



confirmed

FOR SERVICE
TO THE WORLD



1.5 hour Confirmation session designed to be facilitated by a catechist or youth minister.

faith. action. results.





confirmed for service to the world

OBJECTIVES

- Explain the connection between Confirmation and service, and encourage confirmandi to understand service as a part of their Christian vocation—not just a requirement that they need to fulfill in order to be confirmed.
- Invite confirmandi to respond to the call to service through solidarity.
- Highlight global water scarcity as one example of how we can live out our call to service in solidarity with those who suffer around the world.
- Offer an alternative service opportunity, like a group project or a personal commitment including an essay reflection, in lieu of or as a supplement to required service hours.

KEYWORDS

- **Catholic Relief Services:** CRS is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. CRS is motivated by the example of Jesus Christ to assist poor and suffering people. CRS serves people in 93 countries on the basis of need, without regard to race, religion or nationality.
- **Confirmation:** Confirmation is a sacrament of initiation. “Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1316)
- **Solidarity:** Solidarity is one of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ seven themes of Catholic social teaching. Rooted in Scripture and tradition, solidarity proclaims, “We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic and ideological differences. We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world.” (USCCB, “Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching”)
- **Water Scarcity:** Water scarcity means there is not enough water in a given region to meet the needs of a population. By 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with water scarcity. (Source: UN-Water)

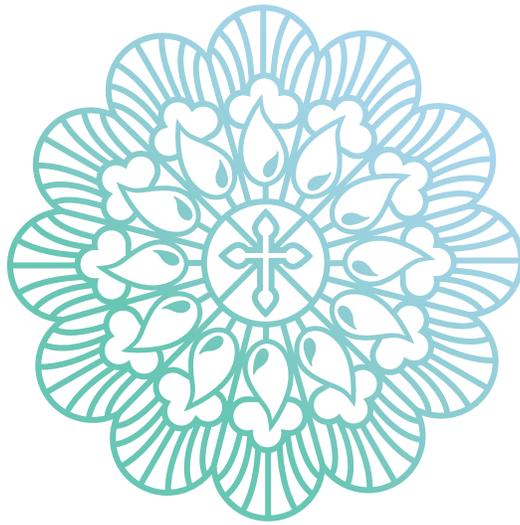


MATERIALS

- Bowl filled with water
- Bibles (one for each participant, if possible)
- Slips of paper that list these Bible passages: Matthew 8:1-4; Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 1:40-42; Mark 6:35-44; Mark 10:21-22; Luke 10:29-37
- Projector, laptop, Internet access
- Masking tape
- Buckets (one for every two to four people)
- Hose/sink/wading pool filled with water or a creative watering station for bucket-carrying activity
- Double-sided handout: “Confirmed for service to the world,” found at the end of this facilitator’s guide
- Download “Somos el Cuerpo de Cristo/We Are the Body of Christ,” Jaime Cortez (Spirit and Song, a division of OCP). You will need a computer or iPod and speakers.

PREPARATION

- Read this facilitator’s guide and become familiar with the session.
- Prepare a prayer space with a bowl of water in the middle for the opening prayer.
- Set up the bucket-carrying activity: Use the tape to mark a starting point (the “well” or “river”) and a finishing point (home) for the groups to carry water. Consider setting up obstacles to demonstrate the often harsh and dangerous conditions people face fetching water at a well or river and then carrying it home. Obstacles could include animals, forests, marketplaces, hills and robbers. Participants, chairs, stairs and tables can be used as obstacles. Decide where participants will get water (e.g., fill a wading pool, identify a hose, etc.). If possible, set up this activity outdoors.
- Write or print a Bible verse on each slip of paper, and make enough slips for each participant. It’s okay to have multiple copies of the same verse.
- Set up the projector, laptop and Internet access with this video loaded from CRS’ YouTube channel:
English: Water for Life: Brazil: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbKg6I2bxxw>
Spanish: Agua para la vida: Brasil: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q95D50PyilA>
(Or invite students to use their smartphones to view the videos. Read through session for additional details.)
- Print double-sided copies of the handout, “Confirmed for service to the world,” for each person.
- Prepare computer/speakers to be ready to play “Somos el Cuerpo de Cristo/ We Are the Body of Christ” to include in the opening prayer.



SESSION OUTLINE



OPENING PRAYER: 5 MINUTES

A brief reflection on water as a symbol of the Holy Spirit



CONFIRMED FOR SERVICE: 25 MINUTES

Confirmandi learn how Confirmation commissions them for a life of service and solidarity as Christ's disciples, and as members of the Catholic Church.



WORLD WATER ACTIVITY AND REFLECTION: 30 MINUTES

Participants apply what they learned about being confirmed for a life of service to the issue of global water scarcity. Through a hands-on activity, they consider how their own lives would be affected if they did not have reliable access to water in their homes and communities. They learn how CRS helps people around the world gain access to clean water.



LIFE OF SERVICE BRAINSTORM: 25 MINUTES

Participants brainstorm how they can live in solidarity with people who lack access to clean water through a group service activity and/or their own personal commitment. Participants can generate their own ideas for fulfilling their service requirement, shifting the emphasis from service hours to a lifelong commitment to discipleship.



CLOSING PRAYER: 5 MINUTES

A brief reflection on how the saints lived lives of service



Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS



opening prayer (5 minutes)

Gather confirmandi around a prayer space with a bowl of water at the center.

ASK:

What are some symbols of the Holy Spirit? (Possible answers: water, anointing, oil, fire, cloud and light, the seal, the hand, the finger, the dove. See Catechism of the Catholic Church (nos. 694-701).

Explain:

A symbol that we might not associate with the Holy Spirit is water. Water is a sign of the Holy Spirit's action in Baptism. At Baptism, we pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit, and this is a sign of our new birth in Christ through the Spirit. We are also baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body in Christ. (CCC no. 694) As we look at the water in front of us, let us remember in prayer that we were baptized into one body in Christ and let us pray that we are strengthened through the sacrament of Confirmation for service to all in our human family who suffer. We remember in a special way people around the world without regular access to clean water.

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit ...*

Come Holy Spirit!

May the water of our Baptism

*Enkindle in us a care for all the members of our one body,
especially those who suffer the most.*

May the water of our Baptism

*Give us the strength to carry out your call to care for others
especially when it is most challenging or uncomfortable.*

May the water of our Baptism

*Encourage us to live our faith in community,
especially in the community gathered here today.*

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen

*Close by having
participants sing or
reflectively listen to
"Somos el Cuerpo de
Cristo/We Are the
Body of Christ."*



confirmed for service (25 minutes)

Explain:

Today we will reflect on how the sacrament of Confirmation anoints us for lives of service to those in need around the world. “Service hours” are not just something you have to check off in order to be confirmed; a commitment to service is a crucial part of preparing for Confirmation and of understanding how our Catholic faith calls us to live.

ASK *confirmandi to share with a partner:*

**What service have you already done as a part of your Confirmation preparation?
What did you enjoy about it?**

*Or, if confirmandi have not yet learned about or started their service requirement, outline those requirements here and then ask: **What kind of service would you like to do? Why?***

Why do you think service is required for Confirmation?

Explain:

The Catechism of the Catholic Church outlines what Confirmation is all about: “Confirmation perfects baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.” (CCC, no. 1316) Let’s break this down.

CONFIRMATION PERFECTS BAPTISMAL GRACE

- “Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For ‘by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit.’” (CCC no. 1235)
- We are baptized by the Spirit into one body. “As ‘by one Spirit we were all baptized,’ so we are also ‘made to drink of one Spirit.’” (CCC no. 694) St. Paul tells us that we are part of one body, and if any member of the body suffers, we all suffer. Imagine having a toothache. Even though it’s a very small part of your body, you cannot forget that your tooth hurts when your tooth hurts! As a part of the mystical body of Christ, we are united with all of our brothers and sisters. Their suffering is our suffering. Have you ever experienced this yourself? Think about a time when you were hurting because someone else was hurting. Even when we don’t know other people who

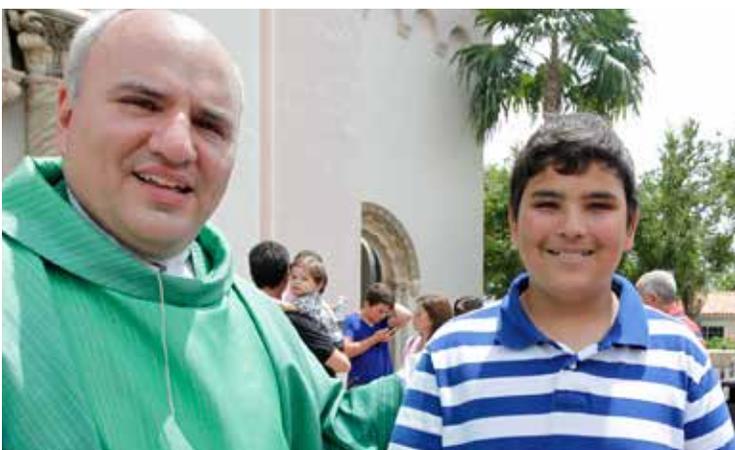


Photo by Alexia Fodere for CRS

Alejandro Ortega, 13, and Fr. Roberto del Cid, at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Miami, Florida. Alejandro was born in Venezuela but moved to Miami. After watching a documentary about orphans in Malawi, he got the idea to hold a bake sale to fundraise for the orphans of Malawi. Because fellow parishioners were so supportive, the project grew into a community event. Alejandro raised more than \$5,000 and chose to donate the money to CRS because of our work with orphans in Malawi.

suffer personally, we are affected. This is what it means to be a part of one body. And so we are called to respond to care for the suffering members of the body.

- The belief that we are a part of one body in Christ is solidarity. Solidarity means, “We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world.” (USCCB, “Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching”) Solidarity is global; it invites us to care for all people around the world.

CONFIRMATION INCORPORATES US MORE FIRMLY INTO CHRIST AND LEADS TO CHRISTIAN WITNESS

- Confirmation unites us to Christ and helps us bear witness to Christ through words and deeds.

ASK:

What was Jesus about? Which of his words and deeds come to mind?

Hand out slips of paper with the Biblical citations. Invite confirmandi to look up the passages and then report back to the group about what Jesus did or said.

- The Gospels show over and over how Jesus lived by serving people in need and urging others to do the same. He spends time with society’s outcasts. He heals those who suffer. He reaches out to people of different ethnicities, religions and cultures. We are confirmed to be witnesses to Jesus’ mission on earth. Our service commitments are not just about doing something good or about checking off a requirement. It is about becoming more like Christ and living as his disciples in what we say and do. The sacrament of confirmation anoints us for lives of service to all people.

CONFIRMATION STRENGTHENS OUR BOND WITH THE CHURCH AND ASSOCIATES US MORE CLOSELY WITH HER MISSION

ASK:

In one word, how would you describe the mission of the Church?

Take answers. Then, either search on a laptop and projector or ask confirmandi to do a Google image search of “Pope Francis and the poor” with their smartphones.

ASK:

Based on the images returned in the search, how would you describe the mission of the Church in one word?

Explain:

The Church “receives the mission of proclaiming and establishing among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God, and she is on earth the seed and the beginning of that kingdom.” (CCC no. 768)

ASK:

**What do you think the world would look like if the “Kingdom of Christ and of God” reigned?
How well does the actual state of the world match up with this?
What can you do to help build Christ’s kingdom on earth?**

Take answers. If access to water does not come up naturally, be sure to mention it here.

Explain:

This is part of what you are strengthened for in Confirmation: to build the kingdom of God. Our Catholic faith matters. Service is not about service hours, it’s about helping to live out the mission of the Church on earth by building the Kingdom of God—not just in our own communities, but throughout the world—by living in solidarity with others. This is a challenge and privilege of our faith.



world water activity and reflection (30 minutes)

Explain:

Let's think again about specific ways that the world does not reflect the Kingdom of God. We talked about how people around the world do not have access to food and water. Let's look more closely at the reality of global water scarcity for a few minutes.

ASK:

What are different ways we use water in our homes, schools, parishes and communities?

Has anyone ever been in a situation where safe drinking water was not easily available?

What did you do?

You might prompt participants by asking if anyone has ever gone backpacking and had to haul water, visited another country where they had to drink bottled water or had their water shut off because of a power loss or construction.

Explain:

In the United States, most people can turn on a faucet and get water for cleaning, cooking, drinking, etc. However, in many parts of the world, people in need do not have access to water. "Water scarcity" is a term used to describe a region's lack of access to enough water to meet the needs of a population. People—usually women and girls—travel long distances to wells or rivers to get water. This water has to last the entire day and is not always clean.

We will now do an activity that requires you to carry water and imagine what it would be like to travel long distances to wells and rivers every day to get the water you need.

Divide confirmandi into groups of two to four people and give each group two buckets. Use the tape to mark a starting point (the well or river) and a finishing point (home) for the groups to carry water. Have group members designate a person to fill the bucket at the well and then person(s) to carry it home. Groups can have more than one person carry the bucket and can decide on the best way for their group to carry it.

Consider setting up obstacles to demonstrate the often harsh and dangerous conditions in which people must gather water at a well or river and then return home. Obstacles could include animals, forests, marketplaces, hills and robbers. Participants—as well as chairs, stairs and tables—can be used as obstacles, but use common sense to ensure nobody is injured. Have supervisors near obstacles to prevent mishaps. If weather permits, hold this activity outdoors.



Photos by Karen Kasmauski for CRS

After the activity, **ASK:**

Was it easy to carry the water? Could you do this for more than a mile, 3 miles or farther?

Many people around the world—mostly women and girls—do this every day. How do you think this impacts their health and safety?



Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS

Read the following statements aloud, pausing between each one:

- Many people throughout the world do not have access to water.
- Approximately 3 million people die each year because of inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene.
- 780 million people do not have access to clean water.
- 2.5 billion do not have access to adequate sanitation.
- Access to sanitation, the practice of good hygiene and a safe water supply could save 1.5 million children a year.
- More than 300 million of the 800 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live in a water-scarce environment.
- By 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity.

(Source: UN-Water)

Activity adapted from CRS FoodFast

The Catholic Church in the United States is responding to the water crisis worldwide through Catholic Relief Services. CRS is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. Motivated by the example of

Jesus Christ, CRS assists poor and suffering people in 93 countries on the basis of need, without regard to race, religion or nationality. Getting involved with CRS is one way we can live out the Gospel call to give witness to the Christian faith in words and deeds. We will watch a brief video now that shows how CRS is helping people address water scarcity in Brazil.

ASK:

What in the video did you find most interesting or surprising?

What were some of the ways the Church responded to lack of access to water?

Show video:

“Water for Life—Brazil (Agua para la vida—Brasil)”

English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XbKg6I2bxxw>

Spanish: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q95D50PyilA>



life of service brainstorm (25 minutes)

Explain:

We have learned today about how the sacrament of Confirmation anoints us for a life of service in solidarity with people around the world. We've also spent time reflecting on the issue of global water scarcity and have seen an example of how the Church responds to this reality by helping people gain access to life-giving water. Now we will brainstorm together about how we might join that response through acts of solidarity—collectively as a Confirmation class, individually through our own personal commitment, or both. We are not responding so that we can complete service hours, but because Confirmation commissions us to follow Christ's call to discipleship through word and deed.

BRAINSTORMING GROUP SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

ASK:

We can live in solidarity by thinking and acting locally and globally. How can we respond in solidarity to global issues of water scarcity?

What commitment can we make together as a group between now and when you are confirmed?

Give participants a chance to brainstorm ideas together in small groups and present their ideas back to the large group. Consider posing a challenge to see which group can think of the most, or most creative ideas.

In lieu of service hours, consider inviting confirmandi to fulfill their service requirement by making a personal commitment to live in solidarity with those who lack access to water. Invite them to detail their commitment ahead of time and to write an essay or complete a creative project about their experience to be shared with the parish. If you decide to allow confirmandi to pursue a group or personal commitment instead of service hours, provide instructions at this time.

IDEA FOR A GROUP PROJECT:

Reusable Bottles campaign

Organize a parish campaign promoting reusable bottles to raise awareness about water scarcity and invite people to live in solidarity by being conscious of their water usage. Consider inviting confirmandi to make videos, write stories or speak at Masses or religious education classes for younger children about water scarcity and why we are called to respond as people of faith. Sell reusable bottles after Masses and donate the proceeds to a CRS water project. Include information about the water project in your parish bulletin.

BRAINSTORMING INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS

Explain:

Confirmation reminds us that service is about how we live as Christ's disciples.

Take a few moments to reflect silently on a daily commitment you can make to live in solidarity with those without access to clean water between now and your Confirmation. The handout is a tool; don't feel limited only to what's listed there.

I will distribute a handout with some prompts for reflection.

Distribute handout "Confirmed for service to the world."

After confirmandi have had time to quietly reflect, invite them to share their ideas with the large group.

Close the session by inviting confirmandi to reflect on the back of the handout with their family or sponsor before your next meeting.



closing prayer (5 minutes)

Explain:

“In preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, we often perform many hours of service to help those in need. In doing so, we practice love and service in imitation of the saints whose names we often take at Confirmation.” (USCCB, “Confirmation: Strengthened by the Spirit, Called to Action”) Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI tells us that the Holy Spirit pours love into our hearts so that we may become ‘instruments of grace’ in order to ‘pour forth God’s charity and to weave networks of charity in the world.” (Pope Benedict XVI Caritas in Veritate, No. 5)

As we close our session today, let us remember that the saints devoted their lives in service to others. We ask their intercession now and pray that like them, we will practice love and service.

I will begin our prayer and then we will take turns saying the name of our Confirmation saint. We will all respond, “Pray for us!”

If confirmandi have not chosen Confirmation saints, invite them to choose either a saint that they admire or even a personal role model who they believe demonstrates a life of discipleship.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ...

Loving God,

Thank you for gathering all of us here together today.

We pray that, inspired by Christ’s witness and the mission of the Church, we will respond to your call to devote our lives in service to those in need throughout the world. We ask in a special way for the intercession of all of the saints who have gone before us, our family members, friends, and the saints (name the saints chosen as your confirmation saints). We ask for their intercession and prayers that we may live out your witness despite the challenges we may face ...

Prompt confirmandi to take turns naming a saint and invite all to respond, “Pray for us.”

*Send your Holy Spirit down on us
and strengthen us to live as your disciples.
In your name we pray. Amen*



Photo by Silverlight for CRS

confirmed for service to the world



how can you be of service to those who live without access to safe water?

■ PRAY

Write a short prayer that you could memorize and say as a mantra each day at a certain time when you use water. For example, you could offer the prayer daily when you brush your teeth!

your prayer:

■ LEARN

Help educate your parish community about global water scarcity. Consider writing a short reflection that could be published in the parish bulletin, making a video that could be posted to the parish website or creating a display that could be hung in the parish gathering space or religious education building.

your ideas:

■ ACT

Make a daily commitment to live in solidarity with those who do not have easy access to safe water by limiting your water usage. You might decide to limit showers to no more than 5 minutes or commit to not leaving the water running when you brush your teeth, shave, etc.

your ideas:

■ GIVE

Think of a creative way to raise money for a CRS water project. CRS Gift of Hope water projects (gifts.crs.org) fund items like hand-washing stations, tools to dig a well and community watering stations.

your ideas:



Neisa Challco washes her hands with the family's new faucet, which brings water from a water system constructed by a CRS-funded project in Bolivia. The goal of the project is to improve health in poor, rural communities—especially among children under age 5, who are at most risk of illness, and even death, from unsafe water.

Neisa Challco se lava las manos con el nuevo grifo de la familia, que trae el agua de un sistema de agua construido por un proyecto financiado por CRS en Bolivia. El objetivo del proyecto es mejorar la salud en las comunidades rurales pobres—especialmente los niños menores de 5 años, que están en mayor riesgo de enfermedad e incluso la muerte, debido a la insalubridad del agua.



Photo by Silverlight for CRS

QUESTIONS for continued reflection to discuss with family members or sponsors:

- Confirmation unites us to Christ and helps us bear witness to Christ through words and deeds. What was Jesus' life about? Which of his words and deeds come to mind?
- What does service have to do with Confirmation?
- Share a story about when your faith has inspired you to be of service to others.
- Define solidarity in your own words. What is one way we can live in solidarity as a family with people around the world who lack access to water?

PREGUNTAS para reflexión y dialogo continuo con los miembros de la familia o los padrinos:

- La Confirmación nos une a Cristo y nos ayuda a dar testimonio de Cristo a través de palabras y hechos. ¿Acerca de qué se trataba la vida de Jesús? ¿Cuáles de sus palabras y hechos vienen a tu mente?
- ¿Cómo se relaciona el servicio con la Confirmación?
- Comparta una historia de cómo su fe lo ha inspirado a servir a los demás.
- Defina la solidaridad con sus propias palabras. ¿Cuál es una forma en que podemos vivir en solidaridad como una familia con personas alrededor del mundo que carecen de acceso al agua?



Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. We are motivated by the example of Jesus Christ to assist poor and suffering people in 93 countries on the basis of need, without regard to race, religion or nationality.

CRS es la agencia oficial de la comunidad católica en los Estados Unidos dedicada a la ayuda humanitaria internacional. CRS se motiva con el ejemplo de Jesucristo de asistir a los pobres y a quienes sufren en 93 países, basado en la necesidad, sin importar raza, religión o nacionalidad.

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