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*“Then Jesus said to the Jews who believed in him, ‘If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.’”
(John 8:31)*

Questions?

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Important Dates

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

Confirmation Parent/Teen Kick-off meeting

**Saturday, November 18, 2023 or
Saturday, January 20, 2024**

Parent/Teen Confirmation Day Retreat**
9:00-2:00pm at the Church
Lunch provided

*Everyone is invited to attend Mass at 8:00am prior to retreat, light breakfast following Mass

February 9-11, 2024

8th Grade Weekend Confirmation Retreat
Camp Friendship – Annandale

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Confirmation Rehearsal Meeting
7:30-8:00pm Education Center

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

ALL Requirements must be completed

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

Confirmation Rite
St. Paul Cathedral at 7:00pm
✓ Please arrive at The Cathedral between 6:00pm and 6:30 pm

Requirements Due

September 27, 2023

Commitment Form Due

November 15, 2023

Sponsor Information and Interview Due

December 13, 2023

Baptismal Certificate Due

February 21, 2024

Sponsor – Letter of Good Standing from Pastor Due

March 20, 2024

Saint Name Form Due

April 17, 2024

Faith Night and Works of Mercy Hours Due

**** Parent/Teen Confirmation Day Retreat**

Parents and Candidates need only attend one of the Parent/Teen Day Retreat.

Confirmation Guidelines

To The Parents:

When you brought your child to the Church for Baptism, you accepted the sacred responsibility and privilege of “training them in the practice of the faith.” (Rite of Baptism, 30). You were reminded that you are the first and best teachers of your child and you were entrusted with keeping the light of faith burning brightly in their life. Parents instruct their children, both by what they say and what they do. It is now time for that next step. Confirmation is a celebration of the ongoing power of the already present Holy Spirit in our lives, the Spirit first received in Baptism. Through this sacrament, the gifts of the Holy Spirit first received at Baptism are deepened and intensified.

Following are some suggestions on ways to assist your young person in their preparation:

1. Pray for and with your child(ren) every day.
2. Initiate conversation about the Sacrament of Confirmation, share your memories of receiving the sacrament, and encourage them to share their ideas of how receiving this sacrament will change their faith life.
3. Help with the selection of a sponsor and saint’s name for Confirmation.
4. Make sure all documents are completed and returned in a timely manner.

Guidelines for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation:

1. Regular participation in Sunday (or Saturday evening) Mass.
2. An appropriate understanding of the Catholic Christian life. The candidate should understand and reflect the life of Christ in their lifestyle.
3. A firm determination to live the Christian life to the best of their ability. The candidate must be a good steward, giving in Christian proportion of their time, talent, and treasure.
4. The candidate must understand the importance of personal and communal worship in the life of the Church.
5. Faithful participation in the Confirmation preparation program.
6. Commitment to further religious education by the candidate and parents or guardian. Reception of this sacrament is a beginning – not an end. It is one step in our life-long journey to holiness. The candidate must be willing to be actively involved in parish life after Confirmation.

Requirements:

Regular participation in the Sunday liturgy:

1. Sunday Mass is *not* optional for Catholics. Celebration of the Eucharist is our highest form of worship and candidates are expected to be active participants. This is the faith they will affirm.

Enrollment:

1. All Confirmation candidates must be currently enrolled in St. Francis Catholic School or Faith Formation and actively involved in that program; or have completed the Faith Formation program and all requirements.
2. To be actively involved, this means attendance, homework, Works of Mercy and Retreat requirements are up to date.

Expectations:

1. Candidates are expected to complete all Confirmation preparation components including:
 - 1.1. Application/Commitment form
 - 1.2. Proof of Baptism
 - 1.3. Sponsor Information, Covenant and Interview forms
 - 1.4. Saint Name Form
 - 1.5. Parent/Teen Confirmation Day Retreat
 - 1.6. 3 Day/2 Night Weekend Retreat
2. Attend at least one Faith Night experience. This is the minimum, it is hoped that our young people will choose to engage in the life of the parish community through Souled Out, LIFTED and other Youth Ministry opportunities on a more regular basis.
3. Emergency absence considerations: *(For Faith Formation)*
 - 3.1. Extreme circumstances, including death of family member, severe sickness and/or inclement weather will be considered emergency absences and candidates may be excused from the minimum requirements. These extenuating situations will be evaluated on a case by case basis. If you feel as though any of your absences fall into this category, please call the Director of Youth Formation and Ministry to discuss options. Extra-curricular activities, although important in the lives of the youth, are NOT considered emergency or excused absences.

Inclement Weather: (For Faith Formation)

1. If the weather is severe and we decide to cancel any retreats or sessions, the cancellation of sessions will be posted on www.stfxb.org website on the main page. In addition, the cancellation will be communicated via Email to all enrolled candidates and their parents.
2. We will defer to your judgment as to whether or not it is safe for you to travel. If a session is missed due to weather conditions, it is the responsibility of the parent to see that the child(ren) have completed any assignments, if assigned that may be due and have their child turn those forms into the Director of Youth Formation and Ministry at the next session.

Participations in Retreats and sessions – ALL Students

1. Candidate should be Respectful and attentive to speakers, Pastor and others in attendance.
2. Candidate should Invest in order to get as much out of it as possible, and complete any assignments including meeting with their sponsor, saint's report, faith night experience, etc.
3. Candidate should actively Participate in any small group discussions or prayer activities.

Sponsor:

1. Each candidate is required to have a sponsor and to complete at least one or more activities with their chosen sponsor. Please refer to the "Sponsor Information" section in this handbook for more information.

Patron Saint Name Selection and Form:

1. At Confirmation, candidates traditionally choose a canonized saint to be their patron. At the Rite of Confirmation, they will be referred to by this name signifying the profound change that the sacrament brings about. The selection of this name will also symbolize the candidate's participation in the Communion of Saints. Each candidate must complete the form on the saint they have chosen. Full details of this assignment can be found in the "Patron Saint Selection and Report" section of this handbook.

The Process

Phase 1:

Beginning as early as 8th grade

- Regular weekly Mass Attendance
- Faith Formation (Currently attending or completed program) or attends St. Francis Xavier Catholic School
- Participate in 1 Faith Night experience – Souled Out, EFC, Living Stations or other approved event

Phase 2: The Application Process:

- Faith Formation (Currently attending or completed program) or attends St. Francis Xavier Catholic School
- Continued weekly Regular Mass Attendance
- Submit Commitment Form
- Provide Sacramental Information – Baptismal Certificate
- Complete Saint Form
- Complete Sponsor Information, Covenant and Interview Sheet
- Submit Faith Experience Night and Works of Mercy Hours

Phase 3: The Journey:

- Continued weekly Regular Mass Attendance
- Faith Formation (Currently attending or completed program), currently involved in Discipleship group or attends St. Francis Xavier Catholic School
- Attend 1 Parent/Teen Day Retreat: 9-2pm at the Church
 - See Important dates Sheet for dates
- Candidate attends a weekend Confirmation Retreat
 - See Important dates Sheet for date
 - Optional Other Retreat: Net Ministries or Dunrovin Retreat Center

FAQs about the Confirmation at STFX

- **What is Confirmation?** Confirmation is a Sacrament that strengthens us and obliges us to witness to, spread and defend the faith (CCC 1303). Confirmation is **not** graduation from a life of Christian learning, a mere cultural passage into maturity or an opportunity to choose whether or not to remain Catholic. Confirmation completes our full initiation as Catholic Christians (CCC 1306) and strengthens our ability to be missionary disciples through the reception of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- **Why has the Confirmation preparation process at St. Francis Xavier changed?** I know that change can be difficult; however I think that this new program will help the youth take ownership of their faith. We believe that each person has the freedom to walk their faith journey at their pace, and make the choice to complete their initiation into the Catholic Faith. This is something that shouldn't be forced upon anyone; instead each individual should have the right to exercise their free will. It is not a secret that the majority of students confirmed in the Catholic Church today stop attending Mass following their Confirmation. The Sacrament of Confirmation was never intended to be an end, but rather the beginning of their mission to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the world. Confirmation strengthens believers to witness to, spread, and defend the faith. (CCC 1303) We hope this new approach will allow teens to be Confirmed when they have shown they are ready, and desire to be confirmed, not just because they have reached a certain grade.
- **Is this preparation process for Confirmation enough?** Hardly! The Catholic faith is so rich and so deep that we can spend our whole life studying the faith and never exhaust the depth of it. We are called to be Disciples of Christ who continue to grow in love of God and neighbor through prayer, worship, study and service, this is a lifelong process. That is why we offer discipleship groups, Bible studies, and the TFC Leadership team for the teens to participate in throughout the four years of high school, as well as other youth ministry opportunities throughout the year.
- **Why do the parents have to attend the Day Retreat?** Many studies have shown that the faith practices of a young adult nearly always mimic the faith practices of their parents. We want to partner with parents to support and equip them in their important role to share with their teens, their love of Jesus Christ and His Church. We want to provide opportunities for you and your child to share an encounter with Our Lord.
- **When does Confirmation preparation begin? When does it end? How long does it take?** Most teens will begin completing the pre-requisites for Confirmation preparation immediately following their 7th grade year, beginning the summer before their 8th grade year. Many will choose to complete the process over a one year period, be confirmed in their 8th grade year and continue to be involved in youth ministry in their 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade years. Some students may choose to complete their preparation over their four years of high school.
- **Why do I have to attend a Faith Experience Night?** The Faith Night Experiences, as we call them, are just that, a time to step away from the craziness of our everyday lives and be open to experience our faith in a new way. This is a time to focus, think, talk and pray about whom we are, why we are here and what our faith in Jesus has to do with it all. These faith experiences provide the environment for young people to have a personal and transformational encounter with Jesus Christ through dynamic talks, awesome music, small group discussion and Adoration. Examples of Faith Experience Nights: Souled Out, LIFTED, AYD, REVIVE, Living Stations, Advent Family Night of Prayer, Steubenville and Extreme Faith Camp.
- **What are the requirements in choosing a Sponsor?** Your Confirmation Sponsor must be a Confirmed, practicing Catholic. It cannot be your parent; however, the sponsor can be a grandparent or God parent. This person should be someone that the candidate trusts in seeking out faith advice and direction. It should be someone that has the ability and desire to be involved in the Candidate's life for years to come. It is expected that the sponsor prays for the candidate and check-in with their Confirmation preparation. It is also encouraged that the Sponsor and Candidate get together 1-3 times or more and spend time together either doing Works of Mercy or sharing in something faith related. Some ideas would be to tour the Cathedral, attend Mass together and/or watch a faith-based or saint movie.

Baptism Record

One of the prerequisites for Confirmation is Christian Baptism. It is the responsibility of the parents to provide St. Francis Xavier with an original copy of their child's Baptismal certificate. It is absolutely necessary that you provide us with proof of your son or daughter's Baptism.

*Please return this form to Parish Office no later than
December 13, 2023

For children Baptized at St. Francis Xavier:

***You only need to fill out the information below and submit the completed form to the Faith Formation Office. We do not need a copy of the Certificate**

Confirmation candidate _____ was baptized at
(Name)

St. Francis Xavier Parish on _____.
(Date)

For children Baptized at another parish:

***An original copy of the candidate's Baptismal certificate must be submitted. We cannot accept photo copies, scans, etc.**

*** It is very easy to obtain this. Simply contact the church where your child was baptized and ask them to send a Baptismal Certificate to:**

St. Francis Xavier Faith Formation Dept.
Attn: Jody
223 19th St. NW
Buffalo, MN 55313

Sponsor

Choosing A Sponsor:

If you have ever attended a Confirmation ceremony, you have seen an adult who stands behind the candidate with a hand on their shoulder as they are anointed, but the role of a sponsor goes far beyond a simple gesture of support. Did you know that the word sponsor comes from the same root word as “responsible”? A Confirmation sponsor is someone whom you look up to as a role model in faith and will be there to support you spiritually before, during and after you receive the sacrament. In essence, your sponsor is meant to act as a spiritual guide and friend in your faith.

That being said, choosing your sponsor is an important task. Don't just choose someone because they are fun or because they haven't done it yet. Choose your sponsor because you know that they will help you grow in your faith this year and because they will continue to support you.

Here are some good questions to ask as you consider choosing your sponsor:

1. Who in my life has made an impact on my faith?
2. Is this person responsible?
3. Is this person mature?
4. Does he/she practice his/her Catholic faith actively by attending Mass at least weekly?
5. Does he/she practice his/her Catholic faith actively in the way that he/she lives and acts?
6. Do I trust him/her?

The Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis has specific requirements that are to be met by all sponsors:

1. The sponsor must be an **active, participating Catholic who has been Confirmed**; someone who will be an inspiration and support for the candidate. There is to be one sponsor, male or female.
2. Sponsor must be at least **16 years of age**.
3. He or she **may not be the candidate's mother or father**. It is desirable, but not mandatory, that the baptismal sponsor (godparent) also be the sponsor at Confirmation to show the close connection of the two sacraments. In many cases this is not possible and another suitable person may be selected. A parent may be proxy at the ceremony.
4. The sponsor should be a person who is prayerful, open, dependable, loving and is comfortable sharing his or her faith with young people.
5. The sponsor should be someone who is a witness to Christ and to the importance of a Catholic Christian lifestyle by their words and actions. A person who will be a support and example to the candidate as he/she moves through periods of crisis, questioning, and discernment.
6. **Sponsor must request a letter from their Pastor verifying that he/she is registered and in good standing.** *See Important Dates Sheet for the Due date*

Sponsor Covenant

***Due no later than November 15, 2023**

Sponsor:

1. I will be in contact with my Candidate monthly during the preparation process (preferably twice a month) in person, by phone or by email:
 - To get to know the Candidate better
 - To share my faith story including my questions, thoughts and feelings.
 - To discuss the Candidate's participation in the Confirmation program.
2. I will request a letter from my Pastor verifying that I am registered and in good standing with the Catholic Church. I understand that the *letter needs to be received by Feb 21, 2024.*

Sponsor's Name (print) _____

Sponsor's Signature _____

Date _____

Candidate:

1. I will be in contact with my sponsor at least two times during the preparation process (preferably twice a month) in person, by phone or by email:
 - To get to know my sponsor better
 - To share my faith story including my questions, thoughts and feelings.
 - To discuss my preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation.

Candidate's Name (print) _____

Candidate's Signature _____

Date _____

Sponsor Information

Due no later than November 15, 2023

A Sponsor must be a practicing, confirmed Catholic, who is at least 16 years of age. He/she may not be the candidate's mother or father. A godparent is a good choice. The candidate is encouraged to choose someone close by. The sponsor should be a person who is prayerful, open, dependable, loving, and is comfortable sharing his or her faith with young people. The sponsor represents the support and prayers of the entire Church. He/she will be the candidate's spiritual friend.

In this program, the following is asked of the sponsor:

1. Accompany the candidate to the Confirmation Reflection/Rehearsal.
2. Attend the Confirmation Preparation sessions with Candidate and parents, if able.
3. Attend the Liturgy of Confirmation and present the candidate during the Confirmation Rite.
4. Meet with the candidate regularly throughout this year of preparation and discuss the topics addressed in the preparation sessions.
5. Share their faith story with his or her candidate.
6. Spend time getting to know the candidate, possibly taking him or her out to lunch or dinner, or having him or her over to your home.
7. Pray for and with the candidate.
8. Continue to be there for the candidate and lend spiritual support after the Confirmation ceremony is over.

** Please print clearly*

Candidate Information:

Candidate Full Name: _____
(first) (middle) (last)

Sponsor information:

Sponsor Full Name: _____

Gender: Male _____ Female _____ Date of Birth: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ Home Phone: _____

Email: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Parish Membership: _____

(Name of Catholic Church where sponsor is registered)

(City/State)

Sponsor Interview

Name of Confirmand (*Candidate*): _____

Instructions: Please meet with your Sponsor, discuss and answer the following questions, when finished please return to Faith Formation Department by November 15, 2023.

These questions are meant for the Confirmand to ask the sponsor, the purpose is to open up a dialogue between the Confirmand and their sponsor about their faith journey. However, the Confirmand is also welcome to use these questions to discuss their own faith with their sponsor:

NOTE: This form is to be completed by the Confirmation Candidate after discussing the questions with their sponsor – it is not to be filled out by the Sponsor.

1. What do you remember about your Confirmation? What stood out and made it special?

2. What name did you pick for Confirmation? Why?

3. Why is your Catholic faith so important to you?

Sponsor Activity

One With Eucharist

Background:

1. Communal worship is viewed by many as an obligation to fulfill; however, it is more like “taking a vitamin.” It nourishes us, guides us, and strengthens us so that we can get through the daily struggles of our lives. The presence of the faith community reminds us that we are not alone. Others are struggling and together we are turning to God for help and guidance. We repent of our sins, and become one body, in Christ, in the Eucharist. Nourished, refocused, and in gratitude for our many gifts and blessings, we proclaim the glory of our God. Help your candidate see their experience of communal worship at Mass as what it is: a source of strength and guidance, as well as an opportunity to gather in thanksgiving.

Discussion Questions (You do not need to write out your answers):

1. What was the best Eucharist (Mass) experience you have ever had? What made it so good?
2. Studies claim that only 30% of young adult Catholics attend Mass each Sunday. Why do you think these young people choose to go? What blessings can come from a “habit” of regular Mass attendance?
3. Do you have trouble believing that Jesus is actually present in the Word, Eucharist, and in the community? What can we do to help our unbelief?
4. Have you had an experience of observing or belonging to a Christian “community” where you felt that Jesus was present? What was it like?
5. How has your experience of Eucharist (Mass) been like a celebration? What things have you seen celebrated at Mass? (ex: baptisms, weddings, funerals, other rites like the Rite of Welcome for Confirmation, First Communion, etc.)

*The Community of St. Francis Xavier is praying for you and your candidate.
May God Bless you during your journey together!*

*Please note that this is an optional guide for candidates and sponsors and does not need to be turned in.

Sponsor Activity

Am I Ready?

Background:

1. Confirmation is one of the sacraments of initiation into membership in the Church. Confirmation builds on and completes the gifts of the Holy Spirit we were given at Baptism, and brings us more closely into the Church. This completion is experienced: through a deeper look at how our lives reflect the values of Jesus (WWJD); through a deeper participation in the life of the Church (active in ministry and participation in liturgy); through sharing our growing faith and the resulting hope and joy we experience as a Christian; and through a growth in the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit (wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and wonder and awe) which guide our choices and actions.
2. Confirmation requires that a person be baptized, freely profess the Catholic faith, and be in a state of grace with no serious sins not confessed. The person must also have an understanding of the sacrament they are about to receive, a desire to be confirmed and a willingness to be a witness for Christ. This sacrament is the final step of the beginning of their new life in Christ...a lifelong process of learning, growing, and becoming even stronger.

Confirmation Process:

1. This year of preparation has provided the opportunity for your candidate to gain a good initial understanding of the Catholic faith and the sacrament of Confirmation. We will continue to learn what it means to be an active member of this Catholic faith family so together we all may live holy lives as witnesses for Christ. Our Sending Reflection/Rehearsal will allow time for personal prayer and reflection for both you and your candidate as part of your final preparation prior to Confirmation.

Discussion Questions:

1. What has been your favorite part of this year of preparation?
2. Are you more ready and excited to receive the sacrament of Confirmation than you were at the beginning of the year? Why or why not?
3. What is something that has changed about your faith or your practice of your faith during this past year? How did that happen?
4. What would you say to someone who asks you why you are a Catholic? If you don't know what to say, how would you find out?
5. What are you going to do to continue to grow in your faith after Confirmation

*Please note that this is an optional guide for candidates and sponsors and does not need to be turned in.

Patron Saint

Choosing A Saint Name:

Background:

So many times when we think of saints the first thing we think of is a halo (no not the video game), but the truth is that saints can't be reduced to people who walked around the earth with heads that glowed. No! Saints were ordinary people, like you and I that lived extraordinary lives. The Church says that a saint is someone who possessed "heroic virtue" (Catechism of the Catholic Church #828). Saints are heroes of the faith!

Form must be completed and turned in by **March 20, 2024**.

Each candidate will be asked to take on the name of one of the saints at Confirmation. At Baptism, children are welcomed individually into a new life in Christ. Because of the close relationship between the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, it is perfectly acceptable for candidates to choose to affirm the saint's name given to them at Baptism. For example, a candidate named Nick might want to choose St. Nicholas. We also look at Confirmation as a time for the candidate to accept as their own the faith that was given to them by their parents and godparents. For this reason it is also acceptable for the candidate to choose a saint whose name is unrelated to their given name but whose life will be a model and inspiration for them during their life as a Catholic. The saint the candidate chooses should express something of the candidate's inner-self, an ideal or goal they are setting for themselves as a Catholic, and should be a reflection of their resolve to live as a disciple of Christ. The name that the candidate chooses will be the name by which they are addressed by the Archbishop at the Confirmation ceremony.

Saint information can be found in parish libraries, the internet, and books on Saint's in the catechist resource room at St. Francis Xavier Education Center. Below are a few trusted websites to check out as well:

www.lifeteen.com

www.newadvent.com

www.catholic.org/saints/

www.americancatholic.org →saints tab

