

Confirmation Preparation Overview

Confirmation Preparation throughout the Diocese takes place over the course of two years and begins no earlier than 8th grade.

The goal of Confirmation Preparation is to ground candidates in the faith and prepare them to live a life of faith, strengthened by the grace of the Sacrament.

To accomplish this, each candidate is expected to complete the following:

- **Catechetical Sessions** - 25 hours each year is dedicated to learning and exploring the faith of our Church.
- **Retreat Opportunities** - two 5-hour retreats (one each year) focused on prayer and relationship with God.
- **Service** - as an integral part of our identity as Catholics, each candidate is expected to complete a reasonable amount of service and reflect on it in light of the Sacrament.
- **Regular Mass attendance** - as Catholics seeking full initiation, it is vital that candidates regularly attend Sunday Mass.
- **Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation** - it is important to approach Confirmation free of the bonds of sin.

In the second year of preparation, candidates are asked to participate in an interview/conversation with the parish clergy or staff and take part in an immediate preparation for the Sacrament.

Catechetical Topics

The following topics of our faith teaching are covered over the two years of preparation.

- ◆ Justice & Solidarity
- ◆ The Gospels ◆ Trinity
- ◆ Catholic Social Teaching
- ◆ Incarnation ◆ Paschal Mystery
- ◆ Moral Decision-Making
- ◆ Church History ◆ Nicene Creed
- ◆ Revelation: Scripture/Tradition
- ◆ Mary: Mother of God ◆ Baptism
- ◆ Eucharist – Real Presence
- ◆ Church’s Hierarchy ◆ Confirmation
- ◆ Structure of Mass/Liturgical Year
- ◆ Prayer ◆ Chastity
- ◆ Living as Disciples: Trinity & Community
- ◆ Sin & Reconciliation ◆ Grace
- ◆ Natural Law/Magisterium
- ◆ The Ten Commandments & Beatitudes
- ◆ Social Sin ◆ Conscience Formation
- ◆ Gifts & Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- ◆ Moral Theology ◆ Hebrew Scriptures
- ◆ Christian Lifestyle & Vocations
- ◆ Medical Ethics ◆ Church History
- ◆ Saints & Martyrs ◆ Sexuality
- ◆ Sacraments of Service

“...bear witness to Christ for the building up of His Body in faith and love.”

(Rite of Confirmation, #2)

The Sacrament of Confirmation imparts a character and enables the person who has been baptized to continue on the journey of initiation into the Christian faith, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Those who receive this Sacrament are empowered to witness to Christ in word and in deed, and to proclaim the gospel message.

Ask Jesus “what He wants from you and be brave!”

Vatican City, April 21, 2013 Pope Francis



A Guide for Parents

Confirmation Preparation

in the

Roman Catholic Diocese of
Rochester, New York

Candidates



Preparation for Confirmation in the Diocese of Rochester is a two-year catechetical process (proximate preparation) that begins in the 8th grade. The process challenges every part of the candidates to grow. They will learn (head), experience (heart), and serve (hands).

Because Sacraments are celebrated within the worshipping faith community (i.e., the parish), Catholic School students should be referred to their home parish.

Candidates who have special needs should have catechesis (teaching of the faith) appropriate to their capacity, and then celebrate Confirmation with the support of their family and faith community.

Prior to the actual selection of a sponsor in year two, both candidates and parents will be instructed on the role and responsibility of a sponsor.

Near the end of the two-year process, there will be opportunities for an interview between the candidate and pastoral leader to reflect on the candidates' self-understanding of their faith, their desire to seek Confirmation, and their commitment to a life-long journey of discipleship; and sessions for immediate preparation for the sacrament.

Parents/Guardians of Candidates

“The single most important influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents.” (*Soul Searching*, Christian Smith)

Parents and guardians are invited to grow in their faith along with the candidates, and attend any sessions of interest.

There will be particular sessions offered for parents and guardians on the meaning and theology of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Together, parents, guardians and candidates will learn about the role and responsibility of a sponsor.

Families are encouraged to join the candidates each weekend at Holy Mass, participate in opportunities for service in the community, and spend time together in prayer and reflection.



Sacred Heart Cathedral, Rochester

Sponsors of Candidates

Pre-requisites:

Sponsors for the Sacrament must be:

- Must be at least 16-years old.
- Be a fully-initiated Catholic: having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.
- Must lead a life of faith that is in accord with their commitment as a sponsor.
- Is not the father or mother of the one to be Confirmed.

Due to the connection between the two Sacraments, it is desirable that the sponsor (godparent) at Baptism be chosen as sponsor for Confirmation, if he/she still meets the requirements.

How To Be a Good Sponsor

Being a sponsor can seem overwhelming, but really—you are not being asked to be anything new. The qualities that led your candidate to ask you to be his/her sponsor are the same qualities that will make you a good sponsor. Here are some “tricks of the trade” to make the task easier:

- Make time for quality conversations about faith and life with your candidate.
- Be open and honest about both the rewarding and challenging aspects of being Catholic.
- Encourage your candidate to be the best Catholic possible.
- See the good and wonderful in your candidate; and tell him/her.
- Don't feel like you need to have all the answers. Sometimes finding the answer together, or seeking out someone with the answer, is a better experience.
- Be genuine and true—to yourself, to your candidate, to your faith.

The Parish Community

As the faith community, the parish has an important role in Confirmation as well. Through prayer and witness, the parish shows its commitment to the young people receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In turn, the candidates seeking Confirmation bear witness to the parish through regular attendance at Mass and through their spiritual growth.



Jesus said, “Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.”

~ Matthew 28:20
