

ST. MICHAEL'S-MAHNOMEN, ST. JOSEPH'S-BEAULIEU, ST. ANNE'S-NAYTAHWAUSH

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

Confirmation is an important Sacrament in the life of every baptized Christian. This is a serious step a young Catholic takes that needs intensive preparation. During this preparation period, we, as a community like to assist the candidate to achieve a certain level of Christian maturity, commitment and a steady relationship with God.

Three Year Program

Confirmation preparation normally begins when the candidate is in 9th grade and the Sacrament is celebrated when the candidate is in the 11th Grade. A three year program is planned for the candidates where they will have an opportunity to deepen their Catholic Faith by using the text book: **Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, Decision Point, Theology of the Body** and the **Altaration** DVD series. Students will also have opportunities to participate in Masses, Teen Nights, Stations of the Cross, Soup Suppers and Penitential Services. We encourage parents to help enrich this preparation process by regularly attending Mass with them, and you are always welcome to join in on classes and Teen Nights. We are never too old to learn or deepen our own faith!

Since the earliest days of the Church the metaphor of planting, nurturing and the blooming of a plant has been used to clarify the movements of a life of faith. Keep the metaphor in mind as the rest of Confirmation process is explained:

First Year Preparation

In the First Year, the candidates begin the "Invitation Period". The "Invitation Period" can be thought of as tilling the soil. In this step the candidates seriously reflect about his or her faith, using the first part of the Catholic Faith Hand Book: **The Creed**. With classroom group teaching and activities, we consider what we really believe as Christians.

Second Year Preparation

The next step begins with the "Formation Period". During this time the candidates are called to be active in their faith journey. This period is likened to planting the seed. The candidates will learn and reflect upon the second part of the Catholic Faith Hand Book: **Christian Morality**.

Third Year Preparation

In the final year, the candidates enter a "Period of Reflection". They will learn and reflect upon the third part of the Catholic Faith Handbook: **The Sacraments**. The main focus will be on the Sacrament of Confirmation. It will be a rewarding time for them to be awakened to the gift of the Holy Spirit, His assistance in our lives, and especially in the process of decision making. We believe that the Spirit of God will connect them with the rest of the Church in a very real way. The Period of Reflection is considered to be a time of tending and nurturing the plants that have grown from the seeds planted earlier. Once again the involvement of the parish community is very important with the help of parents and volunteers.

At the end of the period of Reflection, the candidates are confirmed in a Mass celebrated by the Bishop of the Diocese of Crookston. **Confirmation is not a graduation ritual**; it is instead a very real opportunity to be in communion with our brothers and sisters in Christ and to actively participate in the life of Christian community as a member of the family.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE CANDIDATES?

- Fill out the Confirmation Registration Form when in 9th Grade.
- If you were baptized outside of St. Michael's, Mahnomen or St. Joseph's, Beaulieu Catholic Churches, you will need to submit a copy of your baptism certificate.
- Attend and participate in all Confirmation Classes regularly. Being absent more than three times in a year will require alternative learning.
- As a baptized Catholic, you are expected to participate in the weekend Masses, Holy Days of Obligation and Community Reconciliation Services during the Advent and Lenten seasons.
- Choose a sponsor using the guidelines.
- Complete the Candidate / Sponsor Questions by March 31st (these are a series of questions handed out that should be done together with sponsor or parent.)
- Complete a minimum of 10 hours of Christian Service per year. A form needs to be filled out for each service completed and signed by the person supervising the service.
- Participate in at least one Youth Rally within the **3 year period**, one Retreat during your second or third year, and all youth programs organized in the parish.
- Pick a confirmation patron/name saint by March 31st - (your first year - freshman.)
- Write a reflection paper about your confirmation patron/name saint by March 31st - (your second year - sophomores.)
- Write a letter to the Bishop of Crookston requesting him to confirm you and present the letter to your teacher by December 15th - (your third year - Juniors.)
- Have an interview with the Confirmation Team in the spring of your third year of preparation.

Confirmation Sponsor Guidelines

Your Sponsor should be:

- At least 18 years of age
- Fully initiated into the Church (celebrated Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist)
- A practicing member of a Catholic Parish community
- Could be one of your baptismal godparents
- Parent's MAY NOT be your sponsor
- Must be able to walk the journey of faith with the candidate (i.e. regularly communicate with you, pray for you and attend required Confirmation sessions).

What is Christian Service?

Christian Service is anything done for someone else that was not rewarded with any type of payment or benefit. As long as a reflection can be written about how Christ was present in the work, it is valid service work. Christian service should always be directed to build up and better the Christian community. A candidate is expected to do at least 10 hours - (5 hours in the church) of Christian service every year, and is asked to tithe of one's financial resources also.

Confirmation Patron/Name Saints

- Preferably one of the baptismal names, if they are saints
- A paper on the life of your saint is needed - the paper should include the Birth and Death date of your saint (if available), What your particular saint is known for, a brief description of their life/how they became a saint and how you can imitate the life of your patron saint.

Retreat Opportunities

NET Retreats:

There are retreats available at the Net Center in West St. Paul. Information and dates can be found on their website - www.netusa.org/confirmation. Also, there are some parishes within our Diocese that will be holding Net Retreats. I will be giving out that information as I receive it.

TEC Retreats

Agassiz Valley TEC: Dates, locations and applications can be found online at www.agassizvalleytec.com
Central MN TEC: Dates, location and applications can be found online at www.cmtec.org

What is expected of the Sponsor?

A Sponsor will be called upon to participate in the following duties:

- Commit yourself to pray for your candidate and whenever you have meetings with your candidate pray with him / her.
- Regularly communicate with your candidate.
- At your meetings with the candidate, discuss the topics on faith, clarify his / her doubts and help your candidate with Confirmation projects and activities.
- Write a brief letter to your candidate, telling what the talents and gifts of your candidate are and encourage them to use them for building up a bright future. The candidates will receive this letter at the rehearsal session for the rite of Confirmation.
- Sponsors are welcome to attend the Confirmation sessions with the candidates on Wednesday evenings.

Qualities of a Sponsor

You are not expected to be all-knowing or all-perfect. But as a sponsor, here are a few qualities that your candidate can expect from you.

- **Hospitable.** A sponsor must be a welcoming and inclusive person – a host. The sponsor needs to be open to accepting and discovering the person and the gifts – sometimes hidden – of his or her candidate. Your personal welcome helps the candidate discover both the comfort and the challenge offered by the community of faith. You can help establish a sense of belonging in your candidate.
- **Prayerful.** By being a person of prayer – willing to pray and trying to pray – you will be a person responsive to the needs of your candidate and to the messages of the Holy Spirit.
- **Respectful.** As a sponsor, you need to remain open and considerate. You need to value and esteem the opinions, ideas, gifts, talents, hopes, fears, and feelings of your candidate. You also need to show that respect by treating the sharing you and your candidate do with confidentiality.
- **Generosity.** In the hustle and bustle of today, just to be a sponsor takes a certain generosity. You will be called upon to be generous with many precious commodities – time, talent, patience and prayer. Your candidate needs to see and experience your faith.
- **Faithfulness.** Your faith must be steadfast, seeking, open, and growing. The community is made up of people on the way – people who have not yet arrived! We are all asked to walk our journey of faith, believing that in asking we shall be given, in seeking we shall find, and in knocking it shall be opened. That makes it abundantly clear that your faith is *alive*.

PRAYERS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Breath into me
Holy Spirit,
that my thoughts
may all be holy.

Move in me, Holy Spirit,
that my work too,
may be holy.

Attract my heart,
Holy Spirit,
that I may love only
what is holy.

Strengthen me,
Holy Spirit,
that I may defend all
that is holy.

Protect me, Holy Spirit,
that I always may be holy.

Amen.



Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful
and enkindle in them
the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit,
O Lord,
and you shall renew
the face of the earth.
Amen.