



Confirmation Preparation Handbook

Confirmation: **Date to be determined**

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I. About the Sacrament of Confirmation

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church #1316-1321

Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

Confirmation, like Baptism, **imprints a spiritual mark or indelible character** on the Christian's soul; for this reason one can receive this sacrament only once in one's life.

In the Latin Church this sacrament is administered when the **age of reason** has been reached, and its celebration is ordinarily reserved to **the bishop**, thus signifying that this sacrament strengthens the ecclesial bond.

A candidate for Confirmation who has attained the age of reason must

- profess the faith
- be in the state of grace
- have the intention of receiving the sacrament
- and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs.

The **essential rite of Confirmation** is anointing the forehead of the baptized with sacred chrism, together with the laying on of the minister's hand and the words: "*Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti*" (Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.) in the Roman rite.

When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, its **connection with Baptism** is expressed, among other ways, by the renewal of baptismal promises. The celebration of Confirmation during the Eucharist helps underline the unity of the sacraments of Christian initiation.

From YOUCAT (Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church)

#205 – What happens in Confirmation?

To be confirmed means to make a “covenant” with God. **The confirmed says**, “Yes, I believe in you, my God, give me your Holy Spirit, so that I might belong entirely to you and never be separated from you and may witness to you throughout my whole life, body and soul, in my words and deeds, on good days and bad.” **And God says**, “Yes, I believe in you, too, my child—and I will give you my Spirit, my very self. I will belong entirely to you. I will never separate myself from you, in this life or eternally in the next. I will be in your body and your soul, in your words and deeds. Even if you forget me, I will still be there—on good days and bad.”

II. Candidate’s Preparation and Involvement after Confirmation

A. Rite of Enrollment

The immediate preparation for Confirmation formally begins with the Rite of Enrollment, when the students officially and publically state their desire to enter into preparations for the Sacrament of Confirmation. At the beginning of the first Confirmation Session, each student will be given a Confirmation Commitment Form that s/he will sign. Candidates will stand and state their names and make their commitment to the requirements of Confirmation. Students will hand in the Commitment Form at the end of the ceremony when they officially become Candidates.

B. Immediate Preparation for Confirmation

The stage of immediate preparation for Confirmation includes the following, which the candidate is expected to perform:

1. Attend all sessions being held for Confirmation preparation. These include Religious Education classes (held in parish school or CCD) and an additional Sunday evening session:
 - a. **Special Session:** Spiritual Growth– Saturday, February 27, 10:00am-12:00 p.m. (includes candidates and sponsors (or one parent); meet at St. Paul, New Middletown)
2. Attend a **retreat** (Confirmation candidates only) date to be determined at St. Paul, New Middletown (includes 5:00 p.m. Mass). Parents and Sponsors are invited to Mass concluding the retreat, which concludes the retreat.
3. Attend weekly Mass.
 - a. Mass times: 4:00 p.m. Saturday, 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 Noon Sunday at Holy Family and 11:00am on Sundays at St. Paul, New Middletown.
5. Participate regularly in the life of the Church by attending Sunday and Holy Day Mass, receiving the Sacraments, including Reconciliation, and actively giving service to others
6. Complete and return all forms by the required date in order to be properly prepared and presented for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation at this time. Below is an explanation of each of the forms:

1. Choosing a Sponsor:

Confirmation Name and Sponsor Information Form and Sponsor Certificate: due by September 27, 2026

The Confirmation Name and Sponsor Information Form is the way that you formally declare the Confirmation Name you have chosen and who your Confirmation Sponsor will be. We have to verify that your Confirmation Name is not “foreign to Christian sensibilities” (Canon 855) and that your Sponsor is eligible to fulfill that role.

In short, you should choose a Confirmation Sponsor who you see as a model of living the Catholic faith and someone who you feel comfortable

with to talk about your spiritual journey. To be eligible to be a Sponsor, the person must be an active Catholic above the age of 16 and must obtain verification from his/her pastor that s/he is eligible. If you Sponsor is from Holy Family Parish, we will verify his/her eligibility with Father Martin based on your Confirmation Name and Sponsor Information Form. If s/he is from another parish, s/he will need to fill out a Sponsor Certificate and have his/her pastor sign and seal it.

2. *Confirmation Saint Research Project*: due by [November 18, 2026](#)

The tradition of taking a new name to show a new role can be traced back to the Old Testament. When Abram was called to lead his people to believe in the one God, his name was changed from Abram to Abraham, “Father of many nations.” Again, in the New Testament, we find Simon’s name changed to Peter, meaning “Rock,” because he was to become the rock upon which Jesus founded his Church.

Now that you are about to be confirmed, it is time to choose the name you will take as a sign of your growth in faith. The Church strongly suggests that you choose your Baptismal name since Confirmation is the completion of Baptism. You may also choose the name of a favorite Saint (you can choose the name of a Saint of the opposite gender). Whatever name you choose, we ask that you do some research about your namesake.

Research Paper – Type a 1-page reflection paper about your Saint. This is a personal reflection paper; please cite any sources that you use in the paper. Use the following guidelines:

- Find out if you were named after a beloved family member or a favorite Saint.
- Whether you select a different name or continue with your Baptismal name, you should tell why you are doing so in your paper.

- Find out who your patron Saint is and tell a little about his/her life.
- What did this person do with his/her life that made him/her worthy of sainthood?
- Why did you select this person as a role model for the Confirmation process?

3. *Letter of Intent*: due by November 18, 2026

Confirmation is not a sacrament that someone receives as a matter of course. Anyone who wants to receive this sacrament must ask his/her pastor to be confirmed. At Holy Family Parish, this is done with a Letter of Intent addressed to Father Martin. Guidelines and format instructions are available at www.HolyFamilyPoland.org/Forms-and-Paperwork.

4. *Service Reflection*: due by February 8, 2027

YOUCAT (the Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church) explains that Confirmation gives the one who is confirmed, “the strength to witness to God’s love and might in word and deed” (no. 203). And at the Last Supper, Jesus told his Disciples, “This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). The life of a confirmed Catholic must be a life of Christian service, and so the preparation for full initiation into this life involves an experience of Christian service.

You will need to choose service projects that total 14 hours. Service hours must include at least one Parish Act of Mercy and one Community Act of Mercy. Please keep in mind that household chores are included your duties to your family and do not count as Christian service. The back of this form contains a list of suggested service projects. To get the most out of this experience, try choosing a service project that you might not normally perform. After you perform an act of Christian service, you will

need to have an adult in charge sign off on the Candidate Service Log. After the service hours are completed, candidates must complete the Service Reflection Report.

C. Readiness of the Candidate

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, every baptized person not yet confirmed can and should receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Since Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist form a unity, it follows that the faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time (during the 8th grade year in the Diocese of Youngstown). Without Confirmation, Christian initiation remains incomplete. To receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, a candidate must:

- Be baptized (Canon 889.1) and provide a copy of the Baptismal Certificate
- Request to receive the sacrament (Canon 885.1)
- Attend catechetical classes prior to and including the 8th grade year
- Be suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew baptismal promises (Canon 889.2)
- Be in a state of grace (CCC 1310) – have received the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to Confirmation

D. The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Because candidates need to be in a state of grace (have no mortal sin on their souls) in order to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, they should receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before the Confirmation day. Most parishes offer Reconciliation on Saturdays, and there are also communal Penance Services during Advent and Lent. You can also schedule a time to meet with a priest if the Saturday times and Penance Services will not work for you.

When you go to Confession, you should follow the Rite of Penance that you were taught when you prepared for your First Reconciliation. If you do not remember it, the priest will help you. The Rite is as follows:

Rite of Penance

Penitent: Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been (approximate length of time) since my last confession. (Now list the sins that you can remember, especially all mortal sins)

Priest: (He will counsel you and perhaps give you advice for how to avoid these sins in the future. He will give you a penance, which will be either an action or some prayers. Then he will ask you to make an Act of Contrition.)

Penitent: (Pray the Act of Contrition) My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you, whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Amen.

Priest: (Pronounces the Words of Absolution—the penitent makes the Sign of the Cross)

Thank the priest, and go do your penance.

E. Faith Knowledge – Formulas of Catholic Doctrine

Confirmation is the last stage in Christian Initiation, but initiation itself is only the beginning of a full, active, and adult Christian life. As you continue to mature, your understanding of the Catholic faith should mature with you—you should not have an 8th-grade-understanding of your faith when you are in 12th grade. Some of your aides in maturing

your understanding of the faith are listed below under the heading “After Confirmation.” Others are regular Mass attendance and Reconciliation, reading the Bible, referring to the Catechism, and other spiritual reading. All of these will help you gain a deeper understanding of the basics of the faith, often called the Formulas of Christian Doctrine, which are listed below and which you should be familiar with by the time of Confirmation:

1. *The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17)*

1. I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor’s goods.

2. *The Two Commandments of Love (Mt. 22:36-40)*

1. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.
2. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

3. *The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12)*

Do to others as you would have them do to you.

4. *The Five Precepts of the Church*

1. You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and remain free from work or activity that could impede the sanctification of such days.
2. You shall confess your sins at least once a year.
3. You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season.

4. You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.
5. You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church.

5. The Seven Capital Sins (Deadly Sins)

Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth

6. The Three Theological Virtues (1 Cor. 13:13)

Faith, Hope, Charity

7. The Four Cardinal Virtues (Wisdom 8:7)

Prudence, Justice, Temperance, Fortitude

8. The Four Last Things

Death, Judgment, Hell, Heaven

9. The Eight Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12)

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
- Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
- Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
- Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
- Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

10. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2-3)

Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude (Courage), Knowledge, Piety (Reverence), Fear of the Lord (Wonder and Awe)

11. The Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)

Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Modesty, Self-control, Chastity

12. The Seven Corporal Works of Mercy (Mt. 25:31-46)

1. Feed the hungry.
2. Give drink to the thirsty.
3. Clothe the naked.
4. Shelter the homeless.
5. Visit the sick.
6. Visit the imprisoned.
7. Bury the dead.

13. The Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy

1. Counsel the doubtful.
2. Instruct the ignorant.
3. Admonish sinners.
4. Comfort the afflicted.
5. Forgive offences.
6. Bear wrongs patiently.
7. Pray for the living and the dead.

14. The Parts of the Bible

Old Testament: Torah (Pentateuch), Historical Books, Wisdom Literature, Prophets (Major and Minor)

New Testament: Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John), History (Acts), St. Paul's Letters to Churches, St. Paul's Letters to Friends, Catholic Letters, Prophecy (Revelation)

15. The Holy Days of Obligation (USA)

Mary, the Mother of God – January 1

Ascension – Thursday after the 6th Week of Easter

Assumption of Mary – August 15

All Saints Day – November 1

The Immaculate Conception – December 8

The Nativity (Christmas) – December 25

16. The Seven Sacraments

Of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist (Holy Communion)

Of Healing: Reconciliation (Penance or Confession), Anointing of the Sick

Of Service and Vocation: Holy Orders, Matrimony (Marriage)

17. The Three Types of Prayer

Vocal, Meditation, Contemplation

F. Involvement after Confirmation

Full initiation through the Sacrament of Confirmation opens up new possibilities of involvement with your faith in your parish. Confirmed Catholics are encouraged to participate in the various ministries at the parish and can serve in other roles as well:

Holy Thursday – All newly confirmed 8th graders are invited to attend the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper. You will wear red stoles and take part in the procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar of Repose.

Youth Ministry – Open to all high school students interested in Christian service and fellowship.

Liturgical Ministry – Confirmed Catholics may serve in a variety of liturgical ministries including as a Lector, Usher, Altar Server, Cantor, and Minister of Holy Communion (at age 16).

Catechetical Ministry – Confirmed Catholics are welcome to perform Catechetical Ministries as a Children's Liturgy of the Word Catechist, a CCD Catechist's Aide, or as a CCD Catechist after high school graduation.

Other Parish Ministries – If you would like to see the full range of ministries at the parish, either check the website or visit the office to pick up a copy of the Parish Ministries Booklet.

Parish Membership – Confirmed Catholics can join a parish as an individual—as long as they live at home they are registered with their parents; once they move out, they will need to register on their own.

Baptism and Confirmation Sponsor – Confirmed Catholics who have reached the age of 16 can be Baptismal Sponsors (godparents) and Confirmation Sponsors.

III. Parents' Role and Responsibilities

“As the primary educators of their children: parents are to be intimately involved in the catechesis for Confirmation. This will help them renew and strengthen their own faith, besides enabling them to set a better example for their children.” (National Directory for Catechesis, no. 19)

Because parents...

- Are the primary educators of their children
- Are responsible for initiating their children into the sacramental life
- Serve as models for their children by being committed Christians

...parents should expect to:

- Worship with your families regularly.
- Be actively involved in the Confirmation preparation of your child.
- Engage in discussions about the material being studied including sharing your understanding and perspective.
- Encourage your child to reflect and thoughtfully consider the decision to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Pray for your child's spiritual growth every day.
- Support and encourage completion of assignments, activities, and expectations.
- Emphasize the importance of the Sacrament of Confirmation by taking an active part in the celebration of Confirmation.

- Assist in retreats, service work, meetings, classes, spiritual events, and social events.
- Faithfully bring your teenager (and when necessary, yourself) to meetings, programs, and prayer services that are planned to help your child prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Confirmation is an opportunity for parents to reaffirm their commitment to the Catholic faith and to become refreshed and renewed in their faith life. This renewed commitment involves developing a genuine desire to participate in the Eucharist and the sacramental life of the Church as well as a commitment to uphold the **Precepts of the Church**:

1. To attend Mass and rest from servile labor on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
2. To receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year, especially if aware of committing a mortal sin.
3. To receive Holy Communion at least once a year, between the First Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday.
4. To observe the fast days and abstinence days established by the Church.
5. To contribute to the material support of the Church.

IV. Information for Confirmation Sponsors

A. The Role of a Confirmation Sponsor

A sponsor must be a person who knows the candidate and can help him/her on his/her spiritual journey and can share his/her own faith. This selection should be indicated at the beginning of the candidate's immediate preparation (8th grade) so that the sponsor can play an active part in the preparation process. Ideally, it should be someone who has been involved already in the candidate's spiritual formation, such as a godparent, a family member, or a member of the local parish.

B. Eligibility of a Confirmation Sponsor

A sponsor **must**:

- Be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church (Canon 874.3)
 - Good standing includes being in a marital state that is blessed by the Church
- Be at least 16 years old (Canon 874.2)
- Belong to the Catholic Church and have been fully initiated (have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) (Canon 874.3)
- Not be the biological parent of the candidate (Canon 874.5)
- Not be prohibited by law from exercising the role of sponsor

A sponsor **may**:

- Be the same sponsor the candidate had for Baptism (a godparent)
- Be a new sponsor selected specifically for Confirmation
- Be either male or female for any candidate

Verification of Eligibility: Each name submitted to be a sponsor must be verified in advance of the Confirmation Liturgy by the parish.

C. Suggestions for Sponsors

- **Be a good Catholic role model.** The primary job of a sponsor is to show a candidate how to live the faith as an adult. This includes going to Mass every Sunday and Holy Day, going to Confession regularly, and praying daily. But it also means bringing your faith into the ordinary situations in daily living: being a model of forgiveness, compassion, and personal sacrifice. If you are not growing in holiness yourself, you will not be able to help your candidate grow in holiness.
- **Offer prayer support.** Remember to pray for your candidate every day for the rest of your life. It can be as simple as offering a

Hail Mary every morning or as complex as creating your own prayer routine. Remember your candidate in your Mass intention each Sunday and Holy Day. And let him/her know that you are praying for him/her.

- **Show visible spiritual support.** Make it a point to ask your candidate about his/her prayer life on a regular basis. Is he/she getting to Mass every Sunday and Holy Day? If not, how can you help (take him/her yourself, talk to his/her parents about going as a family, etc)? Is he/she getting to Confession regularly? If not, how can you help?
- **Mark the Confirmation Anniversary.** Remember the date that your candidate is confirmed and celebrate it each year. Send a card, make a phone call, or go out to dinner. Do something to remind your candidate (and yourself) that this is a major event in both of your lives.

D. Liturgy Dress Code for Sponsors

The Sacrament of Confirmation is a once-in-a-lifetime event during which the candidates will solemnly and publically profess their personal belief in the ancient Christian faith and accept full membership in the Catholic Church. Out of respect for the importance of the event and the guests in attendance, we request that sponsors adhere to the following guidelines.

Women

Dresses or skirts:

- Should not be shorter than 1" above the knee
- Spaghetti straps, sleeveless, or strapless dresses must be covered by a sweater, scarf, or jacket
- Plunging necklines are prohibited

Shirts:

- Spaghetti straps, sleeveless, or strapless dresses must be covered by a sweater, scarf, or jacket

- Plunging necklines are prohibited
- Undergarments must be covered

Dress pants:

- Pants should not be skin tight or low riding
- Skin or undergarments must be covered

Shoes

- No flip-flops or tennis shoes

Men

Dress pants:

- Pants should not be so loose as to reveal underclothing
- Jeans and athletic apparel are prohibited

Shirts:

- Collared dress shirts and ties are required
- Suit/sport coats are recommended, not required

Shoes

- No flip-flops or tennis shoes

V. The Confirmation Liturgy

The Sacrament of Confirmation is a once-in-a-lifetime special event during which the candidates will solemnly and publically profess their personal belief in the ancient Christian faith and accept full membership in the Catholic Church. Candidates should review the Renewal of Baptismal Promises and the Anointing with Chrism to be familiar with what they will be professing.

A. Dress Code for Candidates

All candidates will wear Confirmation gowns to provide solemnity and uniformity to our celebration of Confirmation. When considering what to wear under your Confirmation gown, please follow the Liturgy Dress Code for Sponsors on pages 17 and 18.

B. Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Do you renounce Satan and all his works and all his empty show?

Candidates: I do.

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

Candidates: I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried,
rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

Candidates: I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who today
through this Sacrament of Confirmation is given to you in a special way
just as he was given to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost?

Candidates: I do.

Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Candidates: I do.

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Candidates: Amen

C. The Anointing with Chrism

Each candidate approaches the Bishop and states his/her Confirmation Name. The Sponsor places his/her right hand on the candidate's shoulder. Then, as the Bishop makes the sign of the cross with chrism on the candidate's forehead, he says:

N. be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The newly confirmed responds: ***Amen.***

The Bishop says: Peace be with you.

The newly confirmed responds: ***And with your spirit.***

The Bishop may shake your hand afterward and/or congratulate you. Do not walk away until it is clear that he is finished.

VI. Forms and Paperwork

1. Confirmation Commitment Form
2. Confirmation Name and Sponsor Information Form
3. Sponsor Certificate (for Sponsors not from Holy Family Parish, please have the Sponsor's pastor sign and seal the form)
4. Confirmation Saint Research Project
5. Letter of Intent Guidelines
6. Service Reflection Form and Approved Service Project List

All forms are available on the parish website

(<https://www.holyfamilypoland.org/forms-and-paperwork>)

where most forms can be filled out electronically and submitted via email or printed to be signed.