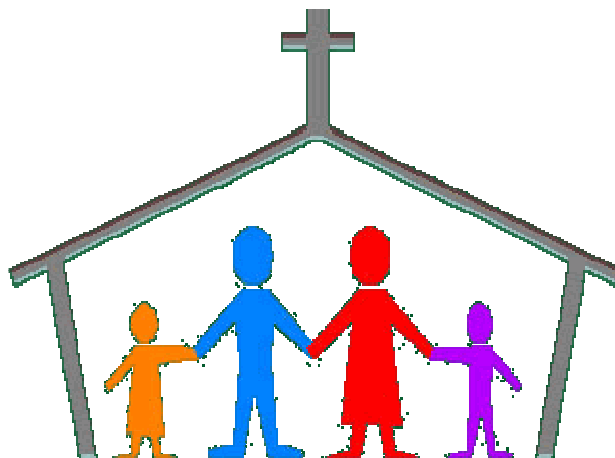


*A Confirmation  
Preparation  
Program*



*Offered to parishes  
in the Diocese of Limerick*

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Prepared by the confirmation working group;  
a sub-committee of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.  
Autumn 2007

**“The community of faith involves  
families, parishes and schools  
working together ...**



**... We grow in faith by sharing and  
living and celebrating our faith together**

**'Never Alone', pg 4. +Donal Murray, Lent 2007**

## The Background: History and Vision

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This program is the work of the Confirmation committee, which is a working group of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. It's work follows on from previous groups who offered this diocese, resources for preparation for Infant Baptism, and preparation for First Holy Communion.

The groups work involved research, planning, and the implementation of a pilot program of parish based preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. The group's membership has changed over its three year term; all members making important contributions at the various stages. We are especially grateful to the four parishes who allowed us to test/pilot aspects of this evolving program in their faith community.

This program is not an end in itself, but rather a step along the way. It is a statement of support for those who work with confirmation candidates, and a statement of hope for those who want to. It is one of many resources available, and it is an evolving resource which will develop and grow according to your parishes needs. We welcome all dialogue and learning which will benefit all involved.

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*Gathered together, Praying together, Serving together*

Two principles informed the preparation of this program

- (i) A parish program does not need to copy or double up on the important and valuable catechetical work already being undertaken in our schools. Rather, we want candidates and their families to experience themselves as:
  - belonging to their home parish *(Baptized)*
  - praying and worshipping with and in their home parish *(Eucharistic community)*
  - people who are called and capable of serving in the faith community *(Ministry)*
- (ii) We firmly believe that this time of preparation must be a time of growth for the whole family – and indeed the whole parish. Everyone can learn more about their own Baptism and Confirmation; everyone can support the candidate's journey.

After much discussion and experience, we suggest the following six themes around which the candidates, their family and the parish might gather:

- |    |                              |  |
|----|------------------------------|--|
| #1 | We belong                    | Baptism and welcome                      |
| #2 | We are a Christian community | Eucharist                                |
| #3 | We are a Catholic family     | Preparing & praying at home (Advent)     |
| #4 | We make a difference         | Call to involvement – ministry, vocation |
| #5 | We are on a journey          | Pilgrimage                               |
| #6 | We rejoice                   | A Pentecost celebration                  |

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PREPARING TO OFFER  
A PARISH PROGRAM  
FOR THOSE PREPARING  
FOR THE SACRAMENT  
OF CONFIRMATION

## Choosing this program

## Pre-September decisions!

### Deciding upon a parish program

Some people think that a parish program for confirmation is a wonderful idea – others don't agree. Some think it's a nice idea if someone else would do it, still more feel it's about time someone did something and they'd be happy to advise the hapless organising committee!!!

*What do you think?*

*What do you want?*

*What are your expectations of parish programs for sacramental preparation?*

A parish based program is based on parish values. It requires team work and collaboration, family involvement and flexibility. Sure, it can be delivered by one or two people (the parish priest or the teacher), but then it's not a parish program, is it!? Our priests and teachers already make a huge difference to our faith communities – a parish based program is an invitation to the wider community to take up its role as adult members of the faith community. Priests and people working together, in mutual respect, for the good of the parish and especially for the benefit of the young candidates ... now that's an exciting parish program!

*So, what do you think? - Are you in?*

### Deciding upon *this* parish program

There are many programs available that offer resources and ideas for a parish based preparation program for confirmation. This program may or may not suit your needs. So, we'll explain the context in which we're offering this program, and you can see if it suits your parish at this time:

- EXPERIENTIAL: This program offers positive learning opportunities in the local parish for families where a child is preparing for confirmation. It does not seek to offer a full catechesis for candidates, as it assumes that the bulk of the candidate's catechesis is being covered in the primary school curriculum.
- COLLABORATIVE: This program assumes collaboration, team planning and delivery. The planning group model the collaborative parish that the candidate is invited into. They are also learning about their own Confirmation, and its implications for the adult parishioner. So, while this program can be offered by one or two people, that be to would miss the whole point of the exercise.
- WHOLE FAMILY: This program is for the whole family and has no evening for 'only parents' or 'only candidates'. It assumes that families grow in faith together, and encourages involvement and dialogue.

Please note that to run this program successfully, the parish will need:

- The enthusiasm and leadership of the parish's priests and parish pastoral council.
- A working group who will plan and deliver it (priests and parishioners)
- Access to a suitable facilities (meeting rooms, photocopying, etc)
- Clarity that this program is for parishioners, wherever they go to school

*So - Are you still in?!!*

## Preparing the program

## Planning meetings in September

### First meeting: Information for possible working group members (1 hour max)

Invite together a group of 10 or more parishioners, the parish's priests, and representatives from the parish pastoral council. Pray together.

Begin at the beginning: Who are the confirmation candidates in this parish?

Discuss the program. *(The handout in appendix 1 might help to start the conversation)*

If you agree to proceed; form a group of 5-8, (including one priest if possible), who will be this year's confirmation working group.

### Second meeting: Planning for the year ahead (1 hour max)

Pray together

Decide on four practical details

- Dates, times and venues of meetings from September to Christmas. Dates from January can be decided once the date of confirmation is announced. Look at any practical details (space, hospitality, venues etc?).
- Numbers: Clarity the numbers involved and how this will affect any gathering (see specific evenings for details). If the number of candidates is greater than 12, you will need to consider noise, space and comfort for all involved, and sometimes you may need to break into smaller groups.
- Publicity and invitation: who will inform the parish, the families and the candidates about the program? Who will invite the families and candidates to attend?
- The availability and gifts of this committee: Are we all happy to be equally involved in all aspects of the program? What particular skills or talents are needed or available?

Study the program, considering your parish's needs and talents. Could we involve the wider parish in any way? (E.g. could we invite people to pray for the candidates, to help to set up rooms, to prepare the tea/coffee, to leading any singing or music, etc!?)

### Third meeting: Planning the session ahead (1 hour max)

Pray together (5 minutes)

Set the scene: (10 minutes)

- Have one person read aloud the session you are preparing.
- Take 5 minutes to clarify what is involved – are we happy to proceed?

Tasks: (15 minutes)

- Decide who will be the session leader – it will be a different person each time.
- Divide out all other tasks; don't forget the task of setting up, and of tidy up.
- Take 5 minutes for each person to re-read the session in silence – so they can assess the task that they have taken on

Clarity (20 minutes)

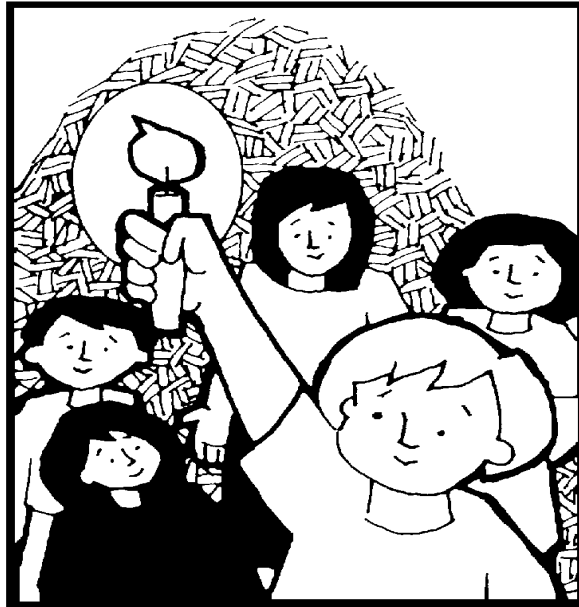
- The leader of the session talks through each part of the evening, clarifying how they see it going and how each person is involved. Everyone chips in to agree, disagree or suggest ideas. This should mean that there is agreement and everyone has the same 'plan' in their head in advance!

Prayer and tea (10 minutes)

Give thanks and enjoy one another company over a quick cuppa!

*Catechesis runs the risk of becoming barren if no community of faith ... takes ... the responsibility of welcoming the (candidates) into an environment where they can live as fully as possible what they have learned.*

JOHN PAUL II, Catechesi Tradendae ,24



## A PARISH PROGRAM FOR CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

## Part One: We belong

**When:** Mid - late October

**Purpose:** A relaxed gathering of candidates and families. Emphasis: welcome, baptism.

### Preparation

The template in appendix ten can be used to prepare for this meeting. Remember to take a glance ahead to next month's meeting too (you'll need sign-up sheets etc)

*Set up of room:* A table with symbols of baptism, especially a large container of water. Individual holy water bottles, and any necessary handouts nearby. Chairs in U or circle shape. A large map of the parish on display. A bright sticker for each candidate.

### Session

**Welcome and Opening prayer** (10 minutes)

Offer an overview of the six night program – the why and how! (*see appendix two*)

**Input: We belong to this parish** (10 minutes)

Leader leads a brainstorm of the words 'church' and 'parish'

Using the map of the parish, speak of parish as a faith community. Invite people to look, to see where they live. Each candidate could come forward and attach a sticker for their home. Discuss size, shape, people, groups, activities etc – what makes this parish unique!

Move into main points:

- We are all parishioners together here – all equal, all important
- We belong: our common link is baptism

**Group work: Remembering our baptism** (20 minutes)

*Family memory:* (5 minutes)

Group leader invites all to sit as a family for a moment. Invite each family to remember the baptism of the confirmation candidate, and any further baptism story that it would be interesting for the candidate to hear. Emphasize the fun sense of this – it's about people bonding rather than deep discussion.

*Sharing the story:* (10 minutes)

Group leader invites every 3 families to join up. Each candidate to tell one story about a baptism in their family.

*Large group* (5 minutes)

Bring everyone back together and ask 'what good news did you hear?', 'did anything surprise you?'

**Prayer:** (15 minutes)

A prayer ritual around baptism (*see appendix three*)

**For next month (Eucharist)** (5 minutes)

- Reminder of date, venue and theme. Invitation to the family.
- Point to the sign-up sheets at the back of the room asking each family to sign up for one ministry/activity (flowers, bread, preparation of room, preparation of altar, Ministers of Word, music, Prayers of the faithful, Offertory gifts etc)
- Invitation to Sunday Mass as a family

## Part Two: We are a Christian community

**When:** Mid - Late November

**Purpose:** A relaxed and positive experience of Eucharist with family and fellow parishioners. An opportunity to gather, as a faith community, and to pray together.

### Preparation

The template in appendix ten can be used to prepare for this meeting.

*Where:* This gathering is best held in a parish hall or similar warm space. If there are more than 15 candidates, it will be necessary to hold this Mass in smaller groups. Gather in geographical areas (e.g. townlands), rather than according to the school they attend!

*Set up of room:* Everyone will help to prepare the room. However, they need leadership and help, so ensure some of the committee are available to guide! Have the mass kit, Advent family prayer booklets, and handouts prepared and available.

*In advance:* At the planning meeting, consider the sign-up sheets and how to organize everyone! Perhaps each group member could take an area and check in with those signed up to ensure they will arrive early and prepared. Music is especially helpful for Eucharist.

You will also need to have copies of 'Advent family prayers' – one per family. There are loads of versions of this available in all Christian bookshops, order early as they do run out!!

Note: At this point you will have the dates for Confirmation, and so can plan dates for all the meetings from January – June. Give each family a note with these details before they go home this evening!

### Session

**Welcome and Opening prayer** (5 minutes)

**Input: We belong to the Body of Christ** (10 minutes)

Display Siegar Koeders painting (*see appendix four*) so all can see it. Invite the groups to reflect on the painting, drawing out themes of service, Eucharist, etc to remind all of why we are here

**Group work: The Eucharist** (30 minutes)

Celebrate a very simple Eucharist with the group – emphasizing all that we bring to the table. Ensure everyone is sitting in a circle, so all can see. As priest dresses altar and himself, it would be good to explain the various items of Mass kit, clothing and cloth.

**Reflection:** (5 minutes)

Sit in family groups for a moment – what did I like/value about this experience? What comments/questions do we have? A short open forum to discuss thoughts and questions.

**For next month (Advent: family prayer)** (10 minutes)

*See next section for ideas on this!*

- Advent is a time for family – we offer each family a booklet of Advent family prayer and invite them to use it each day together.(see part three for details)
- A special invitation to Sunday Mass in Advent – a time of preparation

## Part Three: We are a Catholic family

**When:** During Advent, in the family home

**Purpose:** To offer parents and family an opportunity to be full participants in their children's faith journey. To offer tools which enable families to develop a pattern of family prayer in their home. Hopefully this can be continued after confirmation.

### Preparation

This part of the parish preparation will happen primarily in the family home, so the preparation involves only three questions:

- Have we enough 'Advent family prayer' booklets for all the families?
- How can we encourage families to take up this challenge during Advent?
- How can we link this activity to Sunday Eucharist and the wider parish?

**Some ideas for encouraging participation** (*pick one or two!*)

- **Clarity:** Have a clear agreed upon target – e.g. daily prayer, a family meal once a week with prayer, and/or, all commit to prayer on a specific day of the week (e.g. Friday)
- **Support:** Have a one page 'instruction manual', or similar, available for each family to take home along with the prayer book (*see appendix five*)
- **Commitment:** Create a sense of ceremony in the presentation of the prayer books at the end of part two. Offer it as a positive challenge for the season of Advent, and speak of how it will connect with Sunday Mass (so families feel supported)
- **Adult commitment:** Have an adult come forward with candidate to accept the booklet. It reinforces the sense of 'taking on a task', as opposed to this being homework given to the candidate!
- **Ritualize:** Have a wall, banner or poster with a picture of a church made from building blocks. Families are invited to sign one of the foundation blocks. This is a sign that they commit to building up the faith community, by praying as a family..

**Some ideas for linking this activity to Sunday Eucharist and the wider parish**

- **Normalise it:** Have the same booklets available for purchase in the church before Advent. Invite all families to participate
- **Connect it:** Refer to at least one of the activities from the booklet in the Sunday homilies each week
- **Celebrate it:** Using the banner of the wall (above), or similar. Invite children of families who are using the book to come to the wall each week and add a block (building up the faith community). Ensure that the blocks are mixed up and no one stands out as participating or not participating: the purpose is to build us all up not knock anyone!!

### Session

Daily, or at least regular, family prayer in the family home, as agreed upon.

## Part Four: We make a difference

**When:** Late January – several weeks before Lent

**Purpose:** Call to ministry, service. To recognize own gifts and vocation.

### *This one is a little different, so let's explain it a little more:*

During Lent, every candidate will have the chance to participate in a normal parish liturgical ministry in the company of adults. Thus they will see, and be seen, as full members of the faith community. Their participation in the Sunday liturgy this Lent will be a *sign and symbol* of their on-going call to full participation in the parish

It is important that their involvement is not confined to one ministry or that one Mass is not set aside for this purpose. This would only reinforce the notion that such participation is transitory and something which the candidate grows out of when they leave primary school!!! We want them to be involved in 'normal' ministry, and we want the parish to recognise their giftedness and to celebrate them! We also want the parish to recognise its role as adult Catholic role models for the confirmation candidates.

All this means that you will have a number of gatherings as part of this session!

- A simple planning meeting with adults in ministry in the parish (early January)
- Meeting with confirmation candidates (mid-late January)

This is because a group of adults who are involved in various liturgical ministry groups in the parish will be part of the session with the candidates and their families.

## 4(a) : Meeting with adults in ministry in this parish

### Preparation

*Working group planning meeting*

*(in December or early January)*

(1) Make a list of the various liturgical ministries that are in existence in this parish.

(E.g. Music ministry (choirs), Ministers of the Word (readings, prayers of the faithful), Ministers of the Eucharist, Collectors, Cleaners, Altar Society, Flowers, Parish liturgy group, Offertory procession, Altar servers, etc)

Consider which of these would be appropriate for a candidate to participate in (e.g. it would not be appropriate for a 12 year old to be a Minister of the Eucharist) and decide on a number of ministries that candidates can be offered a chance to participate in. Now, make a list of adult parishioners who might come to the session and represent each ministry. This would involve very little 'public speaking' (*see appendix six for template*), so its not too challenging.

Invite these to meeting 2 (see below). Consider inviting more than you need, so people have the possibility of saying yes or no!

(2) If possible, check with the school to see if the candidates have learnt about the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. Teachers are very supportive, and if the candidates have posters, or similar, of these gifts/fruits, it would be great to have them on the night.

(3) With all these details in place(!), now you can plan your meeting with these adult parishioners as you would plan a normal meeting

PS: If this planning meeting is in December, it might be nice to have a prayerful and a social element, to give thanks and to celebrate your hard work so far!

### Session

*Meeting with adults in ministry in the parish*

*(45 minutes – early January)*

Welcome and opening prayer

Leader explains the confirmation preparation program and in particular this part – ministry. Stop and check for questions and comments

Offer each person a template (*see appendix six*) and ask them to fill it out for their ministry and their experience. Allow a few minutes to chat about what was easy or challenging about that.

Ask for volunteers to present the specific ministries at the main meetings. Take 5 minutes to sit with each volunteer to ensure they are happy.

## 4(b): Meeting with confirmation candidates and their families

### Preparation

Plan the meeting using the template in appendix ten, as usual

*Set up room:* Meet in the parish church where possible. If the group was divided into smaller groups for the experience of Eucharist, you might need to do the same here. Posters showing the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit, handouts, markers and stars

### Session

**Welcome and Opening prayer** (10 minutes)

**Input: Gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit** (5 minutes)

Remind candidates (and thus their families) about the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit – using posters or similar. Ask: ‘How can our gifts become fruits? – through use, through caring and sharing? Where can we do this – at home, in school, in parish? Everyone has gifts from God – we want to recognize each other’s giftedness and celebrate it’

**Group work: recognizing our gifts** (10 minutes)

Each person gets one marker and one star. Invite each person to face one family member present. Now, in silence, consider how you know that the Holy Spirit lives in that person – what gift or fruit of the Holy Spirit can you see in their life. Write on your ‘star’ one fruit of the Holy Spirit that that person has.

Invite pairs to share with each other. Allow time for this.

Now think of one other gift the person has. Write it on the back of the star & share it.

**Input: Making a difference** (5 minutes)

Read ‘starfish story’ – Note how each of us can, and does, make a difference.

Explain that, as part of Confirmation preparation, each family is being invited to make a difference this Lent. Each family is being asked to support the candidates involvement in liturgy on two out of the six Sundays of Lent. This involvement is a sign to the whole parish of the giftedness of these candidates. It is a sign to the candidates that they are valued and valuable. It is a symbol of the ministry & service that all adult Catholics are called to.

Volunteers come forward and each speaks of each area of ministry that they want to invite candidates, and families, to become involved in. (*using template in appendix six*)

Allow a moment for each family to discuss and decide how they’d like to be involved.

**Group work: choosing our activity for Lent** (10 minutes)

Sign-up sheets have been placed in different corners, ‘adults’ go stand there.

Each family is given a blank card (*see appendix seven*) and asked to commit to 2 Sundays in Lent (out of 6). As they do, they can fill in the card to take home as a reminder

**Prayer:** (15 minutes)

Parent places hand on child’s head and prays a prayer of thanksgiving for their child  
Child places a hand on parents head and prays for them too

**For next month (preparation for Lent)** (5 minutes)

Candidates will need to meet with their ministry group to prepare for Lent.

## Part Five: We are on a journey

**When:** In advance of the candidates confirmation

**Purpose:** An opportunity to experience a Catholic parish pilgrimage. This could be done as a parish event, or as an event for the families. It could be a pilgrimage

- within the parish (walk from church to a holy well),
- a local pilgrimage (one of limericks main sites)
- a national pilgrimage (Knock or similar)

### Preparation

Decide on three questions

- Is this pilgrimage for the candidates and their families or for the wider parish too?
- Where will we journey (from and to) ?
- What is our theme, and timetable

Plan accordingly – involving parents of the candidates as much as possible in the preparation and planning.

---

## Part Six: We rejoice

**When:** After confirmation – around Pentecost (June)

**Purpose:** An opportunity to gather with other parishes and celebrate the candidates new role in the faith community

### Suggestions

#### *Cluster gathering*

- All the confirmation working groups in the diocese could gather after Easter to plan such a gathering
- All candidate and their families invited to a Pentecost celebration. This could include a workshop, a liturgy, and/or a social aspect

#### *Cathedral or similar gathering*

- A group of parishes could choose to visit the Diocesan cathedral, Diocesan Pastoral Centre, or a similar venue. Tour the venue, pray together and have a simple celebration

#### Parish celebration

- Invite all involved together for a parish celebration. (prayer, reflection and social)
- All confirmation candidates could be invited to participate in the Sunday Eucharist on Pentecost Sunday, as a sign of the Holy Spirit present and active in our parish

# Appendices

## Appendix one: Handout for group An introduction to the parish program

Catechesis runs the risk of becoming barren if no community of faith ... takes ... *the responsibility of welcoming the (candidates) into an environment where they can live as fully as possible what they have learned.*

*JOHN PAUL II, Catechesi Tradendae, 24*

### Your Vision:

A parish-based program is based on parish values. It invites priests and people to work together, in mutual respect, for the good of the parish and especially for the benefit of the young candidates. A parish based program always hopes to be:

- EXPERIENCE-BASED: To offer positive experiences in the local parish for families where a child is preparing for confirmation. The program does not need to offer a full catechesis for candidates, as this is delivered in the primary school.
- COLLABORATIVE: The program assumes collaboration, team planning and team delivery. The way the planning group work together, is an example to the candidates and their family of how parishioners co-operate well together.
- FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY: This program has no evening for ‘only parents’ or ‘only candidates’. It assumes that families grow in faith *together*. Parents and candidates who attend the same sessions are able to discuss them afterwards!

### Your Mission:

That candidates *and their families* would experience themselves:

- As belonging to their home parish *(Baptized)*
- praying and worshipping with and in their home parish *(Eucharistic community)*
- people who are called and capable of serving in the faith community *(Ministry)*

### Your Program

There are six gatherings or ‘sessions’ in this program, each very different:

	<i>Title</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Time</i>
#1	We belong	Baptism and welcome	Mid-October
#2	We are a Christian community	Eucharist	November
#3	We are a Catholic family	Preparing & praying at home	Advent
#4	We make a difference	Call to involvement: ministry, vocation	January
#5	We are on a journey	Pilgrimage	Lent
#6	We rejoice	A Pentecost celebration	May/June

- 
- What do I like about what I have heard?
  - What am I not so happy about?
  - What questions do I have now?

## Appendix one: Planning meetings

*This is simply a suggested agenda for your planning meetings  
– these meetings should **never** be longer than one hour!*

- Pray together (5 minutes)
- Set the scene: (10 minutes)
- Have one person read aloud the first session
  - Take 5 minutes to clarify what is involved – are we happy to proceed?
- Tasks: (15 minutes)
- Decide who will be the session leader – it should be a different person each time.
  - Divide out the other tasks, don't forget the task of setting up, and of tidy up.
  - Take 5 minutes for each person to re read the session in silence – especially the task that they have taken on
- Clarity (20 minutes)
- The leader of the session talks through each part of the session, clarifying how they see it going, and how each person is involved. Everyone chips in to agree, disagree or suggest ideas. This should mean that there is agreement and everyone has the same 'plan' in their head in advance!
- Prayer and tea (10 minutes)
- Give thanks and enjoy one another company over a quick cuppa!

## Appendix two: Handout for families on night one Parish Confirmation preparation: Practical details

19

These gatherings are being organised on behalf of the All-Saints Parish Pastoral Council.

This year's Confirmation working group members are: #####, #####, #####, #####, and ##### (list names of parishioners and priests here)

You can contact us by calling ##(name)## on 087 - #####

---

### Confirmation Date

The dates for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation across the diocese are decided and announced during the Autumn. The Bishop makes every effort to accommodate parishes and candidates. As soon as the date for this parish is known, you will be informed. This date will affect our meeting dates after Christmas, so these dates will be announced at the November meeting.

The Parish of All Saints

Confirmation Preparation in our parish



"The community of faith involves families, parishes and schools working together. ... We grow in faith by sharing and living and celebrating our faith together'

*'Never Alone', pg 4. Bishop Donal Murray, Lent 2007*

## Appendix two: Handout for families on night one Parish Confirmation preparation: Practical details

Our hope is that, candidates and their families will experience themselves:

- As belonging to their home parish *(Baptized)*
- Praying and worshipping with and in their home parish *(Eucharistic community)*
- As people who are called and capable of serving in the faith community *(Ministry)*

You will notice that there are no talks/sessions for ‘only parents’ or ‘only candidates’. Families grow in faith together, and we want to support the whole family not separate it. We hope that the discussions of each session will continue long after the evening ends.

---

There are six gatherings or ‘sessions’ in this program, each very different:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Time</i>
We belong	Baptism/welcome	Mid-October
We are a Christian community	Eucharist	November
We are a Catholic family	Praying at home	Advent
We make a difference	Call to share talents	January
We are on a journey	Pilgrimage	Lent
We rejoice	A Pentecost celebration	May/June

*Parish of All Saints*



### *Sessions from September 2007 to Christmas 2007*

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Venue</i>
We belong	Mon, Oct 20 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 – 8:45pm	ParishHall
We are a Christian community	Wed., Nov 21 <sup>st</sup>	8-9pm	Parish Hall
We are a Catholic family	Season of Advent		Familyhome

---

## Appendix three: Prayer for night one

### *Sample outline of a prayer service for night one*

- Moment of silence to let people 'settle down'.
- Blessing of water and salt. (*Explain the blessing, as it happens, so everyone can feel part of it*)
- Invite a member from each family to come forward and fill a small bottle from the blessed water to take home, together with a prayer sheet which offers 3 ideas for praying with holy water at home.
- Each candidate is invited to open holy water bottle and to use the holy water to trace a sign of cross on their parents head, saying 'God bless you'. Parents response 'Amen'.
- Each adult/parent is invited to similarly trace the sign of holy water on child's head
- Closing prayer

### *Sample outline of a prayer sheet for families to take home*

God made us a family. We need one another.

We love one another. We forgive one another.

Jesus, help us to work together, to play together,  
and to pray together, today and everyday. Amen



Some ways to use holy water in the family home:

1. In the mornings, bless each person as they leave the family home. Sprinkle holy water on them and pray 'God bless #(name)## today'
2. Begin or end night prayer with a holy water blessing: 'God bless you, and give you peace'
3. May Eve is a traditional time to bless the four corners of your home/land with holy water.
4. A traditional blessing in the evenings

A holy water font can be bought in religious or gift shops in Limerick. (*Try the Knock Shrine Bookshop in Little Catherine St, Abbey bookshop at the Augustinians or Veritas bookshop in Ennis*). Hang it inside the front door with a small clean sponge in it to absorb the holy water.

## Appendix four: A reflection on the Eucharist

This painting is by Sieger Koeder, a German priest who has a real gift of capturing the essence of the gospel in his work.

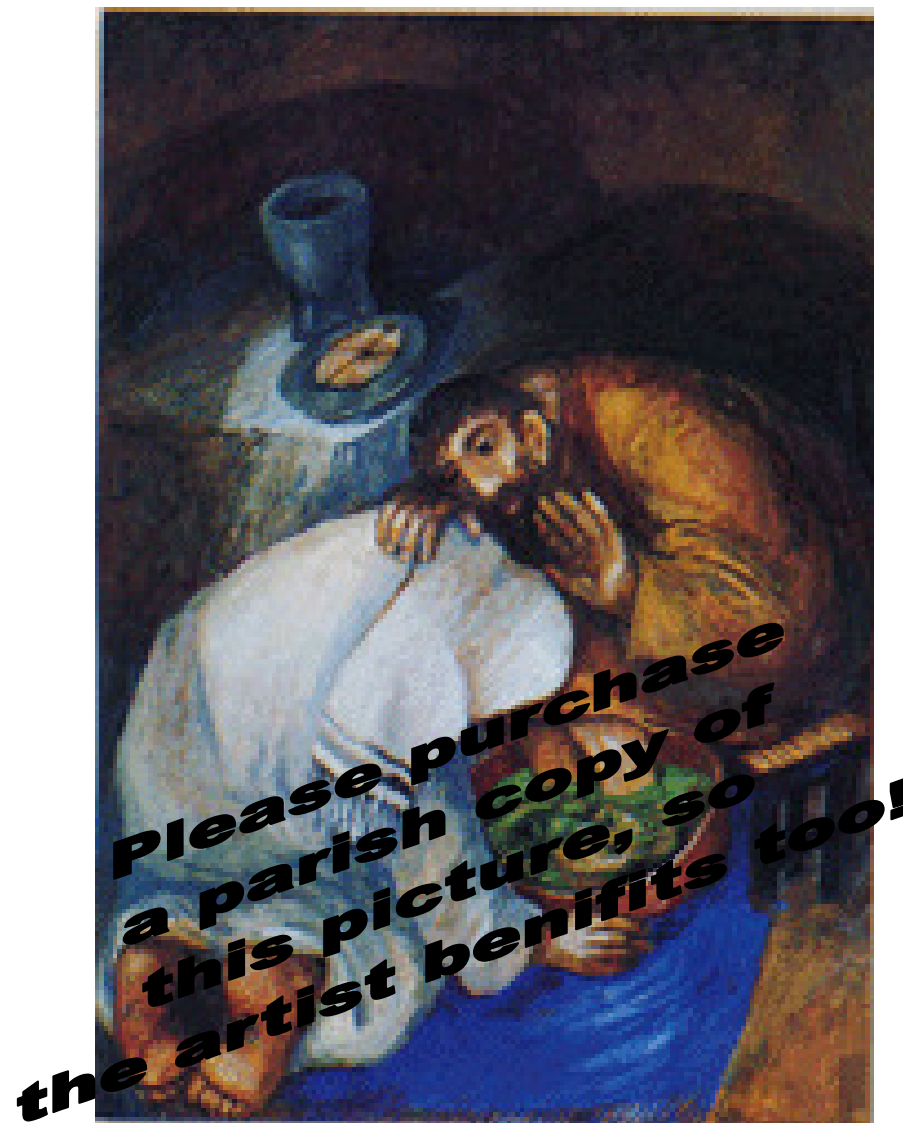
This painting is of Jesus washing the feet of Peter

Ask people to look at the painting for a minute in silence. Then chat a little, getting people to speak about the picture. E.g.:

- What do you see (colours, people, light and shade)
- See Jesus feet – ordinary, dirty from hard walking.
- Point out Peter sitting in the chair above Jesus. How does he feel, what is he thinking, would you say? See his hands, one holding, one pushing away.
- In our own lives, can we feel like Peter?
- Point out the bowl of water. Notice it's not sparkling clean, its muddy with the dirt of life.
- Ask where we can see Jesus' face (reflected in the water). God is present in the everyday, not just the perfect.
- Point out the table with bread and wine.
- Ask where we can see Eucharist in this picture? At the last supper Jesus broke bread and washed feet – explain that the Christian links liturgy & life.

In silence, ask people to think:

- what do you like about this picture?
- What does it tell you about Jesus?
- What does it tell you about Eucharist?



## Appendix five: Instruction Manual for Advent

### *Advent –What are you waiting for?*

In the Catholic tradition, Advent is not just a time of preparation for Christmas. It is not about the future, it is its own season! Advent is a time to slow down, to spend time with family and to realise that God wants to get to know you and your family better. Why not create some time during this Advent for your family and your faith!?!



Some ideas

- Have an Advent wreath at home. You can make one using an oasis and floral wire and four candles, or buy a simple one at most markets. Make an event of lighting one candle each Saturday or Sunday evening, perhaps at the end of a meal or similar. It creates a relaxing family event to be enjoyed by all in the family home.
- Make an Advent calendar. One cloth bag or pocket can be opened each day each to reveal an Advent challenge. E.g. be kind to a classmate, help at home today, Visit your parish church today as a family etc etc.
- Find out about saints feast days in Advent – many have lovely family traditions that you could adopt. E.g. St Nicholas, St Lucia etc
- Take home the Advent booklet you received tonight. Have a family meeting (over dinner maybe?!) to decide how your family will use this resource this Advent.
  - Ten minutes every day – as part of our family night prayer?
  - A half hour, twice or three evenings a week – prayer and activity?
  - Both weekend mornings over family breakfast?
  - Before school in the morning?

Decide who will prepare the days readings and activities. One adult and one child could prepare together.

- Take time for your family and community during Advent. Christmas will bring its own pleasures – but let Advent be about the present moment and those God has given you.

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## Appendix six: Handouts for January – meeting with adults in ministry

*A sample of how you could present this idea!  
Adapt as appropriate!*

### **Welcome!!**

During Lent this year, every confirmation candidate in this parish will have the chance to participate in a normal parish liturgical ministry in the company of adults. Thus they will see, and be seen, as full members of the faith community. Their participation in the Sunday liturgy this Lent will be a *sign and symbol* of their on-going call to full participation in the parish

It is important that their involvement is not confined to one ministry or that one Mass is not set aside for this purpose. This would only reinforce the notion that such participation is transitory and something which the candidate grows out of when they leave primary school!!! We want them to be involved in 'normal' ministry, and we want the parish to recognise their giftedness and to celebrate them! We also want the parish to recognise its role as adult Catholic role models for the confirmation candidates.

### ***Your Ministry in this parish***

What ministry are you involved with in this parish at the moment? \_\_\_\_\_

What gifts / talents are used in this ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

Could confirmation candidates become involved in this ministry this Lent? How? \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Final decisions!***

Confirmation candidates this Lent will have the opportunity to become involved in the following ministries:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Presentation of Ministry group***

We are delighted that you are going to speak at the confirmation meeting. Thank you for your generosity. Your gift to the group is your presence, so don't feel you have to say a lot. Some of the following would be more than enough:

“My name is ....

I am involved in this parish through the ministry of ....

I like this involvement because ....

The purpose of this ministry is ....

*(e.g. to use flowers and plants to make the church beautiful. A nice atmosphere helps people to pray)*

The preparation for this ministry is ....

*(e.g. I find out about the reading a week beforehand, I read it several times our loud in advance and spend some time thinking about its meaning. I arrive early at Mass so I can check the microphone and missal)*

I would describe this ministry in 3 steps by saying ....

*(e.g. I begin at the back of the church, I hand a basket to the first person in the seat and pass the basket along, I bring collected baskets to the altar where I place them, I bow & return to my seat)*

## Appendix Seven – Invitation to families

### The parish of All Saints

#### An invitation to make a difference



‘Each person is a blessing to their community,  
Each child, each adult, has been placed  
in this particular community in order  
to bless that community with Gods gifts’

Wouldn't it be wonderful if our children, our families, our  
community believed this truth – that each is unique, precious  
and valuable to us all!?!?!?

This is an invitation to a conversation about how  
each of us does make a difference in our parish.

**Please join us on Tuesday, \*<sup>th</sup> March  
from 7:30 – 8:30pm, in our parish church**

All confirmation candidates are invited. All parents or  
guardians of confirmation candidates are also invited.

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Lent - a different time – a special time -  
An opportunity to consider what is important  
and who I am becoming

---

Confirmation – a special moment  
An opportunity to consider who I want to become  
and to invite the Holy Spirit  
into my life and my choices

---

Whether parent, guardian, sponsor or candidate  
We are all called to grow and learn  
Lets support on another this Lent as we prepare for  
Confirmation 2008

## Appendix Seven– The Starfish Story

### *Starfish*

There had been a big storm the night before. As the man walked down to the beach that morning, he noticed that the sea had crashed up on the rocks, throwing its contents out the sand. All along the beach he could see seaweeds, stones and starfish!

Suddenly he noticed that a young girl was walking towards him on the beach. She seemed to be bent over and walking slowly. He realised that she was picking up starfish, one by one, and throwing them back in the sea, - saving them one at a time.

He walked over to her and said ‘Young girl, what you are doing is very nice, but there are thousands of starfish, too many to save. What difference can one person make?’

She smiled, bent over and picked up a starfish. ‘I make a difference to this one’ she said. And she threw it back into the sea.



### *All Saints Parish*

#### **An invitation to make a difference**



*‘Each person is a blessing to their community,  
Each child, each adult, has been placed in this particular  
community in order to bless that community with Gods gifts’*

The parish needs the gifts that each person brings, and as a sign of that giftedness we commit to supporting

\_\_\_\_\_ (candidates name)

On the following dates:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and,

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_;

we will pray together at Mass as \_\_\_\_\_

shares their gifts through the

ministry of \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix Eight – Sample: Lenten Commitment. Note for families and for sacristy

### ALL SAINTS PARISH – CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES SHARING THEIR GIFTS AND ENERGY WITH THE PARISH



<b>WHEN</b>	<b>MINISTRY</b>	<b>NAME</b>
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> March	Preparing for St Patrick's Day with the Liturgy group	
Saturday, 17 <sup>th</sup> March @ 7pm	Prayers of the Faithful Collectors Offertory procession	
Sunday, 18 <sup>th</sup> March @ 11:30am	Prayers of the Faithful Altar Servers	
Wednesday, 21 <sup>st</sup> March @ 6pm	Cleaning the church	
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> March @ 7pm	Prayers of the Faithful Offertory Procession Collectors	
Sunday, March 25 <sup>th</sup> @ 11:30am	Prayers of the Faithful Collectors Altar Servers	

***Making in a difference by sharing our energy and talents with our faith community***



