

What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?

Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are the sacraments of initiation. Through these sacraments we become members of the Catholic Church, a community of Spirit-filled people who have been saved by Christ and who witness Christ's love in the world. As quoted from the Confirmation text, Celebrating our Faith, "Confirmation completes and seals our Baptism. Through the fullness of the Spirit's gifts, we are lead to Eucharist through which we become the Body of Christ (p.4)." Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, the candidates are:

- Enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Are bound more perfectly to the Church.
- Are strengthened in faith.
- Enabled to courageously witness to Christ and to spread and defend the faith.

The Role of Those to Be Confirmed

Those to be confirmed must freely choose to be confirmed and must be willing to participate in the Confirmation Preparation program, consisting of study, service, and prayer. Their faith in God must be evident through their participation in the sacramental life of the Catholic Church. They need to be attending Mass regularly on Sunday's, and living an active Christian life. Knowing that there are those times when we turn away from God or fail to follow his will for us, the candidates are encouraged to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation during this preparation process. As stated in the Confirmation text (p.6) the expectations of the Candidates are to:

1. Enter the journey with a willing heart and an open mind.
2. Commit oneself to consistent personal prayer throughout the journey.
3. Attend all sessions (Excused absences require completion of work missed).
4. Willingly engage in community service.
5. Participate in the Confirmation retreat.
6. Complete all entries in the candidate's book.
7. Support and encourage other candidates on the journey.
8. Maintain an open and honest relationship with one's sponsor and mentor.

The Role of the Parent (or adult family member)

Parents play a primary role in the sacramental preparation process. The parent:

1. Models the commitment to personal prayer, community worship, and ministry expected of a mature Christian.
2. Assumes responsibility to assist the candidate in meeting the program's attendance and service requirements.
3. Agrees to help the candidate understand the experience of the journey enters into dialogue with the candidates, prays for and with the candidate, is willing to share his or her personal faith story with the candidate.
4. Is willing to step in for the mentor at any time if the mentor is unable to fulfill his or her commitment.

The Role of the Sponsor

Each candidate, with parental help, is expected to choose a sponsor. The sponsor:

1. Models the commitment to personal prayer, community worship, and ministry expected of a mature Christian.
2. Agrees to discuss the Catholic faith with the candidate, using the Celebrating our Faith text, and completing with the candidate the entries in the candidate's book.
3. Supports the candidate during the journey of preparation through ongoing dialogue, notes of encouragement, and a willingness to listen to the concerns and hopes of the candidate.
4. Prays for and with the candidate.
5. The sponsor must be a confirmed, practicing Catholic, and sufficiently mature for this role. By canon law, parents cannot be Confirmation sponsors for their own children. It is greatly encouraged that the baptismal sponsor also be the confirmation sponsor to more clearly illustrate the relationship between Baptism and Confirmation. The sponsor presents the candidate to the bishop for the anointing.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation

Registration for Confirmation

If the candidate was not baptized nor made their First Eucharist at St. Francis, a copy of the candidate's baptismal certificate is requested along with the registration form. At the time of registration, you will also indicate the name of your sponsor. Congratulatory letters will be mailed to the sponsor.

Religious Study and Formation in Faith

Full participation in religious education classes or in the school is an important part of one's growth in understanding the Faith. Regular attendance, completion of assigned work, and participation in class are requirements in preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Religious Study during the 8th grade includes Morality (Living the Christian Life) and a concentration on the Sacrament of Confirmation, using the material found in the red binder (given at the first Confirmation Preparation Meeting) and the Confirmation texts. Please be prepared to bring your red binder to class as directed by your teacher.

Sponsor (Mentor) Faith Discussions

Life in the Spirit is first and foremost about a relationship with God and with others. The time and commitment your sponsor (mentor) gives to you in guiding and supporting your faith is a valuable gift towards your life-long growth in Christian discipleship. The Confirmation booklet, Celebrating Our Faith, is a tool to aid in faith discussions with your sponsor (mentor). Thus, timely completion of the Confirmation text with your sponsor (mentor) is required.

How to Use the Celebrating our Faith Text

Ideally sitting down together, or by phone or other means of communication, both the sponsor (mentor) and candidate read the session (chapter) of the text to be discussed. The candidate may wish to complete his/her questions before the discussion takes place or may choose to answer the questions during the mentor and candidate discussion periods. Please complete, writing in your book, answers to the questions asked of you and have your sponsor (mentor) answer the mentor questions in each chapter. All work in the Celebrating our Faith text should be completed by mid-March.

The Confirmation Retreat

The retreat experience is an important means of spiritual growth for the Confirmation candidate. The scheduled overnight retreats allow for the candidate to become more aware of the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives and to grow spiritually in friendship with the Lord and with their peers.

Candidates choose one of the overnight retreats to attend. Permission forms are available online and in the Religious Education Office.

What to bring and not to bring on the retreat.

Bring your bible! Read over and bring the Confirmation prayer (included in your red binder). You do not need to bring your red binder to the retreat.

Wear comfortable clothing for the retreat, bring two changes of clothing, bring warm clothing and a jacket in case of cool weather in October and winter clothing if necessary in November. Bring an overnight bag of personal hygiene items (such as toothpaste, toothbrush, hairbrushes, etc.) Remember to bring any medicines, including asthma inhalers that you currently use. Medicines, including over the counter remedies, must be in the original container with medicine name and dosage information clearly labeled.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served. Pizza will be served on Friday night after the arrival at Bethany House. Please do not bring i-pods, CD players, or other tech equipment with you to the retreat. Cell phones are strongly discouraged. If you bring a cell phone, the phone must be checked in and left at the desk for the retreat. Please review the Bethany House retreat rules (available online), that you signed and returned to the Religious Education Office. Remember, you represent what it means to be a Catholic youth at St. Francis. Give your best on these weekends!

Where to Meet for the Retreat

For the retreat, please meet in the St. Francis front parking lot at 5 p.m. on Friday. We will travel by bus to Bethany House. We will return to the St. Francis parking lot on Sunday around 2 p.m.

Adult Chaperones are needed.

Adult chaperones age 21 years and over are needed. There is no retreat fee for Confirmation youth related to adult chaperones. Please call 821-2132 for more information about chaperones.

Service Project Information

Jesus came “not to be served, but serve (Mt 20:28).” The Church is a servant community and all those accepting full membership in the Church are also accepting the responsibility to serve.

Candidates for the reception of Confirmation are asked to select at least three different service projects. By engaging in services, the candidates contribute

their own talents and abilities and help make a “Christ” difference in their communities by helping others. In living an active faith, the candidates grow in knowledge and love of God and neighbor. A rich variety of service opportunities are available at St. Francis. Check the Sunday forum for opportunities to help or log onto www.stfrancisa2.com/socialministry for the St. Francis social ministry page. Also, watch for emails sent from the Religious Education Office for more service projects. Be creative in seeking out additional service projects in your school or neighborhood communities.

Candidates are asked to contribute 30 hours of service to others as part of their preparation for Confirmation. Please document the service, using the service forms provided earlier. For each service project, please complete the form, obtain the service project supervisor’s signature, and return the form to the Religious Education Office. Forms documenting 30 hours of service are due by the end of January.

A service form is included in your red binder and additional forms are available from the Religious Education Office or on Confirmation web page.

Choosing a Confirmation Name

Throughout the Bible there are many times when God changed the name of a person to indicate that the person was changed in some way. This name change also represented a deepening of the person’s relationship with God and often was the point at which the person took on a new role as a follower of God.

“God calls each one by name. Everyone’s name is sacred. The name is the icon of the person. It demands respect as a sign of the dignity of the one who bears it (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2158).”

At Baptism, your parents gave you a name. In Confirmation, you have the opportunity to choose a name that speaks to you of your relationship with God. You may choose the name of a saint who will be your patron/patroness for your Christian journey. You may also choose to keep your baptismal name, for the life in Christ began in baptism, is now sealed in Confirmation.

Researching your Name Saint

Once you have chosen the name of a Saint or holy person, you will need to do some research into the life of this person. Research information can be found in the Religious Education Office, the Parish Library (located in the gathering space in Church), the area community libraries, the internet, and local bookstores. A

good website to start acquainting yourself with the saints is <http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/indexsnt.htm> .

Take notes to answer the following questions:

1. What is the story (biography) of this Saint's (or holy person's) life?
2. What did this person do in their daily life that showed they were a follower of Jesus?
3. Why did you choose this person? What in this person's life do you admire or wish to imitate in your own life?

At the Confirmation interview the candidates will be asked to give an oral report, about the Saint/holy person they have chosen for their name.

Confirmation Name Form

After you have chosen your Confirmation name, please complete the "Confirmation Name Form" enclosed your red binder and return to the form to the Religious Education Office. Along with the form, please include a photo (about 3" by 5") of yourself to be included in the picture display. Please write your first and last name on the back of the photo. The Confirmation Name Form is due in February.

The Presentation Mass

- Candidates are asked to be in Church by 4:30 p.m.
- Candidates sit with their families and sponsor in the reserved pews.
- During the Mass, the candidates will be asked to profess their Faith, will be presented to the parish community, and will be blessed as they continue their journey toward Confirmation.
- The sponsors will be recognized and honored at this Mass.
- The parish is invited to pray for these candidates.

Appropriate Attire

Candidates should wear dress clothes appropriate for Mass. No jeans, sweat suits, wind suits, or T-shirts should be worn.

Interview of Candidates

All candidates will be interviewed prior to being confirmed. Interviews are scheduled for March. Sign-up for interview times will take place at the February meeting. At the time of the interview, all preparation requirements for Confirmation are to be completed. An oral report about the Saint/holy person chosen for the Confirmation name will be asked of the candidate. Understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation through discussion of the Confirmation booklet, Celebrating Our Faith, and the "Confirmation" text (found in the red binder), and review of completed service projects will be discussed at the interview. The candidate's desire for the Sacrament of Confirmation will also be determined.

The Confirmation Mass

A reception follows the Mass in the Parish Activities Center (PAC). Rehearsal takes place in the church. If possible, sponsors should attend the rehearsal with the candidate. Information on the Confirmation Mass will be available at the rehearsal.

Dress Guidelines for Confirmation

The dress guidelines for the candidates are as follows;

Girls- Dress or skirt with shirt, dress slacks, dress shoes and stockings. Please note: Dress and skirt hemlines are to be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee.

Dresses or tops must have some type of sleeves. Jackets or sweaters must be worn in the Church if the candidate chooses to wear a sleeveless dress. Clothing should not be too tight or have low-cut necklines or slits that go above the knee.

Boys- Dress shirt, dress pants, and dress shoes. Sport coat or suit and tie is optional.

Questions?

You will find information and forms on the Confirmation webpage.

Please feel free to contact Courtney Aymen, secretary at stfreled@stfrancisa2.org or 734-821-2130 or Ellen Ward, Director of Religious Education at ward@stfrancisa2.org or 734-821-2132 for questions.

*May God bless you and your family,
Working all things out for your good,
As you prepare for this important milestone
In your journey of Faith!*