

# *ST. BARBARA PARISH*

138 Cambridge Road

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## *CONFIRMATION HANDBOOK*

*Updated September 2017*

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Welcome G9-10 Parents & Confirmation Students!

Confirmation formation begins in Grade 9 and concludes with the reception of the Sacrament in Grade 10. The goal of the ministry is to ensure an experience that our young people, their parents and sponsors will find both engaging and meaningful. The success of the program is dependent on dedicated volunteer catechists, retreat facilitators, speakers, parents and the faith community into which the candidates are being initiated.

The curriculum is specifically designed to address the spiritual and emotional needs of this age group. By focusing on several components such as: The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, scripture, canon law, theology of the body and apostolic service projects, the Confirmation candidate is well-prepared to take an active role as a parishioner always ready to defend his/her faith by spreading the Word of God.

To fruitfully prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation, your child must participate in:

- Class meetings/Assignments
- 4-hour retreat
- Apostolic Service Projects
- Presentation of Candidates Mass
- Reconciliation/Confession
- Confirmation Rehearsal Mass of Confirmation
- A review of this Confirmation Handbook will ensure you have all the most up-to-date and relevant information. Do not hesitate to contact me if you should have additional questions, concerns or feedback. We look forward to partnering with you in nurturing your child's relationship with Jesus Christ through His church.

Sincerely,  
Maureen Ward

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Confirmation is first and foremost one of the three Sacraments of Initiation. Preparation for and celebration of this Sacrament of Initiation provides our candidates with an opportunity to affirm the faith into which they were baptized and to experience again and be open to the sign of God's grace in their lives. Confirmation also bolsters our appreciation of God's involvement in our lives by helping us recognize the action of the Gifts of the Spirit within us. It offers us opportunities to experience the spiritual strength from the Christian Community. It also helps us identify with the mission and ministry of the Church by choosing to be responsible for that mission and ministry as maturing, spirit-filled defenders of our Catholic faith.

## **WHO MAY BE CONFIRMED**

To be confirmed, one must:

- Anyone who desires to be Confirmed! Please see a staff member if you have questions.
- Be a baptized person who has not been confirmed.
- Be entering the ninth and tenth grades.
- Have received Roman Catholic religious instruction from grade one, including religious education during the last two years prior to the reception of the sacrament, with an adequate attendance record. Normally, this will mean enrollment in a parish school or a parish religious education program or private Catholic school with supplemental parish preparation.
- Give evidence of knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities of being a member of the Catholic Church, as well as some appreciation of sacramental life, with a sincere desire to receive the sacrament.
- Have completed the requirements..

## **CONFIRMATION; MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS**

- Provide a valid Catholic Baptismal certificate to the Parish office. If candidate was not baptized at St. Barbara's Parish, please provide office with a copy of his/her Baptismal certificate.
- Complete all necessary forms: Contact information, Confirmation pledge form, verification of sponsor form, apostolic hours form, chosen saint paper, reflection paper and more.
- Regular attendance and full participation in the two-year program of study.

## **ROLE OF THE CANDIDATE PREPARING FOR CONFIRMATION**

- Be fully committed to the program by signing the Confirmation Pledge Form.
- Be practicing his/her faith and developing a prayer life.
- Participate in attending Mass and receiving the sacraments, of Eucharist and Reconciliation regularly, which opens our hearts to God's Grace.
- Be aware of the initiation aspects of the sacrament of Confirmation and be committed to continuing the faithful practice and study of his/her Catholic faith.
- Participate in the Confirmation program, including Reconciliation, the performance of apostolic service, attendance at our evening retreat and all classes.

## **HOW THE CONFIRMATION DATE IS CHOSEN**

Confirmation dates are set by the Archdiocese of Boston Planning Office (RCAB). Given the vast number of parishes and scheduling of the Bishops, the logistics of planning are significant.

A parish is given three possible dates as to when Confirmation will be held. Once received, the dates are sent to parents to "hold the date" for the ceremony. The final date is sent to parents immediately once known.

Typically, Confirmation is held in March/April or May of each year. The date cannot be changed once given to the parish. Rehearsals are held Sunday, Monday and/or Friday before the Confirmation. While three rehearsals are scheduled, only two may be required if the candidates are exceedingly well - prepared. A prepared candidate will allow staff to run an efficient and organized rehearsal. Candidates participating in Mass as readers are advised to prepare and practice starting three weeks before the first rehearsal. Specific rehearsal logistics will be sent to students approximately one month before the ceremony. Parents should review with both the candidate and sponsor in advance of the first rehearsal.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND EXPECTATIONS**

Our purpose is to provide the finest religious education possible for all of our Confirmation candidates. To achieve this goal, we require certain standards of behavior where courtesy and responsibility are important.

Respect for yourself and others is mandatory and should be a part of everyday behavior not only in Religious Education classes, but also outside class. Please keep your hands to yourself. Refrain from making negative comments to or about classmates, teachers or topics in general. Bullying of any sort, verbal or physical will not be tolerated.

Parents will be contacted immediately if any student in G9 - G10 is acting disrespectfully towards other students, teachers, staff members or Parish property. Problems may arise which will require DRE intervention. If your child is having a behavior problem during class the Catechist and Director will speak with him/her directly. If the problem continues, the parent will be asked to come in for a meeting with his/her child. If the problem cannot be resolved, we will meet as a team to come up with a plan that is better suited to your child's learning needs and environment.

Parish students will:

- **Be considerate, courteous and respectful.** Please keep your hands to yourself. Refrain from making negative comments to or about classmates, teachers or topics in general. The use of vulgar language and bullying of any sort, verbal or physical will not be tolerated.
- **Cell phones, Ipods and texting.** Both are inappropriate in the classroom setting. If a student wishes to ignore this rule, his/her cell phone/Ipod will be taken away for the duration of the class and a parent will be notified.
- **Pay attention to their catechists and presenters.** Students will listen and raise hand to be called on to speak unless, of course, they are working together on a project. Cross-talking is a distraction and clearly shows disrespect for all.
- **Be on time and prepared for class.** Bring your assignments only. Writing instruments will be provided.
- **No food or drink in the classrooms.** Students are not allowed to bring food into the classrooms. There are a number of students with life-threatening allergies!
- **Use a soft voice and walk at all times.** No screaming or running.
- **Handling problems.** Students should feel comfortable bringing any and all concerns to the Catechetical Associate or the Director of Religious Education.

## **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Be fully committed to the program by signing the Confirmation Pledge Form.
- Recognize that they are the primary religious educators of their child.
- Be responsible for initiating their child into the sacramental life.
- Serve as role models of Gospel values for their children.
- Worship with their family on a regular basis.
- Nurture their family in the faith.
- Encourage their child to reflect on and thoughtfully consider the decision to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Attend the Parent Information Meeting, Reconciliation, Presentation of Candidates Mass and any other events planned to help their child prepare for Confirmation.
- Assist their child with the immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation through prayer, study and apostolic service work.
- Emphasize the importance of the Sacrament of Confirmation by taking an active part in the celebration of Confirmation.
- Stress the initiation aspect of the sacrament by encouraging their children to continue learning more about their faith.
- Help their child in understanding that the acts of apostolic service they perform should be a beginning to a life committed to Catholic Christian service.

## **CHOOSING A SPONSOR ~ RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES**

The sponsor is an invaluable assistant to parents in transmitting the faith. The sponsor needs to be able to fulfill several requirements:

- The Church requires the sponsor be an active, practicing Catholic, 16 years of age or older, male or female, who attends Sunday Mass on a regular basis and has already celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Church recognizes that the person cannot transmit what the person does not have.
- It is important that the sponsor be mature, more informed and experienced in the ways of our faith and culture than the candidate. He/she should strive to be an example of wholesome Christian living and embrace the moral teachings of the Catholic Church.
- The sponsor should be a person who already has a trusting relationship with the candidate such as an older friend or relative in whom the candidate can confide.
- The sponsor may not be a parent of the candidate.
- It is recommended that the sponsor be an older person who has some experience with his or her faith and hence a clearer perspective from which to speak.
- The sponsor needs to be willing to make a commitment to continue the faith journey with the candidate after the celebration of Confirmation.
- The sponsor presents the candidate to the Bishop during the Confirmation Mass.
- The sponsor is asked to accompany the candidate to rehearsal prior to the Confirmation Mass. If a sponsor can not attend a parent must attend in their place.

*Note: Not compulsory for G9 candidates in their first year.*

## **CHOOSING A SAINT - Grade 9 (DUE JAN. 31, 2018)**

In the student packet you will find a form that asks you to research your patron saint. Ask this saint of your choosing to be your patron/patroness to help you prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation and afterwards to be your helpmate in your Catholic Christian journey. You can honor this saint through prayer and meditation. You may also call upon him/her to intercede to God for you when you feel that you are having some trying moments.

## **CHOOSING A CONFIRMATION NAME**

Your Confirmation is an opportunity to enter into a deeper relationship with God and with the Church. One Confirmation tradition is to choose the name of a saint to symbolize this new relationship. During the Confirmation Mass the Bishop will call you by your new "Confirmation Name".

The saint's name will symbolize a new beginning in your faith life and a connection with that particular saint. This would be especially true if you felt that you have not been strong in your faith and are now making a renewed commitment to your faith. Your commitment would be symbolized with the taking of a new name to show that you are in some ways now a new person. This new name would be used after your present middle name and before your last name.

The particular saint's name that you choose will represent the direction you feel your faith life is taking or will represent a strength or attribute you feel you need. It is important and necessary to learn something about the saint you choose before you decide on that name.

This option of taking a new name is not to be used just because you like the sound of that name, how it fits with your other names or because it is the name of a friend or relative. Take great care in making your choice.

## **NEW SPIRIT RETREAT**

The annual New Spirit Confirmation Retreat has been specifically created for our G10 candidates. All G10 Confirmation candidates must clearly understand that **attendance is mandatory to receive Confirmation.**

The retreat is scheduled for **December 13, 2017** and will begin promptly at 5pm and end at 9pm. Per the retreat provider, students must arrive no later than **4:45pm** as the doors will **close at 5pm** in order that we may start on time with no distractions. Pizza & drinks will be provided.

The New Spirit facilitators travel a great distance to lead us in this retreat and we must be respectful of their time.

This retreat is only presented once, therefore it is considered mandatory. If a candidate finds that he/she is unable to attend the retreat due to unforeseen or extenuating circumstances, it will be up to the candidate to locate another retreat and complete prior to December 31st. The retreat fee that was included in the registration fee will be forfeited and the candidate will be required to expend another fee to attend elsewhere. Proof of attendance at another retreat is a requirement and must be handed in to the Confirmation coordinator.

**THE CANDIDATE MUST ATTEND THE MAKE-UP RETREAT NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 31<sup>st</sup> of this year to be Confirmed.**

## **RECONCILIATION**

In order to receive Confirmation, a candidate must be in the state of grace. This means that the candidate is required to confess and be absolved from his/her sins. During the course of catechesis the Ten Commandments will be our guide as we try to discern sin in our everyday lives.

On the scheduled days, students will first go downstairs to the hall and sign in. Upon sign student will proceed upstairs and walk quietly to the back of the church while awaiting their turn. There will be several priests in attendance.

Parents are most welcome to make their own, personal reconciliation with a priest of their choice

during this time. It is also advisable to review The Ten Commandments with your child at home.



## **PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES**

At the Presentation of Candidates Mass the Confirmandi are introduced to the parishioners and a declaration is made attesting to their readiness to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. The sponsor and parents attend the Presentation of Candidates. See Dress Code for Presentation & Confirmation.

## **CONFIRMATION MASS REHEARSAL**

Prior to the Confirmation Mass, there will be one mandatory rehearsal. Sponsors or parent must be in attendance for rehearsals. If a sponsor does not live in close proximity, a parent may attend with the candidate. During the rehearsals we will go through the entire Mass, including the procession from the lower level up to the Church proper.

## **RITE OF CONFIRMATION**

Candidates and sponsors are required to come to the Church no later than 9:15am as there is much to do. Gowns will be handed out and put on, Father and the conferring Bishop will come downstairs to address the candidates. Please sit in your assigned seat. Please do not bring bags, jackets, phones or other devices with you to the hall – please give to a family member to hold. Candidates will take their positions in line to formally process upstairs for the Confirmation Mass.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY**

Please note that all forms of picture taking are a distraction to the Sacrament of Confirmation. To that end, our Pastor does recognize the desire of the family to capture the moment and preserve it on film. Therefore, Father and the Bishop will be available to take pictures once the Mass has ended. Everyone will have an opportunity to be photographed.

## **APOSTOLIC SERVICE HOURS**

*"I, your Lord and Teacher, have just washed your feet. You, then, should wash one another's feet. I have set an example for you so that you will do just what I have done for you" (John 13, 14-15)*

Programs which prepare the young to receive the sacrament of confirmation hold the serving aspect of discipleship to be a very important part of following Jesus as Lord. For this reason, all candidates for the sacrament are expected to experience moments of service during the course of their preparation for Confirmation and should be seen as an essential part of the candidates' formation in discipleship.

Candidates are urged to begin thinking about their apostolic service immediately following 8<sup>th</sup> grade. As they prepare for confirmation they will want to use their gifts to serve others. Their attitudes and actions will indicate how they are growing in their love for Christ. Christian service should reach out beyond the family circle to the larger community. With that in mind, we require a **minimum of twenty hours of apostolic service to be completed by December 31<sup>st</sup> for Confirmation (10 in G9, 10 in G10).**

Apostolic service may be fulfilled through various service sites. It is important that your choice of service be something specific and practical that you can do for others. That it involves using your skills and talents to meet a real need in the parish or the neighborhood and that it is something you give time and effort to outside of your everyday responsibilities.

Apostolic Service should follow the Corporal Works of Mercy. If you can answer 'yes' to any of the Corporal Works of Mercy then you are performing Apostolic Service. If you volunteered at a Catholic Organization, Gathering Change Ink or BKP your volunteer hours will count for service.

Please know Apostolic Service differs from Community Service. If you are in doubt please ask. Credit will NOT be given unless it is true Apostolic Service to others. There are many wonderful volunteer opportunities, however, we strive to ensure kids know the true meaning of Apostolic Service.

Here are some points to think about when planning your service requirements:

- Corporal Works of Mercy
- Think about people's needs, problems and fears. Ask how you can help.
- Is there someone who needs time, effort, service or love from you?
- What talents do you have that you can share with another human being?

Make your plans ahead of time and carry your project to fulfillment. Be on time. Honor your agreements with organizations that you serve.

When your service is completed, you might look back and investigate other ways you can continue to be of service to your parish and your community after Confirmation

If you are not sure that a particular project qualifies, you may email the the DRE. Do not be caught in a situation where your service form does not meet the requirements and you have little time left to fulfill those requirements.

**IF IN DOUBT – ASK!**

## **APOSTOLIC SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES**

Below you will find a brief list of opportunities. Please reach outside the parish to fulfill at least 50% of your obligation. There are many many programs in need of volunteers that feed the hungry, help the homeless and more! Many students exceed the 20 Apostolic Service Hours!

**Assist in Religious Education:** Assist in Religious Education classes on Sunday as well as our movie nights, retreats and more. There is no limit to the amount of hours you may accrue but only so many slots are available per event so sign up early.

**The Giving Tree:** Christmas is a time of giving. What better way to help the less fortunate than by collecting Christmas gifts and delivering them.

**Nursing Home/ Senior Living:** Offering to say the Rosary or entertain a group of seniors at a nursing home or assisted living facility. There are many other services that candidates can provide in this environment. Get a group together and make someone happy!

**General Help:** There is always something that has to be done around the Church or in the office.

Candidates are urged to research other opportunities that would fulfill the apostolic service requirement. However, be sure to check in with the office to make sure that the service falls within our guidelines.

## **DRESS CODE:**

Out of respect for the Sacrament of Confirmation, the following dress is expected of Confirmation candidates and sponsors.

Please keep in mind that this is a church event and should not be compared to the dress style that would be appropriate for a graduation or prom. Confirmation is a joyous yet serious occasion and clothing should reflect that tone.

## **LADIES' DRESS CODE:**

Ladies are to wear either a blouse and skirt of conservative length (hemline to fall around the knee below), or a dress of the same fashion. Dress trousers that are of a proper fit (not skin tight) and blouse, sweater or jacket are all permissible. Necklines must be conservative, not plunging. Color is the choice of the candidate.

## **GENTLEMENS' DRESS CODE:**

Men are to wear a collared dress shirt or polo shirt of any color and pressed dress pants. Shirt should be tucked in. Sport jackets and neckties are encouraged but optional. Suits are allowed but not expected. A belt and dress socks must also be worn.

## **SHOE CODE FOR LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

Shoes should be of a dressy nature. Ladies shoes should be flat or of a conservative heel height. Proper hosiery or stockings are desirable. Men shoes should be clean and free of scuff marks. Due to the length of the Confirmation gowns, feet are exposed. Therefore in order to avoid an unattractive appearance, NO flip-flops, sandals, sneakers, boots of any kind, including hiking boots will be allowed.

## **PLEASE NOTE:**

NO tight-fitting clothing. NO revealing tops or shirts. NO bare waist or midriff. NO open back dresses or tops. NO sheer clothing or spaghetti straps. Shoulders are to be covered.