



Whoever Wants the Next Generation of Catholics the Most Will Get Them!

Confirmation Proposal

 **DynamicCatholic.com**
Be Bold. Be Catholic.

An initiative of The Dynamic Catholic Institute



The Dynamic Catholic Prayer

Loving Father,

I invite you into my life today,
and make myself available to you.

Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself,
by seeking your will

and being a living example of your love in the world.

Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change,
so I can carry out the mission you have imagined for my life
and experience the joy you desire for me.

Inspire me to live the Catholic faith in ways
that are dynamic and engaging.

Show me how to best get involved in the life of my parish.

Give our community a hunger for best practices
and continuous learning.

Give me courage when I am afraid,
hope when I am discouraged,
and clarity in times of decision.

Lead your Church to become all you imagined it would be
for the people of our times.

Amen.



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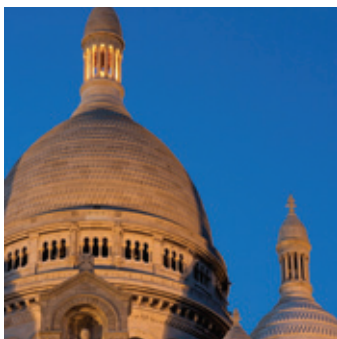
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Executive Summary

- We are losing young Catholics at an astounding rate. 70% stop attending Sunday Mass by age 21, and 85% stop attending Mass by age 30.
- Confirmation preparation is our last chance to make a case for Catholicism. It also coincides with that time in a person's development when they are most likely to choose or reject Jesus and the Church.
- More than one million young Catholics prepare for Confirmation each year. Less than 10% of Catholic youth attend Youth Group, but more than 90% attend Confirmation Preparation.
- Current Confirmation programs are woefully inadequate. They are stuck in the 60's format of textbook and workbook. While some supplementary video content exists, not a single major Confirmation program includes video content (which is 80's technology). There is no effort underway to enter the 21st century with Internet content. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, the materials being used for Confirmation preparation today completely fail to confront what young people are experiencing and struggling with.
- We have been sending catechists/teachers to the front lines for decades with inadequate resources to engage young people in the modern world. For the first time ever this program will place world-class resources in the hands of the good and dedicated volunteers who prepare more than one million young Catholics for Confirmation each year.
- Parishes say that young people are the future of the Church and a priority for their community, but often even parishes with significant financial resources refuse to invest in the best resources to engage and educate them. As a result, over the past thirty years Catholic publishing companies (the group responsible for creating and delivering programs until now) refuse to invest in developing world-class programming because they know they cannot recoup their investment. The result is that very often an out-dated program is updated by changing the photos, but the text remains stale and unengaging.
- Even if world-class learning systems were available, a large and growing number of parishes would not be able to afford them because of shrinking attendance and budgets.
- We are inviting teens to make the most significant decision of their lives, and our research indicates that few teachers feel equipped for the job and few students feel inspired by the conversation. Current programs are extremely dense in content, which leads catechists/teachers to complain that the entire class is spent conveying information in order to satisfy course requirements.



- Young Catholics need a compelling introduction to the genius of Catholicism and a personal connection with Jesus. Throughout the research process, which involved more than 2,000 interviews, catechists/teachers asserted over and over that what young Catholics need the most is open and honest discussion about God, religion, spiritual practices, and the issues of the day.
- The Dynamic Catholic Confirmation Program will transform the Confirmation experience by engaging students, parents, sponsors, and teachers through a series of FREE web-based resources.
- We will free up valuable class time for discussion by presenting 7-12 minute videos that students will watch for homework by logging into a secure site. The student will enter his/her name and password and watch the video. He/she will then be prompted to answer three or four multiple choice questions, which will assess comprehension. The student will then type in a short reflection. And finally, he/she will be able to submit questions for discussion in class.
- Catechists/Teachers will be able to log on and see all activity for their class, including: who did or did not watch the video; how did individual students (or the whole class) perform on the multiple choice questions; read student reflections; and collect all the questions proposed by the students.
- We view confirmation not only as an opportunity to engage Catholic youth but also as an opportunity to increase the engagement of Catholic parents. The parent, sponsor, and teacher portions of our program will also be delivered via the Internet. This will allow parents and sponsors to reinforce what the candidates are learning through the program. This holistic approach provides an opportunity to catechize students, parents, and sponsors.
- The content of our Confirmation program will use the theme of *Finding Your Mission in Life* to explore the role the Holy Spirit yearns to play in our lives, the way the Sacrament of Confirmation can transform us, and the connection between life in the Spirit and every day life.
- Our program will be made available to all parishes at no cost, allowing access to every parish in the United States. This is a significant shift from the failing user pays model to an endowed model that can focus not on financial outcome but on delivering the very best program. The only cost to parishes would be for printed materials, and these costs would be minimal.
- Confirmation should be a life-changing experience. It is anything but that today. The Dynamic Catholic Confirmation Program will bring the Confirmation preparation process into the 21st century both in terms of content and delivery.





Engaging Catholic Youth

Whoever wants the next generation of Catholics the most will get them. We have to decide how much we want them.

Jesus placed a priority on young people. He rebuked his disciples when they turned young people away.

On any given Sunday less than 30% of American Catholics attend Church. Among Catholic ages 18-30 that number drops to less than 15%. That means in a Confirmation class of twenty students, seventeen will leave the Church in their twenties. For generations people have said "they will come back" but they are not coming back, not even to get married. In fact the number of weddings taking place in Catholic Churches has dropped 60% over the past four decades, even though there are 18 million more Catholics in the United States today than there were in 1972.

While it is no small task to keep young Catholics engaged, it is certainly easier to keep them than it is to get them back. But engaging young people is no easy feat. It will require commitment, strategy, execution, and investment. The question is: Does the Catholic Church love her young people as much as God loves them? If we do, then it is past time for us to get serious. We may want them, but do we want them more than anyone else?

You see, Nintendo and every other gaming company in the world want them very much. Nintendo spent \$200 million on R&D last year alone... all in an effort to more effectively woo young souls. To place this in perspective that is more than the United States government spent on research and innovation in the area of education. We have to want our young people more than Nintendo does.

The secular culture wants our young people also. This is obvious to even the most casual observer.

And the non-denominational churches want them in a big way. The topic at a recent national convention for non-denominational church leaders was: *Targeting Catholic Youth - The Key to Your Church's Future*.

Whoever wants the next generation of Catholics the most will get them. The competition for these young souls is fierce. The question is, do we want them more than any of these other groups?

About The Dynamic Catholic Institute

The Dynamic Catholic Institute (TDCI) was founded to develop world-class learning systems that reinvigorate Catholics and their parishes.

All the learning systems developed by TDCI will be based upon the findings of our seminal research project that examined the difference between highly engaged Catholics and disengaged Catholics. This research ultimately gave birth to The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic.

The first study examined two simple aspects of parish life that are common signs of commitment and engagement: volunteerism and financial contributions. We discovered that 6.4% of parishioners contribute 80% of the volunteer hours, and 6.8% of parishioners contribute 80% of the financial resources. We refer to these highly engaged Catholics as the 7% of Dynamic Catholics.

What every parish needs are more people like the 7%. The second phase of our research explored this question. What differentiates the 7% from the other 93% of Catholics? We discovered that the 7% had four differentiating qualities/behaviors in common. We have termed these, the four signs of a Dynamic Catholic. They are:

Prayer

They have a daily commitment to prayer. Highly engaged Catholics tend to have a daily routine of prayer and they make prayer a priority. They pray in the same place or in the same way every day, many of them even pray at the same time everyday.

Study

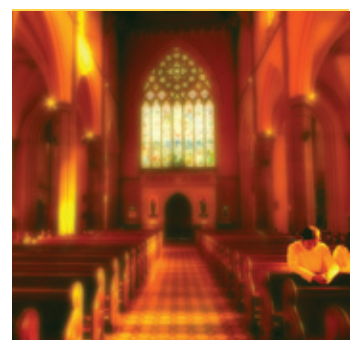
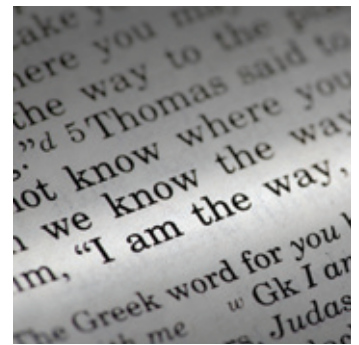
Dynamic Catholics are continuous learners in the area of the faith. They are always reading a Catholic book, listening to faith related CD's, or participating in small groups or Bible studies. They are disciples in the sense that they take time to sit at the feet of Jesus and his Church and learn.

Generosity

Highly engaged Catholics are generous in every sense of the word. They consider Christianity to be at its very core a philosophy of generosity. As a result they are generous with their time, talent, and treasure... but they are also generous with their love, appreciation, encouragement, and praise.

Evangelization

These highly engaged Catholics make the love of God manifest to other people. They are committed to sharing their faith with other people through the example of their own lives, by encouraging others to consider God's perspective and Church teaching on specific problems, and by passing around Catholic books, emails, CD's, DVD's, and periodicals. They believe the faith is worth sharing and want others to experience the joy it has brought to their lives.





Every program designed, developed, and deployed by The Dynamic Catholic Institute will intentionally attempt to increase these four habits in Catholics.



We believe trying to cater to the other 93% is madness, and that we should focus our efforts as a Church on trying to raise up more Dynamic Catholics like the 7%.

If we raise up another 1% like the 7%, that will effectively result in a 15% increase in engagement, volunteerism, and financial contribution. Create another 1% like the 7% each year for three years and that is a 45% increase. What could your parish accomplish with 45% more of these?

If a parish was able to raise up 1% more highly engaged Catholics each year it would be a complete game-changer for the parish.



The 7% are the people keeping your parish alive. In order to really thrive your parish needs another 7% like them.



The Catholic Teen Experience

Let's face it, how many young people do you know who are really engaged and knowledgeable in their faith? Sure, your parish might have a great youth group, but how many young people are involved? Twenty? Fifty? One hundred? More importantly, what percentage of young people are involved?

Amazingly less than 60% of Catholic parishes in the United States even have a youth group. The other 40% have given up altogether on engaging their teens in the faith and the community. Even more sobering than that is the fact that less than 10% of Catholic youth attend their church youth group.

Now let us turn our attention to mandatory programs for young people. Most children make their First Communion around age 7, but only 30% of teens believe that Jesus is present in the Eucharist.

After First Communion students attend CCD classes if they are not enrolled at Catholic school. These classes are routinely described as "The most boring hour of the week."

Finally, around the age of 15 (age varies by diocese) our teens attend Confirmation preparation classes before receiving the Sacrament. These programs are massively out of touch with where teens are today and the issues they are dealing with on a daily basis. Unbelievably there is no web-based content for Confirmation, and in fact, the major programs don't even offer audio or video content.

Not surprisingly, within fifteen years of Confirmation 85% of our young people are electing to formally leave the Church or simply stop attending. For decades we have been saying that young people are the future of our Church... but we are losing them at an alarming rate.





The Dynamic Catholic Confirmation Program

After considering all the options we have decided that our first youth-focused initiative will be a Confirmation program.

Confirmation preparation is our last formal opportunity to make a case for Catholicism to our teens. It also occurs at the age when a person is capable of choosing Christ and the Church for him/herself. We believe it is critical that every teen have access to a world-class presentation of the genius of Catholicism at that time.

The Dynamic Catholic Confirmation Program will consist of a series of offerings designed to engage participants, parents, sponsors, and teachers in a process of spiritual renewal.

We will use a sampling of initial offerings to gather feedback as we are developing the overall program.

Initial Offerings

- Four CD's/Audio Downloads - Each designed specifically for: participants, parents, sponsors, and teachers.
- Book - Finding Your Mission in Life - This book will make the connection between the role the Holy Spirit plays in our lives and the every day situations that young people are facing around the time of Confirmation.
- Online Surveys - TDCI will use a series of surveys to determine how best to serve participants, teachers, parents, and sponsors.

The Dynamic Catholic Confirmation Program

- Online Program - This will consist of twenty-four short length films designed to be viewed online, but also available for classroom use. After each film, students will be prompted on screen to: answer four multiple choice questions; write a one-hundred word reflection on the topic; and submit questions to be further explored in class.

This online environment will be supported by a series of traditional media offerings, including textbooks, workbooks, CD's, and handouts.



Our Process

All programs developed by TDCI will be based upon the four signs of a dynamic Catholic. Realizing that these four signs are evidenced in mature and contributing members of a Catholic parish, we seek to sow the seeds and develop them through every project we develop and deploy at the service of God's people.

Furthermore, the development of these programs are guided by the following process:

Discovery: We begin by exploring all current offerings available in a particular area (e.g. Confirmation or Marriage Preparation) or around a specific topic.

Research: We then interview representatives of all constituents who will be affected by the program we are developing. For example, in the case of Confirmation we interviewed Directors of Religious Education, Youth Ministers, parents, teachers/catechists, sponsors, and students. The research determines how programs that are currently available are successful and what is missing from these current offerings.

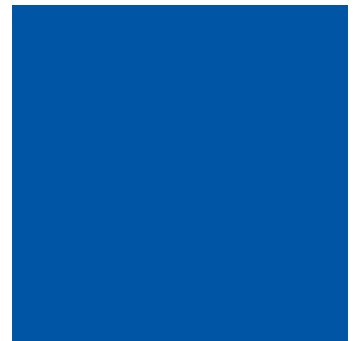
Development: The first phase of development is the actual design of the learning system. How will we deliver the program? This first phase of development seeks to ascertain whether we will use traditional modes such as textbooks and workbooks, intermediary modes such as video and audio content, or new media modes such as web-based and mobile applications. In this first stage of development we also determine the scope of our program. Will it be a two-year program, as in the case of Confirmation, or a six-week program, as in the case of some of our introductory Bible studies? The second phase of development deals with content itself. The third phase of development deals with production and design.

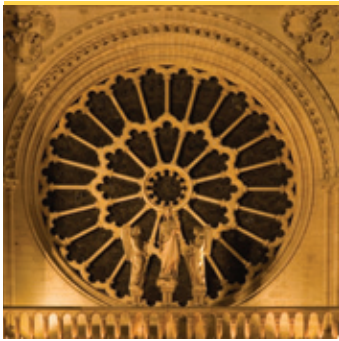
Testing: At this point it is critical to test the program in a live environment. This piloting of our programs allows us to see how people respond to them. The feedback gathered in this stage is critical to get the programs to their highest level of effectiveness. The knowledge gained from this stage of development allows us to tweak the program before full-deployment.

Revision: Based on feedback from the testing stage we will revise the program before final deployment.

Distribution & Deployment: This is when a program becomes available on a large scale to individuals and parishes.

Updating: All TDCI programs will go through continuous revision in order to ensure that they are up to date, relevant, and engaging participants.





Timeline

The following timeline for The Dynamic Catholic Confirmation Program is dependant on raising the first million dollars of support in 2011, the second million dollars in 2012, and the final million dollars over 2013 and 2014.

- Discovery - Spring 2011
- Research - Summer 2011
- Development - Fall 2011 through Spring 2012
- Testing - Fall 2012
- Revision - Winter 2012 through Summer 2013
- Distribution & Deployment - Fall 2013
- Updating - Ongoing



Budget

An old priest who advises us often says, "No money, no mission." Engaging today's young Catholics is going to require a world-class learning system that combines dynamic content with the latest technology. This will require a significant financial investment.

The overall budget will be \$3,000,000. The breakdown of related expenses is as follows:

Research	\$300,000
Content Development	\$550,000
Design & Production	\$1,100,000
Web-Based Learning Platform	\$650,000
Revision & Maintenance (5 Years)	\$500,000
Total Five Year Budget	\$3,000,000



Dynamic Catholic Programs

The following is a brief description of programs both current and in development at TDCI.

- Research
- The Parish Book Program
- Bible Studies - The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic
- Generosity: The Heart of Christianity
- Confirmation

Research

Research is at the core of everything we do at TDCI. Our first research project explored the difference between highly engaged and disengaged Catholics. This project gave birth to The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic, around which all our programs will be built. This research will be published in December 2011 and may represent one of the most significant Catholic research projects ever undertaken.

In addition to this seminal research, every learning system we build begins with a significant research project. In the case of TDCI Confirmation Program, more than 2,000 interviews have been conducted with diocesan directors, parish directors of religious education, catechists, youth ministers, teachers, parents, sponsors, and students. All this in an effort to ascertain how we can best present the Confirmation experience.

Research is an ongoing component of our work at TDCI.

The Parish Book Program

Established in 2008, this program makes bestselling Catholic books available in bulk for just \$2 per copy to parishes at Christmas and Easter. The idea is to reinvigorate the faithful and engage the disengaged. 32% of those who attend Christmas Mass attend only once or twice a year. That makes Christmas our best opportunity to reengage them.

If every Catholic in America read one great Catholic book next year it would be a game-changer.

In 2008 we distributed 88,000 books

In 2009 we distributed 296,000 books

In 2010 we distributed 601,000 books

In 2011 we have already distributed 350,000 books and expect to distribute more than 1,200,000 books by Christmas.

This program is ongoing and has reached fiscal sustainability.





Generosity: The Heart of Christianity

The next great crisis for the Catholic Church in America is going to be a financial one. Giving is decreasing at a disturbing rate and parishes and schools have been underfunded for many decades.

If we are going to meet the challenges of our times we are going to need considerable financial resources.

This program will present a new approach to stewardship that integrates a Biblical understanding of giving, practical education in the sphere of personal finances, and the spirituality of money.

This program is in development and a first phase will be ready for pilot testing in 2012.



The Four Signs Program

Imagine you knew the four things that made people highly engaged Catholics. Wouldn't you intentionally try to increase these behaviors in your parishioners?

This program will consist of two parts.

1. A program to help individuals develop the four signs in their personal lives.
2. A program designed to help parishes drive the four signs through all their programming and communication.

This program will be launched in the summer of 2012.



Confirmation Program

Confirmation preparation is the last formal teaching most Catholics receive from the Church, our last chance to make a case for the relevance of Catholicism, and most young Catholics leave the Church within a handful of years of being confirmed.

This program will focus on making a direct connection between the questions young people are grappling with and the Sacrament of Confirmation.

At present we are in the process of evaluating current offerings available to parishes, and the strengths and weaknesses of those programs. We expect to have something to pilot in the Fall of 2012.



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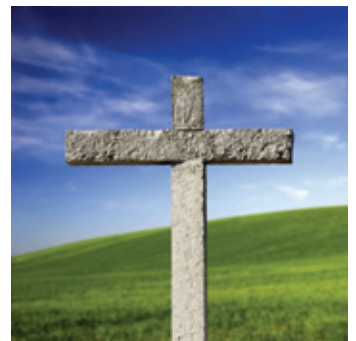
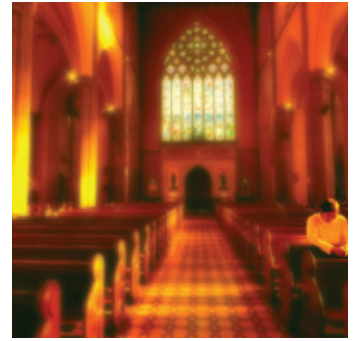
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