

Sacrament of Confirmation Preparation Handbook



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“Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation," whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For "by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed. The duty of Christians to take part in the life of the Church impels them to act as witnesses of the Gospel and of the obligations that flow from it. This witness is a transmission of the faith in words and deeds. Witness is an act of justice that establishes the truth or makes it known. All Christians by the example of their lives and the witness of their word, wherever they live, have an obligation to manifest the new man which they have put on in Baptism and to reveal the power of the Holy Spirit by whom they were strengthened at Confirmation”

Catechism of the Catholic Church 1285, 2472

The Sacrament of Confirmation further strengthens our relationship with God the Father, firmly unites us to Christ, and increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In seeking this Sacrament, the Candidate is stating that they want to participate in the Church’s mission of making God known, loved, and served, completing their Initiation into the Church.

Out of an understanding of the Sacrament, Diocesan Policy, and Canon Law, the Saint Joseph Parish Sacramental Preparation Program has developed the following guidelines and expectations for those preparing to receive Confirmation.

1) Preparation Program and Purpose



As baptized Catholics, we share in the mission of the Church throughout in the world. Therefore, the involvement of the parish community in the initiation process is essential. The preparation for and the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, and Reconciliation begins at home, within the family, the "domestic church" or the "church in miniature." Students are also provided with information and formation to help them prepare for these sacraments through the Saint Joseph Parish School of Religion (PSR) program or Catholic Day Schools. However, the required religious curriculum for each grade level is not specific to individual preparation for the sacraments.

Sacraments are community events, and this is reflected in the preparation and celebration of the sacrament at Saint Joseph Parish. Sacramental preparation is a parish faith formation activity. PSR, SJPS, formation at home, and the parish work together to support each other to prepare our youth for sacraments.

The Saint Joseph, Saint Anthony, Blessed Trinity Parish Sacramental Preparation Program for Confirmation works to form disciples with a lived faith. Its purpose is to bring Candidates into intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, as reflected in the mission of the Church. It seeks to enlighten faith, direct hearts to God, foster participation in the liturgy, and inspire apostolic activity. All formation and guidance is aimed at preparing the Candidate for full Initiation of Christian life in the Church.

The Program follows the "Sacrament Preparation Guidelines" set forth by the Diocese of Cleveland. It involves preparation session within a two year period, provides opportunities for service, and involvement with the parish community. Those in PSR and in Catholic Day Schools will come together for these session and prepare as a parish community for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

2) Readiness of Candidate and Requirements

Canon Law states that a person is able to receive Confirmation that is **"suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew the baptismal promises."** **Knowledge and awareness of the faith, personal conversion and a willingness to grow in faith through parish involvement are the major factors for determining readiness for Confirmation.**

Candidates must be Baptized Catholic, registered at Saint Joseph, Saint Anthony, Blessed Trinity Parishes, have received First Communion, and be currently enrolled in either PSR or Catholic Day School. If you are doing at home religious education, please see the Pastoral Associate.

The present Diocesan policy states that candidates should be the between 12-17 years of ages, within a two year preparation period. Our preparation process begins at age 12. It is asked that candidates who present themselves for Confirmation have fully completed no less **five (5)** years of Parish School of Religion (PSR) or a Catholic Grade School. If you have completed less than five years, this will **not** bar you from the Confirmation Program. Please contact the Pastoral Associate to find out what additional catechesis may be necessary.

3) Consistently participate in Mass, other Sacraments, and Prayer

It goes without saying that those wishing to be fully initiated members of the Catholic Church should attend Mass every Sunday. Your presence at Mass greatly increases everyone's experience. Participating in the Eucharistic life of the community is both a privilege and an obligation for Confirmed Catholics. It is the center of all that we believe as Catholic Christians, and our participation is a profession of our belief in our Catholic Faith. Saint Joseph Parish is your faith family and we want to pray with you, for you, and ask you to pray for us as we work toward recommending you for Confirmation. You will not be monitored in your Mass attendance as attendance at Mass is assumed for anyone taking Confirmation seriously. The Candidate should also celebrate the Sacrament of Penance as needed. Candidates are encouraged and will be provided opportunities to deepen their prayer life.



4) Candidate Registration Packet

In order to participate in the Confirmation Program, a complete registration Packet must be turned into the Parish Catechetical Leader (PCL) which includes:

- The Complete Registration Form (Including Photo Release and Emergency Medical Form)
- A Baptismal Certificate if not Baptized at Saint Joseph's
- Completed Candidate Packet
- \$75.00 Materials Fee (*If this poses a problem, contact the PCL*)

A Student cannot attend any sessions without this completed packet turned in.

5) Parental Responsibilities

Parents, as primary educators of their children (*CCC 2221*), are encouraged to be actively involved in their Candidate's preparation for Confirmation. By doing this, parents are living out the commitment they made at the child's Baptism. Parents are expected to lead by example by attendance at Sunday Mass each week, participation in the Sacrament of Penance, regular family prayer. This example will help your Candidate through Confirmation preparation as well as encourage lifelong faith development. Parents are encouraged to continued growth in their own faith through participation in the sacramental life of the Church, especially in regular Sunday celebration of the Eucharist, daily prayer, and reading of Scripture.

Parents should also be aware of the Confirmation assignments and the Confirmation Project and assist their candidate if needed (see #8).

6) Sponsors and Sponsor Certificates

The person you choose to be your sponsor is very important. It is not an honorary role but one with significance and responsibility. It helps to remember that your sponsor is a person who is representing our faith and our Church and as such is sponsoring you into the fullness of the faith and promising to guide you by word, prayer, and example. Because of this, there are some Church laws that we are all required to follow. Canon 874 of the Code of Canon law gives the qualifications necessary for a person to serve as a godparent or sponsor.



- ✓ Designated by the confirmandi for the role of sponsor
- ✓ Completed the sixteenth year of age
- ✓ A fully initiated member of the Catholic Church (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist)
- ✓ Is registered and is able to obtain a sponsor form from his or her parish
- ✓ A practicing Catholic
- ✓ Not a parent of the one who is to be confirmed

If the person you choose does not meet these requirements they cannot be a sponsor for confirmation. It is extremely important that you make your choice early so that you can make sure that the person to be your sponsor is able to do so and has plenty of time to get their sponsor certificate.

One option for a Confirmation Sponsor is one of the candidate's Godparents. This demonstrates the close connection between Baptism and Confirmation. Another option is a confirmed Catholic whom the candidate admires and who bears witness to the gospel in his or her everyday life.

The name, contact information, and home parish of you sponsor is due no later than April 1st You may either submit the form included in the registration packet or visit www.saintjoe.org/Confirmation to submit the primary information about your sponsor. In addition, if your sponsor is from a different parish, please have them contact their home parish to obtain a Sponsor Certificate.

The sponsor is asked to be present at the Presentation of the Candidates (see #12), at the rehearsal, and the celebration of the Sacrament. In addition to these events, there will be a few short questions or reflections for the sponsor to discuss with their candidate during the summer months.

7) Attendance and Participation

The Candidate is expected to be present at and fully participate in all Confirmation Events. If you are actively seeking to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, these sessions should be a priority, as they are important in preparing for reception of the Sacrament. Students are to be prepared for the sessions, which includes completing any assignments or reading. **Before registering for the Confirmation program, please take a few moments to look over our attendance policy.**

It is with compassion and understanding that we say we cannot accommodate every scheduling conflict and other demands placed upon a Candidates's time. If there are other activities that have a higher priority than the Confirmation program and would cause you to have consistent conflicts with arriving on time and staying for the duration of the classes, or in any other ways compromise their ability to successfully complete the program, we respectfully ask that you not enroll in this program until such time as those conflicts can be avoided. Please contact the Pastoral Associate if you find yourself in this situation to discuss options.

The Confirmation Attendance Policy is as follows for those who expect to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation:

- 1.) Candidates cannot be absent for more than three (3) sessions during the entire program. Missing more than that may result in the Candidate not being Confirmed.
- 2.) Attendance at Eucharistic Devotions in October and attendance at the Final Retreat is **MANDATORY**. If a Candidate fails to attend these events, they may not be confirmed.

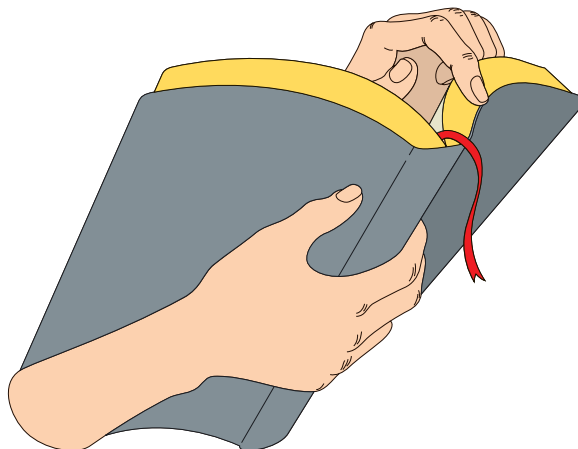
You have advanced notice for the date of these events so please work all schedules around it. Emergencies (medical/family) can be discussed with the Pastoral Associate or the Pastor.

8) Reflection Assignments and Confirmation Report

Each of us are entrusted with a unique mission at our baptism, a purpose that we are called by God to fulfill within His Church. We are called to learn the truths and teaching of our Catholic faith and, by word and action, live and defend them if we must. In Confirmation, we are strengthened to further this call.

Candidates will always have an assignment to complete in between sessions. These assignments are meant to aid the candidate in their understanding and reflection of their faith, while tying in one session to the next. Some may have 1 or 2 questions for the candidate to discuss with their sponsors. These assignments are also a way for the Pastoral Associate to gauge the readiness of each candidate to receive Confirmation and then communicate this to the Pastor.

Each Candidate will complete a report on the life and virtues of their Patron Saint. Detailed instructions, expectations, and resource list will be provided.





9) Christian Service

“The central message is simple: our faith is profoundly social. We cannot truly be called “Catholic” unless we hear and heed the church’s call to serve those in need and work for justice and peace. We cannot call ourselves followers of Jesus unless we take up his mission of bringing “good news to the poor, liberty to captives and new sight to the blind” (Communities of Salt and Light, U.S. Bishops, 1993).

Serving our brothers and sisters in Christ is part of the commitment we make as Christians, following in Christ’s footsteps and living out the Mission of the Church. Service is not something we do once, or just before Confirmation: it is a way of life for Christians that we incorporate fully into our faith.

Candidates will participate in various service projects as a group that are parish and community based and organized by the Confirmation Team. All service should be performed freely and willingly. Candidate will be asked to reflect on the service they have performed in their Saint reflection.

Make it enjoyable and perhaps discover new ways of being an active Catholic in your parish or as a Catholic assisting your community.





10) Confirmation Name

One of the traditional practices in the Church at the time of Confirmation is choosing a name that will remind you of this sacrament. It is an acknowledgement that the Holy Spirit will change you through the grace of this Sacrament. This can provide an opportunity to grow deeper in your faith and your relationship with the Church by considering what name you should pick.

A name identifies you, not just your physical self, but who you are as person.

Your parents probably spent many hours thinking about what they would

name you. Your name may have been chosen to honor a relative or friend, or even a saint that is special to your family. Names are important in our religious tradition as well. We see in Scripture that individuals changed their name as they entered into a deeper relationship with God to signify a new stage in their lives. For example, Abram became Abraham (Genesis 17:5), Sarai became Sarah (Genesis 17:15), and Simon became Peter (Matthew 16:18). Throughout the centuries, religious men and women often take new names to show their new relationship with Christ and His Church.

When picking a Confirmation name, take some time to think and pray about it.

What is your Baptismal name? You might want to recommit yourself to it since it expresses the relationship that exists between these two sacraments.

Is there a scripture story that is important to you? Do you have a favorite saint? You might want to choose the name of a saint who represents the type of Christian you wish to be. This means the name of a Saint or the name of someone the you consider to be a role model of faith. Perhaps they are a patron saint of quality you have, or somebody whose life you want to emulate, or one you have something in common with.

Avoid using names of celebrities or choosing a name simply because you like it.

Whether you decide to stay with your Baptismal name or pick a new name, take the time to research, explore, and pray about your name for as Scripture says, "*Yahweh calls each of us by name.*"

Resources:

Catholic Online-Saints - <http://www.catholic.org/saints/>

Patron Saints Index - <http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/indexsnt.htm>

Catholic Information Network - Catholic Saint Links - <http://www.cin.org/saintlink.html>



Row One - Blessed Pier Giorgio, St. Andre Bessette, St. Pope John Paul II, Mary Mother of God, St. Polycarp

Row Two - St. Damien of Molokai, St. Anne, St. Mother Theresa, St. Juan Diego

12) Clothing/Attire

"Clothes say something about what we think, what we value. They also influence how we behave and feel. Sunday is special, and God's House is special. Some things are really important, and our clothing and demeanor ought to reflect this truth." - Life Teen Website

Dress at Monthly Session/Retreat/Service Sessions

We do have fun at our formation sessions and on our Retreat. There is lots of "stuff" to do and plenty of moving around so make sure you are comfortable! Just keep in mind that we will be attending Mass at the retreat. Please dress in a way that best represents yourself, the Confirmation Class, and Saint Joseph Parish.

Dress for Presentation of Candidates

The Presentation of Candidates takes place at a Mass where the Candidates make their official commitment, before the parish community, to prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation. It also calls on the community to state that they will support these young men and women on this journey.

At the Presentation of Candidates, the Candidates will come forward and make their commitment to the requirements of Confirmation.

We ask that the Candidates and the Sponsor dress for this occasion. A clean, collared shirt or sweater and slacks/khakis (or skirts for young women) ("business casual" or dressier if you prefer).

Dress for Confirmation Mass

Apparel should be appropriate for Sunday Mass, in a manner respectful to the sacrament.

Young Men: dress pants, dress shoes (no athletic shoes), a dress shirt with a collar and a tie. Jackets are also acceptable

Young Women: dress or skirt and dress shoes. Dresses should be of an appropriate length and cover the shoulders and back. No plunging necklines, miniskirts, or apparel with sheer "see through" fabric. Dress pants and blouses are also allowed.

