

Holy Spirit Catholic Church



Confirmation Handbook

Philosophy of Holy Spirit's Parish Religious Education Program

With and through our Christian community, Holy Spirit's Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) strives to cultivate in all participants:

- A deep knowledge of the faith;
- Full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical life;
- Moral formation;
- An attitude of prayer and contemplation;
- A true belonging to our Christian community;
- Active participation in the life and mission of the Church.

Requirements of the Confirmation Program

Each candidate is required to attend Confirmation classes for two consecutive years in order to fully and faithfully profess the beliefs of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Regular class attendance and participation in formation activities are important.

All Confirmation Candidates are expected to have the willingness to learn and actively participate in the program throughout the entire school year. If you know that your child will not be able to complete lessons for more than two weeks, please notify the Catechist or the C/DRE. Our expectation is that students will attempt to "make-up" any missed lessons.

The world is busy, complicated, and stressful, but by enrolling in this program you as parents/guardians have made a commitment to the promise that was made at your child's baptism: to ensure you child is raise in the faith. Confirmation is the third and final Sacrament of initiation into the Church, it is a critical stage in faith development. I implore you to do your best to clear the calendar for these times in order to get your students to class and events (retreats, pilgrimage).

Pandemic Response

As of the writing of this handbook, all pandemic mitigation measures have either been relaxed or rescinded. The pandemic situation remains fluid and we will follow guidance from the Diocese, CDC, Palmyra School District and state health authorities.

Program Description

Students in 7th and 8th grade will receive lecture separately for most of the year as well as some combined classes and presentations. During our in-person gatherings, special instructional lessons and other supplemental activities will be used to teach and reinforce the curriculum. Students may be required to complete some small "homework" assignments; however, unlike previous years, students will not be required to perform online lessons during weeks where in-person classes are not scheduled.

Mentoring Program

To complement the in-person classes, students will also participate in our Confirmation Mentoring Program. Each student will be assigned an adult mentor. The student and mentor will schedule individual appointments to meet at least once a month in person for a minimum of 20 minutes to have an open, mature discussion about our faith,

answer questions, provide feedback, prayer, and spiritual guidance. While in-person is preferred, if requested, these can happen over teleconference platforms such as Zoom, Skype, or Microsoft Teams.

Meetings have historically occur on the grounds of the Holy Spirit campus, but starting in 2022-23, if the parents agree, then off-campus meetings in public places are also permitted (restaurant, basketball court, state park, etc.). This may provide different opportunities for the mentor and mentee to connect emotionally and use other arenas to help catalyze faithful conversations. Regardless of the meeting time, date, or location, a minimum of **ONE** parent/guardian must be present on the same property for the duration of the mentoring meeting.

Our mentors have been selected with care and we have chosen men and women who are practicing faithful Catholics, active in the parish, and in the sacramental life of the Church. All adult mentors have the appropriate youth protection background checks and clearances.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend the in-person classes regularly, engage in class, perform homework assignments in a timely manner, attend the annual retreat, attend the annual pilgrimage, and participate in the mentoring program. The 2022-23 schedule is included in this document.

Sunday Liturgy (Mass)

Sunday Liturgy (Mass) is the Source and Summit of our Catholic Faith. It is the place where, within our faith community, we are fed by both the Word of God and the Bread of Life, strengthening us in Christ's love so that we may go into our homes, schools, work place and community spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Because Mass attendance is vital to our Catholic faith formation, candidates who do not show a commitment to attend Sunday Mass **may not** be considered ready for Confirmation.

Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a wonderful gift of Jesus Christ to His Church where we can experience and receive God's love, mercy, and forgiveness. Candidates are encouraged to frequent the sacrament and are expected to attend our Parish Reconciliation Services during Advent and Lent. Father Anthony is also available for confessions on Wednesday after 6pm Mass (6:30-7pm) and Saturday after 4pm Mass (5:00-5:30pm) or by appointment.

Retreat(s)

Confirmation Candidates are expected to attend the Confirmation Retreat associated with their grade. For 2022-23, we will be combining our retreat with St. Paul (Anville). Though subject to change, the scheduled dates for our retreats are as follows:

- 7th: April 29th (assume full day)
- 8th: May 20th (assume full day)

Specifics on itinerary and timelines will be provided closes to these dates in Spring 2023. Traditionally, the retreat(s) have ended with 4:00 pm Mass at Holy Spirit, but we are planning on incorporating Mass into the retreats themselves this year. **While this retreat is considered a mandatory part of the curriculum, please contact the Confirmation DRE if your child is unable to attend.**

Pilgrimage

Confirmation candidates are also required to visit a shrine or holy site during their sacramental preparation. To assist with this requirement, both 7th and 8th grade students and catechists will be visiting the National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in Emmitsburg, Maryland (location of Mount St. Mary's). Coordination with the Shrine is ongoing, but the pilgrimage is currently scheduled for October 1, 2022. Holy Spirit Parish will coordinate transportation (bus) to and from the site, but students are expected to provide their own lunches.

Information about the shrine can be found here:

<https://www.nsgrotto.org/>.

Students who are unable to attend the pilgrimage trip are required to make their own visit to a shrine of their choosing. This is a wonderful opportunity for a family trip to a holy site. Here is a short list of local shrines, but please feel free to visit others:

National Shrine of St. John Neumann

At the Parish of Saint Peter the Apostle

1019 North Fifth Street

Philadelphia Pa 19123

1-215-627-3080

SJNoffice@comcast.net

<http://www.stjohnneumann.org/>

National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa

Ferry Road

Doylestown, PA 18901

215-345-0600

info@czestochowa.us

<http://www.czestochowa.us/>

National Centre for Padre Pio

111 Barto Road

Barto, PA 19504

610-845-3000

<https://www.padrepio.org/>

Basilica of the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

333 South Seton Avenue

Emmitsburg, MD 21727-9297 USA

Phone 301.447.6606

http://www.setonshrine.org/contact_us.htm

Confirmation Name and Saint Report

St. Paul reminds us that “we have been called to be saints” (1 Cor 1:2). It is customary to take a saint’s name as a model of inspiration as well as to adopt that saint as a patron to whom a special spiritual relationship can be formed. This name should be chosen with much thought and prayer. It is recommended that students research several saints, as well as engage in prayer to/with the saints, to help select one.

Entering 2022-23, 8th graders should have already have picked a name; however, if there has been a strong spiritual transformation resulting in the desire to change to a different saint, that is okay. 7th graders will be expected to have a patron saint selected by around All Saints’ Day, which is a few days after our October 30th in-person class.

When selecting a confirmation name, designate the specific person. For example, there are quite a few “Saint Johns” out there, be sure to select one in particular – St. John the Baptist, St. John the Apostle, etc.

The use of your baptismal name, if already after a Saint, can serve to further emphasize the three-fold process of Christian initiation: Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation. The name chosen must be a blessed or canonized Christian saint. A canonized Christian Saint is a man or a woman who has displayed heroic virtue and has been recognized by the Church.

After the saint name has been selected, an approximately 1-page report is requested. The report must be typed, double spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font. While this report should include some factual statements about the saint, it should fall short of a biography. Instead, detail the reasons why the saint was selected to be your patron, how you have been inspired by their life, and how you intend to use this inspiration going forward.

The report must include the following topics:

- Who is the saint? (When and where did he or she live, family life, job, etc?)
- What have you learned about this Saint through your research?
- Why did you select this Saint to represent your faith journey?
- How is this person a good role model for you to follow as a confirmed Catholic?
- Include the resources from which you obtained your information (website(s), book(s), etc.).

The Saint report is due by the end of the first year of formation (7th grade) and no later than the start of the second year (8th grade).

Sponsors

Each confirmation candidate will choose a sponsor to assist him or her in preparation for the sacrament, stand with him or her while they are confirmed and continue to guide them in their spiritual journey. The sponsor should be one whose positive influence on the student is permanent and strong; hence not just an honorary title but has the responsibility of setting a good example of Catholic living. It is important to pick a sponsor early in the process, so the student may have the benefit of someone who is “walking with them” through the formation process.

Confirmation Sponsors must:

- Be 16 years of age or older
- Have been baptized and confirmed in the Catholic Church
- Worship at Sunday Mass regularly

- Receive the Sacraments frequently
- Be an active participant in parish life and community service
- If married, are married by the laws of the Catholic Church and in the presence of a Catholic priest
- Submit a Sponsor Letter of Eligibility from his/her own parish

Canon law does not permit a parent to be a sponsor. The Church, however, does encourage that one of the Baptismal Godparents be considered as a sponsor. This manifests the sacramental link between Baptism and Confirmation. Siblings are permitted so long as they meet the pre-requisites listed above.

If the sponsor is not a parishioner of Holy Spirit, a Confirmation Sponsor's Letter of Eligibility Form must be requested and provided to us by January 31st of the student's 8th grade year. Please ask your sponsor to request this immediately to avoid delays. **They simply tell their parish office that they need this to sponsor a Confirmand. Easy!**

In the event that a proxy sponsor must be used, the proxy must adhere to all of the qualifications of an actual sponsor. **Canon Law does not permit a Confirmand's parent to be a proxy.**

Interview

Each candidate will be interviewed by the Pastor and/or DRE to determine his/her readiness to receive the sacrament. The interview will evaluate the candidate's understanding of basic Catholic teaching as well as what it means to be a disciple of Christ. In addition, the Bishop may question the candidates on the day of the Confirmation Mass.

Expectations and Behavior

Holy Spirit's PREP staff and volunteers prepare a quality program of Religious Formation presented in an atmosphere of respect and Christian Community. We expect all students to listen attentively and be prepared to participate fully in Confirmation Classes. Proper conduct and respect of others: adults, students, and property are expected at all times of all students. We expect all participants to behave in a manner exemplifying members of the Body of Christ.

Dress for Confirmation

Boys – suit and tie or dress pants and shirt, tie and dress shoes (sports jacket /suit jacket is optional)

Girls – dress or skirt (no bare shoulders or very short dresses), nylons and dress shoes. Please do not put makeup on forehead, it makes it hard for the oil to stick.

****It is appropriate for each Confirmand to have a bit of white on to symbolize the sacramental link between Baptism and Confirmation.***

Works of Mercy Hours (Service Projects)

Confirmation Students are expected to complete 24 hours of Christian/community service during their two years of confirmation preparation. It is suggested that students complete 12 hours in 7th grade and 12 hours in 8th grade. Due dates are provided on the checklist on the last page of this handbook. The intent of service projects is for the candidates to experience *how important they are as witnesses to the fulfillment of Christ's mission*. These service opportunities should model the mind and heart of Christ by selflessly and lovingly helping those in need and set a pattern for future service.

Students can perform a variety of activities, but we ask that no one activity be MORE than 25% of the total required hours. For example, altar server 6 hours, fish fry 6 hours, raking leaves 1 hour, snow shoveling 2 hours, volunteer and caring cupboard 3 hours, help cleaning the church (Sparkling Hearts Ministry) 6 hours, total= 24 hours. Our parish offers ample opportunities for service, but activities are not limited to the parish. Students are encouraged to seek opportunities to serve in their school and community as well.

Please keep your child's safety in mind when choosing a service project. Never drop a child off with the expectation of responsible adults that hold background clearances being present unless you have been *specifically told this in a church permission slip*. All other projects are under the parents' discretion and responsibility. Candidates that are completing projects that are not on the list below are encouraged to discuss the project with the Catechist or the DRE to ensure the project will be approved. Always have your child sign up ahead of time for projects and contact the project's leader to inform that person of their presence.

Upon completion of service projects, students are required to report the hours using the **Simplified Works of Mercy hours** form (a copy is provided in the back of this handbook). We require that students choose one service project and complete a more extensive **Report of Service Project Form**. The form provides opportunities for students to better explore what their service has meant to others and to them. Parents are required to review the form for content and neatness before signing it. Service projects completed over the summer leading up to 7th grade count, as well as through the spring of 8th grade.

The following is a list of suggested service projects:

- Raking leaves and/or mowing grass for elderly or needy neighbors without pay.
- Volunteering at a soup kitchen
- Volunteering at Caring Cupboard
- Providing babysitting services to someone in need without pay
- Visits to a nursing home
- Helping at church when the need is presented
- Shoveling snow for needy neighbors without pay
- PREP classroom and/or Office aides
- Fish Fry Assistance
- Parish Festival volunteering
- Altar Server
- Sparkling Hearts Ministry (cleaning the church)

These are just some examples. Again, if not listed please discuss the project with the Catechist or the DRE to ensure the project will be approved.

Biography

Confirmation candidates are required to submit a brief Parish Biography which must contain the following information:

Name & pertinent information about the student (age, family, school, interests, activities).

- Favorite Service Project(s) and provide a few reasons why
- Confirmation Sponsor and what the student admires about him/her
- Patron Saint name selection and why
- What has the student learned about their faith during Confirmation preparation
- ‘I am saying “Yes” to Confirmation because...’
- ‘My Parish can continue to support me by...’

The biography must be:

- Typed
- Paragraph form
- Must contain a picture of the Confirmation candidate
- It should be ½ to ¾ sheet of paper to allow room for your picture which will be displayed with your biography for all parishioners to see. You can print the picture directly onto the page or affix one at the bottom of the page.

The biography will be posted in our Narthex, so our parishioners can get to know and pray for our confirmands.

Letters to the Bishop

Confirmation Candidates are required to write a letter requesting Confirmation. You will write a letter addressed to the Most Reverend Bishop Ronald Gainer (*Dear Bishop Gainer*). Include the following information when writing these letters:

- Name, family, interests
- Why I want to be Confirmed
- My favorite service project and why
- What Saint I chose for my Confirmation name and why
- The person I chose to be my Confirmation Sponsor and why
- Something I learned this year about my faith
- My hopes for my future and my faith

Remember to sign your name in your own handwriting (not the computer's). This will personalize your letter. The DRE will forward the letters to Bishop Gainer. **Parents, please proof your child's letter.**

Simplified Works of Mercy Hours Form

Directions: Please complete this form for every service project completed. Please print neatly.

Your Name: _____

Grade: _____

Date(s) of Project: _____

The number of hours I did on this project is: _____

Briefly describe your service (include location): Example: raked leaves for elderly neighbor at their house.

Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Report on Service Project

Directions: Please choose **one** service project and complete all the items below regarding the work you did. Please print neatly. You may add pages if needed.

Name _____ Date(s) of Project _____ Grade _____

Parent Signature _____ Project Lead's Signature _____

1. The number of hours I did on this project is _____.

2. Describe your service (include location)

3. By my service, I learned that _____

4. By my service, I realize that other people _____

5. I also learned that Christ _____

6. I was surprised that I _____

7. The hardest part of the job I did was _____

8. The best part of the job I did was _____

9. The Corporal and/or Spiritual Work of Mercy that I mostly did through this project was _____ because _____

10. I plan to do this again: YES NO (circle one) **Student Signature** _____

Corporal Works of Mercy: Feed the Hungry, Give Drink to the Thirsty, Clothe the Naked, Visit the Sick, Visit the Imprisoned, Shelter the Homeless, Bury the Dead.

Spiritual Works of Mercy: Admonish the Sinner, Instruct the Ignorant, Counsel the Doubtful, Forgive all Injuries, Comfort the Sorrowful, Bear Wrongs Patiently, Pray for the Living and the Dead.

Confirmation Requirement Checklist

- _____ Choose a Sponsor. Should be selected as early in the formation process as possible.
- _____ Sponsor Certificate if sponsor is not a Holy Spirit parishioner - Due at least 3 months prior to Confirmation. The sooner the better.
- _____ Choose Confirmation name and complete Saint Report. Must be completed in 7th grade.
- _____ Letter to the Bishop - Due at least 2 months prior to Confirmation.
- _____ Parish biography with picture - Due at least 2 months prior to Confirmation.

Works of Mercy Hours can be completed anytime between the summer prior to 7th grade and the spring of 8th grade. Following is a suggested guideline.

_____ 12 Works of Mercy Hours Due by the last class of 7th grade

_____ 12 Works of Mercy Hours due by last class of 8th grade

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit,
Fill the hearts of your faithful
And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit
And they shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
 For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn,
 For they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
 For they will inherit the land.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
 For they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful,
 For they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the clean of heart,
 For they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
 For they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
 For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5: 3-10