

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish
Confirmation Program
www.stelizabethschurch.org

Dear Candidates and Parents,

On behalf of Fr. Stan and the entire Confirmation Team, I welcome you to the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Confirmation Process. We are called to set out together on a journey, mapped out to strengthen and prepare our teens to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation. The path ahead promises to lead each of us to spiritual growth, a deeper understanding of our Catholic faith, and an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. As we embark, we are called to reflect upon our Baptismal call and answer that call with our lives.

The Confirmation process at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish involves a two-year commitment to sacramental preparation, designed to ready our teens for lives of discipleship. Our preparation is multi-faceted, offering many opportunities for growth and development through Word, Worship, Service, Retreats, and Parish Life. Following the RCIA model, we challenge our teens to mature through periods of Invitation, Formation, Reflection, and Mission. The details of our process are outlined in this handbook. The Confirmation team, consisting of Fr. Stan, dedicated sponsor-catechists, peer ministers, adult mentors, and myself, will guide you through this process. We invite you to set out on this journey with hearts that are willing and minds that are open to the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Candidates, what an amazing path you are on! For those setting out in the first year, I welcome you with open arms and look forward to walking together. For those continuing the journey, know that I am proud of the direction in which you are heading and eager to walk side by side. I guarantee that this journey, when taken seriously, will change your lives. At the end of the two-year process, you will be asked to make a mature decision as to whether or not you are ready and willing to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit and to assume the role of a fully initiated Catholic. **Confirmation marks not the ending of religious education, but the beginning of new life in the Church.** I ask you to pray as you prepare to make this monumental decision and to be open to the various aspects of the journey. May your “yes” be one to a life of discipleship that continues well beyond these years of preparation.

Parents, as your children undergo this sacramental preparation, you too are invited to walk with them, offering your support and prayers each step of the way. You remain your teen’s first and best catechist. Your guidance, involvement, and example will be integral components of this process. The decision to say “yes” to the Holy Spirit should be one that your teen makes freely. We encourage you to support and pray for your teen, rather than force, to ensure that the voice with which each candidate answers “yes” is his or her own.

As Youth Minister, I take my role of advocate for and minister to our teens very seriously. Please be assured of my constant prayers for you and your families and my gratitude for your partnership in Christ. My door is always open to you, if you have any questions or if I may be of help. May our journey together be filled with the love of God, the peace of Jesus, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Yours in Christ,

Shannon Jones

Youth Minister/Confirmation Coordinator

Email: confirmation@stelizabethschurch.org

Cell: 201-407-6995

ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CONFIRMATION PROCESS

WORD: By listening to and speaking the Word of God and through reflecting on certain themes of Christian living, the candidates experience being a “**prophetic**” people. There will be several small and large group sessions held at the church throughout the course of the school year to help bring the Word of God alive in the hearts of the candidates.

Small Sharing Groups

On a regular basis throughout the two-year period, the candidates will meet for catechesis, reflection, and sharing with a small group of other candidates under the guidance of a Sponsor-Catechist. The discussions are based on different aspects of Christian life. See <http://dynamiccatholic.com/confirmation/> for information on our text/resources.

Large Group Sessions

During the course of the two-year period, we will convene various large group sessions and welcome speakers and presenters to share their faith, while enriching ours.

The Sponsor-Catechist

In addition to guiding small groups, Sponsor-Catechists will serve as advisors to the candidates concerning the entire preparation process. They also act as liaisons between the candidates and the rest of the Confirmation Team.

WORSHIP: Through liturgical celebrations, Teen Masses, retreats, and prayer services, the candidates experience being a “**priestly**” people, united in community, prayer and worship.

Prayer was central to Christ’s life and He taught His disciples to pray alone and together. Preparing for Confirmation involves personal and community prayer experiences, as well as participation in liturgical celebrations. There are occasions for reflection and growth as people of faith within our Church community.

Liturgy

At certain liturgies, candidates celebrate key moments in the journey towards becoming a confirmed Catholic Christian. The entire parish is involved in these celebrations.

1) *The Rite of Initiation*

This rite takes place at a Saturday evening liturgy in the first year and marks the beginning of the preparation period for Confirmation.

2) *Teen Masses*

Teen Masses will be held throughout the year. These dates will be on the calendars and will be opportunities for the candidates to worship together and to participate actively, fully, and consciously in the Mass.

3) *The Rite of Acceptance*

This rite takes place at a Saturday evening liturgy during the second year of preparation. It celebrates the acceptance of our teens as candidates for the reception of Confirmation. This acceptance follows a review by the Pastor, the Sponsor-Catechists, and the Confirmation Team of each candidate's progress and participation in the program over the preceding two-year period.

SERVICE: Through community outreach projects and parish ministries, the candidates experience being a “**kingly**” people who strive to spread God’s Kingdom through service to others.

Jesus Christ taught us that service is the key element of discipleship. Confirmation Preparation is seen as a time of “apprenticeship” to help the candidates experience and develop a wider range of practices and skills related to membership in the Christian Community. Service projects are designed to awaken in each candidate a sense of benevolent giving of themselves to others.

All candidates are required to complete **thirty** hours of service as a part of the Confirmation preparation. At least **fifteen** of these hours must be Parish Service, such as participating in any Youth Ministry projects/events, aiding in the K-8 Religious Education program, being a Minister of Hospitality, or singing in the choir. Please note that a minimum of 15 parish hours is required; all 30 hours may be done in service to or with the parish. The balance of the service otherwise is considered Community Service, such as participating in walk-a-thons, serving at a soup kitchen, or volunteering at a hospital.

Please feel free to peruse the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton website for a list of Ministries and contact information. Youth Ministry opportunities will be emailed to parents monthly. Teens interested in participating in Youth Ministry opportunities may contact Shannon Jones or register via the Sign-Up Genius link provided in the email.

If teens are involved in other activities that could be considered Christian service, please contact Shannon Jones for approval prior to the service. Some activities may not qualify, so please ask first. Some of those activities include service projects that teens may be doing as part of the Scouting program or with a club in which they are involved in school. Community Service should be above and beyond what teens are required to do as members of that club/organization.

Candidates must complete a ‘Service Hour Ticket’ and have it signed by an adult for each service experience. Hours are tracked and posted on the bulletin board. It is the candidate’s responsibility to turn in the tickets after the service is completed. They may be placed in the box in the church vestibule. Please hand in all tickets within a week of the service activity.

RETREATS: Jesus tells us, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” Integral to the Confirmation process is time away from the labors and pressures of daily life, “unplugged” and dedicated to rejuvenation in Jesus’ peace. Retreats offer such opportunities for remarkable spiritual growth.

Traditionally, we hold two half-day retreats for 1st year candidates and one full-day retreat for 2nd year candidates. Separate payment will be collected and additional details will be provided in the fall of each year. The retreats are required to complete the Confirmation program.

PARISH LIFE: Essential to the Confirmation Process is growth in relationship with Jesus and His Church. The Church is not a building, but rather its people who together make up the Body of Christ. The parish is a microcosm of the universal Church and should be a home base for every Catholic. In saying “yes” to full initiation, the candidate lives out the call to discipleship more fully in the parish family of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

During the Confirmation process, the candidates will explore how to serve and support the larger parish family. Teen Masses give candidates opportunities to test liturgical ministries and assess how they can best use their talents after Confirmation, all while serving the community at large. Teen Stations of the Cross allow candidates the chance to give spiritual nourishment to parishioners. Likewise, through collaborative service projects, such as Bridges Outreach and the Backpack Program, our teens take the lead in providing service outlets for others in the parish family, building up the Body of Christ at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and beyond.

The parish in turn plays a special role in the preparation process, mentoring candidates, offering continued prayers and support, and welcoming them into full life and ministry in the Church. The candidates are not only the future of the Church, but also the present, valued by all in the parish family.

Community Days

Community Days occur throughout the preparation period and focus on the call to prepare for the Sacrament through increased awareness of self and one’s relationship with God and His people.

Community Days include Mass; dates will be noted on the calendar.

THE ROLE OF THE CANDIDATE

Candidates are expected to actively participate in all aspects of the preparation process:

WORD:

- 1) To participate in the Small Groups in a way that is prayerful, thoughtful, respectful, and questioning
- 2) To be open to communication with the Sponsor-Catechists and other participants in the group

WORSHIP:

- 1) To attend liturgies, Teen Masses, and prayer services, and to participate thoughtfully
- 2) To regularly attend Sunday Mass and to share in prayerful participation with the parish in liturgical celebrations

SERVICE:

- 1) To give generously of time and commitment in Christian service
- 2) To fulfill thirty hours of meaningful Parish/Community Service prior to Confirmation

RETREATS:

- 1) To commit to attending all retreats
- 2) To participate thoughtfully and to be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit

PARISH LIFE:

- 1) To attend parish activities and community days with an open heart and mind
- 2) To be open to growth in relationship with Jesus and His Church by deepening a connection with St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish

CONFIRMATION NAME

The candidate may retain his or her Baptismal name or may take a new Confirmation name. If selecting a new name, it must be that of a recognized Saint of the Catholic Church. This name must be submitted to the Coordinator at the beginning of the second year and will be approved by the Bishop prior to the Rite of Confirmation.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is expected at all Small/Large Group Sessions, Community Days, Retreats, and Service Activities. If there is a reason why a candidate cannot attend one of these events, please let the Sponsor-Catechist know as early as possible before the event. Any time an event is missed without the approval of the Sponsor-Catechist (*either before or after the fact*), the absence is considered unexcused.

We must stress that participating in school extracurricular activities which conflict with Confirmation classes is not necessarily considered an acceptable excuse. If the candidate has known conflicts with Sunday/Monday night small groups, please notify the Confirmation Team of this immediately. We will attempt to place the candidate in a small group that meets on another night.

In the event of an absence, it is the candidate's responsibility to contact the Sponsor-Catechist for any makeup work that may be required. Makeup for an absence could require reading or viewing material, attendance at another small group's session, or individual assignments based on the topic which was missed. This will be determined on an individual basis. **Makeup work is required for both excused and unexcused absences.**

IF A CANDIDATE MISSES MORE THAN THREE SESSIONS IN YEAR 1 OR MORE THAN ONE SESSION IN YEAR 2, IT MAY BE GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM. IF A CANDIDATE MISSES 4 SESSIONS, ALL SESSIONS MUST BE MADE UP.

At regular intervals throughout the year, the Confirmation Team and Sponsor-Catechists review the candidate's progress and readiness based on the quality of participation and understanding of the material. If any problems exist, the candidate and parent(s) will be notified. Resolution of such problems should be sought immediately. Failure to do so by the end of the first year means that continuation into the second year is not possible without some makeup-work or some other active resolution. Failure to do so by the end of the second year may mean that the Team cannot make a recommendation to the Pastor about the candidate's readiness to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

DISCIPLINE

Each candidate will conduct himself/herself in a cooperative and mature manner. A Christian attitude, respect, and understanding toward others will be expected at all times during this program. If a candidate's behavior is consistently disruptive and unruly, the consequence will be immediate removal from the program. Cell phones and other electronic devices should not be brought to class.

FAITH FORMATION HISTORY

Candidates who have not completed the minimum requirement of Grade 1-8 religious education may not be permitted to begin the Confirmation program, unless they provide and demonstrate an understanding of our faith and beliefs. Additional classes may be required to bring the candidate up to these minimum requirements.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL CANDIDATES

Catholic high school candidates must register and prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation within the parish. Candidates are expected to participate in all phases of the program. While there may be some duplication in material covered at the school and in the parish, it is important that all those to be confirmed share a sense of community throughout the preparation period, regardless of the religious instruction received at school.

TRANSFER CANDIDATES

Any candidate transferring into our program from another parish within our diocese will be required to supply us with a letter of transfer from their former parish Director of Religious Education stating that classes have been completed through the 8th grade. Candidates who have not completed the minimum requirement may not be permitted to begin the Confirmation program, unless they provide and demonstrate an understanding of our faith and beliefs. Additional classes may be required to bring the candidate up to these minimum requirements.

Any candidate transferring into our program from another diocese also will be asked to supply us with a letter of transfer from their former parish Religious Education Office. These candidates will be evaluated individually based on the requirements for preparation for Confirmation in their former diocese and the recommendation of their former parish Director of Religious Education regarding their readiness to begin the Confirmation process. The policy regarding successful completion of Religious Ed classes is the same as discussed above.

ROLE OF PARENTS / GUARDIANS

As teens begin preparing for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation, parents are asked to accompany them through various phases during the two-year period. **Parents' attendance at liturgical celebrations is strongly encouraged.** Transportation for your child to all activities is vital to the success of the program. Parental support, weekly Mass attendance, and a home environment conducive to faith development will greatly enrich your child's faith experience.

With regard to the service commitment, in certain instances, parents may be required to verify the time invested in particular services rendered in the community or home setting by your teenager.

Because free response is required of the candidate, parents are asked to support the decision of their child regarding Confirmation, even if it is the choice to delay receiving the Sacrament.

ROLE OF THE SPONSOR

The sponsor and candidate have a special relationship. The sponsor is a friend and companion who helps the candidate integrate the teachings of Jesus into his/her daily life. The sponsor serves as a role model for the candidate of an active Christian follower and believer.

The sponsor must be baptized and confirmed, as well as a participating member of the Catholic Church. If the sponsor does not belong to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, a statement from his/her parish priest must be obtained indicating that he/she is a practicing Catholic. A sponsor cannot be the candidate's parent.

ROLE OF THE SPONSOR-CATECHIST

The Sponsor-Catechist is a trained member of the parish who is willing to share his/her faith with the candidates and guide them on their journey to Confirmation. Each Catechist attends Focus Sessions and then conducts Small Groups. While there are set dates on which the small group is required to meet, the actual time is left to the discretion of the Catechist. He/she stays with the same group for the two-year preparation period. The Sponsor-Catechist is responsible for assessing the candidate's progress during the process. If at any point in time a problem should arise, the Catechist will inform the team, candidate, and parent(s).

ROLE OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY

The parish Community is a vital part of each candidate's journey towards Confirmation. Through prayer and support of candidate activities, the community sustains their goals.

Every winter before Confirmation, the Prayer Partner Program is launched in the parish. This program reaches out to fellow parishioners by assigning a specific candidate to them and requesting prayers for that candidate up to and including the reception of Confirmation.

ROLE OF THE CONFIRMATION TEAM

The Confirmation Team consists of parish members who are particularly interested in serving the candidates preparing for Confirmation. It is this team which has designed the program and oversees its implementation under the guidance of our Pastor. The Team believes in this preparation process as a time of faith enrichment for both the candidate and parent(s). The Team welcomes any questions, suggestions, or comments. You may speak with any member of the Team or call the Coordinator whose number is in the bulletin.

Team Members:

Rev. Stanley Barron
Shannon Jones

Pastor and Spiritual Leader
Confirmation Coordinator

CONFIRMATION SERVICE PROJECT FORM

CONFIRMATION SERVICE PROJECT FORM	
GRADE:	9 TH 10 TH (CIRCLE ONE)
CANDIDATE'S NAME:	_____
	(PLEASE PRINT)
Parish Ministry SERVICE:	_____
Community Ministry SERVICE:	_____
SERVICE DATE:	_____
TOTAL HOURS SPENT ON SERVICE:	_____
ADULT SIGNATURE:	_____
=====	
RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO DESIGNATED BOX IN THE CHURCH LOBBY	
=====	
Questions? Call Shannon Jones 201-407-6995	

SAMPLE

CONFIRMATION SERVICE PROJECT FORM	
GRADE:	<u>9TH</u> 10 TH (CIRCLE ONE)
CANDIDATE'S NAME:	<u>Mary Smith</u>
	(PLEASE PRINT)
Parish Ministry SERVICE:	<u>Usher</u>
Community Ministry SERVICE:	_____
SERVICE DATE:	<u>3/25/19</u>
TOTAL HOURS SPENT ON SERVICE:	<u>1 hr</u>
ADULT SIGNATURE:	<u>Shannon Jones</u>
	MAY NOT BE PARENT
=====	
RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO DESIGNATED BOX IN THE CHURCH LOBBY	
=====	
Questions? Call Shannon Jones 201-407-6995	