

PREPARING for the SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION YEAR I



Our Lady of Sorrows–Saint Anthony Parish Hamilton, NJ

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The journey begins to celebration of Confirmation in the fall of next year. You are the companions, the mentors, of your child as he or she prepares to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The journey ahead should be marked by fervent prayer, reflection, study and service.

The parish supports you in your vocation. We hope that this booklet along with the classroom's catechetical text will be a sure guide for you. Please take the time to review these. In this booklet you will find the information you and your child will need to prepare well for Confirmation:

Calendar (insert) & Program Overview
Commitment for the Journey
Writing your Christian Autobiography
Choosing a Sponsor

Choosing a Patron Saint
Works of Charity & Service
The Interview
Catechism on Confirmation

These aspects of the program are designed for a meaningful and reverent celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The parish expects all candidates to undertake and complete the various "tasks" involved. Do not hesitate to contact the office with any questions or concerns.

Mariyam Francis
Director of Religious Education

Msgr. Thomas Gervasio
Pastor

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION: AN OVERVIEW

Our parish's preparation for Confirmation is a two year process that is based on the *National Catechetical Directory*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Policies of the Diocese of Trenton*. The long-range goal of the process is to prepare the youth of our parish for active participation in the life of the Church. This process usually begins at the sixth grade level and culminates with Confirmation during the eighth grade year.

Below are listed the various aspects of the parish program. It is our hope that our families will cooperate fully in all activities and requirements of this process.

YEAR I CALENDAR SHOULD BE INSERTED IN THIS BOOKLET

YEAR I

- Class Attendance & Study
- Weekly Mass & Daily Prayer
- Mandatory Parents Meeting
- Commitment to the Journey
- Christian Autobiography
- Works of Charity & Service
- Service Reflection Paper
- Choosing a Patron Saint
- Choosing a Sponsor
- Interview

YEAR II

- Class Attendance & Study
- Weekly Mass & Daily Prayer
- Mandatory Parents Meeting
- Sponsor & Candidate Meeting
- Retreat Experience
- Penance Service
- Confirmation Practices

MANDATORY PARENTS MEETING AND COMMITMENT TO THE JOURNEY

Please refer to the Calendar for the date of the parents' meeting and for the due date to submit the "Commitment to the Journey" form to the religious education office. These are necessary components to our program, giving an official beginning and enrollment to the process of preparation.

WRITING YOUR CHRISTIAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Preparation for Confirmation involves reflection and prayer on the place of God in one's life. The writing of a Christian Autobiography facilitates this process. As a "Christian" account, it focuses on the activity of God throughout a candidate's life. We are please to offer a few "writing tips:"

- Use a computer (Avoid writing in cursive)
- Use photographs if you like
- Design an attractive cover
- Format: one inch margins; double line space; New Times Roman Type; Font Size not larger than "14"
- Length: minimum of six pages

What sort of things should be covered in the autobiography?

The Past: Family life; the celebration of one's baptism; first memories about God; First Communion Day; and experience of religion classes and learning about God; those who influenced life of faith most; favorite prayers

The Present: How one feels about God now; thoughts about our parish; the experience of Mass, the Sacraments, and Catholic life; things learned this year; ones strengths and weaknesses; gifts and talents.

The Future: One's hopes plans, dreams, ideals; plans to become involved in parish life; relationship with confirmation sponsor and patron saint.

MAKING CHOICES

A Sponsor A certificate!

The selection of a sponsor is a very important part of preparation for Confirmation. The sponsor presents the candidate to the Bishop or his delegate. He or she should be a model of faithful Catholic life. The sponsor must submit a "certificate" or "letter" of eligibility for this role from his or her parish. This comes not from the sponsor's parish of baptism but from the parish in which a sponsor currently resides and worships.

The qualifications to be a sponsor:

- Must lead a life in harmony with the Catholic faith
- Must be a Catholic who has been confirmed and received the Eucharist
- Must be at least 16 years of age (however the pastor may make an exception to this provided the sponsor meets the other qualifications.
- (if married) in a valid Catholic marriage
- Cannot be the parents of the candidate
- Does not have to be of the same sex as the candidate
- May be the baptismal sponsor of the candidate (This is not only permissible but desirable)

Refer to Calendar for Deadline
to submit Certificate/Letter

A patron Saint An Essay!

Candidates are given the opportunity to choose a Patron Saint with whose name they are confirmed. The candidate may also choose their given baptismal name (if it is the name of a canonized saint).

Since the saint is to serve as a candidate's role model and heavenly intercessor, candidates are expected to write an essay about him or her.

Candidates should not create their own name but choose the name (or derivative) of a recognized saint of the Catholic Church. For example: The saint chosen may be *Charles* but the derivative of "Karl" or "Carlton" is acceptable.

The internet is a good place to do some research. Suggested sites to visit are:

www.catholicforum.com
www.americancatholic.com
www.daughtersofstpaul.com
www.catholicpages.com

Refer to Calendar for Deadline
to submit Saints Essay

WORKS OF CHARITY AND SERVICE

Jesus came to “to serve and not to be served.” (Mt. 20:28) In imitation of the Lord, candidates choose a variety of ways to serve their family, parish, and wider community. These works should not be seen as just another “hurdle” to clear on the way to Confirmation. They are an introduction to the charity and service that should characterize the entire life of the disciple.

In keeping with this sense, it would be inappropriate to “count” as service hours those chores that are normally expected of a teenager: e.g. cleaning one’s room, washing the dishes, homework or mowing the lawn at home. Rather, these works should be things like, visitation and assistance of the poor and elderly, hospital and nursing home visits, help in parish projects. Candidates are to write a brief reflection on the impact of these good works.

EXPECTATION: 20 HOURS MINIMUM

Refer to Calendar

for due dates to submit the service hours log and reflection paper

THE INTERVIEW

An interview appointment will be arranged to meet with a priest, deacon, or catechist. Please keep in mind that the interview is not a test. There is no pass or fail grade given. It might well be called a 15 minute “Confirmation Chat.” The interviewer and candidate will discuss what has been learned over the course of the year and what it means to receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. Under separate cover, the candidate will receive an interview preparation guide. A parent or sponsor must accompany the candidate and observe the interview. In addition to the preparation note the following:

- Dress appropriately and be prompt
- Enter by Our Lady of Sorrows School: Door 3 (left of trailer)
- Upon arrival register at the desk (outside gym entrance 2nd floor)
- Please relax for the interview—you will be called by interviewer
- Socializing afterward is difficult. In the interest of good order and respect for interviews taking place, we would appreciate making your way home directly after interview

Common Questions about Confirmation

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation: (the others being Baptism and Holy Eucharist). These sacraments make us part of—or more fully part of Christ's Church. In Confirmation the Holy Spirit comes to us in a special way to strengthen us (Confirmation means "strengthening.") to increase the grace of our Baptism so that we might spread and defend the Faith. This is done through the laying on of hands and anointing.

Who is the minister of Confirmation?

The Bishop, successor of the apostles and shepherd of the diocese is the ordinary minister of Confirmation but he may delegate a priest

What is the essential rite of Confirmation?

The essential rite is the anointing with Sacred Chrism (oil mixed with balsam consecrated by the bishop) which is done by the laying on of the hand of the minister who says: "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." This seal (mark) lasts forever and is called a character.

Who may be confirmed?

Only the baptized can and should receive this sacrament which can be received only once. To receive it efficaciously (powerfully) one must be in the state of grace.

What is a Confirmation Sponsor? Are there qualifications to be sponsor?

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What if a chosen sponsor cannot attend?

It happens that a sponsor may not be able to attend the actual celebration of Confirmation. In such a case, the candidate may select a proxy to "stand in" for the sponsor.

What is a sponsor "certificate of eligibility?"

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Why should one be confirmed?

Without Confirmation Christian initiation is incomplete. The Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist bring us into full membership in the Church. One should also be confirmed in order to receive the graces that the sacrament brings.

Must one be confirmed to enter to heaven?

Confirmation is neither a requirement nor a guarantee of getting to heaven. Entrance into heaven is the faithful completion of the Christian life involving prayer, worship and life choices. Confirmation is a help for this journey.

Must a Catholic be confirmed to be married?

Canon Law (#1065) states that "Catholics who have not yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation are to receive it before being admitted to marriage, if this can be done without grave inconvenience.

Is regular Mass attendance required?

It would be puzzling for someone to prepare for Confirmation while not participating in the life of the Church. Such an attitude or practice contradicts the meaning of Confirmation. Catholics are obliged to assist at Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (illness, care of infants) or dispensed by the pastor. Those who deliberately fail in this duty commit a grave sin." (CCC#2181)

Must one choose a "Confirmation Name?"

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What happens if classes are missed?

Participation in all classes is expected. If a class is missed due to illness, call the Office of Religious Education to arrange a "make-up" session.

Confirmation Preparation Requirements and Event Calendar 2012-2013

All the paper work will be given to the 7th grade parent's meeting on
September 26, 2012 at 6:15 PM OLS Church

These Events are required to attend:

Presenter	Month/Date	Time	Topic	Place
Priest	November 28,2012	6:00PM to 7:00PM	Sacrament of Initiation	OLS Church
Deacon	February 06,2013	6:00PM to 7:00PM	Ordained Ministers of the Church and Religious Vocation	OLS Church
Priest	April 10, 2013	6:00PM to 7:00PM	Sacrament of Confirmation	OLS Church
Catechists/teachers	May 8, 2013	Due papers	Come with parent	Class Room
Confirmation Interviews	May 27, 2012	6:00PM to 9:00PM	Come with parent	OLS School

Important Note for Parents: All the paper work should be returned in a timely manner. There will be no reminders sent to the parents. If the required papers are not turned in your child will be not scheduled for an interview. We have picked May 8, 2013 for all the parents to come and bring all the required paper work to the class room. The teacher will receive the paper work and get the parents signature. We like to avoid any inconvenience for the parents. We have picked only one day and all the paper work should be back on the appointed date. We would highly appreciate your support in this matter.

The teacher should check a Christian Autobiography before you submit it in May.