

SAMPLE

BECOMING CATHOLIC CONFIRMATION

A practical guide
for families

KATHY HORAN





Kathy Horan has worked extensively in a range of leadership roles within Catholic Education S.A. These roles include Religious Education Coordinator in parish schools, Deputy Principal, Principal, and Consultant in Religious Education, a role which involved working across schools and parishes within the Adelaide Archdiocese and the Diocese of Port Pirie.

Kathy holds Masters Degrees in Theology and Educational Leadership. A focus of her work is Family-based Catechesis, particularly in the area of Sacramental preparation. She enjoys working with families and supporting adults in their ongoing faith formation and understanding the importance of their primary role in sharing their faith with their children.

Kathy is currently working as Assistant Principal, Religious Identity and Mission, at St. Joseph's School, Hindmarsh, in South Australia, and is part of the Flinders Park-Hindmarsh Parish Sacramental team.



Published in Australia by
Garratt Publishing
32 Glenvale Crescent
Mulgrave, Vic. 3170

www.garrattpublishing.com.au

Copyright © Kathy Horan 2014

All rights reserved. Except as provided by the Australian copyright law, no part of this book may be reproduced in any way without permission in writing from the publisher:

Design by Canary Graphic Design
Images: www.thinkstock.com
Printed in China by Tingleman

Scripture quotations are drawn from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Nihil Obstat: Reverend Gerard Diamond MA (Oxon), LSS, D.Theol
Diocesan Censor

Imprimatur: Monsignor Greg Bennet, Vicar General

Date: 9th July 2013

The Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur are official declarations that a book or pamphlet is free of doctrinal or moral error: No implication is contained therein that those who have granted the Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur agree with the contents, opinions or statements expressed. They do not necessarily signify that the work is approved as a basic text for catechetical instruction.

9781922152046

Cataloguing in Publication information for this title is available from the National Library of Australia. www.nla.gov.au

The author and publisher gratefully acknowledge the permission granted to reproduce the copyright material in this book. Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyright material. The publisher apologises for any errors or omissions in the above list and would be grateful if notified of any corrections that should be incorporated in future reprints or editions of this book.

Garratt Publishing has included on its website a page for special notices in relation to this and our other publications. Please visit www.garrattpublishing.com.au

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Symbols of Confirmation	7
Prayers of the Christian Tradition	8
Preparing	10
Celebrating	26
Living	38

SAMPLE



INTRODUCTION

This book aims to support you in the religious development of your children, particularly as they prepare to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation.

During the mid-sixties, the Catholic Church underwent significant changes in all areas of its life and ministry so that it could recapture a deeper understanding of the spirit and mission of Jesus as one who came to share, in a special way, God's hopes and dreams for the world. Between 1962 and 1965 the Pope and the bishops of the Church gathered in Rome for what is known as the Second Vatican Council. The work of this important Council was to renew the rituals and practices of the Church so that all members of the Church could become more engaged and involved in the life of the Church.

The Council called on all of us to share in the mission of Jesus in our daily lives. In addition to this, it affirmed the role of parents as first educators in the faith of their children. Indeed, the Church named the family unit as the 'domestic church' and, at the present time, the Church community continues to seek ways to support you in the most important role of bearing witness to your faith and supporting your children as they, in their turn, prepare to celebrate the sacrament

of Confirmation—a further step in their life journeys within the religious community that we name Church.

Your role as parents

For some of you, the thought of being involved in the formal preparation of your child to celebrate the sacraments may seem a fairly daunting task, and yet it is you who brought your children into the world with love, and you who brought your child along to the church for Baptism. While this may in part have been because of your family's hopes and expectations, it was still your decision to begin the process of initiating your children into the Christian community through Baptism. You chose godparents who joined with you in sharing your faith and Christian values. Together you showed your child ways of belonging and being involved in the life and work of the community.

While there is a formal aspect to the preparation you are about to begin with your children, what is very important is that you understand your family unit as both family and church. You desire happiness for your children and you know the importance of developing a deep relationship with your child within the family setting. All the experiences of family life prepare us in some way for celebrating the various sacraments. The highs and

lows, the successes and failures, and everything in between, form the fabric of human life, and it is precisely into this environment that you are called to share with your children your understanding of Jesus and his mission and how to live as followers of Jesus.

The Scriptures provide the Christian community with insights into living as people of God. They show us the person Jesus, who lived his whole life in deep relationship with God and was guided by God's Spirit. The Jesus of the Gospels is a human person who loved, laughed and lived the ordinariness of human life in his family, extended family and religious community. Jesus had to learn about the ways of his religious community. Mary and Joseph would have shown him the importance of becoming involved in the life, prayer and work of the community. You play a similar role as you support your child in becoming more involved in the Christian community.

Throughout the pages of this book you will find some stories or sayings of Jesus that come to us from the Scriptures. They are offered as a way for you, as a family, to come to a deeper knowledge and understanding of Jesus. From Jesus' life we learn that he, too, belonged to and enjoyed family life and the company of friends and extended family. For Jesus, relating

to other people—and especially to God—was at the heart of his mission.

The sacraments of Christian initiation

The sacrament of Confirmation is one of the sacraments that has received particular renewal following the Second Vatican Council. In the early Church, when people were initiated into the Christian community, they were baptised, confirmed and then received First Communion all in the one celebration. These three sacraments, in this order, make up the sacraments of Christian initiation. For various reasons, over time, the sacrament of Confirmation has been separated from Baptism and this has made it difficult for us to understand that becoming a Catholic is a process that takes time. In addition to this, there have been many different ways of explaining and understanding Confirmation. The Church teaches that Confirmation confirms Baptism and is the second formal step in the process of becoming initiated into the Christian community. Baptism and Confirmation are thus linked closely and relate to the initial stages of the initiation process. Receiving Holy Communion within the celebration of the Eucharist completes the process of initiation.

THE CHURCH NAMED THE FAMILY UNIT AS 'THE DOMESTIC CHURCH' AND, AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE CHURCH COMMUNITY CONTINUES TO SEEK WAYS TO SUPPORT YOU IN THE MOST IMPORTANT ROLE OF BEARING WITNESS TO YOUR FAITH AND SUPPORTING YOUR CHILDREN.



THE JESUS OF THE GOSPELS IS A HUMAN PERSON WHO LOVED, LAUGHED AND LIVED THE ORDINARINESS OF HUMAN LIFE IN HIS FAMILY, EXTENDED FAMILY AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

THE CHURCH TEACHES THAT CONFIRMATION CONFIRMS BAPTISM AND IS THE SECOND FORMAL STEP IN THE PROCESS OF BECOMING INITIATED INTO THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.



This ordering of the sacraments helps us to understand the present move to restore this process by celebrating the sacraments in their original order. However, there is still a lot of debate about the need for some ritual to signify a move towards adult commitment in faith. This debate results in a wide variety of practice: some dioceses celebrate Confirmation before Eucharist, others towards the end of primary school. Whatever the practice, the essential meaning remains: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist together complete the process of initiation into the Catholic community.

As you work your way through the themes in this book, a pattern will begin to emerge. What Joseph and Mary did for Jesus as they initiated him into the life of their religious community, so too, you will do as you share insights with your children. At the heart of this book is the understanding that Confirmation is the second part of the initiation process and confirms Baptism. This process invites us into a deeper way of relating to God, to Jesus, to one another, and to becoming more actively involved in the life of the community through the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit.

At his Baptism, Jesus had a strong sense of being the beloved child of God and that God had something special in

mind for him. Jesus became aware of God's Spirit leading and guiding him in his life's journey. When we celebrate the Baptism of a child, or adult, this signifies that that person's journey in faith has begun within the Christian community. Initiation into the Christian community means becoming a part of the life and work of the community: gathering to celebrate Eucharist, to listen to the Word of God, to pray together and share in the care for the poor. The story of Pentecost shows us how the disciples, gathered together in fear but also to support one another, came to an understanding that Jesus' Spirit was with them, which gave them the power and courage to go out and spread the good news about Jesus to the whole world.

From then on, the disciples understood all that they had shared with Jesus and knew that the Spirit would be with them always, enabling them to keep alive in the world the mission and message of Jesus. It is into this mission that we are called through Baptism. Confirmation confirms us in living this new way of life according to the Gospels, and is an invitation to each one of us to renew the Baptismal promises first made on our behalf by our parents and godparents when we were baptised.

Sharing the Christian Story

For each of the themes in the booklet, there is a brief reflection at the beginning. This sets the scene and provides you with some insights into the life and mission of Jesus by drawing on examples of how Jesus related to and treated people, and how he promoted God's dream for all of us; in particular, we follow a process from the beginning of our initiation into the Church, and how this unfolds into our commitment and involvement as an active follower of Jesus.

In each theme, the reflection material is centred on a story from the Bible, and the reference for the story is included. You may like to read the whole story from the Bible when you gather together, or simply to focus on the caption from the story that accompanies the illustration.

Family Reflection Time

This section provides you with some practical ways of reflecting together on the theme and making some connections with the family life you share with your children.

Prayer Time

One of the important ways the Christian community supported one another was by gathering together to pray, to reflect on the story of Jesus and his wonderful words and deeds. As members of the Catholic community, it is important for you also to gather together and spend some moments in prayer as a way of deepening your personal relationship with Jesus.

Let us Pray

When you come together as a family to spend some time in prayer, it is good to gather around a focus for prayer. This may be at the dinner table after a meal or in a comfortable place in your living room. It is often good to light a candle as a symbol of the presence of Jesus in your midst. You may like to have a family bible on the table as a reminder of listening to the Word of God in the Scriptures. You will also find a collection of greetings and prayers of the Christian community in the following pages of this book. These are offered as a way of becoming familiar with the greetings and prayers of the community that you and your children will hear when you go to Mass with the community.

THIS PROCESS INVITES US INTO A DEEPER WAY OF RELATING TO GOD, TO JESUS, TO ONE ANOTHER, AND TO BECOMING MORE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY THROUGH THE ONGOING PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

SYMBOLS OF CONFIRMATION



Activity Sheets

For each topic, there are two activity sheets provided for you and your family. The second of these is a reflective, journaling activity.

Overview of Themes

PREPARING:

- Jesus is baptised
- Baptism: the journey begins
- The Church: a community of disciples
- Pentecost

CELEBRATING:

- The Spirit of Jesus alive in us
- Confirmation: confirming Baptism

Celebrating Confirmation

LIVING:

- Being a follower of Jesus
- Living as Spirit-filled followers of Jesus
- Called to mission

As you continue this journey of preparation for Confirmation with your children, my hope is that you will be affirmed in your role as parents and in your understanding of the importance of family life. As Mary and Joseph prepared Jesus and involved him in the life and worship of their religious community, I pray that you, also, will continue to share your faith with your children as they grow in age, in wisdom and in grace within the Catholic community.



SHARE YOUR FAITH WITH YOUR CHILDREN AS THEY GROW IN AGE, IN GRACE AND IN WISDOM AS MEMBERS OF THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY.

Oil

When oil is used in Christian rituals and celebrations, such as Baptism and Confirmation. It is used as a symbol of strengthening and anointing and is a sign to the community that the person is being chosen and confirmed in their calling to the Christian community.



The laying on of hands

During the celebration of Confirmation, the bishop extends his hands over the candidates to be confirmed and he prays that the Holy Spirit will continue to help and guide them in their journey through life.

Lighted candles

When the Catholic community uses lighted candles in prayer settings, such as at Mass and the celebration of the sacraments and in informal prayer gatherings, the candle is a symbol of the light of Christ. It calls to mind the presence of the risen Lord in our midst. As Christians we are called to be the light of Christ in—and for—the world.

Name

At Baptism, the person being baptised is given the name by which they will be known in the Christian community. This name is often the name of a saint. At Confirmation, candidates often choose another name, usually the name of a saint or Christian role model who can support the candidate in their faith journey.

AT CONFIRMATION, CANDIDATES USUALLY CHOOSE THE NAME OF A SAINT OR CHRISTIAN ROLE MODEL WHO CAN SUPPORT THE CANDIDATE IN THEIR FAITH JOURNEY.

