



## *Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown*

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Sacramental Preparation  
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**TO:** All DRE's, CRE's, and Confirmation Directors

**FROM:** Francine Swope, Coordinator of Youth Ministry, Religious Education and Sacramental Preparation;  
Jeanne Thompson, Assistant Coordinator of Sacramental Preparation

**RE:** Confirmation Retreat Reflections

**DATE:** July 25, 2018

An important aspect of a good retreat is that the retreatants are given time to reflect on the experience and then prayerfully share with the other retreatants. These days should be “*communio*” experiences that have led our young adult Confirmation Candidate's to recognize their growing relationship with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. This is integral for a mature understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation and becoming a fully initiated “missionary disciple” of Jesus Christ as member of the Body of Christ, the Church.

We are asking that a prayerful reflection be added at the conclusion of **every retreat** during the Confirmation preparation process. This is a “*mystagogical*” tool, “To explore the mystery is to deepen the experience of God within the heart and thus deepen the resolve and desire to live as a missionary disciple of Jesus Christ.”

**This time is to begin as an individual, quiet task, and not be rushed.** We need to include this as a deeper step of an integrative formation process, not merely as another task. You may want to play some quiet music.

You will need to supply one copy (2 sided) for each participant, including adults, and a pen/pencil. Everyone should “spread out.” People **do not** have to put their name on it. **After** everyone has completed the reflection paper, students and adults should gather in the small group, or pair, they were in throughout the day and share two or three of their answers. The retreat leader or group leader should facilitate and encourage a voluntary sharing time, and offer a reflection too. It is okay to give a moment of quiet before someone shares. We need to trust the action of the Holy Spirit that after the first person speaks more will follow.

During the Eleventh Grade Retreat the Sacraments of Penance/Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist are celebrated at different times in the schedule. The receiving the grace of the sacraments may be the experience that “cements” the candidate's recognition of the faith journey experience God is leading them on.

Wherever the location of your retreat is or when the sacraments occur we are asking that you please make the reflection the final experience of the day. Please close this time of sharing with prayer and include the students as much as possible. We can supply you with a basic outline for a full Closing Prayer Service

Collect the reflections after you read them for you own prayerful evaluation and future planning. Please copy and submit them to the Sacramental Preparation Office.



## **DIOCESE OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN OFFICE OF SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

### **2018-2019 SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION: NINTH GRADE RETREAT ON BAPTISM**

#### **RETREAT and PRAYER REFLECTION**

A retreat is an opportunity to enter into a space away from any worldly distractions. It is an invitation to enter in to prayerful reflection and can be a time for spiritual and religious growth. Often, it helps raise questions you may have been wrestling with in a non-judgmental environment.

Please take some time to reflect on what you have encountered personally during this retreat. You will be invited to share your answers. These may be the very thing someone else needs to hear!

#### **PART ONE**

1. During the Rite of Baptism you were baptized and immersed, “In the name of the Father, and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit.” This is when you received the Holy Spirit for the first time. What is your understanding now of how the Sacrament of Confirmation seals and strengthens the promises of your Baptism?
2. Describe an occasion today that you became more aware of God’s presence. How were you able to do this? (Through a prayer, a person, an activity, a scripture story, etc.)
3. How did this recognition of God’s loving presence within you (grace) helped you deepen your understanding of the love of God?
4. How have any of your beliefs, values, or attitudes been strengthened or changed by this retreat?

**PART TWO:**

1. As a Child of God you were welcomed into God’s family at Baptism, and became a member of the Body of Christ, the Church. All who are baptized are called to live the same roles as Jesus was: priest, prophet and king.

**As Priest:** We are priestly when we our lives are marked by holiness. This means being open to the Holy Spirit in all we do in our family lives, in our schoolwork, in our free time, in our care of ourselves and others, and in our personal and communal prayer.

**As Prophet:** We are prophetic when we announce the Good News of Jesus Christ by striving to grow in our faith and being willing to share it with others through actions and words.

**As King:** Jesus fulfills his kingly role by being a leader who serves others, particularly those who are poor in need. We participate in this mission when we use our gifts to help other people.

Give an example of how you can responsibly live your baptismal call:

**As Priest:**

**As Prophet:**

**As King:**

2. Complete the following:  
I came to a deeper understanding of what the Catholic Church teaches about:

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3. I would like to learn more about:

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4. What do you want to remember about this retreat a year from now?

**Parish:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **2018 SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION: TENTH GRADE RETREATS**

### **THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE PARABLES**

#### **RETREAT and PRAYER REFLECTION:**

A retreat is an opportunity to enter into a space away from any worldly distractions. It is an invitation to enter in to prayerful reflection and can be a time for spiritual and religious growth. Often, it helps raise questions you may have been wrestling with in a non-judgmental environment. Please take some time to reflect on what you have encountered personally during this retreat. You will be invited to share your answers. These may be the very thing someone else needs to hear!

**Special Directions:** If the retreats are combined please answer all the questions. If the retreats are separate than answer the questions in PART TWO for the theme. PART ONE can be repeated. Your retreat time may have led you into a different faith experience from the first one to the second.

#### **PART ONE**

1. Describe an occasion today that you became more aware of God's presence. How were you able to do this? (Through a prayer, a person, an activity, a scripture story, etc.)
2. What is the most important insight you gained concerning God's relationship with you?
3. What have you learned about your understanding of God, and your relationship with others?
4. How did your interaction with others today reflect your growing experience of God's grace and the Holy Spirit ?

#### **REFLECTION for more than about this day:**

5. Throughout our Catholic life after First Holy Communion we are to attend Mass weekly as a community of God's family. During Mass have you become aware of the grace of God (True presence of Jesus) in the Holy Eucharist? How? Describe your personal encounters with Jesus in the sacrament. Does this help you to recognize the Holy Spirit working in your parish to keep it a community of faith? If not, why not?

## **PART TWO: THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

1. Which gift(s) of the Holy Spirit do you feel you already use in your Christian walk of faith and Why?
2. Which gift of the Spirit would you like Jesus to help you strengthen in you now? Explain how it would make a difference for you.

## **PART TWO: THE PARABLES**

1. How does Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of God through the parables help you understand more about the mercy and love of God the Father for your own life?
2. Which parable(s) most reflects hope for your life? Describe how.
3. Living faithfully by the Law of Love and the Ten Commandments can be difficult in the world today. The Beatitudes, reflected in the lessons of the parables, are an even greater challenge. How much harder is it for you to strive to live the goals of living a Beatitude life? Explain why.

## **ANSWER THESE FOR BOTH RETREATS:**

4. What part of the retreat was particularly meaningful to you and how did it help you to understand the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist (the Sacraments of Initiation) better?
5. What do you want to remember about this retreat a year from now?

**Parish:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



**PART TWO:**

1. In this third year of Confirmation formation how did this retreat help your understanding of your roles and responsibility as a member of the Body of the Christ, the Church?
2. Looking ahead to the Sacrament of Confirmation as a sealing of the gifts of love of God received at Baptism what do you believe is (or could be) your expression of the Holy Spirit in your life now?
3. The mission of being a disciple of Jesus Christ is the same mission as the Church, to tell the story of Jesus Christ, *the Good News*, to others. How did this retreat give you more confidence to call yourself a disciple?
4. The mission of the Church is also to teach as Jesus did by loving and serving all those in need. How did this retreat time help you understand better what being a disciple is? What is a lesson or experience of the day that you recognize has already changed your life?
5. What do you want to remember about this retreat a year from now?

**Parish:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_