



# St. Odilia

## Confirmation Handbook

*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.*

~ From the *Laying on of Hands* during the Rite of Confirmation.





**Welcome!** We are looking forward to sharing this journey of faith with you, as you prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. As you will see, Confirmation preparation involves learning, sharing, serving, fellowship, spiritual growth and fun! You will be given the opportunity to learn more about your Catholic faith and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

## What is Confirmation?

*The Sacrament of Confirmation strengthens the baptized and obliges them more firmly to be witnesses of Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith. It imprints a character, enriches by the gift of the Holy Spirit the baptized continuing on the path of Christian initiation, and binds them more perfectly to the Church.” ~ Canon Law, 879*

As much as we think of Confirmation as a rite of passage, or as a transformation of ‘child’ Catholics into ‘adult’ Catholics, it is neither. Confirmation is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a *strengthening* in that same spirit. Through preparation and the Sacrament, we are imprinted with a Christ-like character and bound to walk his way of life.

Confirmation is the Sacrament in which one is enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church. It strengthens us and obliges us to be witnesses to Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith. It is the Sacrament in which one enters into full membership in the Catholic Church.

Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives us the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply as children of God, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us to bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds. Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a spiritual mark or indelible character on the Christian soul; for this reason one can receive this sacrament only once.





When we are imprinted with this character, we feel the lasting effects. A Christian does not live as a child of God through his or her own efforts alone, but through the grace of God. We see this in a practical way when we look back on our own lives and the lives of others, even the lives of saints. Therefore, it is our duty to seek the grace that God offers us in order to live our lives as Christians in the way that God intends.

## What Happens at Confirmation?

*And suddenly there came from the sky a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. ~ Acts 2:2-3*

Confirmation is not just a symbol of a spiritual reality—it actually is an effect of what it symbolizes. In Confirmation, our senses are fully engaged: We see the bishop’s hand raise in anointing. The candidate feels and smells the chrism, or sacramental oil, and hears the bishop proclaim, “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”

What we physically see, hear, feel, and smell in Confirmation is an anointing, a sealing with the Holy Spirit. These visible elements are not merely symbolic. Working through what is visible, the same Holy Spirit who was poured out upon the apostles at Pentecost makes a home in the newly confirmed person’s soul.

## What is Required?

*“Faith is a gift, the Holy Spirit is a gift, and Sacraments celebrate the unmerited grace of God. Confirmation celebrates what God does, not what teens have shouldered.”*

~ Rev. Paul Turner, Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions





To receive Confirmation, our Church recognizes a baptized person needs to be:

- \* Suitably instructed
- \* Properly disposed
- \* Able to renew baptismal promises

This means preparation through:

- \* Catechesis—Learning about the Church
- \* Faith Formation—Connecting the teachings of the Church to our lives
- \* Reconciliation—The candidate must be in the state of grace
- \* Practicing more intense prayer
- \* Attending Mass regularly
- \* Service to the Church and the wider community
- \* Selecting a sponsor

It is through these integral parts of preparation that we are able to see the Holy Spirit at work in our lives and truly open our hearts to the gift of Confirmation.





## How will St. Odilia's Youth Prepare for Confirmation?

### The Structure of the Process

*Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." ~ John 14:5-6*

This is the lofty goal of St. Odilia Confirmation Preparation: to offer an encounter, and ultimately a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, his Son. We invite candidates to an encounter, show them the truths our Church teaches, and send them in the way of Christ.

### The Necessary Components of the Process

#### Faith Formation: Catechesis and Spiritual Growth

In order to be properly disposed for Confirmation, it is absolutely necessary for candidates' hearts *and* minds to be engaged. It is for this reason that we have selected a Confirmation curriculum called **Chosen**. *Chosen* offers a mix of catechesis, small group discussion, and up-to-date videos which are meant to enrich a young person's relationship with God and simultaneously build his or her knowledge of the Church.

Faith Formation students will attend *Chosen* sessions on two Wednesday evenings a month for catechesis. Students who attend (or graduated from) St. Odilia School will receive or have received their *Chosen* catechesis during the school day in their religion classes. Both Faith Formation and St. Odilia School students will attend one *Chosen* Sunday evening per month.

Here are some of the topics covered in the *Chosen* series:

- \* Existence of God
- \* Scripture
- \* Divine Revelation
- \* The Person and Mission of Christ
- \* Why Be Catholic?
- \* Sacraments, especially the Sacraments of Initiation
- \* The Trinity





- \* Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- \* Prayer
- \* Mary
- \* Beatitudes
- \* Love, Sex, and Marriage
- \* Vocation

### Service

*“Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words.”*

~ Attributed to St. Francis of Assisi

In addition to our hearts and minds, our hands must also be engaged. Service and justice are integral parts of our Catholic Christian faith. As candidates for Confirmation, ministry and service experiences are essential elements in preparing for the Sacrament and are meant to assist in making you aware of the importance they hold in our faith. It is through service that we become Christ to others and see Christ *in* others.

Candidates will be expected to complete two service requirements. The first will be an ‘in-house’ large-group project in which all candidates will participate together. The second will be led by individual catechists in their small groups (consisting of about ten candidates). Each small group will complete this service project as organized and scheduled by their catechist. Families will be notified in advance of specific service project dates.

### Prayer

*“Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts.”* ~ Saint Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa)

In order to hear God’s voice, candidates are asked to engage in more intense prayer through:

- \* Daily Prayer

Daily prayer, even just for a few minutes, helps form a relationship. Just as friends cannot remain close without communication, it is impossible to allow one to feel close to God without talking to him each day. When He is a friend, prayer





becomes less of a burden and more something to look forward to each day. If candidates are not already in this practice, they are encouraged to start. The Confirmation team is ready to offer support and ideas.

\* **Attending Mass**

Mass, like prayer, when seen as a way to connect to Christ and his Church, is a gift rather than a burden. When we go to Mass with an open heart, we are receiving Christ and taking him into our world. Mass attendance is expected of all students.

\* **Attending Classes**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to notify the Coordinator of any absences. Absences may be excused in cases of illness/injury/health issues or emergency situations. The Coordinator will determine whether an absence is excused. An excess of unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the program. More than two (2) excused Sunday absences, or three (3) Wednesday absences, may result in a requested meeting with the Coordinator to discuss the situation.

**Retreat**

A retreat is an essential part of preparation. Retreats provide a unique opportunity for the candidates to spend an extended time in discernment. It is time set aside from the busy routine of life for candidates to reflect on the gifts of the Spirit, on their relationship with God, and on their faith life, and to hear stories from others about their faith. Each candidate is required to attend a Confirmation retreat hosted by the parish. A registration link will be on the Confirmation page of the parish website.

There will be two retreat dates from which to choose: November 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, and February 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>. The online registration for the retreat dates can be accessed from the parish website if you have not already done so.

**Choosing a Sponsor**

Each candidate is to have one sponsor who is:

- \* At least 16 years old and sufficiently mature for this role





- \* A fully initiated Catholic (Baptized, First Communion, Confirmed)
- \* A practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church

The sponsor must be someone who can:

- \* Be a representative of the Catholic Faith Community
- \* Act as a role model and witness
- \* Be of support to the candidate, and the parents and guardians on the faith journey
- \* Pray with and for the candidate

The sponsor would ordinarily be encouraged to attend the Rite of Sending with the candidate. **However, as the Confirmation Mass will be held at St. Odilia this year, there will be no Rite of Sending.** Candidates and sponsors are encouraged to meet outside of class and discuss issues relevant to the candidate's spiritual journey. Discussion questions and review materials will be sent periodically.

### Choosing a Confirmation Name

The name given to you at baptism carries deep meaning. The name one receives is a name for eternity, and one by which God calls each of us. Using your baptismal name at Confirmation also signifies the association between baptism and Confirmation.

However, the practice of taking on a new name has deep roots in our tradition. It is done to show a new role, and can be traced back to the Old Testament. Abram (father of many) changed his name to Abraham (father of many nations). In the New Testament, Simon (reed) changed his name to Peter (rock), and Saul became Paul.

It is for these reasons that the candidate will be free to decide if he/she would like to choose a Confirmation name.





### Letter to the Pastor

After discerning if he/she is ready to receive the sacrament, each candidate will write a letter to the pastor indicating his or her readiness for the sacrament of Confirmation. Letters should be at least 2/3 of a page (not counting headings), but no longer than 2 pages in length. They should be typed (standard font/size used in school) or in very neat handwriting, and should answer the following questions:

- Why do you want to be confirmed?
- Why do you feel you are ready to be confirmed?
- How do you plan to be involved in the church after confirmation?

Letters will be collected at the beginning of class on Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup>. Students of St. Odilia School may hand in their letters to their teachers if they wish.

### Interviews

Interviews are an integral part of Confirmation preparation and provide a useful tool in assessing the growth and readiness of the candidate. It is an opportunity for the small group leader to evaluate the candidate's attitude regarding the Confirmation process, and the spiritual growth of the candidate through the process.

Interviews are tentatively scheduled for May 1<sup>st</sup> and May 8<sup>th</sup>. (Students will be asked to interview on only one of those two dates.) Catechists/group leaders will let their students know in advance what day and time their interview is scheduled for. Interviews are approximately ten (10) minutes in length.





## The Roles in the Process

### Candidates

Candidates are asked to do one thing: to open their hearts and minds to the Holy Spirit and the experience of Confirmation. This means attending each event and participating as fully as possible. This also means dedicating themselves to prayer, as a relationship with God is the basis for a life in the Church.

### Parents

*“Parents are not only the ‘primary educators’ of their children; they are also the ‘first heralds of the gospel.’ Parents provide a child’s first glimpse of the unconditional love that is at the heart of the gospel. They are also the first to show their children, by example, what it means to be a disciple of the Lord. For better or worse, a teen’s faith tends to mimic that of Mom and Dad.”*

~ Chosen Leader’s Handbook, Page VI

Parents are asked to be as involved in the Confirmation process as possible. They should expect to:

- \* Worship with your families regularly
- \* Be actively involved in the Confirmation preparation of the candidate
- \* Engage in discussions about the material being studied including sharing your understanding and perspective
- \* Encourage your child to reflect and thoughtfully consider the decision to receive the sacrament of Confirmation
- \* Support and encourage completion of assignments, activities and expectations
- \* Emphasize the importance of the sacrament of Confirmation by taking an active part in the celebration of Confirmation
- \* Assist in retreats, service work, meetings, classes, spiritual events and social events
- \* Faithfully bring your child (and when necessary yourself) to meetings, programs, and prayer services that are planned to help your child prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation





Most importantly, remember that you are a model of faith for your child.  
Pray for your child's spiritual growth every day

### Sponsors

The most important role for the Sponsor is to be a “spiritual help” to your candidate. Their primary mission is to ensure that the candidate is genuinely ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and to live out the mission that comes with it.

This role includes:

- \* Praying daily for his or her candidate, and reminding the candidate that they're doing so
- \* Encouraging his or her candidate to pray daily
- \* Supporting the parents of the candidate
- \* Supporting the candidate's *lifelong* faith journey

### Small Group Leaders

Their responsibility is not only to teach, but to help the candidates form into disciples. Their constant presence at Confirmation events and sessions, and their tireless prayer for the candidates, is invaluable.

### Parish Community

The parish community is called to fulfill the promises made at the candidates' baptisms. Members of the parish are here to pray for and support the candidates and their families with their presence and continuing prayer. The Rite of Sending will take place within a parish Mass setting for this reason. It is a time of celebration for the whole community!



# Confirmation Calendar

## **Sunday Evening Chosen Confirmation Sessions** (7:00 – 9:00 PM)

October 7 \* November 4 \* December 2  
January 13 \* February 10 \* March 31

## **Wednesday Evening Chosen Confirmation Sessions** (6:30 – 8:00 PM)

(For Candidates *not* currently attending St. Odilia School)

September 26 \* October 10, 24 \* November 14, 28 \* December 12, 19  
January 16, 30 \* February 13, 20, 27 \* March 27 \* April 3, 17, 24

## **Faith Spark Youth Ministry Nights** (6:30 – 8:00 PM)

September 19 \* October 3 \* November 7 \* December 5 \* January 9  
February 6 \* March 6 \* April 10 \* May 1

## **Parent-Child Orientation Retreat** (12:30 – 5:00 PM)

Option #1: August 25  
Option #2: October 6

## **Confirmation Retreat Weekends**

Option #1: November 9 – 11  
Option #2: February 15 – 17

## **Confirmation Liturgy**

**Held at St. Odilia**

Tuesday, May 21 at 7:00 PM



# Confirmation Checklist

## Requirements

## Due Dates

Submit the Code of Conduct

Bring signed forms to class on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>

Select a Confirmation name

Due by Dec. 21<sup>st\*</sup>

Choose a sponsor

Due by Dec. 21<sup>st\*</sup>

Submit sacramental information

Due by Dec. 21<sup>st\*</sup>

Fulfill all service project requirements

Due by Mar. 29<sup>th</sup>

Write a Letter of Intent to Fr. Rask

Bring completed letters to class on March 31<sup>st</sup>

Complete the interview with catechist

Tentatively scheduled for May 1<sup>st</sup> and May 8<sup>th</sup>

*\*There will be an online registration form available to collect this information. It will include required fields for Confirmation name, sponsor (including contact info) and sacramental information. Completion of this form will be due by Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>.*



# Confirmation Curriculum Schedule, Part I

September 26 <sup>th</sup>	Guest Speaker / Icebreaker Activities
October 7 <sup>th</sup>	Guest Speaker / Discussion Questions
October 10 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 1 – “Why am I here?” Lesson 2 – “What makes me happy?”
October 24 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 3 – “What’s your story, God?”
November 4 <sup>th</sup>	“My Neighbor” & “Being Catholic in the World” (A LifeTeen Look at Social Justice)
November 14 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 4 – “How do I know God is real?” <i>OPCY Presentation</i>
November 28 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 5 – “Who is Jesus?”
December 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>Large Group Service Project</i>
December 12 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 6 – “Why be Catholic?”
December 19 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 7 – “Where am I going?”
January 13 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Mini-Retreat</i>
January 16 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 8 – “How do I get there?”
January 30 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 9 – “When did my journey begin?”



# Confirmation Curriculum Schedule, Part II

February 10 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Ministry Fair</i>
February 13 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 12 – “Who is the Holy Spirit?”
February 20 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 13 – “What does the Holy Spirit do for me?”
February 27 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 14 – “Why have I been Chosen?”
March 27 <sup>th</sup>	“Making More, Making a Difference” (A Lenten Reflection)
March 31 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Guest Speaker</i>
April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Reconciliation Service</i> / Lesson 10 – “Why tell my sins to a priest?”
April 17 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Stations of the Cross</i> “The Triduum – Life, Death & Resurrection” (What is Holy Week and Why is it Important?)
April 24 <sup>th</sup>	Lesson 15 – “Why do I have to go to Mass?”
May 1 <sup>st</sup> & May 8 <sup>th</sup>	Catechist Interviews (tentative)
Possible take-home assignments:	Lesson 20 – “What would Jesus do?” Lesson 23 – “How do I build the kingdom?”

