ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
PREPARATION OF SCHOOL AGE CANDIDATES
FOR THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Revised April 2019

These questions and answers are provided as a supplement to other catechetical resources to assist parents, guardians, sponsors and catechists as they prepare candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation should be guided in the study of this information. Although memorization is a helpful tool for learning, it is more important that the candidates understand both the questions and answers beyond what is stated. Questions and answers numbers 1, 3, 12, 14 and 15 would be a great benefit to the candidate if they are memorized.

1. *What is a Sacrament?*
   A Sacrament is a visible and effective sign instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church through which we share in God's grace. (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [hereafter CCC] CCC 1211)

2. *What is God's grace?*
   God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, give sanctifying grace—God's very life—with the reception of the Sacraments. This grace helps the baptized person to grow in faith, hope and love; to live fully the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to grow in goodness and Christian morality. (CCC 1266)

3. *How many Sacraments are there?*
   There are seven Sacraments. They include the Sacraments of Christian Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist; the Sacraments of Healing: Penance and the Anointing of the Sick; the Sacraments at the Service of Communion and the Mission of the Faithful: Holy Orders and Matrimony. (CCC 1210-1211)

4. *How do the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist lay the foundation for living a Christian Life?*
   Christians are born anew into Christ Jesus with Baptism, strengthened with his Holy Spirit with Confirmation, and nourished with the divine food of eternal life with the Holy Eucharist. (CCC 1212)

5. *What is the Sacrament of Baptism?*
   The Sacrament of Baptism is the door to all the other Sacraments. With the Sacrament of Baptism, a person is freed from Original Sin, reborn as a child of God, becomes of a member of Christ's Body, the Church, and is given the promise of Eternal Life. (CCC 1213)

6. *How does the Church carry out the Sacrament of Baptism?*
   The sacred minister—Bishop, priest or deacon—immerses the candidate in water three times or pours water over the head of the candidate three times. At the same time he says, "N., I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (cf. CCC 1239-1240) In case of emergency, anyone, even a non-baptized person, with the intention of the Church, baptizes in the same way. (CCC 1256).

7. *Does the Sacrament of Baptism impart an indelible mark on the soul?*
   Baptism seals the new Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of belonging to Christ. No sin can ever erase this indelible mark. This is why the Sacrament of Baptism can never be repeated. (CCC 1272)

8. *What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?*
   - The Sacrament of Confirmation completes the grace of Baptism.
   - With this Sacrament, a baptized person is more perfectly bound to the Church and receives a special strength of God, the Holy Spirit.
   - With Confirmation, a person becomes a true witness to Christ, especially by spreading and defending the faith by word and deed. (CCC 1285)

9. *Who is to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation?*
   Every baptized person should receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Sacrament of Confirmation forms a unity with the Sacrament of Baptism and the Eucharist. (CCC 1306)

10. *How does a person prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation?*
    - A person prepares for the Sacrament of Confirmation through prayer, study and a new commitment to the promises made at Baptism.
    - This preparation aims to assist the candidate to have a more intimate union with Jesus Christ and the Church, to be even more ready to witness to the Gospel in every circumstance.
    - This preparation also includes living in the state of grace, living without serious sin. So, the reception of the Sacrament of Penance is a part of this preparation.

- A Sponsor, often a godparent at Baptism, accompanies the candidate during preparation and the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. (CCC 1309-1311)

11. How does the Church carry out the Sacrament of Confirmation?

- The Bishop is the original minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation. However, at times, a priest may be delegated by the Bishop to administer the Sacrament.
- For the conferral of Confirmation, the candidates are presented to the Bishop, the Word of God is explained for a deeper understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation, the candidates renew their baptismal promises, the Bishop lays hands on the candidates calling upon God, the Holy Spirit, they are anointed with Sacred Chrism, and the rite concludes with the Universal Prayer (CCC 1297-1301, cf. *The Order of Confirmation*)

12. What is Sacred Chrism?

Sacred Chrism is a mixture of olive oil and balsam consecrated by the Bishop at the Chrism Mass which is typically celebrated on Holy Thursday morning. (cf. *The Rite for the Blessing of Oils and the Consecration of Chrism*)

13. What is the essential rite of Confirmation?

The Bishop anoints the forehead of the baptized candidate with Sacred Chrism. He does this with the laying on of the hand and the words, N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." The newly confirmed responds, "Amen." In addition, the Bishops says, "Peace be with you." The newly confirmed responds, "And with your spirit." (CCC 1300, *The Order of Confirmation*)

14. What is the special strength of God the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is received with the celebration of every Sacrament. With the celebration of Confirmation, there is a unique outpouring of God, the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. This is the same Holy Spirit that God, the Father, with God, the Son, poured upon the Apostles on Pentecost.

This outpouring of the Holy Spirit has a real effect upon the person confirmed.

- There is an increase and deepening of all the effects of Baptism, especially the grace of Baptism;
- the newly confirmed is more profoundly a child of God, the Father, and more firmly united to God, the Son.
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit are more fully given.

- The union with the Church and all her members is more completely realized.
- There is the new strength to witness to Christ and his Church and to never be ashamed of the Cross. (CCC 1302-1303).

15. *What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?*
    The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord. (CCC 1831, cf. *The Order of Confirmation*)

16. *What are the Fruits of the Holy Spirit?*
    The Fruits of the Holy Spirit are: Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Modesty, Self-Control and Chastity. (CCC 1831)

17. *Does the Sacrament of Confirmation impart an indelible mark on the soul?*
    Confirmation, like Baptism, seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) which identifies the Christian as someone with the seal of Christ's Holy Spirit as empowered to be his witness. This same mark indicates a completeness in the share in the common priesthood of Jesus to offer oneself and all things with Christ to his Father, especially in the celebration of Mass. (CCC 1304-1305).

18. *What is the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist?*
    The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus on the Cross that takes place on the altar at every Mass. It is the divine event of the very death and resurrection of Christ that happened in history and in every age for the redemption and salvation of all. (CCC 1323)

    The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist completes Christian Initiation. With the Sacrament of Baptism, a person receives a share in the common priesthood of Jesus. With the Sacrament of Confirmation, a person is more completely united to this common priesthood. Now with participation in the Holy Eucharist, a person joins with the other members of the Church celebrating Christ's own Sacrifice and receiving his Body and Blood from this Sacrifice actually taking place. (CCC 1322)

19. *How are the Sacrament of Baptism and Confirmation renewed?*
    The Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are only received once. However, their effects in our Christian lives are renewed every Sunday with participation at Mass and the reception of Holy Communion. This is part of our obligation and duty to go to Mass every Sunday.