Confirmation Retreat

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| Meditation and Opening prayer (The Apostles Creed) | 10:30-10:40 |
| The salvation story | 10:40-11:00 |
| The Apostles Creed | 11:00-11:10 |
| Gifts of the Holy Spirit Pass the Parcel Game |  |
| The Pentecost story | 11:10-11:30 |
| The Apostles Creed; Crunch & Sip | 11:30-11:40 |
| Renewal of the Baptismal Promises and oils (Torch)The Effect of Baptism and Confirmation(Choc Milk Activity) | 11:40-11:5011:50-12:00 |
| The Apostles Creed |  |
| Fruits of the Holy Spirit Bingo Game | 12:00-12:10 |
| Rite of ConfirmationReflection  | 12:10-12:2012:20-12:30 |
| Lunch | 12:30 |

**Salvation Script (20mins)**

**Equipment**

Laminated images 1 – 12

Coloured cloth

Script

Student journals

Image 1

*In the beginning God created the world and everything in it, the plants and animals, man and woman.*

Image 2

*Adam and Eve were our first parents.*

Image 3

*The devil tempted Eve to eat the fruit from the forbidden trees by lying to her and twisting the truth.*

Image 4

*Now sin separates us from God.*

Image 5

*Sin happens when we choose evil instead of good, when we choose to listen to the devil instead of God.*

Image 6

*God gave us intellect to know right from wrong and free will to voluntarily do right or wrong.*

Image 7

*Jesus the son of God was sent to fix our problem with sin. Jesus was born to a virgin named Mary in a place called Bethlehem.*

Image 8

*Jesus grew up to be a man who taught people many things, most importantly he taught us about God and how we should treat one another.*

Image 9

*At the Last Supper Jesus shared with us his body and blood through the bread and blood. This is shared with us through Holy Communion.*

Image 10

*Jesus took all our sins and died for us on the cross.*

Image 11

*After Jesus’ death he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.*

Image 12

*At Pentecost the Apostles received the Holy Spirit and they went out and started the Church.*

Individual reflection time for students

***Gifts of the Holy Spirit pass the parcel***

**Pentecost story (20mins)**

**Equipment**

Bible

Reflection questions displayed

Large copy of *The Pentecost*

Four copies of *The Pentecost* (one for each group)

Four pieces of butcher’s paper

Transition song and prayer

Listen to Acts 2:1-12.

Reflection questions

1. What words were used to describe what filled the whole house?
2. The wind is used as a symbol to represent what?
3. The tongues of fire are used as a symbol to represent what?
4. What did the tongues of fire do?
5. What gift was given to the followers of Jesus?

Students split into small groups and view *The Pentecost* by Jean Restout 1732. They mind map their responses to the following questions.

1. What are the flames on each of the people’s heads? (tongues of fire)
2. Why were the disciples locked in the upper room? (they were afraid)
3. Who looks surprised in the painting (The Apostles)
4. Who doesn’t look surprised? (Mary) Why? (Mary is sinless and she is ready for the coming of the Holy Spirit)
5. After the Holy Spirit came upon them in a strong wind and with tongues of fire, what happened next?
6. After receiving the Holy Spirit were the Apostles afraid? (no) Why? (The Holy Spirit took away their fear and gave them courage, boldness and strength to tell others about Jesus).

Students come back together as a whole group to share their responses to the above questions.

This painter (*point to the picture*) decided to make Pentecost look very dramatic, with the fire and the expressions of the disciples. At your confirmation you will probably not see tongues of fire and you may not have this dramatic of an experience on the outside, but the Holy Spirit is going to work in you the same way. You will be given the gift of the Holy Spirit just like the disciples received. The same Holy Spirit wants to do great things in you!

The Holy Spirit will help you to go and boldly talk and share the Good News with other people. The Good News is all you have learned from your parents, your pastor and teachers about Jesus Christ and His Church.

Transition prayer – Apostles Creed

Song

**The Renewal of Baptismal Promises (5mins)**

**Equipment**

Two flashlights (one without batteries)

Transition prayer & Song

Two students are given flashlights and asked to stand up the front of the class. The students hear how we are just like flashlights of Christ, we were created to give off light, the light of Christ. Students are then asked to turn their flashlights on. Only one flashlight turns on and students are asked why this might be. Students are able to discover that one flashlight is missing batteries.

*The batteries are the Holy Spirit. When we have the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives we are like the flashlight with batteries. We are given the gift of the Holy Spirit at our Baptism. He comes and lives in our hearts and gives each of us power to live a life that pleases God. Without the Holy Spirit we are like the flashlight without batteries, we don’t work like we were designed to work.*

Transition prayer – Apostles Creed

Song

**Chocolate Milk Activity (15mins)**

***Activity -*** *The Importance of the Holy Spirit acting in our lives*

***Objective -*** *To help children learn about the effects of the Holy Spirit*

***Equipment***

*Clear glass of milk*

*Chocolate syrup*

 *spoon*

We are going to do a little demonstration of what is happening in our soul when the Holy Spirit pours His Grace into us. It is an analogy.

We begin with this glass (*point to the glass*), this is like us before Baptism.

***Fill the glass with milk.***

The milk represents you and I on the day of our Baptism. The chocolate I am about to use represents the spiritual gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit that day.

***Squeeze the syrup three times into the milk but do not stir it up yet.***

At Baptism, the priest said the prayer and poured water over our heads saying: “I baptise you in the name of the Father (*squeeze*), and of the Son (*squeeze*) and of the Holy Spirit (*squeeze*). At that moment we became children of God and members of God’s family! We didn’t look any different than before we were baptized with water (hold up the glass), but actually a huge change took place! God adopted us and we became members of His family, the Church.

***Squeeze more syrup into the milk*.**

Now at Confirmation, the Bishop places chrism oil on your head and says: “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit” (***squeeze a generous amount in****)* And you say “Amen”. Amen means “Yes! It is true.”

 ***Pick up spoon to stir.***

Well, saying “Amen” is like stirring up the Holy Spirit.

***Stir the syrup so it is now chocolate milk***

You won’t look any different than before you were confirmed but you may feel joyful inside because you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit and now have all the grace and help that you need to live out your Catholic faith!

In this example, the chocolate syrup is like the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit that are given to us in baptism and confirmation. Remember the Pentecost story? Jesus promised that He and the Father would send a helper, the Holy Spirit, but we must cooperate with the Holy Spirit. If we choose not to pray and obey the Holy Spirit then we are like the glass of chocolate milk that when you leave it to sit, (WHAT HAPPENS?) the chocolate will separate and sink to the bottom of the glass and the milk will no longer taste chocolaty.

So, what should we do to cooperate with and keep the Holy Spirit stirred up in our lives?

Students given outline of Holy Spirit and they record their ideas of how they are going to keep the Holy Spirit alive. For example: pray, use the gifts of the Holy Spirit, obey the 10 commandments, go to Mass, go to Reconciliation, read the Bible, be kind to others, share with the poor, develop the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

**Fruits of the Holy Spirit bingo**

**Rite of Confirmation**

Sponsors

Laying on of hands

**Reflection (20mins)**

**Equipment**

Chairs

Sacred space – candles, cross, art work from the day

Student journals

Bible

Assume a prayerful and serene posture, comfortable yet not too relaxed. Sit upright, feet on the floor. If you wish, you may close your eyes.

(*Make the Sign of the Cross)* In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

We will take a few moments to recognize the loving Presence of the indwelling Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three Divine Persons are present here, within your heart, desiring to have a deep, intimate relationship with you.

Praise and thank God the Father for His Word and for this time of prayer with Him. (*pause for 15-20 seconds*)

Invite God the Son, the Word, to have an intimate encounter with you. Ask him to heal you of any resistance to the Father’s plan for you. (*pause for 15-20 seconds*)

Ask God the Holy Spirit for the gift to receive the Word of God as the Father wills. (*pause for 15-20 seconds*)

The first step is to listen to the Word of God. Listen and simply receive the Word.

I will read to you a text from the bible twice. With great reverence be attentive to the Word which God the Father speaks to you. Notice the words which strike you in a particular way, either positively or negatively.

Listen to the Word, — and be aware of your reactions to the Word. We will examine these responses in the next step. Be silent and listen to what the Word of God says.

The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God’s will.

(*Pause for 15-20 seconds. Afterward, reread the text a second time*. *Pause for 15-20 seconds before moving on to the next step)*

**Step 2: *Meditatio*, Meditation on the Word**

In the first step we read the text, and simply considered, “What does the Word of God say?” In this second step we will consider, “What does the Word of God say ***to me***?”

Reflect on your reaction as you heard the Word. Talk with God about ***why*** a particular word or phrase struck you. How does it apply to you, — here and now? Talk with God about this encounter with the Word.

How does it console you? Challenge you? Confuse you? Call you to a change of heart? In this reaction, what is God showing you about yourself? In this experience, God will show you how He sees you? We will now pause in silence for meditation. Consider, “What does the Word of God say to me?”

(*Pause for at least 10 minutes of silence*.)

**Step 3: *Oratio*, Praying with the Word**

In the first step we listened as the Word of God was read. We simply considered what the Word of God said. In the second step, we meditated on the Word of God: “What does the Word of God say ***to me***?” Now we will consider our response to the Word.

In a conversation with God, respond to Him sincerely, as you would talk with a friend. In response to His Word to you, tell with Him what is really in your heart. Your prayer may be praise or thanksgiving. You may petition God, asking for a deeper understanding or some other grace, or want to intercede for others. Be sincere in your conversation. Speak to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This is prayer.

We will now pause five minutes for you to pray, that is, for you to spend some time responding to God’s Word to you.

(*Pause for silence*.)

**Step 4: *Contemplatio*, Resting in the Word**

We will now spend a few minutes resting in the Word. Be with the Word you received. What does God reveal that He wants for you? As He invites you to a deeper relationship, what conversion of heart is God asking for? Rest in the peace and love of the Word.

(*Pause for silence*.)

**Final Step: the Concluding Prayer**

Heavenly Father, I praise you and thank you for this time of prayer with you, your Son, and your Holy Spirit. Jesus, I venerate your saving name and am grateful for this encounter with you.

Holy Spirit, thank you for helping me receive the Word as the Father wants me to receive it.

God,—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—I worship you, three Divine Persons, and thank you for the gift of your presence within me. Let your Word become a living word within my heart. Continue to dwell in me that I may live from this encounter of prayer.

We will conclude by saying the Lord’s Prayer together. “Our Father, …”

(*Make the Sign of the Cross while saying*)

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

**Optional Step: Sharing**

*If time permits, you may invite the participants to share what they received. It should not last longer than ten minutes. Emphasize that prayer is “holy ground,” and that what is shared should be received with great reverence. Whatever is said is for the sake of the group and should be considered confidential, that is, it should not be shared with anyone outside the group. This is* ***not*** *a time to answer questions about the text. It is a time to listen in reverence about a person’s encounter with God. Do not comment on or correct anything that is said. Allow the participant to receive again what they received in prayer.*

*You may begin this time by saying,* “Would anyone like to briefly share what they received in prayer?” *Be patient. Do not be afraid of the silence. It may take a little while for the first person to begin. After the sharing is complete, thank everyone for their participation.*

Students given time to individually journal about their experiences during the retreat session.