

Signups

All sign ups will be done through the SignUp Genius website.

Questions and Concerns

Please address any and all concerns to Fr. Michael
or Mrs. Allison Holdt.

Communication and Contact Information

***When sending an email kindly list your child's name
in the subject field.***

Confirmation Program Coordinator:

- Fr. Michael Szwarc - 973-786-6631 (ext. 209)
- frmichael@goodshepherdrc.org

Confirmation Program Assistant:

- Mrs. Allison Holdt - 973-786-6415 (ext. 203)
- allison@goodshepherdrc.org

GOOD SHEPHERD RC CHURCH

Confirmation
Booklet



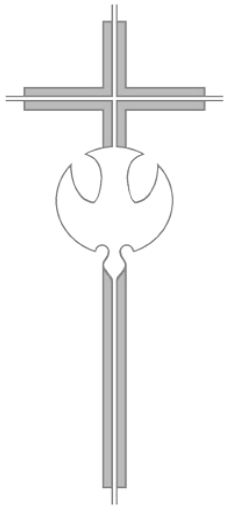
Understanding the Sacrament of Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation is an important moment in the life of the individual as well as in the life of the whole Church. In Confirmation, Catholics are sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit and strengthened in their Christian life. It is the culminating celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation). It is through Confirmation that a person accepts for oneself the gift of faith into which he/she has been baptized. Upon receiving this sacrament, one is invited to more fully participate in the life of the Church.

Therefore, it is important to us that your children be well prepared to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Listed below are the requirements, procedures and policies of our Confirmation program.

General Information

1. The Confirmation program is a two year preparation process.
2. The candidate should be actively participating in the liturgical and sacramental life of Good Shepherd parish, which means attending Sunday Mass regularly throughout the entire Confirmation program and not only when we have classes.
3. The decision to be confirmed rests with the young person. It has to be reasoned, of free choice and should reflect their faith commitment.
4. Only candidates who have completed all necessary paperwork, make-up assignments, service hours, satisfied class attendance and other requirements may receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.



Behavior

1. Attend all scheduled activities, arriving promptly, and staying for the entire event.
2. Respect other persons and/or property.
3. Refrain from actions that could result in injury and/or damage property.
4. Use of cell phones is prohibited during Mass, classes, retreats or any other events. All cell phones must be turned off and out of sight.

Confirmation Dress Code

There is a definite dress code for the sacrament of Confirmation:

- **For young men**, usually a suit. If you want to be less formal, a nice pair of pants and a long sleeved dress shirt with a tie will do just fine. Dress shoes are highly recommended with either outfit.
- **For young women**, a modest dress. It should have sleeves, and the hem fall at the knee. Chest, back and shoulders should be covered (you can wear a jacket or sweater to cover your shoulders). The dress should be in pastel colors (not neon colors) and could be in any type of fabric. Shoes with appropriate heel height. You can wear simple accessories. If nail polish is worn, it should be a subdued or pastel color.

Also, when fixing your hair, your forehead must be uncovered for anointing from the Bishop.

The following are NOT appropriate:

- **Tennis shoes, sneakers, hiking shoes, sandals or flip-flops**
- **Jeans, baggy pants and yoga pants**
- **Tee shirts or Polo shirts**
- **Novelty neckties (e.g., cartoon characters, logos, etc.)**
- **Strapless, tight, backless or low cut dresses**
- **Tank tops**
- **Spaghetti straps**

Confirmation Service Hours

Confirmation is a commitment to share the gift of ourselves with the Good Shepherd Parish family and others. Therefore, any service performed for our church community is acceptable, such as ministers of hospitality, choir, altar server, lector, or catechist's aide. The service hours made outside the parish should reflect the works of mercy, acts like helping people in need, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick or lonely, and all similar activities which make students aware of the needs of the universal Church.

1. In order to help the youth of our parish community understand the importance of service in the life of a Christian, students will be required to fulfill **20 service hours in the entire program**.
 - First year: **10 hours** - to be earned by service to Good Shepherd
 - Second year: **10 hours** - to be earned by service to Good Shepherd
 - As an option, **half of the required service hours may be completed outside the parish ONLY if pre-approved** by Fr. Michael or Mrs. Allison Holdt. **Please provide verification/documentation and description required.**
 - **The service hours which were made as one of the school obligations will not be counted towards Good Shepherd service hours.**
2. Confirmation candidates are strongly encouraged to participate in the ministries that Good Shepherd offers. In particular, we need young people to help serve at Mass. To sign up you will receive a link to the SignUp Genius website or you may contact Fr. Michael or Mrs. Allison Holdt.
 - Ushers/Lectors/Choir (weekly)
 - **Other opportunities to serve at Good Shepherd include the following:** (details can be found in the bulletin or at www.goodshepherdrc.org)
 - Vacation Bible School
 - Parish Picnic
 - Walk for Ethiopia (all students will participate)
 - Mass at the Cemetery
 - Pancake breakfast
 - Ash Wednesday - Grilled cheese and tomato soup
 - Lent: Stations of the Cross
 - Other projects...
4. All service hours must be documented on the "Service Hours" form and signed by the teacher of the candidate or a staff member.
5. The forms must be filled out in their entirety, listing where the candidate volunteered as well as the specific work that was done.
6. Documentation for the service hours is due by the last class of the program.

Parents/Guardians Participation

1. Faith formation is the cooperation between the Good Shepherd parish and the Confirmation candidate's family. Please read the Confirmation Handbook with your teen.
2. The candidate's commitment to the Confirmation program should be supported by parents/guardians with **weekly celebration of the Eucharist at Mass**. As fulfillment of your baptismal promises you should be a Christian role model and demonstrate the importance of the sacraments in your own life. **Additionally, you should encourage your teen's full participation in class, at Mass, in retreats and with completion of service hours.**
3. Assist your teen in selecting service experiences and in choosing a Confirmation sponsor. Support the Confirmation sponsor and maintain contact with them.
4. Pray for all the Confirmation candidates.
5. Attend the parent information session, the Rite of Acceptance Mass, and the Rite of Confirmation - **all mandatory**.
6. Complete all Confirmation paperwork by the due date (included in your calendars).
7. Mark your calendar for the obligatory rehearsal for candidates and their sponsors the day before Confirmation.

Registration

A registration form needs to be filled out completely for a candidate to be enrolled in the program. A copy of your teen's **baptismal certificate is needed if they were not baptized or did not receive First Holy Communion at Good Shepherd parish**. All certificates and records are due no later than the second class.

Tuition and Fees

- 1 child \$150
- 2 children \$250
- 3 children \$375



Registrations received after August 30th will receive a \$25 late fee. (Financial hardship please contact Fr. Michael)

Requirements for Acceptance

1. A Confirmation candidate must have sequential attendance in the Faith Formation program in grades 1-8 at Good Shepherd or provide record of attendance from previous parish.
2. Any candidate who does not meet the above requirement will be evaluated and may be required to attend supplemental classes prior to enrollment in the Confirmation program.
3. A candidate must be willing to participate **fully** in all phases of the Confirmation program.
4. A candidate in the Confirmation program will not automatically receive the Sacrament of Confirmation unless the evidence of readiness of the candidate has been demonstrated. Readiness for celebrating a sacrament cannot be determined by the calendar and is the responsibility of priests, parish staff and catechists.

The evidence of readiness includes:

- **Understanding of the sacrament of Confirmation** as a personal commitment to assume fuller responsibility in the community and in the ministry and service aspects of parish life.
- **A sense of unity with the parish community** as evidenced by full participation in the Liturgy and the Eucharist, with an awareness of what is taking place. The candidate's willingness to celebrate the Eucharist with the community each week can be seen as one of the criteria by which he/she can judge their own readiness to celebrate Confirmation.
- **Understanding of Christianity** including a deepened awareness of Jesus, His teachings and the role of the Church in continuing His mission. The candidate should be able to express his or her faith in ways which others can understand and appreciate.
- **Witnessing in the way the candidate lives their Christian life.** The candidate may be called upon to witness to his/her faith in a world often dominated by outside pressures. His/her actions should reflect a loving reverence for God and His law.
- **Total participation in all aspects of the Confirmation preparation program** including: class, retreats, interviews, service components, and liturgical celebrations.

The Candidates may choose a new name as a sign of growth in faith, or keep their baptismal name (if it's the name of a Catholic saint), to emphasize the fact that Confirmation is a sealing of the baptismal commitment.

Candidates should choose their Confirmation saint name as soon as possible so that they can learn more about their life and let them guide them on their journey.

We highly recommend to choose a well known saint name.

Saint Reflection Paper

1. Candidates are required to **write a reflection paper no less than 500 words** in which they will share their thoughts on the Confirmation experience and the saint whose name they have chosen to be their Confirmation name. The paper should reflect their journey and feelings about making the Sacrament of Confirmation. Reflection paper will be returned to the student if guidelines are not followed.
2. **Guidelines for writing a Saint Reflection Paper**
 - ⇒ **1st paragraph:** Start with: "For Confirmation, I am choosing the saint name of..." Then, provide a brief summary of your saint's life. What is interesting about this saint?
 - ⇒ **2nd paragraph:** Answer the following questions: Why did you choose this Catholic saint? What did you learn about your saint patron? How you can relate to the saint's life? How can the life of this saint be a model of faith and commitment to you? How can you imitate this saint and become a better Christian?
 - ⇒ **3rd paragraph:** Why do you want to be confirmed? What does it mean to be confirmed in your life as an adult in the Church? Express how you intend to continue your faith journey after receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.
4. **Text formatting:**
 - Font: Times New Roman
 - Size: 14
 - Line Spacing: 1.5
 - Margins: 1 inch
5. Reflection paper will be due in the second year of the program at the first class.



Confirmation Sponsor

A Confirmation sponsor serves as a role-model in the faith and should be someone that will encourage you as you prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation, continue to support you through prayer and encouragement as you seek to live a life rooted in Christ.

1. The individual must be at least 16 years old.
2. He/she must be a fully initiated Catholic (Confirmed in the Catholic Church) and should be active in a Catholic faith community. A sponsor certificate or letter is needed from their parish.
3. A godparent is an ideal Confirmation sponsor – choosing the same sponsor for both Baptism and Confirmation helps to emphasize the connection between the two candidates.
4. A Confirmation sponsor **should be chosen as soon as possible, so that he/he can support you throughout the preparation process.**
5. **Parents are not allowed to be a Confirmation sponsor.**

If the sponsor is registered at Good Shepherd he/she needs to meet with one of the parish priests to have their sponsor form signed. Please contact the office for a brief 10 minute meeting with the priest.

Confirmation Name

On the day of Confirmation all candidates will be presented to the Bishop by the name they have chosen as their Confirmation name. Just as parents chose a name for their child at Baptism, now all teens are encouraged to choose a new name - **the name of an approved Catholic Saint**. (Please check the website: <http://www.roman-catholic-saints.com>).

A new name symbolizes a new beginning in their faith life and a connection with that saint. Also, it's a sign of conversion or change, a way to show that they will become in some way a new person. The patron saint should be a role model for the person, and an example of how the Gospel can be lived in a practical way.

Rite of Acceptance

To involve the whole parish community in the journey of the youth into full initiation, the *Rite of Acceptance Mass* will be celebrated at a weekend liturgy during the first year of the Confirmation program. All Confirmation candidates and their families are **required to attend**.

Interviews

Each candidate must meet with a member of the Good Shepherd staff during their first year to determine the candidate's readiness to enter the sacramental preparation process. During the second year and before the date of Confirmation another interview will take place to ascertain the willingness and the readiness of the candidate to receive the sacrament.

The interviews will be approximately ten minutes in length and will help both the candidate and the pastor determine whether or not the candidate is ready to be confirmed. The interviews through an invitation with available dates/times will be scheduled through the SignUp Genius website.





Attendance

1. Confirmation candidates are required to attend all classes, one retreat per year and complete all service hours and assignments.
2. **Only one unexcused absence is permitted. Students who miss 3 classes will need to meet with Fr. Michael or Fr. Tim to evaluate their commitment to the process and participation in the program.**
3. Please be aware that absences are taken seriously. Therefore, failure to attend Mass or participate in other aspects of the Confirmation program may necessitate a candidate postponing Confirmation.
4. Students are expected to **be on time** for all instruction and **attend the entire class**.
Leaving a class early is not permitted. If the student cannot attend class due to illness or a family emergency, a parent/guardian must **notify the office**.
5. Students must be prepared for class and participate.
6. **Sports events/practices, trips, weekends away, homework, and all other reasons are not acceptable for being absent.**
7. In case of class cancellation due to weather conditions or any other emergency, please check your email and our website: **www.goodshepherdrc.org**.

Classes

1. Confirmation candidates must attend all scheduled classes for the entire Confirmation program (see "Attendance"). We will have classes in a small group format to make this preparation more personal and to form a relationship between themselves and their teachers.
2. Candidates are obligated to participate in the Sunday Mass. They are scheduled to attend 10:30am Mass where they are expected to actively participate as ushers, lectors, or altar servers. After Mass, there is a snack break followed by classes at 11:45am until 1:15pm.
3. Candidates are required to take part in all aspects of the Confirmation program (classes, retreats, activities, discussions, group work, etc.).

Assignments

1. It is the responsibility of the candidates to complete the work missed and/or get the make-up assignment. A make-up assignment must be completed for any session skipped regardless of the reason. The assignment **must** be handed in at the next class session.
2. The candidate and/or parent/guardian will be contacted after an absence by the office and advised of the make-up assignment.

Retreats

- The Confirmation program requires each candidate attend a retreat experience each year of their preparation. A candidate must be in attendance for the entire retreat. Late arrivals and/or early departures do not fulfil this requirement. **Retreats are mandatory.**
- **If a candidate is unable to make the retreat hosted by Good Shepherd parish, he/she needs to find a nearby retreat to attend and be responsible for any fees if appropriate. Proof of retreat attendance must be submitted to the Faith Formation office.**
- Celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation is required of all students at retreats and before receiving the sacrament of Confirmation.