



Confirmation Preparation
GUIDEBOOK
FOR CANDIDATES & THEIR PARENTS

NAME _____

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INSIDE THIS GUIDEBOOK...

❖ Introductory Information	3
----------------------------	---

CONTINUOUS EXPECTATIONS

❖ Participation in Mass	5
❖ Participation in Confirmation class	6
❖ <u>Acts of the Apostles</u> self-directed Bible study	6
❖ Kingdom Work	7

ANY TIME EXPECTATIONS

❖ Catholic devotion of Eucharistic adoration	8
❖ Spiritual activity/activities	9
❖ Social activity	9

DATE SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS

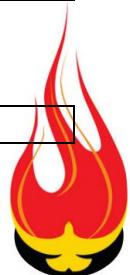
❖ Orientation Meeting	<i>Summer/Fall 2016</i>	10
❖ Letter of Intent	<i>September 2016</i>	10
❖ Candidate Enrollment Form	<i>September 2016</i>	12
❖ NET Retreat	<i>October 25 2016</i>	12
❖ Sponsor	<i>November 2016</i>	12
❖ Saint Reflection	<i>January 2017</i>	14
❖ Pilgrimage Trip	<i>April 1 2017</i>	15
❖ Triduum liturgies	<i>April 13-15 2017</i>	15
❖ Letter to the Bishop	<i>May 2017</i>	15
❖ Kingdom Work Reflection sheet	<i>June 2017</i>	7
❖ Bible Study Packet	<i>August 2017</i>	6
❖ Clergy Interview	<i>July/August 2017</i>	16

CONFIRMATION 2017

❖ Confirmation Rehearsal	<i>Fall 2017</i>	17
❖ Confirmation Liturgy	<i>Fall 2017</i>	17

PARENTS

❖ Information and Responsibilities	19
------------------------------------	----





INTRODUCTION

Preparing for a sacramental encounter with our savior, Jesus Christ, is an opportunity to learn more about your Catholic faith and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

As a participant in our parish *Confirmation II* program, this will be a focused and intense year of preparation as you continue your journey towards the sacrament of Confirmation. As you will see, Confirmation preparation involves and leads you to learning, sharing, serving, fellowship, and spiritual growth! Your parish faith community and the Religious Education staff look forward to sharing this journey of faith with you.

WHAT IS CONFIRMATION?

Confirmation is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation. While Baptism is the first step of initiation into the life of the Church, Confirmation can be seen as the completion of the Baptismal commitment. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “The reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace” (no. 1285). There are two primary effects from the sacrament of Confirmation: strengthening of one’s bond with the Church, and reception of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The following guide details the requirements and expectations of Saint Paul Catholic Church for those youth enrolled in Confirmation preparation as well as the expectations of parents and sponsors. This commitment involves the whole family and we ask that you carefully examine the expectations.

WHO MAY BE CONFIRMED?

Confirmation candidates must:

- ❖ Have received the sacrament of Baptism and have not yet been confirmed
- ❖ Be a person who has the use of reason and is able to renew their baptismal promises.
- ❖ Have been adequately and suitably instructed in the Roman Catholic faith. This is usually accomplished through ongoing participation in a Roman Catholic parish or school-sponsored religious education program.
- ❖ Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the obligations of a practicing member of the Catholic Church.
- ❖ **Have a sincere desire** (properly disposed) **to receive the sacrament** as well as an appreciation of the sacramental life of the Church.
- ❖ Have sincerely attempted to fulfill the expectations as outlined in this guidebook.
- ❖ **Formally identify themselves as a candidate seeking Confirmation** by writing a Letter of Intent and submit it to the parish Religious Education office by the end of September.





FORMING DISCIPLES FOR THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

ARCHDIOCESAN RELIGION CURRICULUM

The Archdiocese of Washington has provided all parishes with a Religious Curriculum Guide, *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization*. This document clearly states what participants in parish religious education programs should be able to know, understand and do at each grade level.

The primary aim of the standards is to strengthen the teaching of the faith. It is directed toward the whole local church. These guidelines focus on the need for mutual collaboration, communication and consultation. They strive to clarify the roles, responsibilities and mutual accountabilities needed by pastors, parents, catechetical leaders and all who assist in efforts to put adults, youth and children into communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ through life-long catechesis in and through the Catholic Church. You may access your grade-specific standards at <http://www.adw.org/forming-disciples/>

The witness of Christian life given by parents in the family comes to the children with tenderness and parental respect...It is deepened all the more when parents comment on the more methodical catechesis which their children later receive in the Christian community and help them to appropriate it. (General Directory for Catechesis, no. 226 and CT, no. 68)

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

EXPECTATIONS IN DETAIL

The following explains the Saint Paul parish Confirmation preparation program in detail. Candidates are asked to make every effort to participate fully in each expected component of this program. Please remember that while in many cases we list a minimum requirement for Confirmation, the candidates are encouraged to adopt some/many of these activities as a regular part of their lived faith practices.

Use the tracking sheet included in the folder of this guide to keep track of your own journey. To learn more about each expectation, see the table of contents on the next page to locate the details within this guidebook. All necessary forms are included in the folder at the back of this guide. If you are missing a sheet or have misplaced your copy you will find digital copies of all resources on our middle school web page, www.stpaulmiddleschool.weebly.com.





CONTINUOUS EXPECTATIONS

The following items are accomplished by the candidate throughout the year. Candidates, with the help of their parents, are each asked to track his/her own journey on the Expectation Tracking Sheet.

❖ PARTICIPATION IN MASS

Expectation: Participate in Mass *every week* and on holy days of obligation

Why is this important?

The Confirmation Candidate must have a sincere intention of participating in Mass every Sunday (or the Sat. Vigil Mass) and all holy days of obligation. Participating in the Eucharistic life of the community is both a privilege and an *obligation of all baptized Catholics*. This is also a powerful way that parents demonstrate to their children the importance that they place on obedience to Christ's commands.

When we worship as a community, we build up the Body of Christ because we are 'being the Body of Christ'. The following excerpts from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) are offered to help the candidate deepen his/her understanding of why the Eucharistic celebration is the source and summit of the Christian life. In fact, intentionally keeping oneself away from the Mass may be a situation of grave sin.

"Take this and eat it, all of you"; communion (CCC 1384-1387)

1384 The Lord addresses an invitation to us, urging us to receive him in the sacrament of the Eucharist: "Truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." (Jn 6:53)

1385 To respond to this invitation we must prepare ourselves for so great and so holy a moment. St. Paul urges us to examine our conscience: "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself." (1 Cor. 11:27-29) Anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion.

The Sunday obligation (CCC 2180-2182)

2180 The precept of the Church specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: "On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass." ...

2181 The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor. Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.

2182 Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to his Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity. Together they testify to God's holiness and their hope of salvation. They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.





❖ PARTICIPATION IN CLASSES

Expectation: Actively participate in Confirmation classes, complete at-home assignments, as well as any make-up work for activities and classes you were unable to attend.

Why is this important? Attendance at the Confirmation classes is extremely important in preparing the candidates for reception of the sacrament. When a class is missed, the candidate loses time for fellowship and prayer as well as the educational material covered that day. We expect that you will make these gatherings a priority and therefore make a sincere effort to adjust your other obligations accordingly.

Details: Students are expected to be prepared for the classes, including arriving on time and staying for the entire session. This also includes completing any assigned readings or homework. Contact your catechist immediately if critical circumstances will not allow you to attend a class. The catechist or staff will determine an appropriate at-home assignment so that the candidate has a complete faith formation experience. Candidates are expected to complete all at-home and make-up work assigned.

Excessive absenteeism (missing more than two classes) can affect the candidate's ability to enter fully into this important period of preparation.

There may be situations (i.e. excessive absenteeism; lack of desire to be confirmed) where, at the Pastor's discretion, it might be deemed prudent to *temporarily* delay the confirming of a candidate until the candidate is deemed ready. As the pastor must attest to the Bishop that the candidates are ready, all final decisions regarding a candidate's readiness are evaluated by the pastor. If the candidate is facing an obstacle to full readiness for Confirmation, Father Pierce, Ms. Nueslein or Mrs. McTighe will be happy to meet with the candidate and his/her parents to determine the best course of action.

❖ ACTS OF THE APOSTLES BIBLE STUDY

Expectation: Complete the self-directed Bible study packet, a journey through the *Acts of the Apostles*, as an at-home assignment. Turn it in by the end of August, 2017.

Why is this important? Exploring and reflecting on the presence of the Holy Spirit in the early Church will help our candidates understand what it means to be a disciple; called, equipped and empowered with carrying forth Christ's mission in the world. By entering into this story, we can better see the path to which Christ is calls us in terms of participating in the work of the Kingdom.

Details: The Scripture study assignment can be found in the back pocket of this booklet (you can also access an electronic copy on our website.) Some questions may be reviewed in class, so be sure to bring your Bible Study to class each session to take advantage of this opportunity. You have all year to complete the study which is due to the parish office by the end of August, 2017.





❖ KINGDOM WORK

Expectation: Participate in a year-long parish mentoring setting focused on the work of the Kingdom of God. Complete a reflection on your project and turn it in by the end of June, 2017.

Why is this important? An awareness of the importance of and vital need for performing service to others is critical in preparing the candidates for a life of discipleship to Christ Jesus. Throughout Scripture we are called to love our neighbor and stand up for justice and peace. Serving others is not something we do “to get it over with”. It is something we do because we recognize the presence of Jesus in all persons and in all of God’s creation.

You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself. He replied to him, ‘You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.’”

-- (Lk. 10: 27-28)

Jesus Christ is ushering in the Kingdom of God here on Earth, right now, and we each have an important stake in this work. For all members of St. Paul parish, there are many opportunities to get involved serving the community through parish involvement. This is not something we just ask of our Confirmation students. All practicing Catholics should be engaged in their parish to offer their time and talents to God to be used for helping build up the church and those she serves.

Details:

In the Fall, candidates will receive a list of options to choose from for their Kingdom Work. Each option will be a ministry within St. Paul Parish through which the candidate will be mentored and become a contributing member. Each ministry will clearly outline how the candidates who sign up will be expected to participate. Parents will sign their candidate up for a ministry on the list and then attend an initial meeting with their candidate to kick off their involvement.

This is NOT equivalent to SSL hours. We are *not* asking the candidates to document a certain number of hours to “complete the requirement.” We are asking that each candidate become actively involved in a ministry and feel the true impact of allowing Christ’s Kingdom to be present to our parish through his/her time and talents.

Specifics for each ministry will be sent by email in September, but we anticipate the following ministries to be working with us to mentor teens for their Kingdom Work.

- Art and Environment Ministry
- Religious Education
- Usher Ministry
- Drama Ministry
- Knights of Columbus
- Catholic Daughters

In the summer of 2017 each candidate will be asked to complete a reflection sheet about their Kingdom Work. **The completed sheet is due no later than June 2017.**





ANY TIME EXPECTATIONS

The following items can be completed on your time and as often as the candidate can.

Candidates, with the help of their parents, are each asked to track his/her own journey on the Expectation Tracking Sheet.

❖ EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Expectation: Participate in the Catholic practice of Eucharistic Adoration several times this year.

Why is this important? Understood simply, Eucharistic Adoration (also known as adoration of the Blessed Sacrament) is adoring, or honoring, the Eucharistic Presence of Christ. In a deeper sense, it involves "the contemplation of the Mystery of Christ truly present before us". During Eucharistic Adoration, we "watch and wait", we remain "silent" in His Presence, and open ourselves to His Graces which flow from the Eucharist. By worshiping the Eucharistic Jesus, we become what God wants us to be! Like a magnet, The Lord draws us to Himself and gently transforms us. Students preparing for confirmation should begin to develop a familiarity with the experience of adoring our Lord, present in the Blessed Sacrament (Eucharistic adoration) because it is a normative Catholic devotional practice.

Details: Some regular adoration opportunities in our area are as follows:

- First Saturday Mass every month at 9am
- Scheduled times during Advent or other liturgical seasons
- Perpetual Adoration (24 hours a day/7 days a week) at Saint John Neumann in Gaithersburg, MD. See <http://www.saintjohnneumann.org/> for more information.
- Before and after any mass the Lord is present in the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle.

Please check our parish bulletin (or the bulletin for other parishes) for opportunities to participate in this devotion.





❖ SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY

Expectation: Participate in spiritual activities that are new to you to deepen your prayer and worship life

Why is this important? Spending time in prayer and reflection does not end when we leave the church on Sunday. It is so important for the candidates to become aware of the many opportunities that are available for them to meditate upon God's Word, celebrating and fostering a lived faith in and with Jesus Christ.

Details: The following is a partial list of examples of spiritual activities you can participate in this year. We sincerely hope the candidate and his or her family, by trying new experiences and making a habit of seeking growth, will have an active and deepening spiritual life!

- Participate in daily Mass (9:00 am M-F) or first Saturday Mass (9am)
- Participate in or attend the Christmas Pageant or the Living Stations of the Cross
- Participate in special liturgies offered throughout the liturgical year. Examples: All Souls Day in November, Thanksgiving Ecumenical Service in November, World Day of the Sick in February, May Crowning in May, or even the Archdiocesan Ordination of Priests. Check the bulletins.
- Reflect on the Sunday Gospel readings each week and journal your thoughts.
- Pray the Rosary for nine consecutive days (a Novena)

Please be ready to share your experiences during relevant class discussions.

❖ SOCIAL

Expectation: Share fellowship and hospitality with faith peers by participating in at least one social activity sponsored by our parish this year.

Why is this important? Social activities provide an opportunity for our teens to come together for fellowship, companionship, support and fun. Socializing together helps foster the recognition of community. *We cannot be the 'Body of Christ' and come to love one another unless we know each other!*

Details: Social opportunities are organized by volunteer parents. There will be several different events offered during the course of the year so be sure to check the bulletin, our website, and your email for upcoming events! Please contact Cathy McTighe to volunteer.





DATE-SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS

The following items have specific dates or due-dates. Candidates, with the help of their parents, are each asked to keep up with upcoming expectations, participate in dated events, and turn in all items before their deadlines.

Please track your own journey on the Expectation Tracking Sheet.

❖ ORIENTATION MEETING

Expectation: Attend a Confirmation orientation meeting (Summer/Fall 2016)

Why is this important? The orientation session with candidate and parent gives us a chance to meet you face-to-face and to get to know you. Most importantly, this meeting is for you, to answer any questions that you have. Our goal is for you to have a clear understanding of the Confirmation preparation program that Saint Paul parish offers to you.

❖ LETTER OF INTENT

Expectation: Type a letter of intent to Fr. Pierce, print it, sign it, and turn it in by the end of September, 2016.

Why is this important? The purpose of this letter is for the candidate to formally inform the Church, through the Pastor, that he/she would like to enter into a period of candidacy for the sacrament of Confirmation. In this letter, the candidate also expresses willingness to commit to the period of preparation. Upon receiving this letter from a candidate we can officially enroll him or her for the sacrament. Please use the following as a guide for the letter:

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...



***Letter of Intent Information Continued...*****Details:**

Your *Letter of Intent* should be addressed to the Pastor, Fr. Joseph Pierce. Here is an outline of what should be included in your letter.

Greeting- Begin with your greeting: Dear Father Pierce,

Beginning- Introduce yourself and share some information about yourself, such as your family, your interests and hobbies, and a little about your background.

Middle- State that you would like to be enrolled as a candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation and explain (*in one or two paragraphs*) why you want to be confirmed. It may help you to think about

- a) the ways in which this sacrament will strengthen your relationship with Jesus,
- b) the role of faith in your life
- c) what it means to you to be a part of our parish community and/or
- d) how the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to be witnesses for Jesus (read and reflect on the *Acts of the Apostles*.)

End- To conclude your letter you will need to select a *quotation from Scripture* chosen from the list below which will serve as your inspiration during your preparation for Confirmation. This can be one verse or a few verses. Include an explanation as to why you chose this passage.

Signature- To end your letter write “Sincerely,” then leave a space for your handwritten signature, and finally, type your first and last name. Sign the letter in pen.

This letter must be turned in as a hard copy. Before turning it in, please place it in an envelope labeled “LETTER OF INTENT c/o: Cathy McTighe” You may drop it off at the parish office, hand it in to the welcome desk at a weekend Mass, or hand it in at one of your Confirmation classes.

This letter should be turned in before the end of September 2016.

Scripture Verses

Each candidate should choose one or more scripture verse to reflect on during his or her Confirmation preparation. You will reference the verse you choose in the letter of intent (directions above.) Options for scripture verse:

Isaiah 11:2

Isaiah 61:1

Matthew 3:13-17

John 1: 33-34

John 14: 15-31

John 16: 5-15

Acts 2: 1-4

Acts 8: 14-17

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

Galatians 5: 22-23





❖ CANDIDATE ENROLLMENT FORM

Expectation: Turn in a Candidate Enrollment Form by the end of September, 2016.

Why is this important? Receiving this form gives us the data we need to record your confirmation in the parish sacramental records.

Details: The form can be found in the pocket of this guidebook and as an electronic copy on our website.

❖ NET RETREAT

Expectation: Attend the National Evangelization Team (NET) Retreat (October 25, 2016)

Why is this important? Retreats provide a unique opportunity for the candidates to spend an extended time in discernment, reflect on the gifts of the Spirit and reflect on their relationship with God and their faith life. It is therefore required that each candidate attend the NET Confirmation Retreat on October 25th.

Details: The NET Retreat will be held at St Paul's on Tuesday, Oct 25th from 4:30-8:30 p.m. This is the only Confirmation Retreat offered by Saint Paul parish. We ask that you make every effort to adjust your personal schedule so that you may attend this retreat with your peers.

❖ SPONSOR

Expectation: Choose a qualified sponsor with whom you will meet regularly as part of your preparation. Give your sponsor the sponsor form to fill out and turn in (November 2016)

Details: The confirmation sponsor must be a baptized, confirmed, practicing Roman Catholic and should be a person who can serve as a strong role-model of an active, Spirit-filled Catholic. Along with this guide you will find a *Confirmation Sponsor Information Form*. The sponsor needs to complete the form and submit it to the parish office.

This form is due to the parish office by the end of November 2016.

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Sponsor information continued...

What does the sponsor do?

This person is a representative of the whole Church into which the candidate is being confirmed, serves as a witness for the Church and companions the candidate on his/her faith journey. Your sponsor will:

- a) bring you forward to receive the sacrament;
- b) present you to the Bishop for anointing, and
- c) will later help you to fulfill your baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit whom you have received.¹

Thus, it is recommended that the sponsor be able to meet regularly with the candidate, spend time building a bond with the teen, help him/her prepare for the sacrament through prayer, study, service and discussion and be in physical attendance at the rehearsal and the confirmation.

What are the qualifications of a sponsor?

Pastors are charged with the responsibility of seeing that the sponsors (usually recommended by the candidates/parents) are of adequate maturity and Catholic formation to take on this responsibility.

A sponsor must be:

- ❖ of sufficient maturity to fulfill this role (at least 16 years old)
 - ❖ a practicing Roman Catholic who has been baptized, confirmed and received the sacrament of First Holy Communion. He/She should participate in the celebration of the Eucharist each week
 - ❖ fulfilling their own baptismal promises by living the Christian life of faith and morals, guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church
 - ❖ be in good standing with the church and not prohibited by [church] law from exercising the role of sponsor (ex. irregular marriage)
 - ❖ not be a parent of the Confirmation candidate
- There is one sponsor for each person confirmed.
 - It is highly recommended (though not required) that the sponsor be a baptismal godparent of the confirmation candidate. This most fully expresses the integral connection between Baptism and Confirmation. If this is not possible, it is permissible that another person be chosen.
 - The sponsor should be reminded that they are there not only for the confirmation celebration but are expected to assist the candidates in fulfilling their baptismal promises faithfully through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
 - Attendance by proxy is allowed in certain situations, such as the sponsor living out-of-town and being unable to travel to the celebration. Requests for proxy should be directed to the parish Director of Religious Education.

¹ From The Rites of the Catholic Church, as revised by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, vol. 1, p. 480.





❖ CONFIRMATION SAINT

Expectation: Choose a Confirmation saint who will become your heavenly Patron and whose name will be used in your Confirmation. Complete the Saint Reflection handout and turn it in by the end of January, 2017.

Why is this important? Just as your sponsor will stand by your side as a witness at your Confirmation, your Confirmation saint will be present as your heavenly sponsor and witness. You will be addressed by your chosen Saint's name when you are confirmed. In both the Old and New Testament, when God had a new mission for someone, He often gave them a new name. Even without a new name, your name has always told others who you are. God calls on each of us to fulfill a special mission. It may be witnessing to non-believers about Jesus Christ, helping the poor, being a peacemaker, entering a religious vocation, or one of many other callings. Confirmation may be the continuation of a mission direction you began at Baptism or the beginning of a new mission. Our missions may be expressed in different ways; therefore there are two options when deciding on a Confirmation name:

First - Because Confirmation is the strengthening of the work that God began in your life at your Baptism, it is recommended that you give first preference to using your Baptismal name for Confirmation. This shows the integral link between Baptism and Confirmation (note: this applies only if your Baptismal name was a Saint's name.)

Second – Perhaps you see Confirmation as the beginning of a new phase of mission for you and a fresh beginning in your faith journey. Then you may choose a new name for Confirmation. Your Confirmation name should be that of a saint you admire or the saint name of someone you know and look up to as a Christian role-model (perhaps your sponsor's saint name?)

Details: We recommend using one of the following websites for research:

www.ewtn.com/saintsholy

<http://www.catholic.org/saints/>

Please note that the saint you choose must be a Canonized Saint in the Roman Rite. You will notice that the reflection sheet asks for a date of canonization. Some saints will have "pre-congregation" listed instead of a canonization date. This means that the saint was recognized as a Catholic saint before the Church developed her current model for canonization. If this is the case, you may write "pre-congregation" in the place of a canonization date. If you cannot find this date for your saint please contact us for guidance. Please call the office with other questions regarding saints.

Once a Confirmation name has been chosen, please complete the reflection of that saint using the form in the pocket in the back of this folder. You may drop it off at the parish office, hand it in to the welcome desk at a weekend Mass, or hand it in at one of your Confirmation classes.

The saint reflection must be turned in by the end of January, 2017.





❖ PILGRIMAGE TRIP

Expectation: Attend the off-site Pilgrimage trip (April 1, 2017)

Why is this important? We may not be able to travel to the Holy Land, but we can still take a day out of our busy lives to experience a local Catholic faith site and spend time in prayer. This is an opportunity to enhance the spiritual growth of our youth.

Details: Our Pilgrimage is an off-site field trip that goes from morning to late afternoon. The trip will take place on Saturday, April 1st, 2017. This year's location is yet to be announced. Saint Paul parish will provide bus transportation to the pilgrimage location. All Confirmation II candidates are expected to attend. You can expect to receive details on location as well as permission slips and final cost information in early March, 2017.

❖ TRIDUUM LITURGIES

Expectation: Attend at least one of the Triduum Liturgies and/or Living Stations of the Cross.

Why is this important? Holy Week is when the Church remembers the most important time in Christ's life, the foundation of our faith. We should know and appreciate Jesus' journey during this week.

Details: In order to *actually become a part of the story*, the Candidates should participate in at least one of these liturgies:

- Holy Thursday – Mass of the Lord's Supper (April 13th, 7:30pm)
- Good Friday – two options: Living Stations of the Cross (April 14th, 3pm)
OR Remembrance of the Lord's Passion Evening Liturgy (April 14th, 7:30pm)
- Holy Saturday – Easter Vigil (April 15th, 7:30pm).

The Good news of being a universal church is that all Catholic Churches throughout the world are celebrating these liturgies. If you are traveling during Holy Week and Easter you can attend Mass wherever you are. Visit www.masstimes.org to find a Mass anywhere in the world.

❖ LETTER TO THE BISHOP

Expectation: Write a letter to the Bishop, print it, sign it, and turn it in by the end of May 2017.

Why is this important? It has been customary for the Bishop to receive a letter from each candidate; a personal letter to him requesting Confirmation.

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Letter to the Bishop Continued...

Details: This letter is not just getting stuffed in a drawer somewhere—you are writing a letter that will be mailed to Bishop Dorsonville, the Bishop presiding over your Confirmation. ***The letter must be typed and signed by you.*** The formality and importance with which you present this letter should show the highest respect for the office of the Bishop. Parents, ways you can help do this are:

1. Discuss the prompt and expectations with your candidate before they begin writing.
2. Proofread your candidate's letter to be sure it is respectfully formal and there are no typos.
3. Consider using stationary paper of some kind rather than regular printer paper to reflect the formality of addressing the Bishop.

Follow the prompt below:

Heading- in the top left corner of your page put:

*Most Reverend Mario E. Dorsonville
Archdiocese of Washington*

Greeting- Begin with your greeting: *Dear Most Reverend Mario E. Dorsonville,*

Body- Write to the Bishop with seriousness and respect---but also write from your heart. The body of your letter should clearly express the following:

- that receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation is your desire
- the ways that you have prepared for the sacrament
- the scripture passage you chose in your Letter of Intent and how your understanding of this passage has grown in the last year
- who your confirmation saint is and why you are choosing him/her

Signature- To end your letter write “Sincerely,” then leave a space for your handwritten signature. Finally, type the following:

*[Your full name]
Saint Paul Parish*

*cc: Father Joseph Pierce
Ms. Lisa Nueslein
Mrs. Cathy McTighe*

What do we mean by “cc:”? By “copying” Fr. Pierce, Ms Nueslein, and Mrs. McTighe, you are indicating that you understand all of these people may review your letter. You do not need to submit more than one physical copy of your letter.

Your letter should be *typed, printed, signed*. You may drop it off at the parish office, hand it in to the welcome desk at a weekend Mass, or hand it in at one of your Confirmation classes.

The letter to the Bishop is due by the end of May, 2017.





❖ CLERGY INTERVIEW

Expectation: Participate in an interview with our Pastor or one of our Deacons. (July/August 2017)

Why is this important? The pastor will have to attest to the Bishop that the candidates are ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Bishop has the right to publicly examine the Confirmation candidates during the liturgy. The purpose of this meeting with Fr. Pierce or one of our parish deacons is twofold:

1. for the clergy to have an opportunity to determine the readiness of the candidates and
2. to prepare candidates to respond to the Bishop's questions posed to them during the liturgy

Details: In the summer of 2017, parents will receive an email with a list of the dates/times of our clergy interviews. You will select the date/time that works for you and sign up to attend it. Clergy interviews are held in a group setting.

NOTES:





CONFIRMATION 2017

❖ CONFIRMATION REHEARSAL

Expectation: All candidates are required to attend Confirmation Rehearsal with their sponsor (or parent.)

DATE AND TIME: 12pm-2pm on Saturday, September 9th, 2017.

Why is this important? We will rehearse the logistics of Confirmation as well as be sure we have all final questions answered and information collected. It is essential that every single candidate is present so we can be sure when the Bishop is celebrating Mass with us things run smoothly and we are all able to focus on the sacrament itself. Fr. Pierce holds the mandatory status of this rehearsal with strict regard.

Details: While we are gathered, the sponsors will also give a special witness about their candidates, as is a long standing tradition at St. Paul. (Once again, all candidates and their sponsors (or a proxy) are expected to attend the Confirmation rehearsal. Any absence from rehearsal must be excused by our Director of Religious Education and Pastor prior to rehearsal.)

❖ CONFIRMATION MASS

Expectation: Participate in the liturgy and Rite of Confirmation.

DATE AND TIME: 1:30pm on Sunday, September 10th, 2017.

Details: The celebrant will be Bishop Mario Dorsonville. You will receive more details as the date draws near.

"All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence."

Rite of Confirmation 25





WHAT ABOUT PARENTS?

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

"As the primary educators of their children: parents are to be intimately involved in the catechesis for Confirmation. This will help them renew and strengthen their own faith, besides enabling them to set a better example for their children." (NCD, no. 119)

All parents are expected to:

- ❖ Ensure that their candidate participates in Mass regularly and the sacrament of reconciliation. Ideally, this will be a family experience.
- ❖ Pray for your child's spiritual growth every day.
- ❖ Be actively involved in the Confirmation preparation of the candidate.
- ❖ Engage in discussions about the material being studied, including sharing your understanding and perspective.
- ❖ Support and require completion of assignments, activities and expectations.
- ❖ Faithfully bring your teen (and, when necessary, yourself) to classes, retreats, meetings and special events arriving on time and participating until the event is complete.
- ❖ Volunteer for retreats, service, meetings, classes, spiritual events and/or social events.
- ❖ Model responsible and active church membership to your child.

SPIRITUAL LEADERS OF THE FAMILY

WHAT INFLUENCES THE FAITH LIFE OF YOUR CHILD?

Your child's future faith life will be directly affected by the personal faith of you, as parents, as well as the religious experiences and practices of both the family and the child. Now is a good time to stop and refocus. Ask yourself this question—

*Would I be comfortable with how my child would describe
the spiritual life of our family? My own spiritual life?*

Consider some findings from recent PEW FORUM surveys on religion:

- Religious commitment as a child and teenager may be related to the propensity to change religion
- Among Americans ages 18-29, one-in-four say they are not currently affiliated with any particular religion.²
- Former Catholics who are now unaffiliated are much less likely than lifelong Catholics to have attended Mass regularly or to have had very strong faith as teenagers.³

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² U.S. Religious Landscape Survey. The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. Accessed on 7/8/16.

<http://religions.pewforum.org/reports#>

³ Ibid. <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=409>





- Only 33% of self-identified Catholics attend religious services at least once a week.⁴
- ...among both former Protestants and former Catholics who are now unaffiliated, more than seven-in-ten say they just gradually drifted away from their childhood religion.⁵

Confirmation can be a key event to prevent the “drift.” As spiritual leaders of the family, you are invited to take a moment to reflect on how this confirmation period may be a time for the entire family to refocus on Jesus Christ.

Enter into this grace-filled moment with your child by:

- Beginning/renewing a daily prayer practice (www.sacredspace.ie)
- Reading the Bible. What are you waiting for? (www.usccb.org)
- Reflecting on the Sunday readings before Mass (www.usccb.org)
- Recommit to *actively and regularly* participating in Sunday Eucharist.
- Prepare for your own Confirmation (if you have not yet been confirmed) Adults can be confirmed too! What are you waiting for?
- Learn more about Catholic belief (can you explain the faith that you profess to your friends or family?) Don’t carry around an 8th grade level of knowledge of our faith! Jesus wants to give you more!
 - www.ewtn.com
 - www.usccb.org/catechism
 - www.bustedhalo.com (online magazine for spiritual seekers)
 - Call our Religious Education Director to find out about programs at our parish.
 - Join RCIA inquiry (for non-Catholics who wish to explore the Catholic faith)
- Nurture your marriage
 - Pray together
 - www.foryourmarriage.org (resources)
 - Renew your nuptial vows (or have your marriage blessed by the Church)

The bottom line: The Holy Spirit is waiting to rain down upon the entire family, along with your Confirmation candidate! Will you seize this grace-filled moment?!

Please know that our Religious Education staff—Lisa Nueslein, Cathy McTighe, and Patti Woods—looks forward to assisting you in this journey. We are praying for you!

⁴ Ibid. <http://religions.pewforum.org/portraits>

⁵ Ibid. <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/chapter-2-religious-switching-and-intermarriage/>

