

Overview of Confirmation Program

Sessions

Each school year is comprised of a Fall, Winter, and Spring Session. Each session is approximately nine (9) weeks in length and includes the necessary number of classes to cover the 8 lessons and final exam. Intensive, week-long classes are offered during some summers as determined by need. The dates for the 2017-2018 sessions are as follows:

- Fall Session: September 17, 2017 to November 12, 2017
- Winter Session: November 19, 2017 to February 11, 2018
- Spring Session: February 25, 2018 to May 6, 2018

Attendance Policy

The Confirmation students are allowed to miss two (2) days per session. Each student is responsible for communicating to his/her catechist prior to the absence in order to receive any assignments missed. S/he will also need to work with other classmates if they would like to borrow notes or ask questions about the content missed. A student will be considered absent if s/he is late to class by ten minutes or more. If students must miss multiple classes due to circumstances regarding parental custody, extended sickness, or medical conditions, the parent must work with the Faith Formation Coordinator to consider ways to accommodate to these particular situations.

Tuition

The cost for a full year of Confirmation preparation, which includes six (6) courses during the Fall, Winter, and Spring sessions, is \$75. Registration for individual classes is \$15 per class. Refunds are not provided due to a student failing to meet attendance requirements or failing a course. Tuition fees cannot be transferred to future years unless the classes needed by a student are not offered during the school year for which they registered. Tuition payments are due by October 31, 2017.

Inclement Weather

It is sometimes necessary to cancel class due to inclement weather. If this situation occurs, the information will be communicated via the Cathedral website. Classes that are cancelled due to weather do not count towards a student's attendance.

Baptismal Certificates

Before a candidate can receive Confirmation, our parish must establish that s/he has been baptized. Confirmation candidates who were baptized at the Cathedral of the Epiphany, St. Boniface, or St. Joseph must simply email formation@sccathedral.org with the date, mother's maiden name, and location of the baptism for us to verify with our records. If the exact date of the baptism is not known, an approximate date and year may be given. Candidates may provide a copy of their certificate, but it is not required.

All other candidates must provide a **copy** of their baptismal certificate to the Sacramental Coordinator. They may do so by dropping it off during the office hours (9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) in the Epiphany Center, mailing it to the Cathedral of the Epiphany, attention "Sacramental Coordinator," or giving a copy of the certificate to the Faith Formation Coordinator during Confirmation class times.

Important Dates

September 17, 2017	Fall Session Class 1	
September 24, 2017	Fall Session Class 2	
October 1, 2017	Fall Session Class 3	
October 8, 2017	Fall Session Class 4	
October 15, 2017	Fall Session Class 5	
October 22, 2017	Fall Session Class 6	
October 29, 2017	Fall Session Class 7	
October 31, 2017	<i>Religious Education / Confirmation Payments Due</i>	
November 1, 2017	<i>Solemnity of All Saints (Holy Day of Obligation)</i>	
November 5, 2017	Fall Session Class 8	
November 12, 2017	Final Exam	Mass Reflection Packet Due
November 19, 2017	Winter Session Class 1	
November 26, 2017	<i>No Class</i>	
December 3, 2017	Winter Session Class 2	
December 8, 2017	<i>Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Holy Day of Obligation)</i>	
December 10, 2017	Winter Session Class 3	
December 17, 2017	Winter Session Class 4	
December 24, 2017	<i>No Class</i>	
December 25, 2017	<i>The Nativity of the Lord (Holy Day of Obligation)</i>	
December 31, 2017	<i>No Class</i>	
January 1, 2018	<i>Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God</i>	
January 7, 2018	<i>No Class / The Epiphany of the Lord (Parish Celebration)</i>	
January 14, 2018	Winter Session Class 5	
January 21, 2018	Winter Session Class 6	
January 28, 2017	Winter Session Class 7	
February 4, 2018	Winter Session Class 8	
February 9, 2018	Sponsor Meeting, Time TBD (Spanish, Candidates do not need to attend)	
February 11, 2018	Final Exam	Mass Reflection Packet Due
February 18, 2018	<i>No Class</i> Sponsor Meeting, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (English and Spanish, Candidates do not need to attend)	
February 25, 2018	Spring Session Class 1	
March 4, 2018	Spring Session Class 2	
March 11, 2018	Spring Session Class 3	
March 18, 2018	Spring Session Class 4	
March 25, 2018	Spring Session Class 5	
April 1, 2018	<i>No Class / Easter</i>	
April 8, 2018	Spring Session Class 6	Works of Mercy & Parish Ministry Booklet Due (for those who will be confirmed in May 2018)
April 15, 2018	Spring Session Class 7	
April 22, 2018	<i>No Class / First Communion</i>	
April 28, 2018	Confirmation Retreat	
April 29, 2018	Spring Session Class 8	
May 6, 2018	Final Exam Confirmation Rehearsal after 1:30 p.m. Mass (Spanish)	Mass Reflection Packet Due
May 9, 2017	Confirmation Rehearsal, Cathedral, 6:00 p.m. (English)	
May 13, 2017	<i>Confirmation, Cathedral (10:00 a.m. English / 1:30 p.m. Spanish)</i>	

Preparation for Confirmation

“Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the ‘sacraments of Christian initiation,’ whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For ‘by the sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed’” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1285).

Mass Obligation

It is the Cathedral of the Epiphany’s expectation that candidates preparing for Confirmation are fulfilling their obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days as prescribed by the Precepts of the Church. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “The precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life. The obligatory character of these positive laws decreed by the pastoral authorities is meant to guarantee to the faithful the very necessary minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbor” (CCC 2041). Because Confirmation students are actively preparing for a Sacrament, it is of the utmost importance that their souls are being nourished by the grace of the Mass and that they are fully, actively, and consciously participating in the Church’s liturgy. Confirmation preparation is not a supplement for weekly Mass, but depends upon the foundation of the grace received at Mass. Because of this, we invite the youth to enter more deeply into the mystery of the Mass by completing the “Mass Reflection Sheet” and turning them into their catechists on the day of the final exams. Holy Days of Obligation are listed below:

- Mary, Mother of God (Jan. 1)
- Ascension (Thursday after the Sixth Sunday of the Easter Season)
- Assumption (Aug. 15)
- All Saints (Nov. 1)
- Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8)
- Christmas (Dec. 25)

Catechetical Preparation

The Catechetical component of Confirmation Preparation consists of twelve (12) courses with each course being made of eight (8) lessons. The students will complete nine (9) core courses along with three (3) electives. Students must pass each course with a grade of 75% or higher.

Students who attend Bishop Heelan may begin Confirmation classes in ninth grade and are required to complete five (5) core courses along with one (1) elective. The core courses typically completed by Bishop Heelan students are indicated by an asterisk, but due to the availability of courses offered, others may be substituted as necessary.

The Core courses include:

1. The Creed*
2. Old Testament
3. New Testament
4. The Sacraments
5. Theology of Confirmation*
6. Foundations of Morality*
7. Morality and the Ten Commandments
8. Apologetics*
9. Prayer*

A variety of electives are offered and in the past, topics have included:

- Theology of the Body
- What’s really so special about Mass?
- The Church in Rome
- Cathedral History
- The Lamb’s Supper: The Bible and the Mass

Students are expected to come to class prepared and with any previously assigned homework completed. It will be helpful for students to have a folder to keep important papers and a notebook to take notes.

Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy and Parish Ministry

The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities.

Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God" (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] 2447).

Confirmation service expectations are intended to help candidates form habits of practicing the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy and of being active parishioners. During the formation process for Confirmation, candidates will perform three (3) Corporal Works of Mercy, three (3) Spiritual Works of Mercy, and serve in liturgical or parish ministry a total of six (6) times. Following the works of mercy, candidates will offer a brief reflection on their experiences. The candidate may use any activity beginning on August 1, 2017 to fulfill these expectations. After they meet these expectations, they will turn in the completed booklet to the Faith Formation Coordinator. For those being confirmed on May 13, 2018, the completed booklet is due by April 8, 2018. For those planning on being confirmed in May 2019, the completed booklet will be due on April 7, 2019. Candidates are welcome to turn in completed packets before the deadline.

These expectations are intended for all candidates who began their Confirmation preparation classes beginning in the fall of 2017 along with subsequent years. For those who are preparing to receive Confirmation in May of 2018 and have completed one (1) year of Confirmation preparation classes, the expectation will be to complete two (2) Corporal Works of Mercy, two (2) Spiritual Works of Mercy and four (4) instances of ministry within the parish setting. If the candidate has completed the requirement per the previous guidelines, the Faith Formation Coordinator will inform him/her that this expectation has been met.

Prayers

Confirmation students will not be tested on their knowledge of traditional Catholic prayers because it is assumed that they are learned at home, as well as during the preparation process for First Communion and First Reconciliation. They will be introduced to other ways of prayer through the Prayer course, as well. If you would like to work with your child to help them learn traditional prayers or want to continually build the treasury of prayer with which they are familiar, the following prayers might offer guidance:

- Prayers of Mass
- Rosary (Hail Mary, Our Father, Glory Be)
- Chaplet of Divine Mercy
- Liturgy of the Hours
- Lectio Divina
- Holy Spirit Prayer
- Spontaneous Prayer
- Apostles and Nicene Creed
- Angelus
- Ignatian Prayer
- Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel
- Prayer to Guardian Angels
- Daily Offering
- Act of Contrition
- Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love
- Prayers for before and after meals
- Memorare

Retreats

Confirmation students are required to attend two (2) parish Confirmation retreats. Students in the Bishop Heelan preparation track are required to attend one (1). The Sacrament of Confession will be available at these retreats to help candidates prepare for Confirmation. “To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. More intense prayer should prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act” (CCC 1310).

Confirmation Sponsors

According to Canon Law, a Confirmation sponsor “is to take care that the confirmed person behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations inherent in this sacrament” (Can. 892). The primary role of the sponsor is to help the candidate develop and grow in his or her faith life by being a living witness of Christ, having a dedicated prayer life, being open to sharing one’s own faith journey and experiences, and inviting the candidate into a deeper life of faith.

In order to be a sponsor, the following requirements must be met in accordance with Canon 874:

- Must be 18 years of age as required by the Diocese of Sioux City.
- Must be fully initiated into the Church through the reception of the Sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion, and Confirmation.
- Must be living a life of faith in accordance to Church teaching, including but not limited to, fulfilling the Mass obligations for Sundays and Holy Days and not cohabitating or living without the Sacrament of Marriage.
- Cannot be the candidate’s mother or father.

Although it is not required to choose a sponsor from the Godparents who are sponsors at Baptism, it can be appropriate to do so because the Sacrament of Confirmation is intrinsically connected to Baptism. “Candidates for Confirmation, as for Baptism, fittingly seek the spiritual help of a sponsor. To emphasize the unity of the two sacraments, it is appropriate that this be one of the baptismal godparents” (CCC 1311).

Sponsors guide the candidate through the process of Confirmation preparation. Some suggestions for this include attending Mass together, praying together with the Scriptures, setting time aside to discuss the role of the Sacrament of Confirmation, and serving together through the works of mercy or in parish ministry. Resources to assist with this process may be found at www.sccathedral.org/confirmation. The sponsors will be asked to attend one meeting prior to Confirmation.

Review of Confirmation Preparation

- Candidates attend Mass on Saturday/Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Candidates complete a total of 12 service components with 6 based upon the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy and 6 within Parish Ministry.
- Candidates complete 12 catechetical courses (Bishop Heelan students must complete 6).
- Candidates attend 2 retreats (Bishop Heelan students must attend 1).
- Candidates and sponsors are expected to meet throughout the preparation process.

Religious Education Policies and Procedures

Behavioral Expectations

The following rules are expected to be followed by students who attend Confirmation classes:

- Students are expected to act with respect toward all clergy, parish staff, catechists, parish volunteers, and peers.
- Students are expected to come to classes prepared with a willingness to learn and participate in class activities and discussion.
- Students may not use rude or vulgar language.
- Students may not run or yell in the Epiphany Center.
- Students may not chew gum in the building.
- Respect for the bathroom facilities is expected.
- Students will dress in an appropriate manner.

This is not an exhaustive list of behavioral expectations, as all students are expected to act with virtue, respect, and in a Christ-like way. If a student engages in any behavior deemed inappropriate, any or all of the following may occur:

- Student will be sent to the office
- Parental notification of infraction.
- Meeting between parents, catechist and Faith Formation Coordinator or Director of Evangelization and Formation.
- Parent attendance required at subsequent classes with their child.
- Permanent removal of student from Religious Education program.

Refunds will not be issued in the event that a child is removed from the Confirmation program.

Cell Phone and Electronic Device Policy

Cell phones and electronic devices may not be used during the class periods of 11:15 a.m. to 12:10 p.m. and 12:20 to 1:15 p.m. and must be out of sight at all times in the classroom. Catechists and the Faith Formation Coordinator reserve the right to have the student place the device in a designated area in the classroom or at the Faith Formation Coordinator's desk in the upper level of the Epiphany Center. Students who bring their cell phones do so at their own risk and take full responsibility for any damage done to the devices while on the parish premises. If cell phone use during class is a continual problem and distraction, the following steps will be taken:

1. The student will be asked by the Catechist and/or Faith Formation Coordinator to place the cell phone out of sight or in the designated area in the classroom. This request will only be made one time before the second step is taken.
2. The student will be asked to take the cell phone to the Faith Formation Coordinator's desk where it will remain until Confirmation is dismissed at 1:15 p.m.
3. If the student is asked to place the cell phone at the Faith Formation Coordinator's desk on three occasions during the school year, the student will lose the privilege of bringing a cell phone to the Epiphany Center while Confirmation classes are occurring.
4. If these steps are taken and the behavior continues, the student will not be allowed to attend classes for the remainder of the session and may return at the beginning of the next session. No refunds will be issued in these circumstances.

If the student is uncooperative at any point in these processes, they may immediately be asked to leave class and will be marked absent for the current and following class period. Parents will be contacted to pick up the student, and if a parent cannot be reached, the student will remain at the Faith Formation Coordinator's desk until the end of the session.

Learning Disabilities

If a student has learning disabilities, please make the Faith Formation Coordinator aware during the registration process. The parents and Faith Formation Coordinator will work together to accommodate to the student's needs.

Safe Environment

In response to the Charter for the Protection of Children as adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Dallas in June 2002, the Diocese of Sioux City has created a safe environment program that includes:

- A strict Code of Conduct to which all clergy, parish and school employees and all volunteers must adhere.
- Comprehensive background checks on all existing and new employees of the Diocese and entities associated with the Diocese, and all existing and new volunteers who have contact with children.
- "Protecting God's Children": An education program that teaches how to recognize and report child sexual abuse, and how to recognize potential abusers.
- All employees of the diocese, parishes and/or schools as well as volunteers who have contact with children are required to participate in and comply with all aspects of the Safe Environment Program.

All records of compliance for the Safe Environment Program are kept at the Central Catholic Offices in Sioux City, Iowa. Additional information is available at www.scdiocese.org.

Student Records

We maintain contact and emergency contact information for each student. If you need to provide an update to the student's information, please contact the Office of Evangelization and Formation to help us ensure that our records are up to date. Please call the parish office, provide a hard copy of the information to the Faith Formation Coordinator during Confirmation class times, or email formation@sccathedral.org to update this information.