

Habit 4: Invested In His Grace

The Sacraments

What to Do:

- Start out with prayer
- Share with each other what's gone on since last time you've talked. Review vision statement (are we still on track?)
- Recap of HABITS curriculum – where is the process taking you?
- Tackle and Explain – Sacraments: why, what, how?
- Resource: Next Step Journal
 - o Found Online at www.sldmfishers.org/confirmation-1
- Talk about the “holes” that might exist in this habit.
- Plan an action step (tangible and intangible)
 - o Take Home Materials
 - o Before Next Time
- Close in prayer

Materials:

- Leader's Guide and Candidate Handout
- Next Step Journal
- Bible (book or app)
- Writing utensil

Before we begin, let's open in prayer (*allow for teens to lead... if they're uncomfortable, take the opening prayer, but encourage them to end in prayer*)

*****Go to Worksheet*****

Recap of the whole HABITS curriculum (each meeting reflected on the side):

1. Our relationship with God is meant to **grow** (*as this experience has continued, has your vision for this year changed? If not, that's okay, but be open to growth as each year of life continues*)
1. Spiritual growth is a life-long **journey** (*not a two-year Confirmation process; challenge yourself to stay involved each year and continue growing!*)
2. Scripture helps us **know God's ways, deepen our faith** and **change our lives**.
3. Developing spiritual habits (&using your gifts) helps us grow **on our own**
5. Accountability with others adds **insight, truth, hope** and **faith**.
5. Stewardship (sacrificing our time, talent, or treasure) is showing God that He **empowers us** and **is more important** to us than money, possessions, our time and our gifts.
6. Getting involved is a **commitment** to finding **our role** in Christ's Church, enabling His message to spread.

TODAY's session we'll discuss how:

4. Sacraments are **encounters with Christ** which sustain us and give us **grace** to live the Christian life.

*****OPEN DISCUSSION*****

Because there is so much richness in the sacraments of the Church, it will take years for the any one person to gain full appreciation, so we just want to give everyone a taste. We encourage them to go deeper by taking a look at why we do what we do and how it will take them to the next level. Sacraments give us God's grace to grow and continue to take the "next steps" on our faith journey.

Do you remember being given your favorite gift? (*i.e. Christmas present or birthday gift that made you scream with excitement?*)

- Share what that gift was with your group (leave no detail out... paint the picture with words on how it was wrapped, where it was placed, how you opened it, your emotions when you got it open, and everything about the feelings of getting that gift.

Now imagine being given that gift OVER and OVER and OVER again... For every Christmas, birthday, etc... After time, that joy you described in receiving the gift

the first time would eventually diminish. You'd slowly just come to expect it, and the day wouldn't be something you looked forward to anymore.

Now let's look to our discussion on the sacraments. We have the opportunity to open a gift (given to us through Jesus Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit), and at first, we might be SUPER excited about it (for example our first communion as a 2nd grader). After time we start to forget the joy in the offering. We start to become a bit less excited.

In life, focus is easily lost, so **what can:** our parish community, or your family, or this Confirmation team do to help bring that joy back and refocus your ability to see the sacraments as an opportunity for joy?

Read the following verse from Acts

"The church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace. It was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and with the consolation of the Holy Spirit it grew in numbers." Acts 9:31

BACK TO WORKSHEET

Briefly discuss:

This is the purpose of the Church...how do you think the Sacraments help the Church and help us? (see categories and descriptions below, with Scripture and catechism references)

What are the Sacraments?

1. **The sacraments of Christian Initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist – lay the foundations of every Christian life. CCC #1212**
 - *"The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life...they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity."*
Pope Paul VI
2. **Jesus Christ, physician of souls and bodies, has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation through the sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick even among her own members. CCC #1421**
 - *Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive people's sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven. John 20:22-23"*
3. **The Sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony are directed towards**

the salvation of others...and serve to build up the People of God. CCC #1534

- God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth." Genesis 1:28
- Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. Hebrews 5:1

Reflect on the Next Step Journal booklet

Next Step Journal – The Next Step journal follows a similar format to a Bible study or devotional; however, it involves a little further research as well as “action steps.” Each journal is broken up into three sections (1. Sacraments of Christian Initiation, 2. Sacraments of Healing and 3. Sacraments of Service). The journal includes an activity or challenge for each sacrament. They are simple, but they will take extra effort. The purpose is to help them think seriously about the sacraments, and engage them in a new way.

With the remaining time left in this session, try to get through the “Baptism” and “Confirmation” sections of the Next Step Journal. Ask them to complete the journal on their own and *follow up via email to candidate and parents.*

Filling in the Holes

- How is your sacramental life? (attending mass weekly, confession, adoration)
- What doubts or challenges do you face when it comes to reconciliation or the Eucharist?
- Have you ever been to daily mass or spent time in the adoration chapel?

Action Steps Before Next Time:

Just like in any club or group you join, you'll need dedication to succeed. Many times to sing in a choir or play varsity sports you'll be asked to do more than just show up. You'll be asked to go beyond your comfort zone outside of your performance. For some of you (*and if we're being honest, many of your families*) participating in the sacraments is very intimidating. But we're going to ask you to take some action steps to grow closer in your faith.

Look at the below items, and approach them as you would a coach's request for 'extra laps' or more 'reps' and take them seriously. If done properly, this can help you to grow on your journey to Confirmation this year. Remember that questions are good, so after each Action Step, please ask “why” on things that confused you. Go up to Father Haan or Father Sean for guidance, or ask your sponsor, but do NOT just walk away confused on why we asked you to do this.

Below is a quick look at all of the "Action Steps." **We are asking that the candidate takes at least one action step in each section.**

The Sacrament of Baptism – Either attend a Rite of Baptism (our church celebrates them the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month) **OR** read the Rite of Baptism (search "Catholic rite of Baptism" online)

The Sacrament of Confirmation – Discuss with your family the gifts/fruits of the Holy Spirit as manifested in your family **OR** interview a youth that was Confirmed *last year*.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion – help the candidate identify something they are going to do in the next week to bring the presence of Jesus into the life of another person.

The Sacrament of Confession – We ask that you encourage the teens to participate in this sacrament before Confirmation (Saturdays 830am and Wed 530pm). In their Next Step journal are steps for Reconciliation. If they are nervous about doing it on their own, you might offer to go with them.

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick – schedule a visit to a nursing home, a children's hospital, a home-bound parishioner, etc.

The Sacrament of Marriage – write a note to a married couple you admire, explaining what you appreciate about their marriage and/or family.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders – If one of your teens is very serious about a religious vocation, by all means notify me and Fr Pat Click; this way you can encourage them to have a conversation with their parents and make sure that they are connected with the proper people at the Diocese. However, most of the candidates have probably never thought seriously about a religious vocation. www.vocationnetwork.org/match is an online inventory that they can take. It takes about 20 minutes to complete, and it helps match various options for a discerner. The purpose of having the student take this test is to help them think in the manner of a discerning person. There is a chance to sign up at the end, and they can skip this portion unless they want more information.

Other options for sacramental participation at SLdM are:

- Daily Mass (8am & 6pm on M/T/W/Th/F/S)
- Perpetual Adoration (open 24/7)
- Confession (5:30-6:20pm Wednesday evening or after 8 am mass on Saturdays, and always available by appointment)
- Parish Reconciliation services during Advent and Lent.

(encourage involvement: we know a high school sophomore's life is incredibly busy, but as we will look at in the next session, we can make time!)

No matter what, encourage them to actively engage in God's grace!

A recent study of non-practicing Catholics found that a large reason for the lack of Mass attendance was the inability of their parish to "entertain" them for the hour. We do NOT go to Mass for entertainment! Mass is created for much more!!! We go to Mass to celebrate Jesus's want to become a part of us! To heal our brokenness!

Non-Catholic Christians might second guess the importance of the Sacraments. It's your job as a Catholic Christian to understand and explain that Jesus didn't leave us the Bible to memorize. It was the Holy Spirit that guided the process of Scripture formation to speak to us. It was Jesus that left us with the Sacraments so we can be with him always!

Your faith WITH the Sacraments can and will sustain you!!!

End with Prayer (led by teen)