

Virtual Confirmation Retreat Outline

Ordinary Holiness: Following Christ & Living Out His Mission

Created by the Office for Evangelization in the Diocese of Richmond

Morning Session (approximately 2 hours):

- 10:00am – Music & Opening Slide
- 10:05am – Introductions & Rules for the Day & Opening Prayer
- 10:10am - Large Group Game: Name That Sound
 - Play different sounds, and have participants guess what the sound is in the chat. Best practice is to play 2 rounds with different themes (such as animal sounds, famous movie clips, etc.), with 10 sounds in each round.
- 10:20am – Choose 2 People to Pray for
 - Have everyone look through all of the Zoom screens and pick 2 people to secretly intercede for during the retreat.
- 10:25am – Small Group #1
 1. Go around the group and introduces yourselves by saying your name, your school, and your current favorite song.
 2. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest, how much would you say your Catholic faith matters to you? Why do you feel this way?
 3. If you have extra time in your group, discuss the following: When you are having a bad day, what is one thing or person that always helps makes you happy again?
- 10:35am – Talk Prep: What to look for
 - The leader should introduce 2-4 questions for the participants to look for answers to in the talk they are about to hear; this helps everyone actively pay attention. These can be fun questions about the speaker or serious questions about the content, but make sure that all questions have a specific answer.
- 10:40am - Pre-Recorded or Live Talk (20min)
 - Title: The Call to Holiness & How God Speaks into Our Lives
 - The Scripture Passage: The Call of the Disciples, Matthew 4:18-22
 - A Personal Story: When was it in your life that you first recognized a desire to know God more? Was it another person who brought this up for you, or was it through a particular event or situation? Tell us the story of how God called you to know Him more, when you came alive.
 - The Pope Quote: “It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you.” – Saint Pope John Paul II
- 11:00am – Journal Questions
 - Jesus is the one we seek when we dream of happiness! Close your eyes and picture Jesus sitting next to you. What words or phrases would you use to describe Jesus?
 - The words “ordinary holiness” sound like they don’t go together on first glance, but yet they totally make sense within our faith as we strive for sainthood. What does the phrase “ordinary holiness” mean to you?
- 11:05am - Live Testimony by Adult or Confirmed Teen (10min)
 - Tell the story of why you are Catholic and choose to follow Christ every day.
 - What helps you to continue to live out your Catholic faith and the mission of the Church? Things to consider including in your testimony:
 - How does the reality of the Eucharist play a role in your story?
 - Is there a saint who you personally look to as an example? Who?
 - Where do you see/hear the Lord in your everyday life?

- 11:15am – Small Group #2
 1. Open in prayer with an Our Father.
 2. Read Matthew 4:18-22 as a group. These ordinary people decided to make a huge change to their lives and to follow Jesus. What do you think went through their minds as they made that decision? Why do you think they said yes to following Him?
 3. If you had to pick 3 words to describe your relationship with God right now, what three words would you pick? Why?
 4. Would you call yourself a disciple of Jesus right now? What characteristics make for a good disciple?
 5. If you could pick anywhere in your house to be your daily prayer spot, where would it be? Is it a sunny spot, a spot in your room, a spot outside? Take your device there to show your group.
- 11:35am – Prayer Experience: Ignatian Contemplation of Acts 1:6-12 and/or Acts 2:1-12
- 11:45am – Explain Lunch Break Activity and Pray Grace Together!
 - A reminder to come on promptly at 12:55pm

Lunch Break:

- Activity: Text 2 people and ask them for 1 way that you can pray for them today. These can be friends, family members, or anyone else you are connected to!
- Suggestion: Encourage the participants to get outside as they would at an in-person retreat!

Afternoon Session (approximately 2 hours):

- 1:00pm – Music & Opening Slide
- 1:03pm – Welcome back
- 1:05pm – Poll: Who Said It, A Saint or A Celebrity?
 - Create a zoom poll with 10 questions. Each question should start with the quote from either a saint or a celebrity, and then there should be 2 possible answers: the name of the person who actually said it and the name of a person who did not say it. (For example, if Saint John Paul II said it, he would be one answer, and a celebrity's name would be the other answer.) After all have played, close the poll and read through the right answers!
- 1:15pm – Journal Questions
 - Who is a saint that you really like? Why do you find them inspiring?
 - If you don't know any, take the next 5 minutes to research one about a topic you like by Googling "patron saint of ____" and fill in the blank with something you like (sports, cooking, music, artists, mission trips, the internet, etc.).
 - If you could be the patron saint of something, what would it be and why?
- 1:20pm – Large Group Game (intro: 4 minutes to build a saint costume at home)
- 1:25pm – Small Group #3
 1. Pray as a group for the intentions that each person collected. Start with the Sign of the Cross, then ask one person to share their first prayer request. At the end of their prayer request, they should say "we pray to the Lord" and everyone else should respond with "Lord, hear our prayer." When they have said all of their prayer requests, they should pick the next person to go. Continue until all people in the group have had a chance to share.
 2. Everyone goes around and tells the group about their saint costume.

3. If you have extra time in your group, discuss the following: If you could change one thing about the world, what would you change?

- 1:40pm – Talk Prep: What to look for
 - The leader should introduce 2-4 questions for the participants to look for answers to in the talk they are about to hear; this helps everyone actively pay attention. These can be fun questions about the speaker or serious questions about the content, but make sure that all questions have a specific answer.
- 1:45pm - Pre-Recorded or Live Talk (20min)
 - Title: Living the Call to Holiness with the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit
 - The Scripture Passage: A Tree is Known by Its Fruit, Luke 4:43-45
 - A Personal Story: When were you trying to make an important decision in your life? How did you discern that choice with inspiration from the Holy Spirit? What was challenging about the discernment process, and what good fruit came from the choice you made?
 - The Pope Quote: “The world offers you comfort, but you were not made for comfort; you were made for greatness.” – Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI
- 2:05pm – Journal Questions
 - The call to holiness really means to be great. Write down the name of one person who you would say is “great”. What characteristics do they have that make them great?
 - The fruits of the Holy Spirit are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, generosity, faithfulness, modesty, chastity, and self-control. Which of these fruits do you feel like God might be calling you to focus on in your life this year? Why?
- 2:10pm – Live Testimony by Adult or Confirmed Teen (10min) (Consider a vocations representative)
 - Tell the story of why you are Catholic and choose to follow Christ every day.
 - What helps you to continue to live out your Catholic faith and the mission of the Church?
Things to consider including in your testimony:
 - How does the reality of the Eucharist play a role in your story?
 - Is there a saint who you personally look to as an example? Who?
 - Where do you see/hear the Lord in your everyday life?
 - (If you have a vocations representative) Beyond our general call to holiness, how do you hear a call to the priesthood or religious life?
- 2:20pm – Small Group #4
 1. Open in prayer with a Hail Mary.
 2. Read Luke 4:43-45 as a group. A tree is known by the fruit it produces, and a disciple is known by the fruits of the Holy Spirit they are sharing with the world. Do you feel like you have been producing more good fruit or bad fruit? What is one thing you can do to produce more good fruit every day, even in ordinary life?
 3. What is your favorite story about a saint? Which fruits of the Holy Spirit did they live out in their life? If you have something that reminds you of a saint in your house (a picture, a book, etc.), take your device there to show your group.
 4. Would you rather live comfortably or live greatly? What is the difference?
 5. At the beginning of today, you answered the question “on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest, how much would you say your Catholic faith matters to you?” How would you answer that question now?
- 2:40pm – Prayer Experience: Have participants post their favorite/Confirmation saint in the chat. Then the retreat leader will lead a litany with the *Come Holy Spirit* prayer to end the retreat.
- 2:50pm – Closing Announcements

DIocese OF RICHMOND VIRTUAL CONFIRMATION RETREAT

THEME: ORDINARY HOLINESS

TALK DESCRIPTION #1

Talk #1: The Call to Holiness & How God Speaks into Our Lives

Length: 15-20 minutes

Where this happens in the zoom retreat: This is the first of two talks on our “Ordinary Holiness” Virtual Confirmation Retreat! The first talk is “The Call to Holiness & How God Speaks into Our Lives,” and the second talk is “Living that Call with the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit.” The teens will have had a game and an introductory small group time before this, and after this they will have a moment to journal before hearing a personal witness story from a priest or youth minister.

Summary: Do you know who you are and whose you are? Do you know your identity and purpose? Do you know that Jesus is the one you seek and that He is calling you to holiness and life with Him?

The disciples all had an experience of Jesus calling them to make a drastic change in their ordinary lives and to follow Him. Why would they do that? These young people in their teens and twenties had ordinary plans and goals for their lives, and then Jesus walked onto the scene. When they heard His voice speaking to them and inviting them to follow Him, something came alive in them. They responded to His call immediately because they knew that life with Him was where they were meant to be. It was not ordinary to drop everything and follow Christ, but it was the most natural thing for them to do! Jesus spoke to the deepest desire of their hearts and invited them on an adventure to become who they were created to be and fulfill their purpose.

God made us to love and to be loved. He is calling each of us to holiness, to experience life with Him and to become more like Him. Though there are many saints with stories that sound extraordinary, they were ultimately normal people like you and me, people who were trying their best to be holy and listen for the Lord in their lives. Like the disciples, they heard Him and followed Him – and they became who they were created to be.

As the speaker, make sure to include:

- **At the Start of Your Talk:** Introduce yourself (name, current job and vocation, and your connection to the Diocese of Richmond)
- **The Scripture Passage:** The Call of the Disciples, Matthew 4:18-22
- **A Personal Story:** When was it in your life that you first recognized a desire to know God more? Was it another person who brought this up for you, or was it through a particular event or situation? Tell us the story of how God called you to know Him more, when you came alive.
- **The Pope Quote:** “It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you.” – Saint Pope John Paul II

DIocese OF RICHMOND VIRTUAL CONFIRMATION RETREAT

THEME: ORDINARY HOLINESS

TALK DESCRIPTION #2

Talk #2: Living the Call to Holiness with the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit

Length: 15-20 minutes

Where this happens in the zoom retreat: This is the second of two talks on our “Ordinary Holiness” Virtual Confirmation Retreat! The first talk is “The Call to Holiness & How God Speaks into Our Lives,” and the second talk is “Living the Call to Holiness with the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit.” The teens will have had a break for lunch and then returned to play a game where they dress up as their favorite saint, and after this they will have a moment to journal before hearing a personal witness story from a priest or youth minister.

Summary: Did you know we are a Church full of imperfect people who became saints? Moses had a stutter, Noah was a drunk, Thomas doubted, Peter denied Jesus – and yet, something inspired them to keep trying to be holy and follow the Lord’s call. We are all called to holiness, but it is only sustainable with the Holy Spirit guiding our way and helping us to make good and holy choices each day. With the Holy Spirit, we can live out the mission that we are given as a Church to bring the Good News to the world!

Jesus told the disciples a story about how a tree is known by its fruit. Are you bearing good fruit into the world out of a store of goodness, or are you bearing bad fruit out of a store of evil? The Holy Spirit has 12 fruits: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, generosity, faithfulness, modesty, chastity, and self-control. When you are feeling lost as you make important decisions in your life, pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance. Which path will lead to you bearing the most good fruit into the world?

The world is going to think that you are crazy when you make choices that it would not, when you treat people with love and dignity even when they are against you. The world is not going to understand when you stand up for the unborn child who you will never meet at the March for Life, or treat the person who shared a rumor about you on Snapchat with respect by commenting something nice and sincere on their Instagram picture – but that is what ordinary holiness is, when ordinary people do the extraordinary and live out the mission to follow Christ’s example and proclaim the Gospel with their everyday lives.

As the speaker, make sure to include:

- **At the Start of Your Talk:** Introduce yourself (name, current job and vocation, and your connection to the Diocese of Richmond)
- **The Scripture Passage:** A Tree is Known by Its Fruit, Luke 6:43-45
- **A Personal Story:** When were you trying to make an important decision in your life? How did you discern that choice with inspiration from the Holy Spirit? What was challenging about the discernment process, and what good fruit came from the choice you made?
- **The Pope Quote:** “The world offers you comfort, but you were not made for comfort; you were made for greatness.” – Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI