

# LIGHTHOUSE PROGRAM

**Leadership Sessions**

ORLA WALSH



**The Lighthouse Program**

Introducing the Leadership Sessions. . . . . 3

**Bright Sparks**

**Session 1**

(a) Introduction . . . . . 4

(b) Called by Name . . . . . 6

**Session 2**

(a) Reflective Practice: What it is and how to do it . . . . . 9

(b) Reflective Practice: In your journal . . . . . 12

**Fanning the Flame**

**Session 3**

Leadership . . . . . 18

**Session 4**

Mentoring . . . . . 22

**Hearts Ablaze**

**Session 5**

Vision and Values . . . . . 29

**Session 6**

E-Leadership . . . . . 34

**Unforgettable Fire**

**Session 7**

The Sacrament of Confirmation and Peer Ministry (Part 1) . . 38

**Session 8**

The Sacrament of Confirmation and Peer Ministry (Part 2) . . 45

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## THE LIGHTHOUSE PROGRAM

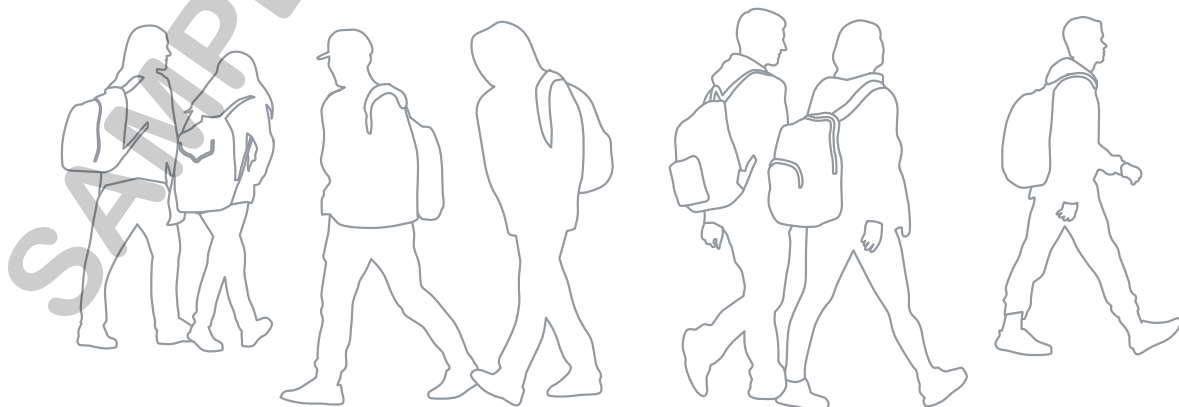
### Introducing the Leadership Sessions

*Welcome to the Lighthouse Program!*

The *Lighthouse Program* is about befriending, caring for, and helping Confirmation candidates celebrate their Confirmation in a way that will encourage them to begin their journey into adult faith. In this program, you will participate in ten sessions of leadership training, after which you and a partner will lead five sessions of peer ministry with our Confirmation candidates.

Before you begin, make sure you have a journal or notebook you will use for your reflective journaling and answering questions that come up throughout the sessions. For the last two sessions in this program, you will also need a copy of the *Peer Ministry Sessions* and *Prayer Services* handbooks to review in advance of working with the Confirmation candidates.

We hope that over the course of your journey to become Lighthouse leaders, you will discover strengths and capabilities you didn't know you had and develop confidence not only in your leadership abilities but also in your faith and beliefs.







## Ground Rules

You will be inviting the Confirmation candidates to create a set of ground rules for respectful behavior in your sessions with them, and we want to model that in our leadership sessions. This is a safe space for you to reflect on and share your faith. Everyone's sharing will be listened to and honored without judgment or comment. Statements made by others stay in this room and will not be shared with anyone outside this group.

## The Bright Spark in Every Leader

The name for this first part in our leadership training, "Bright Sparks," comes from the notion that there is a bright spark in every leader, a stirring deep inside each of you to be more, to take the helm, to be the first to walk the path. This can be a very courageous step. Not only have you chosen to be part of this program, but you have also chosen to stand on your own two feet when the time comes to lead in faith.



## Committing to the Lighthouse Program

You begin this journey to become Lighthouse leaders as part of a team, but when you lead, you will do so in pairs, so it is up to you to prepare and to be ready. You are called to commit to the program from the beginning.

### In Your Own Words

With the person beside you, discuss the following:

- Do you commit to a program/plan/project easily?
- What causes you to commit to a program/club/team?
- How will you show commitment to the *Lighthouse Program*?
- What qualities will you need to display and put into practice as a Lighthouse leader?



Leaders inquire about the road ahead and educate themselves about what each stage of the journey might bring. With that in mind, what do you need to know about the program and how you are going to be involved in it, the logistics, timeframe and so on?





## (B) CALLED BY NAME

At the beginning of this session, you were asked to introduce yourself. You were asked to speak your name. This is hugely important. It has been said that the most beautiful sound to a person is their own name.

### Our Name Connects ...

When our name is called, we immediately feel connected to the person who is calling it. It feels good to be addressed by our name. The Prophet Isaiah tells us that God has carved our name on the palm of his hands. How do you feel when you hear that? Think about this for a few moments and connect with its meaning.

### Our Name Comforts ...

It is comforting to be called by the name that was chosen for you by the people who love you most—your own family. They chose your name, and they delighted in your presence. For your first couple of months on earth, it was the one word you could understand and respond to, so it is a comforting sound to you.



### Our Name Communicates ...

Your name communicates who you are, what you are, and all that you will become. Our names represent our stories, and they are precious to us.

When we celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation, we began our journey into adult faith. This means we began to take responsibility for our faith. Just as we mature and grow in other parts of our lives, our faith also matures and grows. It is important to ask ourselves how attentive we are towards our faith.

We are also asked to be witnesses to our faith. This means that we must be ready to stand up for our faith, if necessary, and be able to explain it to others.

### JUST THINKING ...

- What are your thoughts about this?
- Did Confirmation change you in any way?
- If so, how did it change you? Chat about this as a group for a few moments.



## The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

When you were confirmed, you received the gifts of wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and wonder and awe in God's presence.

### Gifts of the Spirit

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>wisdom:</b> looking at life with the eyes of faith</li> <li>• <b>understanding:</b> thinking deeply about things you know</li> <li>• <b>right judgment:</b> making good choices based on</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>courage:</b> following through on those choices, especially when it's hard/counter-cultural</li> <li>• <b>knowledge:</b> questioning and exploring the world</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>reverence:</b> respecting ourselves, others, and our world</li> <li>• <b>wonder and awe:</b> seeing God in all things</li> </ul> |
|---|---|--|

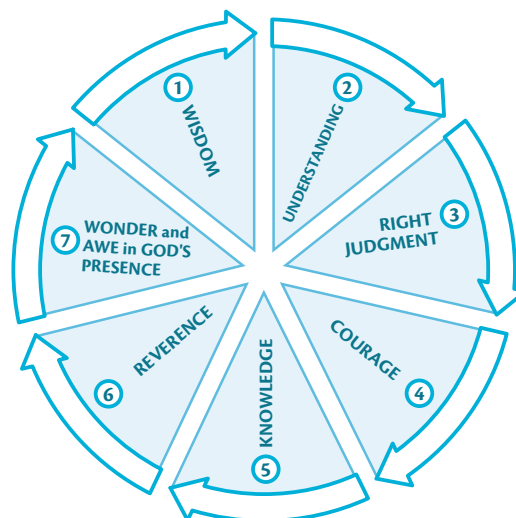
### In Your Own Words

- In pairs, consider and discuss how you have used three of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, then share your thoughts with the group.
- In your opinion, which gifts of the Holy Spirit do you use most frequently?
- Which gifts do you/will you use in the *Lighthouse Program*?



### REFLECTING ON THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Spend some more time reflecting on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how they play a part in your life. You first received the Holy Spirit in Baptism when you became children of God. Then at Confirmation, you received the fullness of the gift of the Holy Spirit to enable you to deepen your relationship with Jesus and to take up your role in the Christian community. When you take up your role as a leader in this program, you are playing your part in the Christian community. As a young Christian leader your challenge is to become the same sort of leader as Jesus was.





### Reflective Journal

As you think about each of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, think of times when you used or needed this gift. Write about it in your journal, taking quiet time and making an effort to really reflect on what you are being asked. It is important to focus your attention because, as leaders, you will help the candidates prepare to celebrate their Confirmation.

Reflecting on our own lives of faith is an important part of learning to be effective leaders of this program. Leadership training for the Lighthouse program always involves reflection, being great leaders of faith means spending time thinking about our own lives and how we choose to live them.

Each week, we will look at one of the aspects of the Holy Spirit and check in with how we are integrating that gift into our lives. As we begin our leadership training, now is a perfect time to consider the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how we use them in our own lives.

## Gift of the Holy Spirit

### Wisdom:

Having the gift of **wisdom** offers us a lens through which we can view life. When we engage with the Holy Spirit's gift of wisdom, that lens becomes a lens of faith. The gift of wisdom involves seeing the positive and the negative in our lives, and knowing the difference between them. It also helps us to recognize what is and is not important in our lives. It is about being open to the workings of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and acting on it.

- In your own words, what is wisdom?
- How do you use it?
- How often do we require wisdom?
- What is the difference between wisdom and information? Explain.
- Is wisdom required for the *Lighthouse Program*? Explain your answer.



### Reflective Journal

Take time to reflect on and then write about whether you think you act wisely in your life.

## SESSION 2

### (A) REFLECTIVE PRACTICE / WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO DO IT

#### Lighthouse Leadership Blessing

Turn to the last page of this booklet to pray the blessing together.

#### LEADERSHIP AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Every great leader is involved in **reflective practice**.

##### In Your Own Words

- Describe what you think reflective practice means.
- In your opinion, how might it help team leaders?
- Have you ever engaged in reflective practice?
- If you were to engage in it, what do you think it would involve?
- Think of a scenario in your life that called for reflection on your actions. Describe it and discuss what happened.

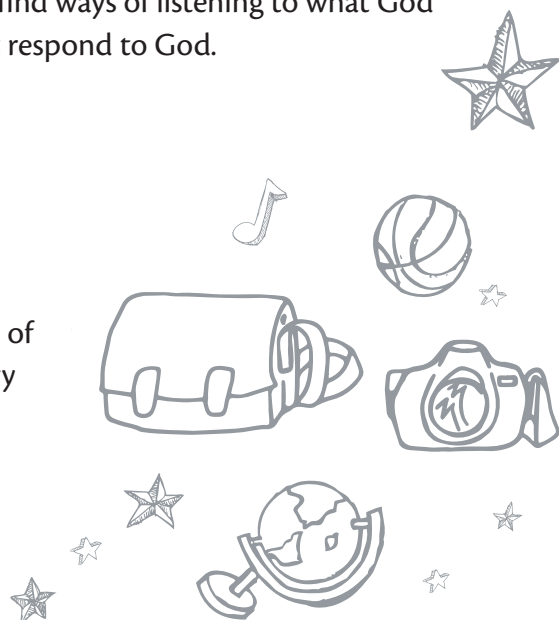
Reflective practice is an ongoing dialogue with the inner self. It is about knowing ourselves and continuously seeking ways to improve our practice. This is hugely important to our effectiveness as leaders because the best leaders know their own limits and talents.

As Christian leaders, we are also challenged to reflect on our relationship with God and with Jesus. God speaks to us every day. We must find ways of listening to what God is saying to us and ask ourselves how we can best respond to God.

##### In Your Own Words

- Name one of your limits.
- Name one of your talents.

Reflecting on one's practice also affects the levels of fulfillment we receive from our role. It is necessary to be fully aware of your whole self. We are constantly changing, growing, and becoming. Reflective practice supports our growth as individuals and, by extension, as leaders.





Reflecting on how we feel, think, act, respond, and react in each kind of situation really helps us to change the way we deal with issues and tasks for the better.

### Three Types of Reflection

In reflective practice there are three types of reflection.

1. **Reflection-on-action** means thinking back, or making sense of an event or an experience.
2. **Reflection-in-action** means thinking on our feet.
3. **Reflection-for-action** means planning ahead, using our learning from the past and present.

By writing in our reflective journals, we will become familiar with these three types of reflection.

#### In Your Own Words

Try to explain what these types of reflection mean to you.

### The Benefits of Reflective Practice

In all areas of life we can use these three types of reflection. We engage in reflective practice when, on completing a task or an encounter, we sit with our thoughts, go over how we felt, what we thought, what we said, and how we reacted. We think about how we could improve our reactions and/or responses.

The latter is a hugely beneficial part of reflective practice. When we feel we have done really well, be it in an exam, a match, a competition, or any other activity, we enjoy that feeling and the attention, grades, gratitude, or awards we receive. However, the positive feelings that come with this last for only a relatively short time, because we tend to hold on to negativity much longer than we do to positivity. Sometimes we give ourselves a hard time over the smallest details, especially those that led to a negative outcome, and we go over and over a situation in a way that does not help us at all.

#### JUST THINKING ...

Spend a few minutes thinking and writing about a recent negative experience. Write down your feelings about it and how you managed the experience. What did you do and how did you feel? Re-read what you have written and reflect on it.



The great advantage of reflective practice is that we can reflect on the day or event and address the emotions that arise. We plan a way forward, we congratulate or console ourselves, we deal with what has happened, and move on. This is very important, as a negative experience can linger if we don't address what happened, why it happened, and why we reacted as we did. Reflecting on our emotions and dealing with them is an important skill that will help us in all areas of our lives. If you are really worried or troubled about something, seek advice from an adult that you trust—for example, a parent or a teacher.

## “REAL” LEADERSHIP

**R – Reflect**  
**E – Evaluate**  
**A – Act**  
**L – Learn**

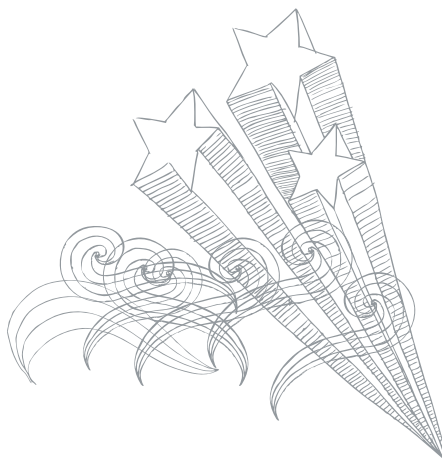
Leadership is about keeping it “REAL”: reflect, evaluate, act, and learn. **Reflect** on what happened and **evaluate** how things went. **Act** if necessary. For example, you may have hurt someone's feelings, or you may have brought happiness or order to a situation. In this way, you will **learn** from today and plan for tomorrow.

## Take Responsibility for Your Energy

Reflective practice helps us to take responsibility for the energy we bring to a space. Taking responsibility for our energy means being accountable for the tone we bring to a situation, conversation, debate—any occasion where we interact with others. We can bring negative or positive energy. We can bring joyous, constructive energy or we can bring immature, destructive energy.

### In Your Own Words

**Successful leaders bring only positive and constructive energy to a situation. Think about that, and in your own words explain what you think it means. Think of a few situations that occurred in your life where the outcome was influenced by someone's positivity or negativity. Talk about it as a group.**





## (B) REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | IN YOUR JOURNAL

Engaging in reflective practice is a sign of maturity and strength—maturity in taking responsibility for how you live each day, and strength in taking control of who you are becoming and the choices you make in each new experience. Reflecting and writing in your journal will help you engage in this reflective practice and prepare for your leadership role.

### Engaging in SELF

As we've just noted, leadership is about keeping it REAL by reflecting, evaluating, acting, and learning from each experience. When we reflect by writing in our journals, it is good to focus our reflective practice on the word SELF.

- S – Spiritual Reflection
- E – Experiential Reflection
- L – Leadership Reflection
- F – Future Reflection

At the end of all sessions in your leadership training and peer ministry, you will need to write something—no matter how short—reflecting on the session and setting yourself up for the next session using SELF as your prompt. We will now discuss SELF in more detail and look at what writing using SELF might look like.

### 1. Spiritual reflection

**Spiritual reflection** is based on how you connect spiritually with any part of the *Lighthouse Program* experience. Did you pray during the session? Did you talk to or about God? Did you show care and gratitude towards the candidates and your *Lighthouse Program* team? Or did you connect spiritually at all? Remember that God is with us always, helping and guiding us in all that we do. You can ask God to help you be more aware of God's presence.

All leadership sessions begin with the Leadership blessing, and all peer ministry sessions begin with a prayer service from the *Prayer Services* handbook. It will be your job as leaders to arrange reading and participation roles for Lighthouse leaders and candidates. At any moment of prayer, try to be really present, concentrate, and give yourself to it so that it helps you connect with others, with your inner self, and with God.

To connect at this level, we ask God for guidance throughout the session and for help to free us from all other thoughts and worries. We put our hearts and minds into the experience and have a sense of gratitude for the holiness present in each one of us.



This may seem like hard work, but it is possible. Every effort, every little push we give ourselves to reflect makes that experience more important and prepares us for a similar experience the following week.

To practice this spiritual reflection exercise right now, as a group say any prayer you like together, but before you do, be mindful of:

- the prayer and the space you share together;
- the people who are with you;
- the words and the sentiment you express;
- the presence of God in the experience.

## 2. Experiential reflection

**Experiential reflection** involves thinking about an experience as a whole and how it impacted you. Again, this is not easy, but practice helps. Practice brings you to a place where you will realize you are becoming a more reflective leader. To reflect on an experience at this level involves noting how the “whole” of you felt, acted, and responded to the situation. Experiential reflection involves thinking about the experience and how you learned from it and felt about it—what inspired you/bored you/irritated you/helped you? The variety of ways the experience “landed” and connected with you is important to record in this element of your reflective practice.



## 3. Leadership reflection

**Leadership reflection** is based on how the peer ministry experience made you feel as a leader. Did you feel that you took on a leadership role? Were you fair and consistent in your efforts? Did you engage with your learning on leadership? Where did your leadership come from—your value system, your training sessions, your sense of self? Was it a combination of all three, or did it come from somewhere completely different? Our leadership needs to be rooted in our value system. When reflecting on your leadership style in your journal, base your thoughts on how much you led (leadership), as opposed to managed (management) the group. How did you help the candidates engage with the session, rather than how did you manage to keep them quiet and well-behaved?

## 4. Future reflection

**Future reflection** is about a plan for the next session. What would you like to keep the same? What would you like to change? How will you make these adjustments, and when will you make them? The future reflection is about sketching a plan for moving on with all your



learning in place. Be a self-motivated and self-directed learner, and therefore a self-motivated and self-directed leader. Decide yourself on how the next session will go rather than being advised.

### In Your Own Words

**Think back on your leadership training to date. How has your experience been? What emotions and feelings has it brought about in you? Try to remember your initial reaction to participating in a leadership session. Has your reaction to or feelings about the training changed since then?**

Leaders who engage in reflective practice reflect on their leadership—how they went about it, the effects they caused, and the impact they had. Reflecting on your day, and in particular your leadership experience, is a vital ingredient for transformative leadership. Transformative leadership is exactly that—it transforms a situation for the better and empowers followers to be leaders themselves.

The following is an extract from a Lighthouse leader’s reflective journal that may help you. All journals are different; yours does not have to be as ordered as this one. The *practice* of being reflective each day is the important thing. Be a REAL leader.





## EXAMPLE OF A REFLECTIVE JOURNAL USING "SELF"

### Extract 1

Spiritual Reflection: After meeting with the group I felt better about my spirituality. We talked about "belonging" and I realized that a sense of being part of something with others helps us to see how important community is. We realized that we can achieve more together than we can alone.

Experiential Reflection: The *Lighthouse Program* is a great experience, both for the group and the leaders. It provides a great experience in relation to preparation and planning, as well as coping with an unfamiliar environment.

Leadership Reflection: Today I felt I was coping very well with the challenges of leadership. I thought I participated well in the leadership training session/led well during the prayer service and during the session with the group. I hope it helped the young people to feel close to one another and to God. It did not seem difficult, as the group is very cooperative.

Future Reflection: After the session with the other Lighthouse leaders/group, I felt very aware of my connection with others and with God. I am looking forward to next week.

### Extract 2

Spiritual Reflection: We talked about faith and the Catholic Church. I found this helpful in understanding my beliefs.

Experiential Reflection: Again, we learned that this program is good both for the leaders and for the group preparing for Confirmation. I gained experience in organizing, leadership, working as a team and working with different people.

Leadership Reflection: I found I'm becoming more confident as a leader. The best way to improve is to practice.

Future Reflection: After our session, I felt that my faith is very important but I know I need to keep growing in my faith all the time.



### Extract 3

Spiritual Reflection: Today we talked about what it means to be a Christian, a follower of Jesus. I feel my spirituality is growing with the help of the sessions with the Confirmation candidates.

Experiential Reflection: I hope the *Lighthouse Program* has been as good for the Confirmation candidates as it has been for me. It has given me the opportunity to improve my leadership abilities as well as my reflective and preparation skills.

Leadership Reflection: I am certainly more comfortable as a leader now.

Future Reflection: As we draw closer to Confirmation day, I think the candidates have a better grasp of what it means to be a Christian and a Catholic, as well as gaining a better understanding of the Sacrament. I am also enjoying learning more about my religion.

### Extract 4

Spiritual Reflection: "Becoming" was the theme of today's session. We are all on the path towards becoming the people God has destined us to be. The Confirmation group is getting more excited and nervous as the big day approaches. I once again reminded them that Confirmation means being more responsible for their faith.

Experiential Reflection: It's great to see the way the candidates have gained more insight into their religion. This experience has helped me personally in my religious understanding. I also feel that I have improved in leadership ability.

Leadership Reflection: I can feel my leadership skills improving as the sessions continue and I now feel more comfortable in a leadership position.

Future Reflection: I am extremely glad that I chose to join the *Lighthouse Program*. The whole experience was excellent.



### JUST THINKING ...

1. What is your initial impression of this reflective journal?
2. Do you think that this Lighthouse leader has developed during the program? Explain your answer.
3. What was the benefit in writing this reflective journal for this Lighthouse leader?

## Gift of the Holy Spirit

### 2. Understanding

Having the gift of understanding gives meaning to what we learn. Understanding does not just magically happen. We have the gift, but we need to engage and work with it in order to understand it. We must give ourselves wholeheartedly to each gift of the Holy Spirit.

- What is the gift of understanding?
- How do you use it?
- How often do we require understanding?
- What is the difference between understanding and knowing? Explain your answer.
- Is understanding required for the *Lighthouse Program*? Explain your answer.



### Reflective Journal

Take time to reflect on and then write about whether you think you understand faith and how it is lived out in your life. For example, are you engaged in trying to understand the relevance of the gospels for your life today?

Write something—no matter how short—on your experience of this session and in preparation for the next using SELF as your prompt.



## Lighthouse Leadership Blessing

We ask God to be with us and to bless us as we prepare to lead the *Lighthouse Program*.

**Program Facilitator:**

Gracious God,

We come together as a Christian community to ask your blessing on the [name of parish] *Lighthouse Program*.

**Lighthouse Leaders:**

We share a communal purpose,  
we shoulder a communal task,  
we shelter a communal spirit of love and holiness.

**Program Facilitator:** Gift us with the strength of faith,

**Lighthouse Leaders:** that we are setting out to share.

**Program Facilitator:** Empower us with peace as we strive,

**Lighthouse Leaders:** to fulfill our baptismal promises.

**Program Facilitator:** Guide our spirit of selflessness and courage,

**Lighthouse Leaders:** as we work to become servant leaders in your holy name.

**All:** We embody our faith, as fragile and vulnerable as it is.

We embody our hope, as limitless and full of promise as it can be.

We embody your love, as unconditional and devoted as it will always be.

Together we share,

Together we shoulder,

Together we shelter,

all that will grow from the seeds of our faith and the efforts of our servant leadership.

**Program Facilitator:** As we ask this blessing, we ask you to bind and connect us in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen.