

**Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Religious Education
Program**



**Confirmation
Handbook
2017-2018**

Dear Parents of Confirmation candidates,

Welcome to Our Lady of Perpetual Help's Confirmation Preparation program. During the 2017-2018 year, we the church, and your family will journey together to share in the important responsibility for your son or daughter's Confirmation preparation period. The Confirmation journey will fortify your son/daughter's Baptismal vows made by you.

The Confirmation program will allow your teen to grow closer to Christ and His Church through regular sessions at which your children will be drawn into a deeper faith that will transform their hearts and change their lives not only during their Confirmation preparation period, but into the rest of their high school and young adult years.

The best preparation that you, as a parent, can give your son or daughter is to practice and live your Catholic faith through word and deed. As you continue ministering to your family, your parish and your community, we ask you to be especially faithful in attending Sunday liturgy.

It is your example that will have the greatest impact on the faith formation of your child. Each of us has been called to witness Christ's love for our children and each other. May these blessings be a continuous faith journey guided by the Holy Spirit to follow Christ as His disciples.

Cherie DiCesare

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Director of Religious Education

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is the strengthening and fullness of the Holy Spirit already received in Baptism. When we were baptized we became children of God. As children of God we share the life of God; the life of three persons in one love. The Spirit is the love between Father and Son. The Spirit acts in us urging us to move beyond our individual selves into making the community on Earth like the community of love that is God. Confirmation calls us to a greater participation in the mission of Jesus and the Church. Through Confirmation our relationship with God is deepened and we are incorporated more completely into the body of Christ. Confirmation obliges us, as true witnesses of Christ, to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.

Why Be Confirmed?

When someone reaches their teens, they begin to realize that life is bigger than themselves. They sense a need to reach beyond their own personal world and into the world of caring for others. They find themselves inclined in that direction. That inclination is God's Spirit alive and moving in them. Being confirmed is the Church's recognition that the Spirit is moving in a person. Thus the Church "confirms" what is going on. To step forward and ask to be confirmed is for an individual to recognize that the Spirit is moving in them, and then ask the larger faith community if they too recognize that Spirit. If so, then someone is ready to be confirmed. It takes recognition from two directions – from within oneself and from the faith community as well.

We say the Sacrament of Confirmation brings the gifts of the Spirit. Actually, the sacrament "confirms" that those gifts have already begun. If you wonder if you should be confirmed, look for those gifts beginning to emerge:

- **Wisdom:** A true knowledge of how to act and live based upon God's viewpoint. Look for the ability to see things as they truly are in an open-minded manner.
- **Understanding:** A deeper insight into what we believe by faith. The ability to draw out consequences from the significance of events.
- **Right Judgment:** The ability to make good and wise decisions dealing with everyday problems.
- **Courage:** the strength to overcome fear when called to do what you sense is right and to stand up for one's beliefs.
- **Knowledge:** The ability to comprehend the truths of the universe and being aware of that truth in one's life.
- **Reverence:** A deep respect for God and all creation because one recognizes the presence of God in all that is.

- **Wonder and Awe:** The realization that our great and powerful God loves me and is close to me, and so also in all of God's people and all of God's creation.

The Goal of Our Lady of Perpetual Help's Confirmation Preparation Program

The goal is to form disciples by leading teens to:

- Develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ,
- Experience the power of the Holy Spirit,
- Awaken a sense of belonging to the Church.
- Encourage a sense of belonging by developing a fellowship among the youth of the parish.

Attendance Requirements (Please see Confirmation calendar for specific times and dates)

- Attend all Confirmation Classes. Due to the concentration of information packed into the Confirmation preparation classes, candidates must attend all classes. Confirmation candidates are **REQUIRED** to attend all of the faith theme classes, both small and large group meetings, retreat and required service hours. They are expected to **be on time for meetings and prepared for the class.** **Leaving a class early is not permitted.** If the student cannot attend a meeting due to **illness** or a **family emergency**, a parent/guardian must notify the candidate's catechist that the student will be absent. **[Sports events/practices, trips, weekends away, homework, and all other reasons are not acceptable for being absent.]**

It is the responsibility of the candidate to contact their catechist and get the make-up information if a class session is missed. If an assignment or reflection is due, it must be handed in at the next class session. If a candidate misses an unreasonable amount of sessions over the course of the Confirmation year, the candidate and his/her parents/guardians will meet with the Director and /or Pastor concerning continued participation in the program.

- Attend weekly Mass. You are called to be an active participant in the communal life of your church. Sunday liturgy is the way to experience community, as well as deepen your faith and spirituality. As a candidate in the sacramental preparation program for Confirmation, you are required and expected to attend weekend liturgy.
- Attend Rite to Enrollment. To involve the whole parish community in the journey of your Confirmation the Rite of Enrollment will be celebrated at a weekend liturgy on October 1st, 2017 during the 6:00 pm liturgy.

- Attend Confirmation Retreat on Sunday, December 17th, 2017 from 1:30 pm to 7:00 pm (includes 6:00 pm Mass). Our Lady of Perpetual Help Confirmation Program requires each candidate to attend a Retreat Experience in preparation for Confirmation. **All retreats must be made at Our Lady of Perpetual Help only.** In order to be credited with fulfilling the retreat requirement, the candidate must be in attendance for the entire retreat. **Late arrivals and/or early departures will void the fulfillment of this requirement.** An afternoon of reflection with Terry Nelson Johnson, Director of Faith Formation at Old Saint Patrick's Church is being planned for this year's retreat experience.
- Attend Confirmation readiness interviews. Candidates will be interviewed by parish priests, or others that he designates, to assess each candidate's readiness to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. A schedule will be provided for your class times.
- Attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the reception of the Sacrament Confirmation. A schedule will be provided with your class times.
- Attend the Confirmation rehearsal. The ceremony of Confirmation requires a brief rehearsal to ensure that it will run smoothly and meaningfully. All candidates are required to attend. Sponsors are not required to attend. It should take no more than an hour – specific times of your rehearsal will be available as we come closer to the actual date.
- Attend the Confirmation Liturgy on March 18th, 2018.

Choosing a Confirmation Name

When you are confirmed, you will be presented to the bishop using the confirmation name that you select. You may choose a special saint that you admire. It is required that you select the name of a saint or someone who has been beatified.

We encourage you to use this opportunity to reflect on our baptismal call to become holy- to become saints. God has given each of us all that we need to become saints – Our One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church to nourish us and teach us His truths, the Sacraments, His Holy Spirit which is always available to us, and the community of saints which we can call upon to pray for us and which provide us with role models and inspiration through their lives.

So, which confirmation name is right for you? Only you can decide. Some of you may already have a saint in mind which has a special place in your life and who you have already been using as a role model in living your life as a faithful Catholic. Others will need to pray quite a bit about this choice, research and ponder. If you are

in this latter category, here is some practical advice on how to select your confirmation saint.

- Pray to God that he guide you on whom to select through His Holy Spirit and take time to be still and listen. Be patient and persistent – sometimes it takes a while to get the answer.
- There are numerous websites that you can use to learn more about the lives of the saints and most will allow you to search by name, patron saint, and saint day. Here is a few web sites that you might find useful with your search:

www.catholic.org/saints

www.americancatholic.org/features/saints

www.catholic-saints.info

www.catholic-forum.com/saints/patron02

- Talk to family and friends and ask them for suggested saints for you to research and consider
- Call the RE office for further ideas and advice.

Writing a Saint Report

Upon selecting a Saint's name, each of you will be required to research and write a paper on that Saint. The report must be two pages long and can be double spaced. The report must provide a brief summary of the saint's life with a focus on what they did with their lives on their path to sainthood. The report must also explain why you chose this saint. You need to discuss what aspects of the saint's life are more meaningful to you and will serve as an inspiration and model to you on your own walk towards sainthood. Lastly, in your own words, create a prayer to your patron saint. Pray often to your saint, especially during this time of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Due dates for these reports are assigned by individual catechists.

“Called to Serve” – Service Project Information

Service projects enable each Confirmation Candidate to identify personal gifts and use them for the benefit of the others within the life of their faith community. These projects also help Confirmation candidates recognize their giftedness as being a sign and an extension of the ministry of Christ in the world and additionally help the Candidate identify the needs and concerns of the world. This service project is separate from projects that are school or club related.

You will complete three projects in the areas of Family, Church and Community. Each time you complete a service project, write your report while it is still fresh in

your mind. Please include any pictures you may have taken. Ask yourself the following questions when completing your service report: (form found online)

- Date service project performed
- Organization/person served
- Hours completed – a minimum of 15 hours must be completed for service projects in all areas.
- Identify how the service project relates to the Spiritual or Corporal Work of Mercy.
- How did you grow spiritually from this service project?

Serious consideration should be given to the service projects. You should discuss your ideas with your parents, sponsor or catechist. The ideas listed below are only a guideline – each student is called in a different way.

Family

- Visiting a sick relative, sending flowers, writing letters
- Writing a letter or sending a care package to a relative in the armed forces
- Preparing and serving a special meal for your family
- Helping grandparents or siblings with jobs they may have hard time doing

Parish

- Assist at Parish events
- Check Parish website/Parish Office or Parish bulletin for events where assistance is needed

Community

- Helping a neighbor with chores
- Participate in an organized shelter event
- Participate in organized soup kitchens

The candidates will also be required to attend, with their class, a service project organized to put the candidates in contact with those who are in direct need. These trips will be organized through the Religious Education Program; you will attend as a class at on a date and location to be determined. Please keep in mind that parent volunteers are needed to transport the candidates to and from this service event. (Hours spent at this event are over and above the hours done in the categories listed above).

Confirmation Service Fair

Candidates are asked to keep a report of each service activity they participate in keeping in mind that a presentation board will be made that represents their most memorable and impactful service experience. This boards will then be presented to

the Religious Education community during a Confirmation Service Fair in the spring of 2018. A schedule will be provided for your class times.

Choosing a Sponsor

Every candidate should have a Confirmation sponsor. It is desirable that baptismal godparents, as extensions of the spiritual family, continue this role at Confirmation. Sponsors should be actively involved in the child's life of faith – before, during and after Confirmation. Sponsors assume responsibility for a person during a period of instruction and vouches for the suitability of the candidate for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Sponsor Qualifications:

- At least 16 years old
- They may not be natural or adoptive parents of the candidate
- They must be full initiated into the Catholic faith (Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation)
- Must be leading a life in harmony with their faith

Sponsor Requirements:

The sponsor is an invaluable assistant to parents in transmitting faith. The sponsor needs to be able to fulfill several requirements:

- The Church requires that the sponsor be an active, practicing Catholic who has already celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Church recognizes that a person cannot transmit what the person does not have.
- It is important that the sponsor be more mature, more informed, and more experienced in the ways of our faith and culture than the candidate is.
- It is recommended that the sponsor be an older person who has some experience with his or her faith and therefore a clearer perspective from which to speak.
- The sponsor needs to be willing to meet with the candidate on a regular basis prior to the celebration of Confirmation and to make a commitment to continue the faith journey after the celebration.
- The sponsor is one who is willing to share his or her faith with the candidate.
- The sponsor is an assistant to the parents as the prime transmitters of faith.
- The sponsor is to be a person of strong and committed personal faith.
- The sponsor needs to be open, honest, caring, committed and encouraging person who will help the candidate grow in his/her understanding of the faith as the young person comes to a deeper appreciation of God in his/her life.

Confirmation Day Information

Your son/daughter will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on Sunday, 18th, 2018 at one of two liturgies. Your time has been assigned. Your class time will be available soon. The ceremony will last approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. The ceremony of Confirmation will be a full Mass. It is a powerful liturgical celebration of young adults choosing to live as Roman Catholic Christian. Confirmation apparel should be as when attending any church functions. Modesty is a must. Proper and modest attire is required for both the candidates and the sponsors.

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