

## PARENT INFORMATION

This At-Home Confirmation Retreat is designed to provide you with an opportunity to grow in faith with your child as you help to prepare them for their Confirmation.

There are five parent-child sessions, each of which require 30 – 45 minutes to complete.

1. Getting Started: A Refresher on the Sacrament
2. The Mark of Confirmation
3. Grace Abounds: The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit
4. Anointed to Serve
5. Witness

Each session resource begins with a parent overview laying the foundation for the lesson you will work on with your child. The “Together with your child” section outlines the specific activities you will do together. Please be sure to complete the entire activity.

Set a schedule for when you will complete these activities with your child. To make this a sacred time, turn off your phone. Try to do these activities when you are fresh, rather than at the end of a long day. This is a unique opportunity for you to engage in sacramental preparation with your child. Make the best of it and have fun!

Your role as parents in this process is essential in your child’s preparation for living out the grace of Confirmation. Please keep the following formation goals in mind:

- Strive to increase a spirit of faith in your child – in times of crisis, faith is our anchor.
- Help them to prepare to celebrate the sacrament fruitfully – like a wedding day; this sacrament is just the beginning of a lifelong relationship with Christ and His Church.
- Model engagement in your faith through active participation in and celebration of the sacraments - including weekly celebration of the Mass online.

### Before each session:

- Read the lesson overview.
- Review the lesson overview text; do any additional reading preparation to answer questions (see suggestions below).
  - Tip: If your child asks a question, you do not know the answer to, the best response is to be honest and say, “I’m not sure, let’s research this together.” The Bible, the online *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and *US Catholic Catechism for Adults* (linked in the parent resources below) are a great place to start. If you do not find the answer, reach out to your parish faith formation coordinator or pastor. They will be happy to help!
- Preview the video, noting talking points you would like to make.

### You will need a:

- quiet space
- device to view the session video

- printed copy of the session worksheet
- pencil and/or markers to complete the worksheet

### **Sponsor Activity:**

Additionally, there is a parent and sponsor video activity to complete. It is recommended that this activity be completed without informing the student. Begin by watching the first half of this video, which addresses the role of a Confirmation sponsor - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIQ9Jdl9Aas>. Invite your child's sponsor to also watch the video. After watching the video, invite the sponsor to write a letter to the student expressing their hopes and desires for Confirmation and beyond. Parents should also write a letter to their child. The parents should keep both letters until the day of Confirmation when they are given to the child.

### **Parent Resources:**

Sofia Sketchpad: Overview of the Sacrament [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lu3MoT\\_egFI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lu3MoT_egFI)

Bishop Barron Comments on Confirmation – Reflection on the Baptismal Promises  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-UuMAU7qT0>.

The Bible can be found online at <http://usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/index.cfm>.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (online here, <http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/index.html>) provides a search feature to help with your questions.

The *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (online here, <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/us-catholic-catechism-for-adults/index.cfm>) provides a narrative format of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It includes easy to access doctrinal points, prayers and reflections. Pages 232-239 are particularly helpful for the Sacrament of Confirmation.  
<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/us-catholic-catechism-for-adults/index.cfm>



Come Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of your faithful  
and kindle in them the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit  
and they shall be created.  
And You shall renew the face of the earth.

## Lesson 1

### Getting Started

#### The Sacrament of Confirmation

To explore the sacrament of Confirmation, it is important to understand the sacraments and their relational nature. You may recall the classic definition of sacraments, efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. In simpler terms, the seven sacraments initiate, restore, preserve, and intensify the life of grace in believers.

As one of the three sacraments of initiation, Confirmation is understood in relationship with the other two Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism and Eucharist. Through these sacraments, a person is incorporated into the Body of Christ and called for mission. In Baptism, we receive God's grace and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Confirmation is a recommitment to accept these gifts and apply them in our lives.

#### Together with your child:

- Begin by praying the Prayer to Holy Spirit.
- Watch the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1v-FLo7bcTE>.
- Tell your child about your own Confirmation. What do you remember? Do you have pictures you can share?
- Invite your child to recall the explanation of the sacraments of initiation in the video. Ask them to explain the relationship between Baptism and Confirmation.
  - Talking points: Both Baptism and Confirmation bestow the Holy Spirit: Baptism gives the first seed of grace; Confirmation intensifies and grows that grace.
  - Look up together the Scripture passages about the laying on of hands (see Acts 6 and Acts 13, or 1 Timothy 4). In each of these stories, the strength to complete the task God gives is made through the laying on of hands. We too, receive this strength.
  - Ask your child why Confirmation is not the end of growing in faith but the beginning of their commitment to Christ. Are they ready for this commitment?
  - Print copies of the "Images of the Holy Spirit" worksheet for you and your child. Read and discuss the images of the Holy Spirit the worksheet together, complete the writing prompt separately, then share your responses.

#### Additional Resources:

Eight Common Questions about Confirmation: <https://lifeteen.com/blog/8-things-you-need-to-know-about-confirmation/>.

Biblical Images for the Holy Spirit blogpost by Msgr. Charles Pope <http://blog.adw.org/2013/05/images-of-the-holy-spirit-from-scripture/>.

# Images of the Holy Spirit

We often use metaphors to speak of God. Like all metaphors, they provide an image of something we are familiar with to help us make sense of something we don't know or in this case, cannot see.

Which metaphor do you feel represents the Holy Spirit in you? Why?

If Confirmation is your "personal Pentecost" - that is, the coming of the Holy Spirit to give you life for Christ - which image do you imagine?

Will you be on fire, will you feel the peace of God fill you with strength, will new life be breathed into you?



Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.  
(Acts 2.3-4)



And the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."  
(Luke 3:22)



When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.  
(Acts 2:1)

Using one of the metaphors for the Holy Spirit, which do you think best expresses His spiritual power? Write a few sentences on how you imagine the Holy Spirit might feel when He comes to you in Confirmation. Share with one another what you have imagined,


## Lesson 2

### The Indelible Character of Confirmation

#### Marked for Christ

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders “seal” the Christian with an indelible spiritual character or mark. Both descriptions are helpful. Being “marked” indicates that one has been chosen; while being a person of “character,” indicates that one exemplifies an upright life - in Christian terms a holy life. How fitting then, that in these sacraments, the Holy Spirit marks our souls with the seal of Christ. We are claimed as His chosen sons and daughters and given the Grace to live in holiness. However, this mark is not just for our personal benefit. Through the Holy Spirit, the indelible mark gives us the power, and responsibility, to be Jesus’s witnesses in the world.

Like a mark made by an indelible (permanent) marker, nothing can erase this mark on your soul. Sin or our failure to live, as witnesses of Christ can make the mark harder to see, but it never goes away. Whether or not we live in accordance with this mark is our responsibility.

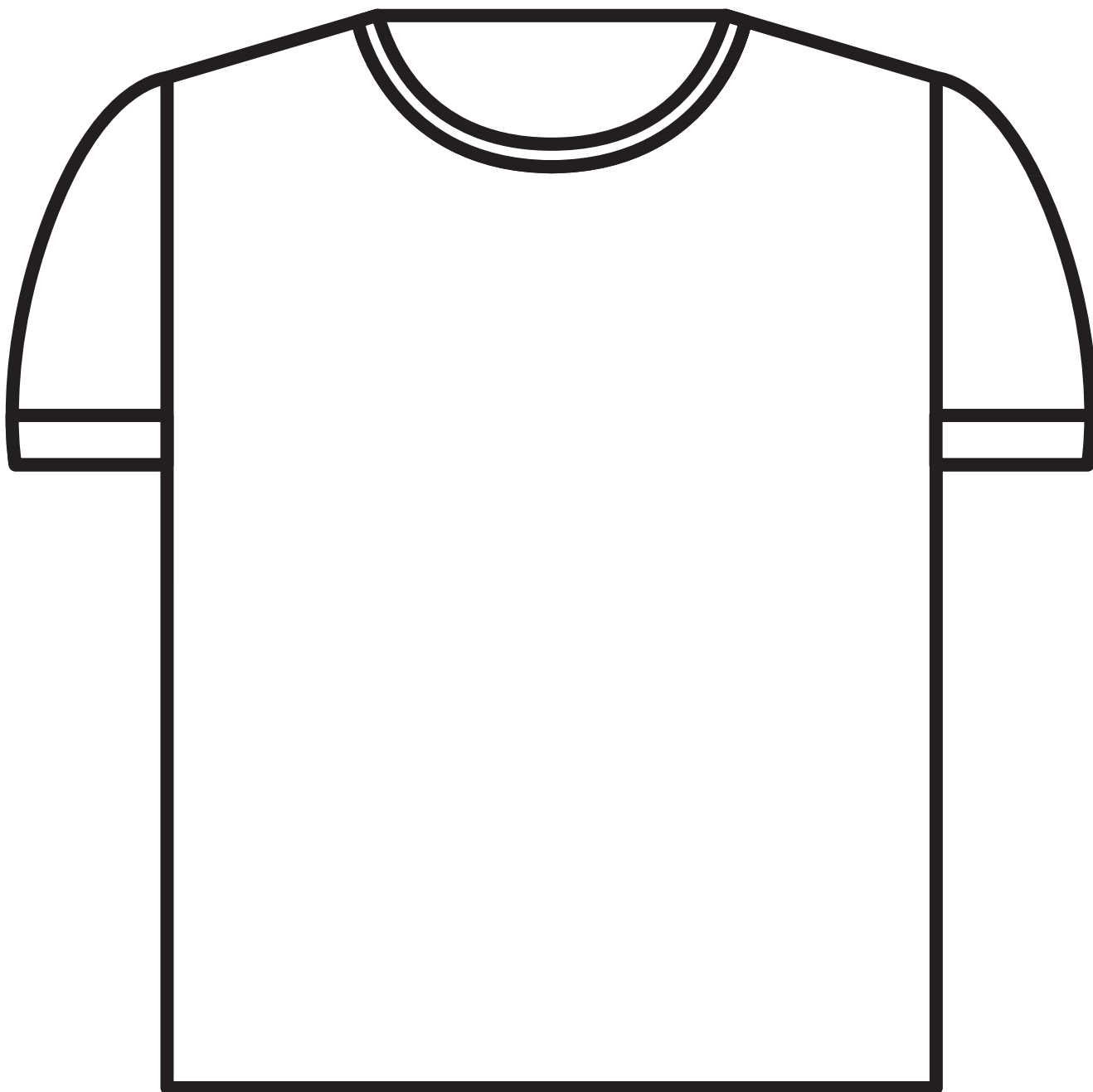
#### Together with your Child:

- Pray the Prayer to the Holy Spirit
- Watch the video – Fr. Mike Schmitz, Can I Get a Tattoo?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpGNzlwSrSs>
- If you have a tattoo(s), tell your child why you chose this particular tattoo. Does it still hold meaning for you? Ask your child if they have considered getting a tattoo. What message or image have they considered getting?
- Ask your child what they thought was the key message of the video. If their response is “don’t get a tattoo,” or something similar, redirect the conversation by pointing out how when we mark our bodies we are making a statement about who we are – what we claim as our identity.
  - Talking points: Recall the portion of the video where Fr. Mike asked us to imagine the tattoo we would have wanted 10 years ago. In Baptism, you chose this mark of Christian identity for your child. In Confirmation, your child will reaffirm that they claim this identity for themselves. This mark is one that lasts across a Christian’s life.
  - Fr. Mike says he wants a tattoo to identify himself as a priest, a soldier of God, a Christian. He then goes on to say that a tattoo is the easy way out. To put on or to wear an outward sign is an easy identifier; you do not have to be an active representative of the message. Real messages are sent by the way we live – but this is much harder and requires daily effort. People can only see the indelible mark on our souls by the way we live. We need to “wear” the love and generosity of Christ through our life.
- Print a copy of the “What Message do I Wear” worksheet for both you and your child. Individually complete the activity then share what you included and why.
- Ask, “Does this message say that I am marked for Christ? Does the way you live reflect your Christian identity? Do you need to live some part of your life differently to reflect your witness to Christ?”
- Close by offering a simple prayer for the Grace to live with the dignity of one marked for Christ.



## What Message Do I Wear?

If you could mark your life by a message or image what would it be?  
Use this t-shirt as the "canvas" to express your mark.



## Lesson 3

### Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit

#### Giving Life to the Fruits of the Spirit

During the Confirmation liturgy, the Bishop may ask students to name the Gifts and/or the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. It is important for us both know this information and to live the Gifts and bear the Fruits of the Spirit in our everyday life.

As a Sacrament of Initiation, Confirmation formalizes a relationship; it does not mark an ending. In the sacrament, we are sealed in the grace we need to live that relationship. The grace comes through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Knowledge, Fortitude, Piety, and Fear of the Lord. When you study this list, you see that four of the gifts – Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, and Knowledge - enable us to reason and think with the mind of God. The other three gifts – Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord - enable us to act in ways pleasing to God. The mark of a Christian life is reflected by both how we think and act.

When we are given gifts, they are just that - a gift. When we receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, they do not take over our mind nor will to control our actions; rather, we are changed by what we do with the gifts. We must open and unwrap the gifts so they can develop in our lives. As the Gifts of the Holy Spirit take root in our lives, our hearts are conformed to Christ. We begin to live differently; our lives naturally reflect Jesus and we bear the “fruits” of a disciple. Scripture identifies the Fruits of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). In addition to these Fruits, the Church also includes goodness, modesty, and chastity. Together these twelve Fruits are outward signs of the Holy Spirit alive within us.

Together with your child:

- Pray the Prayer to the Holy Spirit
- Watch this 1-minute video on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6H5qrScvc2c>.
- Ask your child, “Can you name the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit?” Can you *explain* what they mean? If not, look them up together. The link “Unopened Gifts” below explains each of the seven gifts.
- Ask your child if they have studied the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. If they have, ask them to name the fruits. If not, review the list found in Galatians 5:22-23.
- Print copies of the Gifts and Fruits Worksheet for you and your child. Fill in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Fruits of the Spirit. Each of you create your own mnemonic phrase to memorize the lists. Note: You do not have to list the gifts and fruits in the order found in Scripture. Compare your lists.
- This week: Have a family contest to live the Fruits of the Spirit. Every time you “catch” yourself living one of the Fruits of the Spirit, write your name and the fruit in action. Keep track of everyone’s fruits in a place where all can see. At the end of the week, tally the list to see who was most active in living the fruits. Do a separate tally of each of the fruits for the whole family to see which fruit most exemplifies your family.



- Final Prayer – a prayer by St. Ambrose
  - Recall then that you have received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of holy fear in God's presence. Guard what you have received. God the Father has marked you with his sign; Christ the Lord has confirmed you and has placed his pledge the Spirit, in your hearts.

Resources:

- Decision Point, Unopened Gifts, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-GH0D5AIlc>.
- Theology in Three Minutes: Gifts of the Holy Spirit, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-0hJ2AmtxA>.



# Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Using the first letter hints below, complete the lists of the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

In the box below each list, create a memory phrase to help you remember the list.

For example: a mnemonic phrase for

the Solar System is "My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Noodles"

Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune.

## Gifts of the Holy Spirit

W

U

C

F

K

P

F


## Fruits of the Holy Spirit

L

J

P

P

K

G

F

G

S

G

M

C


## Lesson 4

### What Happens at Confirmation?

#### Anointing – Outward Sign and Invisible Reality

If you have not been to a Confirmation Mass before, you may be wondering what happens. Mass begins like every Sunday. After the proclamation of the Gospel, the Confirmandi (that is the name we use for those preparing for Confirmation), are presented to the Bishop. The Bishop will then give a homily or ask questions of the Confirmand. After that, the Rite of Confirmation begins. There are four important elements to the Rite:

- Renewal of Baptismal Promises – to show the connection between Baptism and Confirmation
- Laying on of Hands – the Bishop calls down the Holy Spirit on the Confirmandi
- Anointing with Chrism –the Confirmandi receives the indelible spiritual Mark of Confirmation
- Sign of Peace – symbolizing the unity of the Church

What happens outwardly in the liturgy reflects powerful inward changes. The Confirmandi claim the Baptismal Promises of their parents and Godparents. They are sealed by the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and are strengthened and marked for Christ, and share in the peace of Christian communion. These public acts reflect a deep, personal yes to the Holy Spirit and to the Church.

#### Together with your child

- Pray the Prayer to the Holy Spirit
- Watch the video: What Happens at Confirmation:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrCUkEmCfi8>
- Discuss the video with your child. The presenter speaks about how he felt the power of the Holy Spirit at his anointing. Ask your child, “Do you think you will have the same experience? Why or why not?” If they say no, assure them that the power of the Holy Spirit will descend upon them – even if that is not felt in the way experienced by the presenter.
- Discuss the saint your child has chosen for their Saint name. Ask your child, “Why did you choose this saint? What about their life inspires you to be courageous in living your faith?”
- Print one copy of the “Anointed to Serve” worksheet. Have you child complete the worksheet. Discuss their responses together.
- Prayer the Prayer to the Holy Spirit by St. Augustine:  
*Breathe in me O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy. Strengthen me O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy. Amen.*



## Anointed to Serve

### What is Chrism?

It is a mixture of olive oil and balsam. Balsam is very fragrant and is used in perfumes. The oil and balsam mixture is blessed by the bishop at a special Mass called the Chrism Mass.

The Bishop uses a prayer like this one to bless the Chrism:  
And so, Father, by the power of your love,  
make this mixture of oil and perfume a sign and source  
of your blessing. Pour out the gifts of your Holy Spirit  
on our brothers and sisters who will be anointed with it.  
Let the splendor of holiness shine on the world  
from every place and thing signed with this oil.

List two ways you will use this new strength in your life.


Just before you are anointed you  
will tell the bishop the Saint name  
you have chosen.

The Saint you have chosen is a  
reminder of your commitment to  
Christ and an inspiration to live a  
holy life.

List two ways your Confirmation saint inspires you.


## Lesson 5

### Christian Witness

#### Witnesses of Christ in the World

When you receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, you become more perfectly bound to Christ and His Church. This unity with Christ's body, and the special gift of strength given through the Spirit, bears the responsibility to be a faithful witness of Christ. Being a witness of Christ means revealing through your words and actions that you believe in Christ Jesus and want to follow in His ways. It means showing with your life – in the way you speak, act, think, and relate with others – that you will love and serve God and others.

This call to live as faithful witnesses of Christ may at times feel daunting and intimidating. The weight of our sins, and our repeated failure to live holy lives, may make us doubt the power of the Holy Spirit in us. We may doubt we have the wisdom or courage it takes to be a witness of Christ. In these moments, we must turn to God in prayer and ask Him to help us reconnect with the grace he gives us. We can also turn to the saints as examples of faithful Christian witness and perseverance in the faith. As the great 'cloud of witnesses' of Christ before us, the saints serve to inspire and intercede for us in our Christian journey.

Through daily perseverance, nurtured by prayer and the Eucharist, we can reveal to the world the presence of the Spirit we have received. Each of us is called to be a living witness, in his or her own time and space, of the power of the Holy Spirit acting in and through us:

#### Together with your Child:

- Pray the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.
- Watch the video on 'The Ticket Without a Seat'  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJf1TkMXuyw>.
- Invite your child to share what they thought about the video. What surprised them? What part was most impactful? Discuss the different responses between the woman who gave up her seat and the other people on the train. Ask them – When have you seen a similar example of someone who chooses not to help a person in need? When? How did you feel?"
  - Talking points: Reflect on the actions of the woman throughout the video; how she acted differently from the rest, how she served selflessly. In spite of her discomfort, and not for the sake of praise – she chose to show kindness for the other. This is what it means to be a witness of Christ – to do as Christ would do at all times, even when doing so hurts, when it is not cool, or when it seems completely against what our friends are doing.
  - Invite your child to think of times when they knew they should stand up for, or help someone else but were afraid to do so. What kept them from helping? Being a Christian requires a lot of courage. We need to trust in God and His promises so we can stand up for what is right. Sometimes it feels like we may be fighting against the world. Long ago men carried a shield with their Coat of Arms on it when they went into battle. This was a sign to the world of the family or country they belonged to and who they were defending. St. Paul encouraged early Christians by telling them to put on the "armor of God" (Ephesians 6:11). Watch the Armor of God video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8HJSewGKe8>.
- Design a "Coat of Arms" with your child using the "My Coat of Arms" worksheet. Explain how each Bishop has their own unique Coat of Arms that includes symbols and a Christian motto.

Together these highlight the message the Bishop wants to convey about his ministry. Learn about Archbishop Gregory's Coat of Arms here, <https://adw.org/about-us/who-we-are/archbishop-gregory/coat-of-arms/>.

- Print a copy of the worksheet for you and your child. Individually complete the activity, and then share your coat of arms. Be sure to explain why you each selected the symbols and mottos you chose. Ask, am I living out this message? Can the world see my symbols and motto through the way I live my life?
- Close by offering a prayer for the graces to live as faithful witnesses of Christ in the world.

# My Coat of Arms

Consider what symbols and motto best depicts your Christian identity. Design your coat of arms using these symbols. Be sure to include your motto in the banner below.

Examples of Christian Symbols:

