



Dear Parents and Children,

Many of you have had to have your confirmation date postponed due to the covid 19 virus. I am sure you are disappointed. This is only a temporary setback, and as soon as this health crisis passes, a new date will be set for this very special celebration of the Sacrament of confirmation.

I appreciate that your daily routine has been disrupted and at times you may feel lonely and isolated from your friends and you may find the restriction to stay at home difficult. I am in no doubt that you are looking forward to the day when you can meet with your friends and begin some of your favourite social activities again.

Your parents and teachers are doing great work in providing you with activities and work to help you have some structure to your day.

I would like to invite those of you who have not yet had the opportunity to attend or complete your pre-confirmation course, to spend some time along with your parents and siblings to engage with some resources that will help you prepare for the sacrament of confirmation in the near future.

The resources provided are not the complete programme of "You Shall Be My Witnesses", but touch on the topics and some of the activities provided in the programme. I will invite you and your family to post pictures and videos on some of the challenges that we set you during the next few weeks. We will post these pictures on our Diocesan and office websites. If you do not wish your child or family's image shown please do not submit videos or photographs.

I would like to thank Maeve Mahon for giving permission to use this wonderful resource during these strange times.

God Bless

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Pastoral Worker

For the Archdiocese of Armagh



Programme Outline

The structure of *You Shall Be My Witnesses* is based on the sections of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

- What we believe!
- What we celebrate!
- What we live!
- What we pray!

There are Five Sessions

Session 1	Belonging
	How do I belong?
Session 2	Believing
	What do I believe?
Session 3	Being a Christian
	How can I be a Christian?
Session 4	Becoming a Witness
	How do I share the Good News?
Session 5	Beginning Again
	What happens next?

Note:

This programme is usually delivered in a parish setting with volunteers who facilitate the programme. Parents are encouraged to join in at the end of each session for prayer. Children are asked to complete some tasks and worksheets at home and these activities provide a conversation for both the parents and children around the topics discussed in each session. In the light of the current situation I would like to encourage all members of the family to provide the support and encouragement needed to prepare your child/ children for the sacrament of confirmation.

Acknowledgement:

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to Maeve Mahon, who developed the *You Shall Be My Witnesses* programme for parishes and for giving us permission to use this wonderful resource in a new way to help our Confirmation candidates prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation



Providing a Sacred Space

In order to deliver each session, I invite you to create a sacred space in your home. This sacred space will also serve as a focus of prayer at the end of each session.

You will need:

A candle (battery is safe)

A white or red cloth

A cross or Bible (or both)

Session 1



Belonging: How Do I Belong?

Start the session by lighting the candle and saying the opening prayer together.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us, especially upon _____ (child's/children's name (s)) as he/ she/they prepare for the sacrament of confirmation. Amen

We all belong to families, parish communities, school communities and some of us belong to clubs like the GAA, swim clubs, dance clubs etc..., and as baptised Christians we all belong to the Christian Community.

All of these groups have things in common. They all have rules on how to behave, they have rules on time keeping for example, at home you have a time to get up in the morning and a time for going to bed, a time for doing home work and meal times etc. Your club would have times for practice and times for competitions and so on. All communities including your family, school, clubs and church have rules on how we treat each other.

Three important words on how we treat each other are;

- Courtesy
- Respect
- Dignity

Courtesy, the showing of politeness in one's attitude and behaviour towards others.

Give an example of how you can show courtesy to others

Respect, regard for the feelings, wishes and rights of others

Give an example of how you can show respect to others

Dignity, the state or quality of being worthy of honour or respect and value

Give an example of how you can treat others with dignity.



Activity

Do you think it's good to belong to a group?

Are you a good group member?

What do you think makes you a good group member?

Look at the worksheet entitled, **Being a Good Group Member** (*You Shall Be My Witnesses page 5 on Workbook*). **Tick** the qualities that you think you have that make you a good group member.

Worksheet1

Being a Good Group Member

	Yes	No
I CAN LISTEN		
I CAN SHARE		
I CAN KEEP RULES		
I AM BOSSY		
I CAN WORK WITH OTHERS		
I CAN HELP OTHERS		
I AM IMPATIENT		
I CAN BE A LEADER		
I CAN SHOUT LOUDLY		



Becoming a Member of The Catholic Church

Discuss the following with your parents/ guardians;

How did you become a member of the Catholic Church?

Was it a choice you made?

Most people who are members of the Catholic Church, belong because they were baptised when they were babies or young children. The choice was made for them. Others choose to become a member of the Catholic Church when they have grown up and are baptised when they are adults.

Baptism is only the beginning of our journey and to become members of the Church. There are three sacraments and these are also known as the sacraments of initiation, initiation is another way of saying to become a member, it usually involves a ritual. The three sacraments of initiation are:

Baptism

First Holy Communion & First Penance

Confirmation

Once you were baptised you belonged to God in a very special way and you became part of a very big family, a community of people who believe in God and live life in a certain way to show they belong to God. There are more than 1 billion Catholic's in the world.

Can you along with your parents/ guardians and siblings give five ways in which we show others that we belong to the Church?

List them here and give an example?

1. -----
2. -----
3. -----
4. -----
5. -----



I Want to Belong!

At Baptism your parents made a choice for you. Now you are being asked to confirm that they made the right choice for you. YOU are being asked to say 'YES' for yourself, to confirm the Baptism that your parents chose for you. Over the next few weeks, we will look at what this 'yes' means for you.

One of the ways in which you say 'yes' for yourself takes place during the Confirmation ceremony. You will be asked to renew the baptismal promises that your parents made for you on the day of your Baptism. When you do this, you are saying 'yes' for yourself to the invitation to be a member of the Catholic Church. My Journey so Far:

My Baptism	Insert a phot of your Baptism here
My baptismal names are: ----- -----	
I was called that name because: ----- -----	
My family name is: -----	
My parent (s) names: ----- -----	My sponsors' names are: ----- -----
The priest's name is: -----	The name of the Church is: -----
My parent (s) wanted me to be baptised because: ----- -----	
My First Holy Communion.	



6. my will family there be celebrate me to with

Letter to the Bishop or Parish Priest

This week we are asking you to write a letter to your bishop or parish priest telling him why you want to be confirmed this year.

You can tell him all about yourself and your family.

You can write about how you are getting ready for Confirmation at home, in the parish and at school.

Ask your parents to help you write it. Sign the letter and ask your parents to sign the letter too. Post it to your parish priest.

Closing prayer (you will need Holy Water)

Loving God, this holy water is a reminder of the water with which we were blessed at baptism. As we bless ourselves with this water may we remember to always walk as children of the light!

Amen