

Part II: Brainstorming

Brainstorming is just listing words, ideas, thoughts. No comments or discussion takes place during a brainstorming session. The idea is to get everything up on the board or paper).

Ask students to brainstorm the symbols and gestures used in the Sacraments of Confirmation. Try to elicit actions as well as material items. Some things students might list are oil, chrism, water, etc. Also look for actions and gestures like outpouring of the Spirit, imposition of hands, anointing, seal, extending hands, initiation, life/death/new life themes, etc.



At the end of the brainstorming session, the following questions are suggested for discussion.

1. Why does the Church use elements from nature to celebrate the presence of the Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation?
2. What are some items in the brainstorming list that you had not thought about and that seem important?
3. Is there something you want to ask a question about on the list?
4. What elements or symbols from creation do you use in celebrations in your own life? (e.g. fire in birthday candles, fireworks on Fourth of July, etc.)

CLOSING RITUAL

Have students stand around the altar. Instruct them to reach out toward the lighted candle(s) with both hands, palms up. Tell them to draw the light of the candle(s) up toward their faces, bathing themselves in the light of the Spirit that the candle represents. Then have them spread their arms out from their bodies, and pass the light on to their friends and the world.

They can end this session with the simple song:

“This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.”

CONFIRMATION and CREATION LESSON PLAN

(Prepared for teachers by the
Ecological Network of Sowers of Justice)



***“Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in
your presence.”***

(Prayer of the Bishop at Confirmation)

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GOAL OF LESSON

When the bishop extends hands over the confirmands he prays

“By water and the Holy spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send the Holy Spirit to be their helper and guide. Give them wisdom, understanding, right judgment and courage, knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.”

This lesson aims to give the confirmation students an opportunity

- to experience wonder and awe of God in creation,
- to connect the gifts of the spirit to the care of the earth

SETTING FOR THIS CLASS

The lesson should take place where the beauty of nature is present.

An altar prepared with a cloth, candle and symbols of earth, air, fire, water. The altar should be large enough for students to place items from nature on it.

Music tape or CD

A blackboard or a flip chart with chalk or markers for brainstorming session

Part I: MEDITATIVE WALK IN NATURE

Background Material to Communicate to Students

Pope John Paul II refers to the universe as “another sacred book.” Nature, together with the Bible, allows us to discover the beauty of God. He says nature is not dumb but speaks of the Creator.

In this class, we are going to take a meditative walk in nature, in silence for about 10 minutes. As you walk and meditate note what you discover about the “beauty of God.” What is nature saying to you about the Creator?

Without damaging anything in nature, bring back something that really spoke to you as you walked – something that is symbolic of your experience. *Suggest to students that when taking something from nature, one should ask permission of the surrounding area to remove this part of the natural community. This attitude shows that you believe everything in nature is connected and has a purpose. It shows reverence for the gifts of creation.*

Now walk quietly to a spot outside that attracts you. I will give a signal when it is time to return. *(Let students know what the signal will be now).*

Return from Walk

When students return, have quiet music or drumming playing in the background.

Ask students to come toward the altar and place the item from nature they brought back on the altar.

Students sit in a circle around the altar, on the floor or chairs.

Invite them to show their selection from outside and tell the group what it says to them about the Creator.

A process of mutual invitation would help sharing. One student or leader starts the process and then invites another by name to speak until all have had a chance to speak. Students are always free to pass, but should be given an opportunity again at the end if they wish to share then.

Remind students: When the bishop extends hands over the confirmands he prays: “By water and the Holy spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send the Holy Spirit to be their helper and guide. Give them wisdom, understanding, right judgment and courage, knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.”

Ask them how the gifts of the Spirit relate to what they have just done.

After all have shared, pray Psalm 139 to conclude this part of the lesson. (See insert of Psalm 139).

PSALM 139

(Divide the group into sides 1 and 2 and suggest they read their parts slowly and meditatively, pausing slightly at the end of each part).



All: O God, You know me inside and out, through and through.
Everything I do,

Side 1: every thought that flits through my mind,

Side 2: every step I take,

Side 1: every plan I make,

Side 2: every word I speak,

All: You know, even before these things happen,

Side 1: You know my past;

Side 2: You know my future.

Side 1: Your circumventing presence covers my every move.

Side 2: Your knowledge of me sometimes comforts me;

Side 1: sometimes frightens me;

Side 2: but always it is far beyond my comprehension.

All: There is no way to escape You, no place to hide.

Side 1: If I ascend to the heights of joy,

Side 2: You are there before me;

Side 1: If I am plunged into the depths of despair,

Side 2: You are there to meet me;

Side 1: I could fly to the other side of our world

Side 2: and find You there to lead the way.

Side 1: I could walk into the darkest of nights,

Side 2: only to find You there to lighten its dismal hours.

All: You were present at my very conception.

Side 1: You guided the molding of my unformed members within
the body of my mother.

Side 2: Nothing about me, from beginning to end, was hidden from
Your eyes.

All: How frightfully, fantastically wonderful it all is!

Side 1: May Your all-knowing, everywhere-present Spirit

Side 2: continue to search out my feelings and thoughts.

All: Deliver me from that which may hurt or destroy me, and
guide me along the paths of love and truth. Amen.

