

**St. Gregory the Great Church Religious Education**  
**MARCH STUDY GUIDE**  
**The Sacrament of Confirmation**

**What is Confirmation?**

In the Old Testament the prophets announced that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the hoped-for Messiah for his saving mission.

The descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at his baptism by John was the sign that this was he who was to come, the Messiah, the Son of God.

Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit; his whole life and his whole mission are carried out in total communion with the Holy Spirit whom the Father gave him “without measure.”

On several occasions Christ promised this outpouring of the Spirit, a promise fulfilled first on Easter Sunday and then on Pentecost.

Filled with the Spirit the Apostles began to proclaim “the mighty works of God.”

From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ’s will, imparted to the newly baptized by laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism.

Baptism, the Eucharist, and Confirmation together constitute the sacraments of Christian initiation.

The sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. Confirmation both confirms baptism and strengthens baptismal grace.

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.

The Confirmed, as true witness of Christ, are obligated to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.

Like Baptism, Confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an *indelible spiritual mark*, which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian

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with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness.

**The Signs and the Rite of Confirmation**

There are nine significant signs of the presence of God in the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. They are:

**1. The Christian Community Assembled**

When the community gathers together in faith, the gathering is the Church of Jesus Christ.

**2. The Bishop**

The bishop is the spiritual leader of the local Church and a link to the universal Church. He symbolizes the unity between the parish community and the Universal Church.

**3. The Candidates for Confirmation**

You, as a candidate for confirmation, are a sign of the gift of the Spirit as it unfolds in your own individual life, as sign of hope and renewal for the entire Church.

**4. The Sponsors**

The sponsor is a symbol and representative of the adult Christian community.

**5. The Reading of Scripture**

The reading of Scripture is an important element of the confirmation liturgy because it is a sign of the many-sided power of the Holy Spirit, which flows upon the Church and upon each one of the baptized and confirmed.

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## **6. The Prayers**

When the Christian community, led by the bishop, prays for the gift of the Holy Spirit, the community is signifying its dependence upon the Father, through Jesus, for the gift of the Spirit.

## **7. The Laying on of Hands**

The laying on of hands is an important biblical gesture by which the Holy Spirit is asked to come to you.

## **8. The Anointing with Chrism**

The gift of the Spirit is actually conferred on you through the laying on of hands and the anointing with chrism on your forehead as the bishop says: "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." Chrism is oil blessed by the bishop as a sign of the priesthood of Christ to which we are all called through our baptism.

## **9. The Eucharist**

The celebration of confirmation is appropriately within the Eucharistic liturgy. The Eucharist is the sign of Christ's way of life. It is, therefore, a sign of your own death and resurrection journey.

These signs and symbols constantly challenge us to live fuller Christian lives.

### **Receiving the Power of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

A long tradition in the Scriptures speaks of gifts that are given by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was with the Old Testament elders, judges, prophets, and kings to help them fulfill missions that they could not have done on their own.

As God's Son, Jesus, who is true God and true man, possessed the fullness of the Spirit, with all the gifts of the Spirit, from his conception.

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By Jesus' passion, death and resurrection, the gifts of the Holy Spirit were poured out to the Apostles and all who believed in Jesus and were baptized. These gifts are not offered to you.

In Confirmation, the Holy Spirit strengthens with his gifts and anoints us to be more like Christ, the Son of God.

There are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit:

1. **Wisdom** gives us the ability to think deeply about a situation or problem and to make the best decision from the information we have. Wisdom helps us to see with the Holy Spirit's eyes. That vision helps us to discover God's Will so we can make the decision that will be best for everyone.
2. **Understanding** helps us open our ears, minds, hearts, and hands to the people around us. The gift of understanding helps us become aware of what we can do to help others.
3. **Right judgment, or counsel**, gives us the ability to judge between right and wrong, good and evil. The Holy Spirit enables us to see what is truly important, what brings life and happiness. The gift of right judgment helps us to decide against those things that bring sadness, depression, worry, and death.
4. **Courage, or fortitude**, might be called personal conviction – the courage to stand up for what we believe in. Peer pressure is all around us. Saying no when everyone else is doing it takes courage. This gift of the Spirit helps us to be true to ourselves, to dare to be different, and to live according to what we know to be right.
5. **Knowledge** gives us the information we need to live our lives, to make good decisions. This information might come from our prayer or from the chance remark of a friend, but suddenly we have the last piece of information we need to make an important decision. This gift also helps us to know God. It allows us to see God as Jesus knew him, as our loving Father.

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6. **Reverence, or piety**, has less to do with how we act than with who we are. One clue to understanding this gift is that it is also called “holiness.” To be holy, or whole, is to have a good idea of who we are, who God is, and what our place is in God’s creation. Holy persons love God and others. They are open to and at peace with God. They are aware of God’s presence in their lives, the lives of others, and the world around them. The gift of reverence helps us participate fully in liturgy, have an active prayer life, praise God continuously, and respect other members of our community.
  
7. **Wonder and awe, or fear of the Lord**, allows us to experience all of life as a gift from God. We are amazed at God’s work in the world, and we realize that we are always in God’s presence. This gift encourages us to show our appreciation for the wonders of creation by striving to improve our relationships with God and to respond to the needs of the community around us