Our Lady of Good Counsel Church

42 W. Main Street – Moorestown, NJ 08057

Confirmation Preparation: "Defending Our Faith"

In the First Letter of Saint Peter, he writes: ***"Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope"*** (1Peter 3:15).

The Sacrament of Confirmation is a point for our young Catholics to actually "confirm" their understanding of the faith and attest to the place where they will try to witness that faith in their lives. As 13- or 14-year-old kids, you are still in so many ways learning the practices of your faith; I expect you to be growing in your faith through the focused preparation for this Sacrament.

What I an proposing is a program where you will form small teams to debate elements of our faith. I will serve as their "debate coach," in conjunction with your 8th grade religion teacher(s). Included in this small project syllabus are elements of our Roman Catholic faith and liturgical practices, where you can choose from possible topics. You would then research these topics (I will provide age-acceptable resources), prepare 3-5 points that are significant to you about the doctrine or prayer in question, and present their "Defense" of their Faith in a forum with your 8th Grade school peers.

Recognizing that the preparation for Confirmation really needs to be considered a two-year focus in 7th and 8th grade, we will involve the 7th graders as the "judges" of the debate, by way of beginning to get them focusing on what will be expected of them the following year.

Some of the topics for your Defense may include:

1) **The Creed**
   a) I Believe in God the Father … creator of all things, visible and invisible
   b) I believe in Jesus Christ … consubstantial with the Father
   c) I believe in Jesus Christ … who became man
   d) I believe in Jesus Christ … who will judge the living and the dead
   e) I believe in the Holy Spirit
   f) I believe in the Communion of Saints
2) **The Lord's Prayer**
3) **From the Mass**

a) The bread and wine .... Work of human hands
b) Make us part of this sacrifice
c) Oh Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul will be healed

Most of the research you may do for this project will likely be done online, but the sources you choose to use must be authentic Roman Catholic resources. For example, you can readily find the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church online, and the Table of Contents for that book is organized in the first half following exactly what was listed above concerning the parts of The Creed.

Part one of this project will be for you to form two-person teams; you will work with your partner in choosing the topic, in conducting the research, and in presenting "... the reason for your hope ..." (1 Peter 3:15).

When you present to your classmates and the 7th Grade students, we will loosely follow the format of a debate, although I will not ask anyone to take the negative or opposing argument against the Faith. Instead, as a team with your partner, you will each need to participate in presenting your Defense of the Faith information; your presentation must include:

- ✔ A five-minute presentation of your point of faith, and why it gives you hope. Once the five-minute mark is hit, you must stop presenting your case, so teams must practice what they will say within that time limit.
- ✔ In your presentation, you must reference at least 3 sources from your research.
- ✔ Your presentation as a team will only be done using 3 x 5" index cards; on your cards, you need to have the information about your research, who was the authoritative source, and what you learned new from that source.
- ✔ Following your presentation, there will be two questions posed to you as a team. You can choose who answers the first question, and the other team member must answer the second question.
    - The questions will come from one 8th grade student and one 7th grade student.
    - Regardless of who first answers each question, the second teammate will have a chance to also offer further ellaboration.

To guide you through preparing for your debate, the following steps will be followed:

Week 1 – You will choose your partner within your class. Father Jim will review with you the specific Roman Catholic doctrine from which you may choose your topic.

Week 2 – With your teammate, you will tell Father Jim what specific point of doctrine or prayer you have chosen to defend. In your own words, you must tell Father Jim and your class why you chose that point or prayer. No more than two teams can choose the same topic.

Week 3 – With your teammate, you need to present a report that shows your first two research sources. These can be taken from the Internet, but you must identify the source so that it can be reviewed (and approved) as authentically Roman Catholic. Each team member must also write down at least one question you think someone in the audience might ask you during your presentation.

Week 4 – "Trial Questions" will be posed by your classmates. Each team will introduce their selected topic to their peers and will offer two questions that they plan on answering. Their classmates will then offer 3-4 alternate questions that might be asked, which they can then consider as they finalize their research.

There will then be no meeting for one week, allowing the teams to collaborate and build their final presentation program. Presentations are all verbal, no visual aids (such as PowerPoint), and the only materials the team will have will be the six index cards.

Week 5 – As a team, you need to provide copies of your 3 x 5" index cards with your research. These cards can contain the research references and specific text, which you can read during your Defense. Or the cards can contain an outline of which team member is presenting on which point. Or the card can contain an outline of a closing statement. ***You must have 3 different source cards***, and you can only have ***a maximum of 6 index cards***.

Following these weeks of preparation, you will Defend Your Faith over the next two weeks, three or four teams each week.

Possible Bibliography/Research Sources

Catechism of the Catholic Church (available online at the United States Council of Catholic Bishops, www.USCCB.org)

The Bible (Available text in class, or various online CATHOLIC versions)

The Roman Missal (PDF available from Mr. Judge's OLGC page)

RCIA Program: The Creed (pdf prepared by Father Jim, available from Mr. Judge's OLGC page)

St. Augustine, "Letter to Proba" (about the Lord's Prayer; (pdf prepared by Father Jim, available from Mr. Judge's OLGC page)

About the Creed

From America Magazine:

Winters, Michael Sean, June 22, 2009:
https://www.americamagazine.org/content/all-things/preaching-creed

Pope Francis, February 2, 2022:
https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2022/02/02/pope-francis-audience-communion-saints-242321

Other Sources:

The Jesuit Post, Strassburger, Brian, SJ, July 1 2020:
https://thejesuitpost.org/2020/07/catholic-101-what-is-the-creed/

From www.catholic-link.org:

Wright, Will: The Nicene Creed Explained

Roach, Becky: How to Pray the Creed Like You Mean It

About the "Lord's Prayer"

Pope Francis, Audience Address, April 21, 2021
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2021/documents/papa-francesco_20210421_udienza-generale.html

Pope Francis, Audience Address, December 9, 2020
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20201209_udienza-generale.html

Saunders, Rev. William, "Catholic Straight Answers", "Why does the Catholic Our Father have a Different Ending Than the Protestant One?, https://catholicstraightanswers.com/why-does-the-catholic-our-father-have-a-different-ending-than-the-protestant-one/

Saunders, Rev. William, www.CatholicStraightAnswers.com, "What does it mean when we pray in the Our Father, "And lead us not into temptation"?", https://catholicstraightanswers.com/what-does-it-mean-when-we-pray-in-the-our-father-and-lead-us-not-into-temptation/

About the Mass

Preface - (Eucharistic Prayer II for Various Needs; other prefaces may be chosen as well)

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks, Lord, holy Father, creator of the world and source of all life. For You never forsake the works of Your wisdom, but by Your providence are even now at work in our midst. With mighty hand and outstretched arm You led Your people Israel through the desert. Now, as Your Church makes her pilgrim journey in the world, You always accompany her by the power of the Holy Spirit and lead her along the paths of time to the eternal joy of Your Kingdom, through Christ our Lord. And so, with the Angels and Saints, we, too, sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

Eucharistic Prayer III

Option A	You are indeed Holy, O Lord, and all You have created rightly gives You praise, for through Your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power and working of the Holy Spirit, You give life to all things and make them holy, and You never cease to gather a people to Yourself, so that from the rising of the sun to its setting a pure sacrifice may be offered to Your name. Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore You: by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts we have brought to You for consecration, that they may become the Body and Blood of Your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate these mysteries.

Option B	For on the night He was betrayed He himself took bread, and, giving You thanks, He said the blessing, broke the bread and gave it to His disciples, saying: TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT, FOR THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU. In a similar way, when supper was ended, He took the chalice, and, giving You thanks, He said the blessing, and gave the chalice to His disciples, saying: TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT, FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT, WHICH WILL BE POURED OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.
Option C	Look, we pray, upon the oblation of Your Church and, recognizing the sacrificial Victim by whose death You willed to reconcile us to Yourself, grant that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of Your Son and filled with His Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ. May He make of us an eternal offering to You, so that we may obtain an inheritance with Your elect, especially with the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with Your blessed Apostles and glorious Martyrs (with Saint N.: the Saint of the day or Patron Saint) and with all the Saints, on whose constant intercession in Your presence we rely for unfailing help.