

# Unchaining Confirmation

Carotta 11/10

*Given all that we now know about adolescent spirituality, good catechesis and youth ministry, how can we enhance Confirmation's potential to be a more formative experience in the lives of young people? (USCCB: 13-18 years old.)*

**Adolescent spirituality : Already believe. 3-D. Beige and inarticulate.**

Suppose we helped them ...

- + develop spiritual sensitivities and awakenings (awareness)
- + evaluate and own their Catholic identity (ownership)
- + imagine *the call and practices of discipleship* (life after Confirmation)
- + ***Drove them out of their minds*** (moral and theological reflection)
- + develop a **Spiritual Growth Plan** ie. KAB? VHI? (personalization)
- + gain the skills and language to articulate the nature of their faith, their experiences of Grace, and their grasp of the Tradition. (articulation)
- + do **SOME FORMATION ON THEIR OWN** -but not alone. (non-gathered)
- + within **a mentoring environment.** (quality of presence)

What kind of experience would they have? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Suggestions?

### When we are with them:

Deep, varied prayer experiences  
Intense, concentrated sessions  
Prod and provoke Awakenings  
Exercise Religious Imagination  
Move from initiation to articulation.  
Drive them out of their minds

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### On their own, not alone:

Spiritual Growth Plan  
"Do a Search" For Faith  
Structured Journaling  
Spiritual Practices  
Go Unplugged  
Co-sponsor

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# Preparation Within A Mentoring Environment

(gleaned and adapted from *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams* by Sharon Daloz Parks, Jossey-Bass (2000))

Mentoring is a term overused in education and youth services for almost every role in which an adult interfaces with the young. Ever since Homer's *Odyssey* it has been laden with expectations of imparting wisdom. But the term mentor is best reserved for a distinctive role. There are four central gifts in mentoring: *recognition, support, challenge, and inspiration*. And few mentors ever manage to get it right all the time.

True mentors are never perfect but they offer good company to young people and know that the young person has a future beyond the mentor's imagination. Mentors convey inspiration for the long haul. Good mentors help anchor the promise of the future. They care about your soul.

Mentors respect the competency of young people and at the same time are prepared to be present in ways that invite more learning and becoming. Mentors are willing to be part of a young person's initiation into an adult imagination of self, others, the world, and God. Mentors are appropriately depended upon for guidance with critical thought, informing a conscience, and faith maturing. As a respected voice beyond the sphere of parents, the mentor recognizes in practical terms *the promise and the vulnerability* of adolescence.

True mentors dance the two-step: the art of supporting and challenging- sometimes simultaneously. In the midst of the challenging and rocky journey that confronts young people, the mentor serves as a steady point of orientation, reminding the young person of what is at the heart of life and spirit. And a good mentor is an antidote to both cynicism and materialism.

A mentor becomes significant only if she or he "makes sense" in terms of the young person's own experience. Mentors notice 'mentoring moments': brief yet powerful encounters and experiences that make a difference. Mentors pose questions that go straight to the heart and the heart of the matter, extending hospitality to the big questions young people ask at the rest stops of their journey. Other adults tend to pose questions that deliberately lead you to their side, and tend not to embrace or befriend big questions- unless they think they have answers that cleanly put those big questions back inside to rest.