



“Be Sealed”

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION



Dear Parents,

I am so happy to be joining you on this spiritual journey with you and your child. Sacramental years are such a blessing for the entire family, and I know this one will be extra special. These moments are times of great grace, and they also serve as checkpoints where families open the windows of their souls to each other and share themselves in a deeper way. Those who are leading the way are given the opportunity to form and shape the one who is receiving the sacrament, all the while re-asking the questions themselves, and hopefully, allowing a deeper knowledge to ensue. It's a fragile and blessed time where the souls stretch and grow and come to God in a more intimate and personal way.

So, this is where our lives merge. As you know, I am the Coordinator of Religious Education for St. John the Baptist and a parent. I am walking this road with you. My job here at St. John is to help you where you feel you might need some assistance. Everyone is at a different place in this journey, and I am happy to jump in and assist at the place where your family needs it.

Because my own children are involved in sports, music and school, and my job is ministry which never stops; I totally understand the strain that we are all under. It is a very busy time in the life of a family. I hope to make things as simple as possible for you while holding on to the important aspects of this process.

Our Confirmation program gears each teen toward a strong relationship with Jesus that will be best if nurtured after the Confirmation ceremony. Therefore, we are going to implement a post-confirmation program where older teens continue their journey with Jesus in our Catholic community.

I encourage you to read over this packet and let me know if you have any questions. Please also let me know of any concerns or comments your teen may express to you. The Confirmation team and I are here to serve your family in any way needed.

In Christ,

Chris Wibbenmeyer  
Coordinator of Religious Education  
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church  
(567) 279-1430 {call or text}  
cwibbenmeyer@marioncatholiccommunity.org

*"Always remain close to the Catholic Church, because she alone can give you true peace, since she alone possesses Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the true Prince of Peace." -St. Padre Pio*

## **Confirmation**

Confirmation is the final Sacrament of Initiation in which Candidates receive a deepening of baptismal grace and armed with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, become full adult members of the Church. Confirmation unites us more firmly to Christ, increase the gifts of the Holy Spirit within us and gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1303)

In order to lead Candidates to a more intimate union with Christ, and make them more familiar with the Holy Spirit and to make Christians more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1309) the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese has a designed a three year program including prayer, fellowship, retreat and study. Students typically participate in the program during their freshman through junior year of high school. The program also includes a period of reflection following Confirmation.

### **The Process**

A copy of Baptism Certificate is needed to begin. We should have this on file but will contact you if we need a copy of your certificate.

#### Period of Invitation (8<sup>th</sup> Grade Year)

- Parent & Candidate Meeting

#### Period of Formation (9<sup>th</sup> Grade Year)

- Rite of Enrollment / Commitment
- SanctifEYEd Confirmation Retreat
- Choose a Sponsor
- Choose a Confirmation Name
- Sponsor & Candidate Meeting
- My Act of Love Service Projects

#### Period of Reflection and Celebration (10<sup>th</sup> Grade Year)

- Review of Confirmation Rite
- Experiencing Prayer in a Deeper Way
- My Act of Love Service Projects

#### Post - Confirmation (11<sup>th</sup> Grade Year)

- Morality: Your call to Christian Living
- My Act of Love Service Projects

#### Post - Confirmation (12<sup>th</sup> Grade Year)

- Your call to Social Justice
- My Act of Love Service Projects

## **WE ASK THE FOLLOWING OF OUR CANDIDATES**

Each Confirmation Candidate will need to spend time reviewing their faith and learning about Christian life in the Catholic community. The Confirmation preparation process at St. John the Baptist contains specific elements to help the candidate experience as many aspects of faith as possible. The elements of Confirmation preparation are as follows:

- 1) Attend Mass Weekly
  - 2) Participate in the sacraments
  - 3) Substantial attendance in Confirmation preparation sessions
  - 4) Be willing and open to learn more about the Catholic faith
- 

- 1) Several My Act of Love service projects. These should be done individually, with a sponsor or parent(s)
- 2) Attend at least two parish/community events in the Marion Catholic Community
- 3) Complete two ministry interviews
- 4) Attend a Confirmation retreat
- 5) Complete required forms as outlined in the binder
- 6) Attend Confirmation rehearsal with sponsor

## **MASS ATTENDANCE**

What does it mean to attend Mass weekly? As Catholics, we are to keep the Sabbath Holy and attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation. God created us for the purpose to know, love and serve him in this life and to be happy with Him forever in the next. Because of this purpose which is written on our hearts, we are actually only able to be satisfied by living it out.

In the Mass, God gives us the only thing that can truly “satisfy” us: His very self. There are other ways we can encounter God such as prayer, reading the Bible, serving others, etc. All of these, however, point to and enliven our reception of Jesus – body, soul, and divinity in the Eucharist. The Eucharist nourishes us spiritually by uniting us with the risen Christ.

Mass is the richest encounter we can have with God here on earth and helps fulfill our core purpose: union with God. God also knows us and our needs better than we even know ourselves and as such commands us to attend Mass.

No one will be taking attendance to make sure your son or daughter is attending Mass. We don't require signed bulletins. As a family, the parents set the example of how to live life as a Catholic. The responsibility is on the parents to ensure that their child, God's child, understands the importance and blessing that the Mass has for us.

## **Confirmation Class Attendance**

### WHAT IS SUBSTANTIAL ATTENDANCE?

-Confirmation sessions are held weekly. These sessions are planned so that the candidate receives basic instruction from the confirmation catechists. Confirmation sessions are intended to assist the parents in their efforts to catechize their child and help the parents prepare the candidate for confirmation.

-Substantial means that the students, with the parent's assistance, makes every effort to attend as many sessions as possible. We understand that absences for illness, school sponsored events or family emergencies are understandable. Homework, drivers' education, studying for tests, sports and other school related work responsibilities are NOT a reason to miss a session. **Please plan ahead.**

-If a session is missed, it is expected that the student and parent will review all information and complete anything required before the next session. Because of our session layout, it is very difficult to "make up" a missed session. Again, please plan ahead.

## **Confirmation "Acts of Love" (SERVICE)**

Throughout Scripture we are called to love our neighbor and stand up for justice as well as peace. Since service and justice are so important to who we are as Catholic Christians, performing acts of service is essential to our lives. Therefore, we ask that each candidate takes his/her service projects very seriously and as a priority.

It is important to keep in mind that service to others isn't something that we do to "check it off our list". Rather, service is something we do because we know that the presence of Jesus is in all persons and in all of God's creation. We literally serve Jesus.

Candidates are asked to perform several My Acts of Love\_with on their own and/or sponsor in the upcoming months.

-Candidates will need to perform hours/projects that center around the Spiritual or Corporal Works of Mercy. A good number of hours to strive for is 15 for the year.

-Candidates and sponsors should choose a service project that centers around the Works of Mercy.

## **Parish Ministry Interviews**

Candidates are asked to interview at least two people who are involved in the ministries of the parish. (i.e. Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, Usher, Choir, etc) It is preferred that candidates interview a person who is involved in a ministry that the candidate is interested in and not previously participated in. Candidates should type up a half page summary of their interview.

## **Confirmation Retreat**

Each Confirmation Candidate MUST attend a confirmation retreat. It is suggested that each student attends our retreat but can attend another retreat if there is a conflict with our date. This retreat is also for parents so please mark this on your calendar as soon as possible.

## **Confirmation Saint Report / Project**

The following Saint Report / Project is to be done as a preparation for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. Please put some thought and time into this project with the input of your parents, so that your preparation will directly involve your family.

Before choosing your Saint name, consider the following story:

There once was a class of young students who were receiving an educational tour of their parish from their priest. The priest informed the students about the history of the church and told the stories behind the stained-glass windows. The stained-glass windows were especially beautiful, and each window showed a scene of the life of a saint. When the tour was over, the priest asked the students some questions about what they have seen and heard. Specifically, the priest asked the students for a definition of a saint. Finally, a hand went up and one student responded, having remembered only the beautiful stained-glass windows of the saints. The student said, "A saint is someone who lets the light shine through."

Let your chosen saint be someone who inspires you by the example of his/her life. Let your saint be someone who inspires you to "Let the light shine through."

Answer the following questions through your research:

1. Who is my Confirmation Saint?
2. Where is my Confirmation Saint from?
3. When did my Confirmation Saint live?
4. What did this saint do that was Special?
5. Why do I want to live like this Saint?
6. When is the liturgical feast day for my Saint and when was he/she canonized?
7. What symbol(s) are used to identify my Saint?

Your project:

Cover Page (Page 1)

Symbols & Meaning (Page 2)

Becoming a Saint (Page 3)

Personal Reflection (Page 4)

All projects should be typed & printed on separate pages. (no front & back pages)

## Saint Project Rubric

### Cover Page

Design a cover page which shows:

- I have 3 symbols that represent my saint
- I have creatively placed my Saint name on the top of this page
- I have creatively placed my Confirmation name at the bottom of this page
- I have a picture of my Saint in the middle of this page

### Symbols & Meaning

Include the following on this page:

- I have written a paragraph which explains the meaning of the three symbols presented on the cover of this project

### Becoming a Saint

I have defined the following terms:

- Confirmation
- Canonization
- Holiness
- Sacraments of Initiation
- Communion of Saints
- Holy Spirit

### Personal Reflection

I have reflected on my decision to be confirmed by answer these questions:

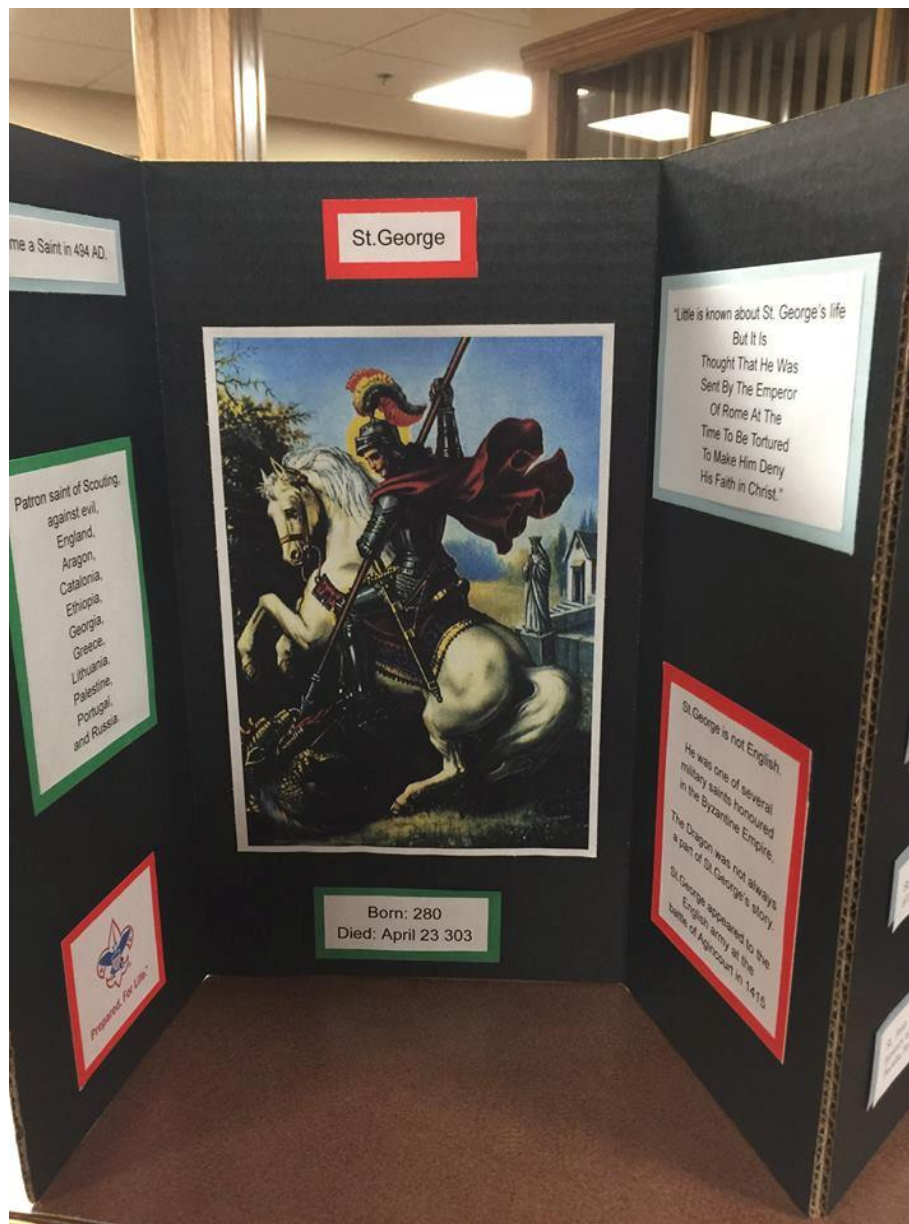
- How will I be a "light" for others
- Highlight 3 things that I have done for others that have denounced my commitment to be the "light for others to see through?"
- Explain how I will be "Saint Like" in your preparation for Confirmation
- Explain how I learned to make the sacrament of Confirmation come to life for me in my daily living
- I have completed my personal reflection in paragraph form

## CRITERIA

Knowledge & Understanding  
Thinking & Inquiry  
Communication

Please place your Saint Project in a plastic report sleeve.

In addition to the Saint Report, you should get a 3-sided presentation board for your Saint Project. You can design your board however you want. The report and board will be presented during the Saints Fair. You will be encouraged to dress up as your Saint during the Saints Fair.





## Confirmation Rehearsal

We will have Confirmation Rehearsal the Wednesday before Confirmation. The rehearsal will be for the candidates and their sponsors. It is VERY IMPORTANT for both the candidate and their sponsor to attend. A parent (or other person) may stand in for the sponsor, ONLY if the sponsor is ABSOLUTELY UNABLE to attend the rehearsal. You must notify the CRE if this is the case.

The rehearsal will include walking through the Rite of Confirmation to familiarize the candidates and sponsors with the roles they will play on Confirmation Day.

## Choosing A Sponsor

The Confirmation sponsor must be chosen and the sponsor information form must be turned in.

### WHAT IS A SPONSOR?

-A sponsor is a person who encourages, assists, and walks the faith journey with a Confirmation candidate to help them embrace, fall in love, and actively practices the Catholic faith before and after Confirmation.

-The sponsor also presents the Candidate to the (arch)Bishop at the Rite of Confirmation.

### WHO CAN BE A SPONSOR?

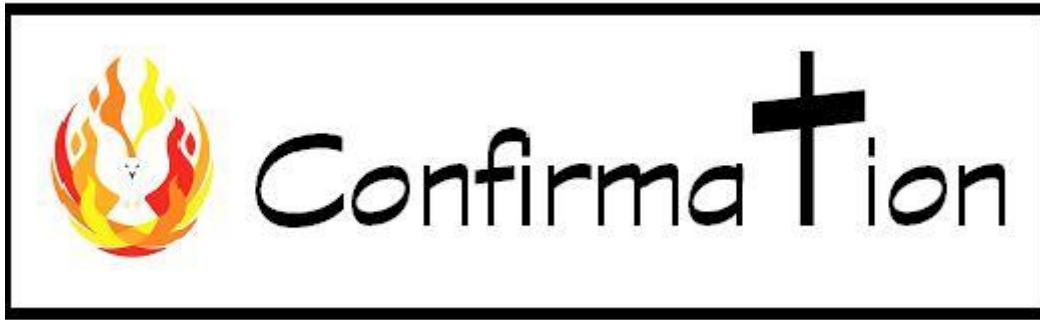
-Being a sponsor is a huge role and not just an honor or fancy name. The sponsor must be an active, practicing Catholic who can be a role model for the Confirmation candidate. The ideal situation would be to choose one of your godparents from Baptism, providing they meet all the guidelines. However, if your godparent is someone you can't choose to be the sponsor, you will want someone who is an example of a committed, practicing Catholic.

-If the sponsor cannot be at the Confirmation ceremony, then a proxy will need to stand in for the sponsor. This proxy needs to meet all the same requirements as the sponsor.

The Catholic Church (per canon law) requires that a sponsor:

- May be either a man or a woman (sponsor doesn't have to be the same sex as the candidate)
- May not be the parent of the candidate
- Is a person who regularly comes to Sunday Mass and celebrates the Sacraments
- Must be at least 16 years of age
- If married, the marriage must be recognized by the Catholic Church.
- Must be a fully initiated Roman Catholic (Baptized, has made First Communion and Confirmed)





## **THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT CONFIRMATION**

### **1. Confirmation is the Completion of Baptism**

Baptism marked the start of your relationship with Christ. Your soul changed permanently, and you were filled with grace from God. Through Confirmation, the Holy Spirit strengthens these graces, gives you more of them, and seals them all inside you – like a carefully wrapped present! This brings you closer to Christ and better prepares you to face the daily challenges of Christian life.

### **2. Confirmation Increases the Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

Want to know more about these graces sealed inside of you? They are called the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Pope Francis has done a homily on each of them: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, fortitude, piety, counsel, and fear of the Lord. You have had these gifts since your Baptism, but Confirmation deepens and strengthens them since it draws you even closer to Christ and the greater Catholic community. Think about it like a team of basketball players. It's possible to get some good results from a team of players that just met their coach and have only played together a few times, but you'll get great results from a team of close-knit players that have played under the same coach for years. Baptism is like being introduced to the team (the Church) and your coach (Jesus). Confirmation is like the years of practice and team building that it takes to really bring a team together.

### 3. A Mission from God: Operation Confirmation

Did you know that when you receive the sacrament of Confirmation you accept a mission from God? In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells His disciples to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Later, the Holy Spirit descends upon the disciples at Pentecost, and they receive the courage to take on the mission Jesus gave them earlier. Confirmation is your own personal Pentecost. The Holy Spirit descends upon you and you accept the same challenge given by Jesus to the disciples.

### 4. Chrism is Much More Than a Sweet-Smelling Oil

Chrism, the perfumed oil that the bishops use to make the sign of the cross on your forehead, signifies a lot more than just a shower in your future. It helps show a connection to your Baptism – the first time you were anointed with oil. It shows healing and cleansing too. Believe it or not, it also signifies preparation to do spiritual battle with the Devil. Why? Oil is slippery and, in ancient times, warriors would cover themselves in it before battle to make it difficult for their enemies to grab them. In other words, Chrism makes it hard for the Devil to grab you!

### 5. Why My Forehead?

You probably wondered about this as it dripped down your face during your Confirmation. St. Thomas Aquinas explained that this is because your forehead is part of your face – the first thing people see when they talk to you. Having the Chrism spread on your forehead proclaims to the world that the first thing people should notice about you is your faith in Christ.

### 6. What's in a Name?

Many Catholics adopt the name of a biblical figure or saint that they find inspiring at their Confirmation. This shows your intention to copy their dedication to God. It makes you a heavenly friend who will pray and intercede for you on your Christian journey. Other Catholics choose not to

select a new name and stick with the one that they were baptized with to show Confirmation's close connection with Baptism!

## 7. Confirmation is Ancient

Faithful people have been receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation for almost 2,000 years. There are even examples of it recorded in the Bible! In Acts 19, Paul the Apostle lays his hands (just like the bishop does during Confirmation today) on a group of believers and the Holy Spirit descends upon them. So, when you are Confirmed, you are sharing in an ancient and rich tradition that millions of Catholics have participated in throughout history.

## 8. You Aren't Alone

To be Confirmed, you must select a sponsor to help guide you through the process. This person is a great example of what it means to be a Catholic. They pray for you and provide a support system for your faith. Confirmation certainly makes you better equipped to handle life as a Christian, but that does not mean things will always be easy. During these more difficult times, do not forget about your sponsor. You will learn more about selecting a sponsor next year.