



Preparing for Confirmation:
Guidelines for Parents, Sponsors and Students
Our Lady of the Visitation Parish
2023-2024

Introduction

Welcome! The Confirmation team at Our Lady of the Visitation Parish is looking forward to sharing this journey of faith with you as you prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. We are excited that you have chosen to receive this sacrament and pray that this will be a time of great spiritual growth.

As you will see, Confirmation preparation involves learning, sharing, serving, fellowship, spiritual growth, and some fun, too. During this journey, you will be given the opportunity to learn more about your Catholic faith and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus the Christ.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

“Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit . . . To this end, catechesis (preparation) for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community.” (CCC 1309)

Our goal is to be true to this statement of preparation for Confirmation, so that by the end of this process you have a good understanding of whom God is and how the Catholic Church helps us to know, love, and serve God. It is our hope that by the end of the Confirmation program you will:

- Develop a more personal faith with the help of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit;
- Develop a deeper sense of belonging to the Catholic Church;
- Develop a more active relationship with Christ through prayer; and
- Become a more active, visible sign of Christ’s love at home, school, and here at Our Lady of the Visitation Parish.

Receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation will complete your Sacraments of Initiation, but it is far from the end of your spiritual growth. It is another step as you continue your lifelong process of becoming like Christ! The Confirmation Team is here for you if you need anything!

Prayerfully,

Mrs. Erin Clegg
Director of Religious Education
Our Lady of the Visitation Parish



Sacramental Preparation 2023-2024 Calendar of Events

Sun, September 17 th 12 PM – 1PM	Registration Meeting Founders Hall
Sun, October 15 th 2-8 PM	Confirmation Retreat (8 th graders only) St. Bernadette's Parish & School
Sun, November 5 th 6-7:30 PM	Getting Ready Day (7 th graders) Founders Hall
Sun, March 10 th 6-7:30 PM	Getting Ready Day (7 th graders) Founders Hall
Sun, May 5 th 6-7:30 PM	FF Interviews with Fr. Greg (8 th graders) OLVP Office
Week of May 5 th During School	MoN Interviews with Fr. Greg (8 th graders) Mary of Nazareth School
Sat, June 1, 2024 2 PM-3:30 PM	Confirmation Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Sacramental Preparation

Sacramental preparation takes place in the parish setting and is in addition to the religious education classes, whether the child is enrolled in the parish Faith Formation program or in a Catholic school.

Our Lady of the Visitation Sacramental and Catechetical guidelines require that:

- Families must be registered members of the parish;
- Children must be enrolled in Catholic school or in the Parish Faith Formation program;
- Consistent attendance at Saturday and/or Sunday Mass;
- Choose a qualified sponsor and submit form
- Attendance at all Sacramental Preparation sessions as scheduled in the Confirmation Preparation Calendar
- Completion of Program Requirements that include:
- Choosing a saint's name and writing a biography about that saint
- Completing the (20) Confirmation Service Hours by
- Write a letter to the Cardinal
- Interview with the OLVP Pastor
- Participation in the Confirmation Liturgy

Confirmation candidates:

- Are at least thirteen years of age.
- Have received the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Reconciliation;
- Practice their faith on a regular basis;
- Are in the state of grace;
- Can demonstrate the knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities of a member of the Catholic Church;
- Can explain the initiation aspect of the Sacrament of Confirmation;
- Are committed to continuing their faithful practice of the faith and the study of their religion;
- Have a sincere desire to receive the sacrament; and
- Are either registered in the parish where the sacrament of Confirmation will take place OR have received written permission of the pastor of their home parish to receive the sacrament in the parish where it is being celebrated.

Choosing a Confirmation Sponsor:

Imagine having the opportunity to choose your own coach in the sport or activity of your choice. You would choose someone familiar and knowledgeable about the sport or activity and actively involved as a participant. Your coach is a role model and would be someone who could help you become a better athlete or participant.

Living as a Catholic today is more than just showing up at Mass. It involves the conscious choice to live as a Catholic and to be “Catholic.” The individual you select as a sponsor will be a type of spiritual coach – someone who goes beyond just “looking Catholic” and is an individual who makes the internal choice to “be Catholic”. Your sponsor will be a role model and guide who will help you to grow in your faith, guide you in what steps you need to take to do that, and make suggestions to help you in the right direction for your life. Your sponsor also will be responsible for making sure you act as a true witness to Christ and that you have prepared for this Sacrament.

Who May Be a Sponsor?

Sponsor qualifications are not particular to Our Lady of the Visitation Parish but are part of the Church’s Code of Canon Law. As a result, no one has the authority to alter these qualifications.

- **Must be at least 16 years of age or older;**
- **Fully initiated** (that is, baptized, confirmed, and already have received communion)
- **Regularly** worships at Saturday evening or Sunday Mass
- **Free of any restrictions** (if married, the marriage must be recognized by the Catholic Church)
- **May not be a parent of the person being confirmed**
- **ALL** Confirmation sponsors must obtain a “Sponsor Certificate” or “Letter” from their registered parish stating that they are eligible to serve as a sponsor. (If you are using a proxy sponsor, he or she must also meet the above criteria.

*As a candidate, you may wish to consider asking one of your Godparents to be your sponsor since there is an integral connection between Baptism and Confirmation.

Guidelines for Program Requirements

The information that follows will explain the particulars of the Program Requirements for your Confirmation.

Choose a Confirmation name and write a biography about that saint

A part of the Confirmation process is choosing a saint and writing a report about that saint. The name of the saint you choose is the name that you will be confirmed under. For example, if you choose St. Anthony, you will be confirmed: "Anthony, be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." There is a great significance in taking on the saint's name as your own. In both the Old and the New Testament, when God had a mission for someone, He often gave them a new name when God asked them to take on new duties and responsibilities. For example, Abram became Abraham, Jacob became Israel, and Simon became Peter.

You may be wondering why you must write a report about a saint. The report is just a way to get to know more about the saint that you are choosing. For example: Saint Cecilia is the patron saint of musicians and Saint Francis of Assisi is the patron saint of animals. Your Confirmation name should be that of a saint you admire or the saint's name of someone you know and look up to as a Christian role model.

So, choosing a saint and taking on their name is not just one more thing you "have to do" to get Confirmed. It is a large part of this key step in your life and a reflection of the beauty of the Catholic faith. Please take some time to find a saint with whom you have a connection. There are many helpful websites available to assist you in gathering information about saints. Some of them are:

www.catholicforum.com/saints

www.catholic.org/saints

www.catholic-pages.com/dir/saints.asp

www.theworkofgod.org/saints

Once you have chosen your Confirmation name, you will need to write a report and submit it to the Confirmation Team. The following format may be helpful for you to follow.

- Who is the saint?
- What have you learned about this saint through your research?
- Why did you select this saint to represent your journey of faith?
- How is this person a good role model for you to follow as a confirmed Catholic?
- What quote from this saint best describes how you will model him or her?
- Include the resources from which you obtained your information – (website, book, etc.)

Participate in Candidate meetings

ALL the information you need to know about meetings and events is on the special calendar in your packet. Please save that calendar because you will need to refer to it throughout the year.

Participate in the Confirmation Retreat

Retreats provide a unique opportunity for you to spend extended time in discernment and reflect on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, your relationship with God, and your faith life. Our retreat will afford you the time to extend your understanding of what it means to be part of a Christian Community of Faith.

Confirmation Service Hours

Throughout Scripture we are called to love our neighbor and to serve as Jesus did. A true spirit of service is not just about accumulating a certain number of service hours or completing a number of projects. It is, instead, about the desire to help others and a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment.

Although donating food is a good thing, it is not a service project. Serving Mass or being a lector is not a service project – it is being part of the ministry of the parish. **Volunteering, however, at parish activities, or for activities in the community are valuable projects because they require a time commitment and an investment of yourself.** It is our hope that as you participate in service projects, you will grow to incorporate service to others as an important part of your faith.

In the preparation for Confirmation, you are expected to make 20 hours of service a priority. Service is doing what Jesus did and making a commitment to use the gifts and talents God has given you to serve others. There are many opportunities in the parish and surrounding community where you can provide service. The OLVP Confirmation Team will work with you on finding those opportunities.

Write a letter to the Bishop

When typing your letter to Cardinal Gregory, be sure to include the following elements:

- Date
- Address the letter to “Your Excellency”
- Include your handwritten signature and your typed name below it

Write about the following topics in your letter:

- Why do you want to be confirmed?
- What does confirmation mean to you?
- What have you done to prepare for Confirmation?
- What service have you done?
- How has that service impacted you?
- What saint did you choose for your patron and why did you choose that saint?
- Who is your sponsor?
- Why did you choose him or her?

So what does all of this mean for you?

I am sure that you have heard the comment, “Don’t just talk the talk; walk the talk”. It is easy to just say you are going to do something but it is much more difficult to promise and actually “do” what you said you would do. In preparing for Confirmation, we, the Team, have asked you “walk” a journey of faith. Now, we are asking you to commit to that walk – by signing and submitting the Rite of Confirmation Pledge found on the next page before you participate in the Rite of Commitment Mass. As always, we, the Confirmation Team, are here to help you fulfill this pledge and walk beside you during this journey.

A Few Closing Words

The Sacraments of Initiation were instituted by Christ to open the way of salvation for us and to lead us in the life of grace. All of us need the grace of Confirmation to support us in carrying out our baptismal vocation not only to live the faith but also to witness to it. The guidelines that direct your Confirmation preparation are designed to help you make a deeper commitment to a relationship with the Lord that Confirmation encourages. Confirmation allows you to receive and use the gifts and grace that you receive in the sacrament of Confirmation to contribute to building up the Body of Christ and serving others in Our Lady of the Visitation Parish.

Closing Prayer

Please know that we, the Team, will be praying for and supporting you throughout this entire process. We want, as the following prayer expresses, you to become the best Catholic that you can be and to come to remain confident in the love and aid of God the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

And to that end, we pray:

All powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit, you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.



**Our Lady of the Visitation Parish
Rite of Confirmation Commitment Pledge**

I, _____, commit myself to begin preparation to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. By signing this contract, I commit myself to prepare spiritually and mentally between now and when I am confirmed. I will do this in the following ways:

1. Through personal prayer
2. Through attendance at Mass at least weekly
3. Through receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation
4. Through studying the faith and asking questions
5. Through attendance and active participations at all Confirmation meetings
6. Through completion of all required activities
7. Through attendance and active participation at the Confirmation retreat
8. Through service to my parish and to my community

I also commit myself to being open to all that God has to reveal to me during this time of preparation, to the Holy Spirit and how He wants to move in my life, and to what the Confirmation Team has to share with me. I understand that the Sacrament of Confirmation is a gift from God rather than a requirement. Therefore, I take this step freely and without reservation.

Candidate's Signature

Date