

Confirmation Preparation

A GUIDEBOOK FOR CONFIRMATION
CANDIDATES, PARENTS and SPONSORS



Holy Cross-Wendelin
St. Joseph-Olney
St. Joseph-Stringtown
St. Lawrence-Lawrenceville

Welcome! We are looking forward to sharing with you this journey of faith as you prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. As you will see, Confirmation preparation involves learning, sharing, serving, fellowship, spiritual growth, and fun! 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 is the Sacrament in which one is enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church. It strengthens us and obliges us to be witnesses to Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith. It is the Sacrament in which one enters into full membership in the Catholic Church.

Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace: it is the sacrament which gives us the Holy Spirit to root us more deeply as children of God, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us to bear witness to the Christian faith in words and actions.

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

A Christian does not live as a child of God through his or her own efforts alone, but through the grace of God. We see this in a practical way when we look back on our own lives and the lives of others, even the lives of saints. Therefore, it is our duty to seek the grace that God offers us to live our lives as Christians in the way that God intends.

Confirmation preparation for youth in our parishes includes the following four elements:

•**Prayer and Worship:** Confirmandi must be active participants in the worship and prayer life of the Church, the Body of Christ. This will be a unique and privileged time of growth in your relationship with Jesus Christ - not only personally, but as a member of the Church. As the completion of Christian initiation, Confirmation incorporates us more fully into the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Eucharist. It nurtures our personal prayer life and fosters family rituals and prayer.

•**Catechesis:** We can love God better by knowing Him better and by keeping His commandments. We can love our neighbor and ourselves better by knowing the truth about who we are and witnessing to the moral law revealed by God to help us become the saints He made us to be. The Church's teaching is a great gift, but a teaching can only bear fruit when it is received by a learning heart. Therefore, Confirmation preparation involves intellectual growth in the tradition of the Church.

•**Community and Belonging:** Our deepest identity is in being members of the Body of Christ. This belonging tells us the most important truth about who we are. We live it out as members of the worldwide human family, as members of the Church, as members of our parishes, and in our families. Confirmation preparation should help young people to feel that they are an essential part of the Church community, providing opportunities for social interaction and meaningful participation in the life of the Church and the civic community. Living in right relationship to others is not only about what we do, but who we are and how we interact.

•**Mission:** Confirmation completes and strengthens our call to witness to Jesus Christ through evangelization and Christian love. Preparing for Confirmation includes deepening our commitment and experience as disciples of Jesus who share our faith with others and show the light of the Gospel to a hurting world. It involves concrete, practical service that makes a difference. It means being committed to relieving human suffering, seeking justice in all human relations, reaching out to those in distress, working for peace, and defending the sanctity of human life.

Who may be Confirmed? Confirmation candidates in our parishes:

- are in the 8th grade or older at the time of Confirmation
- have received the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and Eucharist.
- are practicing their faith
- are in the state of grace
- understand the responsibilities of a member of the Church
- are committed to continuing the practice and study of their Faith
- have a sincere and personal desire to receive the sacrament

Confirmation Candidate Expectations

- participate in Mass each Sunday (or Saturday evening)
- participate in Confirmation classes
- choose a qualified sponsor and meet regularly with him/her.
- choose a Saint's name as your Confirmation name and complete a research-based project on the Saint
- participate in the Rite of Commitment Mass in October
- participate in the parent/candidate meeting
- participate in a Confirmation retreat
- be regularly involved in service activities
- participate in additional spiritual activities
- write a letter to the Bishop
- participate in the Confirmation rehearsal
- participate in the Confirmation liturgy

Expectations in detail

The following pages further explain these expectations. Please remember that while in many cases we list a minimum requirement for Confirmation, the candidates should be encouraged to make many of these activities a regular part of their religious practices.

Participate in Mass on Saturday evening or Sunday each week

Being an active member of the parish includes keeping the Lord's Day Holy. Regular and active participation in Sunday Mass is a basic requirement for faithful Catholicism and therefore for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. **A Check-In System has been created for accountability. Simply place the provided paper slip in the collection basket with the candidate's name.**

The obligation to attend Mass does not cease when you are out of town. When the candidate attends Mass at another Catholic Church, the name of the parish and signature by the parish priest, or a copy of that week's parish bulletin, will suffice.

This is also an important way that parents demonstrate to their children the importance they place on the faith they are handing on to their children. If your family has not been attending Mass regularly in the past, this is a great opportunity to bring the practice of the faith into family life. It will mean that the candidate's Confirmation is already bearing fruit!

Participate in Confirmation classes

When a class is missed, the candidate loses time for fellowship and prayer as well as the material covered that day. All candidates are expected to be prepared for the classes, which includes completing all assignments in a timely manner.

Choose a qualified sponsor and meet regularly with your sponsor

The confirmation sponsor should be a person who has been a strong role model as a faith-filled Catholic. This person will be a companion in the candidate's faith journey and will vouch for their readiness to receive the sacrament.

Preference is ordinarily given to the candidate's Godparents, which expresses the integral connection between Baptism and Confirmation. The sponsor should be able to meet regularly with the candidate, help him/her prepare for the sacrament through prayer and service, and be present at the rehearsal and confirmation. Attendance by proxy is allowed in certain situations. Requests for proxy should be directed to the Pastor.

The sponsor:

- Is a practicing Catholic (attends Mass each Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation and is living according to the teachings of the Catholic Church)
- Supports the person to be confirmed in living a Christian life
- Is willing to serve as a long-lasting Christian influence on the candidate
- Is a fully initiated Catholic (Baptized and Confirmed themselves)
- Submits the verification letter provided in this guide
- Is sufficiently mature in their own faith (the bishop prefers the sponsor to be at least 18 years of age.)
- May be either male or female for any candidate
- Must be reasonably informed on Church teachings
- May not be the parent of the candidate
- Assists in determining the candidate's readiness and presents the candidate to the Bishop for Confirmation

Choose a Confirmation Saint name

Because Confirmation is the strengthening of the work that God began in your life at your Baptism, it is highly appropriate to choose your Baptismal name for Confirmation if your Baptismal name is a Saint's name.

On the other hand, choosing a new name reflects the ongoing work of grace in your life and Confirmation as a new step in your relationship with God. Your Confirmation name should be that of a Saint you admire and wish to imitate as a Christian role model.

Be careful about trustworthy sources when researching Saints. A few helpful sources are:

**lifeteen.com/biggest-best-list-confirmation-saints-guys-girls/
catholic.org/saints/
theworkofgod.org/saints**

Once the candidate has chosen his/her Confirmation name, they will complete a biography of that saint using the form found with this guide.

Participate in the Rite of Commitment Mass

All candidates and parents, and sponsors if available, should plan to attend the Rite of Commitment celebrated at the candidate's parish in October. During the Mass the candidates declare their intention to seek the Sacrament of Confirmation with the parish community as witness. In return the community pledges to support and pray for all those involved in this faith journey.

Participate in the Confirmation Retreat

Retreats provide a unique opportunity for the candidates to spend an extended time in discernment and reflect on the gifts of the Spirit and reflect on their relationship with God and their faith life. It is therefore required that each candidate attend the Confirmation retreat hosted by the parishes in their Confirmation year.

Be regularly involved in Service

Throughout Scripture we are called to put our faith into action, loving our neighbor and standing up for justice and peace. The greatest service we can provide another is sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed. Witnessing our faith, caring for the poor and suffering, and service to our neighbors are also essential to discipleship. Therefore, candidates will be involved in service activities as an ongoing and regular commitment.

Each Candidate is asked to complete at least 3 service projects per month (about 16 hours total). There are many opportunities to serve at church, in the family, and in the community.

Participate in additional spiritual activities (on a weekly basis)

Spending time in prayer and reflection is not only something to be done in church on Sunday. Candidates will choose from many opportunities that are available for them to pray, worship, and further their relationship with God.

The following is a partial list of spiritual activities:

- Attend weekday Mass
- Attend First Saturday Devotion
- Participate in Advent Evensong (Wendelin)
- Attend Stations of the Cross during Lent
- Participate in Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil liturgies
- Pray the Rosary on your own or with others
- Fast or give up some sacrifice occasionally
- Try a Bible reading plan, or read through the Gospels
- Read the works of a Saint or some other spiritual reading

Candidates are asked to choose some spiritual activity weekly during their time of preparation and encouraged to try different things.

“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” -James, 4, 8

Write a letter to the Bishop

It has been customary for the Bishop to request that each candidate write a personal letter to him requesting Confirmation. The students will be given more information about this letter as Confirmation approaches. Please consult the finalized schedule for the exact date.

Attend Confirmation Rehearsal

All candidates and their sponsors (or a proxy) must attend the Confirmation rehearsal which is typically the Wednesday before Confirmation. The sponsors will also give witness to the candidates at this time.

Participate in the Liturgy and Rite of Confirmation

Confirmation will be in the spring of 2024. The exact date will be announced.

“All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.” -Rite of Confirmation 25

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

“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.” (NCD, no. 119)

Because parents:

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

Parents should expect to:

- Worship with your family regularly
- Support and be actively involved in Confirmation preparation
- 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
- Support the expectations and program
- Pray for your child’s spiritual growth every day

Confirmation Sponsor Guide



Holy Cross-Wendelin
St. Joseph-Olney
St. Joseph-Stringtown
St. Lawrence- Lawrenceville

Sponsor Information and Suitability Form

Candidate's Name (Please Print): _____

Sponsor's Name (Please Print): _____

Relation to Candidate: _____

- I am a practicing Catholic: I attend Mass each Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation and am striving to live according to the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- I have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
- I believe I am sufficiently mature in my own faith commitment (the bishop prefers the sponsor to be at least 18 years of age).
- I am reasonably informed on current church teachings and I am not a parent of the candidate.

I accept the responsibilities of a Sponsor including faithful participation at Mass and striving to grow in my relationship with Jesus, trying to be a witness to the Gospel in words and in actions. I will support the person I sponsor by my continuing prayers, encouragement, and the example of my Christian life.

Date: _____ Sponsor's Signature: _____

CERTIFICATION BY THE SPONSOR'S PASTOR

(If the Sponsor is not a member of the four parishes)

Date _____ Pastor's Signature _____

Dear Sponsor,

Thank you for agreeing to be a sponsor for this young person. It is a role that the Catholic Church takes very seriously. You have committed to play an important role in the maturing of your Candidate's faith. If you have never been a sponsor before, you might be asking yourself, *"What is a sponsor, why does the Catholic Church require Confirmation candidates to have sponsors, and what is a sponsor's role?"*

Faith and knowledge of our religious traditions develop in many ways. Parents, siblings, teachers, priests, coaches, catechists, friends, and other people who enter our lives all play a part in a person's religious formation. Some learning experiences take place in formal settings with books and instructors while other learning happens informally as an outgrowth of day-to-day happenings. Every opportunity to learn in our faith is vital because the Holy Spirit uses every means to lead us to greater faith.

As we grow from childhood belief on the conviction of our parents to a mature and chosen faith of our own, we seek out models of faith who witness in their own lives the message and power of their relationship with God. A Confirmation Sponsor is such a witness and mentor. When the time comes, the sponsor will testify to the readiness and desire of your candidate to receive Confirmation.

Over the next several months, you are asked to spend significant time with your Candidate. Get to know one another on the level of faith. Talk about what it means to be a Catholic Christian. This booklet was designed to help in this effort. Your Candidate's book is exactly the same as yours so that you may work through this together even if you live far apart. We ask that both you and your Candidate look over the booklet and answer the questions **BEFORE** discussing. This will allow more time to share once you meet. There are no "correct" answers. The answers should be truthful and reflect from the heart. It is our hope that these discussions will bring to mind personal experiences and stories that both of you can share, which will help you see how God is at work in both of your lives.

These booklets are not to be turned back in.

We suggest working through one page at a time, spaced out during the year.

For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one Body and all were made to drink of one Spirit. If one member (of the Body of Christ) suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.
(1 Cor. 12:12-13, 26)

What do you think this passage from St. Paul's letter to the Christians at Corinth is saying?

Who in your life right now shows you what it means to follow Jesus and live in the Spirit?

Who are the people who support you as you try to follow Jesus Christ?

Who are your Christian "heroes?" These can be people living or dead whom you admire and want to be like. These can also be canonized saints. Why?

God is calling you to become a saint, someone who follows the way of Jesus wholeheartedly. Pretend that is far into the future and you have died and gone to heaven. What do you want it to say on your tombstone? How will you be a hero to others who follow you?

**** Sponsor & Candidate read the Scripture verses and answer the questions. Discuss your responses with one another.***

John 13:1-9,12-17

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world to the Father, having loved those who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And during supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, laid aside His garments and wrapped Himself with a towel. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel around His waist.

He came to Simon Peter and Peter said to Him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward, you will understand." Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him saying, "If I do not wash your feet, you shall have no part of me." Simon then said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and head!"

When Jesus had finished washing their feet and had put His garments back on and resumed His place at the table, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right for so I am. If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is the one sent greater than he who sends him. Blessed are you if you know what I have just said, and you do it."

What do you think is the main message of this Scripture passage? Why do you think Jesus did what He did in this story?

How do I imitate Christ by serving others? Think about all aspects of your life— family, school, work, your parish, your city, county, state, country, other groups you belong to.

What gifts, abilities, or qualities do I have that I can use to help others come to know, love, and serve God?

Who are persons that I can name who have served me directly or indirectly in some way and have shown me the love and care of God by their actions?

**** Sponsor & Candidate answer the questions privately then share your responses with one another.***

If someone asked you, “**Why are you a Catholic?**”, what would you say?

Provide at least 3 reasons.

1.

2.

3.

A question that I have about the Catholic faith is:

**** Sponsor & Candidate answer the questions privately then share your responses with one another.***

What is your favorite story about Jesus?

The Candidate and Sponsor should each tell or read the story to each other.

Why is this story your favorite?

What does it tell you about Jesus, or God, and about yourself?

What does it teach you?

If you could ask Jesus any one question or tell Him one thing, what would you ask or say?

*** Sponsor & Candidate answer the questions privately then share your responses with one another.**

A Question to Consider...

What meaning does your baptism have for you today?

With Your Family

With the help of your parents or other loved ones, recall the day of your Baptism. Record a few important details.

Date of your Baptism:

Your Godfather's Name:

Your Godmother's Name:

Church where you were Baptized:

How old were you when you were Baptized?

Family members and important loved ones present to witness your Baptism:

Confirmation Candidate Guide



This booklet is intended to help the candidate and sponsor to truly walk together during the final year of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. The candidate and sponsor are encouraged to meet together on a regular basis to complete these exercises and discussions. These booklets are not to be turned back in.

** Sponsor & Candidate read the Scripture verses and answer the questions. Discuss your responses with one another.*

For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one Body and all were made to drink of one Spirit. If one member (of the Body of Christ) suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

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Your Godmother's Name:

Church where you were Baptized:

How old were you when you were Baptized?

Family members and important loved ones present to witness your Baptism:

Confirmation Preparation Covenant

(To be completed at the Rite of Commitment)

This agreement sets forth the responsibilities and commitments that exist between our parish, our confirmation candidates, and their families. By our signatures, we affirm and bind ourselves to these mutual commitments.

Parish

We, as your parish promise to:

- *Pray for the candidates*
- *Provide the Holy Mass and a complete Sacramental life to candidates and their families, striving to be a place of both welcome and challenge*
- *Provide timely and competent teaching to prepare candidates for Confirmation*
- *Share in the spiritual development of the candidate and provide a Christian witness*
- *Diligently seek and truthfully discern the readiness of candidates for Confirmation*

On behalf of the Parishes of Holy Cross in Wendelin, St. Joseph in Stringtown, St. Joseph in Olney, and St. Lawrence in Lawrenceville:

Signature _____ Date _____

Parents

We, as parents, promise to:

- *Pray for our candidate*
- *Put Confirmation preparation above lesser priorities and activities even when difficult, and insist that our candidate do the same*
- *Demonstrate the priority of faith in our own lives, particularly by our faithful Mass attendance*
- *Actively support and participate in our candidate's preparation*

As parent(s) for the Candidate:

Signature _____ Date _____

Candidate

I, the Candidate, promise to:

- *Seek to grow in my relationship to God this year and throughout my life*
- *Attend Sunday Mass*
- *Engage the preparation program with integrity and sincerity*
- *Attend group activities, classes, Masses, Reconciliation, and retreats.*
- *Take responsibility for completing expectations in preparing for Confirmation*
- *Strive to exhibit appropriate behavior*

As a Candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation:

Signature _____ Date _____