

my **Sacramental Journey**

CONFIRMATION

Parent Guide

Supporting parents as they
journey with their child in
preparing for the
Sacrament of Confirmation

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*"You meet the Holy Spirit.
He fulfils your heart.
He wants to be strength for your life and your
inner guide.
The Holy Spirit wants to continue in you what
he started at baptism."*

WELCOME!

Welcome to this time of preparing your child for the Sacrament of Confirmation!

In the Archdiocese of Brisbane the approach to sacramental preparation is 'family-centred' and 'parish-based'. This means that, as parents, you have the most important job of all in preparing your child for the sacraments. Your children learn about living as part of God's family by living in your family – the chats you have in the car, the grace you say at dinner time, the way you love and care for each other. The relationship you share is the most potent and powerful learning relationship there is! Does that mean you have to be an expert in everything? No! You are the first and best educators of your children because of who you are and the relationship you share with them. Throughout this sacramental preparation there will be many ways in which you as parents will need to engage with, support and encourage your child. This will look different from family to family, so we encourage you to be creative and enjoy the opportunity to spend time together as you both discover more about how much God loves us all.

Of course, you are not alone in this! There is a team of people here in your parish or community who help by facilitating this time of preparation, providing information and ideas, running sessions and generally sharing this time with you and your child. Each member of this team is passionate about sharing the love of God with children and it's a joy to be a part of this time with your family.

A LITTLE ABOUT THE SACRAMENTS

It's easy to forget the extremely close link between the Bible and the sacraments. When Jesus walked on the earth, people could be in his presence, they could feel his nearness, see him, hear him, touch him and be touched by him. They could experience him through all their senses.

It's a little different now! Jesus died and rose to life again in a new way, but those of us who live today don't miss out because we have the sacraments.

What we read about in the Bible; Jesus feeding people, blessing them, healing them, forgiving people, talking to them and teaching them, we experience today through the rich signs and symbols of the Sacraments. The sacraments are special moments in a life-long relationship we share with God and the Church community through which Jesus personally blesses us, feeds us, heals us, forgives us, talks to us and strengthens us.



The Catholic Church celebrates seven sacraments altogether: the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist; the Sacraments of Healing – Penance/Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick; and the Sacraments at the Service of Communion [at the service of others] – Matrimony and Holy Orders.

At this time in their life, the sacraments that are most important for your child are the Sacraments of Initiation.

At Baptism, your child first received the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, they became a child of God and a member of the Church.

Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, your child will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit so that they can take their place in the mission of the Church and do the work of God in the world.

Through the Sacrament of Eucharist, your child will be fed and sustained by receiving Jesus himself in the bread and wine. Each time they receive the Eucharist, they will be united with the whole Church as we encounter the mystery of God's great love each time we celebrate the Mass together.



PREPARING FOR THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

And for now, you are preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

To help with this, Evangelisation Brisbane has prepared the **My Sacramental Journey: Confirmation activity book**. The topics in this activity book include: All about Me, Baptism Hunt, In the beginning: the Holy Spirit in Creation, Who is Jesus?, God sends the Holy Spirit, and the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Confirmation activity book is accompanied by this Parent Guide which provides background information and further ideas for you to try at home.

Each topic in the Parent Guide includes: Background information and important scriptures from the Bible; as well as activities, family fun ideas and ways to pray together at home.

Together, these resources are designed to be a springboard for conversations and engagement as you accompany your child through this time of preparation for Confirmation.



OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

The Bible is used on a number of occasions throughout the children's preparation. The Contemporary English Version is most commonly used in the Children's Lectionary (the book of scripture readings used in children's masses and children's Liturgy of the Word on Sundays). The New Revised Standard Version is used in the Eucharist activity book. Both of these are appropriate choices for use in the context of sacramental preparation. Bible gateway is a helpful resource for accessing the scriptures online biblegateway.com.

The **Flame of Faith** website was produced by Evangelisation Brisbane to support families and sacramental teams, especially during this time of preparation. The site includes FAQs, and videos explaining each of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, and Penance flameoffaith.org.au

Our Family Prays is a resource produced by Liturgy Brisbane which outlines the Sacraments of Initiation and prayers you could use at home liturgybrisbane.net.au.

The **YOUCAT for Kids** is based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and reproduced for children. It is particularly helpful for adults as they find ways to articulate concepts of faith in child-friendly ways freedompublishingbooks.com.au



Lastly, often accompanying our children through sacramental preparation can stir up questions for us as adults about our own faith and relationship with God. That's a great thing! **More with Jesus**, a 30-day faith exploration booklet can help Catholics reflect of the significance of their baptism. For information about More with Jesus, other adult faith resources and events or to talk to someone about deepening your faith, just contact the Evangelisation Brisbane office on 3324 3440 or formation@bne.catholic.net.au

A FINAL WORD

We pray that this is a blessed time of preparation with your child. May the conversations, prayers and activities you share draw you closer to each other and may you both encounter God's love in a new and inspiring way!

Finally, whatever your involvement in your parish community has been in the past, we extend a very warm welcome to enter in even more. As Pope Francis says, the Church is a 'family of families', and it is more wonderful with you as part of it! If you'd like to know more about how do get involved or if you have any questions about Sacramental Preparation for your child please contact the team in your Parish.

God bless!

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TOPIC 1

All about Me

Activity

In this topic, the children design a t-shirt that is all about them and the people who are important to them e.g. family, friends, and parish priest. They might choose to do this through drawing or by cutting and pasting photos or other images.

As you talk with your child about the design on the t-shirt, affirm your child for the unique and precious gift they are to you and to the rest of their family and friends.



Through your affirmation as parents, your child experiences being known and loved by God. As you talk with them watch their reaction. Do you notice how loved they feel? Can you feel that love too? The Bible says that “God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them” (1 John 4:16). Make the most of this time with your child knowing that God is with you.

Background Information

Developmentally, children of this age are primarily concerned with themselves and those who are close to them. With this in mind, it is fitting to begin this time of preparation with the children themselves.

Through Baptism, children are welcomed into the faith community and claimed for Christ. God’s love for them is immense and personal, and primarily encountered through the love expressed by you their parents. This page gives children an opportunity to express those things that are important to them and you an opportunity to affirm the uniqueness of your child, their dignity as children of God and God’s love for them as individuals.

Notes

Use this column to keep notes, ideas you may want to share with your child or things they say and reflect on that you don’t want to forget.

Family Prayer Idea

Help your child set up a prayer space in your home. All you really need is a cloth, a candle and a cross to start with, but your child could put other things in there that help them make their prayer space special.

For this topic, you could place a photo of each member of your family in the prayer space.

Invite the whole family to gather around the prayer space. You may like to light a single candle or a small candle to go with each of the family photos (battery operated candles are a great option for families with small children).

Together say thank you prayers to God for each member of the family. For example, 'thank you God for Ben', 'thank you God for Mary', 'thank you God for Mum', 'thank you God for Dad', etc.

Notes



TOPIC 2

Baptism Hunt

Aim

Through this topic, your child will learn that Baptism is the first Sacrament of Initiation and have an opportunity to explore their own Baptism. Together with you, your child can look through mementoes from their Baptism, e.g. their baptism candle, certificate, clothes, photos or videos.

As you share the memories and stories from their Baptism, your children's understanding of Baptism increases as they revisit some of the symbols and moments in the sacrament. Their identity as a 'child of God' and experience of God's love is affirmed as they engage in this activity with you as parents.



Notes

Background Information

Baptism is the first Sacrament of Initiation. It is “the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments” (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC], 1993, para. 1213).

The Church teaches that the seven sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony) “touch all the stages and important moments of the Christian life; they give birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian's life of faith. There is thus a certain resemblance between the stages of natural life and the stages of the spiritual life” (CCC, 1993, para. 1210).

At Baptism, we are welcomed into God's Church. We receive the Holy Spirit so that we can be formed as a child of God who continues to grow in relationship with God and others. "God adopts us as children and makes us a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit" (Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2015, introduction). At Baptism, we become a Christian – a child of God called to be a missionary-disciple who shares in God's life and continues the work of Jesus in the world.

For most Catholics, it is their parents who chose to have their child baptised as infants. As part of that, parents make a commitment to raise their child to know God and to practise the Catholic faith. As their parents, you play the primary role in your child's formation as they grow up and learn to live out their Baptismal call in their everyday life and relationships.

Family Fun

Watch the Flame of Faith baptism video together <http://flameoffaith.org.au>. This video outlines what happens during the sacrament of Baptism and describes the symbols of Baptism and their meaning.

Talk about your child's Baptism and look at videos and photos from the celebration. Share memories and stories from the occasion.

Take a small bottle with a lid with you the next time you visit your local church and collect some holy water to use at home.

Have your child use the middle pages of their MSJ: Confirmation activity book (pages 8-9) to write a story, draw a story board or display some photos from their Baptism.

Family Prayer Ideas

Invite the whole family to gather around your prayer space and light a candle. Use the holy water you collected from the church to trace the Sign of the Cross on each other's forehead, saying, 'You belong to Jesus' or 'At your Baptism, you were baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' Be sure to have the children share in tracing the Sign of the Cross on your [parent's] forehead as well.



TOPIC 3

In the Beginning: The Holy Spirit in Creation

Aim

Through this topic your child will learn that the Holy Spirit, with the Father and the Son, is one God (known as the Trinity).

They learn that the Holy Spirit has been present and active from the beginning by exploring the first mention of the Holy Spirit in the Bible in the story of Creation (Genesis 1:1-2). The Holy Spirit is God's personal presence here with us.

While there are many images in the Bible that help us to understand more about the Holy Spirit, you will explore one in particular, the image of wind, which is found in this story in Genesis. Through the image of wind your child will learn that, although we cannot see the Holy Spirit, we can see the effect of the Holy Spirit in ourselves and in the world around us.

Activities, such as playing with a kite or pinwheel, provide opportunities for you to talk with your child about the Holy Spirit. While activities, such as the prayer, provide opportunities for you and your child to 'feel' the Holy Spirit and to experience God's presence with you.

Background Information

The Holy Spirit, with the Father and the Son, is one God.

The Holy Spirit is God, just as the Father is God and the Son is God. The Holy Spirit is the love that flows between the Father and the Son – the love of God, which gives life to everything. This is known as the Trinity, it is a mystery!

The Holy Spirit was active at the very beginning of Creation (Genesis 1:1-2) and has continued to be active throughout all of history. In the book of Genesis the Hebrew word used for the Holy Spirit is 'ruah' which means vital breath, wind, air and spirit – this gives us a beautiful insight into the Holy Spirit as the very breath of God who permeates all of creation and history.



Notes

Further in the Old Testament, we read about how the Holy Spirit came upon the prophets and spoke through them to the people. Through the Holy Spirit, Mary conceived and became the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-28). Just as the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus when he was baptised by John in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:14), the Holy Spirit also came upon the disciples at Pentecost, empowering them to become bold witnesses to Jesus (Act 2:1-41). The Holy Spirit is constantly at work in the Church. In a personal way at our Baptism, we receive the Holy Spirit who makes a home in us and forms us as children of God. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Holy Spirit gives us the same grace that the disciples received at Pentecost, strengthening us so that we can take our place in the mission of the Church.

Scripture

The story of Creation.

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the waters.”(Genesis 1:1-2) Read the scripture and talk about which word in this sentence tells us that the Holy Spirit is present at the beginning of creation. What is the image of the Holy Spirit?

Family Fun Ideas

As a family, play with a pinwheel or fly a kite and talk about how we cannot see the wind but we can see the effect of the wind. In a similar way, we cannot see the Holy Spirit but we can see the effect of the Holy Spirit all around and within us – in the plants, trees, animals, water, sun, moon, and stars; in the people we live and play with other people we don't know; and in ourselves.

Use your Bible skills to find the scripture from Genesis 1:1-2.

Activity

Invite your child to write a story or poem about flying their kite or pinwheel and add some photos or drawings to it.

Family Prayer

Invite the whole family to gather around your prayer space and light a candle. Pray the prayer found at the bottom of page 7 in your Confirmation activity book.

You might also like to try a simple Holy Spirit prayer. Sit comfortably and simply breathe and quietly say the words, ‘Come Holy Spirit’. Slowly, repeat this phrase as many times as you like.

TOPIC 4

Who is Jesus?

Aim

Through this topic, your child will learn more about Jesus' life and teachings by exploring some of the stories found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Through these stories, your child will grow to recognise the action of the Holy Spirit at work in Jesus' life and make connections between these events and the Holy Spirit at work in their own life..



Background Information

Way back in the book of Genesis, we read the Creation narratives. These stories give us an insight into God's nature and why God created humankind. The first paragraph in the Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it beautifully:

“God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Saviour. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life” (CCC, para. 1).

Notes

So, God is loving and creative and made humankind to share in God's life and love. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, we read about the many ways God reached out to humankind through the prophets, but all this culminates in the coming of Jesus – a real person who lived in first century Palestine – but a person unlike any other.

Jesus was God in the flesh – the Christ (in Hebrew, Messiah), the Anointed One, the full revelation of God made present for all of humanity. That's why Jesus is sometimes referred to as 'the Word' or 'God's Word made flesh' – because in Jesus, God has communicated everything there is to say to humankind about his love and invitation to be in relationship with him.

The Gospels (the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the Bible) tell of the life and teachings of Jesus, and of his death and resurrection. Through Jesus, all humankind has access to God and the life-giving relationship that God offers.

This topic helps your child to get to know Jesus through various stories from the gospels. Most children are familiar with the story of the birth of Jesus, but other stories may be less familiar. This is an opportunity for your child to hear the stories of Jesus' baptism, first miracle, healing, forgiveness, peace, and his love for children. It's also a chance for you and your child to recognise the action of the Holy Spirit at work in Jesus' life.

Scripture

- The birth of Jesus – Matthew 1.18-25; Luke 2.1-7
- The baptism of Jesus – Matthew 3.13-17; Mark 1.9-11; Luke 3.21-22; John 1.29-34
- The wedding at Cana – John 2.1-11
- Jesus stills the storm – Matthew 8.23-27; Mark 4.35-41; Luke 8.22-25
- Jesus cleanses a leper – Matthew 8.1-4; Mark 1.40-45; Luke 5.12-16
- Feeding the five thousand – Matthew 14.13-21; Mark 6.30-44; Luke 9.10-17; John 6.1-15
- Jesus blesses little children – Matthew 19.13-15; Mark 10.13-16; Luke 18.15-27
- Jesus and Zacchaeus – Luke 19.1-10

Family Fun

Invite your child to interview their family about their favourite stories of Jesus. They might even like to make a video of these?

Activity

Have your child select their favourite story about Jesus and retell it in their own words or represent it in some other creative way.

Family Prayer

Invite your family to gather around your prayer space, light a candle, and pray the Our Father, which is the prayer that Jesus taught us.



*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed by thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day, our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.*

TOPIC 5

God sends the Holy Spirit

Aim

Through this topic, your child will grow in their understanding of the Holy Spirit and the way in which the Holy Spirit is active in their life and in the life of others.

Together, you and your child explore scriptures from the Bible that talk about how Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit and about the many ways the Holy Spirit helps us to grow as children of God and carry out the work of Jesus in the world.

Background Information

The Holy Spirit, together with the Father and the Son, is God (the third person of the Trinity).

Before he died, Jesus told his friends that God the Father would send a special helper (the Holy Spirit) who would help them live as he had shown them. We read about this in the Gospel of John 14:16-26, 15:26, 16:7.

Then, in the book of Acts, we read about the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The disciples had hidden away out of fear when suddenly, the Holy Spirit came down on them as a loud, rushing wind and tongues of fire. 'They began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability' and 'each one heard them speaking in the native language of each' (Acts 2:4, 6). Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Peter began to preach and the apostles ministered to the crowd that had gathered because of the noise. All were astonished by what they experienced and more than 3,000 came to believe.

The Holy Spirit continues to be active and present today, both in the Church and in the lives of believers.

In the Sacrament of Baptism, we receive the Holy Spirit so that we can be formed as a child of God. At Confirmation, the Holy Spirit strengthens and empowers us, giving us gifts so that we can take our place in the mission of the Church and be living witnesses to Christ and the life that God offers. The Prayer of Invocation, which is prayed by the Bishop over the candidates at Confirmation, lists the gifts of the Spirit taken from the book of Isaiah – wisdom, understanding, counsel/right judgement, fortitude/courage, knowledge, piety/reverence, fear of the Lord/wonder and awe (Isaiah 11:1-3).

Notes



WISDOM

With the gift of Wisdom, we can think deeply about a situation and see things the way God sees them.



FORTITUDE/COURAGE

With the gift of Fortitude, we are strengthened to overcome our fears and to stand up for what we believe in.



COUNSEL/RIGHT JUDGEMENT

With the gift of Counsel, we can recognise what is right and what is wrong - what is of God and what is not.



UNDERSTANDING

With the gift of Understanding, we become aware of the meaning of God's message.



PIETY/REVERENCE

With the gift of Piety, we are able to love God more deeply through our love and care for others and God's world.



KNOWLEDGE

With the gift of Knowledge, we are able to discover and follow God's will in all things.



FEAR OF THE LORD/WONDER AND AWE

With the gift of Fear of the Lord, we are able to be in humble wonder and awe of God's creation, and God's love and compassion for us.

These are first received in Baptism and strengthened in Confirmation. You can find other gifts, given by the Holy Spirit, in other parts of scripture: Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

In the book of Galatians, we read about the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23a). These characteristics are evident in the lives of those who actively embrace the Holy Spirit. They become living witnesses to Christ and effective missionary-disciples because the Holy Spirit helps them to be loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, generous, faithful, gentle, and to have self-control.

Scripture

- Jesus promises the Holy Spirit – John 14:16-26, 15:26, 16:7
- The coming of the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:1-4, 6
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit (in the Prayer of Invocation) – Isaiah 11:1-3
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit in other scriptures – Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
- The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – Galatians 5:22-23a

Family Fun

Encourage your child to choose one of the gifts of the Spirit and have them think about how it might help them to live like Jesus. Have your child write a prayer asking the Holy Spirit for that gift.

Activity

Thinking about the fruit of the Spirit, have your child look carefully at the members of your family, friends, other people they may know, and themselves. Have them fill each flame on the page with the name of someone in whom they recognise a fruit of the Holy Spirit and they saw the person do.

Family Prayer

Invite your family to gather around your prayer space, light the candle, and pray the prayer that your child has written. Maybe invite other members of the family to use the prayer to ask for other gifts of the Holy Spirit.



TOPIC 6

Confirmation: what happens?

Aim

In this topic, your child will explore the celebration of Confirmation and the key moments in the rite (that is, the ritual or celebration) itself. These key moments include: Renewal of Baptismal Promises, Laying On of Hands, and Anointing with the Oil of Chrism.

Background Information



Renewal of Baptismal Promises:

When your child was baptised, you (as parents) and your child's godparents made promises on their behalf. These promises include to reject evil and all that is bad, and to affirm their belief in God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Now that your child is older, they will be asked to renew those promises for themselves.

At Baptism also, your child received the light of Christ. This was symbolically given when your child's Baptismal candle was lit from the Paschal candle (or Easter candle). The Paschal candle is kindled for the first time at each Easter Vigil mass and remains in the church throughout the year as a visible reminder that Jesus is risen from the dead and is always with us. Often, during the Renewal of Baptismal promises at Confirmation, the children will be invited to light their Baptismal candle once again (perhaps this may be done when your child makes their Confirmation).

Laying On of Hands:

In Confirmation, the Bishop (and any other priests who may be concelebrating) lay hands upon each of the candidates and pray for them individually. This practice of the laying on of hands is an ancient one that dates back to the apostles and the early Church. The Bishop then extends his hands over the all the candidates and prays the Prayer of Invocation, asking God to send the Holy Spirit upon each of them.



Notes

In the Prayer of Invocation, the Bishop asks that the Holy Spirit give the candidate 'gifts'. These are from the book of Isaiah 11:1-3 (there are other gifts of the Holy Spirit in other parts of scripture).



These gifts are Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord. Each is a charism through which the Holy Spirit acts in the life of each person for the good of all.

Anointing with the Oil of Chrism:

Following the laying on of hands, each of the candidates is anointed with the Oil of Chrism – the same oil with which they were anointed at Baptism. As he traces the cross with the Oil of Chrism on the candidates forehead, the Bishop calls them by name saying, “[name], be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit”.

Oil is a rich symbol which signifies abundance, joy, cleansing and health. Throughout history it has been used to soothe and heal, strengthen and preserve. In the Hebrew Scriptures, those who were chosen and called by God for some special task, were anointed with oil. By this anointing in Confirmation, the candidate receives the ‘mark’, the ‘seal’ of the Holy Spirit who empowers them to be living witnesses to Christ Jesus (CCC, para., 1295).



Scripture

The gifts of the Holy Spirit (in the Prayer of Invocation) – Isaiah 11:1-3
Gifts of the Holy Spirit in other scriptures – Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Family Fun

As part of your preparation, watch the Confirmation video together on the Flame of Faith website <https://flameoffaith.org.au/> this will give you a good idea of what happens during Confirmation.

Activity

Practise the words and gestures of the rite of Confirmation:

Trace the Sign of the Cross on your child's forehead and say, '[name], be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit'.

Have your child respond with 'amen'.

Touch them lightly on the cheek and say, 'peace be with you'.

Have your child respond with 'and with your spirit'.

Family Prayer

Invite your family to gather around your prayer space, light the candle, and pray using the words of the baptismal promises on page 14 of your My Sacramental Journey: Confirmation activity book: I believe in God, I believe in Jesus, I believe in the Holy Spirit.



A PRAYER FOR MY CHILD

Loving God,
I thank you for the gift of my child.
I thank you that you created them
precious and unique.
I thank you that you love them and
call them into relationship with you.
Lord, look tenderly on all of the children
who are preparing for the
Sacrament of Confirmation.
Open their ears to hear your voice.
Open their eyes to see your good works.
Open their hearts to receive
your love and grace.
Lord, as I journey with my child
towards their Confirmation,
deepen my faith and help me to live what I
believe so that they will encounter
your love in me.
Amen.