

ACTIVITIES FOR HOME

1. **Revisit your baptism**, that is, the candidate's baptism, and maybe even parents' baptism(s).
Who was there? Where was it? What were your hopes and dreams for your child at that time? You might wish to share some of this with the candidate.
2. **Travel through Lent.** Come to Mass on Ash Wednesday. Pick up reflection material at the parish if you like on the First Sunday of Lent. Make your prayer for Lent the coming of the Holy Spirit into your family more deeply.
3. **Develop a taste for symbols.** What things are symbols of your family's love? When you participate at Mass, what are the symbols that make up the language of our worship? Think of a keepsake that symbolizes something deeply to you even though it is not obvious to others. Develop family symbols and rituals.
4. **Pray.** Pray the way you know how! Take a little time alone each day & a little time together. Thank God first, ask for guidance and promise to listen. In particular, the "Our Father" contains most perfectly all the elements of prayer.
5. **Make sure you have a New Testament at home.** Reading the Scriptures, especially the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Letters are important ways to open ourselves to what God may wish to say to us. "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."

BACKGROUND

Imposition of Hands

At Confirmation the bishop anoints you with oil. He also prays over you with hands outstretched. We say that he “imposes” hands. This action is used in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and even more intimately in the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

Prayer for Confirmation

The bishop prays these words:

*All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you freed your sons and daughters from sin
and gave them new life.
Send your Holy Spirit upon them
to be their helper and guide.
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.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. AMEN.*

The Oil of Sacred Chrism:

Perfumed with balsam, this is the most solemn of the oils. It is used after Baptism to anoint the head. Along with the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, it is at the heart of the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is particularly linked with the threefold ministry of Jesus: priest, prophet and king. And so, it is also used at the ordination of a priest and the ordination of a bishop. It points in a direct way to the mission each believer has to give witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ. As it says in the ordination rite: “May the Lord who has begun the good work in us, bring it to completion.”

Filled with the Spirit and Called by God to a Vocation

In 1988, Pope John Paul II wrote a document after a worldwide consultation on the vocation of everyone in the Church. The document is titled, “To Christ’s Faithful.” Below are some things to think about and meditate on from that document.

(2.) The call is addressed to everyone: lay people [everyone who is not ordained a bishop, priest or deacon, for whom there are also other responsibilities]. . . are personally called by the Lord, from whom they receive a **mission** on behalf of the Church and the world. . . .

3. . . The voice of the Lord clearly resounds in the depths of each of Christ's followers, who through faith and the sacraments of Christian initiation [Baptism, Confirmation & Eucharist] is made like to Jesus Christ, is incorporated as a living member in the Church and has an active part in her mission of salvation. . . .

10. It is no exaggeration to say that the entire existence of the lay faithful has as its purpose to lead a person to a knowledge of the **radical newness of the Christian life** that comes from Baptism, the sacrament of faith, so that this knowledge can help that person live the responsibilities which arise from that vocation received from God. . . . *Baptism regenerates us in the life of the Son of God; unites us to Christ and to his Body, the Church; and anoints us in the Holy Spirit, making us spiritual temples.*

13. . . . With this spiritual "unction" [anointing], Christians can repeat in an individual way the words of Jesus: "***The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord***" (Lk 4:18-19; cf. Is 61:1-2). Thus with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation, the baptized share in the same mission of Jesus as the Christ, the Saviour-Messiah.

14. . . . But in particular the lay faithful are called to restore to creation all its original value. In **ordering creation to the authentic well-being of humanity** in an activity governed by the life of grace, they share in the exercise of the power with which the Risen Christ draws all things to himself and subjects them along with himself to the Father, so that God might be everything to everyone (cf. 1 Cor 15:28; Jn 12:32).

The participation of the lay faithful in the threefold mission of **Christ as Priest, Prophet and King** finds its source in the anointing of Baptism, its further development in Confirmation and its realization and dynamic sustenance in the Holy Eucharist. . . .

15. . . . The "world" thus becomes the place and the means for the lay faithful to fulfill their Christian vocation, because the world itself is destined

to glorify God the Father in Christ. . . . The lay faithful, in fact, "are called by God so that they, led by the spirit of the Gospel, might contribute to the sanctification of the world [making the world holy], as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. . . .

19. . . . In its turn, the Council has looked again at the entire history of salvation and has repropounded the image of the Church as the People of God: "It has pleased God to make people holy and to save them, not merely as individuals without any mutual bonds, but by making them into **a single people, a people which acknowledges him in truth and serves him in holiness.**" From its opening lines, the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* [*Christ, the Light of the World, The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, Vatican II, November 21, 1964], summarizes this doctrine in a wonderful way: "The Church in Christ is a kind of sacrament, that is, a **sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of all the human race**". . . .

The Spirit of the Lord gives a vast **variety of charisms [spiritual gifts]**, inviting people to assume **different ministries and forms of service** and reminding them, as he reminds all people in their relationship in the Church, that what distinguishes persons is *not an increase in dignity, but a special and complementary capacity for service*. . . . They are treasures that complement one another [fit together] for the good of all and are under the wise guidance of their Pastors".

December 30, 1988
Pope John Paul II

Emphasis added.

