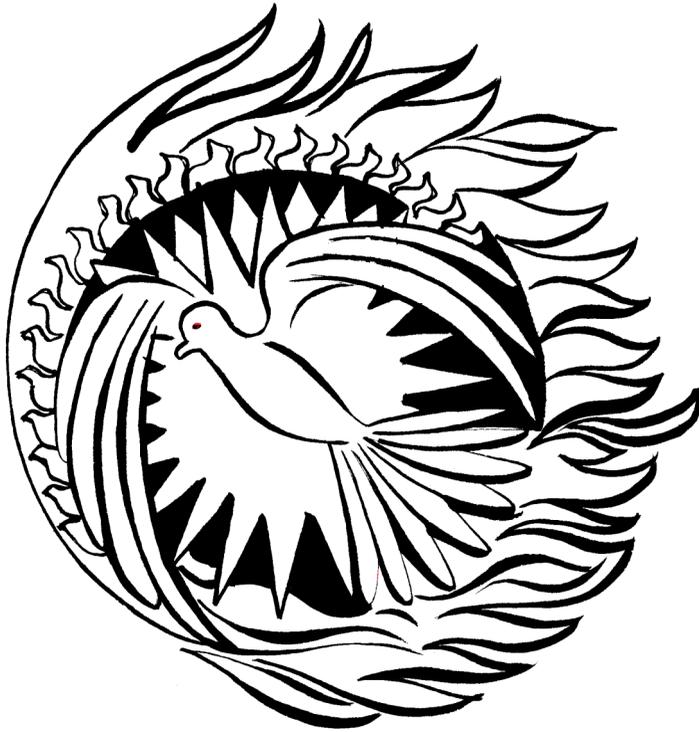


Our Lady of the Valley
Parish Community



Confirmation Handbook

“Why should I choose to prepare for Confirmation?”

“What difference will it make in my life?”

UNDERSTANDING THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

“Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit’s actions, gifts and biddings, in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis 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.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church #1309*)

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

...Confirms Baptism

When we are baptized our parents and our Godparents made a commitment to raise us in such a way that our lives would reflect the life and love of Christ. In and through the Sacrament of Confirmation, we *confirm* this commitment and assume full responsibility for living out the call of being the presence of Christ in our world today.

...Completes the Sacraments of Initiation

The Sacraments of Initiation are: Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.

Confirmation is the *completion* of the Sacraments of Initiation.

In other words, once one is confirmed, they have *full membership* in the faith community.

...Bestows Upon us the Gift of the Holy Spirit

In and through the sacrament of Confirmation, one *formally recognizes, acknowledges and celebrates* the fact that the Holy Spirit has been actively present in their entire life. It is not that the Holy Spirit “all of a sudden” appears at Confirmation. Rather, it is we who “all of a sudden” *recognize, acknowledge and celebrate* the gift of the ever-present Spirit in the midst of our parish community.

...Is a Commitment to Embrace Christianity

Christianity is our Faith! It is who we are!

To embrace Christianity is to share ourselves *unconditionally* with others the way we share a loaf of bread with our friends.

Confirmation is a *commitment* to love the way Jesus, the "Bread of Life" loves us.

...Is a Commitment to Accept and Practice Roman Catholicism

Roman Catholicism is our religion. It is the Tradition through which we choose to express who we are as Christians. Therefore, Confirmation is a *commitment* to recognize, acknowledge and celebrate who we are, in and through the Roman Catholic Religious Tradition.

...Is a Commitment to Share the Gift of Ourselves with the Parish Family of Our Lady of the Valley

We believe that all of us make up the Body of Christ. As the parish community of Our Lady of the Valley, we believe that when we gather around the Table of the Lord, we do not gather as individuals, but rather we gather as One Body.

We *commit* to share life with one another in order to build up the Body of Christ. When one of us is missing we are incomplete.

Confirmation is a *commitment* to embrace this belief.

...Is a Beginning

In our highly academic society, it is very easy for us to mistake Confirmation as a "graduation from the parish." It is very tempting for us to see it as an end.

But Confirmation is a *beginning* that celebrates a new chapter in one's faith journey to live as a *fully committed* and *active member* of the Catholic Church.



REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

1. A Confirmation candidate must have sequential attendance in the Faith Formation Program in Grades 1-8.
2. Any candidate who does not meet the above requirement, will be evaluated and may be required to attend supplemental classes prior to enrollment in the Confirmation Program.
3. A candidate must be willing to participate **fully** in ALL PHASES of the Confirmation Program.
4. **No candidate will be accepted simply because of age.**
5. A candidate in the Confirmation Preparation Program WILL NOT AUTOMATICALLY receive the Sacrament of Confirmation unless certain requirements are met.

REQUIREMENTS FOR RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

A baptized person may receive the Sacrament of Confirmation when evidence of readiness on the part of the candidate has been demonstrated.

EVIDENCE OF READINESS INCLUDES

- ♦ *understanding* of the Sacrament of Confirmation as a *personal commitment* to assume fuller responsibility in the community, and in the ministry and service aspects of parish life.
- ♦ *sense of unity* with the parish community as evidenced by full participation in the Liturgy and the Eucharist, with an awareness of what is taking place. The willingness to celebrate Eucharist with the community *each week* can be seen as one of the criteria by which a candidate can judge his/her own readiness to celebrate Confirmation.

- ◆ *basic understanding* of Christianity including a deepened awareness of Jesus, His teachings and the role of the Church in continuing His mission. The candidate should be able to *express* his faith in ways which others can understand and appreciate.
- ◆ *witnessing* in the way the candidate lives a Christian life. The candidate may be called upon to witness to his/her faith in a world often dominated by outside pressures. His/her actions should reflect a loving reverence for God and God's law.
- ◆ *total participation* in all aspects of the Confirmation Preparation Program including: retreats, faith theme sessions, interviews, service components and liturgical celebrations.



THE DETERMINATION FOR READINESS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRIESTS, THE CO-ORDINATORS OF THE CONFIRMATION PROGRAM AND THE SPONSOR CATECHISTS.

RITE OF ACCEPTANCE

To involve the whole parish community in the journey of the youth into full initiation, the *Rite of Acceptance* will be celebrated at a weekend liturgy during the first year of the Confirmation Program.

LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

The candidates are called to be *active participants* in the communal life of the church. Sunday Liturgy is the way to experience community, as well as deepen their faith and spirituality. As candidates in the sacramental preparation program for Confirmation, they are *required and expected* to attend weekend liturgy.

FAITH THEME CLASSES



The *Faith Theme Classes* are where the candidates will begin to grow as the young adults of our parish community and truly understand the *Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit* and understand God's love for them and the community. The faith theme classes are presented in various forms: these experiences will deepen your commitment to be a witness to Jesus and to spread and defend your faith. Sharing of their beliefs will help others integrate their past learning with their lived experience as they prepare to be confirmed in faith. During the *monthly meetings*, the students will also have the opportunity to pray together. Students will be *responsible* for any work assigned for a particular Faith Theme.

ATTENDANCE

Confirmation candidates are **REQUIRED** to attend **all** of the faith theme classes, both small and large group meetings, Reconciliation Services (as stated on the Calendar of Dates) with their classmates during Advent and Lent for Year 1 students, retreat and required service hours. Reconciliation is required of all First Year Students **even if they attend a Catholic High School**. They are expected to **be on time for meetings and prepared for the class**. Leaving a class early is **not permitted**. If the student can not attend a meeting due to illness or a family emergency, a parent/guardian **must notify** the Faith Formation office that the student will be absent. [*Sports events/practices, trips, weekends away, homework, and all other reasons are **not acceptable** for being absent*].

A make-up assignment *must be completed* for any session missed regardless of the reason. The candidate and/or parent/guardian **will be contacted** after an absence by the Faith Formation Office and advised of the make-up assignment. *It is the responsibility of the candidate* to complete the work missed and/or get the make-up assignment. **The assignment must be handed in at the next class session.**

If a candidate misses sufficient sessions over the two year period, the candidate and his/her parents/guardians may be asked to meet with the Director of Faith Formation concerning continued participation in the program.

CONFIRMATION SERVICE HOURS

*In order to help the youth of our parish community understand the importance of service in the life of a Christian, to serve our brothers and sisters in need, each candidate **must** fulfill the following requirements of service to the community:*

FIRST YEAR: 20 Hours

20 hours of community service must be performed during the **first year** of Confirmation classes. These hours are to be earned by service to the Our Lady of the Valley or Holy Cross Parish Communities or the Wayne Community (*e.g. Nursing Homes (Preakness Health Care Center is one that we have assisted often in the past), Safety Town, Wayne Public Library, cleaning the church, singing in the choir, assisting in the Faith Formation Program as a Catechist's aide, working at the Festival [Year 1 students only] etc.*). **Documentation for Year I Service Hours is due by June 1st. Service hours are to be done each year; if additional volunteer hours are accrued in the first year, they may not be used toward the amount needed in the second year.** Additionally, the students are asked to vary their service in order to get a fuller experience of helping others. Therefore no more than 50% (or 10 hours for Year 1) will be accepted from any one place, unless the service is earned through helping out at Our Lady of the Valley or Holy Cross Churches.

Service hours may also be earned through attending and participating in the service projects offered on specified Wednesday nights at the Youth Group meetings throughout the year. The schedule for these service projects will be distributed to the candidates at the beginning of the school year in September (for September-December) and again in January (for January-May).

PLEASE NOTE: Each service area ***must*** be approved by the Faith Formation Department ***prior*** to the acceptance of donated hours).

SECOND YEAR: 10 Hours

10 hours of community service must be performed during the **second year** of Confirmation classes. These hours are to be earned by service to the Our Lady of the Valley or Holy Cross Parish Communities or the Wayne Community (*see suggestions above*). Candidates may begin to accrue service hours for Year II once the school year has ended for Year I in June.

Please Note:

1. All service hours must be documented on the “**Service Hours Verification Form**” and signed by supervisor of candidate at the chosen area of service (*signature must be other than parent/guardian*). **The forms must be filled out completely, listing where the student volunteered as well as listing the specific work that was done.**
2. Service hours must be done for the Wayne community: such as Safety Town, Wayne library, Habitat for Humanity, Boys & Girls Club, PAL, START, FOWA etc. (*The candidate must do this service without receiving any payment for their time*).
3. Any service performed for the church community **is acceptable**, such as Ministers of Hospitality, choir, altar server, Living Stations, Readers, Faith Formation catechists/aides, Assisting at any Knights of Columbus activity, Parish Festival (Year I students only), Liturgy of the Word with Children, etc. Ongoing service opportunities will be listed in the weekly church bulletin.
4. Service hours that are **not acceptable** are: those required by the local high schools, chores at home, babysitting within the family or for friends, lawn and yard work for family or friends, bible school at another church. Hours done outside of our church or Wayne community will **not** be accepted unless **prior** authorization has been given by the Faith Formation Office.

It is suggested that you retain copies of all documentation handed in to avoid any problems with misplaced paperwork.

We look forward to journeying with our youth as they grow in mind and spirit by their *positive attitude, dedicated service and willingness* to reach out to those less fortunate and in need.



YOUTH PARTICIPANT CODE OF CONDUCT

Youth participants will:

- ◆ Project an image of Christian consideration, sensitivity, and respect being mindful of language, dress and behavior.
- ◆ Refrain from inappropriate touching, verbal harassment and peer sexual harassment.
- ◆ Respect other persons and/or property.
- ◆ Refrain from actions that could result in injury and/or damage to property.
- ◆ Attend all scheduled activities, arriving promptly, and staying for the entire event.
- ◆ Maintain the spirit of the event.
- ◆ Report problems of any kind to a trusted adult.
- ◆ Abide by the rule that the use of cell phones is **prohibited** during Mass, class, retreat sessions or any other events (*in an emergency, students may use office phones*). ***Cell phones will be collected at the beginning of each session and returned to the student at the end of each class session.***

RETREAT

Our Lady of the Valley Confirmation Program *requires* each candidate to attend a retreat experience in preparation for Confirmation. All retreats must be made at Our Lady of the Valley Parish 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 do not fulfill this requirement.**

Our Confirmation program offers two Antioch retreats each year, one in the fall and one in the spring of the 2nd year of preparation.

The Antioch retreat begins on Friday evening and ends on Sunday afternoon. It is an experience which fosters a sense of community among the young people and gives the candidates an opportunity to establish a closer relationship with God and their peers. The Antioch retreat offers the best example of communal Christian experience.

As there are no overnights conducted at Our Lady of the Valley Parish, parents will be responsible for transporting students to and from the parish facility each day. **Parents will also be asked to come in to Father Rugel Hall to pick up their teen personally.**

Since the Sacrament is a parish celebration, the preparation for the Sacrament is a parish experience, therefore, Catholic school retreats would not fulfill this Confirmation requirement.

LETTER TO THE PASTOR

Once all documentation is handed in, and the candidate has attended the required retreat, they will be asked to write a letter to the pastor requesting to be accepted as a candidate to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Details regarding this letter will be distributed in January of the 2nd year to parents.

CONFIRMATION INTERVIEWS

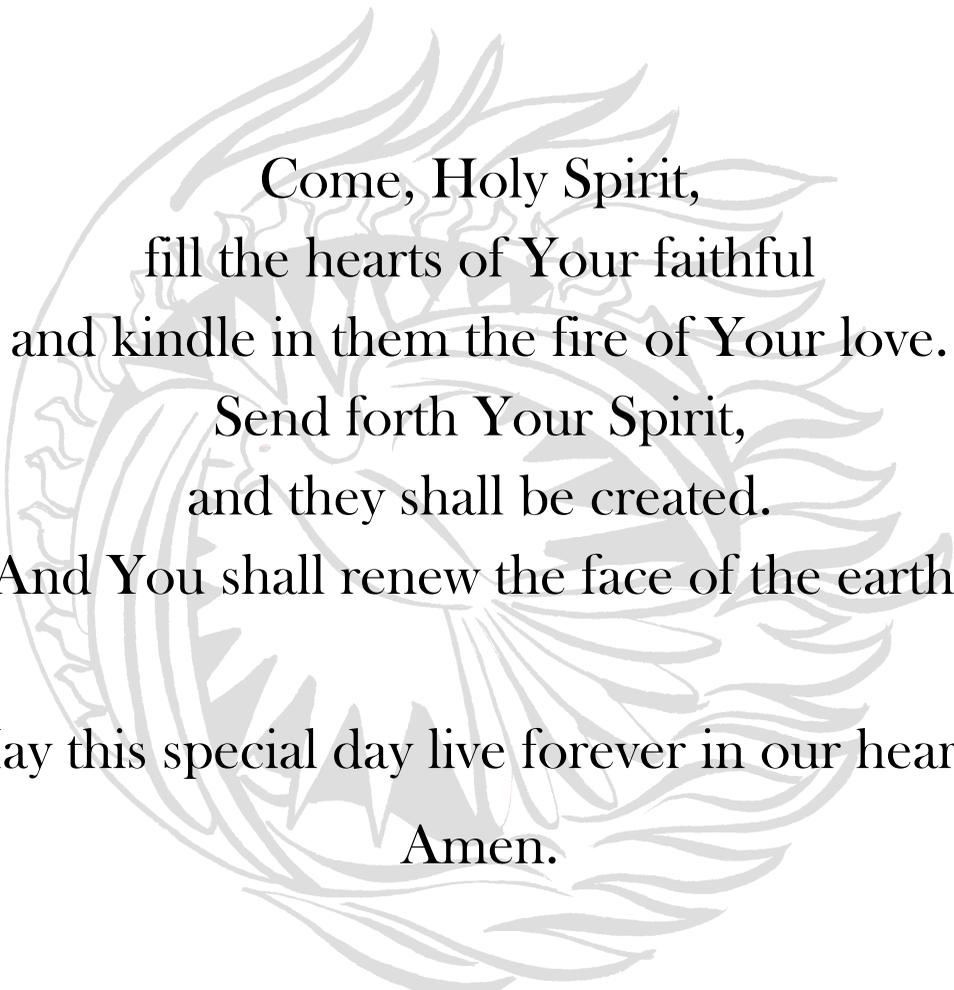
In spring of the second year of preparation, each candidate will be *interviewed* by the Director of Faith Formation to insure readiness of the candidate to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. If deemed necessary, the candidate may also be required to have an additional interview with one of the priests. No candidate will be interviewed until all forms, make-up assignments, service hours, attendance and the letter to the pastor has been handed in.

All of the above must be handed in to the candidate's catechist on or before the specified date.

CONFIRMATION OFFICE

The telephone number for the office is **973-694-4585**, Extension 7248. If no one is in the office at the time of your call please leave your name, your child's name, the grade they are in and why you are calling. Calls will be returned as soon as possible.

When sending in paperwork for your child, please place it in an envelope with your child's name on the front of the envelope and leave it on the back porch of the Parish Center.



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

Send forth Your Spirit,
and they shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.

May this special day live forever in our hearts!

Amen.