Sacrament of Confirmation
Family Guide
2019-2020
Dear Confirmation Families,

In the Catholic Church, a sacrament is an outward sign of inward and spiritual divine grace. The Sacrament of Confirmation enriches one with the gift of the Holy Spirit who serves to strengthen us to be witnesses to Christ in word and deed. It perfects the grace we receive at Baptism, and like Baptism, it imprints a spiritual mark on the soul.

We don’t live as children of God by our own efforts, but through God’s grace. By considering our own lives, the lives of our models of the faith – parents, siblings, extended family, and even the lives of the saints, we see this in a practical way.

Just as we don’t live as children of God by our own efforts, we don’t take this journey alone. Parents, Sponsors, Catechists, Teachers, parish staff and other members of your parish family are here to help you, the Confirmation candidate, prepare through learning, sharing, serving and spiritual growth.

Parents, just as you are helping your young adolescents make other transitions at this time of their lives, you also play a vital role in this transition in their faith life. You can serve as their model by continuing to:

- Worship as a family regularly;
- Pray for your child and his/her spiritual growth every day;
- Be actively involved in the Confirmation preparation process;
- Talk with your student about what he/she is learning and share your understanding and perspective;
- Support and encourage their commitment to serve others as Jesus calls us;
- Support and encourage their completion of Confirmation formation activities, service projects and expectations;
- Celebrate with them as they receive the Sacrament of Confirmation!
Expectations of Confirmation Candidates –

- Participate in weekly Mass  
- Participate in the Confirmation Small Faith Groups  
- Choose a qualified Sponsor and share your journey experience with him/her regularly  
- Attend and participate in the Enrollment Mass, Retreat, Rehearsal & Practice  
- Regular involvement in service and social justice activities  
- Confirmation formation projects  
- Recommendation of candidates / Celebration of Sacrament  

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Participate in Weekly Mass

An important part of our journey of faith is participating in the Eucharistic life of our St. Giles faith community. Coming together as a community at Mass each week builds up the Body of Christ. Regularly attending Mass as a family helps bring us together in numerous ways.

Participate in the Confirmation Small Faith Groups

On a monthly basis the Confirmation Candidates will have an opportunity to come together with each other and committed Small Faith Group Leaders to meditate on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and how these appear in our daily lives. Candidates will have a chance to reflect, ask questions and support and encourage each other through discussion and prayer. These gatherings are where you will receive your Confirmation formation projects and share what you learned and experienced in working on each of these. We understand that Candidates have many activities, but your faith life will be with you always, so it’s important to make it a priority. MAKE A NOTE OF THE CALENDAR DATES NOW.

Choose a Qualified Sponsor and Share Your Experience Regularly

Your Sponsor will be a companion on your faith journey and prior to the sacrament of Confirmation will give evidence of your readiness to receive the sacrament, how you have grown in your spiritual life, and that you fully understand your commitment. This is why you need to share your experience regularly with your Sponsor. Below are the elements shared by qualified Sponsors:

- Be a practicing Roman Catholic, living according to the teachings of the Catholic Church, be fully initiated, having received Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation and at least 16 years of age – NOT PARENTS OF CANDIDATE;
- Knows the Candidate well and is willing to serve as a strong and long-lasting Christian influence on the Candidate;
- Assists in determining the Candidate’s readiness for the sacrament
Attend and participate in the Enrollment Mass, Retreat, Rehearsal & Practice

- **Enrollment Mass** – 11:15 am in Church - Candidates, Parents and Sponsors, if they are available
- **Candidate Retreat** – 10am to 2:00 pm in McDonough Hall
- **Prayer, Rehearsal & Practice** – Beginning at 7pm in Church (Candidates, Parents and Sponsors)

See Confirmation Preparation Calendar for all dates

Be Regularly Involved in Service and Social Justice

Through both our Scripture and Tradition, we are called to love our neighbor and stand up for justice and peace. It isn’t something that we “check off a list” or “get it over with”, it’s how we live our lives because we recognize God’s presence in all people and in God’s creation. **This is why we do NOT choose a service hour target.** Candidates are encouraged to get involved in a service activity that is an ongoing and regular commitment **and the entire month of November is designated for Candidates and their families to engage in and document a service activity together.**

When considering a service activity, think about these things:

- What are people’s needs or problems and what can I do to help?
- Who needs time, effort, work or service from me?
  - At school? At church? In my community?
- What unique gifts or talents has God given me that can be used to help others?
- Consider the Corporal Works of Mercy: Feed the hungry; Give drink to the thirsty; Give alms to the poor; Shelter the homeless; Visit the sick; Visit the imprisoned; Bury the dead
- Consider the Spiritual Works of Mercy: Instruct the ignorant; Counsel the doubtful; Admonish the sinner; Forgive injuries; Comfort the sorrowful; Bear wrongs patiently; Pray for the living and the dead

There a number of opportunities available right here at St. Giles. Check for opportunities each week in the Arrow on the website and on parish social media.

**You will be discussing your service activity in each Confirmation Small Faith Group gathering and it will be a major part of your final reflection project – My Faith Journey.**
Do your very best and complete all of the Confirmation formation projects

At the monthly Confirmation Small Faith Group, you will receive information on projects plus a reflection on your entire preparation experience. Each of these projects will have be discussed in your Confirmation Small Faith Group.

These formation projects are designed to help you on your journey and are not graded. You are encouraged to discuss them with your parents and your Sponsor.

Recommendation of candidates to Bishop

Fr. Carl, in consultation with Small Faith Group Leaders, catechists and teachers, and after reading letters from sponsors, will consider each candidate’s preparation process individually, including their engagement in Confirmation Small Faith Groups, completion of formation projects, and involvement in service and social justice activities. This is ongoing, with final recommendations made to the bishop after the Retreat.

Celebrate the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation!

In the Spring, one of the auxiliary bishops will join Fr. Carl in celebrating Mass and your reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation! This is definitely a high point of your journey, BUT it is not the end, but instead a new BEGINNING of a life of faith, love and service. You will continue to reflect on your journey so far and consider where you are headed next through your Confirmation Small Faith Group.