



## **ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH 7<sup>th</sup> GRADE CONFIRMATION PREPARATION**

### **PARENT PRAYER**

Loving God,

You are the giver of all we possess, the source of all of our blessings.

We thank and praise you.

Thank you for the gift of our children.

Help us to set boundaries for them, and yet encourage them to explore.

Give us the strength and courage to treat each day as a fresh start.

May our children come to know you, the one true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

May you, Holy Spirit, help them to grow in faith, hope and love, so they may know peace, truth and goodness.

May their ears hear your voice.

May their eyes see your presence in all things.

May their lips proclaim your word.

May their hearts be your dwelling place.

May their hands do works of charity.

May their feet walk in the way of Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord.

Amen

### **CANDIDATES PRAYER**

Spirit of God, grant me:

The gift of wisdom, to see the world through your eyes;

The gift of counsel, to make difficult decisions;

The gifts of knowledge and understanding, to use my mind to know you and to love you;

The gift of fortitude, to have the courage to live in the faith despite the difficulties and disappointments;

The gift of piety to be able to express my special love and commitment to you;

And the right kind of awesome fear that makes me pause to wonder and revere

God's Love.

Amen

### **CONFIRMATION: ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH**

***Confirmation is a public statement of faith that indicates a readiness, willingness and ability to take on the rights and responsibilities of a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church. It is a commitment to being a witness to the gospel in words and deeds.***

Confirmation is one of three initiation rites into the Catholic Church, the other two being Baptism and First Eucharist. According to Catholic doctrine, in the sacrament of Confirmation, the faithful are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and are strengthened in their Christian life. **Confirmation preparation at St. Joseph is a two-year program that begins in seventh grade.** The Confirmation curriculum focuses on the life and teachings of Jesus, the sacraments and our communal worship in Mass.

Students will affirm for themselves their faith in Jesus and His Church. The goal at St. Joseph Parish is to help the Confirmandi (those being confirmed) deepen their personal relationship with Christ, develop their sense of belonging in a loving Christian community, and personally ratify their membership in the Catholic Church.

When you're confirmed, you choose a Confirmation name to add to your first and middle names. This can be your birth name or the name of a saint you admire, who can pray for you from heaven.

Participants also choose a sponsor who will guide them on their journey.

### **Youth Confirmation Participation Requirements**

Youth Confirmation candidates must:

- Have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist - **Baptism certificates must be on file in the parish.**
- Practice their faith
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities of Church members

- Be committed to continuing the faithful practice and study of their faith
- Have a sincere desire to receive the sacrament
- Complete Confirmation preparation classes with **no more than 4 absences**.

### **7th Grade Youth Confirmation Preparation**

The first year of preparation for Confirmation includes the following activities:

- Regular attendance at **Sunday Mass**, attend in-person or virtually through the parish's livestream service.
- Regular attendance at **Confirmation classes** – no more than 4 absences
- Attendance at **Commitment to Confirmation Mass, 5 p.m. Sunday, November 5, 2023**
- Completed **Confirmation Commitment Form** (last page of this handbook)
- Completion of a minimum of **four Service Projects totaling at least 10 hours of service** to the community
- Regular entries in Google forms: [Mass](#) (8), [Service](#) (4) and [Saints](#) (4), must be completed & turned in by the end of February.
- Renewal of Baptismal Promises

### **PARENT INFORMATION**

The initiation of children into the sacramental life of the Church is primarily the responsibility of parents. Although the child has reached the age of reason at the time of preparation for Confirmation, they have not yet been fully initiated. Parents must assist their child in the life of holiness. Please talk to your child about what they are learning. Help them see how these things can be part of their every-day lives. Your affirmation, reiteration and daily practice of faith are very necessary to prepare your child for this sacrament.

### **ROLE OF PARENTS**

Just as your child grows physically, intellectually and emotionally, so, too, he or she grows spiritually. As a parent responsible for the development of your child, you try to meet all of his or her changing needs. You foster and direct spiritual growth by the atmosphere in your home, the example of your life and the celebration of the sacraments. You have seen that your child has been initiated into the faith through Baptism and the Eucharist. Now, your young teenager is at the stage of strengthening and reaffirming his or her commitment to the faith through the Sacrament of Confirmation. The elements of our parish preparation program for the sacrament, including the learning materials, will assist you in giving your teen a better understanding of Confirmation and help him or her lead a more active, responsible Christian life.

The goal of the sacramental preparation program is to help young people be receptive and responsive to the graces and challenges of the sacrament of Confirmation. They become more aware of the presence

and action of the Spirit's gifts within them, which empower them to live more fully as Jesus did. They will discover ways to fulfill the specific responsibilities that are theirs as Christians.

Throughout the preparation process, we also hope to guide all those involved in the formation of the candidates and in the celebration of the sacrament so that Confirmation becomes a meaningful faith experience for the candidates, the family and the parish community. In addition to our texts, we will offer opportunities for your child to share faith experiences, encountering Christ as they come together for retreats and service opportunities.

Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to be our advocate and helper. At Pentecost, this Spirit was poured out on the first believers, making them witnesses full of faith and courage. At Baptism, the Holy Spirit comes upon us, and at Confirmation, we are anointed in the strength of this Spirit and sent to carry on Christ's mission. Confirmation gives us the strength to become the man or woman God intended.

The Spirit in us is the same Spirit who anointed Jesus to redeem the world and bring about the kingdom of the Father through loving service. The Holy Spirit and his gifts help us to live our baptismal promises, grow into the likeness of Christ, and share his mission. We are united with other Spirit-filled people in the Church, the Body of Christ. Together we spread the message of the Good News, we worship at the Eucharist, we support one another in community, and we give service to those in need.

As teens struggle to clarify their own convictions, attitudes and values, parents are their chief models. Faith is caught more than taught. In undertaking more seriously, your role of preparing your son or daughter for Confirmation, Consider these questions:

- Do I keep lines of communication open with my teenager?
- Do I make time for prayer, both private and communal?
- Do I actively participate in the sacramental life of the Church?
- Do I try to grow in knowledge of the faith and share it with my family?
- Do I give loving service to those inside and outside my family circle?
- Am I involved with parish activities as much as I could be?

**The Church teaches that parents are the first and foremost teachers of faith for their children.** As your child journeys through the process of preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation, there are opportunities for you to guide, accompany and learn from him or her.

- Talk with your child about the faith content he or she is learning in RE class.

- Encourage your child in their practice of personal daily prayer and the use of the Gospel reflection.
- Witness to your own faith in your daily words and actions; share your faith experiences.
- Pray with your children. Include in your family prayers those who are in need around the world.
- Guide your child's choice of a Confirmation name and a faith-filled sponsor.
- Support and better yet, join your son or daughter in planning and performing Christian service. For example, volunteer as a family at a community food bank, PADS shelter, senior center...
- Attend Sunday Mass together. Agree together to make Christ part of your weekend.
- Help out with a parish activity.
- Consider how you can grow as a Christian: For what do you need to be forgiven? What formation do you need to strengthen your faith such as Bible study, retreat, workshop, etc.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Journal Service-Mass-Saints

### Service Component

Why be a person of service?

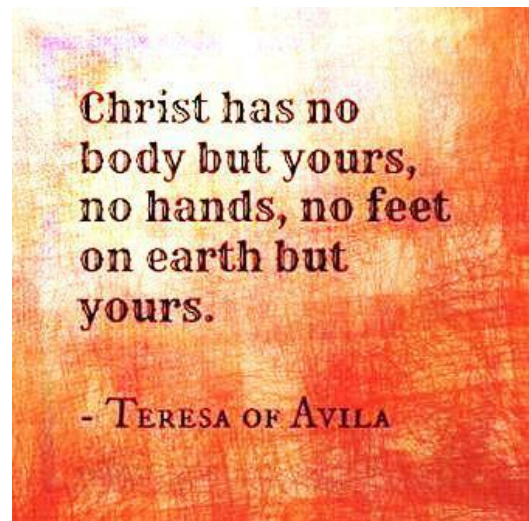
Christian service flows out of our Catholic beliefs, which are expressed in the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. There is a whole set of teachings in our church we refer to as Catholic Social Teaching. Being familiar with these teachings will help you to see how being a person of service can influence the world in a positive way.

As you decide how you want to serve this year, remember the story about Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. No act of service is too small. No person or group unworthy of our care. At your baptism, you were claimed for Christ and called to follow him. When you receive the Eucharist, you become the body of Christ for the world. As a confirmed Catholic, you are sent forth to be Christ's witness in the world. We give witness to Christ when we put our faith into action.

Seventh-graders are required to do **four Service Projects totaling at least 10 hours of service** that illustrate the Corporal Works of Mercy. Those service activities are recorded in the service section of the journal, where the student will reflect on what they have done.

### Examples of Corporal Works of Mercy:

- Feed the hungry
  - Feed My Starving Children



- Volunteer in a food pantry
- Donate food to a food pantry
- Cook food and bring to a neighbor that is homebound
- Set the table, do the dishes, or help cook dinner for your family
- Give food to a homeless person
- Give drink to the thirsty
  - Run a lemonade stand and donate the profits, or give the drinks away for free
  - Take extra water/drinks with you to a sporting event and share
  - Pay for the person in the drive-thru behind you
- Clothe the naked
  - Participate in a clothing drive
  - Collect baby items for moms in need
  - Have a garage sale and donate the money
  - Volunteer/donate at St. Vincent DePaul Thrift Store
  - Host a clothing drive and donate the money
- Shelter the homeless
  - Volunteer in a PADS shelter
  - Donate old furniture, pillows, and blankets to those in need.
  - Participate or support the parish's summer mission trip
- Comfort the sick
  - Volunteer in a nursing home or senior center
  - Volunteer in a hospital
  - Write letters to people in nursing homes
  - Visit a friend who is sick
- Visit the imprisoned
  - Visit someone who is homebound, send cards and call them
  - Cook for someone who is homebound
  - Visit someone in residential care
  - Help prison retreat ministry
- Bury the dead
  - Volunteer in the Bereavement Ministry of the parish
  - Visit a cemetery and pray for the deceased
  - Attend a funeral and visitation for a friend or family
  - Help a widow or widower in need with yard work or errands.
  - Clean up trash and weeds at the cemetery.
  - Donate to ministries that offer free Catholic burials to those who are unable to afford one.

## Mass Component

Participation in the Mass is vital to a committed Catholic. First of all, the Mass is a sacrifice, the perfect sacrifice created by Jesus. Through the priest, we offer Jesus' Body and Blood to the Father, just as Jesus offered Himself to the Father on the Cross. We repeat, make present, Christ's death and Resurrection. Through this memorial of Jesus, we offer God our praise, sorrow for our sins and our deepest thanks.



The Mass is a meal. At the Consecration, the bread and wine, through the power of the Holy Spirit, become the Body and Blood of Christ. Not a mere symbol, but Jesus' real flesh and real blood, under the appearance of bread and wine. When we receive Holy Communion, we receive Jesus himself. He is real food for our souls. He said this very plainly: *"I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him on the last day. My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him."* (John 6:55-56)

The Mass is the greatest prayer we have in the Catholic community. God made us social beings; he wants us to come together in worship. *"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I."* (Matthew 18:20)

The whole purpose of Mass is to worship God, unite ourselves with the sacrifice of Jesus, and to elevate our lives to the life of God. We will only get out of this relationship with God what we put into it; **God's grace can only work in our lives if we are open to receiving it.**

Seventh-graders are asked to record eight Mass reflections in the Mass section of the journal or via a Google Form.

## Saints Component

As part of the process of preparing for Confirmation, 7<sup>th</sup> grade candidates are asked to research different saints as they begin to discern the saint they will choose as their patron by taking that name as their Confirmation name. On the day they receive the sacrament, the bishop will confirm them using their chosen saint name.



The research process will allow the students to identify those saints they admire, can relate to or aspire to be like. When deciding on a Confirmation name, the goal is to pick the name of a saint you admire, can relate to, or aspire to be like.

Students can begin the research process by browsing books of patron saints, using the Internet and searching Catholic websites about saints with whose names they are familiar. While researching, ask yourselves why you are drawn to some more than others. Is it because they were courageous in speaking about their faith? Were they drawn to helping the poor? Did they have an occupation that you are interested in or have a family like yours?

As you start to narrow down the saints you are interested in, think again about the reasons to choose one. Is this someone I look up to and want to emulate? Is this someone who I want to spiritually "have my back"?

In the journal, students are asked to research at least **4 saints in 7<sup>th</sup> grade** whose name you might consider to take as your Confirmation name next year. They can refer to their own research when making their final decision about their Confirmation name.