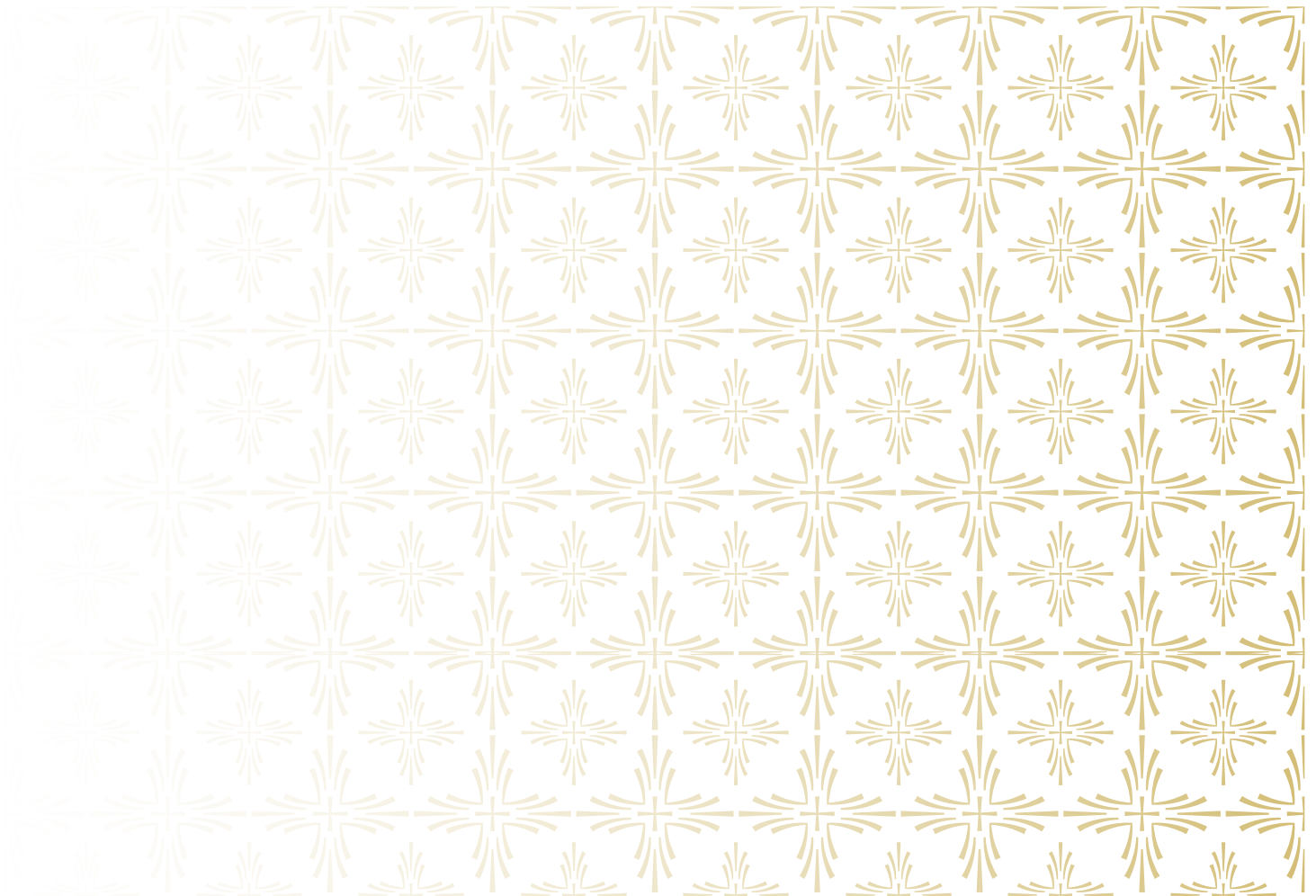




Candidate Sponsor Encounter

A Resource for Confirmation



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Introduction:

The Candidate-Sponsor Encounter is a series of activities for Confirmation candidates and their sponsors. Its format is flexible: serving as a full or half-day retreat facilitated by a formation leader or given to sponsors to do with their candidates on their own, either in one sitting or as a series of one-on-one discussions.

Materials needed:

- This leader guide and handouts (Christus Vivit, Virtues and Conscience) pgs. 11-13
- Bible (readings can also be accessed via USCCB: <https://bible.usccb.org>)
- Pair of dice

Outline and components:

- **Opening prayer / Icebreaker questions**
- **Activity 1 – Our relationship with God**
Read passages and discuss:
 - ✠ FATHER: God's love for each person (Psalm 139)
 - ✠ SON: Christ's offering of himself for humanity / invitation to friendship (Christus Vivit 118-126)
 - ✠ HOLY SPIRIT: Holy Spirit in action (Acts 1:1-9 and 2:1-8)
- **Break**
- **Activity 2 – What is my response?**
 - ✠ Who do I want to become and how do I make good decisions?
This is an exploration of virtues and forming conscience
 - ✠ Interactive game of faith conversations
- **Break**
- **Activity 3 – Our relationship with others**
Intercessory prayers and exploration of ways to be in solidarity with those in need.
- **Activity 4 – Our relationship with the Church**
You belong in the Church and your gifts are valued. How will you be involved after Confirmation?
- **Break/prepare for Mass**
- **Following Mass, enjoy lunch or dinner together.**
- **Summary: Large group sharing (group event)**
Write a paragraph summary together (if candidate and sponsor complete on their own)

Leader Guide



Purpose of this Resource:

We are created by God in His image and likeness, and each of us has immeasurable dignity. This set of activities highlights the many ways our dignity can be recognized in our ongoing relationship with God and with the people around us. Together, candidates and their sponsors will explore:

- **Our Relationship with God:** God is always revealing himself to us and inviting us into relationship. How can we recognize this and what is our response? Each of us is called to consider who God has created us to become, and a set of discussion questions and prompts help us to examine character and moral decision-making.
- **Our Relationship with others:** Next, we turn our attention to others by practicing intercessory prayer. At the end of this time together, candidates are invited to consider how they will continue to participate in parish life after they receive the sacrament.

Opening Prayer:

Select any prayer. Prayers related to the Holy Spirit are great options.

- Here is a good example: [Prayer to the Holy Spirit](#) (found on USCCB website):

*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 shall renew the face of the earth.*

Let us pray.

*O God, who have taught the hearts of the faithful
by the light of the Holy Spirit,*

*grant that in the same Spirit we may be truly wise
and ever rejoice in his consolation.*

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ice Breaker Questions:

Before diving in, the sponsor is invited to share:

- What was your faith life like when you were my age?
- What do you remember about your Confirmation?
- Do you recall any impactful moments that affected your faith?
- What do you appreciate most about being Catholic?
- What do you hope I will gain from learning about Confirmation and being confirmed?



Activity 1 | Our relationship with God

Let's get to know God on a deeper level! God has unveiled each Person of the Trinity in a way that gives us a better understanding of who he is. This is God's invitation to draw into closer relationship.

Explore these passages together:

- o Read each of the following passages, then discuss questions (candidate asks sponsor / sponsor asks candidate.) Feel free to improvise questions or use the ones provided.
- o If time permits, read the passages more than once, asking what stood out each time (Lectio Divina format).
- o Take stretch breaks in between sections, if needed.

GOD THE FATHER: God's love for each person (Psalm 139) found in the Bible or use text from [USCCB website](#)

- o What stands out to you about this psalm?
- o The psalm mentions that we are wonderfully made. What are some unique gifts, talents, or qualities that you feel God has given you?
- o God created you intentionally. How can an awareness of this influence the way you treat yourself and others?
- o As a child of God who is "wonderfully made," you have inherent dignity. What do you think this means? What difference does this make for your life? (What happens when people don't see this in themselves or in others?)
- o Your dignity comes from who God created you to be, not from social approval or achievements. When is this difficult to remember? What can you do to be more aware of this?
- o Who in your life can encourage or remind you of your God-given worth, and how can you seek their support? How can you be a support to those around you and help them recognize their own dignity?

Activity 1 | Our relationship with God (continued)



GOD THE SON: Next, focus on the Son through Christ's offering of Himself for humanity and invitation to friendship (Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Christus Vivit* from 2019 – paragraphs 118–126 – see page 11).

- o What stands out to you about this passage from Pope Francis' writing?
- o How does knowing that God made you so carefully influence the way you think about the sacrifice Jesus made for you?
- o What does it mean to you personally to be described as "priceless" and "redeemed by the precious blood of Christ"? How can recognizing your value influence the choices you make every day?
- o The passage emphasizes that Jesus is not just a historical figure. How do you recognize Jesus' presence in your everyday experiences—at school, with friends, or at home?
- o What do you think Pope Francis means when he says that Jesus "comes to you today and every day, inviting you to set out towards ever new horizons." How can you respond to this invitation?
- o Pope Francis describes Jesus as your "friend who loves you and wants to triumph in you." What does it mean to have a friendship with Jesus?

HOLY SPIRIT: Finally, let's learn about the Holy Spirit through reading Acts 1:1–9 and 2:1–8. You can find these in your Bible or on the [USCCB website](#).

- o After reading, acknowledge the student has been discussing the Holy Spirit in Confirmation class. What stands out to you about these passages from Acts?
- o Can others see the Holy Spirit's work in your life? What personal habits or choices might show that you are connected to God's Spirit?
- o The disciples waited and prayed together. How can you strengthen your relationships with other believers and encourage one another?
- o How does the Holy Spirit's empowerment of each disciple in Acts 2:1–4 affirm the unique value and purpose of every person in God's plan?
- o Reflecting on the disciples' transformation, how do moments of spiritual empowerment or service help you recognize your own inherent worth and the dignity of those around you?



Activity 2 | What is my response?

As you prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation, it is a good time to ask, “What kind of person do I hope to become?” Following Jesus’ example and striving to become more like him is one way to grow in moral goodness. Another helpful approach is to practice the virtues:

- Theological: faith, hope and charity
- Cardinal: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

Like practicing a musical instrument or training for your favorite sport, it takes time to develop virtuous habits, which over time will help you to instinctively choose virtuous behavior.

Growing in Virtues Activity: Review the handout on pg. 12 and discuss the virtue(s) you believe you are already practicing and which ones you could improve upon.

This is also a good time to consider how to make good decisions. We are all equipped with a “compass” for good decision-making: Our conscience is a desire to do good and an internal sense of what leads us in the right direction. It is something we possess naturally, but it is not complete all by itself. We rely on the wisdom of the Church and the help of others to point our needle northward and to inform us what “north” is.

Conscience: Review the handout on pg. 13 and ask any questions you may have.

Interactive Game: Have 2 dice on hand. Roll the dice and answer the question that corresponds to the total of the dice. If you re-roll a number, add or subtract.

2. (If you roll a 2) How do you describe what it means to live a life of holiness and dignity? Can you give examples from your life or the life of someone you admire?
3. Can you share a time when you felt God’s presence in your life?
4. Have you ever had to defend your dignity or someone else’s dignity?
5. Share an experience when someone treated you with kindness or generosity, upholding your dignity in a challenging situation.
6. What advice would you give for being a peacemaker and promoting justice, equality, and respect at school, home, or in the community?
7. What’s your favorite gift of the Holy Spirit (wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord)? Can you give examples of how they have helped you make choices that honor the dignity of yourself and others?
8. Name a person who demonstrates at least one of the virtues (faith, hope, charity, prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance). What do they do to reflect this virtue?



Activity 2 | What is my response? (continued)

9. What's one of the virtues you find difficult? Why?
10. What do you think the world would be like if everyone practiced the virtues? Which ones do you think are most important?
11. Can you think of a time when you were faced with a decision and you felt your conscience guiding you to make a morally good choice?
12. Why do you think you need the help of others to form your conscience? What would happen if everyone relied on their own experience to determine right from wrong?



Activity 3 | Our relationship with others

Prayer has a powerful way of transforming our hearts and calling us to see those around us in a new way.

Sponsors: You may introduce this prayer activity with these other types of prayer if it would be helpful for context:

There are various forms of prayer:

- Adoration (where we contemplate the greatness of God)
- Thanksgiving (where we take time to articulate our gratitude to God for all we are and all we have)
- Contrition (where we express sorrow for the times we have turned away from God)
- Petition/Intercession (where we ask God for specific things. Intercession is when we ask on behalf of others)

Through Intercessory prayer, we see the people among us as children of God, recognize their dignity and ask God to care for them in a particular way. We do not have to personally know people to pray for them.

This activity invites the sponsor and candidate to each share who is in need of prayers, and then pray together for:

- Someone each personally knows who is in need of prayer (This includes people you may struggle with or have anger toward).
- Someone each has heard about who may need help, support, or prayers.
- What groups or people are in need of prayers? What is going on in our city, state, country, world? Name them, pray for them.
- Together, explore a few ways to be in solidarity with those in need. Are there any actions to take to help them?

Begin your prayer together by making the sign of the cross: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"

- Let's think of people we know who need prayers. (Pray for them intentionally, one by one, for example, "I would like to pray for my brother who is having knee surgery next week, that all goes well and he has a smooth recovery." After each prayer intention, say "We pray to the Lord," and then together, "Lord, hear our prayer.")
- Is there anyone we are struggling with right now? Let's try to see them as a beloved child of God. How would we like to pray for them? (The sponsor may like to go first) After each, say "We pray to the Lord," and then together, "Lord, hear our prayer."

Activity 3 | Our relationship with others (continued)



- Now, let's consider people around us. These are people we may have heard about but don't know personally, like people our friends know or people in our city, nation, and in the world (Pray each intention together one by one, and after each say "We pray to the Lord," and then together, "Lord, hear our prayer.>").
- Discuss together: How can we be in solidarity with each of the people and groups we prayed for? What actions can we take to support them? How can we help them with their needs? What can we do to draw attention to or uphold their dignity?

Activity 4 | Our Relationship with the Church



Your Confirmation is preparing you to be a missionary disciple! (That is, a disciple of Christ on a mission to bring His love to others). You belong in the Church and your gifts are valued!

Spend a few minutes to consider:

- What are my gifts? What comes easily and naturally to me? How has God given me these gifts to help others?
- How will I be involved in the life of the Church after I receive the sacrament of Confirmation?
 - o In my parish: Look through parish bulletin, consider roles of laypeople during Mass (greeters, ushers, lectors/readers, musicians, eucharistic ministers), what activities are done in my parish to serve the poor?
 - o Outside my parish: What are other service opportunities with school or with a community group?

Attend Mass

Following Mass, enjoy lunch or dinner together.

Discuss something that stood out from Mass. What was your favorite part of today's time together? Why?

Summary:

Both the candidate and the sponsor should conclude the day with a reflection. If the Encounter takes place in a group setting, each can be invited to share their impressions, highlights, and/or take-aways from the Encounter with the large group. If the candidate and sponsor meet on their own, they may write a paragraph together, which summarizes their impressions, highlights, and takeaways.



What does the Holy Father have to say about our relationship with Jesus in a document he wrote to young people called **CHRISTUS VIVIT**?

Christ saves you

Christ, out of love, sacrificed himself completely in order to save you. His outstretched arms on the cross are the most telling sign that he is a friend who is willing to stop at nothing. (Paragraph 118)

The same Christ who, by his cross, saved us from our sins, today continues to save and redeem us by the power of his total self-surrender... Never forget that "he forgives us seventy times seven. Time and time again, he bears us on his shoulders. No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this boundless and unfailing love. With a tenderness that never disappoints but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew." (Paragraph 119)

The Lord's love is greater than all our problems, frailties and flaws. Yet it is precisely through our problems, frailties and flaws that he wants to write this love story. (Paragraph 120)

Young people, beloved of the Lord, how valuable must you be if you were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ! Dear young people, "You are priceless! You are not up for sale! Please, do not let yourselves be bought... You are priceless. You must repeat this always: I am not up for sale; I do not have a price. I am free! Fall in love with this freedom, which is what Jesus offers." (Paragraph 122)

He is alive!

Christ is alive! We need to keep reminding ourselves of this, because we can risk seeing Jesus Christ simply as a fine model from the distant past, as a memory, as someone who saved us two thousand years ago. But that would be of no use to us: it would leave us unchanged, it would not set us free. The one who fills us with his grace, the one who liberates us, transforms us, heals and consoles us is someone fully alive. (Paragraph 124)

Alive, he can be present in your life at every moment, to fill it with light and to take away all sorrow and solitude. Even if all others depart, he will remain, as he promised: "I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt 28:20). He fills your life with his unseen presence... he did not only come in the past, but he comes to you today and every day, inviting you to set out towards ever new horizons. (Paragraph 125)

You have a friend who loves you and wants to triumph in you. Your Savior lives. (Paragraph 126)

Virtues

Theological Virtues

These are gifts from God that help us grow in our relationship with him.



Virtue	What It Means	How You Can Live It
Faith	Believing in God and all He has revealed	Pray daily, go to Mass, trust God
Hope	Trusting in God's promises and looking forward to Heaven	Stay positive, believe God is with you
Charity (Love)	Loving God above all and loving others	Be kind, help others, forgive easily

Cardinal Virtues

These are human virtues that help us live a good and moral life.

Virtue	What It Means	How You Can Live It
Prudence	Knowing the right thing to do and choosing it	Think before you act or speak
Justice	Trusting others fairly and giving them what they deserve	Stand up for what's right, tell the truth
Fortitude	Having courage to do what's right, even when it's hard	Be fair, respect others' rights
Temperance	Controlling your desires and actions	Don't overdo things, practice self-control

Reflections:

- Which virtue(s) do you think you're strongest in?
- Which one(s) would you like to grow in?
- What's one thing you can do this week to practice that virtue?

Conscience

The Catechism teaches that forming your conscience means learning to recognize right from wrong, guided by truth, reason, and God's teachings. It's a lifelong process that starts when you're young and helps you make good choices.



What is conscience?

- Your conscience is like an inner voice that helps you know what's right and wrong.
- It's not just a feeling — it's the voice of God in your heart, helping you choose the good.

How do you form your conscience?

The Catechism (paragraphs 1783–1785) says forming your conscience means:

- Learning what is true and good by studying Scripture and Church teachings.
- Listening to reason — thinking carefully before making choices.
- Praying and asking God for help to understand what's right.
- Following good examples — like saints, parents, and teachers who live with virtue.
- Avoiding bad influences — things that tempt you to ignore what's right.

Why is it important?

- A well-formed conscience helps you make wise, loving, and fair decisions.
- It protects you from being tricked by selfishness or peer pressure.
- It helps you grow closer to God and become the person he created you to be.

What you can do

- Read the Bible and learn about Jesus' teachings.
- Ask questions when you're unsure about a choice. Talk to trusted adults.
- Practice examining your conscience — think about your actions and ask, "Was that loving? Was that fair?"
- Consider how forming and informing your conscience can help orient your life toward good decision-making.