

## Confirmation Lab Time

For the Gen Z'ers who stay and are committed (i.e. do more than attend church regularly, but are engaged and invested in the mission, some 10%):

- 89% believe living in relationship with Jesus is the only way to find fulfillment in life (49% for habitual churchgoers)
- 90% relationship with Jesus brings me deep joy and satisfaction (48%)
- 88% say their Church is a place I feel I belong (43%)
- 85% say there is someone in their life who encourages them to grow spiritually (50%)

*For more stats on Generation Z, check out the resources for the Middle & High School Ministry Lab time!*

### **Takeaway #1: The answers to these questions are the principles of Jesus' mission -**

1. How do we introduce Gen Z to a lived relationship with Jesus Christ?
  - a. **Heart to Heart Ministry**
2. How do we help Gen Z belong?
  - a. **Person to Person Ministry**
3. How do we challenge Gen Z to grow spiritually?
  - a. **Communion to Commission - intentional discipleship through Call/Form/Send.**

How do we do this in the context of Confirmation?

### **Understanding Remote vs. Immediate Preparation**

- Immediate Preparation: preparation for the Sacrament itself. Topics here include (National Directory for Catechesis, 122-123):
  - Teaches that Confirmation increases and deepens the grace of Baptism, imprinting the indelible character on the soul
  - Teaches that Confirmation strengthens the baptismal conferral of the Holy Spirit on those confirmed in order to incorporate them more firmly in Christ, strengthen their bond with the Church, associate them more closely with the Church's mission, increase in them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and help them bear witness to the Christian faith in words and deeds
    - See effects of Confirmation - *Catechism* paragraph 1303
  - Teaches about the role of the Holy Spirit, including gifts, and fruits of the Holy Spirit
  - Is developmentally appropriate and includes retreat experiences

- Includes instruction on the Rite of Confirmation and its basic symbols: the imposition of hands, the anointing with Sacred Chrism, and the words of the sacramental formula
- Ensures that parents and sponsors are involved in the catechetical preparation of the children for Confirmation
- Teaches that the bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation (In the Eastern Churches, however, the priest is the ordinary minister.)"

Note what is *not* included in Immediate Preparation:

- Service Hours
- Mass attendance
- Application/Interviews
  - Good idea to assess readiness, but is it a “test”?
- Multiple years long with multiple benchmarks
- “Requirements” that must be met to be Confirmed

All the “other stuff” we want teens to be doing (living a life of service, worshipping at Mass, evangelizing) are *fruits* of discipleship and should be modeled in Remote Preparation.

- Instead of “requiring” these practices to be Confirmed, what if we asked potential candidates to focus on these habits *before* they start Immediate Preparation for Confirmation?

### **Practical Efforts:**

1. Shift thinking from Confirmation-centered Youth Ministry to holistic, comprehensive Youth Ministry, of which Confirmation is one part teens *may* take part in.
  - a. Start communicating and planning a vision of Youth Ministry that goes “beyond” Confirmation (i.e. 12th grade).
  - b. Stop referring to 9th/10th grade as “required” to enter Confirmation year or using language like “Confirmation 1, 2, 3...”
    - i. Consider separating “Confirmation Preparation” from 11th grade youth ministry. (Note: candidates still need to be 16)
    - ii. For Immediate Preparation, consider having monthly sessions with other “Youth Ministry” sessions on other weeks with rest of YM
  - c. Expect and cast vision for teens participating in the parish post-Confirmation
2. See “requirements” and what you need to offer, not what must be accomplished by candidate.

- a. Rename things like “application”, “interview”, etc. Consider using “conversation” or something else.
- b. Be open and work with families to form teens in other ways.
  - i. Can still make parish a part of the process. Ask families how they plan to do that.
  - ii. Most families will still do what you offer to form their teens
  - iii. Still have a conversation about their readiness
  - iv. Still have candidates write letters to Bishop
3. Leverage and equip adult mentors to accompany candidates. Train them in how to have conversations with teens about the Faith. (Sponsors, Parents, SG Leaders)
  - a. Give Sponsor Guides with content and activities to do, like:
    - i. Go to Adoration together
    - ii. Serve together
    - iii. Sponsor interview
    - iv. Read a book together
4. Make retreats/days of reflection serve a purpose of relationship building
  - a. What happens on a retreat that can’t happen in a classroom?
  - b. Be ready to adjust based on family concerns with Covid-19.
  - c. Focus on the Holy Spirit and Confirmation, not just a generic retreat experience (those are helpful in other areas of YM)
  - d. Leverage relationships through things like GreaterRetreat.com (could be done with Sponsors)
    - i. Consider this instead of sending to another parish retreat.

**Further Resources:**

- *A Vision for Confirmation in Light of Comprehensive Youth Ministry* - The Church Podcast with John Rinaldo and Christopher Wesley
  - <https://www.thechurchpodcast.org/2020/02/18/episode-121-a-vision-for-confirmation-in-light-of-comprehensive-youth-ministry/>
- *Rebuilding Confirmation* - Christopher Wesley