

I pray ...

These two pages are for both of you, the sponsor and the candidate, to talk about your experience of prayer.



Getting started

Break the ice by reading this question aloud and letting your imaginations take flight.

Imagine that you have been asked to design a place for people to pray that is unlike any other space anyone has ever seen. Describe it in as much detail as possible. Would it be quiet, lively, modern, historic, bright, or dark? What kind of furniture would your prayer space need? How would your place help people pray?

1

exploring the theme

Take turns reading the statements below one at a time. Before moving to the next one, take a minute to tell what you've experienced about that statement in your own life. Tell a story that illustrates what you've experienced.

- All you need for prayer are God and yourself.** You can always count on God to be present. Are you present?
- God loves being with you.** You're not bothering God when you turn to him in prayer.
- God always understands what you mean.** You don't have to worry about saying it right. In fact, you don't have to say anything. Just show God your mind and your heart.
- God ever and always wants to give you what's best for you.** Sometimes God just gives you things. Sometimes God waits for you to ask. ASK! Pester God! You may not get the response you expect, but trust God to do what is *really* best for you.
- You can talk with God while doing other things.** You can pray while doing homework, riding in a car, when you're with friends, or even in the middle of a difficult situation. God is always there to listen and respond.
- At some point every day, let yourself think that God loves you more than anyone else can.** (It's true.) You can do this before you get out of bed in the morning. Take a little time to receive and enjoy the love God longs to send you.

CATHOLIC FACT

In prayer, the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response.

—*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2567*

When you've read and talked about all six principles, think about which of these you'll each want to practice in the days to come.

2
just
for
fun

A screenwriter who is not Catholic needs advice about a character he is writing into the script who is Catholic. He wants details on living the Catholic faith. Work together to list all the things the writer needs to know about how someone who is confirmed lives what he or she believes.



What to wear?

How might a person of faith dress? Are there any accessories a person might wear as a follower of Jesus'?



What to do?

Name some things a Catholic would make time for.



How to behave?

How would a Catholic make decisions? What principles would a Catholic use to guide behavior? How would he or she make a moral decision?



What might a person of faith own?



Praying together

Together, pray aloud this prayer of St. Richard of Chichester.

*Dearest Lord Jesus, savior and friend,
three things I pray:
To see thee more clearly,
To love thee more dearly,
To follow thee more nearly,
Day by day. Amen.*

3
until
next
time

Recall the stories you heard and told about in the Exploring the Theme section on page 22. What prayer practice comes to mind from your conversation that you might both commit to in the coming week?

Suggestions: Spend five minutes in the morning enjoying the fact that God loves you better than anyone else can love you. Or, because you can talk with God while you're doing other things, commit to praying whenever the classroom bell or your telephone rings. Pick a prayer practice and then check in at a specific time and date you both agree on.



what is my destiny

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 your mission, identity, and destiny as followers of Jesus.

life lesson | THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE . . .

Jesus would often talk about the Kingdom of Heaven, describing it as a banquet, a wedding feast, a mustard seed, or a treasure hidden in a field. When I hear Jesus use analogies and stories to tell spiritual truths, it often evokes a story in me. Here's a story of how I got a glimpse of what that kingdom might be like.

Back when I was a kid, my dad taught a religious education class for eighth grade boys. They were a rowdy bunch, and Dad tried every way he could to reach them. When Advent came, our parish ran a food-and-toy drive for people in need. Dad made this his group's number-one priority and became a cheerleader for bringing in canned goods, condiments, cleaning supplies, games, and toys. The boys responded with surprising generosity. On a snowy day in December, I joined my dad, a few other adults, and his class of rowdies to help deliver shopping bags of food and boxes of home supplies and toys to half a dozen families in a parish across town.

All of us boys were nervous entering an unfamiliar neighborhood, but Dad was at ease. He greeted each person we met as a long-lost relative. When someone would invite us in, he'd eagerly accept, and in one apartment we stayed a while. I remember the boys from my parish playing with the five or six kids in the living room and all of us eating homemade cookies. Meanwhile Dad and the parents sat in the dining room, sipping coffee and telling stories—sometimes laughing, sometimes with eyes brimming with tears. The people we visited stopped being “the needy” and became family who shared with us as we shared with them.

I learned that day that you cannot possess the Kingdom of God; you can only enter into it. The keys to this kingdom are compassion, solidarity, and love.

By Tom McGrath, author of *Raising Faith-Filled Kids*, www.loyolapress.com

the big idea

WHAT IS HEAVEN? For thousands of years people, have wondered what Heaven is like, and there are plenty of jokes about people arriving at the “pearly gates.” But it’s important to realize that when we pray “Our Father, who art in heaven,” this biblical expression does not refer to a particular place, but a way of being. It refers to God’s way of being and his invitation to us to live that way too. This way of being encompasses many elements, including taking on the vision of God, participation in divine nature, eternal life, and closeness to God.

Placing God in Heaven doesn’t mean that God is distant, but majestic. In fact, Jesus revealed that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. (Matthew 10:7) Our heavenly Father is not “elsewhere,” but in the hearts of those who are humble and contrite.

The Church points to the pathways by which we enter the Kingdom of Heaven. We have the Ten Commandments to guide us, the Beatitudes to inspire us, and the teachings of the Church to sustain us on our way. The clearest revelation of how we may enter the Kingdom of Heaven appears in the example, teachings, life, and death of Jesus.

Heaven, or communion with God, is the state of being that we long for the most. Chapter one, paragraph 27 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* begins, “The desire for God is written in the human heart.” The fulfillment of that desire is eternal life with God in Heaven. St. Catherine of Siena said, “All the way to heaven is heaven.” And so along the way as we align our will to God’s will for us, we will get glimpses of that glory and tastes of that divine union.

Thought to Ponder . . .

I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

—John 10:10

PREPARING FOR THE RITE

Concluding Rite

The end of every Mass is also a new beginning. The Confirmation Mass ends with a final blessing by the bishop that acknowledges this truth. He will extend his hand over all the people gathered and pray that the Gifts of the Holy Spirit will motivate everyone present to live out the Gospel of Christ. He’ll say these words of blessing:

God our Father,
complete the work you have begun
and keep the gifts of your Holy Spirit
active in the hearts of your people.
Make them ready to live his Gospel
and eager to do his will.
May they never be ashamed
to proclaim to all the world Christ crucified
living and reigning for ever and ever. Amen.

—*The Rites: Volume One*, page 494

The work of the Holy Spirit is not restricted to your Confirmation day. The Spirit moves and deepens within you throughout your life. The Eucharist, which you will receive over and over, will nourish and strengthen you to sustain your effort to follow Christ.

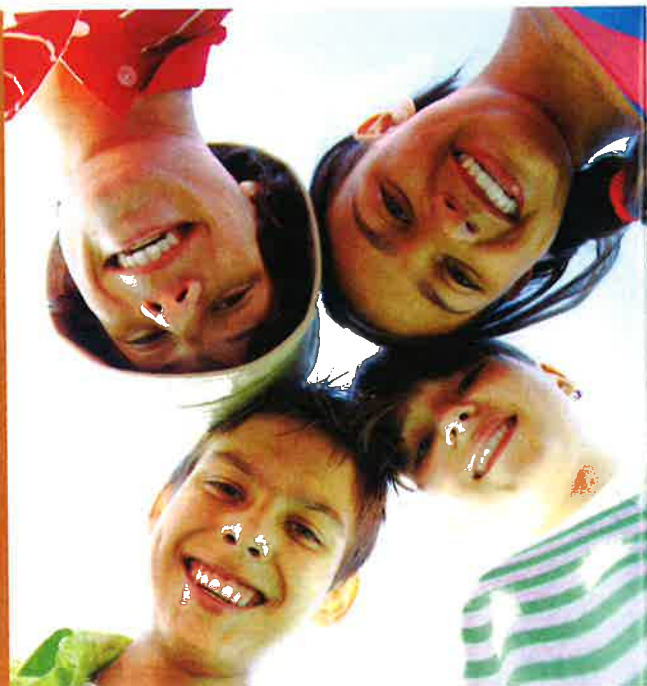


Now you’re ready to meet with
your candidate to share your
ideas, feelings, beliefs—and fun!



My destiny is . . .

These two pages are for both of you, the sponsor and the candidate, as you prepare to live out the gifts and graces of Confirmation in your lives.



Getting started

Take a minute to consider this question. Then share your ideas with each other.

If you had 25 seconds on national radio or TV to share one core belief that really matters to you, what would you say to the world?

1

exploring the theme

Heaven is the perfect life in union with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It's a state that is beyond all human understanding. However, images from Scripture—fullness of life, light, peace, wedding feast, paradise, and the Father's house—can give us an idea of the essence of union with God. Together read through the list of images above. Then take a moment to think of which one of these images or another image from Scripture stood

out for you. Why do you think it caught your attention?

Now, considering that image, think of a time in your life when you've experienced a sense of closeness to God. Tell each other what image speaks to you and a time when you experienced that sense of closeness to God in your life.

You can finish by sharing thoughts on what you think or hope Heaven will be like.



Praying together

Read through the following prayer together. Imagine you are an illustrator for a book of prayer. What images would you use? After you pray the prayer together, share your illustration ideas.

O God, who have prepared for those who love you good things which no eye can see, fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of your love,

so that, loving you in all things and above all things, we may attain your promises, which surpass every human desire. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

—Collect, Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

2
just
for
fun

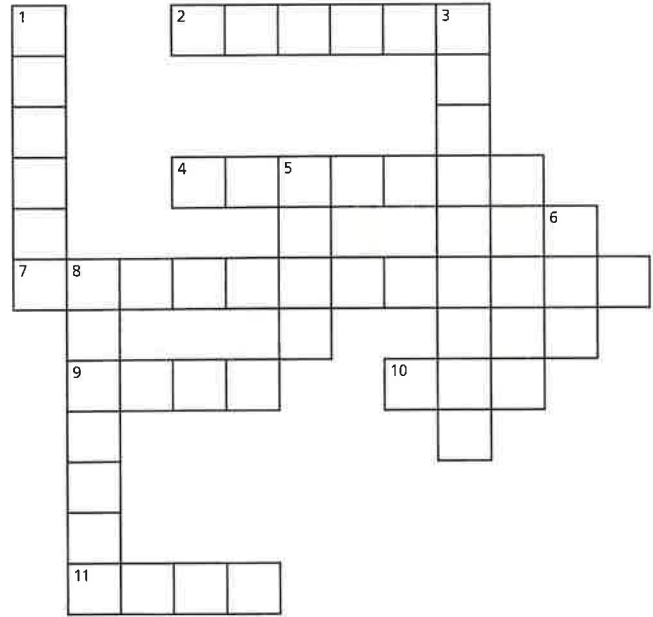
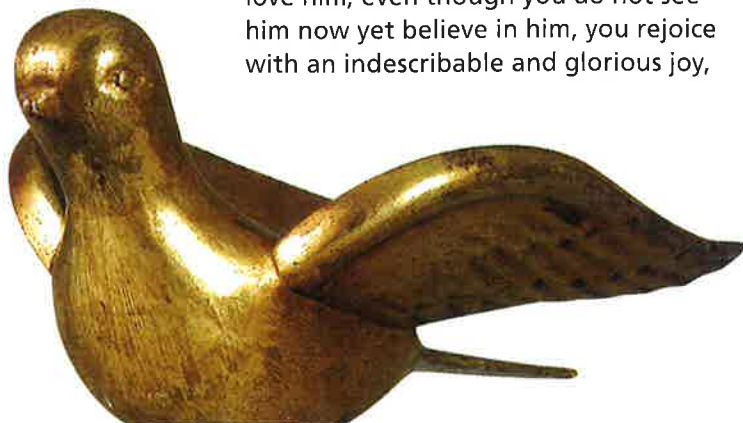
Use your Bible and the clues below to complete the crossword puzzle.

ACROSS

2. Whoever eats my flesh and _____ my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. (John 6:54)
4. I write these things to you so that you may know that you have eternal life, you who _____ in the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:13)
7. I am the _____ and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live. (John 11:25)
9. Revelation says that God "will wipe every tear from their _____, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away." (Revelation 21:4)
10. For God so loved the world that he gave his only _____, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. (John 3:16)
11. And this is the promise that he made us: eternal _____. (1 John 2:25)

DOWN

1. Blessed be the God and _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead . . . (1 Peter 1:3)
3. Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,



3. _____ as you attain the goal of [your] faith, the _____ of your souls. (1 Peter 1:8–9)
5. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our _____. (Romans 6:23)
6. Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true _____, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. (John 17:3)
8. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have _____ life, and I shall raise him [on] the last day. (John 6:40)

3
until
next
time

How will your discussion today about eternal life make a difference in how you live your life now? How will your hope in eternal life influence the choices you make and affect the priorities you set for yourself?



a collection of Catholic Prayers

JESUS SAID, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20) To support you as you prepare to pray together with your candidate (or sponsor), collected here are a few of the many classic Catholic prayers that you can use in the Praying Together portion of your Conversations sessions. Take time to browse through these as you prepare to meet.

Praying in your own words

It’s wonderful to pray the classic prayers of our faith, but praying in your own words—on your own or with others—is also a powerful

way to communicate with and deepen your relationship with God. Just remember to keep it simple and talk to God as though you were talking to a respected friend. Tell about your hopes, fears, joys, dreams, desires, challenges, and worries. Keep these tips in mind.

- Thank God for all the blessings you have and for all the good that you’ve experienced recently.
- Tell God what your needs are.
- Tell God what you are sorry for.
- Pray for the needs of others.
- Pray with praise and adoration, recognizing the depth of God’s goodness.

Prayers

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Glory Be to the Father

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen.

Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among
women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

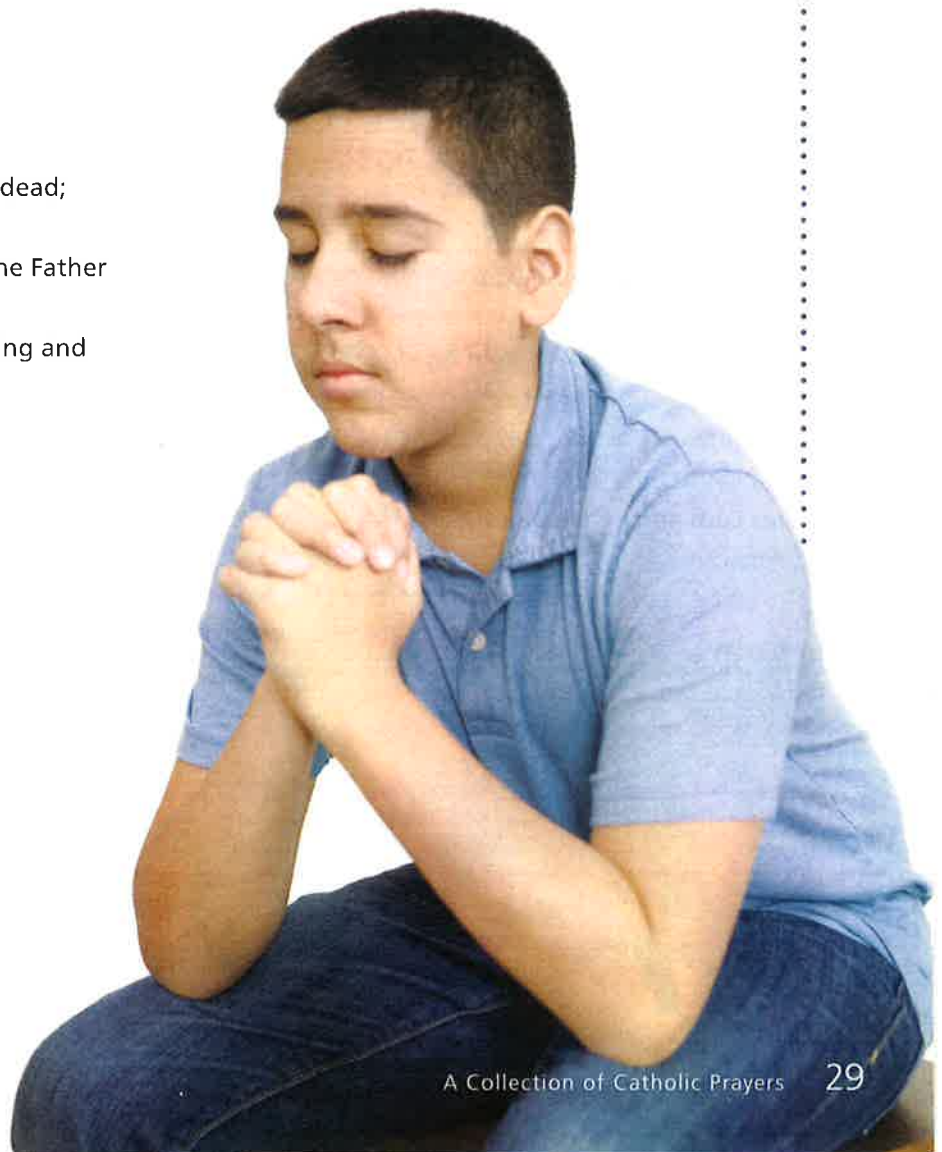
I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father
almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and
the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you will renew the face of the earth.
Let us pray.

Lord,
by the light of the Holy Spirit
you have taught the hearts of your faithful.
In the same Spirit
help us to relish what is right
and always rejoice in your consolation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Prayers *(continued)*



Act of Faith, Hope, and Love

Jesus, I believe in you.

Jesus, I hope in you.

Jesus, I love you.

Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, relying on your infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.



Act of Love

O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of all my love.

I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and I ask pardon of those whom I have injured. Amen.

Prayer for Generosity

Eternal Word, only begotten Son of God, Teach me true generosity. Teach me to serve you as you deserve. To give without counting the cost, To fight heedless of wounds, To labor without seeking rest, To sacrifice myself without thought of any reward Save the knowledge that I have done your will. Amen.

Holy Spirit Prayer of Saint Augustine

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, That my thoughts may all be holy.

Act in me, O Holy Spirit, That my work, too, may all 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.

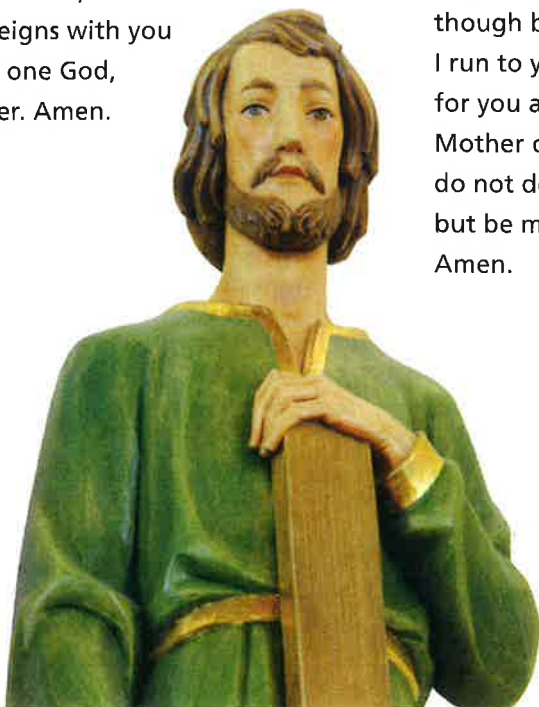
Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so
 much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

Prayer to St. Joseph, Protector of the Church

Father, you entrusted our Savior to
 the care of Saint Joseph.
By the help of his prayers may your
 Church continue to
serve its Lord, Jesus Christ,
 who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God,
 for ever and ever. Amen.



Magnificat

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Memorare

Remember, most loving Virgin Mary,
never was it heard
that anyone who turned to you for help
was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence,
though burdened by my sins,
I run to your protection
for you are my mother.
Mother of the Word of God,
do not despise my words of pleading
but be merciful and hear my prayer.
Amen.

Answer Key

Conversation 1: Just for Fun

Mary; carpenter; Judaism; fishermen; Galilee; apostles; Judas Iscariot; Peter; wedding; wine; roof; sins; mat; King of the Jews; rose; Father

Conversation 2: Just for Fun

1. d, 2. f, 3. b, 4. c, 5. g, 6. e, 7. h, 8. a

Conversation 3: Just for Fun

1. (b) Mother Teresa. She believed that we can all do "something beautiful for God."
2. (a) Leprosy. Blessed Damien of Molokai died from leprosy. He had established a cemetery, constructed a church, and worked side by side with the people building houses.
3. (a) 16 million. That's approximately 1 in 5. There are many places to learn about hunger. You can learn more at the Catholic Campaign for Human Development Web site.
4. (b) St Vincent de Paul. He wrote: "Go to the poor: you will find God."
5. (d) Catholic Charities. It works to reduce poverty, support families, and empower communities.
6. (c) Dorothy Day. She stood for peace and lived alongside the people who were poor that she served.
7. (d) all of the above. To learn more, go to the Catholic Relief Services Web site.

Conversation 4: Just for Fun

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

Conversation 5: Just for Fun

What to wear? modest dress; T-shirts with faith messages; wearing a cross; wristband or other faith symbol **What to do?** helping neighbor; social justice; receiving the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation; going to church; going on retreat; listening to Christian rock music; going out of one's way to be kind to someone who is rejected; volunteering at the parish as a lector, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, or choir member; going to workshops the parish or diocese offers; praying; observing Advent, Lent, and Holy Days; look up the Corporal Works of Mercy **How to behave?** knowing the Ten Commandments; the Beatitudes; lives of the saints; practicing the virtues **What might a person of faith own?** a rosary; Bible; prayer books; books on the faith; statues; Christian music

Conversation 6: Just for Fun

Across:

2. drinks
4. believe
7. Resurrection
9. eyes
10. Son
11. life

Down:

1. Father
3. Salvation
5. Lord
6. God
8. eternal



Lamentation pour Haiti

Tamara Natalie Madden [1975–] was born in Jamaica and moved to the United States as a teenager. She is a self-taught artist, and her work is highly regarded by critics and academics. Several of Madden’s paintings are part of permanent collections. Madden says her paintings “represent my feelings and love for my countrymen and women. I have an inherent love and respect for the plight of everyday folk.” In the above work, Madden expresses mourning for the people of Haiti after the devastating earthquake of 2010.

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This artwork is also in the *Confirmed in the Spirit* candidate’s text on page 51 and in their journal on page 43. You can meditate on this painting during the “Praying Together” portion of Conversation 3, 5, or 6, using it as a prompt for your prayerful reflections.