

Preparing for Confirmation

Guidelines for Parents, Sponsors and Students

Introduction

Welcome! We, the Confirmation team are looking forward to sharing this journey of faith with you as you prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. We are very excited that you have chosen to receive this sacrament and pray that this year 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 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.”

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 Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton through the liturgical ministries, social activities, and special annual events.

Receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation is far from the end of your spiritual growth. It is another step as you continue your life long process of becoming like Christ! The Confirmation Team is here for you if you need anything! God bless you in this coming process.

Prayerfully,

Your Confirmation Team

Sacramental Preparation

Sacramental preparation takes place in the parish setting and is in addition to the religious education and formation whether the candidate is enrolled in the parish school of religion (PSR) or in a Catholic school.

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Sacramental and Catechetical guidelines require that:

- Families must be registered members of the parish;
- Children must have been participating in religious education/formation for the previous two (2) years and currently be enrolled in a parochial Catholic school or in the PSR program;
- The Candidate must regularly participate at Sunday Mass;
- A qualified sponsor must be chosen*;
- The Candidate attends all Sacramental Preparation sessions as scheduled in the Confirmation Preparation Calendar;
- The Candidate completes the following:
 - Writing a letter of intent to the Pastor
 - Choosing a Saint's name and include a written biography about that saint
 - Participate in the Presentation of Candidates to be scheduled for an upcoming weekend Mass
 - Completing the social justice / volunteer hours
- Write a letter to the Bishop
- Participation in the Confirmation Liturgy

Confirmation candidates:

- Are beginning the 7th Grade of school when the process begins
- Have received the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and Eucharist;
- Practice their faith on a regular basis;
- 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.

WHAT EXACTLY IS THE PREPARATION PROCESS?

- Completion of Homework Assignments
- Personal Interview
- Parental Involvement
- Sponsor Involvement
- Participation in the Confirmation Retreat
- Regular Participation in the Sacramental Life of the Church
- Participation in the Core Program
- Completion of Service Projects

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS?

- The primary religious educators of their children
- Initiating their children into the sacramental life
- Serve as models of Gospel values for children
- Worship with their families on regular basis
- Nurture their child in the faith
- Encourage their child to reflect on and thoughtfully consider the decision to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation
- Attend the Parent Information Meeting and other Rites planned to help their child prepare for Confirmation
- Assist their child with the immediate preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation through prayer, study and service work
- Emphasize the importance of the sacrament of Confirmation by taking an active part in the celebration of Confirmation
- Stress the initiation aspect of the sacrament by encouraging their children to continue learning more about their faith
- Help their child in understanding that the acts of service they perform should be a beginning to a life committed to Christian service.
- Regularly attend Mass with Son/Daughter
- Pray for their journey and dialog with them often about their preparation
- Hold them accountable in participating in all required sessions and retreats
- Letter to Confirmation Team introducing your teen
- Communicate with your teen's sponsor
- Serve as a volunteer
- Attend Parent meeting(s)

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF CONFIRMANDS?

- Attend Mass regularly
- Pray regularly
- Demonstrate a high level of maturity and initiative
- Actively participate in the preparation process and sessions
- Participate in the retreat
- Use personal gifts and talents to serve our community
- Support fellow candidates in the journey
- Complete homework assignments on time
- Awareness of the responsibilities associate with completing the Confirmation Program
- Keep parents and sponsor informed
- Freely choosing to be confirmed and make their desire known
- Continually enriching their knowledge of the Catholic faith
- Practicing their faith and developing their prayer life
- Participate in attending Mass and receiving the sacraments of Eucharist and
- Reconciliation regularly, which opens our hearts to God's Grace
- Be aware of the initiation aspects of the sacrament of Confirmation and be committed to continuing the faithful practice and study of their religion
- Participate in the Confirmation program, including the performance of service work
- Complete Service Projects

WHAT ARE THE CLASS RULES THE STUDENTS SHOULD FOLLOW?

1. Actively participate in all activities
2. Treat others the way you would like to be treated
3. Class time is cell phone & electronics free
4. **No Gum, Candy, or Food**

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 who is familiar and knowledgeable about the sport or activity, and actively involved as a participant. Your coach would be someone who could help you become a better athlete or participant. Your coach is often a role model for you as well.

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 Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton but are part of the Church’s Code of Canon Law. As a result, no one has the authority to alter or change these qualifications in any way.

- **Must be at least 16 years of age or older;**
- **Fully initiated** (that is, baptized, confirmed, and already have received communion)
- **Regularly** worships at 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.

WHAT ARE THE EVENTS THE SPONSOR SHOULD ATTEND?

- Attend any required classes with the Confirmand
- Presents the candidate to the Bishop for the Sacrament of Confirmation, if unable to do so a Proxy may fill in.

Guidelines for Program Requirements

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

Write a Letter of Intent to the Pastor

Each candidate must write a letter of intent, addressed to the Pastor, Father Charles Ryba. The purpose of this letter is for the candidate to demonstrate in writing his or her desire to be Confirmed, and the willingness to make this commitment. Please use the following guide for the letter:

First: Begin with your greeting: “Dear Father Charles,

Second: Introduce yourself and share some information about yourself, such as your family, your interests and hobbies, and a little about your background. Six to eight sentences should do it.

Third: Tell why you want to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation and explain (in one or two paragraphs) why you want to be confirmed. It may help you to think about (1) the ways in which the sacrament will strengthen your relationship with Jesus, (2) the role of faith in your life, (3) what it means to be part of the parish community and/or, (4) how the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to be witnesses for Jesus.

Fourth: Close your letter with a quotation from Scripture, which will serve as your inspiration as you prepare for Confirmation. This can be a sentence or two and please remember to tell why you chose this quotation.

Fifth: Use the closing phrase “Very truly yours,” or Sincerely, “ and sign your full name on the line below this phrase.

Write a letter to the Bishop

When writing your letter to the Bishop, be sure to include the following elements:

- Date
- Address the letter to “Dear Bishop ”
- 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?
- ^Who is your sponsor?
- ^Why did you choose him or her?
- #What saint did you choose for your patron (tell a little about him or her)?
- #Why did you choose this saint?

The topics with one asterisk (*) are mandatory. The topics with like signs: (+), (^), (#) go together – choose one topic but cover both questions. If you are REALLY ambitious, you may choose two topics, but please remember, you are NOT writing a book.

Write a letter to the Confirmation Team

First: Begin with your greeting: “Dear Confirmation Team,

Second: Introduce yourself and share some information about yourself, such as your family, your interests and hobbies, and a little about your background. A couple paragraphs should do it. This will help the team to get to know you better.

INTERVIEW PURPOSE

- Part of receiving a sacrament is to explore its meaning and to respond to the grace that is given.
- To have an official chance to speak about concerns, hesitations or questions the candidates may have.
- For the Confirmation team to ascertain a level of comprehension about candidates readiness and receptiveness towards the Sacrament.
- To encourage the Candidate to process and personalize their Confirmation experience.

CONFIRMATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/STUDY GUIDE

1. Who has served as a spiritual role model for you? What about that person has rubbed off on you?
2. If someone asked you who Jesus is, what would you say?
3. How did you choose your sponsor? Why? Tell me what you hope to “copy” from your sponsor (in terms of behavior/service experience).
4. Where do you regularly attend mass? Are you committed to participate in the sacraments of Eucharist every Saturday/Sunday and Reconciliation regularly?
5. Can you recite the 10 Commandments? Which one or ones do you use in your everyday life? What are the Fruits of the Holy Spirit and what are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit? How do they affect your life?
6. Prayer: What does it mean to you and how have you spent time praying to God the Holy Spirit?
7. How will you continue to practice your faith? How will you actively participate in the church?
8. Tell me what the Sacrament of Confirmation means to you and how it might affect your life.
9. What was the most encouraging/positive thing you did during your preparation?
10. As you are choosing to be a fully initiated Catholic, tell me what it means to you to be Catholic.
11. Why does the Church need you and why do you need the Church?

CANDIDATE REVIEW GUIDE

Below are topics that you should be familiar with as a basic foundation of preparation for Confirmation. Do take time to learn these important foundations of our faith during this preparation time to Confirmation. Take time to talk with your parents, sponsors, and catechists/teachers about these important faith foundations and the importance they have in living out our faith every day.

CANDIDATES SHOULD KNOW BY HEART

- The Our Father
- The Hail Mary
- The Apostles' Creed
- Glory Be to the Father
- Act of Contrition/Sorrow
- The 10 Commandments

- **The Ten Commandments**

1. I am the Lord, your God; you shall have no other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

- **Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit help Christians live their lives more fully committed to Christ. These Gifts are:

1. Wisdom
2. Understanding
3. Right Judgment
4. Courage
5. Knowledge
6. Reverence
7. Wonder and Awe in God's Presence

- **The Fruits of the Holy Spirit**

The Fruits of Holy Spirit are the observable behaviors of people who have allowed the grace of the Holy Spirit to be effective in them. The Fruits are:

1. Charity
2. Joy
3. Peace
4. Patience
5. Kindness
6. Goodness
7. Generosity
8. Gentleness
9. Faithfulness
10. Modest
11. Self-Control
12. Chastity

- **The Sacraments**

1. Initiation
 - a. Baptism
 - b. Eucharist
 - c. Confirmation
2. Commission
 - a. Holy Orders
 - b. Matrimony
3. Healing
 - a. Reconciliation
 - b. Anointing of the Sick

- **Beatitudes**

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth.
- Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.
- Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.
- Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

- **Corporal Works of Mercy**

- To feed the hungry
- To give drink to the thirsty
- To clothe the naked
- To visit the imprisoned
- To shelter the homeless
- To care for the sick
- To bury the dead

- **Spiritual Works of Mercy**

- To correct the sinner
- To teach the ignorant
- To counsel the doubtful
- To comfort the sorrowful
- To bear wrongs patiently
- To forgive all injuries
- To pray for the living and the dead

- **Laws of the Church**

1. To assist at Mass on all Sunday and Holy Days of obligation
2. To fast and abstain on the days appointed
3. To confess our sins at least one a year
4. To receive Eucharist during Easter-time
5. To contribute to the support of the church
6. To observe the laws of the Church concerning marriage
7. To contribute to the missionary efforts of the Church

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 have chosen is the name that you will be confirmed under. For example, if you choose Saint 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. (To find out what happened to these people, check out Genesis 17:1-8, 32:23-29 and Matthew 16: 13-20).

You may be wondering why you had to 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 important step in your life and a reflection of the beauty of the Catholic faith. **You will be asked to give a report in front of the class about your saint.**

Presentation to the Parish Community

Candidates for Confirmation will be presented to the parish community. At this Mass you will come up to the sanctuary and be introduced to the Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish faith community. At that time, you will declare your intent to seek the Sacrament of Confirmation with the parish community as witness. In return, the community agrees to support and pray for all of you involved in the journey of faith.

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. Once the actual date is set, you will be informed. The retreat will end with Reconciliation.

Perform Service / Social Justice Activities

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 a service project – it is being part of the ministry of the parish. **Volunteering, however, at parish activities, or in 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 asked to make service projects a priority. Serving others is not something you do “just to get it over with.” 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 where you can provide service. The Confirmation Team will work with you on finding openings for those activities.

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. 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 the parish of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton.

CLOSING PRAYER

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your divine love.