LETTERS TO A BISHOP:
THE JOURNEY TO CONFIRMATION

Catholic Diocese of Jackson
Department of Faith Formation
Dear Pastors, Lay Ecclesial Ministers, Parish Catechetical Leaders, Catechists, and Parents:

One of the highlights of my Spring is making the journey across the State to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation with the young people of this diocese. As a requirement, each candidate writes me a letter asking for the sacrament of confirmation. The letters vary greatly in many ways, but for the most part our young people take this responsibility quiet seriously. I am truly humbled at the depth of their faith, their desire for a deeper relationship with God and their willingness to share their doubts and short comings. Those letters, along with the sacramental preparation guidelines in the Catechist Companion: A Curriculum Guide for Catechesis and Religious Education, are the infrastructure from which this program is developed.

We are excited to publish this confirmation sacramental preparation program for its use by parishes around the diocese. It may serve to augment what you are currently doing or may take your program in a new direction. Whatever its utility in your parish I do hope you give some consideration to utilizing all or part of it in your sacramental preparation.

Given the demographic and geographic nature of our diocese we recognize there are variances from parish to parish in how sacramental preparation for confirmation is undertaken. We are comprised of 94 parishes and missions in 65 of Mississippi’s 82 counties. In terms of geography it is the largest diocese East of the Mississippi River. We have vibrant parishes in the larger cities of the diocese and knit together a beautiful network of parishes across Mississippi’s rural landscape. There is not a “one-size fits all” solution to ensure our young people are properly prepared for the sacrament of confirmation. That is why this program is intentionally organic in nature. It provides a blueprint, if you will, of what needs to be covered and addresses those subjects that our youth will hopefully find engaging.

May the Lord continue to bless you in your ministry of serving God’s people.

With prayerful best wishes, I am

Yours sincerely in Christ,

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INTRODUCTION

The word confirmation is from the Latin “confirmare” which means “to strengthen” or “to establish.” What is strengthened in the sacrament are the graces we receive at baptism through the Holy Spirit. It is especially poignant for those of us baptized as infants to have the opportunity as teenagers to affirm the desire that was originally expressed by our parents to receive the Holy Spirit sacramentally. Each year confirmandi from around the diocese send our Bishop letters expressing their desire to be confirmed. This annual exercise is, in fact, one of the two requirements laid out in Canon Law that speak to what is necessary for the sacrament to be administered. The primary requirement is that the individual, free from the impediments that would prevent the reception of the sacrament, asks for the sacrament. The secondary requirement is that the pastor and others have the responsibility to worthily prepare those who ask for the sacrament.

Can. 843 §1 Sacred ministers may not deny the sacraments to those who opportunely ask for them, are properly disposed and are not prohibited by law from receiving them.

§2 According to their respective offices in the Church, both pastors of souls and all other members of Christ's faithful have a duty to ensure that those who ask for the sacraments are prepared for their reception. This should be done through proper evangelization and catechetical instruction, in accordance with the norms laid down by the competent authority.

It is in the latter requirement that we find the greatest variance in sacramental preparation. Across the country, the articulation of the “how” and “when” of the sacrament differ. Even within a diocese there is little conformity of the exact plan for sacramental preparation. Given the differences between programs within the diocese, this program is designed to ensure that the curriculum articulated in the Catechist Companion is included in the sacramental preparation program you already have developed in your parish. The idea was to pair the curriculum with the hopes, doubts and questions our young people are struggling with today. Anyone who has been doing youth ministry or catechetical ministry for a decade or more knows that the landscape for how we relate to students has drastically changed. All the while, we are called to remain faithful catechists in our teaching.

In writing the Bishop, our young people are not only expressing their desire to be confirmed, but in many cases, they shared their doubts, fears and hopes. It was in “hearing” their voices articulate their reality that this work found its genesis. Our young people are speaking their truth. It is up to us to hear them and journey with them as they prayerfully discern who they are in this world and how specifically their Catholic faith helps shape and mold the decisions they will make as adults. As parents and catechists, we are called to cultivate and captivate the hearts and minds of our young people so they may receive the seeds of faith and respond as fully engaged Christians. No doubt, how we communicate the faith from generation to generation is challenging. We live in a world of constantly advancing technology. The culture of instant communication does not mean that we are effectively communicate with our youth. Culture is changing. However, what does remain the same is the message: the message of the Gospel.

This approach is firmly rooted in scripture and tradition in living out the mission of the Church. It requires students to be reflective and integrate what they are learning into their own lives. Our diocesan sacramental preparation directives in the Catechist Companion communicate the nine areas
that should be included in the curriculum. The first area is scripture which does not have specific curriculum guidelines (see page 74 of the *Catechist Companion*). Given the importance of opening the Word of God regularly with our young people, Scripture is part of each unit. A session on human dignity was added bringing our total of sessions back to nine. It is critical for young people to have a foundational understanding of the Genesis value in our creation in God’s likeness and image. The remaining eight areas from the curriculum of the *Catechist Companion* are:

** Tradition:** To discover how the mission of Christ formed the Church and how the local parish community helps the members remain faithful to the mission of Christ; Candidates will explore the role of the Holy Spirit in the early Church.

**The Church as the Faith Community:** To build a foundation for an understanding of the values of Jesus which form the core of the Christian message.

**Morality: Forming a Christian Lifestyle:** To fully understand how our choices and decisions affect ourselves and others and recognize how Jesus plays an important role in shaping our response to the challenge of living a Christ-like life.

**The Reality of Sin and the Need for Redemption:** To reflect on what sin is and how it can affect our lives; to appreciate God as loving, forgiving, merciful, and faithful; and, to recognize that we are called to bring peace and reconciliation to the whole world.

**Missionary Initiation/Service:** The image of Christ as “servant” guides us in developing an attitude of caring and concern for others; to be able to assess the needs of society around us; to see how we can apply our own gifts in loving service to others; and, to recognize that we are called to share in the mission of Jesus.

**Prayer:** To understand prayer and study are important in our daily living; to identify various ways to pray; and, to reach a decision to pray regularly.

**Liturgy and Worship:** To appreciate the Confirmation liturgy; readings, renewal of baptismal promises and to know what to expect during the ceremony; to choose Confirmation not as an end, but as a step that will help Candidates continue their journey of faith and commitment to Christ; and, to become familiar with the history behind the rituals and symbols used in the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

**The Nature of the Paschal Mystery:** To help the candidates reflect on the profound impact of Christ’s death and resurrection; to give the new members the opportunity to explore Jesus’ promise of life everlasting to those who believe in Him; to recognize that we are called to share in the death and resurrection of Jesus; to appreciate that the Eucharist is central to our faith and celebrates the presence of God in our lives; to recognize discipleship requires ongoing conversion and change of heart; and, to help the Candidates review their acquaintance with the Holy Spirit and recognize his actions in their lives.
Each session is similarly formatted. Each lesson is broken down into five parts or movements. The first part, the students are gathered around a prayer table or other suitable prayerful environment. The opening prayer includes an introduction to the week’s topic. The catechist might explain the focusing object and read the leaven from the letter to the Bishop.

Right after the introduction of the session’s topic, while still in prayer, a question is posed to get the students thinking about the topic. The second part includes time for reflection and time for the students to respond to the theme as it relates to their own experience. This can be done through verbal sharing or journaling.

The third part of the lesson is breaking open the Scripture. Questions for small groups are provided and they dig a deeper into a critical reflection on the theme. After small group discussion, it is advised to return to the large group and provide a synthesis of all the groups. This connects the larger group back to the topic and gives individuals an opportunity to speak on behalf of their group’s discussion.

Once the larger group has given a synthesis of their small group discussion, the catechist asks the students how they might integrate and assume the outcome of the discussion into their own life. Again, this can be done verbally or use journaling or another means to codify their response. This is the fourth part of the lesson, integration of the lesson into their own faith lives.

The fifth and final part of the lesson is introducing the students to a saint whose life reflects and underscores the theme of the lesson. One option would be to let the students know in advance what saint they will be discussing in the upcoming class. They could all be tasked to do research on that saint and be prepared to share what they learned.

As they break open a deeper understanding of the life of the saint they are studying the students are called to think about how they could emulate that saint in their own lives. Finally, either formally in closing prayer or informally in the large group students are asked once again to reflect and make a resolution as an outcome in response to the whole process.

Depending on how you use this program, you will need to set aside some time for your students to write their letter to the Bishop requesting the sacrament of confirmation. The guidelines for sacramental preparation also suggest that the students enrolled in the confirmation class make a separate retreat about the sacrament. The diocese offers a High School Confirmation Retreat in the Spring semester. This experience is especially beneficial to parishes with small Confirmation classes that otherwise find it hard to put together a retreat.

The use of this program is intended to be organic and suit the needs of each faith community. However, it is developed based on a specific praxis. Maintaining the five sections of the plan is key to developing an understanding of the subject being undertaken as well as the personal experience and response of the individual students. God’s blessings as you continue the important work of catechesis!
SESSION 1: “In the Big Inning, or was that Beginning?” Understanding the dignity of all humanity.

FOCUSING OBJECT: Atlas or Globe

The Atlas or globe represents all the cultures, regions and people of the world. If we believe that we are created in God’s likeness and image then we must recognize that all people regardless of race, creed or culture are marked with the same dignity.

LEAVEN FROM A LETTER: “Dear Bishop: I’ve learned so much about my faith…and what I need to do to reach my full potential as a Child of God.”

What does it mean to be a Child of God?

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:27

God created mankind in his image; in the image of God, he created them; male and female, he created them.

What does dignity mean to me?

Do I see all people as God’s children? Or just the folks who believe like I do?

How can I protect my own dignity?

How do I support others who might not look like me or share my faith beliefs?

What can we do to better ensure that others are loved and respected as God’s children?

SAINT: St. Teresa of Calcutta—Feast Day: September 5

How can you imitate St. Teresa? How did St. Teresa extend God’s love to all people? Have you ever considered literally loving someone to death?
SESSION 2: “Why Be Catholic?” Exploring the Rich Tradition of the Church

FOCUSING OBJECT: Rock

This week’s saint was an apostle and the first Pope. He is known as “the Rock.” In Matthew 16 we hear, “16 Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. 18 And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven…”

LEAVEN FROM A LETTER: “Dear Bishop: The reason I want to be Confirmed is I see this as God wanting to share his gifts with me.”

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 4:18-22 The Call of the First Disciples

18 As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. 19 He said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” 20 At once they left their nets and followed him. 21 He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, 22 and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.

CATECHIST COMPANION CURRICULUM: Tradition

To discover how the mission of Christ formed the Church and how the local parish community helps the members remain faithful to the mission of Christ; Candidates will explore the role of the Holy Spirit in the early Church; Candidates will deepen their appreciation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit which they have received; Candidates will accept their Confirmation as a new beginning in their Life in the Spirit; Candidates will reflect upon the significance of their membership in the Church community; Identify and understand the ministries of the Church; and, to understand that Confirmation initiates the Candidates into the full communion of the Church.

How can I better witness my faith in my family, community and the world?

SAINT: St. Peter—Feast Day, June 29 (shared with St. Paul)

How does Peter’s witness give you hope? Hint: Peter denied Jesus three times; he holds the Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven.
SESSION 3: “My Name Isn’t Thomas, But I’ve Got Some Doubts…”

FOCUSING OBJECT: Pair of old glasses

The glasses represent “clearer vision” experienced by Thomas after he witnessed the Risen Christ and placed his hands in Jesus’ wounds. We all experience times when we doubt. During these times, our faith needs “clearer vision” to know that God’s Spirit walks with us.

LEAVEN FROM A LETTER: “Dear Bishop: Honestly, I want to be Confirmed because my parents sent me here. I don’t feel like I am ready to be Confirmed, but everyone else says they weren’t either. I’m scared I’m not going to get Confirmed because then I will let my parents down.”

SCRIPTURE: John 20:24-29

24 Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” 26 Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” 28 Thomas answered and said to him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Jesus said to him, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

CATECHIST COMPANION CURRICULUM: The Nature of the Paschal Mystery

To help the Candidates reflect on the profound impact of Christ’s death and resurrection; to give the new members the opportunity to explore Jesus’ promise of life everlasting to those who believe in Him; to recognize that we are called to share in the death and resurrection of Jesus; to appreciate that the Eucharist is central to our faith and celebrates the presence of God in our lives; to understand that there is a resurrection from death through Jesus Christ; discipleship requires ongoing conversion and change of heart; and, to help the Candidates review their acquaintance with the Holy Spirit and recognize his actions in their lives.

Is it wrong to question our beliefs?

SAINT: St. Thomas the Apostle—Feast Day: July 3

Is it wrong to have doubts? Should I be praying for signs? Who can I talk to when I have doubts?
SESSION 4: “Choosing a Life of Faith”

FOCUSING OBJECT: Fruit Bowl

Everyone is gifted. Every member of your family, school, church community has certain gifts. Our Christian community is like a fruit bowl. As individuals our gifts are wonderful, but when we mix our gifts together we make up something spectacular!

LEAVEN FROM A LETTER: “Dear Bishop: The Catholic Church and its teachings give me faith. Our world is so messed up and suffers from ignorance that sometimes the only place I can turn to is my Church and the people in it.”

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

12 As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. 14 Now the body is not a single part, but many. 15 If a foot should say, “Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body,” it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. 16 Or if an ear should say, “Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body,” it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I do not need you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I do not need you.”

CATECHIST COMPANION CURRICULUM: The Church as the Faith Community

To build a foundation for an understanding of the values of Jesus which form the core of the Christian message; that the Community of Faith place their hope and trust in God through our Savior Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit; to help discern the obstacles that are hindering progress in our faith journey; to discover our personal strengths and gifts that are contributing to our progress in our faith journey; to understand the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and to grow in the use of these gifts; to discover that, by the use of our own unique gifts, we witness the presence of God’s Spirit in all of us; to recognize that the Kingdom of God is built by each person responding to the call of the Holy Spirit; to deepen our commitment to become Kingdom-builders in the world; to better understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus; and, to help the Candidates identify themselves as members of the Catholic Church.

SAINT: St. Monica—Feast Day: August 27

St. Monica is famously known to be the mother of St. Augustine and her unceasing prayers are attributed to his conversion. She also was a formidable force when it came to her non-Christian husband and mother-in-law.

God gives us all gifts. Those gifts produce the fruits of the Holy Spirit. What gifts did Monica have? What fruit did she bear? How about yours?
SESSION 5: “Defining vs. Refining Moments: Lessons in Living a Holy Life”

FOCUSING OBJECT: Piece of Sand Paper

There are events in our lives that help define us. Our Baptism, Confirmation and vocation all help define who we are. There are other events, good and bad, that help refine us. When we make poor decisions, or do something contrary to our faith we can learn from it and commit to not do it again.

LEAVEN FROM A LETTER: “Dear Bishop: I hope that being Confirmed will bring me closer to God. I also hope that I will stop doubting my faith in God. There have been times that I have made wrong decisions in life but I want to start making right ones and being Confirmed is a good start.”

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 20:1-17

Then God spoke all these words: 2 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 You shall not have other gods beside me. 4 You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; 5 you shall not bow down before them or serve them. For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their ancestors’ wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation; 6 but showing love down to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. 7 You shall not invoke the name of the LORD, your God, in vain. For the LORD will not leave unpunished anyone who invokes his name in vain. 8 Remember the Sabbath day—keep it holy. 9 Six days you may labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God. You shall not do any work, either you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your work animal, or the resident alien within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD has blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. 12 Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you. 13 You shall not kill. 14 You shall not commit adultery. 15 You shall not steal. 16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 17 You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

How do you see the Ten Commandments being relative today?

CATECHIST COMPANION CURRICULUM: Morality: Forming a Christian Lifestyle

Our choices and decisions affect ourselves and others; Jesus plays an important role in shaping our response to the challenge of living a Christ-like life; we are called to be signs or witnesses for Jesus in the world around us; the virtues of faith, hope and love are at the core of the Christian way of life; faith is our guide for dealing with contemporary problems and moral decisions; and, candidates will review the Ten Commandments.

SAINT: St. Kateri Tekakwitha—Feast Day: July 14
St. Kateri remained steadfast against her community when she discerned her call to Catholicism and a chaste life. What does St. Kateri teach us about our faithfulness to do what we believe is right? Have you ever felt misunderstood for the Catholic faith you profess?
SESSION 6: “Spiritual Growing Pains Are Real; God’s Grace is the Balm”

FOCUSING OBJECT: Ben-gay or Icy Hot

Growing pains are real. Like our physical growing pains, we experience spiritual growing pains. Let us remember that God’s grace soothes our achy spirits and helps us grow into the persons he created us to be.

LEAVEN FROM A LETTER: “Dear Bishop: I question my religion all the time and a lot of the time I put other things like objects before God because sometimes I feel like they’re more important. I guess I really don’t understand much yet.”


1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2 He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. 3 The tempter approached and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread.” 4 He said in reply, “It is written: “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.” 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, 6 and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you’ and ‘with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.’” 7 Jesus answered him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.’” 8 Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, 9 and he said to him, “All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me.” 10 At this, Jesus said to him, “Get away, Satan! It is written: ‘The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.’” 11 Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

Does the fact that Jesus was tempted by the Devil make you mad or does it give you encouragement that if Jesus was tempted it is expected that we would be too?

CATECHIST COMPANION CURRICULUM: The Reality of Sin and the Need for Redemption

The Candidates will reflect on what sin is and how it can affect our lives; to help the Candidates realize that temptations can make the Christian journey difficult but not impossible with the help of the Holy Spirit; to help the Candidates understand that Jesus offers salvation and rebirth to those who are willing to change and to help them identify the areas in their lives that need changing; Candidates will explore the theme of conversion and ways of celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a sign of God’s mercy and steadfast love for us which calls us to forgive others; to discover that “conversion” and “reconciliation” sometimes involve letting go of feelings, thoughts, or ways of life that are hard to give up; to appreciate God as loving, forgiving, merciful, and faithful; and, to recognize that we are called to bring peace and reconciliation to the whole world.
SAINT: St. Angela Foligno—Feast Day: January 8

How are you called to bring peace and reconciliation to the whole world?
SESSION 7: “A Servant’s Heart Counts Blessings Not Hours”

FOCUSING OBJECT: Watch or Clock

Young people are doing “service hours” to build their college resume or as a requirement for awards, scholarships and even the Sacrament of Confirmation. As a Church, we need to get away from recording hours. Instead we need to inspire our students with a desire to serve others without “getting something out of it.” We will read in Matthew’s gospel that Jesus himself is asking us to serve one another. He did not say it would be easy, nor did he say it would help you get into college.

LEAVEN FROM A LETTER: “Dear Bishop: I intend to continue serving my community and giving back to others. As you can see, I have chosen to be a part of the mission of Christ.”

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:42-45

For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’ 44 Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ 45 He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’

CATECHIST COMPANION CURRICULUM: Missionary Initiation/Service

The image of Christ as “servant” guides us in developing an attitude of caring and concern for others; Candidates will choose to respond to the call to service within their own parish setting and practical ways to live out their discipleship; to be able to assess the needs of society around us; to see how we can apply our own gifts in loving service to others; and, to recognize that we are called to share in the mission of Jesus.

SAINT: St. Vincent DePaul—Feast Day: July 19

Christian service is not just about building a resume for college, it is a way of life that Jesus challenges us to love. How are you living a life of service?
SESSION 8: “Growing Closer to God: My Will and His Plan”

FOCUSING OBJECT: Print out of Google Map Directions

We often talk about “God’s plan” for us, but often really express what we want God’s plan to be. Our journey in life often takes unexpected twists and turns. It is essential that we develop a practice of discernment and come to understand our own charism or spirituality. Not all devotions or forms of prayer resonate with everyone equally the same. That is why there are differences in religious orders. They all serve a noble purpose, but speak to different charisms. The map reminds us that we do have a destination, but there many ways to get there.

LEAVEN FROM A LETTER: “Dear Bishop: I want to get Confirmed so that I can get to know Christ better. I am doing it for myself and not because my parents are making me. This is the next step on my journey through life and I am glad it is happening.”

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 4:4-9

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! 5 Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. 6 Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. 7 Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Do you feel like you do a good job discerning God’s will for your life? How do discern? Prayer? Talking to your friends, parents, another adult?

CATECHIST COMPANION CURRICULUM: Prayer

Prayer and study are important in our daily living; the experience of prayerful reflection on the Scriptures is an important source of conversion; to identify various ways to pray; and, to reach a decision to pray regularly.

SAINT OF THE WEEK: St. Ignatius of Loyola—Feast Day: July 31

St. Ignatius, bed ridden and recovering from a battle wound, experienced a major conversion. He read about the saints and became a soldier for Christ. Have you experienced a similar change? What does his witness say to those of us who need to always have it “our way”?

St. Ignatius decided to use his misfortune for the better. What does it mean when someone says, “God has a plan for me.” How does our free will and God’s plan go together?
SESSION 9: “THIS ISN’T CATHOLIC GRADUATION”

FOCUSING OBJECT: Toolbox

The toolbox represents the sacraments of initiation, all the learning we have experienced in our faith journey, the love of our family, the support of our faith community. As we encounter temptations, doubts and questions during our young adult years, we have this full toolbox to help us build a better future.

LEAVEN FROM A LETTER: “Dear Bishop: I want to receive the sacrament of Confirmation because I know I will need the graces conferred in this sacrament to live my faith boldly and to fulfill my unique vocation.”

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 2:9-10

9 But you are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises” of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were “no people” but now you are God’s people; you “had not received mercy” but now you have received mercy.

What does God’s mercy look like to you? How do you see yourself, your family and the people you associate with living out their call as “a people of his own”?

CATECHIST COMPANION CURRICULUM: LITURGY AND WORSHIP

To understand the Easter Vigil and the Rite of Confirmation liturgy and the importance of confirmation being celebrated in the setting of the Mass; to appreciate the Confirmation liturgy; readings, renewal of baptismal promises and to know what to expect during the ceremony; to help Candidates participate actively and affectively in the celebration of the Sacrament; to choose Confirmation not as an end, but as a step that will help Candidates continue their journey of faith and commitment to Christ; and, to become familiar with the history behind the rituals and symbols used in the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Saint: Who did you chose? Why?

Review the Sacrament of Confirmation and/or practice for the Liturgy. If you have not already written you letter to the Bishop this would be a good session to do so.