



# Gathered Session 5: Mystagogia (45 minutes)

## Overview

This gathered session comes after the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. It focuses on the experience of receiving Confirmation and recalls the elements and activities of the entire preparation process. The session helps the young people reflect on the process, express their gratitude for the guidance and community they have experienced through program leaders and peer relationships, and affirm the commitment they have made by choosing a keepsake.

## Suggested Structure

| Time Frame | Activity                   |
|------------|----------------------------|
| 5 minutes  | Gathering                  |
| 5 minutes  | Welcome and Opening Prayer |
| 15 minutes | Small-Group Activity       |
| 10 minutes | Small-Group Activity       |
| 10 minutes | Closing Prayer             |

## Practical Considerations

### Preparation

- **Space:** This gathering requires space for the group to meet together as a whole, as well as space for the small groups to meet.
- **Prayer:** For the opening and closing prayers, set up a prayer table with a tablecloth, a Bible, a candle, and matches. For the closing prayer, you will need to provide several small keepsakes, each containing a phrase from the list below. Each young person will choose a keepsake based on the value, lesson, or gift he or she most desires to take away from the Confirmation experience.
  - Do What You Believe
  - God Is Love
  - It's Not Complicated
  - Love God above All Things
  - Love Is Most Needed in the Shadows
  - It's the Way of God
  - He Looks to Us
  - What Are You Doing about It?
  - Saints Are Our Friends
  - Your Will Be Done
  - Be Present and Listen
  - Am I Willing to Do It?
  - Love Confirms Dignity
  - We Don't Earn Love
  - We Don't Earn Dignity
  - Love Validates Dignity
  - Realize the Dignity You Already Have
  - Go out and Make a Difference
  - Friendship: That's What the Kingdom of God Is All About
  - God Is Most Proud When We Try
  - Christ Loves You
  - Christ Wants You to Change the World
  - Be Courageous
  - Don't Be Afraid to Fail
  - Try Whatever You Can
  - Called to Mercy
  - Forgive, Even When It Is Difficult

One option for a keepsake is to paint on small smooth stones, or print on cardstock, flames, doves, or other images along with the phrases, one per item. Include multiples of phrases to allow more than one person to choose a particular phrase. You may have ideas for other mementos or keepsakes that would be meaningful to your group. A T-shirt with the motto of mercy the young people designed as part of the retreat might be appreciated. In many places, there is a tradition of giving each young person his or her own Bible, such as *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* or *The Catholic Youth Bible*<sup>®</sup>, from Saint Mary's Press.

You may also want to invite three readers for the closing prayer to arrive a few minutes early to practice reading with the background music so that you can adjust the volume settings accordingly.

## Materials Needed

### • Gathering and Opening Prayer

- the song or music video "Holy Spirit," by Steven Joubert, from the *Scandal of Mercy* album, and an audio or video system
- copies of the handout "Opening Prayer" (Document #: TX005811), one for each young person and adult leader
- projection equipment and a digital photo that represents each invocation in the opening prayer litany (*optional*)

### • First Small-Group Activity

- sheets of newsprint, one for each small group
- markers, several for each small group
- small prizes for the winning group members

### • Second Small-Group Activity

- tape, one roll for each small group
- pens, one for each young person
- strips of paper in different colors (at least three per person)

### • Closing Prayer

- the song "Scandal of Love," by Greg Walton, from the *Scandal of Mercy* album, and an audio system
- copies of the handout "Closing Prayer" (Document #: TX005812), one for each young person and adult leader
- keepsakes

## The Session

### Gathering (5 minutes)

As the young people arrive, have Steven Joubert's song "Holy Spirit" playing in the background. If you have not already done so, find three young people to read for the closing prayer.

### Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Light the candle. Welcome the young people and introduce the session with these or similar words:

- Welcome back, everyone, and congratulations on your Confirmation! The team is very glad to be gathered together with you one last time. We wanted the chance to get together after Confirmation to reflect on the experience of Confirmation itself, have the chance to say good-bye, and take the time to remember all the ways we have learned and grown through this process. Let's begin with prayer.

### Opening Prayer (see the handout "Opening Prayer" [Document #: TX005811])

Distribute the handout. Direct the young people to read the prayer aloud as a group. If you collected digital photos, project them on a screen or blank wall during the prayer, as each invocation is read.

### Small-Group Activity (15 minutes)

Arrange the young people into small groups. Give each group several markers and a sheet of newsprint. Introduce the activity in these or similar words:

- When I say "Go!" your group will have 3 minutes to write down everything you can remember about Confirmation. You may include memories that pertain only to you, such as "My family couldn't find a place to park," and memories that apply to everyone, such as "The bishop and all the priests raised their hands over us when they prayed for us." You may name funny things that went wrong as well as the serious things that were supposed to happen. You may include feelings like "I was nervous," as well as facts. Your group will get extra points for anything you write down that is specifically related to the Sacrament of Confirmation. Keep in mind symbols and gestures, colors, songs, prayers, and any special words that were said.

Ask if anyone has questions before you begin. Let the young people know when they can start by calling "Go!" and time them. Give them a 30-second warning, then call time.

- Count the total number of memories your group listed, and write that number down as your score. Circle any responses that include the following words or phrases. (*Read this list slowly.*)

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| • Holy Spirit                   | • Confirmation name  |
| • renewal of baptismal promises | • bishop   |
| • red                           | • the phrase "I do"  |
| • chrism                        | • procession   |
| • oil                           | • the phrase "Be sealed with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit" |
| • Sign of the Cross             | • blessing   |
| • sponsor                       |  |

Give your team an extra point for any of those words, and add them to your score.

When all the groups have totaled their score, award small prizes to the winning group. Then invite the groups to spend a few minutes discussing the following questions:

- What stood out most for you or meant a lot to you at Confirmation? Was there a special moment in the celebration? Did someone important to you attend? How did you feel about the whole experience?
- What connections can you make between the Confirmation Mass and things you learned through the *Called to Mercy* online learning modules or gathered sessions, including the service day?

### **Small-Group Activity (10 minutes)**

Invite the small groups to stay where they are. Give each small group a roll of tape. Distribute to each young person a pen and three strips of paper. Explain that everyone should take a few minutes of quiet now to write down on their three strips of paper anything they are grateful for regarding Confirmation preparation and Confirmation itself. They could list any of the experiences they have had or friendships they have developed in the gathered sessions, during the retreat, or on the service day. Perhaps they are grateful for leaders, sponsors, parents, or other adults who helped them prepare. Perhaps they are grateful for the experience of receiving the sacrament or for something specific they have learned through the process. When everyone is ready, invite the young people to share in their groups and to assemble a paper chain with their strips.

### **Closing Prayer (10 minutes)**

Invite the small groups to come to the prayer space and connect their paper chains with the other groups' chains to form one large chain. This can be hung on the wall or coiled around the base of the prayer table. When everyone is seated again, light the candle and distribute the handout "Closing Prayer" (Document #: TX005812). Call the readers forward and turn on the music. Cue the readers to begin and be ready to lower the volume of the music during readings and raise it again as the young people come forward to choose their keepsakes.