall into sin, turn back to Christ. He will help you begin again. The seal of Confirmation remains for life, and its grace is meant to grow through a lifetime of discipleship.

Talk and understand

How should I prepare to receive Confirmation?

With suitable instruction, prayer, sincere intention, the state of grace and a willingness to live the faith.

What if I am conscious of grave sin?

I should seek sacramental Confession before receiving Confirmation.

Do I need perfect knowledge or confidence?

No. I need genuine faith and suitable understanding according to my capacity.

What happens after Confirmation?

I continue in Sunday Mass, the sacraments, prayer, conversion, charity and mission.

Remember**How should a confirmed Catholic persevere?**

Through Sunday Mass, worthy Communion, regular Confession, daily prayer, virtue, charity and service.

Pray together

Lord Jesus, prepare my heart for the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Keep me close to your Church, faithful when I struggle and generous in serving others. Amen.

One small step

Make a personal plan: Sunday Mass, a simple daily prayer, the next opportunity for Confession and one regular way to serve.

For the adult: This final conversation is not an examination. Invite an honest conversation with the candidate and family about faith, practical arrangements and continuing accompaniment.

Scripture and Catechism: Acts 2:42; Galatians 5:22–25; CCC 1306–1311

Appendix A | The Rite of Confirmation Step by Step

Confirmation is normally celebrated within Mass. The bishop, or another minister lawfully authorised to confirm, and the approved liturgical book govern the exact celebration. These steps help candidates understand what they will do; the parish will also explain any practical arrangements.

1. Presentation and homily

Candidates may be presented to the bishop. The minister explains how Confirmation strengthens Baptism and calls us to witness.

2. Renewal of baptismal promises

Candidates renounce Satan and sin and profess the Catholic faith in the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and the Church. Answer sincerely with the congregation.

3. Prayer and laying on of hands

The minister invites silent prayer, extends his hands over the candidates and asks the Father to send the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit.

4. Anointing with sacred chrism

Approach reverently with your sponsor, according to parish guidance. The minister places his hand on your forehead in anointing you with chrism.

5. The sacramental words

The minister says: "N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." Answer clearly: "Amen."

6. Sign of peace

The minister says: "Peace be with you." Answer: "And with your spirit."

7. Continuation of Mass

Join the prayers and Holy Eucharist. Receive Holy Communion if properly disposed, and afterwards give thanks to God for the gift of the Spirit.

A helpful reminder

The sacrament does not depend on giving a perfect answer, remembering an exact gesture or experiencing a dramatic feeling. The parish will guide you.

Traditional descriptions sometimes mention a light blow on the cheek. The present Roman Rite uses the sign of peace after the anointing.

Appendix B | The Seven Gifts and Twelve Fruits

The gifts help us follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The fruits are qualities that grow in a life strengthened by his grace. They are not simply feelings and should be understood in the light of Catholic faith.

Wisdom

Loving and judging everything in the light of God and our final destiny.

Understanding

Grasping the truths of the faith more deeply.

Counsel

Recognising the right action in difficult or uncertain situations.

Fortitude

Standing firm and enduring difficulty for what is right.

Knowledge

Understanding creation and human life in relation to God.

Piety

Loving and worshipping God as our Father, with devotion and reverence.

Fear of the Lord

Reverent awe before God and loving sorrow at the thought of offending him.

The twelve traditional fruits of the Holy Spirit

Charity — Love of God above everything and our neighbour for God's sake.

Joy — Spiritual gladness rooted in God's goodness.

Peace — A heart increasingly ordered towards God and neighbour.

Patience — Enduring difficulty without losing charity.

Kindness — Being attentive and ready to do good.

Goodness — Choosing what is right and generous.

Generosity — Giving of ourselves without counting the cost.

Gentleness — Strength used with humility and care.

Faithfulness — Loyalty to God and reliability towards others.

Modesty — Respectful restraint in dress, words and behaviour.

Self-control — Governing desires and choices according to reason and grace.

Chastity — Living sexuality with integrity according to our state of life and vocation.

The gifts, fruits, virtues and charisms are related but not identical. See Conversation 9.

Appendix C | Choosing a Sponsor and a Patron Saint

What is a sponsor?

A sponsor accompanies the candidate, presents the candidate for Confirmation and afterwards helps the newly confirmed person persevere as a witness of Christ. It is desirable, when suitable, to choose one of your baptismal godparents, showing the unity of Baptism and Confirmation.

Who may ordinarily be a sponsor?

- A practising Catholic who has received Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist.
- A person ordinarily at least sixteen years old, unless a lawful exception applies.
- Someone living in a way consistent with the Catholic faith and genuinely willing to fulfil the role.
- Someone not prohibited from the role by a canonical penalty.
- Someone other than the candidate's father or mother.

The parish priest will help if you are unsure whom to choose. Do not choose someone merely because the person is popular, related to you or willing to appear in a photograph.

Do I need a Confirmation name?

A new Confirmation name is not required. Where local custom allows it, some candidates choose the name of a saint. The important thing is not a fashionable or unusual name but a holy person whose example leads you closer to Christ. Your baptismal name can also be a good choice.

Read the life of a saint, discover how that person followed Christ, and ask for their prayers. A sponsor and patron saint both point beyond themselves towards Jesus.

My sponsor: _____

Why this person will help me follow Christ: _____

My patron saint (if chosen): _____

One virtue I would like to imitate: _____

Appendix D | Prayers and a Catholic Rule of Life

The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Act of Contrition — the parish form

O my God, because you are so good,
I am very sorry that I have sinned against you,
and by the help of your grace
I will not sin again. Amen.

Prayer for the seven gifts

Holy Spirit, give me wisdom to seek God, understanding to know the faith, counsel to choose rightly, fortitude to persevere, knowledge to see creation in God's light, piety to love the Father and fear of the Lord to worship him with reverence. Amen.

Before Confirmation

Lord Jesus, I belong to you through Baptism. Prepare me to receive the seal of your Holy Spirit in the state of grace, with sincere faith, humility and joy. Amen.

After Confirmation

Father, I thank you for the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Keep me united to Jesus and his Church. Make my thoughts, words and actions a faithful witness to your love. Amen.

A simple rule of Catholic life**Every day**

Offer the day to God; pray to the Holy Spirit; read a short passage of Scripture; examine your conscience at night.

Every Sunday

Participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with faith and attention.

Regularly

Go to Confession, receive Holy Communion worthily, and make time for Adoration or quiet prayer.

In relationships

Practise honesty, kindness, chastity, forgiveness and care for anyone who is excluded or vulnerable.

In the parish

Discover a suitable way to serve within the parish's safeguarding arrangements.

When you fail

Repent, seek God's mercy and begin again. The Holy Spirit does not stop calling you to holiness.

Appendix E | Summary Catechism

These concise answers gather the principal teaching of the twelve conversations. First understand the meaning, then learn the answer. This is an optional aid to remembering, not a pass-or-fail examination.

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?

The third Person of the Most Holy Trinity, true God with the Father and the Son.

2. Is the Holy Spirit merely a feeling?

No. He is a divine Person who knows, loves, guides and sanctifies.

3. What happened at Pentecost?

The Apostles received the Holy Spirit and proclaimed Christ courageously.

4. Which are the sacraments of Christian initiation?

Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist.

5. Does Confirmation replace Baptism?

No. It strengthens and completes baptismal grace.

6. Who instituted Confirmation?

Jesus Christ instituted Confirmation.

7. Where does Scripture show the Apostles giving the Spirit to the baptised?

In Acts 8:14–17 and Acts 19:5–6.

8. Who is the ordinary minister of Confirmation in the Latin Church?

The bishop.

9. Can a priest confirm?

Yes, when Church law or competent authority gives him the faculty.

10. What is sacred chrism?

Perfumed oil consecrated by a bishop.

11. What are the sacramental words in the Roman Rite?

“N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”

12. What does the candidate answer?

“Amen.”

13. What is the spiritual seal of Confirmation?

A permanent character marking us as belonging to Christ.

14. Can Confirmation be repeated?

No. It is received only once.

15. What is the chief effect of Confirmation?

A special outpouring of the Holy Spirit for stronger Christian life and witness.

16. How does Confirmation unite us to the Church?

It binds us more perfectly to the Church and her mission.

17. What are the seven gifts?

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

18. What do the gifts help us do?

Follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

19. What are the theological virtues?

Faith, hope and charity.

20. What are the cardinal virtues?

Prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

21. What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

Qualities of holiness formed in us by the Holy Spirit as we cooperate with grace.

22. What is a charism?

A gift of grace for building up the Church and serving others.

23. Why renew baptismal promises?

To profess again the faith received at Baptism and reject sin.

24. What does a soldier of Christ fight against?

Sin, temptation, the fallen world and the devil, using spiritual means.

25. Does Christian witness allow hatred of opponents?

No. We defend truth while loving every person.

26. Who may receive Confirmation?

A baptised person who has not already been confirmed.

27. How should I prepare?

Through prayer, faith, suitable instruction, sincere intention and proper disposition.

28. What state should I be in when confirmed?

The state of grace.

29. Which sacrament should I receive beforehand when needed?

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

30. What does a sponsor do?

Helps the confirmed person continue living as a witness of Christ.

31. Does Confirmation end my formation?

No. I continue growing in faith and holiness throughout life.

Appendix F | Readiness and Pastoral Conversation

Readiness is not perfect memory, polished public speaking, attendance at a fixed number of meetings or reaching a particular age as a social milestone. A suitable candidate has a sincere intention to receive Confirmation, understands its essential meaning according to capacity, is properly disposed, and is willing to live as a disciple of Christ.

Questions to explore with the candidate and family

Faith in Christ

Can the young person speak simply about Jesus Christ and profess the Catholic faith?

Understanding of Confirmation

Does the candidate understand the Holy Spirit, the relation to Baptism, the sacred anointing and the mission of witness?

Free intention

Does the candidate sincerely wish to receive the sacrament rather than feeling compelled merely to satisfy an adult or complete a programme?

State of grace and Confession

Has there been age-appropriate teaching about sin and a private opportunity for the Sacrament of Penance?

Sunday Mass and prayer

Is the candidate being helped to participate in the ordinary worship and prayer of the Church?

Sponsor and practical arrangements

Is there a suitable sponsor and a clear plan for the rite and necessary adjustments?

Life afterwards

What practical habits will help the candidate continue in Mass, prayer, Communion, Confession, charity and parish belonging?

A few questions the priest or mentor may ask

- Who is the Holy Spirit, and why does Confirmation matter to you?
- What is the difference between Confirmation and finishing a course?
- How might the Holy Spirit help you follow Jesus at home or among friends?
- What would you like to ask about the faith or the sacrament?
- What will help you continue practising your Catholic faith afterwards?

Pastoral safety: Never require disclosure of personal sins or publicly shame a candidate. Respect disability, learning differences, anxiety and family circumstances. Arrange discreet pastoral and accessibility support and follow current Diocese of Nottingham safeguarding procedures.

The parish priest makes the pastoral judgement about readiness within Church law and diocesan requirements. Confirmation is a gift of Christ. The purpose of preparation is a sincere, fruitful reception and a continuing Christian life.

Sources and Doctrinal References

Sacred Scripture

Isaiah 11:1–3; John 14–16; Acts 1–2, 8:14–17, 19:5–6; Romans 8; 1 Corinthians 12–13; Galatians 5:22–25; Ephesians 6:10–18; 1 Peter 3:15–16.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Numbers 683–747 on the Holy Spirit; 1210–1321 on Christian initiation and Confirmation; 1691–1698 on life in Christ; 1803–1845 on virtues, gifts and fruits; 2006–2011 on grace and merit.

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Holy Spirit and Church; questions on Confirmation and the Christian moral life.

Code of Canon Law

Canons 842, 879–896, 872–874, especially ministers, candidates, preparation, sponsors and sacramental records.

The Order of Confirmation

The approved Roman Rite for England and Wales governs the renewal of baptismal promises, invocation of the Spirit, anointing, words and sign of peace.

Traditional Catholic catechesis

Traditional descriptions of the confirmed as soldiers and witnesses of Christ, understood as spiritual combat against sin with charity for others.

Diocese of Nottingham

Current diocesan policy and safeguarding arrangements govern local preparation, age and particular cases.

This catechism is intended as a faithful preparation resource. The approved liturgical books, universal Church law, current diocesan directions and the parish priest govern sacramental practice. It is not itself an authorisation to vary the rite or conditions for reception.