

HOLY SPIRIT AND ST. JOSEPH'S CONFIRMATION HANDBOOK

For Parents and Candidates

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation, like every sacrament, is not the work of men but of God, who cares for our lives in such a manner as to mold us in the image of his Son, to make us capable of loving like him.

~Pope Francis



"DEAR YOUNG PEOPLE,
LET YOURSELVES
BE TAKEN OVER BY
THE LIGHT OF CHRIST,
AND SPREAD THAT
LIGHT WHEREVER
YOU ARE."

St. John Paul II



Dear Families,

Welcome to the Confirmation Program, and congratulations on taking the first steps with your child, as they begin the journey to be fully initiated into the Catholic Church! Their journey began at Baptism, was nourished in Holy Eucharist, and will be continued when they renew their Baptismal promises in the sacrament of Confirmation!

Confirmation preparation in the Diocese of Rochester is a two-year formation program that begins in 8th grade and is geared at helping the candidates in their faith development, as well as preparing them to serve as adults in the Catholic Church. At Holy Spirit and St. Joseph's, preparation for Confirmation includes attendance at bi-weekly faith formation classes, participation in service opportunities, and worship at weekly mass as members of the faith community.

Preparation is also a family endeavor. You are your child's first, and most important, teacher and role model of the Catholic faith. This is a wonderful time for you and your child to have a conversation about our Catholic beliefs, commitment to the faith – and to the program – and the potential role they will play as fully initiated members of the church.

I am delighted that you and your child will be part of the program, and I look forward to working with you to make this experience meaningful for your family.

Blessings,

Lisa Milano

Director of Faith Formation and Youth Ministry
585-586-8089, ext. 123
lisa.milano@dor.org

Faith Formation

➤ **Preparation for Confirmation Class Sessions**

Candidates for Confirmation will participate in bi-weekly classes. Year 1 and Year 2 students will meet on opposite Sunday nights at St. Joseph's Learning Center, beginning with 5:00 pm Mass, and ending at 7:15. The schedule is included at the end of this document and can be accessed online at: [Confirmation Preparation | HS-SJC | Penfield, NY \(holyspirit-saintjoseph.org\)](https://holyspirit-saintjoseph.org/confirmation-preparation)

Regular attendance at these sessions is expected and students will be encouraged to participate in both large and small group settings. The following expectations will be communicated and expected of candidates at each session:

- *Be safe.*
- *Be kind.*
- *Be respectful.*

This is an important time in your child's faith formation journey and their respectful participation will make the preparation for the sacrament meaningful and memorable.

➤ **Confirmation Retreat Sessions**

Confirmation retreats offer a unique opportunity for Confirmation Candidates to encounter Christ. There are two seasonal retreats planned: one during Advent in preparation for the birth of Christ at Christmas, and one during Lent in preparation for Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. The dates for the retreats are listed below, and can also be accessed electronically at: [Confirmation Preparation | HS-SJC | Penfield, NY \(holyspirit-saintjoseph.org\)](https://holyspirit-saintjoseph.org/confirmation-preparation)

- **December 2, 2023, 12:30-5:30** (includes attendance at Saturday 4:30 Mass)
Advent Retreat (Prepare the Way of the Lord)
- **March 23, 2024, 12:30-5:30** (includes attendance at Saturday 4:30 Mass)
Lenten Retreat (Way of the Cross with Jesus)

Students will participate in a minimum of **one retreat each year of their Confirmation preparation** but are welcome to participate in both.

➤ **Choosing A Confirmation Name**

There is a wonderful tradition in the history of our faith of God changing someone's name to represent a new direction or purpose for that individual's life. Abraham (Abram), Peter (Simon), and Paul (Saul), are a few examples of people God set apart and destined for a great future. God calls all of us to a unique mission in life, and candidates should reflect on their future purpose or potential mission when choosing a name for Confirmation. Candidates should select the name of a saint who shares this mission and purpose, someone whom they admire for "having what it takes" to live life as a Christian witness.

Candidates may also use their Baptismal name, if they share their name with a canonized saint. This is a wonderful option if candidates see Confirmation as the strengthening of the work that God began in their life at Baptism.

➤ **Confirmation Name Project**

Candidates are given the option of choosing their Baptismal name or another saint's name for Confirmation. In either case, candidates are expected to research the life of the saint so the chosen name will have special significance in their life. This is also an amazing opportunity for candidates to engage with their families and their sponsors.

Students have two options for completing a Confirmation Name Project, and these will be introduced with examples during Confirmation Class Sessions.

- *Option 1 – Written Report*

Candidates can complete the written report included at the end of this document. A copy will also be available online. The written report should include the full name of the saint, dates of birth and death, dates of canonization, interesting life details (miracles, challenges), and an account of why this saint represents the Catholic faith to the candidate.

- *Option 2 – Visual Report*

Candidates can complete a visual report using Google Slides, Power Point, or Adobe Express. The visual report should include a minimum of 5 slides and include the full name of the saint, dates of birth and death, dates of canonization, interesting life details (miracles, challenges), and an account of why this saint represents the Catholic faith to the candidate.

Candidates will be encouraged to share their reports in a small peer group during the class session on March 3, 2024. All reports – written and visual – should be turned in at that time.

The following is a list of electronic resources to assist Confirmation Candidates in choosing a name:

[CATHOLIC SAINTS \(catholic-saints.info\)](http://catholic-saints.info)

Search here for a list of saints from A-Z or listed by patronage.

[Biggest and Best List of Confirmation Saints \(for Guys and Girls\) - LifeTeen.com for Catholic Youth](http://LifeTeen.com)

This site is teen friendly and lists saints by category, i.e. modern-day saints, cool conversion stories.

[Saints Archives - Busted Halo](http://Busted Halo)

Choose this site to find interesting stories of the saints...and great podcasts!

➤ **Confirmation Conversation**

Each candidate is required to participate in an interview in the weeks leading up to the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. This is meant to be a conversation about the Confirmation process and how it has gone for them, their readiness to receive the sacrament, and a few basic questions about their understanding of faith doctrine. Candidates will also have the opportunity to address any questions or concerns that they have about the ceremony or reception of the sacrament itself. Conversations will be scheduled with Ms. Milano and other staff members at St. Joseph's. Ms. Milano will use Sign-Up Genius for candidates to schedule dates and times for interviews.

➤ **Confirmation Letter of Intent to Bishop Matano**

Throughout the preparation process, Confirmation candidates will deepen their relationship with Christ, learn through firsthand experience how to serve others in His name, and live as part of a worship community by attending Mass and participating in the life of the Church. Candidates should be prepared to write a letter to Bishop Matano stating their desire and intent to be confirmed. Letters will be collected by March 23, 2024 and will be delivered to the Bishop. He will review them and return them with personal comments and notes.

Letters may be typed or handwritten. All should be formatted accordingly:

Greeting

Please use the formal greeting, Most Reverend Salvatore Matano, Bishop of the Diocese of Rochester.

Body of the Letter

Paragraph

Candidates should introduce themselves and share with the Bishop personal information such as hometown, home parish, school attendance, and something about their family background.

Paragraph

Candidates should share their Confirmation preparation experience and their faith formation journey.

Paragraph

Choose a gift of the Holy Spirit and explain why it is significant and how the candidate will use that gift in their life as a Catholic adult.

Paragraph

Candidates should formally request to receive the sacrament in the following manner: I am ready to be sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and accept the challenges and responsibilities that come with the sacrament. I respectfully request to be confirmed on (date).

Conclusion

This should include a statement about the candidate's anticipation of the sacrament.

Closing

Please use a formal closing such as: Sincerely in Christ, Respectfully yours, or Asking for your blessing.

Signature

Candidates should sign letters – handwritten and electronic – in their own handwriting.

Letters will be collected by the Director of Faith Formation and Youth Ministry. Please do not mail directly to Bishop Matano.

Service

Then the righteous will and Him and say, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill, or in prison and visit you?" And then Jesus said to them in reply, "Amen I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

~ Matthew 25:37-40

Service to others is an important part of the Catholic faith. Jesus asks us to reach outside of ourselves and to help others in need. When we serve others, we are not only serving them. We are serving Jesus as well. Confirmation candidates are encouraged to complete at least 5 hours of service each year so that they may become accustomed to serving others as an adult member of the church.

➤ **Service to the Parish**

Candidates are encouraged to participate in ministries at St. Joseph's throughout the year. There are several opportunities to be active in the parish. Candidates can assist with Children's Liturgy of the Word, act as lectors, altar servers, ushers, or greeters, or share their musical talents in the Morningstar Choir. A list of contacts for each ministry can be found below:

Children's Liturgy of the Word (9:30 Mass at St. Joseph's, 11:00 Mass at Holy Spirit), please contact Jeanne Mooney at jeanne.mooney@sjcpenfield.org

Morningstar Choir (5:00 Mass at St. Joseph's), please contact Susan Gividen at susan.gividen@dor.org

Lector, Altar Server, Usher, Greeter (any weekend Mass at St. Joseph's or Holy Spirit), please contact Lisa Milano at lisa.milano@dor.org

➤ **Service to the Community**

Candidates are also encouraged to challenge themselves and participate in a form of service outside of the church, and the service opportunities completed by the Youth Group as a whole.

When participating in service opportunities, candidates should reflect on why this opportunity helped them deepen their relationship with Jesus, and how it allowed them to see Jesus in the people that they served. A Service Record Form should be completed for **each act** of service and signed by the adult responsible for supervising the event. The form can be found at the end of this document and is available at [Confirmation Preparation | HS-SJC | Penfield, NY \(holyspirit-saintjoseph.org\)](https://www.holyspirit-saintjoseph.org/confirmation-preparation). Please use the record form to track your service hours. *The completed form is due by April 14, 2024.*

Community

As candidates prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, they also prepare for their role in the church community. Sponsors and parents support the candidate in making connections to the parish community and beyond.

➤ **Choosing a Sponsor**

A sponsor has three primary roles:

1. To assist the candidate in preparing for Confirmation
2. To present the candidate for Confirmation
3. To help the confirmed person live out their Christian faith fully.

The sponsor can be a godparent or any other Catholic adult, but not a parent. The requirements below will be helpful when choosing a sponsor:

- Sponsors are 18 years of age and fully initiated members of the Catholic faith, having celebrated the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- Sponsors practice their faith and are role models for living according to the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Sponsors are willing to encourage the candidate in their spiritual growth after they are confirmed.
- Sponsors may assist the candidate in choosing and completing service activities.
- Sponsors may accompany the candidate to special liturgies and preparation sessions.

In addition:

- Sponsors will assist in determining the candidate's readiness for the sacrament and present the candidate to Bishop Matano at the celebration of Confirmation.
- Sponsors will attend the Sponsor/Candidate meeting, date TBA.
- If a sponsor is not a member of Holy Spirit or St. Joseph's, they must submit a letter from the pastor of their home parish, indicating that they are a registered member in good standing. This letter is due February 4, 2024.

Finally, please keep in mind that candidates should be able to easily communicate with their sponsors. A sponsor should be able to walk the journey with candidates and help to guide them through the process.

Candidates should submit the names of their sponsors using the form at the end of this document by February 4, 2024.

➤ **Parent Participation**

A parent's role in their child's preparation is indispensable! While the candidate's sponsor will help them prepare for Confirmation and offer encouragement to continue to grow in the Catholic faith, as parents you are the primary educators in the faith. The two most important ways that you can help your child are to pray, and practice (participate in) the faith.

In addition to attending Mass as well as the Parent Meetings, please consider one of the following volunteer opportunities:

- *Small Group Facilitator*
Each session, candidates will meet in large and small groups. Facilitators are needed to guide small group discussion and reflections sessions. Ms. Milano will provide support with materials and training if needed.
- *Small Group Assistant*
The small group assistant will provide support for the small group facilitator by contributing to the discussion and helping to ensure the safety of the candidates.
- *Hospitality Volunteer*
Teenagers are always hungry! Hospitality volunteers are willing to feed the candidates. Volunteers will be asked to provide food for a meeting as part of the hospitality team.
- *Retreat Volunteer*
Candidates will attend *one* retreat in each year of their preparation. Volunteers will assist the retreat facilitator with various tasks throughout the retreat.
- *Service Volunteer*
Candidates will participate in a variety of service activities as well as a Bake Sale to raise money for the Steubenville Youth Conference, and Ornament Sale to benefit St. Damien Pediatric Hospital in Haiti. Volunteers will assist the candidates with coordination, organization, and collection of funds.

Ms. Milano will use Sign-Up Genius for parents so that they may choose at least one volunteer activity. Parents are encouraged to be involved as much as possible throughout their child's faith formation journey.

Celebration of the Sacrament

The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation occurs at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Rochester. The date and time will be determined by Bishop Matano and the Pastoral Center Staff. This will be communicated in early January.

➤ **Confirmation Rehearsal**

To ensure reverence and order for the Sacrament of Confirmation, a rehearsal will be held prior to the celebration at the Sacred Heart Cathedral. The rehearsal will be held at St. Joseph's and will include a walk-through by the candidates and their sponsors. A rehearsal will be held the day before the Confirmation celebration.

➤ **Arrival and Seating at the Sacred Heart Cathedral**

Candidates and their sponsors are asked to arrive 30-40 minutes before the Mass begins and should check in with Ms. Milano. At the ceremony, candidates and their sponsors will sit together. Families will typically sit behind the candidates and their sponsors, although seating is not reserved and may depend on how Bishop Matano plans to administer the sacrament.

➤ **Dress Code for Candidates and their Sponsors**

- Young ladies should wear a dress, or skirt and blouse, or dress pants and blouse. Please refrain from wearing strapless clothing or spaghetti straps, unless also wearing a sweater. Hem of dresses and skirts should come to the knee. Dress shoes, please.
- Young men should wear a suit and tie, or dress pants with a button-down dress shirt and tie. Shirts should be tucked in, and belts are preferred. Dress shoes, please.
- Jeans, t-shirts, shorts, sneakers, and flip-flops are not acceptable attire given the importance, and sanctity, of the occasion.

Confirmation Class Meeting Dates

<i>Month</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Year 1 Meeting Dates</i>	<i>Year 2 Meeting Dates</i>
September	17	(Parent Meeting)	
	24	Class Meeting	(Parent Meeting)
October	1		Class Meeting
	8	No Classes	
	15	Class Meeting	
	22		Class Meeting
	29	Class Meeting	
November	5		Class Meeting
	12	Class Meeting	
	19		Class Meeting
December	2 (Saturday)	Advent Retreat	
	10	Class Meeting	
	17		Class Meeting
	24	Merry Christmas!	
	31	Happy New Year!	
January	7	Class Meeting	
	14	No Classes	
	21		Class Meeting
	28	Class Meeting	
February	4		Class Meeting
	11	No Classes – Super Bowl Sunday	
	18	No Classes	
	25	Class Meeting	
March	3		Class Meeting
	10	Class Meeting	
	17		Class Meeting
	23 (Saturday)	Lenten Retreat	
	31	Happy Easter!	
April	7	No Classes	
	14	Class Meeting	
	21		Class Meeting
	28	Class Meeting	
May	5		Class Meeting
	12	No Classes	
	19	Class Meeting	

Document Due Dates

Year 1

2/25/2024

Baptismal Certificate Due

4/14/2024

Service Hours Due (5 hours)

Year 2

1/21/2024

Sponsor Form Due

3/3/2024

Confirmation Name Project Due

3/17/2024

Letter to Bishop Matano Due

4/21/2024

Service Hours Due (5 hours)

Confirmation Service Reflection Form

Candidate Name: _____ Date of Service: _____

Type of Service: _____

What happened? Describe what you did.

Where did you see God in this service?

How did you see Catholic/Christian discipleship at work in this service?

Person in charge where the service happened: _____

Confirmation Sponsor Eligibility Form



**HOLY SPIRIT-SAINT JOSEPH
ONE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Meets the requirements to be a Confirmation Sponsor for

Candidate name

At his/her Confirmation in the Spring of 20_____

Parish Name _____

Diocese of _____

Address _____

Pastor or Administrator: _____

Date: _____

Confirmation Name Project Written Report

Candidate Name _____

Confirmation Name _____

What is the full name of the saint that you chose? _____

What was their early life like? (Birthplace, family life, milestones)

What was remarkable about their life? (Visions, miracles)

Are they a patron saint? Does this saint have symbol or special characteristic?

What challenges did this saint face in their life? Do you face any of the same challenges? Explain.

When was this saint canonized, and why?

Why did you choose this saint? Why did they have “what it takes” to be an inspiration for you in your faith life?

Written reports are due on or before class session on March 3, 2024.

A Prayer for Confirmation Candidates

HOLY SPIRIT, CONFIRM IN ME...

God's acceptance and love for me just as I am ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The new life of my Baptism when I became a child of God ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The words my parents and godparents said on my behalf at Baptism ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

My closeness to Jesus each time I receive Communion... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

My desire to follow Christ more closely as his disciple ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

My acts of service and love to my family and friends ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The knowledge that God created me for greatness and to be a saint ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

My desire to pray even when I am not sure how ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

My desire to turn to God in difficult times ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

My searching faith, and the strength to stay with my questions ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The softening of my hard heart ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The assurance that God helps me find second chances ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

Your peace when I am in conflict ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The humility to give and to ask for forgiveness ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The courage to face challenges ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The desire to care for God's creation ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The generosity of heart to stand in justice with the poor ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

Your help to remember, as Jesus promised, "everything I have taught you" ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The gift of Wisdom to recognize the importance of keeping God central in my life ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The gift of Understanding to hear and know God's voice speaking to me ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The gift of Knowledge to explore God's revelation and the mysteries of our faith ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The gift of Counsel to make good choices and to see the best way to follow Jesus ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The gift of Fortitude giving me the courage to do what I know is right ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The gift of Piety helping me pray to God with a true heart ... Holy Spirit, confirm in me.

The gift of Awe and Wonder to be amazed by God's presence, in small ways and in big way ... Holy Spirit, confirm in me.

*Holy Spirit, you are the giver of many gifts which God wants to give me very personally. Open my heart and my mind as I prepare for Confirmation. Help me to know that you are confirming all the goodness that I am, and all the goodness that I will become. Increase my desire to know and follow Jesus as his disciple with a grateful and courageous heart. **Amen.***

~Jane Casserly Myers

