



# FAITH FORMATION GUIDE

## Holy Fire 2019

As you guide your students in preparation for Holy Fire, please use these materials to help them enter more deeply into the experience.

To prepare your students, you can engage them in the prayer exercises and reflections on faith offered below, as well as introduce them to parts of the day which will include prayer and worship experiences.

Please share that this will be a daylong spiritual experience which will include prayer, song, testimony and liturgy. Videos illustrating prayer and worship, Eucharistic Adoration and Mass can be found linked throughout the document. There are links in each section to help you illustrate and explain prayer pieces more thoughtfully.

## PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

### Explain Why We Go to Holy Fire

Holy Fire is an experience for thousands of young people to join together in a moment of encounter with Jesus Christ through prayer, celebration, community, worship and fun. Holy Fire features powerful stories from dynamic speakers, live music, praise experiences and sacramental moments designed to deepen the faith experience of all participants.

### Discuss What to Expect at Holy Fire

Expect a concert-like venue with several thousand sixth through ninth graders who are coming from across the Archdiocese of Chicago and other dioceses to have fun, hear inspirational witness stories, pray, participate in Eucharistic Adoration and participate together in Mass.

### Make Room for the Holy Spirit

Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you as you prepare for Holy Fire, that it may be a holy time for you, inspiring you for years to come. Read **this passage** from Pope Francis' Homily for the Solemnity of Pentecost (2013) together, with students taking turns on each stanza. Ask students to consider the following questions silently:

- Why do you think that God is inviting you participate in Holy Fire?
- What do you think God hopes for you?
- What fears or worries might God be asking you to let go of?

Pray together that the Holy Spirit, who you received at baptism and whose gifts are sealed within in you at confirmation, will be with you and that you will be open what God has in store for you at Holy Fire.

Take time to offer a prayer intention for Holy Fire in your own words or perhaps using the prayer, Come Holy Spirit:

**All:** Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love.

**Leader:** Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

**All:** And you shall renew the face of the earth.

**Leader:** Let us pray.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise and ever to rejoice in His consolation.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

## Have Faith Conversations

Invite students to discuss their inspirations, motivations and challenges in their faith life. This helps prepare students to receive inspiration and guidance from the speakers at Holy Fire.

Conversation starters:

- Who has inspired you in your faith life? Who has been your mentor? Who introduced you to Christ, the Church and/or your Catholic faith? Think of these people as your spiritual companions during your Holy Fire journey. What do you imagine they would say to you at this moment as you prepare for Holy Fire?
- Who is Jesus to you? Is there anything you would like to learn about Jesus or what He wants for your life?
- How can taking time to connect with God in your life right now as we prepare to attend Holy Fire?

## Address Racial, Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

Holy Fire reflects the universality of our Church by bringing youth from diverse backgrounds together in praise and worship of Christ our Savior. It is important to explain to your group that at Holy Fire they will encounter young people from various racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and that they are called by Jesus and expected by their parish or school to treat one another with love and respect.

You may use the following activities to help students explore what it means to treat others with love and respect.

- Invite students to remember a time when they were in a new place or around new people (at a new school, on a new team, at a friend's birthday party, etc.) and discuss the following.
  - What did people do to make you feel welcome?
  - What else could they have done to welcome you?
  - What can you do to make others feel welcome at Holy Fire?
- Read the **Parable of the Good Samaritan** (Luke 10:25-37) and discuss the following.
  - Based on this passage, who is your neighbor?
  - How does God want you to treat that person?
  - Why does God want us to welcome someone we might view as a stranger?

- Explain and discuss the Catholic Social Teaching principle of solidarity.

“We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they may be... Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.” (USCCB)

- What does it mean to treat others like family?
- How can treating everyone at Holy Fire like our sisters and brothers be a sign of peace in our world?

## Journal

The following prompts are recommended for students and teachers who are keeping a journal about their Holy Fire experience.

- Is there a longing in your heart you wish to bring to the Lord at this time in your life?
- How are you feeling about Holy Fire?
- Are you excited, tired, uncertain, prayerful, indifferent or anxious?
- Is there anything you have been praying for in your own life or in the lives of your parents, siblings, grandparents or other relatives that you want to bring to the Lord?
- Are there any places in your life where you want to give thanks? Has anything special happened recently that you want to give thanks for?

## Prepare for Praise and Worship

Praise and Worship is an important part of the spiritual journey and can be a new experience for many young people. Click [here](#) for a video that explains how you can participate in praise and worship.

To further explore the elements of Praise and Worship, read the [Canticle of Mary](#) (Luke 1:46-55) and reflect on the following questions:

- What are the great things the Lord has done in your life?
- What are you grateful for?

Encourage the young people to thank God throughout Holy Fire for all of the blessings in their lives.

## Prepare for Eucharistic Adoration

Eucharistic Adoration is a powerful moment of encounter with the Risen Lord yet may be a new experience for some students. Here are a few ways that you can prepare the youth in your group to participate.

### Explain What Adoration Is

- Use [this video](#) to orient the group to the different elements of Eucharistic Adoration.
- Explain that Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is a form of prayer that began centuries ago. The word adoration means “to pay honour or homage to someone or something.” Adoration is a time to sit face to face with Jesus and deepen and strengthen your relationship with Him. The same Jesus whom we receive in the Eucharist at Mass is who we worship in adoration.

### Offer Tips to Be Successful at Adoration

- **Be Patient:** Allow yourself the time and grace to enter into the moment. Set yourself up for success by allowing your mind to be free for a moment from worries or what you might be doing later in the day. Enter into the moment with Jesus and allow yourself to be amazed.

- **Reflect on What God is Telling You:** Think for a moment if there was something a speaker said earlier in the day that resonated with you. Was there a short quote from the Bible that touched your heart? Quietly reflect on their words or the image the speaker(s) helped paint in your mind. Ask yourself what changes God is asking you to take. How will you go about making those changes? Make this part of your prayer.
- **Listen to Praise and Worship Music:** There will be soft music in the background that may be drawing you closer to Jesus. The words and lyrics you hear may help you quiet your heart and your mind.
- **Be Okay with Silence:** Our world can be pretty loud if we think about all the times we hear music, play with our phones or even watch TV at the end of our day. Our minds and ears do not often encounter silence. Give your mind the gift of silence, and as you quietly kneel in front of the Blessed Sacrament, know the quiet of your heart allows Jesus to speak to you one-on-one in a way you can only hear.

### **Use Scripture to Focus the Heart on Praise**

It can be helpful for young people to come to Eucharistic Adoration with a passage from Scripture on their minds and hearts. These are helpful Scripture passages to share with students. Ask them to choose one to memorize before Holy Fire and reflect on during Eucharistic Adoration.

- “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” (James 4:8)
- “He will wipe every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 21:4)
- “Let us come before him with a song of praise” (Psalms 95:2)
- “We know that all things work for good for those who love God” (Romans 8:28)
- “Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God” (Isaiah 41:10)

### **Encourage Participation in Reconciliation**

During the lunch hour you can opt to attend the sacrament of reconciliation. The sacrament of reconciliation is an encounter with Jesus who heals and forgives us. It is a way to experience God’s mercy and abundant love in a way that encourages to reconcile with God and with the Church. The sacrament “washes us clean” and renews us with Christ.

## **FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES**

Once you come back from Holy Fire there could be a fire instilled in the heart of the participants. It is important to help young people listen and respond to what God is telling them through this encounter with Jesus.

The most important follow up you can do is to make sure that the young people in your group have regular opportunities to pray together, discuss faith in an open and accepting environment, learn more about their faith and discern how God is calling them to live as missionary disciples of Jesus, worship God and put their faith into action by witnessing the love of Jesus in the world.

Below you will find some immediate next steps you can take with students.

## Reflect on the Holy Fire Experience

Use these questions to help young people take another step closer to Christ by reflecting on their experience and listening to how Christ has called them forth. Please take time in the week after Holy Fire to share these questions with students.

- How will you remember Holy Fire?
- Is there a speaker that you enjoyed listening to or whose stories were relatable to your life?
- Is there a moment that created a special memory for you? Why was that moment memorable?
- Is there a particular image, prayer, message or person that you will use to commemorate this experience?
- Where is God now leading you?

## Discern Calling through Scripture

As you are beginning to process your Holy Fire experience spend time reading and reflecting on the **Appearance on the Road to Emmaus** (Luke 24:13-35). Ask students to reflect on the following passage:

Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?"

So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them

who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!"

Reflect and Discuss:

- What do you think the disciples meant when they said, "Were not our hearts burning?" Did you experience anything like this at Holy Fire.
- After realizing they had encountered Christ, the disciples set out announce the Good News that He had been raised from the dead. How are you called to announce this Good News in your life right now?

## Put Faith into Action

Invite young people to consider how the Holy Fire experience made them think, touched their hearts and inspires them to act. Draw an image of Christ on the Cross on a piece of poster paper.

With sticky notes, invite students to do the following.

1. Write down one thing from Holy Fire that made them think and place it around the head of Jesus.
2. Write down one thing that touched their heart and place it on the heart of Jesus.
3. Write down one thing they want to do going forward and place it on the hands of Jesus.

Have students discuss what they feel called to do going forward. Consider directing them to take some of the following actions:

- Create a plan to share what they experienced at Holy Fire with younger students and others in their parish or school community.
- Discover opportunities in their parish/school to engage in prayer, community, worship, learning and service. Commit to participate in one or two of these opportunities in the coming weeks.
- Commit to being more merciful, compassionate and loving in your everyday life: reflect on who you ignore or struggle to love in your family, class and community, and think of one way you can treat them with the love the Jesus calls you to share.

## Encourage Family Conversations

Encourage parents and guardians to discuss the Holy Fire experience with their youth. Here are some questions you might suggest:

- What was the most impactful thing you can carry with you that you experienced at Holy Fire?
- How was Holy Fire different from other retreats or experiences you may have had taken in the past?
- How has your relationship with God changed or been enhanced by Holy Fire?
- What is one action step or resolution you want to take after Holy Fire?
- What is one thing we can do as a family to help you deepen your relationship with God?
- Where do you feel God is calling you to next in life? How might God be calling you to your life's vocation through Holy Fire?