

Connect: Rite of Confirmation

Present the following information using the text or your own words:

Have you ever watched public officials take oaths of office? They raise their hand and vow to carry out their duties and responsibilities of their offices. In ancient times anointing with oil served that function. Kings and priests were anointed to symbolize their commission to those roles. Jesus himself is called Christ, which means "the Anointed One." In the Rite of Confirmation, Christians are anointed by the bishop with chrism and thus are commissioned to be Christ for others. This action also recalls their anointing with chrism at Baptism.

The anointing at Confirmation is an act of consecrating the person, to share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ and the Church. In the Roman Catholic Church, the bishop usually does the anointing, as well as the laying on of hands, to link the person symbolically to the universal church, the church of the apostles.

To be anointed the candidates come forward one by one. As each one approaches the bishop, that candidate's sponsor places her or his right hand on the candidate's shoulder and gives the bishop the candidate's name. In the essential words and actions of the sacrament, the bishop dips his right thumb in the chrism, puts his hand on the person's head, and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead, saying, "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." The bishop then gives the person the sign of peace.

(From *Celebrating Sacraments* by Joseph Stoutzenberger, Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 2000. Excerpts from page 167, 170. Used with permission.)

4. Connect: Jesus and Anointing

In Luke 4, Jesus enters the synagogue in Nazareth to announce the beginning of his ministry. Jesus' proclamation in the synagogue reinforces the understanding of being anointed for mission.

Read from the Gospel of Luke Jesus' proclamation from the prophet Isaiah. (You may want to write this on newsprint or poster board for all to see.)

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

You may also want to read the story of the messengers of John the Baptist finding Jesus to ask about his ministry. Read from Matthew 11:2-19 or Luke 7:18-35.

Explain to everyone that Jesus is anointed by God for his mission which included:

- bringing the good news to all people that God loves them and wants them to live God's commandments
- serving the needs of people who are poor and outcast/lonely
- forgiving the sins of people so that they can feel God's love again
- healing physical illness and making people healthy again
- freeing people who are oppressed by others and the society or captive to anything that stops them from experiencing God's love and forgiveness