



# Growing Faith for Confirmation

## Mini-Courses

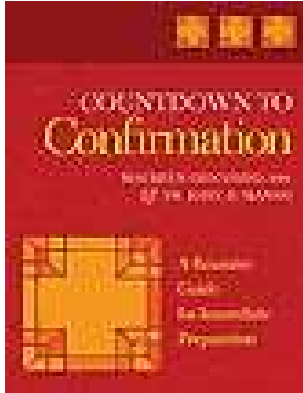
If you could have THE perfect resource for your confirmation preparation, it would probably be

- ✚ easy to use
- ✚ prayerful
- ✚ reflective
- ✚ oriented to young people
- ✚ and it would cover the entire spectrum of Catholic teaching.

**Sounds impossible, doesn't it?** But this resource is real and it's called **The Growing Faith Project**. Each of its 48 eight-page booklets covers key teachings from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in a prayerful, reflective, easy-to-absorb way. With *Growing Faith Project*, confirmation candidates will have the *complete* content of the faith at their fingertips. And yes, *Growing Faith* has a *Nihil Obstat* and an *Imprimatur*.

Many people have been asking us how they might use *The Growing Faith Project* with adults and adolescents who are preparing for confirmation. This little resource is our answer. It provides guidelines for programming, possible learning paths, details about how to schedule the preparation process, and suggestions for eight mini-courses. Keep in mind that this is only a guide because *Growing Faith Project* is, by its very nature, flexible. How you use the *Growing Faith* booklets will depend, of course, on your parish schedule for confirmation preparation. Here are some possible options.

This outline and program is often used in combination with one of these two resources:



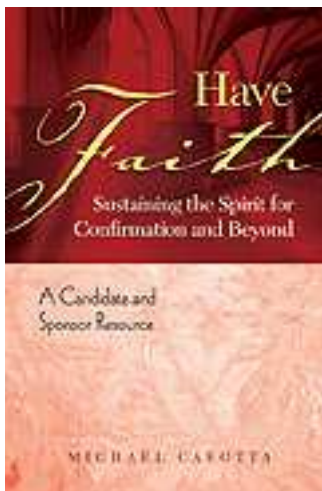
### **Countdown to Confirmation**

This unique and creative program can be adapted for any age group and can certainly be used with RCIA candidates and catechumens.

Here's a confirmation preparation program that goes right to the source. It teaches about the Rite itself because the authors believe that the liturgy is the primary source of catechesis. "The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all the Church's power flows" (Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, 10).

Candidates are taught ABOUT the sacrament even as they walk through its ritual aspects. The liturgical rite becomes the focal point for helping them understand what it means to be a confirmed member of the Catholic Church. These eight sessions therefore explore the phrases used in the dialogue between the bishop and the candidate so that the liturgy itself is at the heart of the lessons.

Topics include: The Role of the Bishop, The Request to be Confirmed, Making Decisions, The Anointing with Oil, The Holy Spirit, What We Believe, Pentecost, and Being Sent Forth. Each session includes a section called "Understanding This Session," which offers creative ways for candidates to respond to what they have learned.



### **Have Faith**

Have Faith is a unique approach to helping confirmation candidates prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation. It invites them to examine their spiritual callings, commitments, the challenges of discipleship, and to develop--for themselves--a well-thought-out Spiritual Growth Plan for "life after Confirmation."

Sponsors will also get a copy of Have Faith and will be working on the same things as the candidates. But because there are no formal sponsor meetings, they can choose an adult sponsor

from anywhere in the country, someone they feel comfortable with. Three times during this preparation process, the two of them will share notes--over the phone, via e-mail, or face to face. Whatever works best for them.

Have Faith helps candidates develop spiritual sensitivities as they... •discover the dominant dimensions of their spiritual life •explore the ways they are responding to their vocational callings. •examine the Creed, review how Catholicism is different and unique, and assess their religious knowledge of the Catholic faith. •recognize the gifts of Holy Spirit in different situations •identify the tasks for their ongoing journey of discipleship

# Scheduling Options

## For a two-year program that meets weekly

(Please see details of each course at the end of this resource and full outlines are available on line.)

### During the first year (30 sessions):

- ❖ Sessions:
  - 1 – community building and program details, prayer
  - 2-6 mini-course one: **The Nature of God and Faith**
  - 7 – pause for review and prayer event
  - 8-12 mini-course two: **Growing our Faith in Everyday Life**
  - 13 – pause for review and prayer event
  - 14-22 mini-course three: **The Person of Jesus Christ**
  - 23 – pause for review and prayer event
  - 24- 28 mini-course four: **The Nature of the Church**
  - 29-30 summary and year end review

### During the second year (30 sessions):

(Continue the course of study even after the Rite of Confirmation is celebrated, using the final mini-courses as mystagogia.)

- ❖ Sessions
  - 1 – community building and program details, prayer
  - 2-9 mini-course five: **Catholic Liturgy & Sacraments**
  - 10 – pause for review and prayer event
  - 11-18 mini-course six: **Catholic Social & Moral Teachings**
  - 19 – pause for review and prayer event
  - 20-26 mini-course seven: **Living the Commandments**
  - 23 – pause for review and prayer event
  - 27- 29 mini-course four: **Christian Prayer**
  - 30 summary and year end review

## For a two year program that meets twice a month

During the first year (15 sessions):

- ❖ Sessions 1– community building
- ❖ Sessions 2–14 mini-course # ten: **A Thorough Survey of the Catholic Faith**
- ❖ Session 15 summary and year end review

During the second year (15 sessions):

- ❖ Sessions 1–12 mini-courses # six & four: **Moral Teachings & Christian Prayer**
- ❖ After confirmation: Mystagogia along with mini-course seven: **Living the Commandments**

## **For a one-year program with monthly mini-retreats**

During the first half-year

- ❖ Sessions 1– community building
- ❖ Sessions 2–4 begin mini-course # ten: **A Thorough Survey of the Catholic Faith**

Month 4: a mini-retreat on the Holy Spirit

Month 5: a mini-retreat on the 10 commandments (one of the booklets in mini-course ten)

Months 6-8: continue with mini-course ten

Month 8: celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation

Month 9: mystagoga and a mini-retreat using the *Living Christ Retreat*

# Suggested Learning Path for Adolescents in a two- hour session

15 minutes: Community Building

15 minutes: Focusing Activity (to discover what they already know about the topic)

35 minutes: GFP booklet, presentation and journaling

(remember that GFP comes with a PowerPoint presentation for each session!)

10 minutes: break

15 minutes: Response to the GFP booklet, group process

20 minutes: Moving Forward (how does the material relate to daily life?)

10 minute: Prayer Experience

## Additional Ideas for the Learning Path

*Community builders:* Saint Mary's Press, Group Publishing, and others have books available that offer community building exercises. When possible, connect the community building activity to the topic of the session.

*Focusing activity:* use a popular song, movie, or video to spark a discussion about what the candidates already know about the topic. (This would be a good time to use the Question of the Week.)

*GFP booklet:* invite candidates to look at the drawings in the booklet as well as the words. Ask: "what does this drawing say to you?" Invite participants to read some of the content aloud and some quietly. Allow time for reflection and questions. Then sum up the key points from the booklet.

*Response to the GFP booklet:* this can be done through skits, posters, and group discussion and should include faith sharing and the sharing of insights and challenges.

*Moving Forward:* this is the time for a commitment to the future. This can be connected to the closing prayer and can be a commitment card, an "accountability buddy agreement," a reminder activity (like a craft) or a "walk the talk" activity.

*Prayer Experience:* for this, incorporate the Scripture from the GFP booklet or from an upcoming Sunday reading. Use music the candidates are familiar with and invite responses to the words from Scripture.

# Sample Session using Growing Faith

Following is a sample session from mini-course two based on GFP booklet #1, *Our Inborn Hunger for God?*



Small Community Reflections  
On Daily Life & Faith

## Growing Faith in Small Groups

This resource relates to *Growing Faith* booklet #1

The Inborn Hunger for God:  
What Does Your Heart Desire

Based on articles 26-49 of the *Catechism*.

### **1** Arrive and get settled. Check in with each other.

[Be sure everyone feels welcome in this gathering. Help each other get settled comfortably. Let each person say his or her name. If there are guests or newcomers, be sure they're introduced. As a group enter into a brief "check-in" with each other using these questions to get started:]

What happened in your life today?

What really struck you in the recent news?

### **2** Brief opening prayer.

[Let a different member of the group prepare a prayer for each meeting, based on those in *Desires of the Heart*. Use the music CD to enhance this opening moment and help people focus. Or use other prayers which you may have at hand.]

### **3** Focus as a group.

[Let someone serve as leader and begin by offering a few short prepared introductory remarks about the theme of this meeting, drawn from the *Growing Faith* booklet in use. You may use these or similar words at this meeting.]

The theme of this meeting include the following points:

The inborn hunger for God

- We are religious beings by nature.
- We are made to live in communion with God
- Being with God is the only way to find happiness.
- When we listen to the message of creation and to the voice of conscience, we can arrive at certainty about the existence of God.

**Learn & Teach:** We strongly recommend that you adopt the **"Learn & Teach"** method for the most effective use of the *Growing Faith* resources. In this method:

- ✚ Work in small groups of whatever size divides your total group best.
  - In a Small Church Community, it might be two

- In a larger group it might be as many as four
- More than four small groups would be too many for this method.
- ✚ Assign a portion of the booklet to each small group.
- ✚ Invite them to **Learn** -- read and share insights based on the discussion questions and method we provide below.
- ✚ Then ask them to **Teach** in the large group, using a 3-step process:
  - Name the 3 or 4 (or more) *major points* learned in this segment – write them on a white or black board, or on flip chart paper. Present them to the large group with explanation.
  - Choose one or two of these *major points* (the ones that seems most central to faith) and create a question or exercise for discussion – participants may wish to use some of the suggested questions or exercises in the booklet or this study guide.
  - Lead a conversation or exercise in the large group, using this discussion question and this method:
    - Ask participants in the large group to work in pairs.
    - Pose the question or exercise and invite the pairs to work together to respond.
    - Invite each pair to present its outcome to the large group.
- ✚ Before going on, the leader may wish to make observations or summarize what happened in this segment.

#### **4 First reading from Growing Faith.**

[Let a volunteer now read from the chosen *Growing Faith* booklet, from the first two pages, more or less. Let the rest of the group note (while listening) any questions, insights, or items each may find remarkable. Write notes directly into the space provided in the booklet. When the reading is complete, the group may enter into conversation:]

What struck you in the text?

What affirmed your belief?

What surprised you?

What do you resist about what you just heard or read?

What questions arise from this section?

Turn now to the reflection/exercise on this page of the booklet.

- Why do you think we Humans have always sought to know God, even if we were following what we later came to see as a “false god?”
- How do you see God revealed in Creation?
- In particular, how do you see this revelation in us Humans?
- Try to recall a moment when you were either in nature or among people when you sensed the presence of God there. Share that among yourselves.

#### **5 Second reading from Growing Faith.**

[Let a volunteer now read from the chosen *Growing Faith* booklet, from the second set of pages, more or less. Let the rest of the group note (while listening) any questions, insights, or items each may find remarkable. Write notes directly into the space provided in the booklet. When the reading is complete, the group may enter into conversation:]

What struck you in the text?

What affirmed your belief?  
What surprised you?  
What do you resist about what you just heard or read?  
What questions arise from this section?

Turn now to the reflection/exercise on this page of the booklet.

- How do God and the things of the world relate to each other?
- What do you think is the divine plan for us Humans regarding creation, possessions, natural resources, and money?
- Can we prove that there is a God?
  - How do we know that God is present with us?
- What is your response to the art on this page?

[If time permits and the group so wishes, you may work through other sections of this booklet together. Members of the group may wish to do so privately or within their household.]

- In the final discussion of this group meeting, back up from all that has been said and ask, “What was the BIG message which I take away from this?”

## **6 Make connections.**

[Members of the group now work to connect the teachings found in this section of *Growing Faith* with their everyday lives. You may wish to insert this discussion into the readings and reflections above. Or members may wish to pause at this point for this purpose.]

What is the connection of this material

- To your daily life?
- To what’s happening in the world?
- To the big questions before us as a society?
- If there is no connection, what do you think that means for you?

## **7 Take it to God.**

What would you say to God about this?

What do you think God is saying to you or to us about it?

Take a quiet moment now to turn toward the face of God in this “colloquy” or “conversation with God.” The first lines provided are meant to *prime your prayer pump*. Continue from there or begin on your own – but spend a little time talking with God. If writing does not suit you, at least make a couple of notes, a word or two, in the space provided to help you make your thoughts and prayers more concrete.

The colloquy will be used in the closing prayer of this gathering, but you will not be asked to share anything you think would be inappropriate for you.



## 8 Take it home.

What would you like to explore further?

What one action or decision or change do you want to make?

What else comes to mind for you before we quit?

## 9 Brief closing prayer.

[If members of the group wish to do so, close by sharing parts of each one's colloquy. You may also return to the opening prayer and repeat part of the prayer or song used there. And let there be a warm embrace of Christian love and peace all around.

Be sure to set the time and place for the next gathering. Let each member know which Growing Faith booklet will be used.]

## 10 Refreshments or a shared meal



# Mini-Course outlines

## 1. *The Nature of God and Faith*

What is God like?

How do we describe the Trinity?

How does Revelation occur and how is it passed  
from generation to generation?

How did God create heaven and earth?

What is grace and how do we get it?

What is the end of life like?

**5 Booklets:** 2, 4, 6, 7, 8

## 2. *Growing Our Faith*

What do humans want?

How are we made in God's image?

Why do we sin?

How are we made whole and free?

How do we make a response in faith?

How do we live our faith in everyday life?

What is human freedom?

**5 Booklets:** 1, 5, 9, 10, 16

## 3. *The Person of Jesus Christ*

Who is Jesus Christ?

What did Jesus teach?

How do we relate with Mary, his Mother?

Why did he suffer?

What happened at the Resurrection?

How does he live on in the Church?

How do we reach out in prayer?

**5 Booklets:** 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

## 5. *Introduction to the Nature of the Church*

How is revelation passed on to us?

Who is the church?

What is the communion of saints?

How does the church pray?

How do we designate leaders?

What is the Magisterium?

**5 Booklets:** 3, 17, 18, 19, 20

## 6. *Introduction to the Liturgy and Sacraments*

How does the Church pray?  
What are the sacraments?  
How is the liturgy the “source and summit” of life?  
How do the sacraments shape our lives as Catholics?  
What are the essential words and actions of the sacraments?  
**9 Booklets:** 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

7. *Introduction to Catholic Social and Moral Teachings*

What makes us free?  
What is right and what is wrong?  
How do we cultivate virtuous living?  
How do we live together peacefully?  
What are our social and moral teachings?  
**7 Booklets:** 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36

8. *Living the Commandments*

What does each of the commandments ask of us?  
How did Jesus bring them to fulfillment?  
How do Christians follow the commandments?  
How does the church help us live as Christ teaches?  
What are the key dimensions of each command?  
**7 Booklets:** 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43

9. *Christian Prayer*

What is prayer?  
How do we pray?  
How do we deal with distractions to prayer?  
What are the wellsprings of prayer?  
How did Jesus pray?  
**5 Booklets:** 44, 45, 46, 47, 48

10. *A Thorough Survey of Catholicism*

Our inborn hunger for God  
Our need for the Church  
How God speaks through Scripture  
The love of the Trinity  
Why we sometimes turn away from God  
The life and teachings of Christ  
The Holy Spirit  
How the Church prays together  
Morality and conscience  
The Magisterium and the Ten Commandments  
Christian Prayer  
**12 Booklets** 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 16, 22, 31, 36, & 44