

OLV Confirmation Preparation

First Session – December 15, 2011



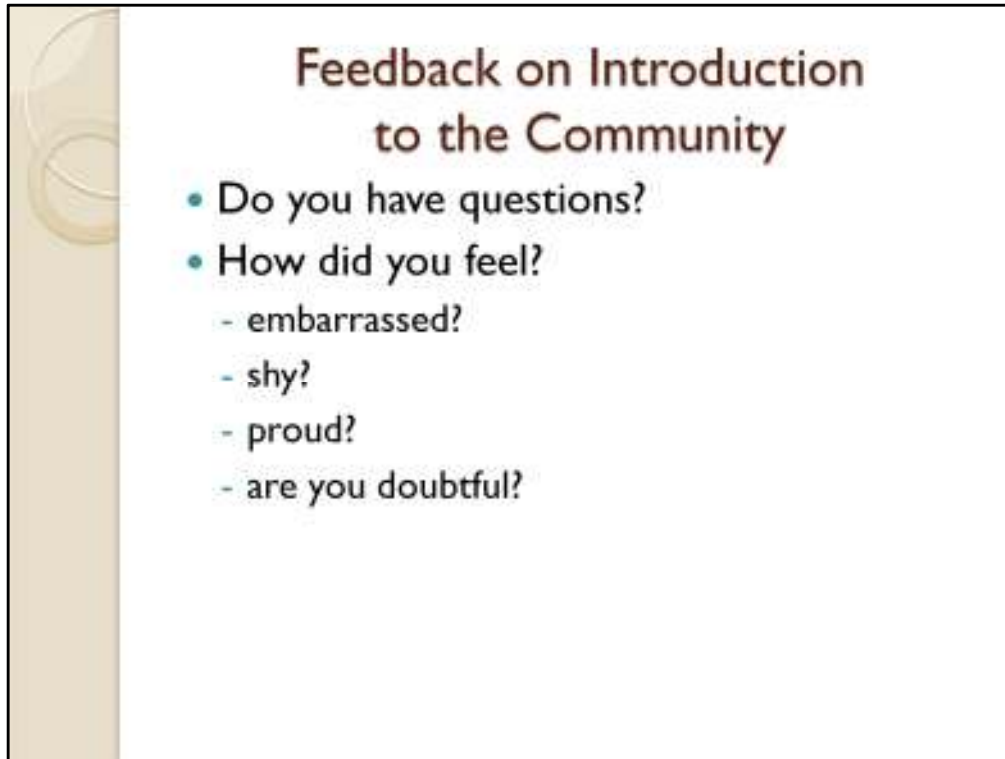
Welcome
Hand out name tags

Reading from John 3:1-16

There was an important man named Nicodemus who came to Jesus and said to him,
"I know you have come from God,
for no one can do what you do
without God."

Jesus answered him,
"Yes, and no one can live in the kingdom of God
without being born again of water and the Spirit.
God loves the world so much that he sent me
so that all who believe will live forever."

Ask someone to do the reading while we all follow on the screen



You were called by name at the Introduction to the Community, you were blessed, and then you accepted to personally commit – i.e.

- ❖ Are you willing to accept the Christian community as your environment for experiencing faith and growing in the Spirit?
- ❖ Are you willing to deepen your personal commitment to Jesus Christ
- ❖ And take responsibility for the gifts of the Spirit in order to help build the kingdom of God?

Is there anything in that Introduction that you recognize as part of the sacrament of Baptism?

Your introduction to the community was not really a commitment but a promise to do your best to understand the sacrament.

Sacraments

Christ instituted the sacraments of the new law. The seven sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life.

Baptism
Eucharist
Confirmation



initiation

Penance
Anointing of the Sick



healing

Holy Orders
Matrimony



service

Sacrament

- A celebration by Christ and his church
- Uses words and actions (signs) to reveal the action of God in our lives
- For example, Baptism – the basis of the whole Christian life

Baptism is the gateway to life in the Spirit

And the door which gives access to the other sacraments

Baptism

What are some of the signs or actions?

- **Sign of the cross**



Parents chose Baptism for you – it was their faith decision

The sign of the cross “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. We make the sign of the cross as a reminder of our Baptism. It is also used in blessings as a sign of God’s loving care.

Baptism

What are some of the signs or actions?

- **Pouring of water or immersion**



- Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace or gifts
- It strengthens our relationship with Jesus Christ

Baptism

What are some of the signs or actions?

- **Clothing in white garment**
- **Anointing with chrism-lit candle**



- It strengthens our bond with the Church and her mission that was taught by Jesus
- It helps us to be witnesses to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds

In Baptism

- We become a child of God, strengthened by the Holy Spirit to overcome the weaknesses in our human nature.
- We are given the gift of faith, which like all new life, needs to be nourished and fed
- We become members of Christ's body – the Church
- Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life – a gateway or door giving us access to the sacraments

If you decide in April to be confirmed, that will be your commitment to continue to be more responsible for your faith journey.

These are ways to help in your faith journey

- By reading and listening to the Scriptures
- By prayer - on our own or with others, and sometimes just by silence and waiting for God to speak to us
- By our lifestyle – making choices that follow Jesus' teachings and by being a good example for others
- By belonging and practicing within a faith community who supports us
- By giving back to your community at large (for example, volunteering at a food bank)

We know that some of you are musicians, some are involved in a sport and there may be many other types of activities.

You know that the more you learn and practice your activity, the better you will become.

The sacrament of Confirmation is not an end – “there, it’s done” – now I can check that off and I know everything there is to know about Confirmation.

It is another beginning towards a more mature faith – but it needs practice

What do Catholics believe?

- In the year 325, the Church leaders met in the town of Nicaea to consider what the Church held as sacred doctrine.
- This Council formulated a Creed that we still say every Sunday at mass.
- Containing 14 different belief statements, it summarized many of the most important teachings of the community.

Before choosing to become fully initiated into a group or organization, it is wise to have a firm understanding of the beliefs, goals, and purposes of the group or organization.

The Nicene Creed

- I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.
- I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.
- God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.

- We make the decision to believe in something that cannot be easily explained or proven. Perhaps the most difficult step of our faith journey is being OK with not completely understanding the nature of God because it goes so far beyond human experience.
- The more we learn about Jesus, the better we understand God. Jesus is the way to God. The New Testament gives us important information about the person Jesus.
- Here we are faced with the mystery of the Trinity. The word begotten means that Jesus and God are of the same nature.

The Nicene Creed

- For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.
- For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.
- He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

- Jesus is both fully God and fully human. He was given a human body and a human soul. As he grew, Jesus experienced all the joys, sorrows, difficulties, and even doubts that are a part of human life.
- The Resurrection of Jesus is central to our Catholic faith. Jesus is the light of the world. We celebrate his triumph over darkness at the Easter vigil on Holy Saturday night and on Easter Sunday. Easter is the greatest celebration of the Church year.
- The Ascension does not mean that Jesus is far away from us in a distant heaven. Quite the opposite. Being at the right hand of God means that, like God, Jesus is with all his people at all times. He is with us when we gather in his name.

Nicene Creed

- I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.
- I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
- I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.
- Amen

- The Catholic Church holds that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and is the perfect love eternally coming from the Father and the Son. The Spirit is the sacred power that influences us to act in kindness and love.
- The word *catholic* means *universal* or *whole*. This acknowledges Christ's desire that all his followers be united in him. The term *apostolic* means that the Church's authority and teachings have root in the apostles, whom Jesus commissioned to preach.
- At Baptism, we become full members of Christ's Church. Eternal life with God brings us knowledge and love that cannot be experienced here on earth or expressed in words we could understand.
- Amen. This word is often used in the Hebrew Scriptures as a name for God, meaning *the faithful one*. All Jewish prayers begin and end with *Amen*, expressing the people's faith that God will both hear their prayer and answer it.

What do Catholics believe?

Besides the Creed, two guidelines from Scripture have been standards for Christians. The first guideline is found in Exodus 20:1-17 – **the Ten Commandments**.

Jesus acknowledged the Ten Commandments. When someone asked him "Which commandment in the Law is the greatest?" Jesus replies: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the profits."

What are the Ten Commandments?

Exodus 20-2-17	Deuteronomy 5:6-21	A Traditional Catechetical Formula
I am the	I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me...	I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange Gods before me.
You shall.....	You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain...	You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
Remember...	Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy...	Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
Honour...	Honour your father and your mother...	Honour your father and your mother.
You...	You shall not kill.	You shall not kill.
You...	Neither shall you commit adultery.	You shall not commit adultery.
You...	Neither shall you steal.	You shall not steal.
You...	Neither shall you bear false witness against your neighbour.	You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
You...	Neither shall you covet your neighbour's wife.	You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.
...	You shall not desire... anything that is your neighbour's	You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.

- The name Exodus means 'departure' and refers to the most important event in Israel's history which is described in this book – the departure of the people of Israel from Egypt, where they had been slaves
 - The central human figure in the book is Moses, the man whom God chose to lead his people from Egypt
- Deuteronomy is organized as a series of addresses given by Moses to the people of Israel. In Chapter 5, Moses reviews the Ten Commandments
- Let us take the 7th commandment for example – You shall not steal.

What do Catholics believe?

- The second guideline for Christians is found in Matthew's Gospel 5:3-12 and is called **The Beatitudes**. These eight statements, unlike the Ten Commandments, focus on what we must do (rather than not do) if we wish to follow the teachings of Jesus.
- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

What do Catholics believe?

Beatitudes (cont'd)

- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
- Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.
- Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

In the Gospel, Jesus continues with:

- Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

Catholics and Church

- Why must we go to church on Sunday?
- Why do we need church?
- How did the early Christians know how to form a church?
- What about the Bible?

- In sacred Scripture, Jesus makes it clear that prayer as a community, not just as individuals, is extremely important.
 - In Matthew 18:20, Jesus promises us, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”
- It is here (church) that our unity as Christians lies. For the church is people – people united, not by a building or a bishop, but by faith in Jesus Christ
- Jesus left his words, teachings, and commands, all backed by his personal example
- The New Testament writings were written years after the death of Christ. Until then, the words and actions of Jesus were preserved through oral tradition, the passing down of stories from one generation to the next.
 - We know that even before Jesus’ life was recorded in the New Testament writings, the formation of the church had begun
 - This early Christian community gathered together for the breaking of the bread and the telling and retelling of stories about Jesus Christ
 - They recalled the things he said and did, the works of power he performed, and the promises he made

Places in the Catholic Church

- Bowl or Baptismal font
- Sanctuary
 - Front or center with altar and lectern
- Altar
 - Table on which the communion bread and the cup of wine are offered
 - Sacramentary – Book of Mass prayers
- Tabernacle
- Sanctuary Lamp

- Catholics have many places that they feel they can go to encounter God, but the place most important to Catholic worship is the building we call the parish church
- The Church has a rich tradition of using art and symbols (we call this liturgical art) to beautify the worship space
- When you walk in the door, you will see a bowl of water or a baptismal pool or font containing holy water, blessed water used by Catholics to make the sign of the cross as a reminder of their Baptism
- The Sanctuary is the area in front or near the center of the church that holds the altar and lectern
- Sacramentary, book of Mass prayers, is also used at the altar. The altar itself is a symbol of Christ. Candles on the altar symbolize Christ's presence and light
- Tabernacle – is a special house where the consecrated Eucharist (the Body of Christ in the form of hosts) is kept.
- Near the tabernacle, the sanctuary lamp burns continually, reminding us of Jesus' presence in the Eucharist that is reserved, or kept, there

Places in the Catholic Church

- Crucifix
- Easter (paschal) candle
- Stations of the Cross
- Sacristy
- Reconciliation rooms or confessionals

- Crucifix – a cross with the image of Jesus on it, representing his suffering and death
- The Paschal candle is a large, decorated white candle symbolic of the risen Christ
 - It is blessed and lighted during the annual Easter Vigil liturgy, held in the late evening of Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday
- Stations of the Cross – a series of fourteen pictures, carvings or plaques representing events in the suffering and death of Jesus
 - These are used for prayer and meditation
- Sacristy – where priests put on their vestments, the symbolic garments worn during the liturgical celebrations
 - The vestments include an alb and a stole. The priest's outer garment is called a chasuble
 - Other ministers also prepare for mass in the sacristy, including the lector (reader) and the altar services (acolytes)
- Reconciliation rooms – small rooms arranged so that a person can seek advice and counsel from a priest and receive the sacrament of reconciliation (forgiveness)

Advent Prayer

Lord Jesus, you have told us to stay awake
and keep watch for your coming.

Help us to see your presence in our world,
especially those in need.

Strengthen our hope in you so that we can
persevere in times of trouble and frustration.

Give us the trust we need to wait patiently
when it seems that you are delaying.

Fill us with your love as we strive to serve your
people for love of you.

Amen.

- The Catholic Church has designated the four weeks preceding Christmas as Advent, a time to “prepare the way of the Lord” for His coming as our King and Savior. It is also the start of the Liturgical Year.
- Notice the colors of Advent, the wreath, the banners
- Light the wreath and say Advent prayer

HOMEWORK

1. Attend Christmas mass
2. Read document being handed out