

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
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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

Effective July 1, 2010, the Diocese of Richmond has established the following normative policies regarding the Sacrament of Confirmation for adolescents who have received the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. These policies are intended to be faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church while be sensitive to the current state of parish-based youth ministry and religious education programs across the diocese. Listed below are some of the expectations set forth by the Diocese:

- In order for an adolescent to begin preparing for Confirmation, he or she must be currently enrolled in the 10th grade and at least 15 years of age. Reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation will occur in the spring of the year in which the candidate has completed the preparation.
- Elements of the Preparation Program: It is necessary that all pastors, catechetical leaders, youth ministers, and catechists follow the prescribed elements of the preparation program. Other requirements should not be invented, nor should mandatory elements be omitted.
- Adolescent Catechesis: Preparation for Confirmation must be a separate and distinct program from the parish youth ministry or religious education program.
- All Candidates seeking Confirmation must be concurrently enrolled in a religious education program during the year in which they prepare for the sacrament. Enrollment in a religious education program is defined as one of the following: Participation in a systematic, parish-based religious education program or enrollment in a diocesan or private Catholic school
- Place of Catechesis: All instruction that pertains to the core Confirmation preparation should take place at the candidate's home parish. Those enrolled in non parish-based religious education (ie. Home school or Catholic school) must prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation in the program at the home parish.
- Collaboration with Local Parishes: Parishes are encouraged to work together to facilitate instruction, retreats, and other events in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

CONFIRMATION preparations is divided into 4 distinct categories:

- **INQUIRY:** Which is the opportunity to discern openness to the reception of the Sacrament and articulate expectations;
- **CORE PROGRAM:** Which includes 4 catechetical modules covering the fundamental theological elements of Confirmation
- **RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT**
- **MYSTAGOGY:** Which assist the confirmand to enter more fully into the life of the church

St. Michael's is using LIFE TEEN's "Oneight" Confirmation program. 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. 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.

EXPECTATIONS

STUDENTS:

- ♣ Must be a registered member of the parish and attend Mass on a regular basis; Must have been Baptized in the Catholic Church and received Sacraments of Eucharist and 1st Reconciliation
- ♣ Ensure that Baptism certificate has been turned in
- ♣ Sign and understand the commitment agreement
- ♣ Attend all classes: Identify conflicts in advance and make Elise and/or CORE team 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 start of classes in September. Meet and Talk with Sponsor regularly
- ♣ Attend the Kick-off Orientation
- ♣ Attend Confirmation Retreat (Nov 12-14 OR Jan 14-16)
- ♣ Write letter to Fr. Brady (due during the 9th session)
- ♣ Attend Confirmation Liturgy Rehearsal and Liturgy*

PARENTS:

- ♣ Must be a registered member of the parish and attend Mass on a regular basis
- ♣ Complete Registration Form and submit with requested fees. Please note that Faith Formation fees(\$50) are separate from Retreat fees (\$125)
- ♣ Locate and Submit Baptism Certificate
- ♣ Assist with Programming and Confirmation Retreat
- ♣ Encourage and Support your child’s participation in all aspects of Confirmation preparation
- ♣ 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! Also, please remember to update any information for the family, student and/or Sponsor when applicable.

CALENDAR OF DATES
FALL SEMESTER

SEPTEMBER 19	CONFIRMATION 1-- KICK OFF
SEPTEMBER 26/27	LIFE NIGHT 1
OCTOBER 3	LIFE NIGHT 2
OCTOBER 10	LIFE NIGHT 3—PARISH MISSION
OCTOBER 17	CONFIRMATION SESSION 2 (NO LIFE NIGHT)
OCOTBER 24	LIFE NIGHT 4
OCTOBER 31	LIFE NIGHT 5
NOVEMBER 7	LIFE NIGHT 6
NOVEMBER 12-14	CONFIRMATION RETREAT-CONFIRMATION 3 (NO LIFE NIGHT)
NOVEMBER 21	LIFE NIGHT 7

CALENDAR OF DATES
WINTER SEMESTER

JANUARY 14-16	ALTERNATIVE RETREAT DATE
FEBRUARY 12	LIFE NIGHT 8
FEBRUARY 20	LIFE NIGHT 9
FEBRUARY 27	CONFIRMATION 4
MARCH 6	LIFE NIGHT 10
MARCH 13	LIFE NIGHT 11
MARCH 20	LIFE NIGHT 12
MARCH 27	CONFIRMATION 5
APRIL 3	LIFE NIGHT 13
APRIL 10	LIFE NIGHT 14
May 15	CONFIRMATION 6

THE CONFIRMATION DATE AND LITURGY REHEARSAL WILL BE SET
ONCE WE HAVE THE DATE FROM THE DIOCESE.

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.
- 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.
- Attendance at retreat.
- 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 other designee.
- Attending Confirmation rehearsal and Liturgy.

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?

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

3. Who will your sponsor be?

Sponsor

Once you have identified your Sponsor, please complete the Sponsor Information Sheet and return it to the office no later than September 19th!

Sponsor Responsibilities

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. Facebook is a great way to connect with your confirmand. However, please make sure that you have talked with parents regarding this connection. Maybe Facebook them too!

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! In this day and age, students need to be challenged on inappropriate behavior, thinking etc. Remember to be firmly compassionate when doing this. Ask questions like "Do you think that's the best thing to do?" "Have you really thought this through?" "What are the potential consequences of these actions?" Help them to make positive moral choices by helping them to process their actions.

Do not be judgmental. Keep in mind that your confirmand is only 15-16 years of age and their faith life is one of a 15-16 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 15-16 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 preparation period. Ask them how things are going; what are they studying in class, etc. In the first semester of the 10th 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.

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! Responsibility comes in the form of becoming an active member of the church. Active means participating regularly in Eucharist and other available Sacraments. It also mean participating regularly in the life of the church by attending and/or volunteering for the many ministry opportunities available here at St. Michaels! God has given you many gifts! It is our job to thank Him for those gifts by sharing them with others! Don't be a pew potato! Take part in the blessings that are our in St. Michael!

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.

