

My Confirmation Passport



Name:

Confirmation Year:

Small Group:



Corpus Christi Catholic Church Confirmation Program 2023-2024

<https://www.corpuschristicatholic.org/Confirmation> | youth@corpuschristicatholic.org | 619-482-3954 ext 2003

Please contact **Sophie Aipa** for questions.

Program Requirements – General Information

The Confirmation program is a two year program purposed for the spiritual and personal enrichment of high school students as they prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Students will receive this final Sacrament of Initiation upon successful completion of the two-year program and the students personal request to be Confirmed in the Catholic Church.

In order to be eligible to enter into the program, teens must be in high school. Most teens tend to begin their Confirmation preparation at the start of 9th grade.

THE CONFIRMATION PROGRAM AT CORPUS CHRISTI IS ONLY OPEN TO REGISTERED PARISHIONERS AT THIS TIME. *If you are NOT local to Corpus Christi and are registered with a different parish, please visit your local parish where you normally attend for classes.*

* Your Parish ID number will be required at the time of registration.

THE STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT ONLINE FORM WILL BE SENT VIA EMAIL & WILL BE POSTED PRIOR TO THE START OF CONFIRMATION CLASSES

Teens will be required to complete this form during their first week

Confirmation Payment: Cost is **\$150** for Confirmation classes for the first child and **\$80** for each **additional child** - Payment is **due** at the time of **online registration**

✿ **Registration closes on August 31, 2023** ✿

Baptismal/First Communion certificate copies: Please email or drop off to the main or youth office a **COPY** of your child's **Baptism & First Communion Certificate** (include first/last name in subject -line please) - If your child received their sacraments at Corpus Christi, please contact Sophie Aipa. We can look up your family's information but you may still have to turn in a copy. If your child has NOT received one or both of these prior sacraments, **please note** so in the registration form & **contact Sophie for additional steps.**

*If you submitted your certificates last year, you DO NOT need to send in additional copies.

High school seniors CONTACT SOPHIE BEFORE REGISTRATION!!!

Transfer students must turn in a letter from their previous parish/Confirmation coordinator or Director of Catechetical Ministry certifying the completion of one full year of Confirmation preparation. This letter must have a seal from the parish.

Class Sessions are every other Sunday from 2:00-3:45PM

Class time / Check-in / Arrival & Dismissal: Check-in for teens will start at 1:45PM and **class will begin right at 2:00PM.** Please drop off your child no later than 1:55PM so that they are

checked in on time otherwise they will be marked as **LATE**. **Class sessions have a strict starting time at 2:00PM**. For **safe environment** purposes, all outer doors will be **LOCKED by 2:10PM**.

Parents **MUST PARK** when dropping off kids at ALL in-person events. Cars **cannot** pull up the Hall and block traffic, as this can lead to accidents and inconvenience towards other families/cars.

During the first few weeks, teens may have a hard time finding their classes. There will be tables set up for **Check-in** with name tags that will have a small group number and teens must find their group. After the first few classes, confirmation teens must do their best to remember their small group number and who their teacher is. There will be volunteers helping direct any teens to their groups if name tags get lost.

Classes will start concluding their session/discussions at approximately 3:30PM and will end officially at 3:45PM. Parents can plan to arrive between 3:30-3:45PM to pick up your kids. Please do not pick up your teens earlier than the class end time.

Parents MUST PARK and can contact teens on where they are parked or they may come to the outside of the Parish Hall to pick up their kids. Again, cars cannot pull up the Hall and block traffic, as this can lead to accidents and inconvenience towards other families/cars.

Small groups & materials Teens will be assigned to designated small groups and will have a 1-2 Teachers and a Young Apostle volunteer. Teachers are responsible for the catechetical preparation of your teen and are given a curriculum and class guides of the program that I provide. Teens may have a book and Bible that will be used in class. **Please have teens bring their Bible and book and a binder to every class.** Teens should set aside a special Binder just for Confirmation passport, information, handouts, and homework.

Homework Assignments Homework assignments are assigned within small groups and may vary from group to group. These assignments will vary and may include watching assigned video material, written assignments, written reflections, and readings of the Bible. Some teachers are also allowed to do the homework with their teens within class time if that is part of their specific teaching style/lesson. Homework assignments are not intended to overwhelm or bring the students down, but simply to assist students in maintaining a consistent relationship with God and going deeper in their faith-life as well as to see that they are participating online. With the right attitude, most students will find the homework enjoyable and edifying.

*Please note that all teachers are given the same material, curriculum, and outlines put together by me and are instructed to teach the assigned material to their small groups. They are allowed to add their own challenges and assigned work so long as it is relevant and faith nurturing.

The Young Apostle Team Young Apostles will be assisting the Confirmation program. The Young Apostle Team is composed of high school students who have completed the Confirmation program, are confirmed, and have chosen to come back and share their gifts with the program. They help with small groups, retreats, youth events, and share their stories and experiences of their faith with the Confirmation teens.

Confirmation Class & Youth Event Dress Code:

Yes, there is a dress code for Confirmation/Youth Events! Formal wear is not necessary, but teens should be dressed nice, as most teens should attend mass earlier in their day.

Tops: T-shirts with big logos and designs are NOT allowed. Teens cannot wear tube tops, crop tops, or tops that over expose their chest, back, or midriff. If a top has a strap or is like a tank top then a jacket, cardigan, kimono open top can be worn to cover shoulders. Blouses, nice tops and shirts are okay. Polos, henleys, appropriate short sleeve shirts are okay if they are not too casual, long sleeve shirts, button up shirts are all okay.

Bottoms: **No blue denim jeans are permitted.** Teens MUST adhere to this dress code and parents and families need to enforce these guidelines for their kids. This is because when blue denim has been permitted, teens always tend to wear jeans that have holes in them and we are unable to permit them. Workout gear (aka tight leggings, leggings with cutouts, sweats, yoga pants) are not permitted. PJs and Shorts are not allowed. Dress pants, corduroy, and black/white pants/jeans are OK as long as they are not super washed out, ripped, or torn. Any other pants so long as they are appropriate for church are allowed.

Dresses, skirts, rompers, pantsuits are OK but they must be an appropriate length. To test if they are an okay length, have a teen stand up straight and place their hands flat on each side. The length of the clothing should meet/pass their fingertips.

Footwear: No Flip flops. White tennis shoes are okay. Shoes do not have to be dressy, but should be appropriate.

Please don't argue the dress code. This dress code has been in place for almost a decade in the Confirmation program. Many adjustments have already been made to it and have made it much easier for the teens to have clothing and wear that complies with it. While there are restrictions to what teens can wear, these restrictions all exist for a reason and help to have our teens in the Confirmation program ready for church and looking their "Sunday's best".

The above rules also apply to Youth Night/in-person events with these exceptions:

Teens may wear more casual clothes such as jeans to youth nights so long as they do not have giant rips and holes in them. Teens may wear casual shirts so long as there are no inappropriate words or logos on them. All tennis shoes/casual shoes are okay.

Please send me an email for any questions regarding the above dress code guidelines.

Books and Confirmation Passport/Package Students will receive material/books for Confirmation classes to aid them in their preparation and are **expected to keep these materials through the entire 2 years.**

Students will also receive a "Confirmation Passport" via email—a packet that they will be required to keep in a binder (binder provided by student, filling provided by church) that contains additional resources, prayers, & standard Catholic teachings for reference throughout the two-year Confirmation Prep Program.

This Confirmation Passport will be sent via email and teens are expected to PRINT and put in a binder. Should a teen be unable to print their own Passport, limited copies will be made available for pickup with their books at the Youth Office. - Book pick-up dates/times is TBA

Youth Ministry Events Youth ministry events happening!

I highly encourage teens to attend at least 1 youth event a month because they enhance the Confirmation program and truly make a much better experience for Confirmation teens. At these youth events, we get to have more social interaction, build relationships in prayer and fellowship, and learn more about our faith! **See our Confirmation Calendar for the schedule for youth events.**

Yearly Retreat

Confirmation 1:

October 28 OR November 4, 2024 - **COST: \$30**

We are bringing back our annual Confirmation 1 Retreat on October 28th and November 4th, 2024, here in our Parish Hall! Students will be required to attend either October 28th OR November 4th, not both. Please block off both days until we can confirm which day your student will attend.

Confirmation 2:

January 26-28, 2024 - **COST: \$325**

- **\$75 non-refundable deposit & online form due October 30**
- **Full/Remaining payment due by December 1**

We are planning to have our annual Confirmation 2 Retreat on January 26-28, 2024 at Whispering Winds in Julian, CA. This will be a three day retreat event, with all safety guidelines in place according to our state and diocese guidelines. The retreat fee of \$325 will cover lodge and boarding for three days and two nights, meals, a retreat shirt, and transportation.

This retreat is required for Confirmation 2 teens only. We will give options for those who are unable to attend the full three day weekend experience.

For any questions or concerns, contact Sophie!

Parent's Responsibilities: As parents are the primary catechists of their children, we give great deference to parental involvement in the faith-education of their children.

I send out emails regularly, and like to send out reminders to parents as much as possible. **It is the parent/guardian responsibility to check emails at least ONCE a week to stay up to date. If you are not receiving emails please reach out to me ASAP.** The "primary email"/"additional email"/"student email" provided at the time of online registration will be the emails I send out reminders to. Please ensure you input your email correctly or else you may miss out on important email correspondences. Parents must also refer to our Confirmation calendar. This

calendar is subject to change but I will always notify families ahead of time so please refer to it for the year schedule and events.

- **We will also be using “Flocknote”, an emailing platform to distribute information.** Please always double check your spam folder for any of my emails.

A parent meeting will be held prior to the start of Confirmation classes. Information regarding these meetings will be emailed shortly.

Absence or Missed Assignments

To notify of absences OR of legitimate reasons for late or missed assignments, a parent/guardian must *send an email explaining the reason for absence/missed assignment*. **More than two unexcused absences may result in a repeat of the preparation year.** (for ex. valid reasons for absence/missed assignments: family emergency or illness, etc.)

Please direct emails to youth@corpuschristicatholic.org

- In the event that the student has a valid excuse to be absent from class or has missed the deadline for an assignment, the student will still need to **complete the prescribed make-up work** for the work that was missed, in order that they do not fall behind. **If this work is not completed, the assignment will not be excused.** Make-up work will be given to those who notify of absences. Make-up work as well as the regularly assigned homework will be due. There will be some classes where make-up can be completed with the attendance of extra youth event opportunities. **Youth night alone does not excuse an absence.**

Weekly Mass Attendance and Mass Logs

Students are expected to attend Sunday (or Saturday vigil mass) virtually or in-person throughout the Confirmation year, though at this time it is primarily expected to be in-person unless there are extraneous circumstances, i.e. illness. **The Bishop reinstated the obligation to attend Sunday mass in-person on July 1st of 2021.** Confirmation teens are expected to set aside time to prioritize virtual or in-person mass as part of their Confirmation curriculum. (Teens/families that are affected by at-risk factors, both physically and mentally, or who are sick are exempt from this obligation).

Mass is the source and summit of the Christian life. As future Confirmandi, we expect teens to appreciate and uphold the privilege to honor and worship God with the responsibility and dedication that He deserves. Experiencing the mass is the greatest form of worship we have as Catholics. While physically attending mass and taking the Eucharist is not always feasible depending on the household, Confirmation students have the convenience of viewing mass virtually at their own pace in these extraneous circumstances.

- You may also watch masses with Corpus Christi on Youtube. (Just search “Corpus Christi Bonita” and it will come up. Our masses are posted within the hour after each mass.
- In order to better enter into the Mass and listen to the Lord, students are asked to **record the “one thing” God spoke to them at Mass OR something they found interesting at attended masses in a provided MASS LOG THAT IS INCLUDED IN THEIR “CONFIRMATION PASSPORT”**. Students should write this down immediately following Mass attendance so they do not forget. The “one-thing” will be reviewed by the teachers

during classes (to the teachers' discretion) and are required to be turned in at the end of the Confirmation program via their MASS LOG SHEET.

Personal Statement Paper/Exit Interview

During the second semester of the second year of preparation, students are required to **complete an individual interview** with the youth minister, Sophie Aipa.

Students will share about their faith journey, how they will practice their faith after Confirmation, and why they would like to be Confirmed in the Catholic Church.

Students may also be asked to **write a Personal Statement** to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, which will be due at the time of the interview (further instructions will be given closer to interview date) or at a given date at the end of their Confirmation 2 year.

I WILL EMAIL PARENTS AHEAD OF TIME IF THE ABOVE WILL BE REQUIRED.

Confirmation Mass Date 2024

CONFIRMATION MASS DATE/TIMES ARE TBA AS WE WAIT APPROVAL FROM THE DIOCESE ON OUR DATES. FAMILIES WILL BE NOTIFIED ASAP IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY OF 2024

For High School Seniors: First-time registered Senior Confirmation teens are ***REQUIRED to attend BOTH Confirmation 1 and 2 class.*** They are expected to complete the requirements listed prior to this page. Seniors can refer to the above information for their Exit Interview. *Please see Sophie for additional questions.*

Welcome to the beginning of your preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation!

The purpose of this Confirmation Passport, is to give you extra material to aid you in your Confirmation experience. Please refer to this Passport for questions you have about the Catholic Basics, additional information, and our Confirmation Program in general.

You are now at the age where you have the opportunity and gift to fully affirm your faith and choose it for yourself. Confirmation is the sacrament that completes the grace we receive in Baptism. It seals, or confirms, this grace through the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit that we receive as part of Confirmation. This sacrament also makes us better able to participate in the worship and apostolic life of the Church. Like Baptism, Confirmation is received only once in a person's life.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Through Jesus, we receive the ***Gifts of the Holy Spirit*** in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Wisdom helps us recognize the importance of others and the importance of keeping God central in our lives.

Understanding is the ability to comprehend the meaning of God's message.

Knowledge is the ability to think about and explore God's revelation, and also to recognize that there are mysteries of faith beyond us.

Counsel is the ability to see the best way to follow God's plan when we have choices that relate to him.

Fortitude is the courage to do what one knows is right.

Piety helps us pray to God in true devotion.

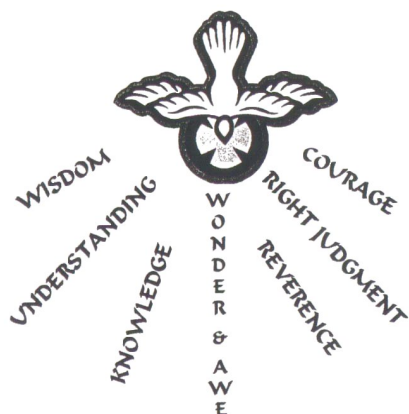
Fear of the Lord is the feeling of amazement before God, who is all-present, and whose friendship we do not want to lose.

A New Name

When preparing for Confirmation, a person is invited to choose a Confirmation name to show that a change is taking place in him or her. Such name changes are common in the Bible (for example, Abram and Sarai to Abraham and Sarah, Jacob to Israel, and so on) to indicate a change in the person. In the New Testament, Peter's original name was Simon. The name *Peter*, meaning "rock," was given to him by Jesus to symbolize Peter's role in the Church ([Matthew 16:18](#)). Often people preparing for Confirmation will choose the name of a saint or holy person whom they look to for guidance in following Jesus.

Signs of Confirmation

The signs of Confirmation are the laying on of hands on a person's head, most often by a bishop, and the anointing with oil.



CONFIRMATION IMPARTS GRACE

Like all the sacraments, Confirmation is a gift given by God. And, like all of God's gifts, it is designed to help us grow in holiness, and bring us into closer relation with Him through the imparting of grace. Grace is a freely given gift to us from God. Grace allows us to form ourselves for salvation with God in Heaven.

IT COMPLETES THE CHRISTIAN INITIATION BEGUN AT BAPTISM

“Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the ‘sacraments of Christian Initiation,’ whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For ‘by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.’” (CCC 1285)

Consider that, for the most part, Catholics are baptized as infants. “The faith required for Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith, but a beginning that is called to develop.” (CCC 1253) Our faith at baptism requires nourishment to grow and mature. We receive this nourishment through the Eucharist and catechesis. **All** members of the Church share in the responsibility of faith formation and religious education: parents, godparents, the clergy and the parish community. This maturing of the faith prepares us for Confirmation, where we are strengthened by the Holy Spirit to go out into the world as faithful witnesses and disciples of Christ. As members of Christ's Body (the Church), we share an “apostolic calling” to spread God's kingdom throughout the world. Jesus told his disciples, “Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.” (Matthew 5:16) We are also called to be a light unto the world, and the sacrament of Confirmation equips us for that mission.

IT IS THE FULL OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In John's Gospel, we read that Christ prepared his followers for his eventual departure from this earth. He told them that it would be better for them if he left because then he would send the Advocate to be with them. At the time, the apostles were full of grief at the thought of Jesus going and probably didn't understand who this mysterious Advocate was. But, just as Jesus promised, at Pentecost, the apostles received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They were able to recognize that this was the person Jesus sent to lead them to the truth, to guide them, and to strengthen them. And, because they were receptive, the Holy Spirit was able to work within them to transform them from frightened men, in hiding from the authorities to proclaimers of the resurrection! The Holy Spirit which the apostles received is the same Holy Spirit whose gifts are sealed within us at Confirmation. He seeks to work within us in the same way. If we are receptive and open to his gifts, we too can be transformed, confident that we can accomplish every good thing.

When we reduce Confirmation to a giant to-do list that we race to complete, we risk losing the importance of what is happening along the way. Confirmation is so much more than just another box to check on the way to adulthood. Talk to your students and children about what this sacrament really means. Don't let them miss out on experiencing one of God's greatest gifts.

Prayer:

Why use written Catholic prayers?

Written, or *formulaic* prayers, help our faith. In following them, we learn how to pray.

The **Our Father** is the best example, the “most perfect of prayers” (*Catechism*, 2773).

Christ himself gave it to us, saying “Pray then like this: Our Father...” (Mt 6:9)

Jesus gave us much **more** than a simple formula to repeat mechanically. “As in every vocal prayer, it is through the Word of God that the Holy Spirit teaches the children of God to pray to their Father.” (*Catechism*, 2766)

- St. Paul: “...The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought....” (Rom 8:26)
- The Psalms themselves are beautiful written prayers. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, they are “the book in which The Word of God becomes man’s prayer.... The Psalms both nourished and expressed the prayer of the People of God.” (*Catechism*, 2586)

And that is why we use written prayers: they **nourish** and **express** our individual prayers.



How to pray

A prayer life is **essential** to the Christian life — it is “a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God.”

(*Catechism*, 2558)

Christ promises to give you “living water” if you simply come to him and ask (John 4:10). Sounds good!

But how?

- You do **not** need a lot of time
- It’s **simple** to begin
- You **can** start right now



The keys to a solid life of prayer are very simple things.

- The How to pray section has detailed guidance in plain language.
- Daily Catholic prayer provides a brief set of habits that are essential to successful prayer.
- Live in the presence of God with this set of easy habits for home & work.
- Christian meditation, or *mental prayer*, will be the backbone of a lifetime of fruitful prayer.

So dig in and start your new prayer life **today!**

Here are some basic prayers to get you started:

The Sign of the Cross

The simplest, most basic Catholic prayer.

Catholics begin their day and many activities with the sign of the cross. It is a *sacramental*, a practice that helps us open ourselves to receiving God's grace more effectively.

While saying this prayer, bless yourself by making the sign of the cross with one hand: touch your fingers to your forehead at the word "Father", to your heart at the word "Son," to your left shoulder at "Holy", and right shoulder at "Spirit".

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

Our Father

Also called The Lord's Prayer, since Jesus taught it to his disciples (see Matthew 6:9-13).

The Our Father is the foundation of Christian prayer (*Catechism*, 2759). Most people learn it before all other basic Catholic prayers.

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.
Amen.

Hail Mary

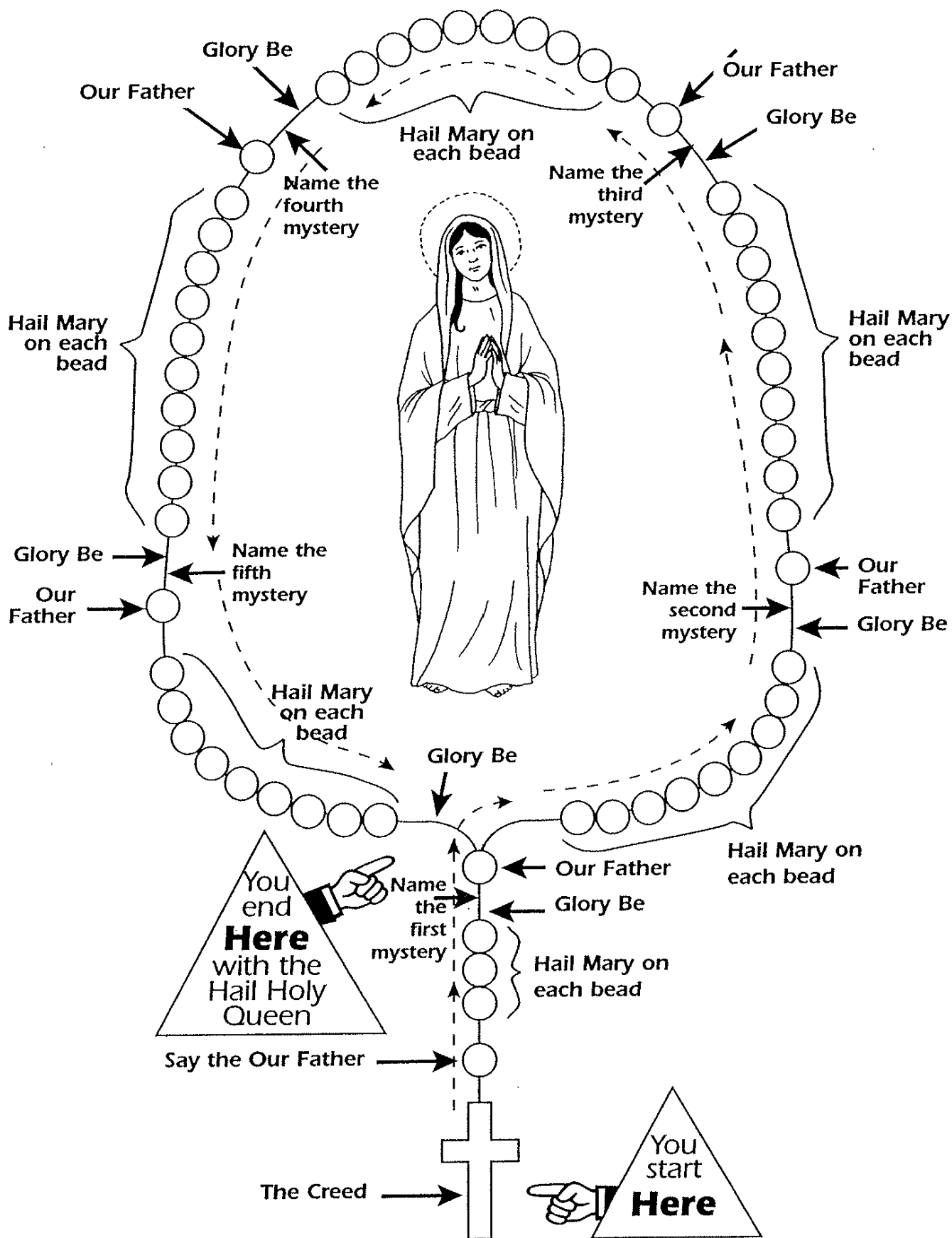
The Hail Mary is well-loved and beautiful basic Catholic prayer. It combines two lines from Scripture (Lk 1:28 and Lk 1:42) with a humble request for Mary to pray for us.

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

Glory Be

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.

How to Say the Rosary



The Mysteries of the Rosary

The Joyful Mysteries:

1. **The Annunciation**—Mary becomes God's Mother
2. **The Visitation**—Mary visits St. Elizabeth
3. **The Nativity**—Jesus is born
4. **The Presentation**—Jesus is presented in the Temple
5. **The Finding in the Temple**—Jesus is found in the Temple

The Mysteries of Light (Luminous Mysteries)

1. **The Baptism of Jesus**—John baptizes Jesus
2. **The Wedding at Cana**—Jesus works his first miracle
3. **The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God**—Jesus preaches to the crowds
4. **The Transfiguration**—Jesus shines with the light of God's glory
5. **The Institution of the Eucharist**—Jesus gives us the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper

The Mysteries of the Rosary

The Sorrowful Mysteries

1. **The Agony in the Garden**—Jesus prays in the garden
2. **The Scourging at the Pillar**—Jesus is tied up and whipped
3. **The Crowning with Thorns**—Jesus is crowned with thorns
4. **The Carrying of the Cross**—Jesus carries his cross
5. **The Crucifixion**—Jesus dies on the cross

The Glorious Mysteries

1. **The Resurrection**—Jesus rises from the dead
2. **The Ascension**—Jesus goes back to heaven
3. **The Descent of the Holy Spirit**—the Holy Spirit comes down
4. **The Assumption**—Mary is taken to heaven
5. **The Coronation**—Mary is crowned queen

Catholics pray the rosary because it's a powerful prayer to God, through His mother, Mary.

Praying the rosary has been a tradition in the Church for a long time. It's a bit fuzzy who made it more formal; some say it was St. Dominic and others say it wasn't. *What really matters is that this prayer is super powerful.*

Throughout Church history, many popes and saints have highly recommended that we pray the rosary. St. Louis de Montfort said, 'When the Holy Rosary is said well, it gives Jesus and Mary more glory and is more meritorious than any other prayer.'

In various apparitions, Mary has appeared holding a rosary and has asked that we continue to pray this prayer. She always leads us to her Son, and presents our needs before Him. Prayer is about developing our relationship with God, and loving Him more, so it makes sense to get to know Him through the events of the life of Christ that we meditate on during the rosary.

'Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. This mobilization of faculties is necessary in order to deepen our convictions of faith, prompt the conversion of our heart, and strengthen our will to follow Christ. Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in lectio divina or the rosary. This form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but Christian prayer should go further to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with him' (CCC 2708).

Rosaries are *not* just decorations. Battles have been won because people prayed the rosary! There have been hearts converted, and impossible intentions answered too. Your life can only be blessed if you start praying the rosary.

Mother Mary... Who is she? by MONICA HARNESS

A personal story and testimony on Mary, the Mother of God.

Mary is the person that always points me in the direction of her Son. I haven't always had a big devotion to our Blessed Mother Mary. Growing up, I knew who she was, and I prayed my Hail Marys, but that's as far as my relationship with her went.

It wasn't until *The Passion of the Christ* hit movie theaters that Mary touched my heart in a personal way. The scene that had me silently sobbing was when Jesus falls for the first time and Mary runs to Him. The film flashes back to Mary swooping the child Jesus in her arms, reminding me of her unconditional love. Her fiat...her yes to God...pierced my heart.



Mary said yes no matter the cost. She said yes with absolute faith in the Lord. **She said yes because she trusted in a plan that hadn't been revealed to her.** How many times did I trust in His plan with that kind of faith? I realized that I had never trusted God like that, but I did have the desire to. Mary quickly became my role model and the person I wanted to be like. I wanted her to teach me to love without limits and how to trust in His plan. A few months later, I took a leap of faith and accepted a job in ministry at my home parish. I didn't know what His plan was, but I placed my trust in Him. Was it complete trust? Probably not, but it was a starting point.

Time flew by, and nine years later I found my relationship with Mary had grown a lot. I had prayed many rosaries and continued to come to her for guidance, as well as her intercession. Then in March of that year, my life drastically changed.

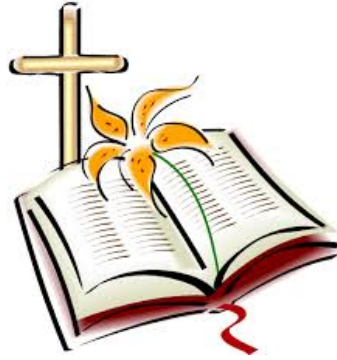
After some months of difficulty in my marriage, I found out my husband was struggling with a drug addiction that could ultimately take his life. **I didn't know it then, but all the time I had spent praying for a heart like Mary's she was preparing me for this time in my life.** I had come to a point where I needed to trust in His plan in a way that I never had before.



It wasn't easy. There were plenty of tears and moments when I felt like it was impossible to trust. That was when a dear friend asked me to pray the 54 Day Rosary Novena with her and a group of other women. I said yes without knowing how much Mary would help heal my heart. I went in trusting that Mary could help me, and she did. That was my first step in completely trusting in His plan.

Those 54 days provided me with more than healing. They brought me peace in the midst of chaos and uncertainty. **Mary became my confidant and helped me to see how the Lord was working in my life and my husband's life to bring about a resurrection that is still unfolding.** I continue to look to her as a model of strength, love, and compassion.

In a few words, our Blessed Mother Mary is my friend, a light in the darkness, the calm in a storm, and an example of grace. I know who Mary is in my heart not just who she was. My relationship with her is personal. She is my heavenly mother, and she is also yours.



How to Start Reading the Bible

1. Pray, and then pray some more. Before you open God's Word, ask the author of that word – the Holy Spirit – to be present in a bold and fierce way. Quiet yourself, spend some time in silence, and hold the Bible in your hands as you pray. Ask God, through the power of His Spirit, to open your mind, your eyes and your heart to His truth. Thank Him for the gift of His Word, a gift that millions have given their lives to defend and offer you the freedom to read and pray. It doesn't have to be a long prayer but take some time ... this is the most important step in Bible study.

2. Have a plan. If you were planning on reading the Bible cover to cover ... don't. The Bible isn't a novel; it wasn't designed to be read from Genesis straight through to Revelation. After you have studied it for a while, if you want to go back and read it cover to cover, go for it. Until then you'd be wise to attack it from a different angle. Pick one book that you are going to start in and make that book your focus for a while. If you are starting from scratch, I'd suggest the Gospel of Mark. St. Mark's gospel is the shortest and easiest to understand.

3. Get the background. If you do start in a Gospel, take the time to learn about who the author was, who he was writing to, and what the basic themes are of his Gospel account. Ask yourself what makes that specific account different than the other three. Don't just jump into a letter of St. Paul without knowing what is going on in the city to which he is writing. If you are reading a prophet, know what was going on in his world at the time.

'Where do I learn these things?' you might ask. Read the Introduction to the Gospel on the pages preceding it. Use one of your additional books or resources to help you. When you know what is going on with the author and the audience, the words will jump out at you in a much different way and you will have a far greater insight.

Let's hit four things you should remember, while reading the Bible and beyond.

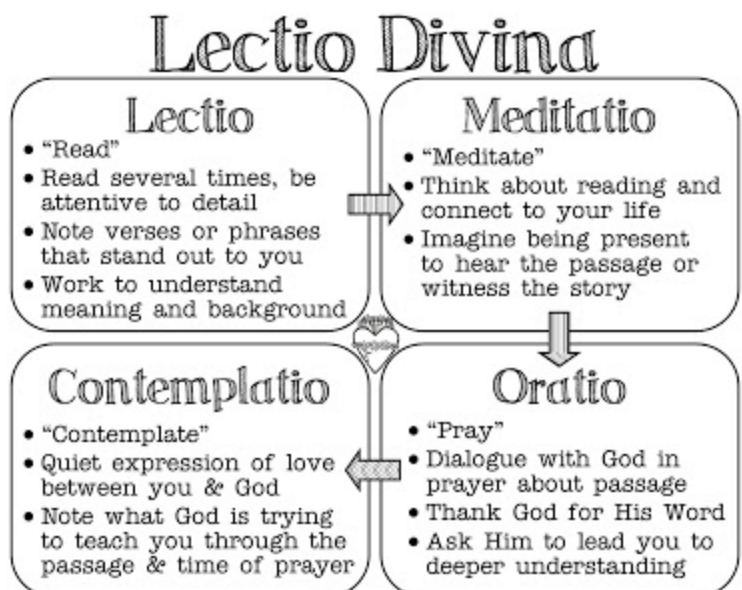
1. **Less is more.** Don't just open up the Gospel and read until you get tired or 'for fifteen minutes' because that's what you committed to doing. Most Bibles break down the chapters into subchapters. If you began in the Gospel of Mark, for instance, you shouldn't just start in verse 1 and continue through verse 45 (the end of the chapter). Instead, take verses 1-8 and spend 15 minutes meditating on them. Take just verses 9-11 and ruminate (chew) through them. That first chapter (the 45 verses) should be broken down into about 10 different studies alone. Studying the Scriptures is not like driving a cross country ... it's not about how much distance you cover in a set amount of time. Enjoy the time, roll down the windows and take everything in.

2. **Periods are there for a reason.** The periods at the end of each sentence are almost as much a gift as the words that precede them. Each little 'dot' is an invitation to take a breath and reflect on what you just read and prayed. At each period, take a moment to envision the story that's unfolding. If you are reading about the Baptism of Jesus (Mk. 1:9-11), don't just say 'Hey cool, Jesus is getting baptized.' Go deeper. At each period, put yourself more deeply into the story ... at His baptism, where are you? Are you on the shore, on the mountain overlooking the scene or in the water right next to Christ? Is it hot out? Does the water smell bad? Is it noisy or peaceful? Let the story come alive.

3. **Journal.** As you are writing and verses confuse you or questions arise, write them down in a journal. Don't allow yourself to get hung up on 'tough verses.' Scribble down the verse number with a question mark and keep moving. Later on you can search the footnotes, other books, this website or just ask someone knowledgeable in the Bible for more help. The journal isn't just for questions, though. You should also use it to write out reflections that the verses stir within you. Write down images God gives you in your imagination. Record key verses that stand out to you spiritually. God will reveal a great deal about yourself to you when you let Him.

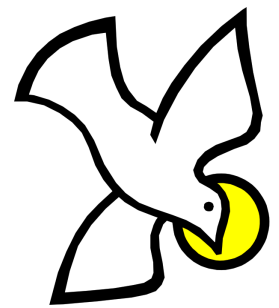
4. **Put the Book down.** Don't become a Bookworm, who never takes their eyes off of the page. The Bible is the *Living Word* (Jn. 1:1-5, Heb. 4:12). It lives and breathes well beyond the page that contains it. Share what you learn. Write out passages and post them up in your room, locker or office. Email verses to people. Put them on the fridge. Just like the Eucharist, the Word should be taken, blessed, broken (down), and *shared*. The greatest gift you can give someone is to live a life that mirrors the Gospels ... reflecting God in all you do. The second greatest gift is to invite others to peer into that mirror.

*The **Lectio Divina** is a great way to start praying while reading the Bible! It allows us to stop what we are doing and full immerse ourselves in Sacred Scripture and allow God to enter into all of our senses. Take a break from life, pick a Bible Verse, and try it out!*



Who is the Holy Spirit?

Most people have an idea about God the Father and God the Son, but not much of one when it comes to their more elusive partner in crime, the third person of the Holy Trinity: the Holy Spirit.



In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI even said, “The Holy Spirit has been in some ways the neglected person of the Blessed Trinity.” Think about it: When was the last time you thought of the Holy Spirit as something other than just a flaming dove who happens to show up from time- to- time in the Bible? If this is true for you, you should definitely keep reading to find out all the incredible things you’ve been missing out on!

First things first, as with the Trinity, know that no one can ever fully comprehend the Holy Spirit. Like many things in the Catholic faith, it has an element of mystery to it. I don’t mean the type of mystery where you shrug your shoulders and say, “Hmm, I don’t know.” I mean the type that is definitely understandable, but because of the infinite nature of God, we can’t understand all of it.

After all, if it was possible to fit the entirety of God (or even just one of the three persons of the Holy Trinity) into our little brains, our God wouldn’t be very impressive, would He? This is kind of like being blinded by light. You can know there is a sun, but if there is too much sunlight all at once, you’ll find yourself unable to see much at all. Knowing that we can’t ever fully take it all in should never stop us from trying to see what we can though. God has made our limited minds capable of understanding pieces of His infinite complexity for a reason, and trying our best to discover why can only make us more amazed and in love with Him.

Saint Paul wrote, “You must know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is within—the Spirit you have received from God” (Corinthians 6:19). The concept of our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit forms the basis for all that the Church teaches about healthy sexuality. But there is more to our being temples of the Holy Spirit. For one thing, “We are the temple of the living God” (Corinthians 6:16); that is to say, the Holy Spirit resides within the community of the baptized. There is both a communal and a personal aspect to this presence within the community: “The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful as in a temple” (*Constitution on the Church*, 4). The Church is a temple of the Holy Spirit, and each member of the Church is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Self-Gift

The coolest part about all of this is that the Holy Spirit constantly invites us and encourages us to take part in this dance. Think about Jesus' baptism in Matthew 3:13-17. The clouds in the sky open up, the Holy Spirit rockets down to descend upon Jesus, and a voice booms, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." When we are baptized, the heavens may not open up and God may not announce our identity, but the Holy Spirit does descend upon us and make a home inside our souls, and is well pleased with us. Think about how incredible of a gift this is: The creator of the entire universe and everything in it has made a home inside of you. He has made a gift of Himself. Jesus promised us no less in John 14:20. And if the Holy Spirit is inside of us, and if the Holy Spirit is part of the flowing relationship of the Trinity, we suddenly find ourselves swept up in the greatest dance of all time! This love, if we are willing to accept it, slowly changes and transforms our mind and soul to be more aware and accepting of the incredible love of God. As Pope Benedict XVI once advised, "Let us invoke the Holy Spirit: he is the artisan of God's works. Let his gifts shape you!"

Teacher of the Soul and Protector of Truth

Have you ever had a teacher who made a huge difference in your life? The way they taught things just made sense, they were creative in ways you never thought possible, and the advice they gave you, even outside of school work, turned out to be the best advice every time. And, maybe, you still find yourself wanting to ask that teacher for help even when you aren't in their class anymore. In John 14:26, Jesus tells us that this is exactly what the Holy Spirit is like. He expands our soul and our mind to be open to God's graces and guides us in our lives as Christians.

And as a teacher, the Holy Spirit would never lead anyone away from the truth. In fact, take a moment to read Acts 2. The Holy Spirit descended upon the first bishops of the Catholic Church (Jesus' apostles) at Pentecost and, ever since, has guided and protected the members and leaders of the Church from straying too far from the teachings of Jesus Christ. It also served as an inspiration to spread this truth to as many people as possible. This guidance and inspiration has remained with the Church ever since by being passed on from bishop to bishop through the Holy Spirit. With all of this in mind, I challenge you to search for the Holy Spirit's presence in your life. Take advantage of the fact that the Holy Spirit has made a home in your soul and ask Him for guidance in your prayers and day-to-day decisions. If the Holy Spirit has managed to keep a Church full of sinners alive and well for thousands of years, He can definitely work wonders for you.



Symbols of the Holy Spirit

In our churches, religious art, and liturgical prayers, we use a variety of symbols to represent the Holy Spirit, all of which come from the Bible. Here are some of those symbols.

One of the most common symbols of the Holy Spirit is a **dove**. It comes from the story of Jesus' baptism, when Jesus saw "the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him." (Mark 1:10) The other three Gospel writers use similar wording to describe the event (see Matthew 3:16, Luke 3:22, and John 1:32).

Fire is another popular representation of the Holy Spirit. The fire that appeared on Pentecost (Acts of the Apostles 2:3) was reminiscent of the burning bush on Mount Sinai from which God spoke to Moses. (Exodus 3:2) During the Exodus, the people of God were led by a pillar of fire at night. (Exodus 13:21) Fire calls attention to the strength and force of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is also represented by **wind**. In fact, the original Hebrew and Greek words for "Spirit" can be translated as "wind." The wind that appeared on Pentecost (Acts of the Apostles 2:2) was reminiscent of the wind that blew over the waters at the beginning of Creation. (Genesis 1:2) The wind calls attention to the Holy Spirit breathing life into the Church.

Water signifies birth and life. From a faith perspective, it represents the cleansing and life-giving action of the Holy Spirit at Baptism. (Matthew 3:11; John 3:5) The symbolism of water is addressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (#694):

As "by one Spirit we were all baptized," so we are also "made to drink of one Spirit." (1 Cor 12:13) Thus the Spirit is also personally the living water welling up from Christ crucified (Jn 19:34; 1 Jn 5:8) as its source and welling up in us to eternal life. (Cf. Jn 4:10-14; 7:38; Ex 17:1-6; Isa 55:1; Zech 14:8; 1 Cor 10:4; Rev 21:6; 22:17)

The **cloud** is used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit because clouds provide life-giving water. In the Old Testament, God often leads his people with a cloud or appears to them in a cloud. (Exodus 16:10) The image of a cloud is often combined with the image of **light** to symbolize the God who is hidden and mysterious but also revealing and luminous.

Anointing with oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit's uniting us with Jesus, the Messiah, the Anointed One. (Acts of the Apostles 10:38; 1 John 2:20-27)

Official documents in the past (Nehemiah 9:38; Esther 8:8), and some documents today, were sealed with hot wax. Then an imprint was made on the wax with the official **seal** of the person sending the document. In a similar way, we are "sealed" by the Holy Spirit to show that we are forever part of God's family. (Song of Songs 8:6; John 6:27)

If you were to draw a representation of the Holy Spirit, what would it look like? What would be your reasoning for drawing the Holy Spirit that way?

The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes are the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount ([Matthew 5:1-10](#)). Jesus teaches us that if we live according to the Beatitudes, we will live a happy Christian life. The Beatitudes do not provide specific directions on how we should live our lives, as the Ten Commandments do. Rather, they inspire us to adopt a certain mindset or vision for our lives, namely, the vision of Jesus Christ. The Beatitudes challenge us to be people of virtue. Virtue is a firm attitude, mindset, or disposition to do good. For the virtuous person, doing good is a habit. Through the Beatitudes, Jesus calls us to change our vision and learn that in order to be happy (blessed), we must be peace-loving, merciful, clean of heart, and meek.

Living the Beatitudes is a lifelong task because the Beatitudes turn upside down the values of the world. The world sets up the rich to be first; Jesus puts the poor on top of the world. The world tells us to seek happiness at all costs; Jesus saw happiness in mourning. The world values power over others; Jesus praised the meek. The world encourages self-fulfillment;

Jesus told us to work for justice. The world says that the merciless succeed; Jesus proclaimed blessed the merciful. The world announces, Go for the gold!; Jesus taught us to keep our hearts pure. The world honors the winners of wars; Jesus celebrated peacemakers.

The world sees the persecuted as losers; Jesus declared them the winners.

So what are some ways that we can develop the Beatitudes in our own lives? First, we can rest assured that the Holy Spirit is already at work within us, drawing us toward God and inspiring our desire to be a Beatitudes-type of person. Second, like anything we hope to develop in ourselves, we must be open, learn, and study. Pay attention to the people you know who model a particular beatitude. Think of ways you can model their behavior in your own life. Finally, talk with God in prayer. Ask him to help you out and to teach you how to develop the Beatitudes in your mind, heart, and actions.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Virtues in Our Everyday Life

Leading a virtuous life sounds like something that is just for the super religious people out there. But it is really something each one of us can aim for. God gives us the awesome gifts of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. Plus there are a ton of other virtues that we can develop on our own.

For example, there are the virtues of temperance, prudence, courage, and justice. These virtues came from classic Western philosophy (think Plato and Aristotle) and were repackaged by Church heavyweights such as Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas so that they connected with the Christian faith. These four virtues are known as the cardinal virtues because they are critical to forming our moral values and guiding our behavior. In addition to the cardinal virtues, there are many other virtues that we can develop. Check out [Isaiah 11:2](#) and [Galatians 5:22-23](#) for more. You'll find many places on the Internet that list virtues that are recognized in different cultures. [Wikipedia's entry on "virtue"](#) lists 100 virtues that are commonly recognized in Western culture.

Once you've had a chance to look at all the different virtues out there, you begin to see that there is quite a range to choose from. Did you know that good humor is a virtue? Imagination and curiosity are also virtues. All of a sudden, leading a virtuous life might not seem half bad. Who wouldn't want to be creative, happy, courageous, trustworthy, or focused? We might not label these things as "virtues" or make them top priority, but the fact is, most of us live the virtues every day. Even something as small as being tactful or friendly is virtuous.

The upshot is that leading a virtuous life is not just for the super religious (if there even is such a thing). It's for you and me and for all people who want to be true to themselves. Living the virtues helps us be real and go after our dreams. Living the virtues helps us be more aware of the people around us and help them when we can. Living the virtues helps us see the beauty in the world, especially in nature, and moves us to care for these as the precious gifts they are. Living the virtues helps us get more in tune with God.

Spend some time looking over the virtues, especially the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. Read [Chapter 13](#) of Saint Paul's letter to the Corinthians in which he talks about what love means in our lives. Think about the virtues that you are already living in your life and what you'd like to develop. Above all, practice random acts of virtue whenever you have the chance!

Reflection Questions:

When you hear the word "virtue" what things come to mind?

What are some good habits, or "virtues" that you perpetuate in your daily life?

What are some virtues that need work or are a challenge for you to have in your life?

Read: [Isaiah 11:2](#) and [Galatians 5:22-23](#) in your Bible. What are some of the virtues listed that you want to grow in/have?

Heaven: Catholic Cheat Sheet

Heaven is where souls live in endless union with God, loving and praising Him and praying for souls not yet in heaven. Only those pure enough to be in God's presence can be in heaven. Until Jesus died on the cross, heaven was not opened to mankind because of the eternal effects of our sins which would have kept us separated from God.

Why it Matters to You

Heaven is a big deal because you are an eternal being; your soul will live forever. God created you because He wants you to live with Him forever in heaven. We are given the gift of spending eternity with God because our souls have been saved by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. You have a choice to accept that salvation and claim your identity as God's child and heir to His kingdom of heaven. This is not just a one-time choice, but a daily choice you make by your thoughts, words, and actions. What will you choose today?

Catechism References about Heaven

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2796, 1053, 769, 269, 290-294, 1821

Bible Verses about Heaven

Genesis 1:8

Matthew 28:19-20

John 14:6

John 14:12

John 17:20-26

John 20:21

John 14:2

1 Corinthians 2:7-9

2 Corinthians 5:8

Philippians 1:21-23

Philippians 3:20-21

Saint Quotes About Heaven

St. Therese of Lisieux: For me prayer is a surge of the heart, it is a simple look towards Heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy. (*Manuscrits autobiographiques, C 25r*)

St. Therese of Lisieux: The world's thy ship and not thy home. (*The Story of a Soul*)

St. Therese of Lisieux: Each time that my enemy would provoke me to combat, I behave as a gallant soldier. I know that a duel is an act of cowardice, and so, without once looking him in the face, I turn my back on the foe, then I hasten to my Saviour, and vow that I am ready to shed my blood in witness of my belief in Heaven. (*The Story of a Soul*)

Pope St. Pius X: Holy Communion is the shortest and safest way to heaven."

Don Bosco: You can fly to Heaven on the wings of confession and Communion.

Don Bosco: [Regarding our good works] God does not forget; He will repay everything in Heaven.

St. Ignatius of Loyola: He who beholds Heaven with a pure eye, sees better the darkness of earth; for, although the latter seems to have some brilliancy, it disappears before the splendor of the heavens.

Purgatory: Catholic Cheat Sheet

Purgatory is a temporary state of purification where souls (after they have died) have the effects of their sins cleansed before they are able to enter heaven. Even though God forgives our sins in the Sacrament of Confession, the temporal punishment of our sin remains and this is what we make up for by spending time in Purgatory. The temporal punishment is the effect of sin that remains on our souls, even after the sin has been forgiven. It's like a broken window — though the offense is forgiven, the effect remains and has to be fixed.

Why it Matters to You

The existence of Purgatory can give you a lot of hope because it means that even though we may not be perfectly holy when we die, God's mercy allows for us to make up the difference by being purified in Purgatory. You can also pray for the souls in Purgatory and their purification will be aided, or helped along, by the grace of your prayers!

Catechism References about Purgatory

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1030-36, 1472, 1861

Bible Verses about Purgatory

Matthew 12:32

Revelation 21:27

1 Corinthians 3:15

Isaiah 4:4

2 Maccabees 12:39-42,44-45

Saint Quotes About Purgatory

St. John Chrysostom – Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice (Job 1:5), why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.

St. Augustine: Temporal punishments are suffered by some in this life only, by some after death, by some both here and hereafter, but all of them before that last and strictest judgment. But not all who suffer temporal punishments after death will come to eternal punishments, which are to follow after

St. Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church: I do not think that part from the felicity of Heaven, there can be a joy comparable to that experienced by the souls in Purgatory. An incessant communication from God renders their joy more vivid from day to day: and this communication becomes more and more intimate, to the extent that it consumes the obstacles still existing in the soul....On the other hand, they endure pain so intense, that no tongue is able to describe it. Nor is any mind capable of comprehending the smallest spark of that consuming fire, unless God should show it to him by a special grace.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, The Angelic Doctor: The more one longs for a thing, the more painful does deprivation of it become. And because after this life, the desire for God, the Supreme Good, is intense in the souls of the just (because this impetus toward him is not hampered by the weight of the body, and that time of enjoyment of the Perfect Good would have come) had there been no obstacle; the soul suffers enormously from the delay.

Hell: Catholic Cheat Sheet

Hell is a place for those souls who have chosen to spend eternity separated from God and love. Hell is not a punishment that God inflicts on bad people. Rather, it is an eternal, voluntary choice that can be made if a sinner wants to reject God's forgiving, merciful love.

Why it Matters to You

It is important to understand hell so that you don't live in fear of it. God sees your heart and knows you better than you know yourself. In hell, there won't be souls who on earth were honestly trying to do His will, and follow His ways, but who fell short sometimes; rather, souls who may be in hell will be those who directly and freely rejected God's will and laws. Hell is a result of our gift of free will. Because we have free will, we can choose to love God now and forever, or we can choose to reject His love, now and forever.

Catechism References about Hell

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1033-1037, 1861

Bible Verses about Hell

2 Peter 3:9

1 Timothy 2:4

Mark 9:43

Acts 2:27

Matthew 10:28

Matthew 13:50

Matthew 25:46

Romans 6:23

2 Thessalonians 1:9

Job 10:21-22

Luke 12:4-5

Saint Quotes About Hell

St John of the Cross, Mystic and Doctor of the Church – At the evening of life, we shall be judged on love.

St. Augustine – That fire is more deadly than any which man can suffer in this life.

St. Bernard – I am filled with fear and trembling, and all my bones are shaken at the thought of that unhappy country of the damned.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons – To whomsoever the Lord shall say, "Depart from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire," they will be damned forever.'

St. Justin Martyr – We have been taught that only they may aim at immortality who have lived a holy and virtuous life near to God. We believe that they who live wickedly and do not repent will be punished in everlasting fire.

God's Love for All People

It's no secret: God has a thing for each one of us. He loves us more than we can possibly imagine. After all, he created us. He knows us inside and out. Whether or not we are aware of it, we share an intimate relationship with our Creator—even from before we were born.

**You formed my inmost being;
you knit me in my mother's womb.
I praise you, so wonderfully you made me;
wonderful are your works!
My very self you knew;
my bones were not hidden from you,
When I was being made in secret,**

**fashioned as in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes foresaw my actions;
in your book all are written down;
my days were shaped, before one came to
be.**

Psalm 139:13-16

Sometimes it's hard to believe that God feels this way about all of us. But it's true; in fact it's the most true thing about us. If someone were to ask, who are you? we might respond, I'm the daughter of so and so, a student at such and such school, a member of this or that club. But the one thing that best describes who we are is that we are infinitely loved by God. So the next time you have to describe yourself, start with the number one descriptor: I am someone who is infinitely loved by God.

God's Love for People of All Faiths

God's love for all people holds true across time, culture, tradition, race, and creed: no one is outside of God's love. God's love is not only our main trait, it is also what connects us to everyone around us. We are all created by the same loving God, and we are all oriented toward God as our ultimate destination. God is present to all of us, and we run into his goodness and saving grace every day, whether or not we are even aware that it is God.

Having faith in Jesus Christ does not mean that we can disregard or disrespect other religions. On the contrary, the Church has said that other religions, though different from our own, often reflect "a ray of that Truth" which enlightens all human beings. (*Nostra Aetate*, a. 2)

The Church holds in special regard the people of Judaism and Islam. They share a special connection with Christians because the three religions trace their history through a common person: Abraham. Each religion believes in "the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth," the one who has spoken to his people. (*Nostra Aetate*, a. 3)

Baptism – A Necessity for Salvation

Baptism of Water

All who have heard the Gospel, and who have had the possibility of asking for baptism, need to be baptized in order to attain salvation. Jesus affirms the necessity of this sacrament saying, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit” (John 3:5). However, our God is a merciful and loving God. While he has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, God is not bound by his sacraments.



Baptism of Blood

The Church has always taught that those who die for the sake of the faith, before they have received the sacrament of Baptism, are baptized by their death for and with Christ. This Baptism of blood brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament. Thus, salvation may be attained.

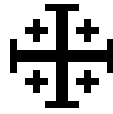
Baptism of Desire

Similarly to a Baptism of blood, the desire for baptism, while not a sacrament, also brings about the fruits of Baptism. An individual who were to die before being baptized, but had expressed a clear desire to receive this sacrament, and repented for his/her sins, would be assured salvation.

God’s Mercy and Our Mission

We must always remember the great mercy of God. Jesus died for every single person, salvation is meant for everyone. The Holy Spirit offers every person, in a way known only to God, the possibility of being made partakers of the Paschal mystery (Lumen Gentium, 16). “Every man who is ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church, but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it, can be saved” (CCC 1260).

So, in short, no, you do not have to be Catholic to go to heaven. However, as Catholics, we should be aware of our God-given duty to evangelize, to make disciples of all people. Have the courage to live your life in such a way that emulates Jesus’, have the courage to speak truth in a time when so many people are afraid of it! While I am often grateful that the salvation of others does not lie in my hands, I am aware that I have a responsibility to help lead others to Christ. It is my prayer that through your life, others may come to know Jesus. May we live a life filled with the hope of heaven!



Mass Responses & Prayer

The Roman Missal, Third Edition

GREETING

PRIEST: The Lord be with you.

PEOPLE: **And with your spirit.**

PENITENTIAL ACT

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to
do,

strike chest 3 times **through my fault,
through my fault, through my most grievous
fault;**

Therefore, I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
We give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father,

Lord Jesus Christ, only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
You take away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us;
You take away the sins of the world,
Receive our prayer;
You are seated at the right hand of the Father,
Have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord.
You alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
With the Holy Spirit,
In the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

GOSPEL DIALOGUE

PRIEST (OR DEACON): The Lord be with you.

PEOPLE: **And with your spirit.**

PRIEST (OR DEACON): A reading from the holy
Gospel according to ____.

PEOPLE: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

PROFESSION OF FAITH (NICENE CREED)

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
Of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
The Only Begotten Son of God,
Born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
True God from true God,
begotten , not made, consubstantial with the
Father;
Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
He came down from heaven,

bow head

And by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin
Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontious
Pilate,
He suffered death and was buried, and rose again
on the third day
In accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
And is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
To judge the living and the dead
And his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The Lord, the giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
Who with the Father and the Son
Is adored and glorified,
Who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic
Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of
sins,
And i look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
And the life of the world to come. Amen.

PROFESSION OF FAITH (APOSTLES' CREED)

I believe in one 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 Pontious 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.

INVITATION TO PRAYER

PRIEST: Pray, brothers and sisters ...
acceptable to God, the almighty Father.
PEOPLE: **May the Lord accept the sacrifice
at your hands for the praise and glory of
his name, for our good, and the good of all
his holy Church.**

PREFACE DIALOGUE

PRIEST: The Lord be with you.

PEOPLE: **And with your spirit.**

PRIEST: lift up your hearts.

PEOPLE: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

PRIEST: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

PEOPLE: **It is right and just.**

PREFACE ACCLAMATION

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

THE MYSTERY OF FAITH

PRIEST: The mystery of faith.

PEOPLE: (3 options)

- A. **We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.**
- B. **When we eat this Bread and drink the Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.**
- C. **Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

PRIEST: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

PEOPLE: **Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

CONCLUDING RITES

PRIEST: The lord be with you.

PEOPLE: **And with your spirit.**

PRIEST (OR DEACON): The Mass has ended.

Go forth/in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

Notes

[illegible]

Notes

[illegible]

Notes

[illegible]

Weekly Mass Log

Mass attendance is crucial to the growth and development of our faith and relationship with God as Catholics. As part of the Confirmation program at Corpus Christi, teens in the program are expected to uphold the once-a-week obligation to attend mass. This can be experienced at any of the Sunday masses/Saturday vigil mass.

As proof of mass attendance, teens must use this Mass Log to reflect on the mass and record any notes/passages/reflections that resulted from the mass. This sheet will be collected at the end of Confirmation 2. (You may write on separate sheet/document)

Date	Notes/Comments/What stuck out to you?

Date	Notes/Comments/What stuck out to you?

Date	Notes/Comments/What stuck out to you?

Date	Notes/Comments/What stuck out to you?