Information for Leaders

- This information is for use during Parent Information Sessions for the Sacrament of Confirmation using the Diocesan program, Let the Children Come
- Remember to include in your presentation specific information regarding how the program will be implemented in your parish
- Leaders are encouraged to discern which information is most suitable for their parish context
- Leaders are encouraged to delete or add information to enhance their presentation
- Two prayers have been provided if you wish to use either of them
- Please contact the RE Centre on 5337 7315 for any clarification

This information is available for use at parent meetings of children preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Leader: Spirit of Fire that cannot be quenched
    Animate and inspire us!
    Qualify our ambitions
    Endorse our attitudes
    Bless our actions.
    Spirit of Fire
    Inspire and enflame us to promote The Reign of God.
    And may God, the Source of All being,
    Jesus the eternal Word
    And the Spirit whose fire
    Cannot be quenched Bless us now and forever.
All:Come Spirit: Renew the face of the earth
Leader: All: Spirit of love
   Help us to be open to the needs of others.
Leader: Spirit of joy
   All: Inspire us to proclaim the Good News.
Leader: Spirit of peace
   All: Fill our hearts with God's presence.
Leader: Spirit of patience
   All: Help us to be still and listen to God's Word.
Leader: Spirit of wisdom
   All: Guide us in our search for truth.
Leader: Spirit of gentleness
   All: Help us to nurture our inner beings.
Leader: Spirit of courage
   All: Give us strength to dispel the fear.
Leader: Spirit of faithfulness
   All: Fill us with Christ's love.
All: Amen
What is a Sacrament?

Sacraments are actions, not things. They are actions of God for people. (Di Gidio)

**Leaders Notes:** Encourage a group discussion on: Sacraments are life long, they are not one off events, they are not things we get.

We begin learning about Sacraments from the very first day we are born. As we grow within our own family we learn about stories, rituals, language, symbols, church life and faith experience. We learn the values that are part of our family.

What are the family rituals that you have in your families that are special to you, is there a special way that you celebrate the birth of a new child or the way you celebrate birthdays? What are the rituals of traditions that are unique to your family?

Think about a childhood memory of being aware that you belonged to something. Eg:-family, sports, interest group etc. A time when you felt you really belonged. Share that memory with some-one near you.
Christian Initiation

- Baptism
- Confirmation
- Eucharist

Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are the three sacraments of initiation. None of these sacraments make sense unless we view them in relation to one another. The sacraments of initiation are all about belonging to a community where we are nourished, supported and challenged in our faith journey.

Confirmation

A DEEPENING OF OUR CHRISTIAN IDENTITY (Carol Luebering, American Catholic)

We are specifically focusing on the sacrament of Confirmation.

Preparation for confirmation includes learning to articulate what it means to be a Catholic Christian. It is a sacrament of connection. Through Confirmation we are more intimately connected to our God and our Church community.

Four aspects of Confirmation

- Naming
- Promises
- Hands
- Oil

These are the four aspects of the Confirmation Ceremony. Their significance is detailed below:-

**Naming**
"I have called you by your name you are mine" (Isaiah 43:1)
As parents we agonize over the name we will give our children, often the name is linked to something specific, a person, place. Our names are our identity

**LEADER NOTES** - You may get questions here about Confirmation names. The Diocesan stance is that we confirm candidates using their baptism name, as confirmation is a confirming of their Baptism. However some candidates will still choose a name for confirmation, this name should be a Saints name. Speak to your Parish Priest regarding this matter.

**Promises**
Promises require making a commitment.
- Renewal of Baptismal Promises at Confirmation

If your children were baptised as babies you as parents along with the godparents made promises on their behalf. Now when your children receive the Sacrament of Confirmation they will be renewing those promises that were made for them.
Hands

- Touch is a vital human action
- Jesus used his hands to forgive and heal.
- Laying on of hands claims each person as precious and loved

The first thing we did as parents when our children were born was to touch them, to make sure they were real! Touch is the one thing that we all do. If our children or upset or hurt we cuddle them to calm them. In the sacrament of Confirmation the laying on of hands is central to the celebration.

Oil

Throughout history oil has been used to:

- soothe
- heal
- strengthen
- preserve

There are many examples where oil is used in scripture, to heal and anoint. In the Sacrament of Confirmation we use the oil of chrism to anoint the children.

**LEADERS NOTES:** Talk about the properties of healing, soothing, strengthening and preserving, i.e: in sport or cooking.

Recall your own experience of Confirmation! How is it different today? Share your thoughts with someone near you.

**LEADER NOTES:** Questions may or may not arise about the order of the Sacraments. The following information gives a brief history of the changes in the order of sacraments of Initiation. You will need to decide whether you need to use following information.
A Brief History of the Sacrament of Confirmation

During the first centuries of the church's life, the three initiation sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist were celebrated together.

After the 4th century difficulties arose when Bishops could not be present at the celebration, due to the growth of the Church, so Confirmation was delayed until the Bishop could be present. First Communion was not received until after Confirmation.

In the early 1900s Pope Pius X asked that First Communion (which was received in the teens) be received at an earlier age, around the age of reason (about 7 or 8 yrs old). Church authorities urged that Confirmation should still precede Eucharist, but this was largely ignored.

Vatican II called for the Church to return to the former order of the Sacraments. In 1991, after wide consultation throughout the Diocese, Bishop Mulkearns announced a change in the order of the Sacraments of Initiation for this Diocese -That is back to their original order.
Diocesan Policy

Our Sacramental preparation is

- Family Based
- Parish Co-Ordinated
- School Supported

For many years now the Sacramental preparation of children in the Diocese of Ballarat has followed this policy.

Parents Role

Parents are the most effective and influential teachers of their children. The Parish and school are here to support you.

It is important to remember that the reception of Baptism, Confirmation and first Eucharist is but the beginning of a journey of growing intimacy with Christ. The relationship continues right through life. Further education in faith at home, in the parish and at school will build on this beginning. (Let the Children Come 1991)