

Confirmation Prep Packet

*****Due Date: May 1st of Candidates 8th Grade Year**

This is the primary spiritual prep work Sponsor and Candidate do together. They meet FOUR times working through each of these four Faith Themes together:

- 1) *Faith in Jesus: True God & True Man*
- 2) *Sin in our Lives (part 1) & God's Forgiveness (part 2)*
- 3) *Christian Morality*
- 4) *Prayer*

We have found spacing-out the theme guide meetings (i.e. monthly) is more productive versus cramming them all together in a short period of time. Each Theme should take an hour to 75 mins to complete. Candidates and Sponsors should look over the Themes & Scriptures BEFORE actually meeting together to discuss (i.e. 30 mins prep). so their time together is more fruitful.

How to use Theme Guides when meeting together **Each Theme Guide consists of these six sections listed in order below:**

1. **Opening Prayer** - Please begin by praying together the prayer of St. Augustine.
2. **Faith Teaching** – *Read together aloud (i.e. candidate/ sponsor can take turns reading each paragraph. After reading aloud, pause in silence for a few minutes, each reviewing text in quiet and underlining any parts of teaching that stands out. After the silent pause, discuss the main things that struck you both.*
3. **Main Scripture** – Read aloud the Main Scripture passage together (again, I suggest you take turns reading). Seek to hear what God is saying to you as you read His Word in relation to the Theme. *Follow the above paradigm: silent pause for few minutes after reading aloud, each noting what struck them, then discuss.*
4. **“See Also” Scriptures** – Additional Scripture passages are given below Main Scripture to flesh out the theme more – use as time permits. *Follow above paradigm: silent pause for few minutes after reading aloud, each noting what struck them, then discuss.*
5. **Questions to Ponder** - Please read and discuss these questions together.
6. **Candidate's Reflections**: write down the most significant points from the faith-sharing discussion - the insights or thoughts that meant the most to him/her. *These reflections may be written on the back of the theme page or a separate page.*

Sponsor's Reflection – See last page of the THEME packet. Sponsors are asked to summarize their experience of sharing their faith via these Themes with the Candidate.

CANDIDATE'S NAME: _____

SPONSOR'S NAME: _____

THEME ONE

Faith in Jesus ~ True God and True Man

1. Opening Prayer (*pray together as you begin*):

Breathe in me O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy,
Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy,
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy,
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy,
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy.

-St. Augustine

2. Faith Teaching (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

Faith is the gift of God which gives one the power and the ability to say, "I Believe." A person of faith chooses to entrust one's life to the Father and follow His will by living a life of service to others for love of God, growing in Him and His likeness "*in Him we live and move and have our being.*"

The promises of God were never completely fulfilled in the Old Testament. God begins his Revelation to all people He would create by gradually revealing Himself to mankind through the Israelites. God lead His people; He fed His flocks, but the Chosen People--the Jews--knew there would be a final fulfillment. They were longing for a Messiah, a prophet, a bringer of Good News, who would change their lives definitively.

The prophet Isaiah, John the Baptist, and Mary all played roles in preparing the world to receive the Good News which was the fulfillment of God's plan: Jesus, 'the Son of the Living God' through Whom the Father wishes to bring every soul into 'a right relationship with Him' grounded in eternal love that lasts forever!

(*cf Catechism of Catholic Church*)

3. Main Scripture (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

Matthew 16: 13-20 & Hebrews 1 - 2:13

4. "See Also" Scriptures (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

Isaiah 40:1-11 (*The prophet foretells the coming of Christ*)

Luke 1:26-35 (*Jesus' Birth, the Incarnation*)

Luke 3:1-6 (*John the Baptist announces the Coming of Christ*)

Philippians 2: 1 – 11 (*St Paul speaking of Christ's humanity and Divinity*)

5. Questions to Ponder (*for discussion*):

Do I believe Jesus is truly God as St Peter confessed when Jesus asked "Who do you say that I am?"

Do I believe Jesus is truly man?

What, in my daily action, shows that I believe in Jesus?

Have I been influenced by people of Faith? Who? How?

What does Jesus seem to be asking of me at this time in my life?

6. Candidate's Reflections: *Written by Confirmation Candidates on back or a separate sheet.*

THEME TWO

Sin in Our Lives & God's Forgiveness

1. Opening Prayer (*pray together as you begin*):

Breathe in me O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy,
Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy,
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy,
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy,
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. -*St. Augustine*

2. Faith Teaching (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

Part 1: Sin in Our Lives

Each and every sin is always personal; Each and every sin is always social. Every sin affects oneself, one's relationship with God, with others, and creation itself.

Without the knowledge Revelation gives of God we cannot recognize sin clearly and are tempted to explain it as merely a developmental flaw, a psychological weakness, a mistake, or the necessary consequence of an inadequate social structure, etc. Only in the knowledge of God's plan for man can we grasp that sin is an abuse of the freedom that God gives to created persons so that they are capable of loving him and loving one another.

God created man in his image and established him in his friendship. A spiritual creature, man can live this friendship only in free submission to God...The "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" symbolically evokes the insurmountable limits that man, being a creature, must freely recognize and respect with trust... Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command. This is what man's first sin consisted of. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church 386-396*)

3. Main Scripture (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

Genesis Chapter 2 & 3 (Creation of Man and his fall)
& **Luke 16: 19-31** *The selfish rich man*

4. "See Also" Scriptures (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

Genesis 4 (*The first murder*)
John 3:17-21 (*Jesus brought Light; to reject it is sin.*)
Romans 6:15-23 (*Sin is slavery; Jesus freed us from slavery to sin*)

5. Questions to Ponder (*for discussion*):

Explain how your sin affects not just yourself, but others, even so-called 'hidden' sin:
cheating on a test, choosing to dwell on sinful thoughts, etc.
Explain how your sin affects your relationship with God.
How do I feel about myself when I've sinned?

See Next Page - THEME TWO, Part 2 God's Forgiveness

THEME TWO, Part 2

God's Forgiveness

2. Faith Teaching (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

Part 2: Forgiveness

The life of the Christian is a humbling process of falling and rising and falling again - of sin and reconversion. No matter how often or how low we fall, we know we have but to turn to Him with a repentant heart and He will always be there with open arms ready to welcome us back.

The human heart is heavy and hardened. God must give man a new heart. Conversion is first of all a work of the grace of God who makes our hearts return to him: "Restore us to Thy self, O LORD, that we may be restored!" God gives us the strength to begin anew. It is in discovering the greatness of God's love that our heart is shaken by the horror and weight of sin and begins to fear offending God by sin and being separated from him. The human heart is converted by looking upon him whom our sins have pierced. Let us fix our eyes on Christ's blood and understand how precious it is to his Father, for, poured out for our salvation it has brought to the whole world the grace of repentance. - *Catechism of Catholic Church #1432*

3. Main Scripture (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

Luke 22: 14-34 and Luke 23: 26-47 - The Passion and Death of our Savior

4. "See Also" Scriptures (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

Isaiah 53 (*Jesus, Suffering Servant, foretold*)
Luke 7:36-50 (*Jesus welcomes the sinful woman*)
Luke 5:18-26 (*Jesus cures the paralytic-and forgives him*)
Matthew 18:21-35 (*How often must I forgive my brother?*)

5. Questions to Ponder (*for discussion*):

What similarities do you find between the Suffering Servant described in Isaiah 53 and Luke 22/23?

Do I really believe God can forgive me?

What signs do I see in my own life that remind me of the forgiveness of the Father?

Do I find it easier to forgive or to be forgiven? Why?

6. Candidate's Reflections for Parts 1 & 2:

Written by Confirmation Candidates on back or a separate sheet.

THEME THREE

Christian Morality

1. Opening Prayer (*pray together as you begin*):

Breathe in me O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy,
Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy,
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy,
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy,
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. -*St. Augustine*

2. Faith Teaching (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

“Be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.” – Jesus in Matthew 5:48

Man is rational and therefore like God; he is created with free will and is master over his acts. God willed that man should be “left in the hand of his own counsel,” so that he might of his own accord seek his Creator and freely attain his full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him.

Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. By free will one shapes one's own life. Human freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude (happiness).

As long as freedom has not bound itself definitively to its ultimate good which is God, there is the possibility of choosing between good and evil, and thus of growing in perfection or of failing and sinning. This freedom characterizes properly human acts. It is the basis of praise or blame, merit or reproach.

The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good & just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to “*the slavery of sin.*”
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

3. Main Scripture (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

Matthew, Chapter 5

4. “See Also” Scriptures (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

Ephesians 4:17-31 *Put on the New Man*

Luke 10:29-37 *The Good Samaritan*

John 15:1-17 *Unity with the Lord*

Ephesians 5:8-13 *Children of Light*

5. Questions to Ponder (*for discussion*):

Do I believe Jesus is truly God as St Peter confessed when Jesus asked “Who do you say that I am?”

Do I believe Jesus is truly man?

What, in my daily action, shows that I believe in Jesus?

Have I been influenced by people of Faith? Who? How?

What does Jesus seem to be asking of me at this time in my life?

6. Candidate’s Reflections: *Written by Confirmation Candidates on back or a separate sheet.*

THEME FOUR

Prayer

1. Opening Prayer (*pray together as you begin*):

Breathe in me O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy,
Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy,
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy,
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy,
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. -*St. Augustine*

2. Faith Teaching (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

In the act of creation, God calls every being from nothingness into existence. “Crowned with glory and honor,” man is, after the angels, capable of acknowledging “*how majestic is the name of the Lord in all the earth.*” Even after losing through his sin his likeness to God, man remains an image of his Creator, and retains the desire for the one who calls him into existence. All religions bear witness to men’s essential search for God.

God calls man first. Man may forget his Creator or hide far from his face; he may run after idols or accuse the Deity of having abandoned him; yet the living and true God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer. In prayer, the faithful God’s initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response. (Catechism #2566-67)

There are many ways to pray; here are some *Helpful Hints*:

- Allow each day for quiet moments in order to listen to the Lord
- Aim for a regular prayer time i.e. morning, early evening, before bedtime
- Find a quiet place and posture that suits you; Relax and quiet yourself.
- Focus on God’s presence within your soul; ask the Holy Spirit to help you pray.
- Speak from your heart about your daily life and then listen quietly.
- Praying with a Scripture Passage is an especially powerful way to encounter God’s presence and His guidance. See: <http://lifeteen.com/immersed-in-the-word/>
- One can use formal prayers (i.e. Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be); *said slowly and thoughtfully, reflecting on each word, these prayers can be a great source of spiritual insight and inspiration.*
- Saying simple ‘aspirations’ throughout one’s day to fulfill St Paul’s exhortation to pray always: ‘Lord help me’, ‘Holy Spirit guide me’, ‘Jesus I love you’, ‘Father have mercy on me’, repeating the Holy Name of “Jesus”: simple, hidden ways to stay in union with God each pt of our day.

3. Main Scripture (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

Luke 11:1-13

4. “See Also” Scriptures (*read aloud together; each reflect on in silence, then discuss*):

Psalm 139 *God guides me; knows me*

Jeremiah 29:11-15 *If we seek God, we will find him*

Matthew 6:5-15 & 26:36-46 *Christ teaching us how to pray by word & example*

5. Questions to Ponder (*for discussion*):

When have I experienced God inviting me to closeness with Him?

When I pray, how do I go about this? How at home do I feel with God?

What are some practical way(s) I can improve my time spent in prayer with the Lord?

6. Candidate’s Reflections: *Written by Confirmation Candidates on back or a separate sheet.*

CANDIDATE'S REFLECTION

Candidates Name _____

My personal reflection regarding my experience working on the theme guides and my relationship with my Sponsor and God:

Theme One:

Theme Two:

Theme Three:

Theme Four:
