The Sacraments of the Catholic Church:

Seven Sacred Encounters with Jesus Christ

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Share what touched your heart the most from this week's presentation and why it affected you as it did?*
2. *What struck you in the Bread of Life discourse? What does it reveal about the Eucharist and Real Presence of Jesus? How might you share this with your students in a way that creates within them a desire to receive Jesus in Holy Communion?*

Chapter 1

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Through 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)

Confirmation in the Roman Catholic Rite occurs after candidates have been properly disposed to receive God's grace and power to live out their baptismal call to missionary discipleship.

1. *Regardless of the grade or subject matter you teach, how do you prepare your students for a life of discipleship and encourage them to live their faith with conviction so that they are ready and eager to be confirmed when they are of age? Give concrete examples.*

Chapter 2

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Each of us receives particular charisms from the Holy Spirit, given according to His purpose to aid us in living out our calling. When we use these gifts to love and serve God and others, we grow in holiness and build up the Body of Christ, offering a living witness of faith and love.

1. *What are two charisms God has given you and how do you use those charisms to love and serve God and others?*
2. *What can you do in your role as a catechist to help your students identify and strengthen the charisms they have received?*

Chapter 3

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

The grace and power bestowed upon those confirmed are the same at any age. However, when a child is confirmed at a younger age, those responsible for their formation bear a greater responsibility to help them recognize the gifts they have received and to guide them in using the grace, gifts, and charisms bestowed by the Holy Spirit. When a child is confirmed at an older age, the responsibility shifts toward preparing them to cooperate with the grace they will receive so that they are ready to actualize the gifts and charism the Holy Spirit imparts.

1. *How does your role as a catechist call you to help children – whether confirmed younger or older – recognize, cooperate with, and live out the grace and charisms the Holy Spirit bestows?*

Chapter 4

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Confirmation is not about a young person "choosing" to be Catholic. Their identity as a Catholic Christian is a permanent effect of Baptism that extends into eternity! What is striking, however, is that even with this unchangeable identity, nearly 85% of those confirmed will stop practicing the faith or leave the Church by age 21 (current statistics as of 2024). This gap highlights the urgent, irreplaceable role of catechists in helping the baptized encounter Christ, understand their identity in Him, and remain rooted in the life of the Church.

1. *How does this challenge me to rethink my approach to catechesis, mentoring discipleship, and personal witness? What practices, habits, or experiences am I offering to my students that lead them to encounter Jesus personally so that He may transform their hearts and minds?*

Chapter 5

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

The purpose of sacramental preparation is to help the candidate become properly disposed – that is, interiorly ready – to receive the grace and effects the sacrament will give. It is the work of tilling the soil of the heart and mind, so that what God freely and abundantly pours out in the sacrament can take root, grow, and bear lasting fruit in the life of the candidate.

1. *Where might I need to shift my approach so that preparation becomes less about completing "requirements" and "assignments" and more about helping my students cultivate a heart that is open, receptive, and ready for the grace God pours out in every sacramental encounter?*

Chapter 6

NOTES:

FINAL REMINDERS

- The course Facilitator will notify the Office for Catechetical Formation (OCF) of your course completion.
- The OCF will update your certification record within two weeks and email you a copy of your catechetical record. If you have completed your Master Certification, a certificate will also be sent via email. If you do not receive your record ***after*** two weeks, contact the OCF via email: phillyocf@archphila.org.
- It is ***your*** responsibility to forward a copy of your certification record to your Principal and/or Director of Religious Education.
- Your feedback is important to us as we strive to improve our courses. Please take five minutes to complete the course survey using the QR code provided.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus,
You call us to lead others to the Father's love.
Pour out Your grace upon us as catechists,
that our words, our witness, and our presence
may open a path for our students to encounter You personally
and recognize Your voice in their lives.
Strengthen our faith so that we teach from a heart rooted in You.
Deepen our love so that we accompany each child
with patience, compassion, and hope.
Renew our zeal so that we never grow weary
of inviting others into friendship with You.
Help us form our students not only in knowledge,
but in a living relationship with You
that grows into lifelong discipleship.
We ask You to bless our ministry and make it fruitful.
Amen.