

HMC CONFIRMATION 1 & 2

For the 2017-2018 schoolyear: **Grades 8 & 9 (Confirmation 1)** and **Grade 10 or Older (Confirmation 2)**

May 15, 2017

Dear HMC Parents,

I am so excited to be writing to you today about some new plans our parish—and, indeed, our entire diocese—is putting in place to help form young disciples. This new vision is in part inspired by the shift in the Confirmation age within the Diocese of Madison, but it is also part of a much greater picture. Read along to learn about the many exciting changes.

First off, I want to share with you one of my big dreams. (This is shared by our pastor Fr. Gary, our bishop, and our larger parish community. I hope it is shared by you, too!) I dream of the days when Confirmation does not mark the end of the road for participation of our young people in the life of the Catholic Church. My dream is that all teens in our parish will become—and will continue to be—enthusiastic followers of Jesus Christ. My hope is that they will desire to know him more deeply, love him more ardently, and serve him more passionately throughout their lives. I desire this for them, in large part, because I believe in my heart of hearts that it's simply the very best gift we can give our children as we send them out into the world: a deeply rooted and vibrant relationship with the One whose love will guide and protect them unlike any other, through thick and thin.

I would love to see our Catholic teens set the bar high for living great lives, marked by kindness and joy, in their high schools—from the classroom to the sports field to the stage. I dream of our youth heading off to college and making attendance at Mass a top priority, to know deeply that Jesus and their parish community “have their backs” whenever the going gets tough. I imagine our teens becoming young adults who generously give back to their parish community. Long story short, my dream is for our youth to love their faith and live it out for the rest of their days.

Now, let's talk about how we are going to bring these dreams to life. I believe this is possible through the strength and grace that we will be given by God, while embarking on this journey. Here at HMC...

- We are going to renew our enthusiasm and efforts in developing engaging, thoughtful, and prayerful formation for high school teens.
- In the years ahead, reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation will be moved to the spring of Freshman year. We will be making this shift in Spring 2019—when this year's incoming 8th and 9th Graders will be confirmed (during their “Confirmation 2” year). This change will help us refocus our understanding of the sacrament as a moment of grace that's meant to provide strength for living out the faith throughout high school years and beyond, rather than marking the end of the road with their local parish. As the U.S. bishops keep reminding us: Confirmation should be a sacramental gift that strengthens our young people for the difficulties they begin to encounter—it was never ever meant to be “graduation from church.”
- Official formation in our parish for high school youth will begin to shift to a 4-year process, with an emphasis on small group communities and prayerful support designed to help our teens to grow into lifelong disciples. This will help reinforce the message that none of us are ever “done” growing in our knowledge and appreciation of the Catholic faith.
- To help bridge the gap between school years, our parish and diocese plans to increase opportunities for summertime activity and formation, with things like local mission trips, prayer nights, and small group gatherings.

As we set off on this path with renewed enthusiasm, I want to mention that reaching our goals will not be possible without your participation. I don't want to dive deeply into this conversation today, but without your witness and support as parents, this vision will not come to life. Stay tuned for more on how we can form ourselves to be better equipped to walk with our teens throughout these formative years!

I hope that you're as excited to begin this new journey, as we are here at Holy Mother of Consolation Parish.

Peace,



Mary Lynn Hendrickson, Youth Minister & Director of Faith Formation, Grades 7-12

ENCLOSED: **Please refer to the enclosed postcard** for important “Save the Date” info for Conf2 families, as well as reminders for new Conf1 families. All of this info can also be found, any time, at: <http://holymotherchurch.weconnect.com/Confirmation>

To help MARK THE TRANSITION into our lowered Confirmation age, along with introducing the Small Group “discipleship” model that we hope will continue to interest and engage HMC teens BEYOND their Confirmation, please note these additional offerings for 2017-2018.

For your Confirmation 1 (Grades 8 & 9) or Confirmation 2 (Grade 10 or older student who has successfully completed Confirmation 1) feel free to CHOOSE ONE of these options IN PLACE OF the regularly scheduled Confirmation 1 & 2 class on Wednesday nights or Sunday mornings (regular attendance will still be required and tracked for Conf1/Conf2):

- Please sign my Confirmation 1 or 2 student up for a yDisciple small group that meets at the parish on SUNDAY NIGHTS for 2 hours, twice a month. (Same price as regular Wed/Sun class.)
- Please sign my Confirmation 1 or 2 student up for a yDisciple small group that meets at the parish most Thursday nights of the school year, from 6 pm-7:15 pm. (Same price as Wed/Sun.)
- My son/daughter has already been Confirmed. Please sign them up for a yDisciple small group that meets at the parish on SUNDAY NIGHTS for 2 hours, twice a month. (No charge!)
- My son/daughter has already been Confirmed. Please sign them up for a yDisciple small group that meets at the parish most Thursday nights of the school year, from 6 pm-7:15 pm (No charge!)
- My son/daughter has already been Confirmed. S/he would be interested in a different kind of small group that meets regularly—such as a prayer group for guys or a scripture/support group for young women. (No charge.)
- I would be interested, as a parent, in leading a small group of teens that would meet regularly in my home or off-site at some other location. Please tell me how!

My Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

IF YOU ARE CHOOSING ANY OF THE ABOVE PROGRAM OPTIONS, PLEASE TEAR THIS BOTTOM PORTION FROM THE LETTER AND STAPLE IT TO THE ENCLOSED (FILLED OUT) REGISTRATION FORM!