



**Confirmation Preparation  
Personal Spiritual Plan  
Meeting Guide:  
The 4 Pillars of Formation**

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# Personal Spiritual Plan Overview

See Confirmation Handbook for due date

## What Is a Personal Spiritual Plan?

A Personal Spiritual Plan (PSP) is a way for candidates, sponsors, and parents to:

1. Intentionally grow in relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church.
2. Have meaningful conversations with loving Christian adults about faith in Jesus and what it means to follow him.

## Why Are We Doing PSPs this year as part of Confirmation Preparation?

Studies from the past twenty years have confirmed what the Church teaches: honest and loving conversations about faith with parents and other adult mentors are key to passing on the faith to our young people. Our PSPs are meant to help candidates, parents, and families have good conversations about life, faith, God, and the Church. (And practical experience has taught us that it helps adults, too!)

## How Does a PSP Work?

A PSP consists of at least four meetings focused on essential pillars of Christian life:

1. Character: Healthy and holy habits, attitudes, and relationships
2. Intellectual life: Learning who God is, who we are, and how we're made to live
3. Spirituality: Healthy and meaningful personal and shared prayer
4. Pastoral mission: Sharing the love of Jesus with others in word and action

At the end of each meeting, candidates, parents, and sponsors set and share a personal goal to apply to their daily lives until the next meeting.

## What do we do at the meetings?

Each meeting includes prayer, shared learning, and discussion about the pillar in question. See the detailed meeting guides below for more details.

## Who Should Be Involved?

We ask that at least one parent and the candidate's sponsor or another spiritual mentor participate in the PSP process with each candidate. Because we want these loving, Christian, adult disciples to encourage and model what it means to grow in a relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church, we ask that the parent(s) and sponsor/mentor each develop and share their own PSP along with their candidate.

## Do I Need to Turn Anything In?

Yes! To help keep one another accountable, candidates should complete a meeting log after each of the four meetings. You can follow [this link](#) or visit our [Confirmation webpage](#) to access the simple form. All four logs are due at the time listed in the Confirmation Handbook for this year.

# Personal Spiritual Plan Meeting Guide

## **BEFORE MEETING I - SET THE STAGE**

Let's be real. This Personal Spiritual Plan thing might be a bit...different. To put it mildly. To put it not so mildly, it might be weird, intimidating, and really challenging. The whole thing is about bringing something really personal, really important, and really vulnerable into the light along with two other people who are really close to you. We're going to ask you to talk about your relationship with God and what it's like. Not what you think we want it to look like, not what your parents want it to look like, not what it ought to be like. What it IS like today.

For a lot of us, that's...different. So before you start, do a bit of a warmup. Here's how:

1. Pray about this. Be honest with God about how you feel and what you think. If you think this is a really weird and embarrassing thing to do, tell him that. If you're kind of excited to talk to someone you really respect about important life stuff, tell him that.
2. Candidates, write down 2-3 adults and one of your parents who you want to have real and honest conversations with this year. Write down why you've picked these adults.
3. Parents, review this list with your candidate(s). Don't judge it, don't revise it, don't criticize it. Just hear it.
4. Parents and candidates, call or meet up with the first adult on your list. Tell him or her why you're calling, why you thought of him or her specifically, and ask if that person would be willing to meet with you and your parent about 4 times this year.
5. Set up the meeting times and locations. If this person is out of town, set up the virtual method of meeting. Send this outline to your mentor, so he or she can prepare if needed.
6. After your person has said yes, write him or her a thank you note saying how grateful you are for his or her time.

Finally, this outline is supposed to be like a springboard: it's meant to help you launch these conversations well. But don't feel like you're obligated to march through everything we've put in here. This PSP process is about YOUR relationship with God. Not ours. If you get stuck on a topic or are more interested in one part than another, spend more time there. The best thing you can do is pay attention to the fruits of the Holy Spirit in these conversations. When do you experience peace, love, joy, hope, kindness, generosity, more self-control, more faithfulness because of these conversations? Those are indicators of God's presence in your life. Where do you experience the opposites of those? Those are signs of operating outside of God's presence in your life. Pay attention to the signs.

We're praying for you as you start out this great adventure!



## MEETING I - CHARACTER FORMATION

This first meeting focuses on character formation. Character is tough to define, but it involves your personal habits, attitudes, and relationships. It's about how to live a life that thrives, a real life, a life to the full. So what that look like? Who is doing it today? And how do we do it in our own lives? Let's dive in.

### Meeting Objectives:

- To talk about what a good life really looks like
- To name key character traits that are necessary for a good life
- To make a specific goal to grow in one of those traits

### Who should be there:

- Candidate, Parent, Mentor

### What to bring:

- This outline
- 3 Bibles
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church (available online [here](#))

### What to do in the meeting:

- Check in: This meeting is all about you guys. So how are you?
  - Ask a fun question (Ex: When you were in 7th/8th grade, who did you hang out with? What stressed you out most? What was the most exciting part of your typical week? Who was your biggest crush?)
- Pray with the Bible: God speaks to us personally through Sacred Scripture.
  - Read Wisdom 8: 5-7 aloud, slowly, two times. Listen for a short phrase or word that stands out to you from this passage.
  - What stands out to you? Why?
- Story time:
  - Take time for each person to share a story about one or more of the following:
    - What is the hardest you've laughed in the last year?
    - What's the most afraid you've been in recent memory?
    - Describe a time when you have felt incredibly alive.

*Meeting outline continued on the next page*

## What to do in the meeting, continued:

- Discussion:
  - Who are 2-3 people that have heavily influenced you? How? What do you respect most about these people?
  - Finish this sentence: "A life that thrives means....". Why did you say that?
  - Parents and mentors: what important qualities do you see in this candidate?
  - Candidates: what important character traits do you see in these adults?
- Read the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 1803-1809.
  - What does this say virtue is?
  - What are the four cardinal virtues?
  - In your own words, what does each cardinal virtue mean? Can you think of an example?
  - Do you see these virtues in the people you talked about earlier? Do you see any other virtues in them?
  - Which of these virtues comes easiest for you? Which is hardest?
- Go back to the "Meeting Objectives" - did you do what you set out to do?
- Set a SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-related)
  - How can you grow in virtue between now and your next meeting?  
(Example goal: I will seek to be more prudent by only watching 30 minutes per day of Youtube videos so that I can spend more time with family and friends.)
- Set the time and day of your next meeting! Shoot for 2-4 weeks in the future.
- Close in prayer
  - Pray out loud together in your own words.
  - If you need it, a helpful format for this kind of prayer is the ACTS acronym:
    - Adoration (say out loud who God is: "God, you are so good.")
    - Contrition (acknowledge that you are in need of his mercy: "You are so patient with us. Forgive us for our bad choices and the habits those create.")
    - Thanksgiving (Thank him! "God, you have given us so many gifts.")
    - Supplication (Ask for his help: "God, I want to be more who you made me to be. Please help me.")
- Candidates, don't forget to log your [SMART goal here!](#)

## MEETING II - INTELLECTUAL FORMATION

The last meeting was all about how to live out a real life, a life that thrives. This meeting focuses on those fundamental truths that make that life possible: Who God is, who you are, and why we're here. What do you believe about God, Jesus, the good life, or faith? What do you struggle with? And what are your questions?

### Meeting Objectives:

- To talk about our deeply held beliefs about God, people, and why we're here.
- To be honest about struggles, questions, and confusion.
- To identify some sources that can help us grow in understanding.

### Who should be there:

- Candidate, Parent, Mentor

### What to bring:

- 3 Bibles

### What to do in the meeting:

- Check in: How are you?
  - Ask for highs and lows since you met last.
  - Ask how the SMART Goal went from the last meeting.
  - Ask a fun question about school. (Ex: What was your favorite class in school? Who was your favorite teacher? What was your worst subject?)
- Pray with the Bible:
  - Read John 15:5-12 aloud, prayerfully listening to what God has to say. What stands out to you? Why?
- Story Time:
  - Share some stories about times when:
    - You had a big "Aha!" moment about God, Jesus, Church, or life.
    - A time when you struggled with or were confused by something someone said about who God is and who we are.
- Discussion
  - Who really helps you know God better? How do they do that?
  - Do you have any practices that help you know God better?
  - What do you think are obstacles to you knowing God better?

*Meeting outline continued on the next page*

What to do in the meeting, continued:

- Read through the following questions and...
  - Mark at least two that stand out to you.
  - Talk about the answers you have heard to them, and your own experience, challenges, and understanding of those answers.
  - Find some primary sources for what the Church has to say about them. (If you're stumped, some good places to start looking are the Catechism, Lifeteen, and Catholic Answers.)
  - What are your own questions? (Everyone has them. If you can't identify yours right away, start with what you find confusing or irritating. That can be a prompting from God to dig a bit deeper.)

Questions about other religions and beliefs:

*Does it matter if someone has faith or not?*

*What about people from other faiths?*

Questions about God:

*Is God actually real, as in not just in our heads?*

*How do we know what God is really like, not just what people say?*

*Is Jesus really God?*

Questions about the Bible:

*Is everything that happened in the Bible true?*

*Why does God sound different in the Old Testament?*

Questions about morality:

*Is there a right and wrong that's true for everybody?*

*What makes something right or wrong?*

Questions about Catholicism and Jesus:

*Why does the Church focus on Mass and sacraments so much?*

*What does the Church say about other Christians?*

*Can you be holy and still like normal stuff?*

- Review the "Meeting Objectives" - did you do what you set out to do?
- Set a SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-related)
  - How can you grow in understanding between now and your next meeting? (Ex: I want to know more about what the Church says about people who are gay or trans. I will find 3 sources that explain the Church's teaching and then talk to my parents. )
- Set the time and day of your next meeting! Shoot for 2-4 weeks in the future.
- Close in prayer. Remember to use your own words as part of it!
- Candidates, don't forget to log your [SMART goal here!](#)



## MEETING III- SPIRITUAL FORMATION

This meeting focuses on your prayer life. Prayer is at the very center of our relationship with God. But it's also hard to talk about or know what to do sometimes. What has your experience of prayer been? What could it be?

### Meeting Objectives:

- To talk about your experiences of prayer (good and bad)
- To name the goal of prayer and some common obstacles to prayer
- To set a goal for growth in prayer

### Who should be there:

- Candidate, Parent, Mentor

### What to bring:

- 3 Bibles
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church (available online [here](#))

### What to do in the meeting:

- Check in:
  - What are some highs and lows since the last meeting?
  - How did your SMART goal go from the last meeting? Do you have any follow-up insights or questions? Talk about them together.
  - Ask a fun question about prayer (Ex: What is the most bored you have been in church? What has been one of the best times of prayer you can recall? Do you have any funny memories about prayer?)
- Pray with the Bible:
  - Read Luke 18: 10-14 out loud, prayerfully listening to what God is saying. What stands out to you? Why?
- Story Time:
  - Name one of your closest friends. What do you appreciate about him or her? How did you get to be so close?
  - Share a story about your own prayer life, both something good and something hard/boring.
- Discuss:
  - Who do you know who seems to have a great prayer life? Why do you say that?

*Meeting outline continued on the next page*

### What to do in the meeting, continued:

- In your own words, what do you think prayer is?
- Do you pray? When? What do you usually say or do when you pray?
- What is hardest for you about prayer? What do you like best about it?
- Do you think prayer really makes a difference?
  
- Read CCC paragraphs 2562-2564
  - Where does this say prayer comes from?
  - What does this passage say about the heart of a person?
  
- Read CCC paragraphs 2650-2660
  - What does this say about how we learn to pray?
  - What are the "wellsprings" of prayer here?
  - Do you connect more with one wellspring over another? Why?
  
- Review the "Meeting Objectives" - did you do what you set out to do?
  
- Set a SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-related)
  - How can you grow in your prayer life between now and your next meeting? (Ex: I want to do a daily examen before I go to bed. I will text my mentor 3 things I'm grateful for, 1 thing I'm sorry for, and 1 thing to focus on for tomorrow each night for one week.)
  - Bonus: this is a great opportunity to try a new type of prayer together! Consider setting a time to go to Eucharistic Adoration, Confession, pray a rosary together, or visit one of the many beautiful churches in our area!
  - Double bonus: for those who want to hear more about how to pray, check out CCC 2700-2719. For those who want to hear more about struggles with prayer, check out CCC 2725-2745
  
- Set the time and day of your next meeting! Shoot for 2-4 weeks in the future.
  
- Close by praying out loud, together, in your own words.
  
- Candidates, don't forget to log your [SMART goal here!](#)

## MEETING IV - PASTORAL FORMATION

This section focuses on how you share the Gospel with others in action and speech. Jesus' final command to his disciples was, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Mt. 28: 19-20). It's actually impossible to follow Jesus without telling others about him. And that can be intimidating. So let's talk about it.

### Meeting objectives:

- Talk about Jesus' command to make disciples
- Identify what sounds good and hard about that to us
- Set a goal for growing in our work to share Jesus with other people

### Who should be there:

- Candidate, Parent, Mentor

### What to bring:

- 3 Bibles
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church (available online [here](#))

### What to do in the meeting:

- Check in
  - What are some highs and lows since the last meeting?
  - How did your SMART goal go from the last meeting? Do you have any follow-up insights or questions? Talk about them together.
  - Ask a fun question about being outside of your comfort zone. (Ex: "What's a time when you were embarrassed? Can you think of a time when you had to do something that scared you?")
- Pray with the Bible
  - Read Mt. 28: 16-20 out loud, prayerfully listening to what God is saying. What stands out to you? Why?
- Story Time
  - Have you ever seen someone talk to other people about Jesus in normal daily life (at school, sports, hanging out with friends, or at work)? What was it like? Did you like it? (It's ok to say no! Sometimes people with good intentions don't always go about things in loving/healthy ways.)

*Meeting outline continued on the next page*

## What to do in the meeting, continued:

- Discuss
  - The Church calls the process of making disciples "evangelization." Do you think we should still evangelize today? Why or why not?
  - Often, people will not hesitate to share about a great movie or a restaurant they visited, but will hesitate to do the same about Jesus. Why is that? What's the difference? (It's ok to say there is/should be a difference!)
  - What are some of the negative things people associate with evangelization?
  - Jesus calls his message and saving work "Good News." What are some of the positive reasons for evangelization?
  - What would it actually look like for you to evangelize at school/work/with friends in a way that is not weird, overbearing, or wrong in some way?
- Read CCC paragraphs 839-845
  - What does this say about our relationship as Christians with people who are not Christian?
  - Does that mean that every religion is equally true?
- Read CCC paragraphs 846-848
  - Why does the Church say there is no salvation outside the Church?
  - What does this say about people who have never heard about Jesus?
- Read CCC paragraphs 849-856
  - Why does the Church go out on mission?
  - Where does this say salvation is found?
  - What does this say about those who are not yet followers of Christ?
- Conversations about evangelization tend to make people both excited and irritated. Take a minute each and share your internal response to this discussion. (Ex: "It makes me feel like I have to force people to agree." "It makes me excited that the Church really wants respectful dialogue.")
- Set a SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-related)
  - How can you intentionally evangelize this week?
  - Bonus: If you have some big hesitations or questions, a quick online search will find a ton of great Catholic resources on evangelization!
- Plan a way to celebrate!
  - This is your last official meeting! Celebrate this time together!
  - Consider how you can continue to have intentional conversations about faith with people you love and respect. Jesus sent his apostles out in pairs for a reason!
- Close by praying out loud, together, in your own words.
- Candidates, don't forget to log your SMART goal!