

Confirmation

Sacred Heart Church

Sponsor Handbook

2016-2017



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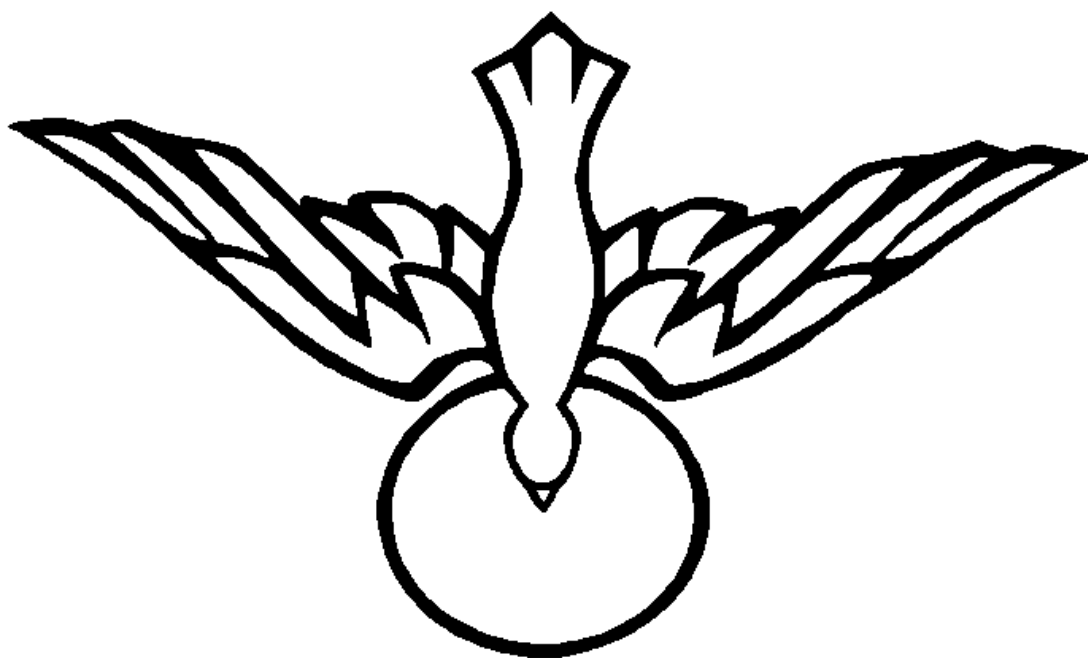
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Sacred Heart Children's Faith Formation

1627 Grand Avenue
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Dear Confirmation Sponsor,

Welcome to the Confirmation program at Sacred Heart Church. You are about to enter into the preparation process of a young person which is a unique responsibility and privilege. You will serve as a role model and guide but mostly as an adult companion in this stage of your candidate's journey of faith.

This booklet has been compiled to help you and to guide you in this task. We have included a list of important dates as we wish you to be aware of the total program and ask you to check in with your candidate to be sure they are meeting various deadlines.

This booklet also includes tips for sponsors that will help you build your special relationship with your candidate, as well as information about the sacrament of Confirmation.

We hope that you find this information helpful as you begin this process. Thank you again for your commitment to your candidate, and to our church community. We pray that this experience will challenge you to grow in your own faith and your commitment to the Catholic Church. If we can be of any help, please call our office.

God Bless,
Kayla Richer
Director of Children's Faith Formation

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is the sacrament that completes Baptism; in it the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon us. In Confirmation the soul of a baptized Christian is imprinted with a permanent seal that can be received only once and marks this individual forever as a Christian. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the strength from above in which this individual puts the grace of his/her Baptism into practice through his/her life and acts as a "witness" for Christ.

Confirmation means accepting responsibility for your faith and destiny. Childhood is a time when you're told what to do, and you react positively to reward and negatively to punishment. Adulthood, even young adulthood, means that you must do what's right on your own, not for the recognition or reward but merely because it's the right thing to do. The focus is on the Holy Spirit, who confirmed the apostles on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and gave them courage to practice their faith. As Catholics, we believe that the same Holy Spirit confirms Candidates during the Sacrament of Confirmation and gives them the same gifts and fruits.

What is a Confirmation Sponsor?

Sponsors are Witnesses

To know someone who lives what he or she says they believe is a powerful witness for all of us. This knowledge is especially helpful for the young person who has chosen you as a guide in faith. As a witness, you might ask yourself, "Is this young man or woman I am sponsoring growing in their faith?" Then perhaps ask yourself, "What can I do to help this young person's understanding of God and continued growth as a Catholic?"

Sponsors are Companions

Being a sponsor means that you serve as a companion or guide. If you live close enough, you can be an integral part of this young person's life. If you live far away, you can keep in touch with a phone call or note of reassurance as to your willingness to help whenever there is a need. Your job is to be an adult friend.

Sponsors are Role Models

Before you begin to feel overwhelmed by such responsibility, remember you do not have to be perfect, no one is. Simply challenge yourself to be open to your own faith growth and put into practice what a life committed to faith requires. Being a sponsor is a journey you and this

special young person take together. So your faith growth is important. You can do this by attending Liturgies and Prayer services together, attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation together and discuss the effects the Sacraments have on you in your life.

A Sponsor Prays

Acting as a sponsor means humbly admitting that God can use you to touch the heart and shape the life and faith development of this young person. Prayer will remind you that you are not doing this alone. Prayer will keep you open to the very real movement of the Holy Spirit in everyday life. Pray for your candidate daily!



A Prayer for Your Candidate

- I pray for the *GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE* for you: that you may be smart about yourself and others, that your vision will be 20/20 about life, and that God will touch your heart.
- I pray for the *GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING* for you: that you will be able to untie the knots of life, that you will become non-judgmental, and that God will expand your heart to love and care as God does.
- I pray for the *GIFT OF WISDOM* for you: to catch on to the mystery and truth of life and to find God in the restless, empty, quiet, or crowded moments.
- I pray for the *GIFT OF COURAGE* for you: that as you walk in this world, you feel prepared and that you might give God all your questions, struggles, hurts, and disappointments.
- I pray for the *GIFT OF PIETY* for you: that you will know a reverence and respect for everything and a piety that will teach you to pray, to forgive, and to build a relationship with God.
- I pray for the *GIFTS OF WONDER AND AWE* (Fear of the Lord) for you: that your attitude toward God is open, humble, and hopeful, and that you are always enthusiastic about God's presence.
- I pray for the *GIFT OF COUNSEL* for you: that you will seek help when you need it and give help when others need it. I pray that this gift helps you make morally good choices that are healthy for your life.

Tips For Sponsors

Below you will find suggestions to help build and sustain a solid relationship with your candidate, one that will support the goals of the preparation process and make the Rite of Confirmation a genuine celebration for both of you. Let these ideas spark your own imagination and creativity. Trust your intuition about what will work well with your candidate, particularly as you get to know each other. If you are already close to your candidate, this is an opportunity to add another layer to an already good relationship. Most importantly, relax and enjoy the time together. Do what you can and let God do what you can't!

- Participate with the young person in activities. Attend important events in their life such as watching them play a sport or attending their music concert.
- Establish a regular time to be with your candidate as listener, sharer and co-traveler on the faith journey. Communicate that the friendship between the two of you makes a difference in your life.
- Be willing to enter into discussion with the young person about the differing values around us and affirm the healthy, life-giving choices of the young person. Model healthy life-giving choices and relationships in your own life. Share stories, both current and historical, of those who have struggled with issues of personal integrity.

- Participate with the young person in community service activities.
- Explore with the young person a variety of ways to pray.
- Reach out to the young person with a "good luck on the exam" telephone call or a congratulatory note about a job well done. Try doing "random acts of kindness" for your young person.
- Support mom and dad with a listening, empathetic ear.
- Take the young person to the ritual experiences at Church or in the community, such as the community's Stations of the Cross.
- Share ways in which your faith and experiences of Church have made a difference in your life - including the doubts and struggles you may have had along the way.
- Pray personally for your candidate and let him or her know it.
- Ask the young person to pray for you.

Confirmation Service Expectation

Ongoing acts of Christian service are essential to the faith life of the Catholic Christian. Developmentally, our Confirmation candidates are at a point in their lives where they are forming their conscience as well as exploring and seeking affirmation of their gifts and talents. Service projects, as part of the preparation process of Confirmation, help youth find ways to use their talents in building up God's Kingdom.

It is the hope of the community of Sacred Heart that our young parishioners who are preparing to be initiated into full membership of the church will find their calling and their place in the Church. The service projects should stretch the candidate just a little beyond his or her comfort zone and help the young person appreciate personal gifts which will be strengthened in the Holy Spirit at Confirmation.

As the Confirmation sponsor, we encourage you to participate with your candidate in some of the service opportunities they choose.

During your Confirmation preparation, the candidate needs to complete **at least THREE Christian service projects** or participate in their school's service cord program or religion class service component at Dowling.

As the candidate schedules his/her service projects, they should keep the following in mind.

- A service project must consist of time you donate to the community. You may not be reimbursed financially for your time.
- Activities that assist your immediate family may not be considered as service hours. As family members these are considered familial obligations. Immediate family includes those living in your household.
- Service Hours may not be signed by family members or a student.
- A variety of service is encouraged. Exiting your comfort zone is good!

Below you will find some ideas for service offered through the parish:

- ✓ CFF Volunteers: CFF can use help at the First Eucharist Retreat in March of each year, at receptions for First Eucharist (May). See the CFF calendar for dates.
- ✓ Church Decorations: Help decorate/clean up the church before/after the change of the liturgical seasons. Watch the parish bulletin for announcements of help needed.
- ✓ FIA (Faith in Action): Spring Break Service Adventure. Sun.-Wed. of spring break. Teens in grades 9-12 spend the days serving at local agencies that help the poor and needy and the evenings engaging in social justice learning and various prayer and community building experiences. More information available late fall on the website www.sacredheartwdm.org
- ✓ Lenten Fish Fry: Each Friday of Lent the parish hosts a fish fry. Watch the bulletin and website for details. www.sacredheartwdm.org
- ✓ Love in the Heart of Christ (Parish Day of Service): Held annually in the fall. Participate in outreach to help parishioners and neighbors with everything from yard work, small household projects and visits with the homebound. Watch the bulletin for details and sign-up information. (Oct. 29-30, 2016)
- ✓ Summer mission trip: Each summer, youth ministry sponsors a week-long mission trip for teens that have completed 9-12th grade. Recent locations have been Winnebago Indian Reservation, South Texas, and Colorado flood relief. More information in late fall.
- ✓ Teen Choir: This group of energetic musicians leads sung prayer at Mass once a month (usually 11:15). Rehearsals are about two Sunday evenings per month 6:30-8:00 pm. Contact Deanna Lane 225-0546 or Deanna.lane@sacredheartwdm.org to sign up.
- ✓ Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration: Help with the celebration after Mass December 12, 2016. Contact Hispanic Ministries Coordinator
- ✓ Watch the bulletin and SMASH update emails: Opportunities will appear throughout the year. Watch the bulletin and read emails carefully for additional opportunities.

Preparation and Requirements for Confirmation

- Parental involvement: Parents are the primary catechist (teacher) in their child's faith formation. We only see your child a few hours a month, you interact with them every day! The family of the candidate must be properly involved, instructed and supported. Parents are expected to attend several instructional meetings during the process.
- Weekly Mass Attendance: Attendance at the weekly Eucharistic Liturgy is expected. Without participation at weekly Mass, no preparation could effectively evoke the communal nature of our Roman Catholic faith that comes from sharing in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup.
- Prayer: The second most important responsibility after Mass attendance for the candidate, their family and the sponsor is to pray. Choosing to complete initiation into the Church is a discernment process. This is a decision that comes from the core of the candidate. To reach that core, one must pray and pray often.
- Catechetical Sessions: Monthly preparation sessions that instruct about the basic beliefs of the Catholic Faith and the Sacrament of Confirmation are mandatory, not elective. Good attendance is essential; make up sessions are required for all approved absences. Confirmation preparation is a process that prepares the candidate for a life-long membership in the Roman Catholic faith. This is a process not of convenience, but of commitment.
- Retreats: Attendance at the Confirmation retreat will be required of the candidate during preparation for the sacrament. Since attendance at the retreat provides the candidate with an invaluable experience, if the candidate is unable to attend, they will be required to attend an alternate Confirmation retreat at another Catholic parish. The Confirmation staff should be notified well in advance and will need to seek approval of an alternate event.

- Service: Service is time set aside in ministering to others. As members of a church family where we are loved and cared for, it is our responsibility to love and care for others. If we see service hours as only a Confirmation requirement, we miss the opportunity to grow in and express our Christian faith. The candidate should take full responsibility for completing service hours. Candidates must participate in fifteen hours of Christian community service. Service hours are due by the September 2017 Candidate session.
- Sponsors: Sponsors not only stand with the candidate at the time of Confirmation, but should be an example and a guide throughout the preparation process. Sponsors should be mature, practicing Catholics; Baptized and Confirmed in the Church and committed to grow in their Catholic faith. The sponsor must be 16 years of age or older, and cannot be a parent of the candidate. Each candidate should choose a sponsor who is available to attend meetings and events throughout the process. Candidates will be required to interview their sponsor and fill out the "Sponsor Interview Form" by January 4, 2017. (Sponsors should be chosen as soon as possible so they can be praying for and connecting with the Candidate along their spiritual journey)
- Confirmation Saint Name: Candidates are given the opportunity to choose a Saint's name for Confirmation by which the bishop will address the candidate when Confirmed. Students will be asked to write an explanation about their choice of a Confirmation name in a report which will be due by Feb. 1, 2017
- Integration into the parish community: Candidates must be made aware of and encouraged in their responsibility to participate in parish life during their preparation as well as after the reception of the sacrament. Candidates are strongly encouraged to attend and participate in the activities of SMASH (Student Ministry at Sacred Heart).

Confirmation Calendar for 2016-2017

Sponsors are welcome to attend any of these events with their candidate. We highly encourage Sponsors to attend the closing session of the retreat on Jan. 15, 2017 and the Confirmation rehearsal fall of 2017 and of course the Confirmation Mass

Wed., Nov. 2, 2016
6:30-8:00 pm

Confirmation Session: (Parish Center)

Wed., Dec. 7, 2016
6:30-8:00 pm

Confirmation Session: (Parish Center)
** Sponsor Name Due

Wed., Jan. 4, 2017
6:30-8:00 pm

Confirmation Session: (Parish Center)
** Sponsor Interview Due

Sunday,
Jan. 15, 2017
11:15 am-6:00 pm
Parish Center and
Church

Confirmation Retreat: The retreat begins with 11:15 Mass and concludes at 6:00 pm. *****Parents (and sponsors if available) will join the retreat at 5:00 pm in the church.*****

Attendance of a retreat is required by the Diocese for all Confirmation Candidates and must be attended in its entirety. If the candidate cannot attend the entire retreat, you will be required to identify another approved retreat in a Catholic parish in our area and attend that event. Please call our office immediately if attendance is an issue.

Wed., Feb. 1, 2017
6:30-8:00 pm

Confirmation Session: (Parish Center)
** Saint Report Due

Wed., March 8, 2017
6:30-8:15 pm

Confirmation Session: (Parish Center)
(Note: This is the 2nd Wed. in March due to the fact that Ash Wednesday is the 1st Wed. of March)

Wed., April 5, 2017
6:30-8:00 pm

Confirmation Session: (Parish Center)

Wed., Sept. 6, 2017
6:30-8:00 pm

Confirmation Session: (Parish Center)
**Service verification forms/logs due

Wed., Oct. 4, 2017
6:30-8:00 pm
Church

Parent/Candidate Session/Rehearsal: This event is required of both the candidate and a parent **(Sponsors are highly encouraged to attend)**. The sacrament of Confirmation and the Confirmation Mass are much more meaningful when we understand the details of the sacrament and the signs and symbols of the Mass. Why does the bishop celebrate this sacrament with us? What does it mean when he lays hands on the candidates? How did the sacrament originate? This required session for parents and candidates will make your experience of confirmation more than just going through the actions of another sacrament. We will also be practicing the actual process of how candidates, sponsors and parents will walk up to receive the sacrament.

Sun., Oct. 8, 2017
4:00 pm Candidates
with last names **A-L**

Confirmation Masses 2017
Candidates and sponsors should arrive at the church by 3:30 pm. Seats will be randomly assigned. Please remember the church will be very full. There will be

Sun., Oct. 15, 2017
4:00 pm Candidates
with last names **M-Z**

limited extra seating for extended family and friends. Following Mass a reception will be held in the Parish Center.

Required Forms and Deadlines

It is the responsibility of the candidate, with the support of the parents and the sponsor, to make sure that all appropriate forms and requirements are met by the necessary due dates. Please read the following information carefully.

The following copies and forms should be completed and sent to the church office or given to your small group leader by the date required.

Baptismal Certificate

We must have a record of the candidate's Baptism before receipt of the sacrament. Please provide our office with a copy at the beginning of the process. **DUE ASAP**

Sponsor Interview Form

A sponsor should be selected as soon as possible. The Candidate must interview their chosen sponsor and complete the "Sponsor Interview Form" by **Jan. 4, 2017**

Confirmation Saint Name Report

This essay should describe the Saint name you have chosen and the reason(s) why. **Due by Wed., February 1, 2017**

Service Verification Form or Log

Dowling students and Silver Cord participants will turn in a log of their service activities. Other candidates will need to complete 15 hours of Christian Service and turn in "Service Verification Forms" If you need additional service sheets, please check the Sacred Heart Web Site and look for forms under Confirmation. Turn in sheets as you complete hours. **All hours are due by Sept. 6, 2017.**

Confirmation Rehearsal and Mass Details

Confirmation Candidate/Parent (and sponsor if available) Session & Rehearsal:

October 4, 2017 6:30 in the Church

Candidate and at least one parent are required to attend. **Sponsors are highly encouraged to attend.**

Confirmation Masses

Due to the large number of candidates this year there will be TWO Confirmation Masses.

Sunday, October 8, 2017 4:00 pm - Candidates with last names A-L

Sunday, October 15, 2017 4:00 pm - Candidates with last names M-Z

Candidates and sponsors should arrive by 3:30 p.m. A pew will be provided for each candidate. Following the Confirmation Mass, we will host a cake and punch reception in the Parish Center for all candidates, family members, and guests. Expect the Mass to last at least 1 ½ hours. The Bishop will be available for photos with the candidates following Mass.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

WISDOM

To value the things of God

UNDERSTANDING

To grasp faith's mysteries

COUNSEL

To make wise decisions

FORTITUDE

To strengthen your will



KNOWLEDGE

To enlighten your mind

PIETY

To love and serve God

FEAR OF THE LORD

To respect God's majesty

