

**2018-2019**

**Confirmation Preparation  
Handbook for Families  
(Levels 1 & 2)**

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(This is a supplement to the  
*St. Mary of the Bay Religious Education Handbook*)

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NB: In this document, "CCC" followed by numbers refer to specific paragraph numbers in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Catechism can be referenced online via our website at [www.stmaryofthebay.org/Religious-Education](http://www.stmaryofthebay.org/Religious-Education).

# *What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?*

Often regarded as a proof of spiritual maturity, *the sacrament is better understood as part of every Christian's ongoing initiation into a life of deeper faith.* The Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation states: "The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and finally are sustained by the food of eternal life in the Eucharist." As sacraments of initiation, Baptism and Confirmation are intimately connected to each other in the life of every Catholic.

At Baptism, each of us entered into the paschal mystery - the death and resurrection of Christ - by the use of water and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Our parents and godparents presented us to the Church, the family of God, to become new creations in Christ. Confirmation reaffirms that baptismal commitment by the use of oil and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit - in a very real way, Confirmation completes Baptism. Individuals receiving the sacrament of Confirmation indicate by their own words and deeds their willingness to undertake the Christian way of life with new vigor and a deeper commitment.

*In the Roman Rite the bishop extends his hands over the whole group of the confirmands. Since the time of the apostles this gesture has signified the gift of the Spirit. The bishop invokes the outpouring of the Spirit in these words:*

*All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
by water and the Holy Spirit  
you freed your sons and daughters from sin  
and gave them new life.  
Send your Holy Spirit upon them  
to be their helper and guide.  
Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of right judgment and courage,  
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.  
Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. (CCC 1299)*

## *The Effects of Confirmation*

Confirmation is always a celebration of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The Spirit is the source of our life and the binding force that unites us in divine love. "Bound more intimately to the Church by the sacrament of Confirmation, the faithful are endowed by the Holy Spirit with special strength. Hence they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith born by word and deed as the true witnesses of Christ." With these words, Vatican II identified the chief effects of Confirmation for the individual - and for his/her wider community. Candidates for Confirmation seek to become full members of Christ's body, the Church, willing to enter the world and continue His saving mission.

*It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. (CCC 1302)*

*Recall then that you have received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of holy fear in God's presence. Guard what you have received. God the Father has marked you with his sign; Christ the Lord has confirmed you and has placed his pledge, the Spirit, in your hearts. (St. Ambrose) (CCC 1303)*

*Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.  
(CCC 1316)*

## *Goals of our Program*

According to the Catechism, preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit—his actions, his gifts, and his biddings—in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end, catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. (CCC 1309)

To accomplish this, our program is designed to give all candidates a rich and vital sense of what it means to be a truly committed Catholic Christian. The program offers the opportunity for serious reflection, prayer, study, and service in anticipation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation.

Our program seeks to make connections, addressing the special concerns of young Catholics as they prepare for adulthood. Our hope is that these connections between our faith and the realities of our world will help the candidates make good life choices and be good Catholic Christians throughout their lives.

## *Expectations of the Candidate*

Candidates for the sacrament of Confirmation are undertaking a solemn responsibility, for they are seeking fuller participation in the life of the Church. Candidates must freely choose to be confirmed and make their desire known.

All Confirmation students are expected to fulfill the following program requirements as they complete their preparation.

**Mass Attendance** – Mass attendance with the class is required as part of every regular Sunday morning class session. Refer to the class schedule for specific dates and times.

In addition, attendance at weekly Mass and on Holy Days of Obligation is expected of each member of the Confirmation class.

### **Class Attendance & Tardiness**

- Attendance at all scheduled classes and Masses is required of each student.
- All work missed due to any absence must be made up.
- An absence will be considered "Excused" if the Director of Religious Education is notified in advance of the class by a parent. OR, in the event of a family emergency, as soon as possible after the class.
- If the Director is not notified, an absence will be considered "Unexcused." "Unexcused Absences" are usually evidence of a lack of commitment to the program, and to the Sacrament of Confirmation itself.
- Multiple absences, Excused or Unexcused, may affect the student's status in the program.
- Tardiness is very disruptive and disrespectful. Please make every effort to be in class/Mass before it begins.

**Responsibility** - Candidates must show personal responsibility in participating, completing the learning sessions and all other requirements for Confirmation. While family involvement is important and encouraged, it is the Confirmation Candidate who is responsible for his/her progress in the program.

**Attitude** - Without a doubt, the most important thing each student can bring to the program is a positive and sincere attitude. Many people contribute to the success of our program, giving countless hours for the faith formation of our students. A positive attitude respects the generosity of all these good people.

**Behavioral expectations** - Given the nature of our goal - to help prepare our youth for the sacrament of Confirmation for life as Catholic Christians - it is important that each student maintain a high degree of respect and good conduct. Students and instructors can learn much about the faith from each other, and all are expected to behave in a Christian manner to maximize the benefits of the time we have together. To this end we require that all cell phones be PUT AWAY in a pocket or bag and NOT USED for any purpose during class time or Mass. We reserve the right to confiscate cell phones during class time or Mass if a student handles or uses the phone.

The Director will notify parents should a student establish a pattern of disruptive behavior so that action appropriate to the situation may be taken.

**Retreat** - Attendance at a retreat(s) designed specifically for the candidates is expected. Information regarding the retreat(s) will be provided in a timely manner.

**Assignments** - Each student is responsible for completing all assignments in a timely manner.

**Christian Service Projects** - Christian Service Projects are a required part of our program. Please refer to the section entitled, *Christian Service Projects*.

**Choosing a Sponsor (Level 2 only)** - Each student is expected to submit a **Confirmation Sponsor Form** by the first class in December. Each sponsor must submit to the Director a completed **Confirmation Sponsor Affidavit** by the end of December. Please refer to the *Choosing a Confirmation Sponsor* section in this document for more information.

**Choosing a Confirmation Name (Level 2 only)** - By the first class in December, each student will submit a 300 word essay with the **Confirmation Name Essay Cover Sheet** about the patron saint he/she has chosen. Please refer to the *Choosing a Confirmation Name* section of this document for more information.

# *Expectations of the Family*

We do not expect that our children will learn what they need to know in the short period of time we spend with them in Confirmation Preparation classes each year. Learning about our faith is a lifelong process which each individual must embrace. Ultimately, parents are responsible for initiating their children into the sacramental life.

**Parental Involvement** - Parents are the primary teachers of the faith. It is up to each parent to take an active role in the faith formation of their children. Our candidates for the sacrament of Confirmation are at an age where the realities of adult life are often thrust upon them, despite the fact that they are not ready to face these realities alone. Your participation in the program is crucial to help your child understand that our faith can be a great source of strength and joy when it is understood and practiced.

**Mass attendance and class attendance** – Parents play a crucial role in getting their young teens to where they need to be. Please consider how you can help your child fulfill his/her obligation to attend Mass each weekend and on Holy Days of Obligation. Also, please help your child arrive at class on time.

**Encouragement & Communication** – The way in which you approach this program and your relationship with the Church and parish will greatly affect your child's attitude toward the entire process and the sacrament of Confirmation itself. Please encourage your child to bring a positive attitude to the process and be open to the experience of the faith we are offering. We urge parents to view some of the videos we will use each week in class and discuss them with your children - this can provide valuable insight into what your child is thinking about his/her faith and about important choices in life.

**Sacramental certificates** – Each candidate who received the sacraments of Baptism and/or First Eucharist at a parish other than St. Mary of the Bay, St. Jean Baptiste or St. Casimir must provide a certificate from the parish at which each sacrament was received. The Director will contact you if this information is not already in the database.

**Logistics** – Please assist us in ensuring that all the required paperwork is returned in a timely fashion. A copy of each required form is included with this package so please help your child stay on top of the process. As each form requires a parent's signature, please read each one carefully before you sign.

In addition we may request that a "Confirmation Information Form" be completed to ensure that we have all the necessary information to keep our sacramental records up-to-date.

**Meetings** – We may schedule one or two meetings with parents during the course of this year of preparation. We encourage you to attend to support your child during this important process.

# Christian Service Projects

Christian Service is a crucial aspect of preparation for this sacrament, because students seeking Confirmation should understand what it means to be a Christian, and be willing to assume mature responsibilities within the Church.

**Christian Service Opportunities** - During the course of the year, we will provide opportunities for our Confirmation Preparation students to perform Christian Service here at our parish or in the nearby community. Information about each opportunity will be provided to students and families. If a student is unable to attend a specific event, we will help to arrange an alternative form of service for him/her.

## **Christian Service Requirements:**

- **Level 1 Confirmation students** are expected to participate in one (1) Christian Service Project.
- **Level 2 Confirmation students** are expected to participate in two (2) Christian Service Projects.

# Choosing a Confirmation Name (Level 2 only)

Taking a name is associated with Baptism in Christian life. Being Confirmed is connected with Baptism because it is a 'delayed' part of the Rite of Baptism and is part of the process of becoming a member of the Church. In celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation we use the same mixture of olive oil and balsam as was used in Baptism. That's why Confirmation is sometimes referred to as "Chrismation" - anointing with the Oil of Chrism. The new name shows that there is a link between Baptism and Confirmation.

A Confirmation name should not be a random choice. Whether you choose to use your first name, your middle name or choose a new name, you should consider those who have had the name before you. Each student should do some research to choose a **patron saint**. Even a student named "John" who wishes to use his given name should choose a specific St. John as a patron.

The patron saint provides a model of charity and the assurance of prayer – that means your patron saint will always be praying for you and your intentions. Some attribute of the saint's life should have particular relevance to the Confirmation candidate.

Each student should do some research to find a patron saint. The following websites should help:

[www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org) (go to *saints* tab and click on *patron saints*)

[saints.sqpn.com](http://saints.sqpn.com)

[www.catholic.org/saints](http://www.catholic.org/saints)

**Each student will write a *Confirmation Name Essay*, attach it to a *Confirmation Name Essay Cover Sheet* and submit it by the first class in December. This essay should address why the name was chosen based on**

information about the life of the saint and how it relates to the student. It should not be simply a biography of the saint but show a real connection between the saint and the student. **Essays must be written by the student and not simply copied from the internet or a book.**

## *Choosing a Confirmation Sponsor (Level 2 only)*

Just as one's patron saint provides a model of Christian life, so too should the sponsor be a role model to the candidate.

The selection of a qualified sponsor is a vital step in any candidate's preparation for the sacrament. The role of the sponsor has often been misunderstood, however, for it is more than an honorary position reserved for an aunt or uncle who was not selected as godparent years ago. Indeed, the sponsor is essential to a Confirmation student's ongoing study and formation. The best sponsor is someone who is already involved in the candidate's life, supporting the candidate by his/her presence and prayer, sharing his own faith, and calling the candidate to a deeper commitment by his/her own example.

Sponsors should thus be chosen for their ability to provide spiritual support and guidance to students as they approach the sacrament. Qualified sponsors must be Catholics in good standing, whose witness to the Truth can inspire and sustain candidates on their own faith journeys.

Specific qualifications for a Confirmation Sponsor are:

- Must be 16 years of age or older
- Parents of the candidate are not eligible to serve as sponsor
- Must have received the three Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist)
- If married, must be validly married according to the laws of the Roman Catholic Church
- If single, must be attempting to live according to the moral teachings of the Roman Catholic Church
- Must be a practicing Roman Catholic
- Must complete a Confirmation Sponsor Affidavit attesting to his/her qualifications

***A Confirmation Sponsor Form (completed by the student) must be submitted in class by the first class in December. A Confirmation Sponsor Affidavit (completed by the sponsor) must be submitted to the Director by the end of December.***

# Confirmation Name Essay Cover Sheet

Saint Mary of the Bay  
Confirmation Preparation Program

Level 2 only - Please return your essay attached to this completed form to the Director of Religious Education by the first class in December.

Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print (from a pc or very neatly by hand) an essay of around 300 words in accordance with the instructions in the *Confirmation Information Package for Families*.

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Confirmation Sponsor Form

## Saint Mary of the Bay

### Confirmation Preparation Program

Refer to the *Confirmation Information Package for Families* for help in choosing a sponsor. [Please note that your parents are not eligible to serve as your sponsor.](#)

**Please note that ALL Sponsors must complete and submit to the Director of Religious Education a *Confirmation Sponsor Affidavit*.**

**Level 2 Only - Please return this completed form to the Director of Religious Education by the first class in December.**

**Candidate's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

The sponsor I have chosen is:

**Sponsor's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsor's Relationship to you:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsor's Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsor's Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsor's Parish:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CONFIRMATION SPONSOR AFFIDAVIT**

Name of Confirmation Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Confirmation Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Address of Parish where Sponsor is currently registered & active:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTIONS FOR THE SPONSOR**

What is your relationship to the candidate?: \_\_\_\_\_

**The individual must be able to answer “Yes” to all of the questions below in order to be qualified to serve as sponsor.**

*Please circle Yes or No for each of the following statements:*

- Yes No I am 16 years of age or older.
- Yes No I am neither the father nor the mother of the candidate.
- Yes No I have received the three Sacraments of Initiation in a Roman Catholic Church: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.
- Yes No If married, I have been validly married according to the laws of the Roman Catholic Church. If single, I am attempting to live according to the moral teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Yes No I am a practicing Roman Catholic, regularly attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days and receiving the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Yes No I actively strive to live out my commitment to Christ and to the community life of the Church by my loving response to those with whom I come into contact daily.

I understand that I assume a great responsibility before God and the Church in becoming a Sponsor. I will give support to this Candidate by my prayers and by the Christian example of my daily life.

By my signature I attest, before God, to the truth of the above statements.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Sponsor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date