



Confirmation Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to Confirmation preparation! We are looking forward to sharing with you this journey of faith as you prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Confirmation is not just one more thing that you need to do before graduation or something to check off a to-do-list. Confirmation is part of your faith journey, which is a lifelong journey. If faith is part of your life, then Confirmation is not an end but a new beginning. It is a new relationship for you with God, the Church, your family and yourself. You will be given the opportunity to learn more about your Catholic faith and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Confirmation perfects the Baptismal grace; it is the Sacrament which gives us the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply as children of God. Like Baptism, Confirmation imprints a spiritual mark and indelible character on the Christian soul; for this reason one can receive this Sacrament only once.

The Confirmation preparation process is an important period in one's faith journey. Therefore each confirmand must participate in weekly faith formation classes and youth ministry which help the confirmand to integrate catechesis into a lived reality. Our faith is not just something we read about and study, but rather something we live every day. The curriculum has been carefully chosen from several sources. In addition to reviewing information learned in prior years of formation, first-year classes expound on Church and Scriptural history so that you are confident in the knowledge of your faith. The second-year class explores life application and touches back frequently into Scriptural roots. Our primary goal for this program is to raise disciples who will stay involved in the Church past adolescence and into the rest of their lives.

Our Christian faith teaches us that families are the first church or school of life. It is within the family where we first come to know and experience community, love and what is right and wrong. In this school of life, the primary educators are the parents (or legal guardians). Parents have a responsibility to educate and children have the right to an education. In the family, parents are responsible for their child's human development and Christian education. It is in the family where children come to learn, through their parents' love, witness and education, the love of God, neighbor and self. The passion necessary to carry your light into the future is largely cultivated and encouraged by your parents who are an integral part of the confirmand's faith formation. But while they may have inspired the beginning of this journey because they value your education, it's up to you to choose to learn and embrace your faith.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

Because parents (or legal guardians) are the primary educators of their children, especially in matters of faith and morals, parents witness to a personal faith that is lived every day. Therefore, we need parents to take an active part in the preparation process for the Sacrament of Confirmation and to do the following:

1. Attend and participate in Sunday Mass every week. It is a good practice to attend mass as a family, if possible.
2. Take an active part in the confirmand's preparation progress and participate in specified events during the Confirmation preparation process. Engage in discussions about the material studied, including sharing personal understanding and perspective.
3. Stay informed about upcoming Confirmation projects, meetings and classes and return all required paperwork.
4. Volunteer to help at events and to do some service projects together as a family.
5. Pray for your child's spiritual growth every day.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SPONSORS

Each confirmand will have a sponsor who represents the support and faith of the community. A vital part of the preparation process, the sponsor gives witness to faith that is alive through his/her example of prayer, ministry and honest sharing. The confirmand and sponsor will spend a lot of time together talking, reflecting on scripture and praying. Officially, in their Canonical role, sponsors present confirmandi to the Bishop and the community at Confirmation. But in addition, your sponsor will be your Confirmation companion. She/he can attend any sessions with you, share his/her faith story with you and invite you to participate in parish life. Your sponsor will pray for you and ask his/her friends to do the same. The important thing is that they personally value being Catholic—a disciple of Jesus Christ and are an active, practicing member of the Catholic Church. Remember, your sponsor should:

1. Be 16 years or older and fully initiated into the Church.
2. Be someone you trust, someone whose life you would like to model.
3. Be mature in his/her faith and open to sharing his/her faith with you. This person does not need to know all the answers but be willing to assist you in finding them.
4. Be a mentor to you as you continue to grow in your own understanding of the Gospel and what it means to be a fully initiated Catholic Christian in the world today.

5. Be a practicing member of the Catholic Church in good standing with the Church by participating in parish life and attending Mass weekly and should assist you in choosing and carrying out your service experience project requirement.

CONFIRMATION PREREQUISITES

1. Between the ages 14 and 18 by the beginning of fall semester.
2. Received the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and Eucharist.
3. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities as a member of the Catholic Church.
4. Participate in two years of Confirmation formation classes.

CONFIRMANDI EXPECTATIONS

Through the Confirmation preparation process the confirmand will grow in knowledge of the Catholic faith and will mature in his or her faith. In Baptism, parents ask the church to welcome the confirmand into the body of Christ. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the confirmand will freely ask the Bishop to complete his or her initiation into the Catholic Church. The confirmed young Christian chooses to embrace the faith that was freely given at baptism. To be adequately prepared both intellectually and spiritually to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Catholic Church asks that the confirmandi gain a personal relationship with Jesus and an understanding that they belong to a church that is both universal and local. This requires that the confirmand review his or her knowledge of what the Catholic Church teaches, and over prayerful reflection, incorporate this knowledge into his or her personal faith and life. This includes active participation in faith formation, community service, and fulfilling all diocesan requirements. Confirmandi will:

1. As a responsible Catholic, attend the Sunday Mass every week. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith and an active participation in the Mass is a vital part of faith formation. As such, confirmandi will also complete a Mass Reflection Journal. Each confirmand will record from where the Gospel was taken (e.g., John 3:2-12) and write a reflection on the homily. At the end of Mass, they may have the celebrant sign the entry.
2. Participate in class; only four absences allowed. Absences may be excused by completing assigned additional homework related to the missed lesson.
3. Attend one youth meeting a month.
4. Complete fourteen service experience projects and accompanying reflection papers.
5. Complete and return all necessary paperwork on time.
6. Learn required prayers. A list of all prayers to be memorized is included.
7. Choose a saint's name as your Confirmation name and complete saint report.

8. Choose a qualified sponsor. The sponsor may be one of the confirmand's Godparents but neither of the confirmand's parents. The sponsor must be at least 16 years old, fully initiated in the Catholic Church and a practicing Catholic.
9. Pass Confirmation test.

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR ONE AT A GLANCE:

1. Write and turn in a letter of intent along with Baptismal and First Communion certificates by November 4
2. Choose a qualified sponsor and write letter telling him/her why he/she was chosen by December 2
3. Recite seven prayers from memory by February 10
4. Choose a saint's name as your Confirmation name by April 7
5. Pass Confirmation test with a minimum grade of 60% by April 28

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR TWO AT A GLANCE:

1. Write letter telling sponsor when Confirmation will be by December 2
2. Complete saint report by January 27
3. Participate in Confirmation Retreat on February 10
4. Recite Apostles' Creed from memory by February 17
5. Write a letter to the Bishop by April 28
6. Pass Confirmation test with a minimum grade of 80% by April 28

YOUTH MINISTRY PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENT

All students, years one and two, must participate in youth meetings once a month.

The purpose of this requirement is to integrate the confirmandi more fully into the church family so that their involvement doesn't end at Confirmation and they will be formed more fully in their faith. Studies have shown that involvement in youth ministry significantly increase the likelihood that teens will remain strong in their Catholic faith and tradition for life.

Youth ministry takes all of the knowledge of the Church and our faith that the teens have learned throughout the years and helps them apply it to their lives. Our primary goals are to provide opportunities for encountering God and show them how they can walk with Him in their everyday lives.

Youth Ministry meets on Wednesdays, 6-7:30 p.m. in the Carroll Room. Check out St. Mary's CYM on Facebook or email stmarys.cym@gmail.com for information.

SERVICE EXPERIENCE PROJECTS REQUIREMENT

When we put our Catholic faith in action, we demonstrate our commitment to follow Jesus through a Catholic way of life. Such experiences are based on the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and, most of all, on the example of Jesus who came to serve. When giving your time and talents to others, keep the following points in mind:

1. Your actions are not just jobs to be done; they are to selflessly and lovingly help those in need. You should model efforts on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.
2. Reflect on how your actions are helping you to take on the mind and heart of Christ to fulfill the needs of others and to build up the Christian community.
3. Giving of your time and talent continues after Confirmation and throughout your life.

To prepare yourself for Confirmation, you are to arrange and participate in fourteen (14) different Catholic action experiences. The experiences are broken down into categories:

- Family (2 experiences)
- School (4 experiences)
- Parish (4 experiences)
- Community (4 experiences)

You are required to write a reflection paper for each experience and have the supervising adult sign it. Do not wait to write your reflection, or you may miss out on the benefits of understanding what it means to be of service to others.

Corporal Works of Mercy

- Feed the hungry
- Clothe the naked
- Visit the sick
- Shelter the homeless
- Visit the imprisoned
- Bury the dead
- Give alms to the poor

Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Warn the sinner
- Instruct the ignorant
- Counsel the doubtful
- Comfort the suffering
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Forgive all injuries
- Pray for the living and the dead

Confirmation Year One

The first year is focused on gaining knowledge and understanding the Catholic faith and the foundation of the Church. Parents and the chosen sponsor should help confirmandi from the beginning by asking what they learned each week and offering their own insights. Sponsors should help guide the students in choosing a patron saint and exploring what it truly means to live your life in the Catholic Church.

After the sponsors have been chosen, the confirmandi should choose a patron saint. Throughout the year, confirmandi will learn about various saints and have resources to explore more on their own. They will be given until April 7th to choose a saint. They will learn more and grow closer with their patron saint as they journey toward Confirmation.

Part of the great commission given to us is to care for those in need. And as such, the confirmandi are expected to serve in their families, in their schools, in the parish and in the community. There will be several opportunities to participate with the youth ministry, but confirmandi should choose to get involved in services specific to their own interests.

At the end of the year the students will be administered the final Confirmation exam. They are not expected to know everything. This is just to give us an idea of where they are in their studies.

LETTER OF INTENT

Each confirmand must write a letter of intent addressed to the Administrator, Fr. George Sanders, and Director of Children and Youth Ministries, Brenda Sanders. The purpose of this letter is for the confirmand to express his/her desire to be confirmed, and a willingness to make this commitment. Please use the following five steps as a guide for the letter:

First: Begin with your greeting:

Dear Fr. Sanders and Ms. Sanders,

Second: Introduce yourself and share some information about yourself, such as your family, your interests and hobbies, and a little about your background.

Third: State that you would like to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation and explain in one or two paragraphs why you want to be confirmed. It may help you think about 1) the ways in which this Sacrament will strengthen your relationship with Jesus 2) the role of faith in your life 3) what it means to you to be a part of our parish community and/or 4) how the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to be witnesses for Jesus.

Fourth: Conclude your letter with a quotation from Scripture which will serve as your inspiration during your preparation for Confirmation. This can be a sentence or a few sentences. Include an explanation as to why you chose this passage.

Fifth: Sign your full name and date.

This letter is due by November 4th along with copies of Baptismal and First Communion Certificates.

EXPECTATIONS OF A SPONSOR

The requirements below are for confirmandi when considering potential sponsors. Preference is given to the Godparents, which most fully expresses the integral connection between Baptism and Confirmation. If you are using a proxy sponsor, he/she must also meet the criteria below.

The sponsor:

- Must be 16 years or older and a practicing Roman Catholic who attends Mass regularly (Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation) and lives according to Church teaching
- May be either male or female
- Cannot be the parents of the confirmand
- Must be fully initiated, having received Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist
- Must submit a verification of Confirmation which consists of either a copy of their Confirmation certificate or a letter from the parish where the sponsor was confirmed
- Must provide a letter of good standing
- May accompany confirmand to special liturgies and preparation programs
- Presents the Candidate to the minister of Confirmation

Sponsor must be chosen and information (verification of Confirmation AND letter of good standing from their church) turned in by December 2nd.

CHOOSING A CONFIRMATION NAME

In both the Old and New Testament, when God had a new mission for someone, He often gave them a new name. Even without a new name, your name has always told others who you are.

God calls each of us to fulfill a special mission. It may be converting non-believers, helping the poor, being a peacemaker, parenting or teaching. Candidates should research several saints in whom they are interested. They should choose a saint who they see as a role model and who inspires them in their faith and share their special mission. Confirmation may be the continuation of a mission began at Baptism or the

beginning of a new mission. Thus, confirmandi should consider two options when deciding on a Confirmation name:

1. Because Confirmation is the strengthening of the work that God began at Baptism, consider first using your Baptismal name for Confirmation. This shows the integral link between Baptism and Confirmation. Note: This only applies if your Baptismal name is a Saint's name.

2. Perhaps you see Confirmation as the beginning of a new mission for yourself and a fresh beginning for your faith journey. Then, you may choose a new name for Confirmation. This name should be that of a saint you admire or the saint name of someone you know and look up to as a Christian role model.

There are many helpful websites available to assist you in gathering information about the saints. Here are just a few:

theworkofgod.org/saints/
www.franciscanmedia.org/source/saint-of-the-day/
www.catholic-pages.com/dir/saints.asp
www.catholic.org/saints
saints.sqpn.com

Confirmation saints are to be chosen by April 7th.

Confirmation Year Two

The second year focuses on practice for how confirmandi should live their lives in full communion with the Church and live out the Great Commission that they will be charged with at the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Part of the great commission given to us is to care for those in need. And as such, the confirmandi are expected to serve in their families, in their schools, in the parish and in the community. There will be several opportunities to participate with the youth ministry, but confirmandi should choose to get involved in services specific to their own interests.

At the end of the year the students will be administered the final Confirmation exam.

SAINT REPORT

Confirmandi should understand that saints' names are chosen because these saints act as models and intercessors in their lives. We seek this intercession of the saints because the Church has always believed and taught that all the baptized are part of God's family. God's family includes all the saints in heaven and all the "saints" on earth who continue to persevere and grow in holiness while living the Christian life with the help of God's grace. Those of us on earth need the powerful intercession of all the saints in heaven, who stand before Jesus' throne of grace. Saints are men and women in heaven, who, while on earth responded to God's call and now share eternal life with Christ. They intercede on our behalf. By completing the saint report you will become more familiar with the saints of the Catholic Church and how they were called to holiness in very different ways.

Report Format (Must be at least one page, typed in 12pt font and double spaced):

- I. Introduction • 1-2 interesting facts about the saint you chose
- II. Biography • When he/she lived • Where he/she lived • Feast day, special devotions, symbols for which he/she is known • Qualities that made him/her saint • Contributions to the church
- III. Conclusion • Why did you choose this saint? • What qualities do you admire? • What characteristics would you like to imitate? • How and why does this saint inspire you to be a disciple of Christ?

Saint Report is due January 27, 2019. Confirmandi will present to class. Parents and sponsors are invited to attend too.

LETTER TO THE BISHOP

This is a very important part of the process. The Bishop adores these letters and reads them carefully. At Confirmation he mentions things that inspire him from what you wrote.

First: Begin with your greeting:

Dear Bishop Anthony Taylor,

Second: Introduce yourself and tell the Bishop about yourself. (Where you go to school, what your favorite sport or pastime is, any special talent you have, etc.)

Third: Consider the various gifts of the Holy Spirit which you receive in Confirmation. (Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgment or Counsel, Knowledge, Courage or Fortitude, Reverence or piety, Wonder and Awe or Fear of the Lord.) Tell him how some of those gifts will help in your life.

Fourth: Tell Bishop Taylor how you feel about being confirmed and how you plan to be a more active member of the Church. Do you have plans for being involved (or already are involved) in a specific ministry? How do you plan to be more like Jesus in the community, at home, at school, and in our parish?

Fifth: Tell him about your Confirmation saint and why you chose him/her as your model.

Sixth: Sign your full name and date.

Letter to the Bishop is due April 28th.

DAY OF CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is Thursday, May 30, 2019, at 6:00 pm. A short reception will precede the ceremony, so confirmandi, sponsors, and family members should plan to arrive at St. Mary's Parish Hall by 4:30 pm. Confirmandi and sponsors will have a short rehearsal as well. A photographer will be hired by St. Mary's from whom you may purchase pictures. Forms will be made available at the rehearsal. You are free to take pictures during the Mass, and there will be an opportunity to take pictures with the Bishop after the Mass as well.

Please dress nicely. Since Confirmation is not just another day, but a very important religious event, confirmandi and their sponsors should wear proper modest dress attire, as they would for an important secular event—no jeans, tennis or sports shoes.

GIRLS: Modest, conservative dress. No excessively tight or suggestive outfits. No midriffs showing. No excessive makeup or jewelry. No mini skirts.

BOYS: Dress pants, dress shirt and tie. A dress coat, if possible. No polos or pullovers.

SPONSORS: Modest, conservative dress.

Service Experience Reflection

Project Date: _____ Name: _____

Experience: (family, school, parish, community) _____

Describe your project:

What were the benefits of doing this project? (for both you and others)

What gift(s) of the Holy Spirit did this strengthen in you? How?

Wisdom	Ability to value spiritual things over worldly ones
Understanding	Recognizing how God is working in our lives
Counsel	Right judgment that allows us to see what is right and what is wrong and prudence to act accordingly
Knowledge	Awareness of God's plan—His purpose and how we respond
Fortitude	Sustaining decision to follow the will of God in any situation-- courage and strength of will to do what you know you should
Piety	Loyalty to God that manifests as generous love and affectionate obedience
Fear of the Lord	Grasping God's greatness and our dependence on Him

Which Spiritual or Corporal Work of Mercy are you modeling through this project? How?

How does this project prepare you to live as a follower and servant of Christ?

Adult signature: _____

Prayers

St. Cyprian, writing on the Lord's Prayer in 252 A.D., makes this point: "Our prayer is public and common; and when we pray, we pray not for one, but for the whole people, because we the whole people are one. The God of peace and the Teacher of concord, who taught unity, willed that one should thus pray for all, even as He Himself bore us all in one." But if we're all to pray together and as one, we need to be praying the same thing. Confirmandi will memorize the following prayers.

The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Our Father

Our Father Who art in Heaven, hallowed be 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.

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Grace before meals.

Bless us O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Act of Contrition.

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You. I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell. But most of all because they offend You, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen.

For poor souls

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.