

The Catholic Community of the Punxsutawney Area
SS. Cosmas & Damian Church, Punxsutawney

CONFIRMATION PROGRAM HANDBOOK
2023 – 2024



Come Holy Spirit!

SS. Cosmas & Damian Catholic Church
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CONFIRMATION PROGRAM PERSONNEL

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Pastor

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Confirmation Coordinator

(814) 771-8288

Msgr. Joseph J. Riccardo

Mrs. Sue Dahrouge

Mrs. Arlene Stewart

Mr. Paul Jekielek

Catechists for the Confirmation Program

The Goals of the Confirmation Program

† To empower young people to live as active and energetic disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today.

† To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.

† To foster the personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

† To cultivate an individually Christ-centered way of life for each young person.

Structure of the Confirmation Program

The Director of the Confirmation program is in charge of the program, which is staffed by trained catechists, who provide the best possible program for the proper spiritual growth of young people.

To ensure the safety of our young people and in compliance with diocesan policies, all those involved in the Confirmation program have all the proper and necessary clearances and background checks needed when working with young people.

Candidate Requirements for the Confirmation Program

In order to be accepted into the Confirmation Program, each candidate or *confirmandi* must meet the following criteria:

† **Is a Registered Parishioner at SS. Cosmas & Damian:** In order to enter the program, the candidate's family must be registered parishioners. If you are not registered, this can be taken care of at the parish office.

† **Be of High School Age:** Each candidate must be a freshman or sophomore in high school. An exception is made if a perspective candidate was retained in the public or private education system yet continued ahead in a religious education program.

† **Has Completed the Proper Religious Education:** Each candidate must have received the sacrament of First Holy Communion and Reconciliation and completed grade 8 and 9 in a Catholic religious education program or parochial school. Students who have not completed such and wish to enter the program must fulfill the requirements of the missing grades.

† **If the Candidate has Already Received Confirmation through the Byzantine Catholic Tradition:** If a student was baptized in the Byzantine Catholic Church or any other of the Eastern Catholic Churches, this included First Eucharist and Confirmation. The student may participate in the Confirmation program to deepen his or her faith and journey with their fellow classmates. At the Confirmation liturgy the bishop will give him or her a special blessing since reception of the sacrament occurs only once.

Components of the Confirmation Program

To provide a well-rounded education and experiential program for our young people, there are various components, each of which allow each young person to enhance their faith life and deepen their relationship with God.

† **Group Instruction:** Students are required to attend confirmation classes, which are held twice each month (cf. schedule for any variations) during the normal time that religious education occurs in the parish: 9:15 a.m. until 10:45 a.m. **Attendance is mandatory.** This is a time of faith formation, encompassing understanding of living sacramental life endowed with the Spirit.

† **Retreat:** The confirmation experience includes a **mandatory** retreat, which is a time of spiritual enlightenment. Candidates reflect on experiences and deepen even further their relationship with God and each other. The retreat takes place in the fall at SS. Cosmas & Damian Parish. If the candidate is absent from the retreat, the candidate must attend a retreat from a neighboring parish after consulting with the Confirmation program director.

† **Service Hours:** In order to assist our young people in understanding the vital and important role that service plays in the life of a Christian, each candidate is required to participate in **30 hours** of service through the Confirmation process: 15 hours in Church related activities and 15 hours in community-oriented activities. A diverse and eclectic assortment of experiences is the best, especially situations that are uncommon to the student. The Director of the Confirmation oversees all service hours and will interject his/her input when necessary. Each candidate is required to turn in the proper service hours form after their service has been concluded. Service offers the candidates opportunities to bear witness to the Gospel values through these lived experiences. Some service hours may be acquired through a class project.

† **Individual Interviews:** During the Confirmation process the candidate is interviewed informally by the pastor. This interview is designed to encourage each candidate to fully explore their desire to be confirmed and to further continue that faith desire after they have received the sacrament.

† **Liturgical Formation:** Candidates, like all professed and practicing Catholics, are expected to regularly attend Mass on Sundays and all Holy Days of Obligation. As with all of us this allows the candidates to grow and renew the sense of the Paschal Mystery in

their lives. All candidates are required to turn in a reflection sheet for each Sunday Mass from September to March. Forms are returned at each class or brought to the Church Office or Religious Education Office.

Choosing a Confirmation Name

Part of the Sacrament of Confirmation is the selection of a saint's name to be used at the Confirmation liturgy, presided over by the bishop. As Catholics, we look to the angels and saints as examples of faith. In our own journey towards salvation, we look to the saints' lives to aid us in our own struggles. The saint you choose must be found in Butler's *Lives of the Saints*.

Each candidate is required to thoroughly research a saint that they closely can associate themselves with and not choose a name for a nonsensical reason. Biblical persons, who we do not necessarily denote as "saints," like Moses, Abraham, Gabriel the Archangel, etc. are very appropriate names for Confirmation.

Each candidate must turn in a 2-page, double-spaced, typed report on the saint they have chosen, outlining a brief biography of the saint's life and a short reflection on the reasons why they chose that holy person.

Confirmation Sponsors

All Confirmation candidates are asked to select a sponsor. The role of the sponsor is to "see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with this sacrament." With that in mind the selection of a sponsor must not be a haphazard one. The sponsor must be a true Christian example for the young person, who can walk with the candidate not only through the Confirmation process, but beyond to experience the mysteries of the faith together.

It is certainly appropriate that one of the candidate's baptismal godparents be selected as sponsor. This is a very visible way of showing the connection between the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation) and continuing the journey of finding and experiencing the faith communally.

The sponsor, in accordance with Canon Law and diocesan regulations:

- † Must be chosen by the Confirmation candidate.
- † Must be a practicing adult Catholic, who had already received the Sacraments of First Holy Communion, Reconciliation, and Confirmation and lead a life in harmony with the Catholic faith.
- † Must be in **good standing** (*attends mass regularly and practices their faith*) with the Catholic Church.
- † Cannot be the mother or father of the candidate.

The candidate must choose their sponsor prior to the end of October. The sponsor is encouraged to attend one class with his or her candidate. This is yet another visible sign that the Confirmation process is a journey and that the journey is always done with others on the road with you. If the sponsor lives a distance away, provisions can be made.

Each candidate is also required to turn in a 2-page, double-spaced, typed report highlighting who their sponsor is (brief reflection on their relationship) and why they have chosen this person as their Confirmation sponsor.

Letter to the Bishop

Each candidate is required to write a formal, typed letter to the bishop. An outline of what is required in this letter will be distributed to the candidates. The letters will be used during the interview between the candidates and the pastor.

Confirmation Ceremony Date

Due to the large number of Confirmation liturgies throughout the diocese, which is a vast area, the date of the actual mass depends upon the bishop's schedule. The Bishop's Office will notify the parish of available dates and then will notify us of what the bishop has chosen. Typically, the liturgy takes place during the Easter Season; however, we wait for the bishop's notification.

Practice for the liturgy is required for the candidate and their sponsor, at a date and time to be determined.

Attendance Policy

All activities that are included in our program are included in this handbook. Therefore, attendance is **mandatory** and will be taken at **ALL** meetings, classes, special events, etc., throughout the year.

Because the program is now twice a month, for most months, absences will jeopardize a student's eligibility for the sacrament of Confirmation. Just missing one class invalidates the entire program, therefore there are provisions made for "make up classes."

Candidates are expected to be at all classes and other required events unless illness or a family emergency arises. Sports events/practices, weekends away, homework, and other reasons are not acceptable for being absent. Please check the Confirmation schedule and plan accordingly.

Particular and unique situations will always be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Registration Fee

To cover the cost of the textbooks, materials, and supplies there is an annual fee of **\$50.00**. This fee should be paid at the time of registration. If there are any financial difficulties, please contact the Pastor or program director.

Curriculum Overview

Textbook:

Our text is: The Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church

The text's mission is to re-energize the Catholic Church in America by developing world-class resources that inspire people to re-discover the genius of Catholicism. Its vision is to be the innovative leader in the New Evangelization helping Catholics and their parishes become the-best-version-of-themselves.

Of course, with all catechetical instruction, the text is the foundation, but personal experiences and probing questions might necessitate various tangents for discussion and analysis – this certainly is a component of any kind of learning.

Session 1: Seeking
Session 2: Reasons
Session 3: Breath
Session 4: Brokenhearted
Session 5: Prodigal
Session 6: New
Session 7: Transformation
Session 8: Foundation
Session 9: Source
Session 10: Signature
Session 11: Called
Session 12: Power

The “100 Questions”:

As part of the curriculum each candidate is given 100 questions, which focuses on aspects of the universal, diocesan, and local Church. The questions will be reviewed throughout the year.

Current Catholic Events:

As part of each class there will be an opportunity to briefly discuss any current events happening not only through the world but also in our country, diocese, or parish. Students and

teachers are encouraged to keep up with Catholic news and share anything they have heard the preceding week.

Prayer Partners:

Each student will be given a prayer partner from various parish organizations (i.e., Catholic Daughters of America, Knights of Columbus, etc). That individual will be responsible for praying daily for the candidate, his or her journey and completion of the Confirmation process.

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday Evening Vigil

4:30 p.m. – SS. Cosmas & Damian

Sunday Eucharistic Celebration

8:00 a.m. – SS. Cosmas & Damian

11:00 a.m. – SS. Cosmas & Damian

Confirmation Class Schedule and Assignment Due Dates

All classes are held at SS. Cosmas & Damian School from 9:15 a.m. until 10:45 a.m. on Sundays.

September	10 24	(* Code of Conduct due) Class with Msgr. Riccardo <i>Seeking</i>
October	1 15 29	<i>Rosary Presentation</i> <i>Retreat</i> 1:00pm-5:00pm <i>Reasons</i>
November	5 19	<i>Breath</i> (*Sponsor Forms & Sponsor reflection due) <i>Brokenhearted</i>
December	3 17	<i>Prodigal</i> (* Safe environment In-service) <i>New</i>
January	7 21	<i>Transformation</i> (*Saint Report Due) <i>Foundation</i>
February	4 18	<i>Source</i> <i>Signature/ Called</i> (* Letter to the Bishop due),
March	3 17 24	Class with Msgr. Riccardo <i>Power</i> Possible class date

April 7 **Confirmation, St. Tobias, Brockway, 2:00pm**

**** The schedule is **subject to change** due to inclement weather or at the discretion of the Pastor or Confirmation Program director. Changes will be communicated immediately to teachers and students.*