



Confirmation

Catholic Area Faith Community of Jesus Our Living Water

Handbook



Mentoring youth toward an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit, and the Catholic community.

CONFIRMATION



Director's Note

The Catholic Area Faith Community of Jesus Our Living Water offers a two-year Confirmation Preparation process for teens entering 10th grade. We typically celebrate Confirmation in February of the 11th grade year with the Bishop presiding.

In the sacrament of Confirmation we are affirming our “Baptismal call to full participation in the life of the Church and the mission of Jesus.” This Sacrament seals our soul and sets us on a path to become what God has always intended for us (Eph. 2:10).

Those seeking the Sacrament are asked to approach this period of preparation as a journey of personal discovery of faith and truth that leads ultimately to making a commitment to the person of Jesus Christ and His Church.

The contents of the Confirmation Candidate Handbook are designed to help candidates, parents, and sponsors understand and embrace the experiences that this journey of preparation has to offer.

Hopes and Prayers – Confirmation is not a graduation! Far from it, Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation – a beginning; confirming the commitment to a life-long journey of discipleship.

It is the wish and hope of the Catholic Area Faith Community of Jesus Our Living Water that during this period of preparation every young person will experience the peace, love, forgiveness, and vitality that can only be found in a life connected to God. We look forward to the energy, ideas and perspective that the youth of our area faith community have to offer both our local community and the greater Church. We pray that these candidates will find a home and purpose in the Church founded by Christ.

May Christ guide you on this exciting journey.

Christine Pinto
Director of Faith Formation (Grades 9-11)



Preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation is a process of discovery that welcomes young Catholics into a deeper relationship with God and into the life and mission of the Catholic community. The purpose of our Confirmation Program is to “mentor youth toward an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Catholic Community.” The Confirmation preparation process is designed to fulfill this purpose by focusing on the following aspects: Mentorship, Faith Formation, Spiritual Renewal, and Discipleship.

Candidate Commitment – Each candidate seeking this sacrament must freely choose to be confirmed and be committed to continuing the faithful practice and study of our faith.

United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) – The USCCB asks each parish to prepare candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation (and by extension, a lifetime of participation in life and mission of the Church) by offering educational, worship, and service opportunities.

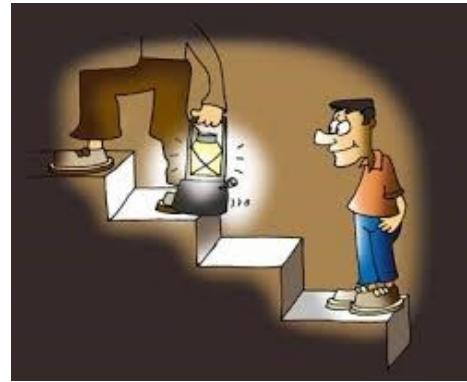
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Mentorship

Guides along the way:

"They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?'" (Luke 24:32)



Parents (*Life-Long Mentors*) – Parents are the first and primary teachers of the faith and are vital role models of our faith. Parents are encouraged to be strong leaders by continuing to learn, grow, and be active in their own faith. Our Faith Formation Staff stands ready to support parents with whatever material (or answers to those tough questions) needed.

During the preparation process we are asking teens to make a journey of discovery. A journey to discover the faith of our ancestors, the truth of God's Word, and the reality of our faith lived out daily. We hope candidates will discover their own purpose and respond to God's outpouring of love and the gifts of the Holy Spirit that are received in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Parents of these candidates are asked to support them by demonstrating the following:

- Make time to pray for their son/daughter each day.
- Attend and participate fully in weekly Liturgy together.
- Help their son/daughter choose a sponsor.
- Help their son/daughter research a Saint/choose a confirmation name.
- Help monitor their son/daughter's progress toward completion of the Confirmation preparation commitments.
- Provide a copy of the their son/daughter's Baptismal Certificate (if he/she was not baptized in one of the parishes of our Area Faith Community).
- Model Christian charity (love) and discipleship.

Sponsors (*Spiritual Mentors*) – Candidates will select a Confirmation sponsor during their first year of preparation. Sponsors play a crucial role on the faith journey in providing spiritual mentorship that will last for years to come. Candidates should take care in selecting their sponsor. The Church views the role of godparents and sponsors as a ministry, not simply an honor or title.

A sponsors are asked to help guide his/her Candidate in the following ways:

- Attend the **Candidate/Sponsor Session** (on a Sunday in the Spring of Year I).
- Attend the **Confirmation Retreat** (on a Sunday in the Fall of Year II).
- Meet individually with the Candidate at least 4 times before Confirmation. During this time Candidates and Sponsors are asked to share their faith stories with one another.
- Monitor and help the Candidate keep his/her Confirmation preparation commitments.
- Attend the **Confirmation Rehearsal** (Wednesday evening prior to Confirmation).
- Attend the **Confirmation Celebration** (on a Sunday usually in February of Year II).
- Continue a faith relationship with his/her Candidate following the celebration of Confirmation.



Mentorship

Guides along the way:

“We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...” (Hebrews 12:1)



Catechists (*Faith Mentors*) – Candidates participate in the Confirmation program at one of the Faith Formation Sites (Our Lady of the Lakes or St. Mary) for their ongoing faith formation. The groups formed in their first year will continue to meet together through their second year of Confirmation preparation. The relationships built between the teens and their catechists in these small faith-sharing communities often last well beyond Confirmation.

Saints: (*Unseen Mentors*) – Confirmation Candidates will choose a Saint of the Church to be their unseen mentor. Candidates will research the stories of Saints to choose one whose story impacts the candidate in a significant way. The chosen Saint’s name becomes the candidate’s Confirmation name.

The significance of taking on the name of the Saint follows many examples in Scripture. Throughout Scripture, God changes the name of people at a crucial time in their lives. God changed Abram's name to Abraham when a covenant of faith was made and Abraham became the “father of many nations”; and God changed Saul's name to Paul after he experienced a conversion of heart and became one of the greatest missionaries of the early Church.

Candidates seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation commit to completing the following Mentorship milestones:

- **Select a Sponsor.** Candidates will be given direction on methods to discern a sponsor who will guide them on their faith journey. (Submit Sponsor Form by December of Year I).
- **Attend the Candidate/Sponsor Session.** Candidates must attend the ***Saints: Candidate/Sponsor Session*** (on a Sunday in the Spring of Year I; if your sponsor cannot attend, a parent may act as a proxy for this session, though it is recommended that the Sponsor attend with the Candidate).
- **Meet individually with Sponsor.** Candidates commit to meet with their Sponsor at least 4 times prior to Confirmation.
- **Select a Confirmation Name** Candidates will be given directions to research Saints and discern a Confirmation name of significance to them.





Faith Formation - Sacramental Preparation

“God confirms us with you in Christ and has anointed us, putting a seal on us and giving us the Spirit.” (2 Cor. 1:21-22)

Ongoing Faith Formation – As candidates prepare for Confirmation it is vitally important for them to continue to grow in knowledge and understanding of God’s word as well as the traditions, teachings, and practices of the Catholic Church. Our Catholic faith is vast in scope, rooted in centuries of theology, and rich in symbol, prayer, and practice; but sometimes the true meaning of our worship or action is lost in layers of ritual.

One could study for a lifetime and still not fully know all that can be known about the Catholic Church or its teachings and traditions. During this period of preparation candidates will focus on what are considered the most basic truths related to being a practicing Catholic.

Small Faith Sharing Groups – Most candidates will participate in the Confirmation Preparation process at either Our Lady of the Lakes’ or St. Mary’s Faith Formation Sites. Small Faith Sharing Groups (classes) formed in the first year will continue to meet together through the second year of preparation. Any candidate missing more than one session in any given year may make up the session(s) but must communicate with the Director of Confirmation in order to do so.

Liturgy: “Source and Summit” – For all Candidates and every Catholic, the Eucharist is an inexhaustible mystery to be loved and lived. It is a sacrament; it is a sacrifice; it is a meal; it is a liturgical celebration, a public proclamation of our faith in sign and symbol; it is the “source and summit” of our Christian experience (where we are fed for the journey and it is our destination). To truly understand who we are as Catholics; to fully participate in the life and mission of the Church; to become the person of faith that God has called us to be, we must seek Christ in the sacraments; we must seek Christ in the Eucharist.

Candidates seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation commit to completing the following Faith Formation-Sacramental Preparation Milestones:

- **Attend Mass weekly.** All candidates preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation are expected to attend Mass every week.
- **Commit to ongoing faith formation.** All candidates preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation are expected to learn about the teaching and practices of the faith by participating in faith formation (Small Faith Sharing Groups).



Spiritual Renewal (Retreats)

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." (John 16:13)

Taking Time for God– Few people take time to be still and rest in God's presence. But consider the Lord's instruction, "Be still and know that I am God." This is why the US Bishops feel that it is imperative that all candidates preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation set aside a period of time so they can build an intimate relationship with the Lord. Retreat experiences allow the candidate to set aside a time for prayer and reflection. They allow space for the candidates to focus on their interior spiritual life and their personal relationship with Jesus. Retreats also serve to help candidates discern their response to God's outpouring of love and how they will live the sacraments as a regular part of the faith community.

Flexibility– We understand the busy lives and complicated schedules that accompany modern life (all the more reason to "recharge your spiritual battery"), so we have designed the Confirmation preparation experience to be flexible enough to meet the needs of each candidate, by giving them a chance to build this valuable experience into their life in a way that works best for them.

Greater Church Experience – Candidates may choose from numerous *Greater Church Experiences (GCE)* over the next eighteen months. The Director of Confirmation will give each candidate a list of possible opportunities that qualify as GCEs. If you have an idea that is not on the list, please speak with the Confirmation Director *prior to* attending to be sure that the experience qualifies. Candidates preparing for Confirmation must attend at least one GCE that is a *Catholic* experience and it should be completed at least one month prior to the celebration of Confirmation.

Confirmation Retreat – Candidates are responsible for attending the Confirmation Retreat during their 11th grade year. This retreat occurs on a Sunday in the Fall of their second year. Sponsors are asked to attend a portion of the retreat with their candidates.

Candidates seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation agree to commit to complete at least two retreat experiences (one Greater Church Experience and the Confirmation Retreat during the Confirmation Preparation process)

Pre-Approved Greater Church Experiences:

NCYC—National Catholic Youth Conference
TEC—Together Encountering Christ
Diocesan Senior High Youth Rally
NET Center (St. Paul) Confirmation Retreats
Steubenville Conference

Young Neighbors in Action—Senior High Mission Trip
YTM—Youth in Theology and Ministry
Diocesan Summer Leadership Camps
NET Center monthly gatherings





Discipleship (Volunteer Service)

“... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 20:40)

Service is a vital part of Christian living. To follow Christ's example we must learn how to pour out our very lives for one another. As part of our preparation for Confirmation, we will explore how to be Christ for others and see Christ in others.

The service component of Confirmation preparation is asked by the Bishops in order to provide candidates with a variety of experiences and opportunities to share their gifts in a few of the many ways the Catholic community answers Christ's command to love one's neighbor.

We have divided the volunteer hours into three distinct ministries of our Catholic Faith.
Group Service Nights, Church Volunteer Service and Family/Community Service.

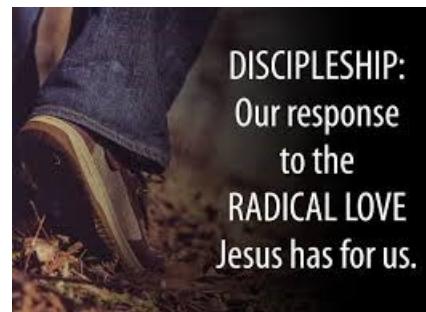
Group Service Nights (10 Hours, Minimum):

Group Service Nights will take place throughout the two years of preparation in conjunction with the young person's small group sessions. Each small group will participate in activities over six nights spread throughout the Confirmation Preparation Process. Four of these nights will take place during the first year of preparation and two are scheduled for the second year. The goals for these nights are:

1. To learn about the agency/service project.
2. To participate in the service experience.
3. To reflect on the experience.

Service Nights allow candidates to live out their baptismal call by sharing their time and gifts with the people of God. In the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 25:31-46), Jesus gives us practical (and specific) instructions on how we should serve the needs of others and God at the same time. We want candidates to recognize that this is the mission of the Church (as well as their mission) and to give them a chance to experience it first-hand.

Group Service Nights may be planned by the Director of Confirmation, the catechist, or the small group itself. Some nights will take place at the church, while others will occur at the local agency. When occurring at the agency, all candidates will report directly to the agency, rather than the church. Attendance will be taken and reported to either Our Lady of the Lakes or St. Mary's faith formation site by 7:15 pm. The Director of Confirmation will communicate with parents and teens regarding the specifics of each Group Service Night within a few weeks of the Service Night occurring.





Discipleship (Volunteer Service)

“... the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:28)

Church Volunteer Service (5 Hours, Minimum):

The aim of this type of service is to provide candidates with experiences that can help them explore or deepen the many (and often unique) ways in which we pray, worship, and serve as a Catholic community.

Some examples are:

Altar Server, Lector, Usher, Greeter, Art & Environment, Projectionist/Sound Board (Carol or Julie)
Choir/Instrumentalist for Mass (Tim)
Children’s Liturgy of the Word - during 10:00 am at OLOL or St. Mary (Barb)
Faith Formation Aid - Grades 1-6 (Barb, Erin or Colleen)
Vacation Bible School - First full week of June from 8:00 am-noon (Christine)
Fall Festival (Carol or Helaine)
Other Groups’ Events: KCs, CCW, D of I, Parish Society, Catholic United Financial, etc. (Carol or Julie)

- Many of the ministries listed above require volunteers to sign up in advance and some training may be required before you begin to volunteer. Some may also require a period of commitment (6 mo – 1 yr).
- Please make sure that you can make a commitment to your chosen ministry before you sign up.
- Remember that any training or number of hours beyond the 5 hour minimum may be counted toward the Family/Community Volunteer hours.
- For more information about these ministries, contact the person listed or one of the parish offices:
Our Lady of the Lakes Office (796-5664) St. Mary Office (235-0118)

Barb Garding: BarbGardning@OurLivingWater.org

Carol Lee: CarolLee@OurLivingWater.org

Christine Pinto: ChristinePinto@OurLivingWater.org

Colleen Lindstrom: ColleenLindstrom@OurLivingWater.org

Erin Wendt: ErinWendt@OurLivingWater.org

Helaine Bolter: HelaineBolter@OurLivingWater.org

Julie Roufs: JulieRoufs@OurLivingWater.org

Tim Cayler: TimCayler@OurLivingWater.org

Family/Community Volunteer Service (5 Hours, Minimum):

The aim of Family and community service is to provide candidates with an opportunity to follow Jesus’ teaching and put their faith into action in ways that help to build up families and the greater community. This ministry emphasizes the recognition of our own unique gifts, talents, and interests as gifts from God and to use those gifts to make our world a better place.

Just a few of the thousands of examples of Family/Community Service (Discipleship):

Helping a neighbor in need (Shoveling driveway, mowing lawn, baby sitting – for free of course!)

Volunteering for a community or sports organization

Volunteering at school



Discipleship (Volunteer Service)

"Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? ... You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:25, 27)

About Volunteer Ministry – Young people have a tremendous capacity and energy to perform great works of charity (love). Most do this with vitality and joy. What a blessing!

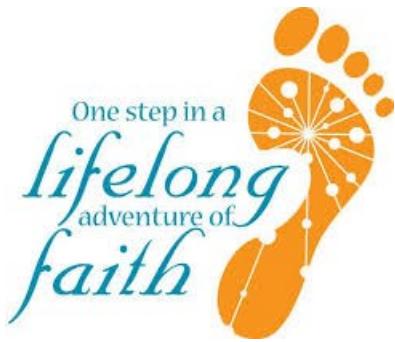
Our youth are not the *future of the Church* they are a *vital part of the Church TODAY*. The Catholic Church needs the optimism, the perspective and the energy of our teens in abundance. To this end, we invite all of our candidates to dig into their volunteer efforts with the same focus and enthusiasm as many of their other interests or hobbies. If not for their own sake (satisfaction of helping others, learning more about your faith/God, discovering an area of passion, etc.), then for the sake of a Church and a planet that desperately need their ideas, energy, and example.

While the Confirmation Director and the catechist will undoubtedly be able to suggest or highlight opportunities for ministry please remember that each candidate is responsible for finding his/her own volunteer opportunities and tracking his/her own hours. After completing service please submit updates for our records. ***Please keep a master copy of all your Confirmation commitments for your own records. We will review this record both in the small faith sharing group sessions and through email correspondence from the Director of Confirmation.***

Candidates seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation agree to complete the following Volunteer Ministry Milestones:

- **Group Service Nights (10 Hours):** Each Candidate commits to participating in six Group Service Nights throughout the preparation process. Through this process, each candidate will complete 10 hours of volunteer service. Those who are absent for Service Nights throughout the year will need to make up the time they missed on their own.
- **Church Volunteer Service (5 Hours, Minimum):** Each Candidate commits to volunteer a minimum of 5 hours for their local parish or within the Catholic Area Faith Community.
- **Family/Community Volunteer Service (5 Hours, Maximum)** Each Candidate commits to volunteer a minimum of 5 hours in volunteer service that benefit the wider community.





In Conclusion...

“... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Final Candidate Notes:

Confirmation is not about deciding to be Catholic. By virtue of your baptism, you are already Catholic. Confirmation, along with the Sacrament of the Eucharist, completes the Sacrament of Baptism.

Receiving the sacrament of Confirmation is NOT a “graduation” from Faith Formation. Rather, through the sacrament, we are commanded by Christ to “go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.”

As one of the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation, Confirmation celebrates the reality that the Holy Spirit is already alive in us and working through us. As with all sacraments, Confirmation should be entered into freely and with an open heart.

Candidates who wish to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation agree to commit to actively participate in the life and work of the Church and demonstrate the following:

- Make time to pray each day.
- Attend and participate fully in weekly Liturgy.
- Choose a Sponsor and complete the Sponsor/Candidate portion of the preparation process.
- Research a Saint/Choose a Confirmation Name.
- Attend all Confirmation Preparation sessions.
- Volunteer for a minimum of 20 hours of service.
- Participate in a minimum of two retreat experiences (GCE & Confirmation Retreat).
- Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Confirmation.
- Seek the Sacrament of Confirmation freely and with an open heart.

The hope of our area faith community is that this preparation will foster the understanding that our Catholic faith is a journey that BEGINS with Confirmation and lasts a lifetime;
God is always calling us to more!

For More Information:

Check out our website: www.OurLivingWater.org/confirmation

Sign up for Reminder Text Messages (see handout)

Check out the Confirmation Information Area at Our Lady of the Lakes or St. Mary

Contact Christine at: ChristinePinto@OurLivingWater.org
or 320-235-0118