

# Connections to Confirmation in the Religious Education Program *Born of the Spirit* and *We Are Strong Together*



## For Teachers of Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8

**“The purpose of the sacramental preparation program is to dispose the candidate to receive the grace of the sacrament and to participate fully in the liturgy of Confirmation. It is not intended to prepare candidates for a test of their religious knowledge.”**

*Sacramental Guidelines for the Sacraments of Initiation of Children in the Diocese of Hamilton, 2012*

### *Contributing Authors:*

*Paul Beaudette, Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board*

*Cathy Chaput, Wellington Catholic District School Board*

*Mary Teresa Coene, Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk Catholic District School Board*

*Amy Kiefer, Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board*

*Katharine Stevenson, Halton Catholic District School Board*

*Leanne Thompson, Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board*

*Anne Jamieson, Catechesis Office, Diocese of Hamilton*

*Christina Ronzio, Liturgy Office, Diocese of Hamilton*

The charts that follow are meant to help teachers see the natural connections to Confirmation already embedded in the *Born of the Spirit* and *We Are Strong Together* programs.

**It is not a question of adding new material or new units, only in seeing the program through the lens of Confirmation.**

## Confirmation is celebrated in Grade 7 according to the Sacramental Guidelines.

Confirmation may take place at any time during the Grade 7 year. So any lesson that you present may be in preparation for an upcoming Sacrament or a moment following the celebration to enter more deeply into the mystery of the Sacrament. Every lesson is an important opportunity for ongoing, foundational catechesis.

### The Connections between Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion:

(These connections are made clear in the General Introduction on Christian Initiation from the Rite of Baptism. The text of the Introduction, especially paragraph 1 and 2, has been summarized here.)

*In Baptism, we become members of Christ's body and of God's people.*

*Confirmation, by signing us with the gift of the Spirit, makes us more completely the image of the Lord and fills us with the Holy Spirit so that we may bear witness.*

*Coming to the table of the Eucharist, we eat and drink so that we may have eternal life and show forth the unity of God's people. By offering ourselves with Christ, we share in his sacrifice and pray for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit. (Lumen Gentium, 28)*

Together, these Sacraments of Initiation combine to bring us to Christ's full stature so that we can carry out the mission of the people of God in the Church and in the world. (Lumen Gentium, 31)



**Mystagogy** is an important concept to understanding this new re-imagining of the Grade 6, 7, and 8 religious education programs. **Mystagogy** is the name of the final stage in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It is the time AFTER a Sacrament has been received. Sacraments are, in some ways, great mysteries. After all, they are moments when God pours out God's grace upon us in very special ways.

We see ritual actions like the pouring of water over a person's head or the anointing a person's forehead with oil; we pray and sing and celebrate in ritual ways. But how do we really understand what is happening? This takes time. The full importance and significance of what we are doing unfolds over a lifetime. The time following Confirmation, therefore, can be a time of **mystagogy** when we "unpack" those gifts we have received from the Holy Spirit. Part of preparing for Confirmation is, in fact, engaging in mystagogical reflection on our Baptism.

It is a time to ask, how have we received the gifts of the Spirit? How can we better understand them? Where is the evidence of these gifts in my life? How am I called to use my gifts? What are my responsibilities as a Christian? What is God asking of me?

## Grade 6

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Program Content</b> (in the Grade 6 Teachers' Manual this is summarized from the Scope and Sequence)	<b>Connection to Confirmation</b>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symbol of light/lantern</li>   <li>• Love of God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to develop an understanding of symbols – symbols help us to understand mystery – at Baptism we receive a candle to symbolize we are meant to carry the light of the Gospel with us all our lives</li> <li>• Many ways we celebrate God's love – in symbol, ritual, and celebration ... this is liturgy</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature of human beings – especially, the image of God in “the other”</li> <li>• Formation of conscience</li> <li>• God's holy name related to our own holy name</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to consider how we are called to treat others</li> <li>• Celebration of our name reminds us of Baptism and the meaning of the choosing of a name</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• covenant</li>   <li>• 10 commandments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God is always calling us into relationship – see Theme 7: What does a covenant relationship ask of me?</li> <li>• An important foundation to our moral code that teaches us how to live in right relationship to God (esp. Commandments 1-3) and to one another (Commandments 4 – 10)</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advent: the Season of Hope</li>   <li>• Jeremiah and Isaiah and women in Scripture</li>   <li>• Mary as one who bears the hope and light of the world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remember that the liturgical calendar gives us times and seasons to celebrate different aspects of our faith – here, Advent celebrates Jesus as the fulfillment of the promise</li> <li>• Great prophets – men and women - have always been called by God to bring people back to him when they have become lost</li> <li>• Mary hears her call and says “yes” – this theme will be further developed in grade 7 – we are always listening for God's call and trying to respond</li> </ul>

5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Justice and social justice issues</li> <li>Jesus as the ‘new covenant’ and the ‘Incarnation of God’s love’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continues the question from before ... how are we called to live? How are we called to treat one another? What does it mean to love one another?</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Beatitudes – this will be revisited in Grade 7</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beatitude people are praised for who they are and what they do</li> <li>What is the call of the Christian? What life are we to lead?</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holy Spirit prayer</li> <li>Lent</li> <li>Corporal works of mercy – examples of faithful persons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As they look forward to their Confirmation, this prayer holds even more meaning for students.</li> <li>Lent, again, a liturgical season that helps us explore yet another facet of Christian life – the need for spiritual disciplines that turn our hearts and minds back to God. We prepare in Lent for the renewal of our baptismal promises at Easter.</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stories of Holy Week</li> <li>The Eucharist as the new covenant</li> <li>Forgiveness as a sign of God’s love</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remembering that covenant is how God wants us to be in relationship with him</li> <li>Origins of a sacrament</li> </ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pentecost</li> <li>Reflection on the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Origins of Confirmation</li> <li>An opportunity for them to see the connection between Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. <b>Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ, Confirmation equips us with the gifts of the Spirit, and Eucharist strengthens us for a life-time of trying to live as Christians.</b></li> </ul>
10	<p>The theme of the entire program has been YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Saints as witnesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Eucharist as commissioning, as communion with Christ, as Thanksgiving, and the summation of Christian life</li> </ul>

## Grade 7

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Program Content</b> (in the Grade 7 Teachers' Manual this is taken from the "Key Concepts" of the Scope and Sequence)	<b>Connection to Confirmation</b>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gifted: each person has unique gifts and talents; we are called to recognize and use them for the common good</li> <li>• importance of a creed as a summary of the most important elements of faith – teaching the Apostles' and Nicene Creed</li> </ul>	<p>Students will receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. These gifts are to be used for the good of the world and the Church.</p> <p>Students will profess their faith in the Creed at their Confirmation by renewing their baptismal promises.</p>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith and the Basis of Faith,</li> <li>• covenant as a formal commitment to a relationship that is rooted in complete trust</li> </ul>	Confirmation is a time to consider your faith and reflect on you relationship with God begun in Baptism in order to work towards strengthening it.
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the nature of God's love</li> <li>• parental love as an example of a loving relationship with God</li> <li>• prayer as our way of talking to God</li> <li>• Covenant theme again</li> <li>• 10 Commandments</li> </ul>	<p>Throughout the unit, the emphasis is that the loving relationship is strengthened by family experience and prayer.</p> <p>There is good catechesis for Confirmation in the study of covenant. Just as the Jews had to learn to live in faithful relationship with God, so also do we need to understand how to live in right relationship with God and others. What does our faith ask of us?</p>
<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• right relationship with creation</li> </ul>	Continuing from the previous Unit, the question arises: What is our Christian responsibility? What does our faith ask of us?
<b>5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Jesus challenged people's expectations in his own time</li> <li>• Jesus' challenges in today's world</li> </ul>	We are challenged by our faith. It is the gifts of the Holy Spirit that enables us to meet those challenges (e.g. wisdom, knowledge, right judgement, courage, etc.)
<b>6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Beatitudes</li> </ul>	It is a lifelong task to continue to consider how we are called to live out our lives as Christians.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Immaculate conception and the Incarnation</li> <li>• The Annunciation, Visitation and Nativity stories and the origin of Hail Mary</li> </ul>	<p>These are examples of the power of God as seen in the action of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>Mary as an example of one who wholeheartedly responds to God according to faith by saying “Yes”. What gifts of the Spirit are at work in Mary as she says “Yes”? What can be learned about discipleship from Mary?</p> <p>We are called to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our “Yes” to God. Is our response whole-hearted?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>8 and 9</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sacrifice</li> <li>• story of Jesus' suffering and death</li> <li>• and, in Unit 9, Jesus' resurrection</li> </ul>	<p>This is good catechesis on the relationship between the sacrifice and the Eucharist as one of our central beliefs.</p> <p>In the Last Supper, we have an example of the institution of a sacrament by Jesus. The classic definition of a sacrament, of course, is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace.</p> <p>It is in the reception of the Eucharist at our Confirmation that our initiation is completed. That’s why, at the Mass, the students are confirmed first and then have communion.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we are called to live Jesus' example and to bring the light of Christ to all</li> </ul>	<p>A beautiful conclusion to a program that has looked constantly at what it means to be a Christian. What is our responsibility – What does our faith ask of us?</p> <p><b>This is not a one-time question. Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ, Confirmation equips us with the gifts of the Spirit, and Eucharist strengthens us for a life-time of asking and responding to that question.</b></p>

## Grade 8

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Program Content</b> (in the Grade 8 Teachers' Manual this is taken from the of the Scope and Sequence)	<b>Connection to Confirmation</b>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pentecost – this is a re-tell of the story</li> <li>• Gifts of the Holy Spirit</li> <li>• Fruits of the Spirit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theme 1: “What do they expect me to do now?” This is a great beginning for mystagogy!</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sacraments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• seeing the relationship between Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist</li> <li>• each theme’s question is a way to begin the deepening of the understanding ... what is the working of the sacraments in my life?</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding the nature of the Church</li> <li>• sacraments of vocation and service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• our life <u>in</u> the Church</li> <li>• continuing discernment of our call</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• saints as witnesses and models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communion of saints – we all belong and are strengthened by one another’s witness</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 commandments and sin</li> <li>• Repentance and forgiveness</li> </ul> <p>(Good discussion starter list of sinful behaviours on page 161 of Teacher’s Guide – speaks to bullying, and other moral issues)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledgement that we all sin and are all in need of forgiveness</li> <li>• Repentance means we have changed our hearts</li> <li>• Reconciliation is a sacrament – God always wants to forgive us when we repent and we receive God’s grace</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dignity of our bodies</li> <li>• Redemptive nature of suffering</li> </ul> <p>(Note: this is foundational to end of life issues)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This again challenges us to continue to ask the question: What does our faith ask of us? What does it mean to live a Christian life?</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entire unit on themes of how we are called to live our faith</li> <li>• Rich concept of stewardship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does our faith ask of us?</li> <li>• How do we take care of what has been given to us?</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>8</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Creed</li> <li>• The Mass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This ends the program with an unpacking of the Creed and the meaning of the Mass</li> <li>• Will your students have a Mass to celebrate the end of their school year or their graduation?</li> </ul> <p><b>This is a remarkable opportunity to deepen the understanding of the Mass</b></p> <p><b>St. Augustine says of the Mass, we become what we consume. What does it mean to be the Body of Christ?</b></p> <p><b>This is why we are called to the Mass over and over.</b></p>