

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation

Suggested November Ritual

(The proposed ritual takes place during the celebration of Sunday Mass.)

Background

Traditionally, November directs our attention to praying for the dead. It also serves as an ideal opportunity for parishes to focus on the 'Communion of Saints' with children preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Communion of Saints is the community of believers in Heaven, in Purgatory, and on earth. It includes all the souls who have gone before us and are now with God in Heaven. A saint is a holy person whom the Church has officially recognised as having lived a holy, faithful life worthy of imitation and who is in Heaven with God. We turn to the saints as models and intercessors. (CCC#828, 956) We are all called to be saints.

Children preparing for Confirmation are encouraged to choose the name of a saint name for their Confirmation. When deciding on a Confirmation name, they are encouraged to choose the name of a saint they admire, can relate to, or aspire to be like. This saint will be bonded to them spiritually and will be their model in life and one they can turn to for guidance and protection.

Throughout the Bible, there are many examples of people taking on new names, dating back to the Old Testament. God changed the names of many to reflect the special roles they'd play throughout the history of the Church. For example, God changed Abram's name to Abraham meaning, "father to a host of nations." This name-change signified that God was making a covenant with Abraham that would make him the first of God's people on earth. Simon's name was changed to Peter, meaning "rock" and refers to Peter becoming the first pope: "And upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:17-18).

Preparation

Having chosen a Confirmation name, Children should be encouraged to prepare a profile/biography of their saint: why they chose them, their early life, feast day, miracles attributed to them, significant quotes, symbols associated with the saint (for example: plants, animals, religious objects, medical utensils, musical instruments, weapons etc. For further information, check out 'The Saints and Their Symbols' - www.domestic-church.com) Information on the lives of the saints is available on www.catholic.org. These biographies can be formally presented at an appropriate moment during the ritual Mass.

Separately, the children may prepare a free-standing depiction of their saint using the following:

- Toilet roll cardboard tube or cardboard rolled into a cardboard tube.
- Glue/tape
- Paint/colouring pencils etc.
- Children should draw a picture of their saint or use templates similar to the ones below. Having decorated them, they may wish to laminate them before cutting them out. They should then be mounted to the cardboard tube so as to remain free-standing. Printable downloads are available for purchase on www.catholicicing.com/abc-saints.

Children may present their saints at an appropriate time during the Mass where they are displayed for the congregation to view afterwards.

The homily could focus on the Communion of Saints, how each was called by name at Baptism. Assuming a new name for their Confirmation strengthens/affirms their commitment in the faith. Like the saints, they are called to witness to the faith they profess.

Prayers of the Faithful

(Some of the Prayers of the Faithful may be included in the Intercessions of the Mass.)

1. We pray for all children preparing for Confirmation, their parents who support them, their Sponsors who witness to them, their teachers who instruct them, and our community who prays for them. May it be a time of great blessing and renewal for all families. **Lord, hear us.**
2. For a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit on our world. May the Spirit transform chaos and war into peace and calm. **Lord, hear us.**
3. As we recall the Communion of Saints, may their words and actions, inspire us to proclaim the holiness of God. **Lord, hear us.**
4. May the Holy Spirit inspire and guide us to show care and compassion towards the poor, the hungry and needy. **Lord, hear us.**





