

# Confirmation

A Guide  
For  
Confirmands, Parents and Sponsors



When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were.

Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts of the Apostles 2

**St. Michael Catholic Church**  
**September 2009**  
**Parish Office 527-1037**

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## Welcome!

To all of you who are beginning (or continuing) in the magnificent journey towards Confirmation – we offer a warm and appreciative *welcome*. We are so glad that you are a part of this amazing time of preparations for our confirmands. Whatever your role – confirmand, parent, or sponsor – you are needed and we look forward to an exciting time together.

This document is meant as a guide for everyone involved in the program. This journey has a way of filling us with all sorts of feelings – from joy to the fearful “How did I get myself into this?”. Needless to say, whenever one is involved with our youth, things will be interesting and challenging.

St. Michael’s has always been a community of faith-filled people. This fact is clearly shown year after year in the Confirmation program. We are here to share our faith with each other. We are here to support our youth as they prepare for the important decision of being confirmed in the Catholic tradition.

We are about living our Catholic traditions in the best of ways – with our youth, our future.

So, let us begin.

## Confirmation Program Overview

In the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, the Office of Youth Ministry has begun a systematic process to review and revise the preparation guidelines for high school youth who are already baptized and seek to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The current guidelines are found in the diocesan document *Called to Faith*, which was last revised in 1997.

It is our understanding over the next couple of years, changes will take place regarding how and when we prepare students for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Until we have that new directive, however, diocesan expectations remain the same: Confirmation preparation is a two year process, with the Sacrament being celebrated in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade; students must be in program a year prior to the beginning of preparation; and, students must participate in a weekend retreat opportunity. In order to stay faithful to Diocesan mandates, and be pro-active regarding future potential changes, we have chosen to combine 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students and will consider them “Year 1 Confirmation Students”. 11<sup>th</sup> grade students will remain “Year 2 Confirmation Students”.

Year 1 Confirmation Students will participate in 10 consecutive weeks of classes, held from 6:45p-8:45p, beginning on Sunday, September 20 and concluding on Sunday, November 22. The only exception to this will be on Sunday, October 25, when Confirmation Students will be asked to attend a presentation on “*The Gospel of Mark*” by Frank Runyoen which will be held at Our Lady of Lourdes at 7pm. Cost for this presentation is \$5. All classes will begin in the Parish Fellowship Hall with pizza and socializing. All students are encouraged to bring \$2 to cover the cost of pizza.

Year 2 Confirmation Students will begin their year with Orientation held on Sunday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> from 1p-3p. The Confirmation Retreat will be held the weekend of January 15-17 and will conclude with a closing Liturgy on Sunday, January 17, 2010. Students will then participate in 10 consecutive weeks of classes, held from 6:45p-8:45p, beginning on Sunday, January 24 and concluding on Sunday, March 28. The only exception to this will be on Super Bowl Sunday, February 7, 2010 when classes WILL meet from 3p-5p. All classes will begin in the Parish Fellowship Hall with pizza and socializing. All students are encouraged to bring \$2 to cover the cost of pizza.

In addition to regularly scheduled Faith Formation classes, all students are **expected** to participate in 3 Catechetical activities as listed on the initial registration form and on the enclosed calendar. Students are also encouraged to participate in Youth Activities as they occur throughout the year.

The classes take on various scenarios, from large group presentations to smaller discussion groups. Casual environments are created; material is presented in various formats and occasionally guest speakers are used. Students are encouraged to ask questions and actively engage in discussions.

St. Michael’s is using LIFE TEEN’s “Oneight” Confirmation program.

The goal of the two year program is to have presented all necessary materials to the students and to have answered questions which will allow each student to make an informed decision as to whether they are prepared to be confirmed.

Hopefully, the time spent in preparation is fun – that the students actually ENJOY talking about matters of faith and religion and that they are open to the movement of the Holy Spirit among them.

Year 1  
September-November

STUDENTS:

- ♣ Must have been Baptized in the Catholic Church and received Sacraments of Eucharist and 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation
- ♣ Sign and understand the commitment agreement
- ♣ Assist with and participate in designated activities
- ♣ Attend all classes: Identify conflicts in advance and make Elise and Coach aware
- ♣ Begin researching Confirmation Name—This is optional as it is encouraged that students re “confirm” their baptismal name
- ♣ Get a sponsor—Sponsor must be identified prior to the completion of Year 1.
- ♣ Identify conflicts in advance and make Elise and Coach aware
- ♣ Continue participation in 3 Catechetical Activities as noted on the registration form and on the enclosed calendar

PARENTS:

- ♣ Must be a registered member of the parish and attend Mass on a regular basis
- ♣ Complete Registration Form and submit with requested fees
- ♣ Locate and Submit Baptism Certificate
- ♣ Assist with 2<sup>nd</sup> year Confirmation Retreat
- ♣ Assist with Confirmation Reception in the Spring

## Year 2 January-March

### STUDENTS:

- ♣ Must be a registered member of the parish and attend Mass on a regular basis
- ♣ Sign and understand the commitment agreement
- ♣ A sponsor must be identified before the start of classes
- ♣ Update information for self and/or Sponsor
- ♣ Ensure that Baptism certificate has been turned in
- ♣ Attend the Kick-off Orientation
- ♣ Attend Confirmation Retreat (Jan 15-178)
- ♣ Attend all classes-- Identify conflicts in advance and make Elise and Coach aware
- ♣ Select Confirmation Name if you choose to do so)
- ♣ Write letter to Fr. Brady (due during the 9<sup>th</sup> session)
- ♣ Complete any uncompleted paperwork
- ♣ Attend Confirmation Liturgy Rehearsal and Liturgy\*
- ♣ Meet and Talk with Sponsor regularly
- ♣ Participate in 3 Catechetical Activities over the course of the year

### PARENTS

- ♣ Must be a registered member of the parish and attend Mass on a regular basis
- ♣ Encourage and Support your child's participation in all aspects of Confirmation preparation
- ♣ Complete and submit registration forms and requested fees. Please note that Faith Formation fees are separate from Retreat fees
- ♣ Complete any incomplete paperwork
- ♣ Participate in the Retreat closing Liturgy
- ♣ Attend Confirmation Liturgy\*
- ♣ Sponsors will be encourages to attend designated classes

\*Please note that the Diocese will not notify us of our Confirmation date until December. Rest assured, as soon as I know you will know!

CALENDAR OF DATES  
FALL SEMESTER  
MIDDLE SCHOOL 6-8 GRADES 3:30P-5:00P  
CONFIRMATION YEAR 1 (9/10 GRADES) 6:45P-8:45p

SEPTEMBER 20	CLASS 1
SEPTEMBER 27	CLASS 2
OCTOBER 4	CLASS 3
OCTOBER 11	CLASS 4
OCTOBER 18	CLASS 5
OCTOBER 25	CLASS 6 CONFIRMATION STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN FRANK RUNYEON PRESENTATION AT OUR LADY OF LOURDES—7PM (\$5 TICKETS)
NOVEMBER 1	CLASS 7
NOVEMBER 8	CLASS 8
NOVEMBER 15	CLASS 9
NOVEMBER 22	CLASS 10

CALENDAR OF DATES  
WINTER SEMESTER  
MIDDLE SCHOOL 6-8 GRADES 3:30P-5:00P  
CONFIRMATION YEAR 1 (9/10 GRADES) 6:45P-8:45p

JANUARY 3	CONFIRMATION YEAR 2 STUDENT ORIENTATION
JANUARY 15-17	CONFIRMATION YEAR 2 WEEKEND RETREAT
JANUARY 24	CLASS 1
JANUARY 31	CLASS 2
FEBRUARY 7	CLASS 3 MIDDLE SCHOOL—1:00P-2:30P CONFIRMATION—3:00P-5:00P
FEBRUARY 14	CLASS 4
FEBRUARY 21	CLASS 5
FEBRUARY 28	CLASS 6
MARCH 7	CLASS 7
MARCH 14	CLASS 8
MARCH 21	CLASS 9
MARCH 28	CLASS 10

## CATECHETICAL EVENTS

- OCTOBER 4           WHOLE COMMUNITY EVENT—  
“LANDSCAPERS CHALLENGE”  
1:00P-2:30P IN THE PARISH HALL
- DECEMBER 6         YOUTH NIGHT-ADVENT  
HIGH SCHOOL—3:30P-5:00P  
MIDDLE SCHOOL—7:00P-8:30P
- JANUARY 2-8        YOUTH NIGHT-CARITAS  
AS ASSIGNED/NEEDED
- FEBRUARY 28        WHOLE COMMUNITY EVENT—  
“LOST?”  
1:00P-2:30P IN THE PARISH HALL
- MARCH 7            YOUTH NIGHT-LENT\*  
HIGH SCHOOL—3:30P-5:00P  
MIDDLE SCHOOL—7:00P-8:30P
- MAY 2               WHOLE COMMUNITY EVENT—  
“WHO’S WEDDING IS IT ANYWAY”  
1:00P-2:30P IN THE PARISH HALL

## Confirmand Responsibilities

The Sacrament of Confirmation signifies the commitment of an individual to live out, in a permanent way, a faith filled life – as a practicing Catholic. It is a lifelong commitment and therefore knowledge about the Catholic Christian faith and the experience of living as a committed Catholic Christian is crucial. Both ingredients – understanding and life experience – are necessary before one is admitted to reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

For that reason, a confirmand **must** understand and fulfill the requirements during the two year preparation period in order to be prepared for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. In part, the requirements are:

- A confirmand will conduct themselves as a Christian at all times.
- A confirmand will make prayer a special part of his/her life, especially in the practice of weekly Sunday liturgy attendance.
- A confirmand will develop an awareness of his/her dependence on God for spiritual healing through participation in the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation.
- A confirmand understands that they are responsible for knowledge of the basic prayers and doctrines of our faith. Therefore, the confirmand will commit to furthering his/her religious knowledge and training by participating fully in the required two years of study.
- Registration and payment of required fees.
- Two years of faithful and active participation in all classes and sessions including proper homework preparation for the classes when required. The confirmand is responsible for making up materials covered if a class is missed. Excessive absences can result in non-preparation for the sacrament.
- Fulfillment of 5 youth activities during the course of each year of preparation
- Attendance at retreats.
- Choosing a confirmation name of a saint that the confirmand finds as a model of Christian life. Use of the name is optional since it is not a legal name.
- Carefully choosing a sponsor and then having regular interaction with the sponsor.
- An interview with the pastor or deacon or alternate.
- Attending Confirmation ceremony.

## **Readiness for Confirmation**

Readiness for celebrating a sacrament cannot be determined by the calendar. The meaning of the Rite for those celebrating it and its total impact on their faith-lives will be strongly affected by many developmental factors besides age or grade. These factors may include the psychological maturity of the confirmands, the depth of their faith development, the degree of their commitment to Christ and to the faith community, the level of their awareness of their religious realities, the extent of their involvement in community worship and service and their knowledge and understanding of the basic teachings of the Church.

Because Confirmation celebrates the response of the individual to the gift of faith, the primary responsibility for determining readiness lies within the confirmands themselves – not their parents, other family members, friends, etc.

It may well happen that a confirmand will not feel ready to be confirmed. It is important that the confirmand does not feel somehow ostracized from the group or parish. Indeed, this very important moment requires the community and its representatives' understanding and support for making the decision.

## Choosing a Sponsor

### Why do I need a sponsor?

Our journey in faith in the Catholic Church is never taken alone. One of the people important to us in the process of becoming a fully initiated member of the community through Confirmation is our sponsor.

The word sponsor means “one who promises to help, one who takes on a responsibility for someone.”

Just as you had godparents when you were baptized, you will choose a sponsor for Confirmation.

### Who can be my sponsor?

Ideally, your Confirmation sponsor will be one of your godparents, because he or she has been important to helping you to grow as a faithful member of the Church. In fact, the Church encourages you to choose one of your godparents.

As you celebrate Confirmation, your sponsor will stand beside you as someone who has supported you and who will continue to help you on your journey of faith.

Your sponsor should be:

- A person who is a practicing Catholic (**other than your parent**) and who has sufficient maturity for this role.
- A person who is a fully initiated Confirmed Catholic who lives a Christian way of life.
- A person who is at least sixteen years of age
- A person who takes an active interest in your faith life.
- A person who is prayerful, loving, and is comfortable sharing with a young person.
- A person who is free to attend meetings and spend time with you.
- A person you can relate to so that you can pray and discuss together.
- He or she does not have to be the same gender as you.

### What will my sponsor do?

Your sponsor serves you in three ways:

First, your sponsor serves as a role model for you in faith.

Secondly, your sponsor is a companion on your faith journey, supporting you in prayer and in your search for the Holy Spirit.

Finally, your sponsor witnesses for you and with you before the entire Church. Standing by you as you are confirmed, he or she proclaims by that gesture that you are ready and willing to accept the responsibilities and privileges of being a fully initiated member of the Catholic Christian community. He/She will be your “spiritual friend.”

Think of how you will ask your sponsor.

- Why not make it a special occasion for your sponsor. **You know, it is a great honor to be asked to be a sponsor for someone receiving a sacrament.**
- Perhaps you will make a card for the person you wish to ask and put the request in the card.
- Maybe, you could invite the person to dinner and ask the person during dinner.
- Whatever you choose, **make it personal.** Avoid calling on the phone.

Please THINK about the following and answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. How will you ask someone to sponsor you in Confirmation?

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2. Why are you asking this person? What qualities does this person possess that you admire?

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3. Who will your sponsor be?

Sponsor

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Name and Address of Sponsor's Parish

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Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ .Date: \_\_\_\_\_ .

## Sponsor Responsibilities

FOR SPONSORS

### *Be at your best!*

If you have been chosen to be a Confirmation sponsor, congratulations! This person sees in you a profound faith commitment, finds trust and knows you are someone who will care about them and their faith. Sounds impressive, doesn't it? It's not all that complicated, but it does take time, a caring heart and a listening ear. If you're a practicing, mature Catholic, don't get too worried. Here are a few suggestions on how to be the best possible sponsor for your candidate:

- **Be a living model of faith.** At least a part of what this young person admires in you is your faith! If the way you practice your faith is not what it should be, "get it together", so to speak! If you honestly can't, this is understandable, but maybe you should decline the invitation to be a sponsor. Your life doesn't have to become artificially saintly, but your faith should be authentic and sincere.
- **Pray for your candidate and yourself.** As candidates decide to be confirmed, they need spiritual strength. Your prayers for them are important but don't forget to pray for yourself also, that you can share why you value and practice your Catholicism. Attend Mass together, or even have the courage to come to Reconciliation together.
- **Give of your time and share your gifts.** You'll be asked to spend time together on various activities. This may mean preparing lessons or even working on a Christian service project. You could also share your own experiences or write a letter of encouragement. Let your unique God-given talents and gifts shine! Offer a gift of spiritual significance- a new bible, rosary or book about our faith or about the saint the candidate has chosen for a Confirmation name—but *be creative and relevant!*
- **Don't miss the ceremony.** Participating in the ceremony is the easiest part of being a sponsor. Your basic job will be to place your hand on your candidate's shoulder, and tell the bishop your candidate's Confirmation name. You're there to be a support, but your role on Confirmation day is only beginning.
- **Don't forget this newly confirmed Catholic.** After Confirmation day, remember birthdays and this anniversary. Send a card or make a phone call. Continue to worship together, or from time to time do some Christian service. Put those "Gifts of the Spirit" into practice.

## **Confirmand—Sponsor Relationship**

To our sponsors:

Call your confirmand as soon as possible. Set up times that you can get together. They are busy and so are you. One on one contact should occur about once a month. Be prepared to help them with “confirmation homework”.

You are definitely the aggressor in this relationship—don’t expect them to call you. Don’t expect miracles; however, don’t be surprised if you get one. It takes patience.

Find out pertinent information about your confirmand: birthday, sports, music, school, likes/dislikes, anything they are willing to share.

It is critical to establish a good, trusting relationship as soon as possible. They need to feel they can trust you and you won’t be telling things they share with you. Don’t become their “pal”; you’re still the adult. Don’t get into “when I was your age.....” – things have changed since you were a teenager!

Do not be judgmental. Keep in mind that your confirmand is only 16-17 years of age and their faith life is one of a 16-17 year old.

Accept these youth where they are now—they are not your age, nor have they lived life enough to know as much as you do about living. Greet them, love them, and help them be better at who they are....a 16-17 year old living in a world of great stress and changes. Help them see that God is and should be an important part of their lives. Let them experience God’s unique love.

## **Parent Responsibilities**

- Take an active interest in your student's activities during the two year preparation period. Ask them how things are going; what are they studying in class, etc. In the first semester of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, your student is expected to have "Reflection" sessions with you. Pick two of the topics, discuss them and then write-up your own comments (use the form provided). Your student is expected to complete his/hers. These reflections are wonderful opportunities to discuss great importance to your student and you. Be prepared for some amazing insights from your child. Students have deep faith that sometimes goes unnoticed until opportunities, such as Reflections, present themselves. Also, take an interest in your child's Service Projects in both the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades.
- Attend sessions for parents. Ask questions of the team. Find out what's going on....
- Show your student through your actions what your values and faith are—why they are so important to you. Don't say one thing but do another.
- Students are so busy but don't let them choose confirmation classes LAST. This should be a top priority for everyone, including the parents. If they can find time for sports, music, malls, movies, etc..... they can find time for GOD. He should be first and not last. IF a student has to miss a class, s/he should call the Elise BEFORE the absence. The student should make arrangements to make-up the missed work.
- If a student is disruptive in class, s/he will be counseled first. If the disruptive behavior continues, the student will be asked to leave and a parent will be called. Arrangements will be made for a parent/catechist meeting. The student will not be allowed back in class until there has been a parent/staff conference.
- If you have any questions or feel something is not working correctly, please call the teacher and discuss. We depend on your input for the quality of the sessions.

## Life in the Church

As you prepare to be confirmed, it is important to realize that with Confirmation comes an increased responsibility! To help you engage in the life of the parish, we are asking that you participate in 5 activities scheduled at St. Michael's over the course of each year. These activities can be youth ministry activities (a form is provided for you) that are currently scheduled or will be scheduled. It is the responsibility of the confirmand to notify Elise of what activities they participated in. It is our hope that the choice of activities will be well rounded.

Our call as Catholic Christians is to strive to become more like Christ. One of the most important aspects of the life of Jesus was His compassion for others. Jesus cared deeply for the poor, the sick and the outcast. In our efforts to love as good Christians, we must do the same.

With this in mind, service projects are an important part of the Confirmation process. It is our hope that these acts of charity will not be one-time affairs, but rather will become a regular part of our lives. Again, these acts of service can be ones provided for by St. Michael, or ones identified and done on your own or in a group! There is no required number of service hours expected.

## **Pray Together**

Holy Spirit, stir me into action.  
May your presence become obvious to others  
through my words and deeds.  
Let it be recognized by all people, especially me,  
that you dwell within me  
and that I am incomplete without you.  
Allow me to be a sign of your love.  
Amen.

