

Hello everyone. My name is Cathy Russell and I work in the Faith Formation and Vocations offices. Congratulations to each of you on receiving the sacrament of Confirmation very soon!

This sacrament is such an important milestone in your faith journey. It completes your initiation into the church. When you receive this powerful sacrament, you will receive the many graces you will need to fulfill the mission you have been given.

You know that right? This is not the end, it is only the beginning!

Let's take a look at those Gifts of the Holy Spirit you will receive at Confirmation.

Pause the video.

At this point, each student should have a copy of the handout.

Using the handout, discuss each gift with the accompanying question.

Restart the video

Our faith teaches us that God has a plan for your life and wants you to complete some work to make the world a better place.

In order to do this, there are three important questions to think about. As a matter of fact, in school your teachers or guidance counselors may have asked you similar questions when speaking to you about your future plans. But when YOU ask yourself these questions, there is a God dimension to consider. This is the beauty of our faith! When you ask these questions, ask God to help you with the answers. The answers won't come immediately. You will learn the answers gradually. But as I said earlier, this is a faith journey. Back to the questions.

Who am I?

Where am I going?

How will I get there?

Let's repeat those questions again.

1. Who am I?

Our faith teaches us that we are born with a unique combination of talents and abilities. Think about that word for a moment- UNIQUE. What does that mean? It means like no other, no two people are the exact same. How awesome is that?

So what are your talents and abilities? How do you figure it out? How do you know what they are? Well, what do you enjoy doing? How do you spend your free time?

Let's listen to Steve Harvey talk about discovering his ability.

At this point, you will play the Steve Harvey video and discuss afterwards.

Pause the video.

(The discussion questions are on a separate sheet. Students do not need a copy of this handout.)

Restart the Video Again after discussion.

Again, WHO AM I? Thanks to Steve Harvey for pointing out in his humorous way that God gives us unique gifts, abilities and talents. Discovering and developing these will make us great and will make us happy.

The next logical question might be: How do I figure out what my gifts are? One thing is to try out new things; don't be afraid to put yourself out there! Look at what you enjoy doing, and what you don't enjoy doing. What comes easy to you, what is not so easy to you? What subjects in school do you like and don't like?

Over time, seriously looking at and reflection on these things, you will learn what your gifts are and how God is inviting you to use them.

Let's take the *Spiritual Gifts Inventory*. That will get you thinking about some of these questions. Afterwards, your group leaders will go over what each of those gifts means and what some of the characteristics of each are.

Stop the video.

(Each student needs a copy of the inventory. Read the direction out loud and be sure they know what to do. Tell them not to spend a lot of time thinking about them. Their first inclination is probably right.)

After students are finished with the inventory, it is time for discussion about it. Give each student a copy of WHAT DO THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS MEAN? Go over what each gift means. There are two questions for you to add to the discussion.)

Restart video after discussion is complete

At this point, do you have an idea of how you answer that first question: *Who am I?* I hope you can. You are loved by God, you are unique and you have been given many gifts, talents and abilities. You have a mission to complete for God that no one else can complete.

That's who you are! Thank God everyday for making you this person and believing in you enough to give you a part to play in making the world a better place. You are loved and made for greatness!

Now let's turn to that second question: *Where am I going?*

The obvious answer is you are going through school, continuing to learn, preparing for your future. You will continue to answer the first question, WHO AM I?

But where are you going spiritually? You are receiving the sacrament of Confirmation. This is not the end of your spiritual journey! It is the beginning! Take God with you as you look to your future, ask for God's help. Our faith teaches us that we are called to holiness ... but what does that mean? Michael Kelly suggests it means we must become our best self.

That is where you are going and you cannot go there alone. You need the prayers and support of your family and of the entire church family. Pope Francis has a message to young people about their gifts. Let's listen.

PAUSE VIDEO TO PLAY AND DISCUSS VIDEO CLIP BY POPE FRANCIS.

(You can use the handout on the video clips to have the discussion questions as well as some answers. Students do not need a copy of this.)

Restart video after discussion.

That leads us to that third question: HOW DO I GET THERE?

So far we have talked about learning who we are and becoming our best self. We have talked about the fact that we need the church community and that Confirmation is just the beginning of this journey, not the end.

In the first part of this retreat, you had a prayer experience. Prayer is the answer to HOW DO I GET THERE? Our faith teaches us that each sacrament is a special grace filled encounter with Jesus. So we must use these two tools in order to GET THERE.

Forming good habits and setting some goals are also important tools. I know I need a plan in order to achieve what I know I need to achieve.

So what would your plan look like? What goals would you choose?

By now I hope you can see that the three questions are related to one another. To bring this part of your retreat time to a close, let's put a plan together. That way, as you prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation and continue your journey on a mission for God, you will have a tool you can start with and revise. God bless you and be sure of my prayers!

PAUSE VIDEO

(Be sure students have a copy of the sample goals and a copy of the plan sheet. Once they complete their plan, they can share them if you wish. This activity completes this third part of the retreat.)