

# Get CONNECTED

with family and friends

## The Church Today: Confirmed Believers

We receive the Holy Spirit at Baptism and we are strengthened by the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation. In the celebration of Confirmation, the laying on of hands and the anointing with Chrism is the sign of God's grace. In Confirmation, the Holy Spirit draws us into fuller participation in the Church, opening our hearts to God's Word.

### Activity

*Mr. Grant, our next-door neighbor, used to wait until everyone else's driveway was shoveled before he drove out in his snow blower to clear his driveway. I always thought that was selfish of him.*

*Mr. Grant passed away last year, and when the first snowfall came, there was no snow blower to be seen.*

*My mom said, "Go over and shovel the driveway for Mrs. Grant."*



*I wanted to mention the snow blower, but instead I just said, "Okay." I spent an hour shoveling Mrs. Grant's driveway.*

*Mrs. Grant came to her door and said, "Let me pay you."*

*Glad to have done an act of kindness, I heard myself say, "No thanks, Mrs. Grant. We're neighbors."*

Do one of the following.

1. Ask your friends to share times they felt inspired to do something good for someone without seeking a reward.
2. Plan to do a "random act of kindness" for someone in your family this week.

## Trivivia

Church History

Social Studies

Arts & Culture

People & Places

Next door to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem stands the church of St. Catherine. Built by the Franciscans in 1881, the church is situated over a cave where, according to tradition, Saint Jerome lived while translating the Scriptures from Greek into Latin.

## Quotable Scripture

Seek the LORD  
while he may be found,  
call him while he is near.  
—Isaiah 55:6

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## ✚ Scripture Background

### In the Time of Jesus

**Jesus' Family Tree** Although there are more than twenty genealogies in the Old Testament, only two appear in the New Testament. In the genealogies of Jesus, Matthew and Luke both include David, the shepherd boy who became a great king of Israel. Also appearing on both lists is Abraham, a Patriarch of the nation of Israel. While Matthew stops with Abraham, Luke traces Jesus' ancestry all the way back to Adam. In Mark 3:31–35, Jesus talks about who is part of his family.

Read the genealogies of Jesus in Matthew 1:1–16 and Luke 3:23–38.

## WEEKLY PLANNER

### On Sunday

Bless yourself with holy water before Mass, reminding yourself that the Holy Spirit is present to help you live as a faithful follower of Jesus.

### On the Web

[blestarewe.com](http://blestarewe.com)



Visit our Web site for the saint of the day and the reflection question of the week.

### Saint of the Week



**Saint John the Baptist**  
(d. first century)

Saint John the Baptist was a prophet and fearless preacher of repentance. He prepared people for the coming of Jesus, the Messiah. His criticism of the adulterous marriage of King Herod and Herodias led to his execution by beheading.

**Patron Saint of:** Jordan, monks  
**Feast Day:** June 24



### A Prayer for the Week

Lord, we pray for the future of our family and the future of your Church. With the Holy Spirit as our guide, we hope to be faithful to you and to bring the Gospel to the world. Amen.

# 18 The Church Today: Confirmed Believers



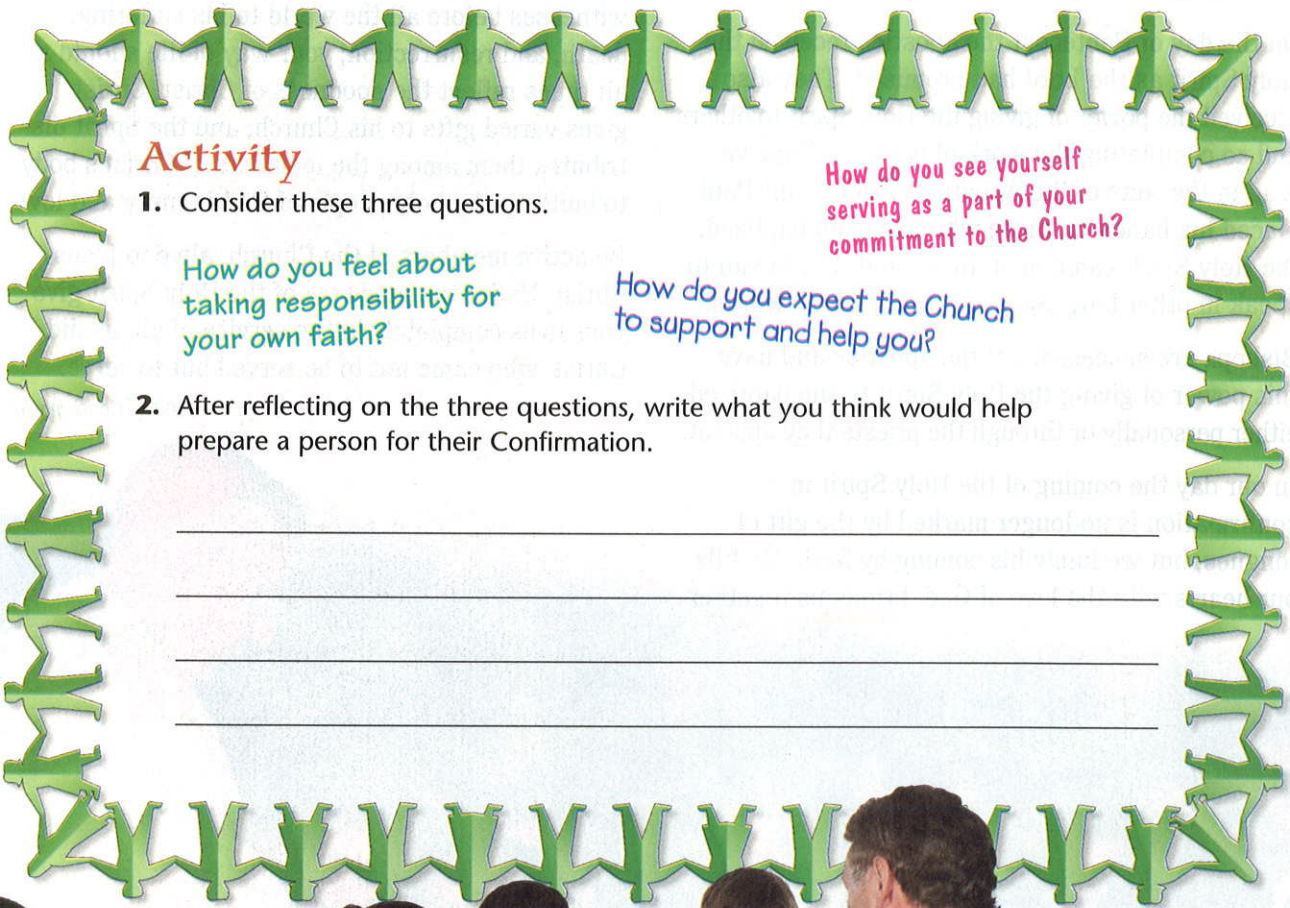
Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit give your lives completely in the service of all, as did Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.

*Rite of Confirmation*

## Share

You were baptized into the Church. The Church supports you, leads you, teaches you the faith, encourages you, and provides you with the opportunity to grow as a Catholic. The Church helps you recognize the gifts God has given you. Your gifts should be shared with others. You can

use your talents and gifts to serve your family, parish, and local community. Serving others is an important part of being a Christian. In Confirmation, Catholics are invited to give more of themselves to their faith and to use their gifts in more responsible and challenging ways.



### Activity

1. Consider these three questions.

*How do you feel about taking responsibility for your own faith?*

*How do you see yourself serving as a part of your commitment to the Church?*

*How do you expect the Church to support and help you?*

2. After reflecting on the three questions, write what you think would help prepare a person for their Confirmation.

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**Why do we celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation?**



## Hear & Believe

# **Worship** The Rite of Confirmation

The Holy Spirit inspires us and gives us the grace to love and serve others. The gift of the Holy Spirit is given to us in the Sacrament of Baptism and then sealed, or strengthened, in **Confirmation**. In the Rite of Confirmation, the bishop prays that we will use the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to follow Christ more closely. When Confirmation is celebrated during Mass, the bishop may give a homily similar to the following. The homily explains the Scripture readings and helps the Confirmation **candidates** gain deeper insight into the Sacrament they are receiving.

On the day of Pentecost the apostles received the Holy Spirit as the Lord had promised. They also received the power of giving the Holy Spirit to others and so completing the work of baptism. This we read in the Acts of the Apostles. When Saint Paul placed his hands on those who had been baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in other languages and in prophetic words.

Bishops are successors of the apostles and have this power of giving the Holy Spirit to the baptized, either personally or through the priests they appoint.

In our day the coming of the Holy Spirit in confirmation is no longer marked by the gift of tongues, but we know his coming by faith. He fills our hearts with the love of God, brings us together

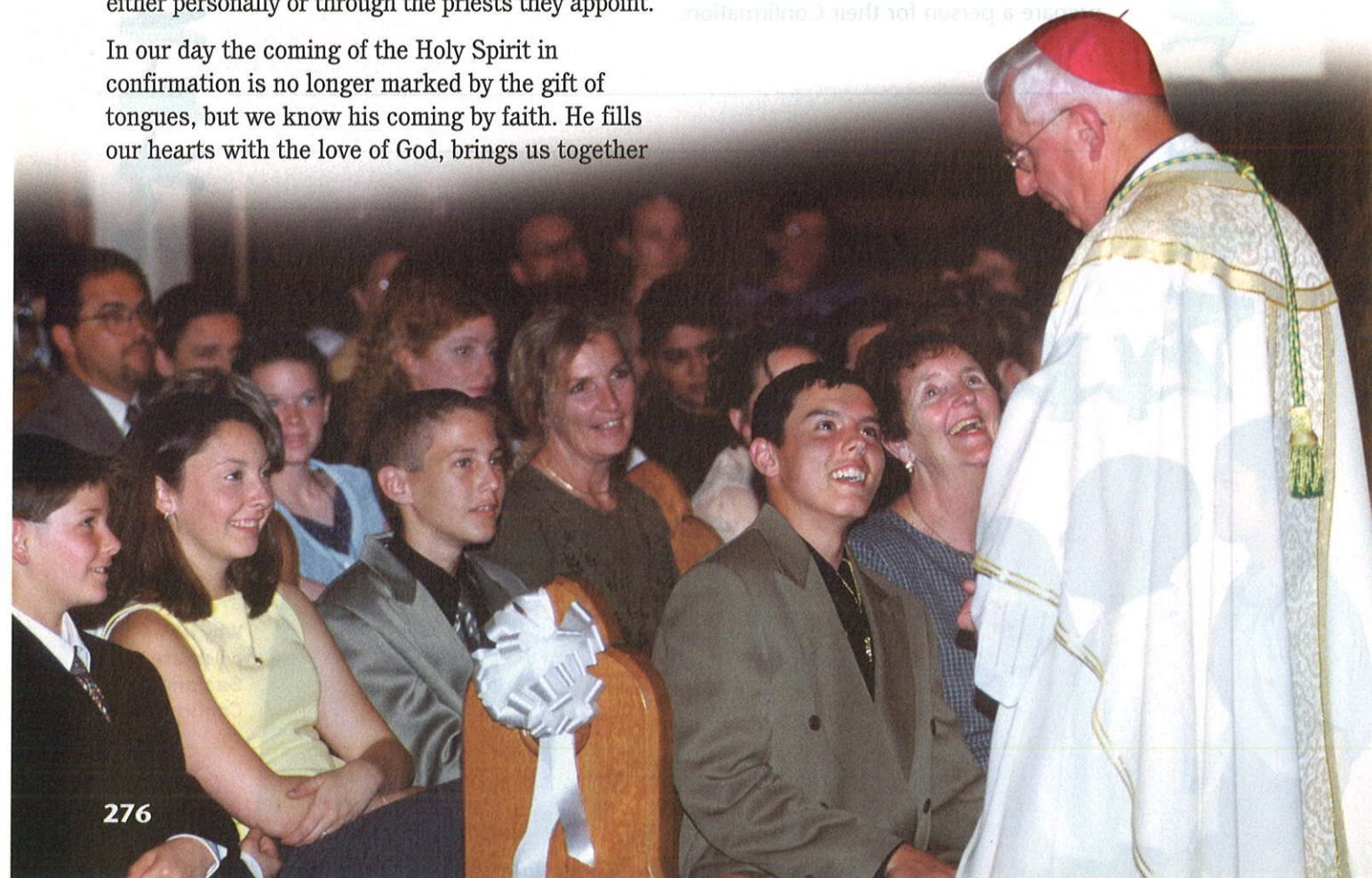
in one faith but in different vocations, and works within us to make the Church one and holy.

The gift of the Holy Spirit which you are to receive will be a spiritual sign and seal to make you more like Christ and more perfect members of his Church. At his baptism by John, Christ himself was anointed by the Spirit and sent out on his public ministry to set the world on fire.

You have already been baptized into Christ and now you will receive the power of his Spirit and the sign of the cross on your forehead. You must be witnesses before all the world to his suffering, death, and resurrection; your way of life should at all times reflect the goodness of Christ. Christ gives varied gifts to his Church, and the Spirit distributes them among the members of Christ's body to build up the holy people of God in unity and love.

Be active members of the Church, alive in Jesus Christ. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit give your lives completely in the service of all, as did Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.

*Rite of Confirmation*



## Confirmed in the Spirit

Confirmation strengthens the graces of Baptism. Confirmation celebrates the Holy Spirit's presence in the Church and action in our lives. We relive the Pentecost experience and grow stronger in our faith so that we can do God's work in the Church.

The readings proclaimed during the celebration of Confirmation are usually ones that have been specifically chosen by the Church for use when the Church is welcoming candidates for Confirmation. After the readings, the candidates may be identified by the bishop. A homily similar to the one you just read is then given to emphasize the meaning of the Sacrament. Next, the candidates renew their baptismal promises. The candidates are then invited forward, usually with a sponsor, and the bishop extends his hands over them, signifying the sending of the Holy Spirit upon the faithful, enabling them to carry out the mission of the Church. Then, the bishop places his hand on each candidate and anoints the candidate's forehead, praying, "(Name) be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." This action signifies the giving of the strength of the Holy Spirit, who guides us in carrying out our responsibilities as members of the Church.

The Mass then continues with the general intercessions and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Mass ends with a special blessing for those confirmed.

Like the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Orders, the Sacrament of Confirmation can be received only once. The "mark of Christ" that we receive in Confirmation remains with us forever. It leads us to a life of worship and service to the Church under God's constant care.

## The Action of the Holy Spirit in Our Lives

The Church identifies seven particular **Gifts of the Holy Spirit** received in Baptism and strengthened in Confirmation. These gifts strengthen us in Christ's love and inspire us to spread his truth to others. These traditional gifts are wisdom, understanding, knowledge, right judgment, courage, reverence, and wonder and awe.

Wisdom helps us know how God wants us to live. Understanding helps us know what God

teaches through Jesus, the Bible, and the Church. Knowledge helps us know and appreciate that God is more important than anything else in life. Right judgment helps us make good decisions in our everyday lives. Courage helps us be strong in living our faith in Christ. Reverence helps us love God more than anything else. Wonder and awe help us to be thankful for all God's gifts. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit strengthen us to give **witness** to Jesus, who suffered, died, and rose again for our Salvation. This is the good news the Holy Spirit helps us proclaim to others. This truth is essential to our Catholic faith, which is one and the same throughout the world.

### Activity

Choose one of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit and tell how this gift can help you serve the Church.

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### Faith Words

**Confirmation** Confirmation is a Sacrament of Christian Initiation in which we receive the special strength of the Holy Spirit to faithfully give witness to Christ and grow in holiness.

**Gifts of the Holy Spirit** The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are the seven special gifts, or blessings, that enable us to become more Christlike: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, right judgment, courage, reverence, and wonder and awe.

**witness** Witness is an attesting to the truth of something by words or actions. We give witness to Christ by imitating in our everyday lives what Jesus would say or do.

What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy?

## Hear & Believe

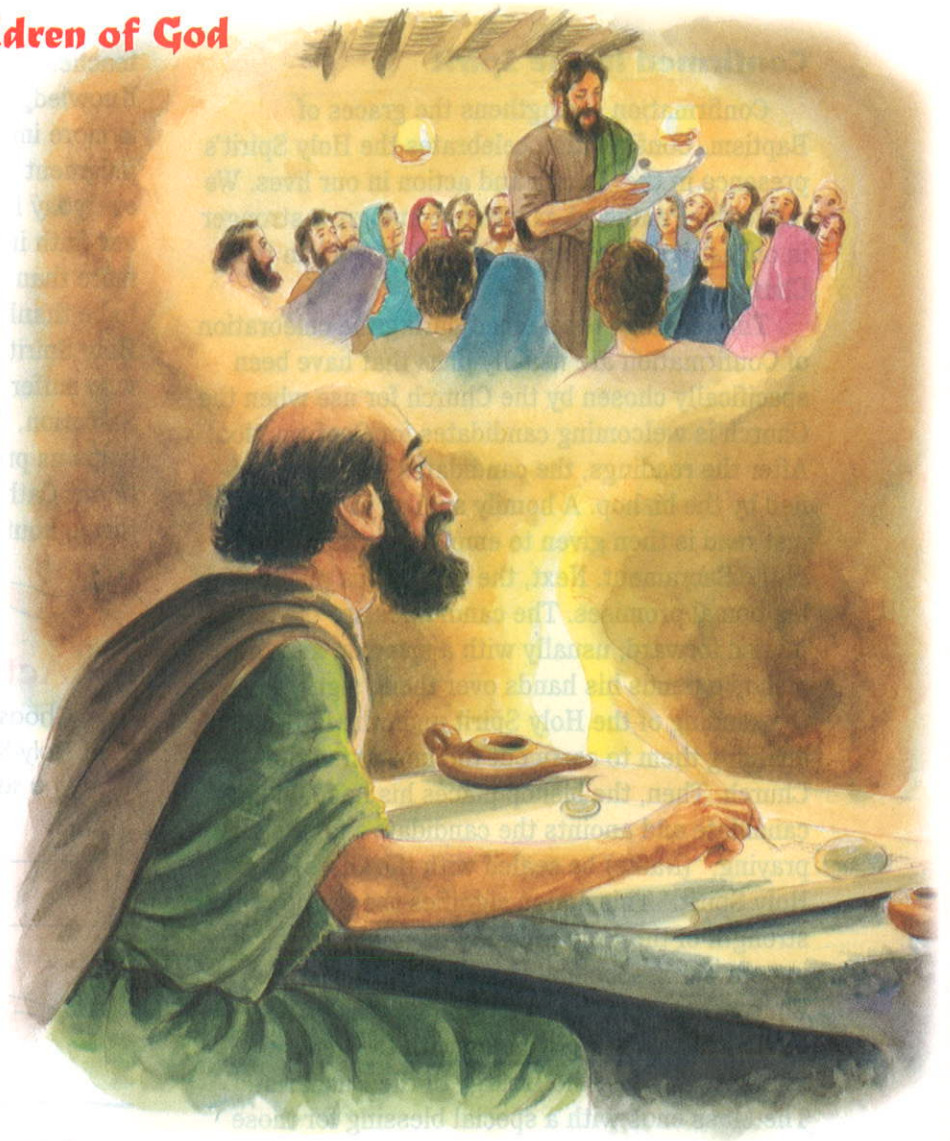
### **+** Scripture Children of God

This Scripture passage comes from Paul's letter to the early Church in Rome. It is one of the readings often proclaimed during the Confirmation liturgy. In it, Paul encourages the Church by saying that the Holy Spirit unites believers with Christ and with God.

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

*Romans 8:14-17*

The Holy Spirit dwells within us, and we are adopted children of God the Father. As children of God, we need never fear. We can be confident that God is with us always. Inspired by that confidence, we can give witness to our faith by following Jesus' example.



## Our Church Teaches

We receive the Holy Spirit in a special way in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Through Confirmation our relationship with the Church deepens and we are called to spread and defend the faith by word and deed with greater commitment. The Holy Spirit strengthens us to give witness to the Church's mission.

The Holy Spirit has a special role in the Liturgy of the Church. The Holy Spirit unites us in faith and prepares the Church to be in the

presence of Christ. In the Liturgy of the Word, the Holy Spirit recalls the words and deeds of

**We Believe**  
In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Holy Spirit unites us more perfectly to Christ and to the Church.

Christ. Then, by the power of the Holy Spirit and the word of the priest, the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. The Holy Spirit also transforms us into Christ's Body so that we can live as Christ lived. Both Baptism and Confirmation leave a permanent spiritual mark on our souls.

## Activities

1. If we allow the Holy Spirit to guide our lives, God promises us an amazing inheritance—eternal life with him in the Kingdom of Heaven. People often write a will to define how their belongings will be distributed after their death. In this way, people provide an inheritance to loved ones and friends. Imagine that you are writing your own will. In the space at right, list your most prized possessions and to whom you would give them. Include your talents (such as a skill in art or sports) and gifts (such as patience or a sense of humor) as well as your material possessions.

*Last Will and Testament*

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
being of sound mind and body, hereby make the  
following gifts:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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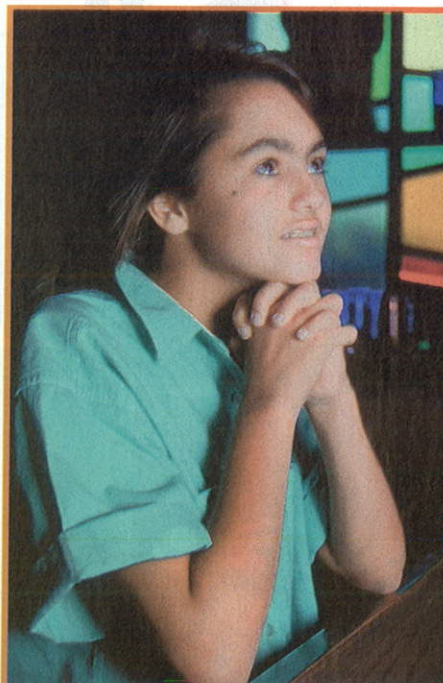
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2. During Mass, Christ is uniquely present in the Holy Eucharist. How can the Holy Spirit help you give witness to your faith in Christ's presence in the Eucharist?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



How do you sense the presence of the Holy Spirit in yourself and others?

## Respond

### Inspired to Serve

While attending the annual parish carnival, Heather and Carla spotted their teacher, Mrs. DelaFuente. She was spinning a wheel at one of the game booths. They also recognized two teenagers who were helping her collect money and hand out prizes.

Heather asked, "Did you ever notice how often we bump into our teacher outside of school? She sure volunteers for a lot of different activities." Carla nodded her head in agreement, adding, "She's so enthusiastic and hard-working. I know a lot of her former students join her when she helps out in the community."

As they waited in line for one of the rides, the two girls continued their conversation about their teacher. They talked about how Mrs. DelaFuente volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, a Christian organization that brings volunteers together to build affordable housing for people in need. They remembered the party she held in school, when each of them brought in clothing to donate to poor children. Heather and Carla agreed that Mrs. DelaFuente's generosity and example of service had made them more aware of the needs of others and had helped them recognize the joy that can be found in giving.

### Activities

1. Imagine that the story of Carla and Heather continues. How might they respond to Mrs. DelaFuente's example?

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2. Carla and Heather realize that there is joy in giving. Describe a time when you felt joy after doing something generous. Explain why you felt joyful.

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3. Think of a friend or relative who has received Confirmation. Name some ways the Gifts of the Holy Spirit seem to help this person in their daily life.

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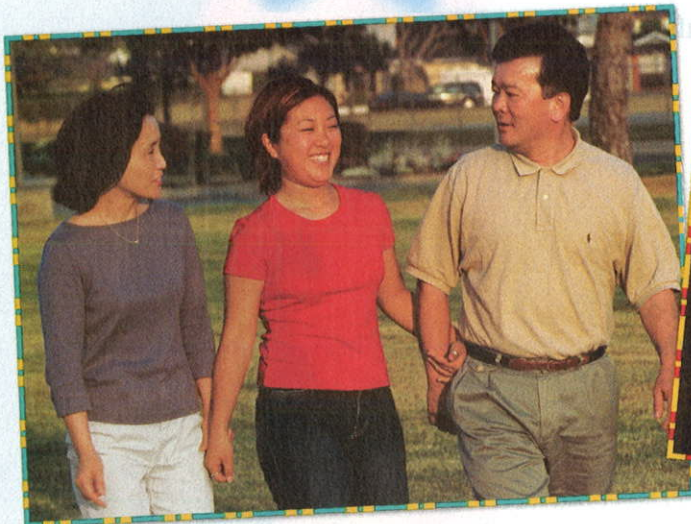
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4. Look at the pictures below to see how the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are at work in daily life. Name some situations in which you might see yourself using one or more of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Understanding helps me relate to my parents.

Right judgment helps me choose positive friendships.



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How might we ask the Holy Spirit to empower and enlighten us?





## Prayer Celebration

### **A Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

You have learned about anointing and the laying on of hands in the Sacrament of Confirmation. There are other signs and symbols associated with the Holy Spirit. Fire is one symbol used to represent the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The Holy Spirit transforms our hearts and lights our way. Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to fill our lives with love.

**Group 1:** 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 will renew  
the face of the earth.

**All:** *Pause and reflect on how you can  
use your gifts in service to others as  
Jesus did.*

**Group 2:** Let us pray.  
Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit,  
you have taught  
the hearts of your faithful.  
In the same Spirit,  
help us relish what is right  
and always rejoice in your consolation.  
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

*Adapted from the Roman Missal*

- A** Write a brief summary of what you have learned in this chapter, using words from the box.

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bishop  
 baptismal promises  
 candidates  
 Chrism  
 homily  
 hand  
 Holy Spirit  
 Sacrament of  
 Confirmation

- B** Circle the letter of the best answer.

- The Sacrament of Christian Initiation in which the graces of our Baptism are strengthened and our relationship with the Church is deepened is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Anointing of the Sick
  - Confirmation
  - Holy Orders
  - Reconciliation
- The seven special graces or blessings that enable us to become more Christlike are the Gifts of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - God
  - Confirmation
  - the Holy Spirit
  - Jesus
- Attesting to the truth of something by words or actions is called \_\_\_\_\_.
  - witnessing
  - protesting
  - servicing
  - committing perjury
- Both \_\_\_\_\_ leave a permanent spiritual mark on our souls.
  - Baptism and Reconciliation
  - Baptism and Eucharist
  - Eucharist and Confirmation
  - Baptism and Confirmation
- \_\_\_\_\_ is NOT a sign or symbol of the Holy Spirit.
  - fire
  - anointing
  - laying on of hands
  - the crucifix

- C** Match each Gift of the Holy Spirit in Column A with its description in Column B by writing the correct number in the space provided.

**A**

1. wisdom
2. right judgment
3. reverence
4. understanding
5. knowledge
6. wonder and awe
7. courage

**B**

- \_\_\_ helps us know what God teaches through Jesus, Scripture, and the Church
- \_\_\_ helps us know how God wants us to live
- \_\_\_ helps us be strong when we face problems in living our faith
- \_\_\_ help us be thankful for all God's gifts
- \_\_\_ helps us know that God is more important than anything else
- \_\_\_ helps us make good decisions in our everyday lives
- \_\_\_ helps us love God more than anyone or anything else

- D** Write the first part of the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Come, Holy Spirit, \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- E** Respond to the following.

1. In what ways does the Church help and support those who are about to be confirmed?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Explain how responsibility and service are related to the Sacrament of Confirmation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_