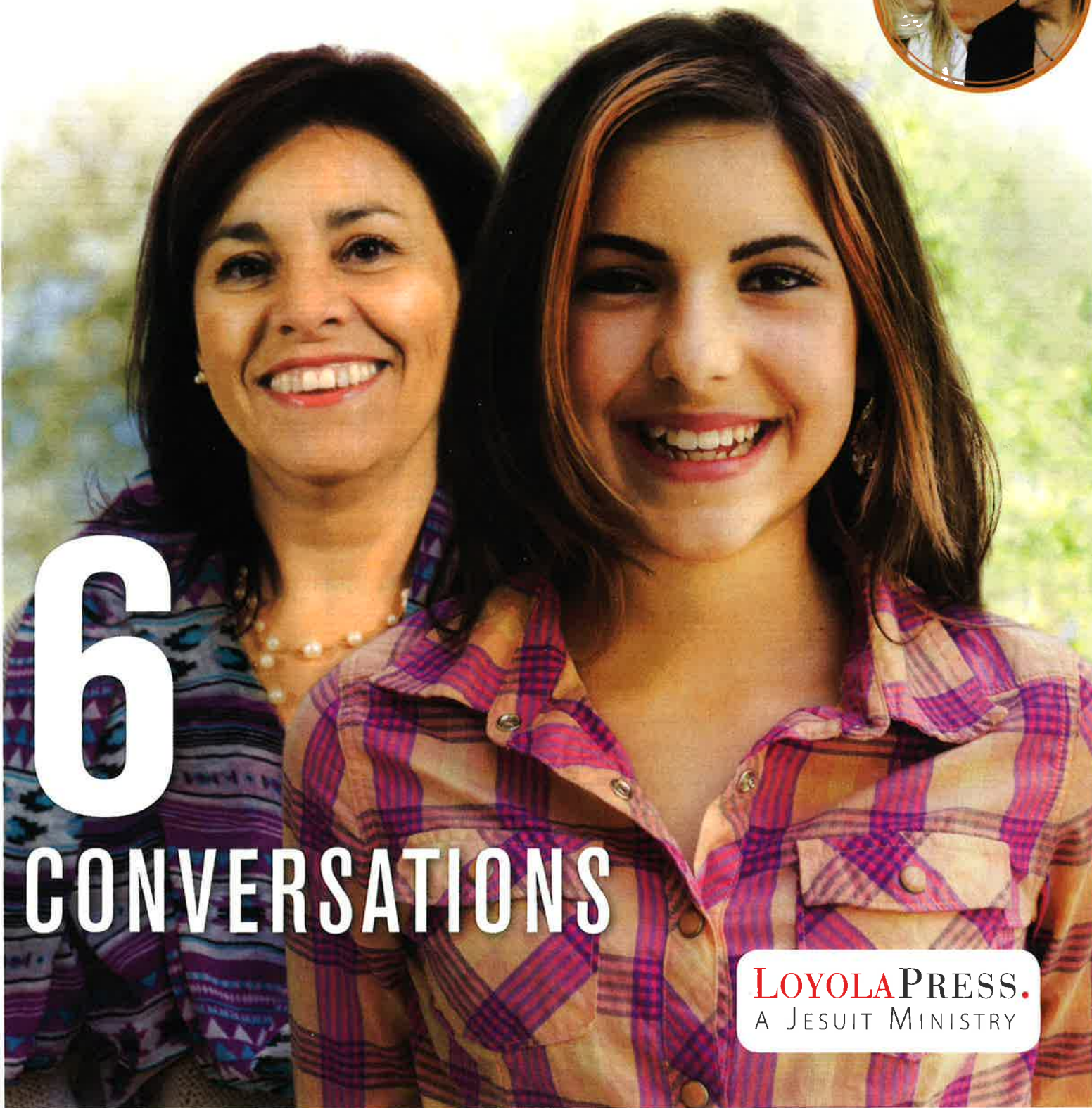


FOR CONFIRMATION SPONSORS AND CANDIDATES

# faith to faith



# 6

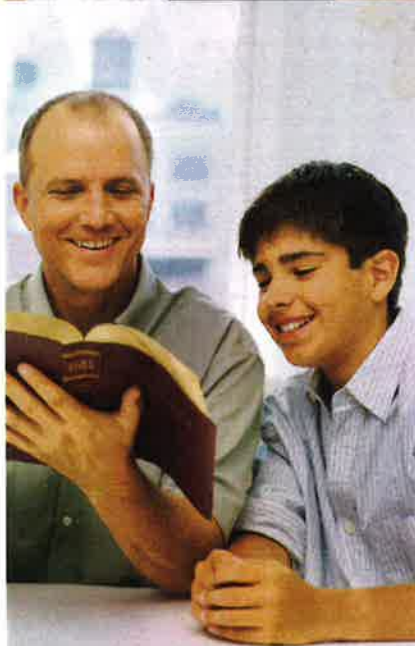
# CONVERSATIONS

**LOYOLA PRESS.**  
A JESUIT MINISTRY



# 10 Tips for Being a Great Sponsor

- 1.** Give the gift of time and attention to the candidate during the period of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- 2.** Listen more than talk. Listen without expressing judgment.
- 3.** When you talk, talk from your heart.
- 4.** Find small ways to show you're thinking of your candidate throughout the time of preparation with an e-mail, phone call, or a card sent in the mail.
- 5.** Follow up on interests the candidate has mentioned to you and discuss them with the candidate.
- 6.** Pray for the candidate daily and ask the candidate to pray for you.
- 7.** Tell stories that reflect your faith. The stories don't have to be pious or overtly holy. They can simply reflect the daily challenges and graces that life entails.
- 8.** Offer concrete, positive praise for the goodness and potential you see in the candidate.
- 9.** Realize your role doesn't end on Confirmation day. Make plans to stay in touch. On each birthday, baptismal anniversary, or Confirmation anniversary, send a handwritten note, card, or small gift that speaks of your faith.
- 10.** Let this invitation to be a sponsor inspire you to focus more on your faith, which will not only help you, but also be a great example to your candidate.



Visit [www.loyolapress.com/confirmation](http://www.loyolapress.com/confirmation) for more resources for sponsors and candidates.

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# faith to faith



6 CONVERSATIONS FOR CONFIRMATION  
SPONSORS AND CANDIDATES

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# what is *Faith to Faith?*

*FAITH TO FAITH* is an adaptable resource designed to help anyone who is accompanying a candidate on the way to Confirmation, whether sponsor, parent, catechist, or a fellow candidate. The six Conversations in *Faith to Faith* are designed to elicit prayerful reflection and open sharing about your own experience of key elements of our Catholic faith. The Conversations can be used sequentially or scheduled to coincide with a specific theme in your program. Ideally, these Conversations will spur impromptu faith conversations that will continue long after the Confirmation ceremony is over.

## For the Program Director

You can find more information on how to use this resource in the *Confirmed in the Spirit* Director Guide or at [www.loyolapress.com/confirmation](http://www.loyolapress.com/confirmation).

## Your role as sponsor

You've been chosen to play a special role in a young person's life. You've been invited to be a Confirmation sponsor, a mentor in faith. Your job is to stand with the candidate, not only on his or her Confirmation day, but also in these days of preparation and beyond. This is a blessed time, a time of great spiritual opportunity for your candidate and for you.

Think back to a mentor you had in your teenage years, someone who saw the potential in you and nurtured your growth in faith. How important has that influence been in your life? You now have the opportunity to be a presence for good in the life of a young person as he or she explores what it means to be a person of faith. Spiritual mentors do immeasurable good that they never fully realize.

If you are the one leading the *Faith to Faith* Conversations, this resource provides everything you will need. The task is simple, and all that is needed are you and the candidate, the preparation material, and the Holy Spirit. Here are the four steps you will take.

- **Set up times to meet.** You may receive instructions from the Program Director as to when to meet and which Conversations to facilitate. But, with your candidate's agreement, feel free to go above and beyond the minimum expected as the two of you prepare for this sacrament. Meetings are best in person, but technology offers many options for connecting long distance. An ideal approach is to go to Mass together and have your Conversation right after. Allow 20–40 minutes for each conversation.
- **Prepare for the Conversation.** The first two pages of every Conversation are designed to help *you*, the sponsor or companion, prepare for the session. You'll begin with a story that will help you reflect on the theme. Then you'll find a briefing on the Big Idea for discussion and an explanation of the Rite of Confirmation and its symbols so that you are familiar with what will happen on the day of Confirmation.

- **Enjoy the Conversation.** The second two pages will guide you and the candidate through your conversation. The conversation itself is the goal; just to be in each other's presence is the intention. Be yourself. Share your faith. Listen with an open heart. Enjoy!
- **Follow up.** Be sure to follow through on the commitments you make to each other. Check in as promised. And after your candidate has been confirmed, find ways to stay in touch. (See point #10, Ten Tips for Being a Great Sponsor, on the inside front cover of the magazine.)

## How to have a good conversation

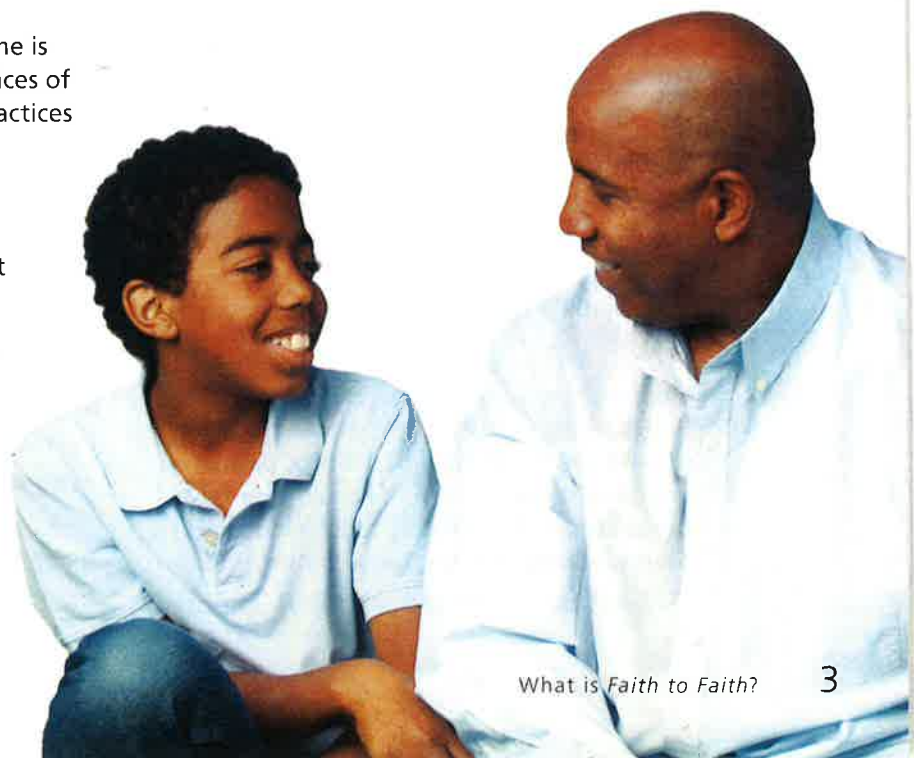
1. Pray before each session, asking God to help you be respectfully present to the candidate.
2. Make room for the Holy Spirit. Stay attuned to the Spirit's promptings in your heart before, during, and after your conversation.
3. Bring your curiosity up front; keep your certainty in your back pocket. In this situation, it's more important to connect than to correct, to welcome than to instruct, to explore than to explain.
4. Be prudently honest. Share your own experience of faith. While it's OK to acknowledge occasional doubts, this time is meant to focus on the blessings and graces of living a life of faith and the religious practices that sustain you.
5. Be receptive. Let the candidate have the space to fully express his or her thoughts, values, and opinions without interruption.
6. Let there be silences. Making space for silence is one way to create a climate for depth rather than just filling up the time with chatter.

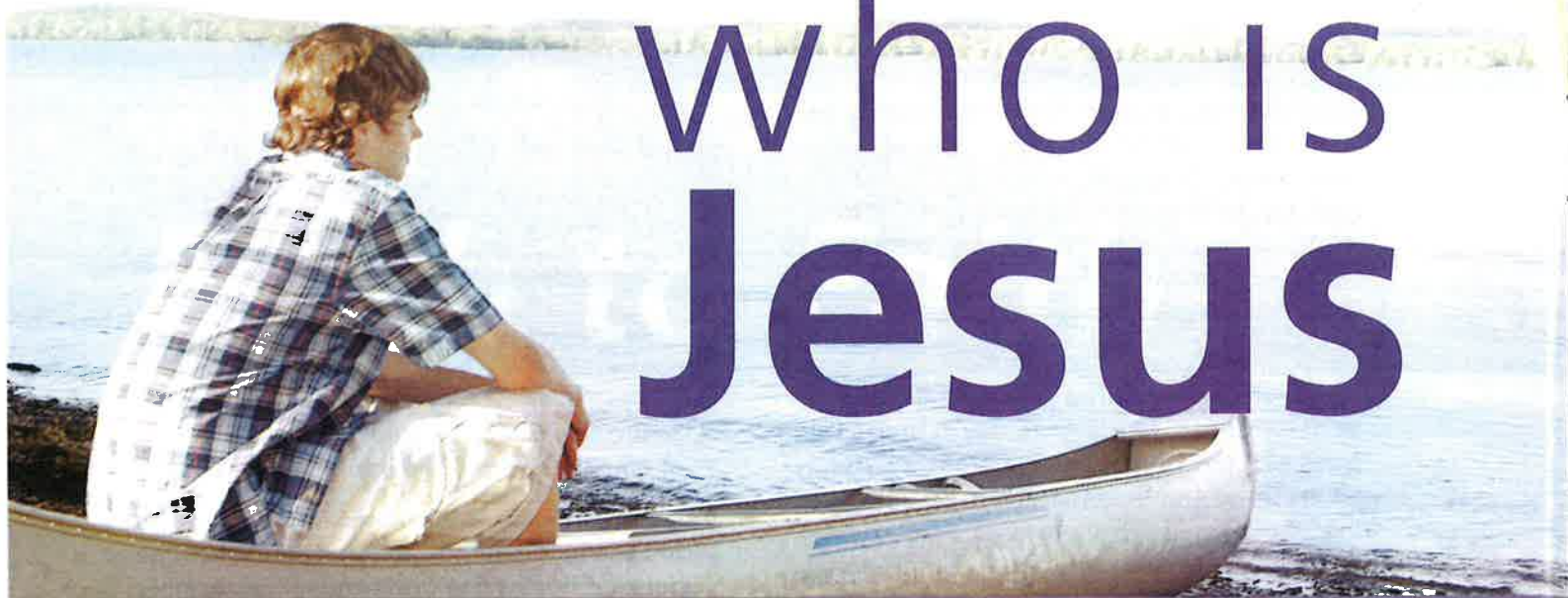
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**"The handing on of any tradition is a matter of one generation holding the next to its heart."**

—John Shea

7. Be prepared. Read through the material ahead of time so that you'll feel confident and ready.
8. Recall your own youth. Remember what life felt like for you at the age your candidate is now. Take the exploring and questioning seriously and affirm it as a sign of the Spirit at work in your candidate.
9. Look for signs of goodness in your candidate. Notice signs of generosity, courage, faith, hope, and love in your candidate. Reflect that back to the young person in concrete words, such as "I'm proud of you for the service work you do."
10. Above all, give the gift of respect—for the person, for the journey of faith he or she is on, and most especially for the presence of the Holy Spirit at work in both of your lives.





# who is Jesus

These two pages are for you, the sponsor, parent, or guide, as you prepare to accompany your candidate on the way to Confirmation. The theme of this conversation is Jesus, so let's begin with a story about how Jesus matters.

## life lesson | CRISIS OF FAITH

When I was 20, I had a crisis. The career path I was pursuing no longer called me. I didn't know what I believed in or if I believed in anything. I was stuck. A good friend asked me, "If you did believe in something, what would it be?" I thought a long time and realized what I wanted to believe in was summed up in Jesus' words: "love one another as I love you." (John 15:12) But what would that mean in real life? I was having a crisis of faith.

Just then, grace intervened, as it often does, and an opportunity opened up for me to work as a camp counselor with young boys who were wards of the state. This was an answer to an unspoken prayer: *Jesus, teach me to love as you do.*

I had a lot to learn. I was totally unprepared to be the adult to 16 boys between the ages of 5–10 years old. They had lots of patience and taught me more than I could ever have taught them. Mostly they taught me to trust, even when life is at its darkest. One night in

our barracks-style cabin, after a particularly scary movie in the recreation center, the boys weren't ready to drift off to sleep. Trying to delay "lights out," they begged me to tell a story.

I turned the tables and said they should come up with a story. And they did. They told me about their lives back home. On this night, it wasn't bragging or tall tales. They were talking honestly about situations that made them sad, times they were afraid, and memories they cherished. They had come to trust one another—and me—and they opened up. During story time that night, I recalled Jesus' words that had brought me to the camp: "love one another as I love you." On what had been a scary night in the north woods of Wisconsin, we let the light of love and trust burn in our midst. Love kept the darkness at bay.

By Tom McGrath, author of *Raising Faith-Filled Kids*, [www.loyolapress.com](http://www.loyolapress.com)

# the big idea

**SON OF GOD** Most people have learned a fair amount about Jesus. He is the Son of God; he was a teacher, healer, and miracle worker. He loved all people. He felt sincere compassion, especially for people who were poor or marginalized. He taught his disciples to serve others. He forgave sins. He prayed. He spoke of the Kingdom of God. He died on the cross for our Salvation, rose, and ascended to Heaven.

It's hard to fully comprehend this, but Catholics know that Jesus was fully human and fully divine. So if you want to know about God, look to Jesus. If you want to know about living the best human life possible, look to Jesus.

The challenge for all of us is to move from what we learn to how we live. Faith grows in stages and shows itself in the choices we make. Adults are able to reflect on their faith in view of life experiences. They can use what they know about Jesus and make it personal, reaching a stage where they feel they are living in Christ. It takes an awareness of God's inner presence to be able to say like St. Paul, "Christ lives in me." (Galatians 2:20) Teens are on their way to being able to see themselves as living in Christ. At this point, young people may think of Jesus as a friend. Friends share many things. Friends may even share a way of being in the world. When young people see Jesus as a friend, they are able to make their own lives conform to what they know about the life of Christ. The Sacrament of Confirmation helps strengthen young people to be living witnesses to Christ on earth.

## Thought to Ponder . . .

Let Christ dwell within you, and having placed all your faith and trust in Him, spread this hope around you. Make choices that demonstrate your faith.

—Pope Benedict XVI  
Message for World Youth Day  
February 22, 2009

## PREPARING FOR THE RITE

### The Presentation of Candidates

After the Gospel, those being confirmed will be presented to the bishop. Candidates stand. Sponsors typically remain seated. It is significant that the bishop is the minister of Confirmation. Your candidate's parish is part of a universal Catholic Church. The bishop is the local leader who also represents your connection to Catholics worldwide. The bishop carries a crosier, or staff, that symbolizes the fact that his role as leader of the diocese is to shepherd the people. The bishop wears a mitre, a folding cap, on his head and a ring on his finger, which are ancient symbols of his authority. Each bishop is the successor to the Apostles who received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. When the bishop places his hand in blessing on the candidates and then anoints them with the sacred oil, Chrism, they receive that same Holy Spirit and are empowered to continue Christ's work in the world. Your role is to witness, encourage, and affirm this sacramental moment on the day of Confirmation and in the years to come.

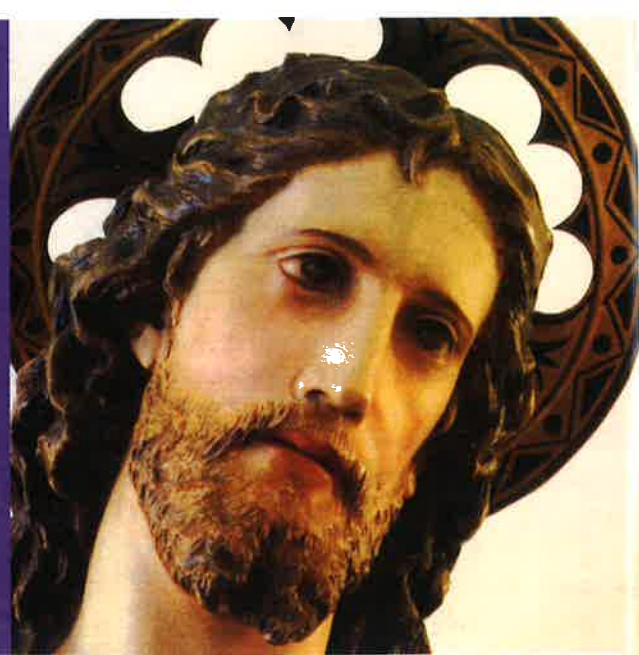


Now you're ready to meet with your candidate to share your ideas, feelings, beliefs—and fun!



# Jesus is ...

These two pages are for both of you, the sponsor and the candidate, to talk about how Jesus is a part of your life.



## Getting started

**Think about the following question and share your responses:**

If you could go back in time and be with Jesus, which Gospel scene would you like to have witnessed? Talk about the scene and why you chose it. What feeling does this scene evoke for you?

1

## exploring the theme

Work together to name as many characteristics of Jesus as you can. You can write your list in the space provided. You might begin with these words: *forgiving, concerned about others . . .*

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Both of you take a few moments to think of a response to the following:

*Name someone you know who is a follower of Christ. Tell how this person has imitated Christ in his or her life.*

Share your answers with each other.

Now, share your answer to the following question:

*What would being a follower of Christ look like for you in your life right now?*

## CATHOLIC FACT

The title "Christ" means "Anointed One" (Messiah). Jesus is the Christ, for "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power." He is the one "who is to come", the object of "the hope of Israel."

—*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 453*





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Help tell about the life of Christ by filling in the blanks together.

Jesus grew up with \_\_\_\_\_ his mother, and Joseph, who worked as a \_\_\_\_\_. His religion was \_\_\_\_\_. At the beginning of his public ministry, he called Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, and John to be his disciples. They were \_\_\_\_\_ by profession, working on the Sea of \_\_\_\_\_. (Mark 1:16–20) Jesus had twelve \_\_\_\_\_. The one who betrayed him in the end was named \_\_\_\_\_. The one who denied him three times on the night Jesus was arrested was \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus performed many miracles. The first one we are told about in the New Testament was at a \_\_\_\_\_ in Cana. Jesus

turned water into \_\_\_\_\_. (John 2:1–11) Jesus also healed many people. Once Jesus was at a house in Capernaum teaching a large crowd. Four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man hoping Jesus would cure him. They couldn't get near the door, so they opened a hole in the \_\_\_\_\_ and lowered the man to Jesus.

Jesus said to the paralytic, "Child, your \_\_\_\_\_ are forgiven." (Mark 2:5) Jesus then said to him, "I say to you, rise, pick up your \_\_\_\_\_, and go home." (Mark 2:11) Jesus was eventually crucified and on his cross was written the inscription "This is Jesus, the \_\_\_\_\_." He suffered, died, and was buried. He \_\_\_\_\_ from the dead and now sits at the right hand of the \_\_\_\_\_ in Heaven.



**Praying together**

Bring your conversation to a close by choosing a prayer you can pray together. You can each suggest a favorite prayer, pray spontaneously from the heart, or select one of the prayers on pages 28–31.

*Suggestion:* You might want to keep it simple and pray the Lord's Prayer on page 28. When Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them to pray, this is the prayer he gave them.

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What new insight do you now have about continuing Christ's work in the world? Name one thing you will do this week to be more like Christ.

*Suggestion:* Get a sticky note for each one of you and write your resolution on it. Stick it on your bathroom mirror or on the inside of a book or notebook to remind yourself of your intention. Next time you get together, tell each other what it was like.



# what do I believe

These two pages are for you, the sponsor, parent, or guide, as you prepare to accompany your candidate on the way to Confirmation. The theme of this conversation is faith, so let's begin with a story about how faith is action.

## life lesson | ACTING IN GOOD FAITH

Faith is not a possession. It's a gift. And to hear Jesus tell it, faith is more a verb than a noun, and a very active verb. "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you," Jesus told the one leper who had returned to thank Jesus after he had been healed. (Luke 17:19) To the woman who washed his feet, Jesus said, "Your faith has saved you." (Luke 7:50) In each of these encounters, faith in action made healing possible.

When I hear these Gospel stories about faith, I think of about a nurse's aide named Regina. When my father was in the hospital recuperating from a difficult surgery, Regina cared for him. After dad's surgery, countless medical professionals came to his room, carrying clipboards and spouting words we needed a medical dictionary to understand. Regina was plainspoken and kept life simple. She greeted my dad with eye contact and a smile. She bathed him, changed his bandages, and tended to his wounds. Often when I

arrived to visit, she was walking the long corridors, helping my dad build up his strength.

I remember trying to thank Regina for her great care of my father. She dismissed my attempts saying, "Oh, God is so good." To her, that explained it all. I had wondered how she could be so joyful in this place of pain and difficulty. It was her faith—a faith alive in every moment, in every encounter, in the face of every challenge that made her joy possible. Moment by moment, Regina lived out her faith.

"Go in peace, your faith will save you," Jesus tells me when I would rather hide in fear. "Pick up your pallet and walk. Your faith will save you," he says when I feel paralyzed by uncertainty. On a good day, that's not only what I believe, it's what faith does for me.

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By Tom McGrath, author of *Raising Faith-Filled Kids*, [www.loyolapress.com](http://www.loyolapress.com)

# the big idea

## WHAT CATHOLICS BELIEVE

Have you ever been asked to explain the Catholic faith to someone who wants to know more about it? To put what we believe into words can be a challenge. We need a summary, a common language to unite us in what we profess to believe. The early Church felt this need, especially as they prepared people for Baptism. In fact, our first profession of faith is at our Baptism. The word *creed* comes from the Latin for “I believe.” The Apostles Creed bears that name because it is a faithful summary of the Apostles’ faith. It is called the oldest Catholic catechism. It’s a treasure connecting us through the centuries to those who walked with Jesus.

The Nicene Creed has ancient roots as well, stemming from the first two ecumenical councils in A.D. 325 and A.D. 381. Praying the Creed in a meditative way brings us into communion with God, stirs our soul, and unites us with all our brothers and sisters in faith. Young people need to understand that faith grows. Sometimes the growing pains of faith can feel like doubt. A father whose son needed healing cried out to Jesus, “I do believe, help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24) The man believed, yet he knew his faith could grow. The Lord is very near to us, and doubt or questioning should never turn us away from God. It is an occasion to turn to the Lord in honesty and trust, knowing that our honesty opens us up to grace.

### Thought to Ponder . . .

There is in each of us—whatever our religion, even in a bishop—a believer and a non-believer. These two exchange views and try to convince each other.

—Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, SJ  
Archbishop of Milan

## PREPARING FOR THE RITE

### Renewal of Baptismal Promises

After the bishop gives a Homily on the Sacrament of Confirmation, the third part of the Rite of Confirmation, the renewal of baptismal promises, is done. There are three Sacraments of Initiation in the Catholic Church: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. Since Confirmation is celebrated in the context of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, those present will experience the unity of all three sacraments. Renewal of your baptismal promises shows the connection between Baptism and Confirmation. The bishop will ask if you reject Satan and all his works. You will respond “I do” to this and to a series of statements about what we believe. See if you can recognize in them the statements in the Creed. At the end, the bishop will confirm your profession of faith by saying “This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.”



Now you're ready to meet with your candidate to share your ideas, feelings, beliefs—and fun!



# I believe ...

These two pages will guide you, the sponsor and the candidate, in talking about what you believe and how that shapes how you live.



Getting started

**Think about the following question and share your responses:**

If you could build a private bridge or tunnel that would take you directly from your home to any place at all, to what would it connect you?

1

exploring the theme

**Directions for Sponsor:** Read aloud the following reflection based on Genesis 1:1–4. Take your time with each step of this process. When you are through, talk to each other about what you experienced.

### GUIDED REFLECTION

Sometimes we might think that faith has little to do with the way we live our daily lives. But when we read the Scriptures carefully, we see that God is not distant, but is close, active, and involved in our lives. Consider these first words of the Bible from the Book of Genesis.

*In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters.*

Can you think of a time when some part of your life felt empty, dark, and uncertain like a “formless wasteland”? Let’s take a few minutes to think about that time and simply feel the emptiness.

*(Pause)*

Now let’s imagine the Holy Spirit of God sweeping over that part of our lives. Let’s imagine God’s spirit moving and swirling over that empty, dark, and uncertain part of our life. Think to yourself, how does it feel to have God’s presence so near?

*(Pause)*

*Then God said: “Let there be light,” and there was light.*

Now, from that empty, dark, and uncertain place in your life, imagine brilliant light shining forth from God, rising like a new dawn over you.

*(Pause)*

God is present in our empty, dark, and uncertain places, bringing light and goodness because God wants only what is best for us.

What else do you want to say—to God or each other—from your experience?

### CATHOLIC FACT

The term “communion of saints” refers also to the communion of “holy persons” (*sancti*) in Christ who “died for all,” so that what each one does or suffers in and for Christ bears fruit for all.

—*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 961*

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Draw a line matching the phrases from the Apostles' Creed with the quotation that has the same theme.

1. God, the Father Almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth
  2. Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord
  3. conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary
  4. suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.
  5. Holy Spirit
  6. holy catholic Church
  7. forgiveness of sins
  8. the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.
- a. There we hope to enjoy forever the fullness of your glory, (Eucharistic Prayer III, Mass for the Deceased)
  - b. "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus." (Luke 1:31)
  - c. In suffering and death his humanity became the free and perfect instrument of his divine love . . . (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 609*)
  - d. It is about the future of God's creation and the one human family. (U.S. Catholic Bishops, 2001 Global Climate Change)
  - e. The Church is holy, not because all her members are supposedly holy, but rather because God is holy and is at work in her. (*Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church, 132*)
  - f. "I am the way and the truth and the life." (John 14:6)
  - g. Wisdom, understanding, counsel, piety, fortitude, knowledge, fear of the Lord (seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit)
  - h. Never despair of the mercy of God. (St. Isidore of Seville)



**Praying together**

Join in praying the following prayer with one person reading the lead line followed by both people responding in unison: We thank you, Lord.

*For the gift of faith, We thank you, Lord.*

*For Jesus Christ, our Savior, We thank you, Lord.*

*For the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be received in Confirmation, We thank you, Lord.*

*What else shall we be thankful for?*

3  
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next  
time

What one thing did you discuss today that will affect your present life? How might you act on that until you meet again? Discuss some possibilities and decide to text, call, or e-mail each other about your progress.

*Suggestion:* You might each agree to think of someone with whom you sometimes struggle and commit to treating that person with reverence and respect.

# how should I live



These two pages are for you, the sponsor, parent, or guide, as you prepare to accompany your candidate on the way to Confirmation. The theme of this conversation is justice, so let's begin with a story on the importance of fairness.

## life lesson | THAT'S NOT FAIR!

I saw some kids playing baseball at a local park, and two of them were standing at second base, arguing—probably about whether the runner was safe or out. One of their buddies was racing in from center field, his face red and his eyes blazing. All the way to second base, he was screaming, “That’s not fair!”

This brought back memories from my youth. Most summer afternoons, kids from my neighborhood would gather at the park to play baseball. Since we never knew how many kids would show up, we were forever negotiating such details as arranging teams so they would be evenly matched, determining if fly balls hit to the right of second were automatically out, and if we had enough players to field two full teams rather than having someone be the official catcher for both sides. It was only later in life that I realized that our daily negotiations were a school of fairness in which we learned the value of a level playing field, that accommodating your opponents’ special circumstances could make for more fun, and the simple rightness of getting everyone into the game.

My next-door neighbor Gerald and his brother Mike are running a school for fairness. They

wouldn’t call it that, but they built an ice rink this winter in Gerald’s yard. When kids of all ages and hockey ability hop on the ice, the rink becomes a clinic for justice, empathy, honesty, and respect. With patience and good-humored teasing, Gerald and Mike treat each kid with respect, and they require the same of all who get on the ice. Amid the fast-paced action, the two dads require good sportsmanship and help the kids negotiate rules that work for all. Since I join the fray regularly, I’m in a position to admit that these are lessons that we all have to keep learning over the course of a lifetime.

Justice, or fairness, is a cornerstone of Catholic Social Teaching, and it’s based on the God-given dignity of each person. And so when skating is in session, the kids and I learn lessons that we’ll need if we’re going to live out the Gospel at school, at work, on the playground, or in the boardroom. How do you see the question of fairness and justice in your life? What do you do when you recognize that something is simply not fair?

By Tom McGrath, author of *Raising Faith-Filled Kids*, [www.loyolapress.com](http://www.loyolapress.com)

# the big idea

**CONFIRMATION** is about mission. It's the sacrament that anoints us to take up Jesus' mission of compassion and reconciliation for the world.

The social justice teaching of the Catholic Church gives us principles and tools to understand human rights and responsibilities and evaluate how social structures affect the well-being of all. Here are seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching that guide us in our response to the needs of others.

- **Life and Dignity of the Human Person:** All human life has dignity and is sacred. We are in relationship with others. We live in community. We are one body; when one suffers, we all suffer.
- **Rights and Responsibilities:** People have rights and responsibilities. We have a fundamental right to life, food, shelter, health care, education, and employment. We have the responsibility to respect the rights of others and to work for the common good.
- **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:** We must care for those who are poor and vulnerable. To evaluate the morality of a society, look at how the most vulnerable members are treated.
- **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers:** People have a right to decent work and fair wages.
- **Solidarity:** We are one human family, so our concern is for all races and all nations. We care about justice globally.
- **Care for God's Creation:** We are called to care for the earth, not just be consumers of the earth's resources.
- **Call to Family, Community, and Participation:** Families need to be supported so that all people can be active participants in society.

Living out these principles is essential to our baptismal identity as Christians.

## Thought to Ponder . . .

If you want peace, work for justice.

—Pope Paul VI

*Message for World Peace Day, January 1, 1972*

## PREPARING FOR THE RITE

### Laying On of Hands

Following the renewal of baptismal promises, the bishop will extend his hands over all those to be confirmed. He will ask God to send his Holy Spirit upon the candidates, calling forth the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. He will pray:

Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of right judgment and courage,  
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.  
Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.

—*The Rites: Volume One*, page 490

You will then accompany your candidate to stand before the bishop, who will lay his hands on the candidate. This gesture is one of the essential signs and symbols of this sacrament. It has been the outward sign of conferring the gift of the Holy Spirit since the time of the Apostles. As you stand with your candidate, think about the legacy of this gift of Confirmation, originating with the Apostles and handed down, person to person, for over 2,000 years, sending each of us forth to bear God's love to the world.



Now you're ready to meet with your candidate to share your ideas, feelings, beliefs—and fun!



# I care for others . . .

These two pages are for both of you, the sponsor and the candidate, to talk about how what we believe affects how we care for others.



## Getting started

**Read aloud the question and share your thoughts and ideas.**

Imagine that you have one wish to make that was guaranteed to come true. However, the wish has to be for someone else, not for you. What would you wish for and for whom would you wish it?

## 1

### exploring the theme

Catholics have a practical method of putting faith into action. Pope John XXIII recommended this method called See, Judge, and Act. Spend some time together using this method now in relation to your own lives.

#### 1. SEE

Take a look around you. What do you observe that you think Jesus would find disappointing or sad? Together, make a list of issues that come to mind that are in conflict with Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God on earth. This could include things such as bullying or mistreating others. Then choose one issue you both would like to focus on. Be specific.

#### 2. JUDGE

What facts do you know about the issue? Do you know what causes it? Which of the seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching apply to this issue? (See page 13.) Are there any biblical values that pertain to the issue? What have you learned at your parish that sheds light on seeing this issue as a follower of Jesus'?

#### 3. ACT

What action can be taken about this issue? What do you think Jesus would do? Is there anything that could be done to address the cause of the problem you have identified? Brainstorm together a few practical responses for the issue you raised. Then choose one action related to the issue you discussed that you will take together or separately. Make a plan on how you will do this and then follow your plan.

### CATHOLIC FACT

"The Church's love for the poor . . . is a part of her constant tradition." This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor. . . . It extends not only to material poverty but also to the many forms of cultural and religious poverty.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2444*



2  
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Imagine that you are contestants on *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* Be a lifeline to each other as you figure out the answers below. Feel free to search for the answers online or in print.

- This nun won the Nobel Peace Prize and served those who were destitute and dying in the slums of Calcutta.
  - Mother Cabrini
  - Blessed Teresa
  - Saint Agnes
  - Mother Angelica
- Damien de Veuster, a Belgian priest, went to the Hawaiian Islands in 1873 to the remote island of Molokai to care for those who were dying from this disease.
  - leprosy
  - cancer
  - the plague
  - tuberculosis
- The number of children who go to bed hungry in the United States is
  - 16 million.
  - 1 million.
  - 500,000.
  - 10,000.



Praying together

Using the list you composed in the See section of Exploring the Theme on page 14, write a prayer together in the liturgical style of the Prayers of the Faithful. Take turns praying the intentions, responding together “Lord, hear our prayer” after each one.

Example:

*For the end of bullying in our schools and online,  
We pray to the Lord . . .*

R: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

End by praying together:

*Almighty and loving God, we ask you to hear our prayers. Send your Holy Spirit to give us the strength to love as Jesus did and to dedicate ourselves to building the Kingdom of God in whatever way we can. Amen.*

- He was a French priest who ministered to the poor in the countryside. He founded hospitals, orphanages, and mental hospitals. He is
  - St. Francis de Sales.
  - St. Vincent de Paul.
  - Henri Perrin.
  - St. Anselm.
- Its national office was founded in 1910 on the campus of Catholic University in Washington, D.C. Today, there are many affiliate agencies across the United States that provide services to people in need. It is called
  - Save the Children.
  - Maryknoll.
  - Hope.
  - Catholic Charities.
- Born in Brooklyn, New York, she cofounded the Catholic Worker movement with Peter Maurin.
  - Elizabeth Seton
  - St. Margaret Mary
  - Dorothy Day
  - St. Clare
- Catholic Relief Services improves the lives of over 130 million people in more than 100 countries. Their educational program involves
  - Operation Rice Bowl.
  - Food Fast.
  - Fair Trade.
  - all of the above.

3  
until  
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time

Building on your discussion in the Exploring the Theme section on page 14, make some final plans on your social justice action. Agree on what you both will do until you meet again. Pick a time to check in with each other by e-mail or phone.



# where do I belong

These two pages are for you, the sponsor, parent, or guide as you prepare to accompany your candidate on the way to Confirmation. The theme of this conversation is belonging, so let's begin with a story about belonging as part of our faith.



## life lesson | SAFE AT HOME

When I was working on a magazine for families preparing for their child's First Reconciliation, we asked people from around the country to tell stories about fault, forgiveness, and reconciliation. One dad, John Dumschat, told a story that has stayed with me because it captured the power of family customs to help us find our way back when we lose our way—whether in anger, selfishness, weakness, or pride. Here's what John wrote:

One morning I was angry—I don't even remember why. I left the house abruptly and did not return for lunch. (We were farming back then.) Finally, as dinner time neared, I knew I had to go back to the house and face the family. We have a custom of beginning meals by holding hands around the table (there are eight of us) to say grace. I did not want to hold hands with my family. The morning rage still simmered, and I felt ashamed to be bringing that into the home. But this was our custom, and all eyes were focused on me: the father. So I reached out and we all joined hands. I felt—and they felt—a profound sense of healing and peace the moment our hands linked. The anger was gone, replaced by the love that gave our family its existence and the balm of healing that flows through the hands of those who love one another because we are family.

Here's what I take from John's story:

**Negative feelings are OK.** It's OK to feel your negative feelings as long as you take the right action anyway.

**Prayer changes things.** Bringing our inner torment out into the light of Christ makes transformation possible.

**Family rituals matter.** It was in joining hands around the table that healing finally entered the family circle once again.

**Gathering together is important.** Gathering with people who love us will remind us of our best selves, and to look beyond our transitory feelings to act based on our deepest values.

**Isolation is not a solution.** The longer I isolate myself, the more this "solution" turns into the problem.

**All families matter.** Families of origin, families of choice, and our parish family are circles of love in which we can find welcome, healing, reconciliation, and a connection to our best selves. When we come home, we come home to God.

By Tom McGrath, author of *Raising Faith-Filled Kids*, [www.loyolapress.com](http://www.loyolapress.com)

# the big idea

OUR AMERICAN culture values individualism. We grow up with messages about going off on our own and pursuing our dreams. Yet life requires balance, and by overly embracing individualism, we can underestimate the importance of community. Jesus wasn't a loner. He gathered a group of disciples around him to share in his work. He ate and drank with others, including sinners and outcasts—anyone interested in growing closer to God. Throughout our lives, community helps us recognize who we are, what we believe and value, and where we belong. We learn from one another and from those who have gone before us in faith. The Church sustains their memories, offering us inspiration, example, and sure guidance. And after Jesus died, rose, and ascended into Heaven, the Church began when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples who were not all off on their own, but rather gathered together in one place in anxious, but hopeful, expectation.

The sacraments build up the community of the faithful. They make us holy, impart grace, unite us, and strengthen our faith. The Eucharist is the heart of our faith, and all the other sacraments are oriented toward it. We are not a community just because we happen to be in the same parish or like to get together. We are a community because of what happens when we gather. We discover our truest identities as we are transformed into the Body of Christ.

## Thought to Ponder . . .

Help each other to live and to grow in the Christian faith so as to be valiant witnesses of the Lord. Be united, but not closed. Be humble, but not fearful. Be simple, but not naïve. Be thoughtful, but not complicated. Enter into dialogue with others, but be yourselves.

—Pope Benedict XVI  
Genoa, Italy  
May 18, 2008

## PREPARING FOR THE RITE

### Anointing with Chrism

The sponsor plays a visible role at this point in the liturgy. This is when the sacrament is conferred. You will accompany the candidate when he or she is called to stand before the bishop. You will place your hand on the candidate's shoulder and clearly say his or her Confirmation name to the bishop. The bishop will dip his thumb in holy oil, called Chrism, and make the Sign of the Cross on the candidate's forehead. The bishop consecrated this oil during Holy Week. It is the same oil that is used in the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Orders. As the bishop makes the Sign of the Cross on the candidate's forehead, he will say, "(Name) be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit," and the candidate will say "Amen." You can pray your own silent "Amen," expressing your commitment to supporting the candidate in the days to come as he or she takes on the hopes and responsibilities the sacrament brings with it.

Being anointed with Chrism imprints a permanent seal on your soul, showing that you belong to Christ and marks you forever as a Christian.



Now you're ready to meet with your candidate to share your ideas, feelings, beliefs—and fun!



# I belong ...

These two pages are for both of you, the sponsor and the candidate, to talk about the role of community in your lives.



## Getting started

**Break the ice by reading aloud the following question and sharing your thoughts and ideas:**

Who brings out the best in you? Is it a friend? A family member? Share a story that shows how that person makes you want to be your best self.

## 1

## exploring the theme

### REMEMBER

Think of a meal when you really felt the presence of God. It might have been a holiday meal or a birthday celebration. It could have been a big feast or a barbecue on a lazy summer's day. But recall a meal when God was clearly in your midst.

### REFLECT

What were the circumstances that made this meal so special? Who was present? What was the occasion? In what way did you feel the presence of God? What was the message God was communicating to you?

### SHARE

Take time for each of you to tell about this special meal. What does this meal tell you about the Eucharist? What does it tell you about the importance of belonging to a group, a family, or a community? Is there a song—possibly a hymn we sing at church—that captures the message and spirit of this special meal?

### CATHOLIC FACT

Within the communion of the Church, the Holy Spirit “distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank” for the building up of the Church.

—*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 951*



2  
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By popular devotion, some saints are considered patrons for particular needs or causes, which are usually related to an aspect of their life. Your personal patron saint is the saint you were named after at Baptism.

Match the patron saint with his or her cause by drawing a line from the saint to their cause.

- |                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. St. Luke               | a. servers and cooks   |
| 2. St. Francis of Assisi  | b. interracial justice |
| 3. Our Lady of Guadalupe  | c. lost items          |
| 4. St. Joseph             | d. florists            |
| 5. St. Valentine          | e. fathers             |
| 6. St. Anthony of Padua   | f. musicians           |
| 7. St. Cecilia            | g. the Americas        |
| 8. St. Martha             | h. physicians          |
| 9. St. Thérèse of Lisieux | i. greeting cards      |
| 10. St. Martin de Porres  | j. ecology             |



**Praying together**

Take turns naming a person who has had a positive influence on your life and faith, and each respond as indicated below. Repeat for as many people as you can think of. Then end by praying aloud together the closing prayer.

For \_\_\_\_\_, R: *We give you thanks, O God.*

For \_\_\_\_\_, R: *We give you thanks, O God.*

Closing: *O good and gracious God, you have put loving people in our lives. They have nurtured us and inspired us to grow closer to you. We thank you for your love and support, so often shown in the love of others. Help us to bring your love to the world, especially to those most in need.*

*We ask you this in confidence, because we know you love us. Amen.*

3

until  
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time

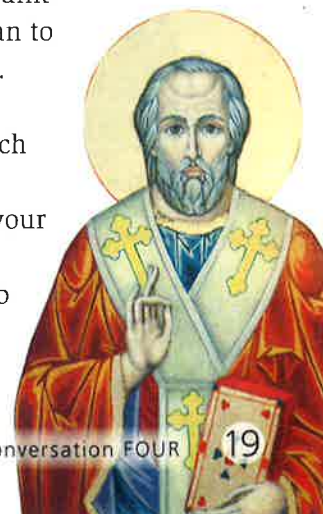
How will you express your gratitude for community in your life? You might consider one of the following:

Write a note of appreciation to the person who brings out the best in you.

Volunteer to do something in your parish to be active in the community. Candidates could ask the director of religious education for ideas on how to volunteer.

Find out more about your patron saint or the saint whose name you plan to use at Confirmation. Exchange that information with each other and mark the saint's feast day in your calendar to remind you to send a note to each other on your saint's day.

St. Nicholas



# how do I pray



These two pages are for you, the sponsor, parent, or guide, as you prepare to accompany your candidate on the way to Confirmation. The theme of this conversation is prayer, so let's begin with a story on how prayer is essential to a Christian life.

## life lesson | WATCHING MY FATHER PRAY

One of my most vivid memories as a child happened on my first day as an altar boy. I was serving at the 6:30 A.M. Mass. Lucky for me, my father attended that Mass daily, so I didn't have to walk or ride my bike to church that cold November day.

I was nervous but glad the church was still mostly dark as my buddy Al Wysocki and I filled the cruets with water and wine, lit the candles, and made sure the big leather-bound book full of prayers was in its place on the altar. Then we waited for Father Hart, our pastor, to come rushing into the sacristy, quickly toss on his vestments, flip on all the lights, and march us out to the altar for his usual 18-minute Mass.

In that moment of waiting, I looked out to the dimly lit church. The couple of dozen people in attendance were spread out. I could see my dad in a side pew in front of St. Joseph's altar. He was kneeling, deep in prayer.

That image of my dad struck me then, and it has stayed with me ever since. I was taken by the intensity of his prayer—clearly there were things weighing heavily on his heart. I wish

today I could ask him what worried him so much. I wish I could ask how prayer helped him. At the time, though, it surprised me to see him from that perspective. This was his own time, his time to talk things over with God and let God know how he felt. Here was the guy I looked up to, the guy who took care of us and seemingly needed nothing. He was kneeling before God and deep in prayer. I'm not sure what I made of it then, but from the distance of some 50 years, I've come to comprehend the lesson I was exposed to that day: real men pray. Looking around the church, the lesson was clear: real people with real problems pray.

Dad wasn't much for preaching at us. But on that cold, dark morning, my first day serving Mass, Dad's presence in prayer said more than words ever could.

Who taught you to pray? Who had the biggest influence on your prayer life? How has your prayer changed since you were young?

.....  
By Tom McGrath, author of *Raising Faith-Filled Kids*, [www.loyolapress.com](http://www.loyolapress.com)

# the big idea

“PRAYER IS the raising of one’s mind and heart to God,” says the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. (CCC 2559) Prayer is giving attention and expression (voiced or unvoiced, individually or as a group) to our desire for connection with God. This desire is not of our own making. It comes from God. “The desire for God is written in the human heart.” (CCC 27) Each of us has been created with this desire. Prayer is a way both to nurture that desire and to give it expression. It is a natural part of who we are.

Christian life is a life of love: love of God and love of neighbor. Prayer is at the heart of this life of love. Prayer draws us into the great love God has for us and it enables us to respond by loving as he has loved us. As a sponsor you can play a vital role now and in the future in encouraging your candidate to develop habits of prayer that can carry him or her through all that life will offer.

Faith is a relationship with God. In any relationship, if communication falters, the relationship will weaken. Christians who have gone before us have shown the value of adopting habits of prayer, like praying daily at specific times and worshiping on Sunday. If we make these practices part of who we are, we can live our entire lives as a prayer.

How and when do you pray? You might pray more than you think you do. Reflect back on your day through the moments of frustration, moments of joy, moments of uncertainty, and moments when everything seemed clear. Did you turn your mind and your heart to God in those moments? Prayer can be a lifelong conversation with God if you let it. God is ready and listening.

## Thought to Ponder . . .

Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him.

—*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2560

## PREPARING FOR THE RITE

### General Intercessions

After the Profession of Faith, the Mass continues with the Prayer of the Faithful. We have heard the Word of God in the readings, and now we pray for the Church, the world, and all those in need. The word *intercession* means “asking on behalf of another person.” This form of prayer reflects our connection and concern for the needs of other people. This sense of connection leads us to pray as Jesus did when he interceded with the Father on behalf of all people. We also offer prayers to God for the Salvation of all. The intentions follow a specific order. The prayers are for the needs of the Church, for public authorities and the Salvation of the whole world, for those burdened by any kind of difficulty, and for the local community. You have an active role to play at this point in the rite. You are part of the faithful, and this is your prayer. So join your prayers with those of the whole Church and be mindful of the prayers and intentions you are carrying in your heart as we gather before the altar of the Lord.



Now you’re ready to meet with your candidate to share your ideas, feelings, beliefs—and fun!

