

Hello Parents,

Thank you for your dedication to your children and your desire to raise them in the Catholic faith. Thank you for all you have done so far to form them and lead them closer to Christ. Thank you also for the ways in which you will continue to mentor them as they grow into young men and women of God. In this moment, thank you most of all for how you have encouraged them to grow as disciples of Christ over the past two years of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

This upcoming week is the final major push of their preparation. During this week, they will learn about the meaning of sacraments and the components within a sacrament, especially symbols, which contain layers of mystery and knowledge that make Christ present and real to us in our very human lives. They will learn about the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, and how the symbols of bread, water, and wine teach about who God is and share God's grace through the Holy Spirit. Finally, they will learn about Confirmation, that powerful sacrament of initiation whereby they declare to the world that they are a disciple of Christ and ask the Spirit to give them the grace to become an apostle, one who shares the message of the Gospel with the whole world.

Here are the practicals: The website saintraphael.org/week-of-prep will have all the details and links for that day's activities.

Supplies: Over the course of the week, they will need access to some basic household supplies for various activities, prayers, and lessons. This includes: pen and paper, bread, a bowl of water, oil, and a Bible or access to an electronic copy of the Bible like the Laudate app or usccb.org/bible. They will also need to be on a computer with a webcam for the hour of their daily small group session.

On Monday, your son or daughter will do two things. 1) Meet with their small group on a Google Meet session for one hour at the scheduled time that you signed up for. During this first session they will get to know each other and be able to ask any questions about how to do the other activities. They will continue to meet with that same group for the rest of the week at that same time. 2) There is an activity on the website under Monday that will guide them through the process of choosing a saint name for Confirmation. This activity should take less than 1 hour. Choosing a saint name is optional. If your child does not do this activity, we will assume that they want to be Confirmed with their Baptismal name.

For Tuesday through Friday, there are four components to each day:

- Family Liturgy of the Word (15 minutes),
- Online Lesson (45 minutes),
- Individual Activity (30 minutes),
- and Small Group Session (1 hour).

Family Liturgy of the Word: This is a prayer time for the whole family. Bilingual instructions for this are in the packet. Feel free to pray in Spanish or English or a combination of the two. Each day of this Liturgy is designed to help deepen your son or daughter's experience of the Mass of Confirmation by praying with a different part of the Mass and sacrament. We encourage you to debrief this activity with your family afterwards by asking questions like: What was your favorite moment of that prayer time? What was strange about it? What was God reading saying to you with that reading? If you lose the packet, you can also find an electronic version of it at saintraphael.org/week-of-prep

Online Lesson: There are four online lessons for Tuesday through Friday. They contain a video of a speaker teaching a lesson along with questions to answer as they go along. Whenever the speaker says that it is time to pause and answer a question, they should scroll down and answer it in the space provided below. Those lessons will be available each day at:

saintraphael.org/week-of-prep

Individual Activity: In this packet is a list of individual activities that can be done entirely offline. Each day, help your son or daughter pick an activity from that list to do that you think would benefit them and that they would connect with. If you lose the list of activities in this packet, you can also find an electronic version of it at saintraphael.org/week-of-prep

Small Group: The goal of the small group time is to help your son or daughter connect with other teens who are on the same journey as them. For Tuesday through Friday, the small group time will focus on processing the material that they have learned that day in the lesson and experienced in the family prayer time. So, please make sure that your son or daughter has completed the Online Lesson and Family Prayer for that day before it is time for the small group. A link to the small group video call will be emailed to you. Text Veronica at 919-322-9954 if you lose this link or need tech support when trying to log on.

I know that this is a lot to do, especially in the midst of the business of preparations for the beginning of a new school year, as well as all the strangeness of the time we are living in. To give you a perspective on what we are doing together, remember that the sacrament of Confirmation will literally leave a mark on your son or daughter's soul. Confirmation is a once-in-a-lifetime sacrament. Please pray for your son or daughter to be open to the grace that the Holy Spirit wants to fill them with on Saturday, September 26th.

God Bless,

Veronica Ripp

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