

WHAT IS CONFIRMATION?

The Sacrament of Confirmation...

Welcomes us and deepens our relationship to the faith community.
Deepens our relationship to God, as Creator, Redeemer and Spirit.
Strengthens us as disciples.

A Sacrament is part of the way that God loves us and calls us. It is God's love expressed as a free, undeserved gift.

The Gift within Confirmation strengthens us for discipleship and deepens our relationship to the faith community through the Trinity.

God uses visible signs to communicate invisible love. To communicate God's love, He uses our senses: eyes, ears, touch, smell, and taste, and elements of our world.

In Confirmation, the signs we will celebrate include being anointed with chrism and the laying on of hands as we remember the water of Baptism and the nourishment of the Eucharist.

God calls and invites; we respond. An attitude of openness communicates a "yes" to God's invitation to a deeper relationship. This "yes" does not mean we know that we will always be faithful or that we are worthy of the gift. "Yes" means we are open to be strengthened by God who calls and loves us.

In Confirmation, we have the opportunity to say "yes" through various responses in prayer.

The community witnesses and celebrates the sacraments. A sacrament is a powerful sign that God is alive and present in the world. As Church, we are called to be sacrament, which is to be God's hand and healing touch in the world. The community that celebrates sacraments is global, reaching to other faith communities throughout the world and joined in a common bond. Community is also local as an archdiocese, a parish, and a community of faith in families. In Confirmation, the community witnesses our celebration and provides a sponsor who represents the love of the community for us.

STANDING ON YOUR OWN

According to the church you have reached a place in your life where you are able to make many of your own decisions.

You are no longer a member of the church because your parents are members, but because that's what you choose to do. You started the journey a long time ago and it will continue for the rest of your life. That's right, you have a choice to make!!

WHY DO I NEED THIS?

"And if it's my choice why are my parents making me go?" That is a good question and deserves a good answer!

Your parents are encouraging you, or making you go, to Confirmation classes because they want you to share fully in the Church. It's your parent's responsibility to guide you in all aspects of your education including Religious Education. They care deeply about you and your faith—they care about your soul.

Finally, you need Confirmation because it's probably one of the most important statements you will make about yourself. There's nothing magic about "going through" Confirmation unless you have made a personal decision to approach the sacrament with honesty and faith. **The Sacrament of Confirmation is nothing without YOU! It requires your response.** Your preparation for the Sacrament will lead you to the point where you can honestly make that decision. That's right, it's up to you!

REQUIREMENTS / COMPONENTS OF THE CONFIRMATION PROGRAM

CALENDAR

The Confirmation Program Calendar included in this booklet lists all the meetings, and the required retreat dates for the entire program. **THESE DATES ARE IMPORTANT!** Meetings are on Sunday evenings. Please check the schedule for exact dates, times, and location. Preparation for Confirmation demands participation just as sports, band, or any other activity. Therefore, I implore you to make these time commitments a **top priority** to truly prepare for the celebration of confirmation. **If a candidate misses a class, a make-up project will be assigned and due by the next class. If more than one class is missed, the candidate will then be asked to go before the team to discuss the importance of the sacrament and whether or not it is a priority to the candidate.**

COMMUNITY

The Sacrament of Confirmation is the completion of one's initiation into the parish community and the community of the universal church. It is vital that there be an active involvement from the candidate in experiencing these communities. So the Candidate can have a sense of belonging as an adult Catholic in the St. Matthew community, but more importantly the Roman Catholic Church. The required experiences are as follows:

Retreat Experience

All candidates are required to make a retreat experience during their preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. A retreat is taking time away to reflect, learn, pray, and discern how God is calling an individual. Jesus did not begin His ministry until He had taken time to be with God, His Father, and to face the temptations that were all around Him in the world in which He lived. The teens have the same invitation to get away and to spend some special time with God and each other. **As noted on the calendar, the Confirmation Retreat is will be on January 26th.** This is a required experience. If the date of the retreat is a conflict for a candidate, candidates must call in advance and discuss the situation with the Confirmation Team to decide upon an alternative retreat experience. **High School Class Retreats do not count as the required retreat experience. Retreats must be after school hours and attended on the candidate's own time.**

CONFIRMATION INFORMATION SHEET

A Confirmation Information sheet needs to be filled out completely for a candidate to be registered in the program. A baptismal certificate is also needed to be confirmed. If you were not baptized at St. Matthew, we will need a copy of your Baptismal Certificate. **All certificates and forms are due by January 13th.**

INSTRUCTION

Our instruction component will occur by means of large group, small groups, speakers, and reflection experience as well as individual and group service opportunities. This year we are excited to announce that our program is based off of Lifeteen's Oneight. There is a website for further investigation. Check it out at www.lifeteen.com.

SERVICE HOURS

A successful Confirmation candidate is one who participates in service opportunities and, when fully initiated into the community of faith, continues to serve God and the people of God. Candidates for Confirmation explore how a fully initiated member in the parish serves the Lord and others. To provide that experience we are asking each teen to complete service hours guidelines. These guidelines consist of five hours within the parish & one community service project outside of the parish community. You will find a service journal in this Confirmation packet with specific instructions and suggestions.

Be sure to log your service hours in the Service Journal provided. **Please turn in your service journal by March 24th so we can suggest additional ideas if necessary!**

HOW DO I CHOOSE A CONFIRMATION SPONSOR?

Every candidate is required to choose a sponsor. **THIS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN LIGHTLY!** The sponsor serves as a witness on behalf of the faithful of the Catholic Church. The person you select will serve as your **mentor** and **friend**. Your Sponsor should be someone who will support and encourage you during your preparation, at the confirmation celebration, and in your faith life. **This person will need to be present for the Rite of Enrollment (January 27th at the 11:30 am Mass), all classes requested, and the Confirmation Ceremony (April 14th).** Here are some simple guidelines for choosing a sponsor:

Talk to your parents about who can best support you during and after the Confirmation preparation.

If married, a sponsor must be in a valid marriage according to the Catholic Church

A sponsor needs to be an **active member of the Catholic Church** and has been fully initiated through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist

Consider a person you know who is a **Christian role model**, who truly lives the Good News. This person must be willing to share his or her faith with the candidate!

All sponsors are encouraged to be 21 years of age. Canon Law requires sponsors to be no younger than 16 and must have received the sacrament of confirmation.

Consider a person who **teaches others through their own example** of Catholic Christian living.

Consider a person who knows you and is **available to listen and talk** to you about your concerns and questions about your faith and the Church.

Consider a person who will be **willing to make the commitment** to be with you at this time and beyond the celebration.

Pray about your decision. With God's help, you and your sponsor can be great **spiritual friends**.

***Note:** According to the Church's Code of Canon Law (canons 872-873), parents are not eligible to be sponsors for their own son or daughter. The ministry of the parent and the ministry of the sponsor are intended to be two separate and distinct ministries.*

Consider choosing one of your Godparents as a Confirmation sponsor. A relative might be an appropriate choice, if he or she lives within a reasonable distance. Another choice may be a parishioner, a teacher, or one of the adult leaders who work with youth. To help share this journey with the Candidate, the sponsor and candidate are asked to attend certain classes together. Understanding the busy lives that we lead, if a sponsor is unable to attend a requested class, we ask that an adult close to the candidate attend as a substitute. As a component of the program, we do ask the sponsor and candidate to reflect on the class experience at the end of the night. So each candidate will need an adult to be present for this portion of the class.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PARENTS?

“The initiation of children into the sacramental life is for the most part the responsibility and concern of Christian parents. They are to form and gradually develop a spirit of faith in their children, and with the help of the catechetical institutions, prepare them for the fruitful reception of the sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist. The responsibility of parents is also shown by their active participation in the celebration of the sacraments.” (Rite of Confirmation, No. 3)

Some possible ways to support your teen in the preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation are:

- Read the Confirmation Handbook with your teen.
- Encourage your teen to participate in all Confirmation sessions.
- Participate in Confirmation activities and programs, and classes.
- Be a Christian role model.
- Assist your teen in selecting service projects.
- Demonstrate the importance of the sacraments in your own life.
- Assist your teen in choosing a Confirmation sponsor.
- Support the Confirmation sponsor and maintain contact with them.
- Pray for all confirmation candidates.
- Discuss with your teen the progress of the confirmation preparation.
- Allow your youth to freely choose the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Attend youth ministry activities with your teen and offer to assist.
- Read Scripture with your teen and pray with them.