



CONFIRMATION HANDBOOK



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 began this journey of faith at your Baptism, when your parents pledged to raise you in the Catholic faith.

During your preparation, 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 strengthens us and obliges us to be witnesses to Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith. You can only accomplish this if your knowledge of your faith is well-formed.

Confirmation is the Sacrament in which one enters into full membership in the Catholic Church. At Confirmation, you will re-affirm the baptismal promises that your parents made on your behalf. 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. For this reason, during your Confirmation preparation you will be asked to work with others in the community so that you can see how we are all connected and supported by our faith.

You will not make this journey alone, but with the help and support of your family, your catechists, Faith Formation staff, and the St. Luke community.

Sincerely,

Diane Yarborough

Diane Yarborough
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Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace in many ways:

- It unites us more firmly to Christ and increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
- It renders our bond with the Church more perfect (whole)
- It gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the Faith by works and actions as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross

How do I prepare myself?

- Be open to how God will strengthen you and continue to be present in your life.
- Participate in every opportunity given to you by making your responses come alive and keeping your eyes and ears ready to see what God is doing in your life.
- Be aware: parish community, parents, sponsors, and catechists are all here to help you prepare.

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.

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.

II. 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."

III. 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. Without Confirmation, Christian initiation remains incomplete.

IV. CONFIRMATION CANDIDATE EXPECTATIONS

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 Day

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. 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 OF PENANCE

Penitent: Bless 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*) O my God, I am sorry for my sins with all 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 the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid whatever may lead me to sin. Amen.

Priest: (Pronounces the Words of Absolution)

Penitent: (makes the Sign of the Cross) Thank the priest, and go do your penance.

FURTHER CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS

- Attend and participate in weekly mass
- Attend and participate in Confirmation preparation classes
- Choose a qualified sponsor and meet regularly with him/her
- Complete twenty-one (21) service hours and reflections
- Attend and participate in the Confirmation retreats
- Choose a Confirmation / Saint name and write a reflection paper and complete a project
- Complete a letter of intent to be confirmed

The following explains each of the Confirmation expectations in detail and in some cases, the reasons the requirements are important to the formation of the candidate. 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.

- **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN MASS EACH WEEK**

The Confirmation candidate and his or her parents (along with the rest of the family) must have a sincere intention of participating in Mass every week. Participating in the Eucharistic life of the community is both a privilege and an obligation of Confirmed Catholics. This is also an important way that parents demonstrate to their children the importance they place on the faith they are passing on to their children. Worshipping as a community, we build up the Body of Christ. If your family has not been attending Mass regularly in the past, we are confident that by doing so you will notice many benefits by the time Confirmation approaches.

- **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN PHASE 2/CONFIRMATION PREP CLASSES**

Attendance at all Confirmation preparation classes is extremely important in preparing the candidates for reception of the Sacrament. When a class is missed, the candidate loses time for fellowship and prayer as well as the material covered that day. We expect that you will make these classes a priority and therefore make a sincere effort to adjust your other obligations accordingly. Contact Diane Yarborough or Amy Ankenbruck immediately if critical circumstances will not allow you to attend a class. Excessive absenteeism can affect the candidate's ability to enter fully into this important period of preparation. Our Confirmation attendance policies are outlined below.

Grade 7/Phase I

- **Monday & Wednesday Classes - Weekly 1 Hour Classes**

Up to six (6) classes can be missed. If more than six (6) classes are missed your child's placement in the Confirmation Program may be in jeopardy.

- **Sunday Classes - Bi-Weekly 2 Hour Classes**

Up to three (3) classes can be missed. If more than three (3) classes are missed your child's placement in the Confirmation Program may be in jeopardy.

Grade 8/Phase II

Monday & Wednesday Classes - Weekly 1 Hour Classes

Up to four (4) classes can be missed. If more than four (4) classes are missed your child's placement in the Confirmation Program may be in jeopardy.

Sunday Classes - Bi-Weekly 2 Hour Classes

Up to two (2) classes can be missed. If more than two (2) classes are missed your child's placement in the Confirmation Program may be in jeopardy.

Confirmation Celebration retreat

Rehearsals and Celebration Retreat Day

All class and retreat dates are provided well in advance and it is expected that the candidate's family will plan accordingly around these dates. However, we understand that circumstances may arise that cause student absence. EXCUSED absences are due to illness or a death in the family ONLY and need to be discussed prior with Confirmation Coordinator. UNEXCUSED absences are vacations, Panthers games, and any extracurricular activities (i.e. sports, dance, cheerleading, band, etc).

• CHOOSE A QUALIFIED SPONSOR AND MEET REGULARLY WITH HIM/HER

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 student's faith journey and will vouch for his/her readiness to receive the sacrament. The sponsor should therefore be able to meet regularly with the candidate, spend time building a bond with the confirmation candidate, help him/her prepare for the sacrament, and be in physical attendance at the Confirmation Liturgy.

Attendance by proxy is allowed in certain situations, such as the sponsor living out-of-town and being unable to travel to the celebration. Requests for proxy should be directed to the Confirmation Coordinator.

A sponsor must:

- Be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church (Canon 874.3)
 - o 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 should:

- Attend Mass regularly on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
- Live according to the teachings of the Catholic Church
- Support the person to be Confirmed in his/her commitment to a Catholic life
- Must know the candidate and be willing to serve as a strong and long-lasting Catholic influence on the candidate
- Should be sufficiently mature in his/her own faith commitment
- Must be reasonably informed on current church teachings

Preference is given to the candidate's Godparents, which most fully expresses the integral connection between Baptism and Confirmation. If you are using a proxy sponsor, he/she must also meet the above criteria. The Confirmation Candidate will receive a Confirmation Sponsor Information and Eligibility Form. This form will be completed and turned in during the Phase 2 Confirmation preparation year.

- **COMPLETE TWENTY-ONE (21) SERVICE HOURS**

Confirmation gives the one who is confirmed "the strength to witness to God's love and might in word and deed" (no. 203). Throughout Scripture we are called to love our neighbor and stand up for justice and peace. 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. An awareness of the importance of and vital need for performing service to others is critical in preparing the candidates for Confirmation.

It is required that the candidates get involved in three service aspects; Church, Community, and Family. Seven (7) hours are required in each category.

Church: These hours must be done to benefit St. Luke Church. Some examples of Church service hours would be helping with Vacation Bible School (VBS), Faith Formation preparations, helping with the blood drive, working at the Fall Festival, spring cleaning day, etc. There are many opportunities for Church service hours. Opportunities will be listed on the church website and in the parish bulletin. Seven (7) Church service hours are required.

Community: Many of you may already assist in your local community. Some examples of community service hours would be tutoring younger students at a local school, helping at the public library, starting a clothing or food drive in your neighborhood, helping at the Catholic Charities food bank etc. Seven (7) community service hours are required.

Family: These are hours done to benefit the members of your family. An example would be babysitting a younger sibling or help with duties and chores around the home (more than you already do). Family service hours are only valid if the candidate is NOT paid to do the work. Seven (7) family service hours are required.

The Confirmation Candidate must complete a Confirmation Service Hours Form. The form requires a signature from the coordinator of the service projects performed. We will not accept forms that are signed by parents or are left blank (except for family hours). It is the responsibility of the Confirmation candidate to get their Service Hours form signed. The candidate is also required to complete a "reflection" for each service project on their Service Hours Form. We do contact project coordinators and verify service work, so please make sure information is accurate in recording your hours. **Completed Confirmation Service Hours Forms are due at the beginning of the Confirmation Celebration Retreat.**

- **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFIRMATION RETREATS**

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 two (2) Confirmation

retreats. There is a retreat in the spring of Phase II Confirmation preparation year and the other is in the fall of Confirmation Celebration year.

- **CHOOSE A SAINT / CONFIRMATION NAME AND WRITE A REFLECTION ON THAT SAINT**

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. Perhaps you see Confirmation as the beginning of a new mission for you and a fresh beginning in your faith journey. You may then choose a new name for Confirmation. The Confirmation name should be that of a saint admired or the saint name of someone the candidate knows and looks up to as a Christian role-model. (Note: the chosen Confirmation name will not affect the Candidate’s legal name in any way.)

Even without a new name, your name has always told others who you are. God calls on each of us to fulfill a special mission. It may be converting non-believers, helping the poor, being a peacemaker, or one of many other callings. Confirmation may be the continuation of a mission that began at Baptism, or the beginning of a new mission.

Once you choose your confirmation name, you must complete a reflection of that saint and include why you chose this saint name to represent your new mission. The reflection must be 2 pages (double-spaced, 12pt font) with a minimum of 225 words. **This assignment will be due during the Phase 2 Confirmation preparation year.**

Considerations for your reflection papers:

- Begin with: For Confirmation I am taking/affirming the name...
- Provide a brief summary of the saint’s life.
- Why did you select this Catholic saint?
- How can the life of this saint be a model of faith and commitment to you throughout the Confirmation process?
- Please – do your best to write a genuine, reflective, original work.

- **WRITE A LETTER OF INTENT AND THANKS TO THE PARISH (WITH PHOTO)**

You also must write a letter of Thanks for the Parish and of intent to be confirmed. This is a letter of intent, addressed to “The People of St. Luke”. The purpose of this letter is for the candidate to demonstrate in writing his/her desire to be Confirmed, and willingness to make this commitment.

The letter will also show the candidate’s thanks and gratitude to the Parish for their prayers and support throughout his/her Confirmation preparation journey. The letter must be 1-2 pages

(double-spaced, 12pt font) with a minimum of 225 words. **The Letter of Intent and Thanks To the Parish is due during the Phase 2 Confirmation preparation year.**

V. 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:

Youth Ministry / Teens For Christ (T4C) – 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).

Faith Formation – Confirmed Catholics are welcome to help our Faith Formation classes for younger ages including being Faith Formation Aide, or as a Faith Formation Catechist after Confirmation.

Other Parish Ministries – If you would like to see the full range of ministries at the parish check the website.

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. In some cases, you can fulfill either role before reaching 16, but you will need to talk with your pastor about it.

VI. 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.” (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 values of the Catholic Faith.

VII. 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 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.

VIII. CONFIRMATION CANDIDATE RECOMMENDATION

THE SACRAMENT of Confirmation is not conferred on demand. A student must prepare well and ask for the sacrament in humility. But someone must grant the request.

The Confirmation Coordinator has authority to recommend any student to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Keep in mind that each student's personal commitment—attendance, participation in class and working knowledge of the Catholic Faith.—will be the deciding factor.

With your help and support, we will accomplish great things in Christ.