

INFORMATION PACKET

FOR CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

Sacrament of Confirmation

Christ promised the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, a promise fulfilled at Easter and Pentecost. The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost brought the Paschal Mystery to its completion. Filled with the Spirit, the Giver of life, the apostles proclaimed the Good News; those who believed and were baptized received the gift of the Spirit by the laying on of hands. By the gift of the Holy Spirit, believers are united to the mystery of Christ and experience the saving effects of His Cross and Resurrection.

Confirmation is a sacrament of Christian initiation and must be seen in its unity with Baptism and Eucharist. The sacrament of Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as Gift, having the effect of grounding us more deeply as adopted sons and daughters of God, uniting us more firmly in Christ, perfecting our relationship with the Church, the Body of Christ, strengthening the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to us at Baptism, granting the special strength of the Holy Spirit for spreading and defending the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ.

Confirmation, given only once, imprints an indelible spiritual character, signifying that Christ has marked the Christian with the seal of the Holy Spirit for the sake of Christian witness, and perfecting the common priesthood received in Baptism.

The Rite of Confirmation

When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, the renewal of baptismal promises, which begins the Rite of Confirmation, expresses both the connection and the distinction of Baptism and Confirmation. The anointing with sacred chrism—the essential rite of the sacrament—is done with the laying on of hands, and is a sign of consecration expressing and imparting a spiritual seal, the seal of the Holy Spirit. The seal signifies a total belonging to Christ, enrollment in Christ's service forever, and the divine promise of protection in the ultimate trial. The sign of peace expresses the bond of ecclesial communion with the bishop and the whole church.

In order to most fully express the unity of the sacraments of initiation and the dynamic orientation of Baptism and Confirmation toward Eucharistic participation, and the ecclesial nature of the sacrament, Confirmation is celebrated during Sunday Mass in the Easter season.

Baptismal Information

In order to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation, a candidate must be baptized according to the Roman Rite. If the candidate was baptized at St. Robert Bellarmine Church, the Director will already have the baptismal information; if the candidate was not baptized at St. Robert Bellarmine, the candidate is responsible for providing the director with a recently issued copy of the baptismal certificate with the registration form. To obtain a copy of the baptismal record, please contact the parish where the candidate was baptized.

Confirmation Name

Confirmation candidates may choose to use their baptismal name for Confirmation (ex. their given name) highlighting the relationship between the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

Candidates may also choose to take a new name for Confirmation signifying the growth in faith they aspire to or affirm as they celebrate the sacrament. The name chosen must be the name of a Saint (from the canon of Saints of the Church) who is a model of Christian life the candidate wishes to emulate or a patron or intercessor to whom the candidate turns to in times of need.

Sponsor Information

Selecting a Confirmation Sponsor

As part of the preparation for Confirmation the candidate should choose a sponsor or godparent. This person will attend the Confirmation celebration and stand as a witness of the candidate's readiness to celebrate this sacrament. Ideally, this person would be the baptismal godparent of the candidate, reflecting the connection between Baptism and Confirmation. However, the candidate may ask someone else to be their sponsor.

Role of the Sponsor:

- Supports the Confirmation candidate in his/her commitment to a Christian life
- Serves as a strong and long-lasting Christian influence and role-model for the candidate
- May assist the candidate in choosing a Confirmation name
- May accompany the candidate to special liturgies and preparation programs
- Encourages the candidate in his/her faith journey
- Attends the practice for the celebration of the sacrament
- Presents the candidate to the bishop for Confirmation
- Communicates to the candidate the importance of daily prayer, regular reception of the sacraments, Christian service, as well as continued Catholic living after reception of the sacrament

Guidelines/requirements for Confirmation Sponsors:

- **Is not the candidate's parent**
- Is a fully initiated Catholic (has celebrated the sacraments of Baptized, Confirmation, and Eucharist)
- Is a practicing Catholic, actively involved in his/her faith
- Is preferably the candidate's baptismal godparent
- May be either male or female for any candidate
- Is at least 16 years of age

Confirmation Preparation Program

Overview

Preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation includes various components:

1. attendance and participation at:
 - Weekly Sunday celebration of the Eucharist;
 - Participation in the Confirmation Preparation Program for 2 years (even if attending Catholic School).
 - During Lent, attend the 5pm Mass for Confirmation Candidates and participate in the preparation sessions following the Mass
 - Rite of Enrollment;
 - Celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the celebration of Confirmation;
 - both candidates and sponsors/godparents must attend the practice session
2. written assignments:
 - brief reflection as to why they want to be Confirmed;
 - Saint Information Sheet
 - Works of Mercy reflection
 - Candidate-Sponsor Faith Sharing Activity
3. forms:
 - copy of Baptismal certificate if not baptized at St. Robert's
 - complete Confirmation Information Form

Written Assignments

All candidates must submit a brief reflection on why they want to be Confirmed (100 words or more), complete the Saint Information Sheet, the Works of Mercy Reflection form and a summary reflection of the faith sharing activity they did with their sponsor/godparent. The Confirmation reflection is meant to help candidates articulate what Confirmation means to them; the Saint Information Sheet is designed to help them reflect on what it means to live a Christian life by focusing on the witness of one of the Saints from our Tradition; the Works of Mercy reflection is designed to help candidates connect service to the Christian faith and deepen their understanding of how service is integral to living the Faith; the Candidate-Sponsor Faith Sharing Activity form is design to help candidates & their sponsors/godparents deepen their faith-based relationship. Candidates should complete the Saint Information Sheet for the Saint whose name they picked as Confirmation name or, if they are keeping their baptismal name, for a Saint whose name they share.

Attendance

Attendance at weekly Mass and all sessions is critical to the preparation of all confirmation candidates and is taken into consideration in assessing the candidate's readiness for celebration of the sacrament. **Attendance is mandatory** and there is no make-up assigned. If there is illness or a family emergency, please contact the director as soon as possible. Sports, rehearsals, and practices are not emergencies. Poor attendance may require repeating a year of preparation.

Candidate's Readiness for Confirmation

In order to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation, candidates must demonstrate a proper disposition and readiness for the reception of the sacrament:

- The candidate must be baptized;
- The candidate should freely choose to be confirmed and make this desire known;
- The candidate must be in a state of grace and have celebrated the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the celebration of Confirmation;
- The candidate must have adequate knowledge of the Catholic faith;
- The candidate must practice his/her faith through prayer, regular participation at Mass, ongoing engagement in service, and living a life in accordance with the Gospel.

If the candidate, sponsor, parent, catechist, program director or pastor expresses concern regarding the readiness of a candidate, the director will contact the candidate to discuss the situation.

Check List

- Confirmation Information Sheet
- Copy of Baptism Certificate if not baptized at St. Robert's
- Reflection on Confirmation
- Saint Information Sheet
- The Works of Mercy Reflection
- Confirmation-Sponsor Faith Sharing Activity