**CONFIRMATION at St. Mary of the Lakes**

*We work with families to meet any special academic, spiritual or physical needs so that all may have access to the sacraments. Please communicate any and all special circumstances so we may do all we can to assist.*

Note: Knowledge of Catholic Faith and prayers is ordinarily assessed using tests, which can be taken as many times as necessary until mastery is gained. We will accommodate any special or educational assessment needs. If this is not a feasible option for a candidate, they may meet with the Pastor to allow him to determine the readiness for the Sacrament.

**Components of the Confirmation program at St. Mary of the Lakes:**

* Confirmation is usually offered at St. Mary of the Lakes for any Catholic who will be 14 years or older at the time of the Sacrament (this is due to the age-appropriate levels of catechesis which includes a chastity program). Exceptions do occur, especially within the RCIA.
* Prior to enrolling in the Confirmation year students, age 12+, complete a 2-year catechetical program which includes "Chosen" (from Ascension Press) as well as lessons from the catechism and other resources in order to gain a strong foundation in the Catholic Faith in which they desire to be confirmed. Students attending Catholic High School (or Catholic Home School) may opt out of this requirement but must still pass the required assessments.
* Candidates must have this solid age-appropriate foundation in the Catholic Faith PRIOR to entering the confirmation year program. In other words, if the candidate has NOT been attending Faith Formation program (or been in a Catholic school program) since First Communion, they will usually be in the parish program for at least 3 academic years.
* Older students may be offered a Fast-track program (which completes the Chosen program in one year or through an adult program depending on need) in order to build their foundation in the Catholic Faith.
* During the completion of the Chosen program (or attending Catholic School), candidates will be assessed (at an age-appropriate level, and according to individual needs, if necessary) to determine their readiness for the Sacrament of Confirmation. This assessment is based on basic Catholic knowledge and precepts as well as prayers. If this is not a feasible option for a candidate, they may meet with the Pastor to allow him to determine the readiness for the Sacrament.
* During the fall semester, just prior to beginning Sacramental catechesis, ALL teen candidates (parish program and Catholic School students) must complete the Theology of the Body for Teens Chastity program ("You").
* Immediate Sacramental Catechesis for Confirmation (usually in the Spring) involves candidates completing the "Decision Point" program with their sponsors for the final 3 months (12 sessions just prior to Confirmation)
* Preparation includes a retreat (usually, during Immediate Sacramental Catechesis). There is also a required rehearsal for candidates & sponsors and reconciliation prior to Confirmation.

**Important notes:**

* Completion of ALL sessions is mandatory (this includes “Chosen,” “You” and “Decision Point”)
* If an absence is unavoidable due to an emergency, or illness, a call should be made to the Parish Catechetical leader as soon as possible
* If an absence is due to a prearranged reason, a note must be sent in to the catechist or a call to Parish Catechetical leader must be made prior to the absence
* ALL sessions missed (due to an emergency, illness or prearranged reason) have to be made up within two weeks in order to receive credit for the class
* After three absences a candidate and a parent must meet with the Parish Catechetical Leader if they wish to continue in the program for that year
* After 5 absences a candidate and a parent must receive permission from the Pastor in order to remain in the program for that year.

**Other required components of the program:**

* Attending weekly Mass and receiving the sacrament of reconciliation at least once a year (or at any time in the state of mortal sin)
* Passing the Catholic Faith Assessments
* Memorizing the Catholic Prayers up to grade level
* Completing the Saint Report
* Having the sponsor complete the Sponsor form
* Letter to the Pastor requesting the Sacrament of Confirmation
* Community involvement such as:
  + First Friday Youth Group
  + Youth Summer Camp
  + Ministries (liturgical or service)
  + VBS
  + Events: Walk for Life, Walk for the Poor, Life Chain, Parish Festival, etc.

**Sponsor requirements:**

* At least 16 years of age and fully initiated in the Catholic Church
* Sponsor form completed: Signed by the sponsor’s pastor indicating that the sponsor is a practicing Catholic, participating in the sacramental life and living in Communion with the teachings of the Catholic Church
* Sponsor’s Certificate of Confirmation
* Sponsor’s Certificate of Marriage—if married
* Must be available to attend the final 12 sessions and part of the retreat with their candidate (Note: the sessions are in English, so if at all possible sponsors really need to speak English)

*Again: Accommodations are given as needed, for family circumstances, special needs, etc. and are determined on an individual basis with the approval of the Pastor*