

St. Christopher
Confirmation Discussion Journal
For Sponsors and Candidates



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Journal Discussion Guide

Part One

One way to encourage a friendship to develop and grow is to share a little about yourself. Remember that no feelings or attitudes are right or wrong. Be honest. Genuine friends share their weaknesses as well as strengths.

Who is a good example of a friend to you and why?

The greatest gift a friend can give is?

List some words that you use to describe yourself. These might include qualities, jobs, responsibilities, roles, feelings or activities. Which are most important to you? In what ways are you unique and special? What qualities make you different from other people?

What three words or phrases would other people use to describe you? How do they compare with how you describe yourself?

Are there some characteristics which are not a part of your life but you would like them to be? What are they? How could you make them a part of who you are?

What would you like other people to know about you that your don't believe they know or appreciate?

What one thing would you most like to change about yourself?

If you could do absolutely anything you wanted for a day, what would you do and who would you be with?

Sharing the Sacraments with each other.....

When were you Baptized?

Who are your Godparents?

What do you remember about your First Communion?

What did you choose for your Confirmation name and why?

Shared Scripture Study

Taking the Leap of Faith

The Sacrament of Confirmation “seals” our union with Christ. But that doesn't mean that once we're Confirmed we know all the answers to life's great mysteries. The journey of faith is a life long journey and it's ok to ask questions and wonder about things.

Discuss:

- If you heard something completely unbelievable from a friend, are you more likely to believe your friend or do you have to check it out for yourself?
- Read John 20:19-24

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' ²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.' ²⁴ But Thomas (who was called the Twin*), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told 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 in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.' ²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' ²⁸Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' ²⁹Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

- If you were Thomas, do you think you would have believed the disciples when they reported that Jesus had appeared to them or would you have not believed until you saw it yourself?
- What are examples of things we're asked to believe without seeing?
- What do you think Jesus thought of Thomas's doubt?
- If someone asked you if God exists, how would you answer?
- What doubts or questions about Catholicism do you have? What can you do to address these questions?

Recite this prayer together: Lord Jesus , Give Me Your Peace

Give me confidence in the depths of danger.
Give me hope when I am surrounded by fear.
Still my worries, calm the anxieties pressing in on me from the world I live in.
Lord Jesus, give me Your peace.

Reassure me that You are with me when I seem alone.
Ease my doubting, as You did Thomas's.
Lord Jesus, give me Your peace.

Guide my searching for peace,
so that I may not seek it where it is not to be found,
but I may seek it in You.
Lord Jesus, live in me and give me Your peace. Amen.

Journal Discussion Guide

Part Two

As Catholic Christians we are called to a life “worthy of the gospel of Christ”. We do this by the grace of Christ and the gifts of his Spirit . We recognize the inherent dignity in God’s creation and share in the responsibility of caring for all creation.

Share with each other words you would use to describe a life “worthy of the gospel of Christ”.

Morality plays a big role in living the gospel message. Survey your personal views on morality. 1 is a strong NO, 5 if half YES and half NO and 10 is a strong YES.

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| ⇒ Are my morals still being formed? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ⇒ Are my morals set in stone? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ⇒ Are my morals similar to my parents? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ⇒ Are my morals similar to my peers? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ⇒ Are my morals close to my church? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ⇒ Are my morals close to my friends? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ⇒ Am I doing what feels good? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ⇒ Do I follow the crowd? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ⇒ Do I let what my peers will think influence me? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ⇒ Do I love my “neighbor”? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ⇒ Am I serving myself more than others? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ⇒ Do I respect the opposite sex? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Share your results with each other and then share your responses to the two questions below:

- When it comes to raising your morals, what is one area you can work on?
- What is a moral issue you support strongly and why?

Shared Scripture Study

Being a Christian means we must help those who are in need. Think how you can help those in your community. This is what God asks of us.

Discuss:

- Do you ever set limits for whom you do good deeds?
- Read Matthew 25: 37-40

Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family,* you did it to me."

- Who is Jesus referring to when he says "the least of these"? Give an example.
- Were you ever in a situation where you could have helped someone but didn't? What happened? How did it feel? What was the outcome?
- For our deeds to be "Christ-like", do they have to be big? Give an example.
- Is there an act of charity that would really take you out of your comfort zone? Describe it. What would it take for you to try it?
- Why do you think Jesus placed such an importance on service?
- Read Micah 6:8

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

- How does this scripture passage translate into your everyday life?

Each of us has been given special and unique gifts from God. Jesus challenges us to share those gifts in order to make His vision become reality. How will you contribute? Discuss:

- ⇒ What qualities do you have which people like in you? What do people thank you for?
- ⇒ How do you make others feel good?
- ⇒ Who has inspired you because of their generosity and why?
- ⇒ Share an experience when you helped someone, but didn't have to. How did you feel?

Journal Discussion Guide

Part Three

In order to grow spiritually, you must pray. Prayer means talking and listening to God. Try to talk to God like you would with your best friend. Share with God your feeling and thoughts. Remember your relationship with God is just like a friendship. The more you talk and share, the closer you will become.

- Read the following article together:

We are His miracle workers among men...

To overcome the numerous problems and challenges in life, all of us resort to prayer. Very often, despite our earnest prayer our problems only seem to get worse by the day. Often we ponder whether God really answers our prayers. This a simple parable that is derived from the Jewish Mishnah may help to answer this question.

A small village in rural Russia was beset by drought one year and all the crops failed. The village rabbi prayed to the heavens, "Why don't you do something about this dreadful drought?" But the heavens remained silent. So the rabbi organized a charity food drive with the neighboring villages to feed his people.

When the rains came, they came in heavy and the local river flooded, killing all the livestock. The rabbi again prayed, "Heavenly Father, my people are suffering so much, save us from this flood!" But, again, no help from God seemed forthcoming. So the rabbi lobbied the government authorities to provide financial assistance to replenish the herds lost in the deluge.

Finally, in the wake of the flood, infection and disease ran through the inhabitants of the village. The rabbi prayed once more, "Now surely God you will help us!" But the diseases ran their course. So the rabbi marshaled and organized the able bodied in the village to care for the sick.

Months later reflecting on the tragedies of the past year, the rabbi turned to God and accused Him, "Why did you not answer the prayers of my poor villagers? Why did you not send help to them when we were beset by drought, floods and pestilence?"

After many hours of anguished entreaty, a quiet voice answered the rabbi in the depths of his heart, "Of course I sent help; I sent you!"

Yes, God definitely answers our prayers and sends help with or without our knowledge. We need not even ask him to grant what we want. He knows what is best for us under the circumstances we are in.

Very often he does not give us what we ask for and this may even lead us to despair. But be assured many years later we will realize what he did was indeed right and for our good.

He does not perform miracles and magic to solve our problems. If we are waiting for such acts, we will be sadly mistaken and disappointed. Like the rabbi in the above story, we are his "miracle" workers among men. He has given us our intelligence, talents and skills to perform his "miracles" to help others.

By Chris Anthony, Catholic Online, 3/29/2007

- Share your reactions to this article. How do you feel God answers prayers?

Shared Scripture Study

Discuss:

- ⇒ How would you describe your prayer life?
- ⇒ Are you content with how much time you spend in prayer or could you commit to pray more? Why?
- ⇒ Which of the following (and you can pick more than one) characterize your prayer?
 - ⇒ Please forgive me...
 - ⇒ Thank you...
 - ⇒ You are wonderful because...
 - ⇒ Please help....
 - ⇒ I need to understand....
 - ⇒ Yes, I will...
 - ⇒ What should I do now Lord...

⇒ Read James 5: 13-15

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵The prayer of faith will save.

- ⇒ In this passage we're told to take our needs and feelings at any moment of the day and turn it into a prayer. Whatever is going on, tell God about it.

Share:

- ⇒ What makes it difficult for you to pray?
- ⇒ When is praying natural for you? What helps you pray?
- ⇒ Share with each other about a time when the power of prayer was evident.

Since you are at the end of your discussion guide, conclude in prayer together with the sponsor saying aloud the following blessing over the candidate for Confirmation.

Loving God,
I ask your blessing upon (name of candidate).
You have gifted him/her in a special and unique way.
May she/he come to know and share the wonder and awe that lives within him/her
as she/he grows in wisdom, knowledge and understanding of you.

Guide and sustain him/her as she/he discerns your invitation to discipleship.
Bless her/his openness and enthusiasm
and allow his/her questions to both enliven and challenge the community of believers to do your will.
Strengthen and support the many good works she/he does.
Challenge and provoke him/her along his/her journey of faith so she/he may help
lead the church into the possibilities of tomorrow.
In all these things, I ask your blessing upon him/her this day, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
AMEN!

(Adapted from NFCYM World Youth Day Blessings)

[Journal adapted from "Journey to the Spirit!" by Tim Clarke]