



# Confirmation

Making a Decision for Christ

Program Manual

St. George Catholic Church  
Valley Lee, MD 20692

# Table of Contents

A Letter to the Confirmandi & Parents	3
Welcome!	5
Is This Right for Me?	6
What Must I Do?	7
More About Service Hours	10
What's Coming?	11
What Must I Know?	12
Getting Serious	14
Parental Sideline (an explanation for parents)	16
Deadlines	18
Assessments	19
Interviews	20

## A Letter to the Confirmandi & Parents

Dear Confirmandi and Parents,

We have begun the very special process of pre-paring for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Confirmation completes the Sacraments of Initiation and brings the gifts of the Holy Spirit alive in us so that we can take all that we have learned and whom we have become, and apply it in action, full of faith and hope that what God has planned for us will come to be, through the power of His Spirit. We hope to come together, grow closer to God and become more aware of God in our lives. We are being called to be soldiers of Christ and be of service to others.

Confirmation, together with Baptism and Eucharist, constitutes the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. Confirmation is not just one more thing that you need to do before graduation or something to check off a to-do list. Confirmation is part of your faith journey, which is a life-long journey. If faith is part of your life then Confirmation is not an end, but a new beginning. It is a new relationship for you with God, the Church, your family and yourself.

Through the Confirmation preparation process, the Confirmand will grow in knowledge of the Catholic faith and will mature in his or her faith.

In Baptism, you ask the Church to welcome your child into the Body of Christ. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Confirmand will freely ask the Bishop to complete his or her initiation into the Catholic Church. The confirmed young Christian chooses to embrace the faith that was freely given at Baptism.

To be adequately prepared both intellectually and spiritually for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Catholic Church asks that the candidate gain a personal relationship with Jesus and an understanding that he or she belongs to a Church that is both universal and local. This requires that the Confirmand review his or her knowledge of what the Catholic Church teaches, and over prayerful reflection, incorporate this knowledge into his or her personal faith and life. This includes active participation in the Sunday Divine Liturgy at St. George Catholic Church and its Youth Faith Formation and fulfilling all archdiocesan requirements.

Everyone involved in helping you and your child during this sacramental year is praying that this process of formation be a powerful time of faith, hope, and love.

May the Holy Spirit strengthen you and guide you.

God's blessings,

Fr. Paul Nguyen

# Welcome!

There once was a basketball team whose members all struggled with the same thing—no one could slam dunk the ball! So the coach, wanting to help his players out, decided to lower the basket from its regulation 10 feet to 6 feet. Suddenly all his players were dunking the ball! What do you suppose happened the next time they played against a team with players who could already dunk the ball when the basket was at 10 feet?

This year of preparation for Confirmation is going to be challenging. You have lots to do before you receive the Sacrament. The adults working with you know how difficult some of it can be but we're committed to helping you grow in your faith through the challenges you face. Our job isn't to lower the basket for you, but to help you do more than you have previously.

Many people treat Confirmation like a graduation, thinking that they're about to conclude their years of religious education and service in the Church, yet such is not the case. This year you're preparing to join the Church in its mission to proclaim and serve Christ. This is the year to test your commitment to Christ and decide if you want to serve him with the grace of Confirmation.

This booklet explains the Confirmation program in detail. Please keep it in a safe place so you can refer to it throughout the year ahead.

So, are you ready to begin? Yes? Then welcome!

# Is This Right For Me?

## **Do you want to be an active member of the Church?**

### **Do you know what the Church is?**

The Church is a community of people who experience, celebrate and grow in their understanding of God, who is always among us. Christians believe that the Spirit guides the church, constantly reminding its members of the powerful message of Jesus, and giving us the insight and strength to live according to that message.

Is that what you want for your life? Do you demonstrate it by the way you participate in the Church community? Ask yourself these questions,

1. Do I really believe what Jesus teaches?
2. Do I want to worship the Lord every week?
3. Do I pray everyday?
4. Do I get anything out of my practice of the faith?

Throughout this year you have a decision to make---do you want to be Confirmed and is this commitment right for you?

## What Must I Do?

What kind of person do you want to become? We cannot live our life fully and with a clear sense of direction and purpose without asking and answering that question. In addition, what kind of Christian do you want to become? That requires you to develop a habit for the following:

1. To worship the Lord every week. It's all about our relationship with God. We need to gather to praise him in the company of other believers on a regular basis.
2. To continue to learn and think about our faith. Everyone knows how many challenges we face and how often we're tempted to behave in non-Christian ways. It's important that you attend all the Confirmation classes.
3. To develop a habit for helping others. *A habit is a regular pattern of acting.* To become good Catholic Christians it's important that we give our time and energy to helping our parish and our community.

Jesus taught his followers to love and serve one another. So, while we're on the subject, let's take a look at the service hours you'll need to complete this year:

### Service Hours —

First, why are you required to do service hours? The answer is very simple—you're preparing to commit your life to serving Christ and his Church. Your experiences this year will help you understand the commitment you want to make.

So, what type of work will you do?

1. You'll help spread the Gospel message by participating in the Living Stations. The rehearsal schedule and date the stations will be presented will be forthcoming. You'll dedicate 10 hours to this project.
2. You'll help strengthen our parish community by giving a **minimum** of 15 hours to helping in projects such as our August dinner, annual spring cleanup, being an altar server at Mass, helping decorate the Church for Christmas, singing in one of our choirs, etc.
3. Finally, you'll take your faith out into the community by giving a **maximum** of 10 hours to helping organizations in our area, such as the monthly Sunday breakfast at the fire hall or one of the many other civic activities in our area.

### Choose a Sponsor –

A sponsor is a confirmed Catholic adult (16 years of age or older) and is someone who practices their faith, meaning, they attend Mass weekly and receive the sacraments regularly.

### Choose a patron Saint –

Saintly people inspire us by their heroic lives. Confirmation students choose a saint who's life encourages us in some specific way to follow Jesus better. (You will write a two-page paper on your patron saint.)

### Write a letter to the Bishop –

You must write a letter asking the Bishop to Confirm you. In your letter, you'll explain why you want to be confirmed and how you made your decision. Your teacher will help you prepare your letter at the appropriate time.



## More About Service Hours



To help you plan your calendar, here is some information you'll need to know about your service hours:

### LIVING STATIONS (10 hours)

This will be a relatively simple task for you to complete. Rehearsals will be held on Monday evenings prior to the evening when we present the stations.

**Please make sure you look at the calendar in advance and mark the rehearsal and presentation dates in your calendar now!**

### OTHER PARISH SERVICE PROJECTS AVAILABLE (Minimum of 15 hours)

Fall & Spring Clean-up

Christmas Pageant

Decorating the Church for Christmas

Parish Christmas Party

August Dinner

Altar Service (no more than 5 hours)

Festival of Saints

Vacation Bible School

Parish Choirs (Only rehearsals count toward service hours unless you attend more than one Mass on the weekend you sing.)

## What's Coming?

Confirmation reminds us that following Christ means committing ourselves to service and to community. Our program will provide you many opportunities to experience these, especially through the following:

- CONFIRMATION INSCRIPTION MASS – Held in October, this is the first time you will publicly promise to live your faith by being an active member of this parish.

- SOUTHERN MARYLAND YOUTH DAY - Normally held in March, a day of activities, prayer and talks where teens from many parishes gather to explore and celebrate their faith.

CONFIRMATION RETREAT – Normally during your 9th grade session, this will be an opportunity for you to experience high school youth ministry first hand while you look seriously at how prepared you are for the commitment you want to make to the Lord!



## What Must I Know?

At one time (many, many years ago) a young man or woman knelt in front of the bishop. At that moment, the bishop asked the teenager a question about the faith. Every teen was required to answer the question before he or she could be Confirmed. Although it doesn't happen exactly that way any longer, bishops still ask questions at Confirmation Masses.

Here is a list of some of the basics (in addition to what you learned earlier) you'll know before you are confirmed.

- Trinity
- Incarnation
- Redemption
- Ten Commandments
- Beatitudes
- Spiritual and corporal works of mercy
- Seven capital sins
- Human rights
- Right to life
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Definition of a Sacrament
- Sacraments of Christian initiation, healing, and vocation
- Holy days of obligation

- Duties of Catholic Christians
- Theological and moral virtues
- Pentecost
- The effects of Confirmation
- The rite of Confirmation (that means, how you are confirmed, what the Bishop uses to confirm you and what prayer he says).
- Name of our Pope and Bishop
- Four "marks" (characteristics) of the Church
- Liturgical seasons
- The role of a patron saint
- The role of a sponsor
- The meaning of Confirmation
- How Confirmation helps you live the faith
- The divisions of the Bible
- The names of the four gospels
- The story of St. Paul's conversion
- The characteristics of belonging to a Christian community (Acts 2)
- Mortal and venial Sin
- Why we are "required" to attend Mass
- The structure of the Mass
- The meaning of the word "Eucharist"

Also, know the following prayers:

- Sign of the Cross
- Lord's Prayer (Our Father)
- Hail Mary
- Doxology (Glory Be)
- Act of Contrition
- Prayer before meals

## Getting Serious

We know that God loves us—in every book of the Bible God repeats that message. Then, in the gospels Jesus tells his disciples that God always loves us and that he cares for us by giving us special gifts (called grace) so we may respond to His love. We show that we love God when we follow his example.

Many people think of Confirmation as a time when we "become adults". Actually, that is true, but not in the way most people think. Many people think of adulthood as a time when we begin to act as we want. But "acting like we want" is not very adult-like.

When we become "adults" we take on adult responsibilities and commitments. As an "adult Catholic" we decide to participate in the mission of the Church beyond just going to Mass every Sunday.

Our Confirmation preparation program is designed to help you deepen your relationship with the Lord and with the Church. Here is how we'll encourage you —

Deepen your relationship to God through prayer.

Prayer is the first sign that you are serious about your relationship to God. To help you your Confirmation teacher will encourage you to begin and end each class with prayer.

Deepen your relationship to God through scripture.

Reading and studying the scriptures is another sign that you are serious about your commitment to Christ. We'll encourage you to get to know the scripture better by discussing it in class.

Deepen your commitment to the Church through a study of its teachings.

You demonstrate your commitment to Christ's Church by studying what the Church teaches. We'll help you take a deeper look at what our Church believes.

Deepen your ability to talk about your faith with others.

You're preparing to be a "witness" to Christ like the apostles and that means learning to talk about your faith and share your experiences. We'll encourage you in that area by meeting with you two times during the year for spiritual direction.

## Parental Sideline

Parents, the Confirmation program is larger than the 8th grade curriculum. It actually begins in the 7th grade. According to diocesan guidelines and parish policy, Confirmation preparation is conducted in phases:

**PHASE ONE** – Remote Preparation – 7th Grade. During the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students are introduced to themes and ideas integral to the Confirmation program. They are also aided in deepening their commitment to the Church through community service (they must complete 15 service hours). Also, 7<sup>th</sup> graders read and learn about the scriptures, particularly the Gospels. Our goal is to encourage your preteen to think about their commitment to the Lord and to deepen their involvement in the Church.

**PHASE TWO** – Proximate Preparation – 8th grade. During the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students deepen their understanding and their ability to articulate the themes and ideas integral to the Confirmation program. They also are encouraged to see the direct connection between community service and the sacrament they are preparing to receive. In addition, the 8<sup>th</sup> graders continue to read and learn about the scriptures, particularly the New Testament.

Our goal is to encourage your teen to examine the depth of their commitment to the Lord and to the Church before they present themselves for Confirmation.

**PHASE THREE**—Confirmation Extension—Several years ago, the Archdiocese granted special permission to pursue a ‘pilot’ program for the Archdiocese, in which many parish now take part. This is a small extension of catechesis to the Fall of the ninth grade year.

Additionally, before a teen is Confirmed, he or she must complete two consecutive years of religious education (normally the 7<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades). This continuity helps a teen understand our faith more fully.

The Catholic Church believes and teaches that the commitment of Confirmation requires a mature faith –maturity demonstrated through a life dedicated to Christ. Thus, for teens to reach maturity it is vital that they practice the faith with their families routinely. Jesus and the scriptures are very clear about the expectations of discipleship: weekly worship, participation in the ministries of the Church and sacrificial giving. Teens who participate in this way with their families are better prepared for Confirmation. Those who wish to receive the Sacrament must practice their faith (as described above) for a minimum of two consecutive years.

# Deadlines

Along with any assignment given to you by your YFF instructor, several documents will be due throughout the year. Each student is expected to submit the required material on time. A calendar of due dates will be provided.

The following is a list of forms you should expect to turn in:

- Application for Confirmation Form
- Registration Form
- Sponsor Certificate Form

Two-page paper on a Patron Saint

Letter to the Bishop

Service Hour Reports

Mass Attendance Cards

Confirmation Banner

**Please remember that deadlines will be ABSOLUTE. Materials will not be accepted late and no one will be Confirmed who fails to complete the above. Turning documents in on time is a sign of maturity.**

## Assessments

According to the ideal suggested by our Catholic bishops, receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation presumes that the candidate understand and be able to explain the basic content of our faith. Of course we struggle to balance that with encouraging our teens so they receive the Sacrament joyfully, prayerfully and enthusiastically. This does not mean that understanding our faith and enthusiastic acceptance of faith are mutually exclusive realities. Our ideal is to develop a Confirmation program that educates and excites our young people.

Understanding and developing an ability to express our faith is a critical element of growing in Christian maturity. This is part of an adolescent's sincere, growing relationship with our loving God, and their deepening commitment to sharing and celebrating their faith with others in the church community. To further that end we will administer 2 written tests in 7th grade and 3 written tests in 8th grade, hoping that it will help your teen take their faith seriously and give us an indicator of where we might need to reinforce the basics of our faith. Students must receive an 80% or higher in order to pass these assessments.

## Interviews & Guidance

Two interviews and spiritual direction are part of the Confirmation program.

There are specific goals for each:

- Entrance Interview — The purpose of this interview is to welcome your teen into the Confirmation program, to explain the process of preparing for the Sacrament and to answer any questions your teen may have. Additionally your teen should be able to recite our basic Catholic prayers.

- Exit Interview — The purpose of this interview is to help your teen review his/her knowledge of the content of our faith, and to invite them to express a firm desire to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Our goal is also to help your teen discern how best to use the grace he/she will receive through the Sacrament.