



St. Anthony's Parish
OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION
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Dear parents,

Last year, our Director of Faith Formation, Jonathan Galo and I, along with input from parents, developed a new and creative approach for preparing our young people for the Sacrament of Confirmation which we called *Encountering Christ*. The results were very successful. We found that more young people were engaged in the program, held a deeper understanding of the commitment to Confirmation, and, most importantly, participated in the life of the parish after the reception of Confirmation. I would like to share the process with you.

The Church views the sacrament of Confirmation as a person's full initiation into the Catholic Church. This means that those who celebrate this sacrament are being asked to make a commitment to living as a disciple of Christ both within the parish community as well as in their daily lives. Unfortunately, some of our youth (and even more sadly, some parents) see Confirmation as simply graduation from Church. This is so contrary to the meaning of Confirmation and it says to me that we need to do a better job in communicating what is expected of someone who desires to be confirmed.

For your son/daughter, Confirmation will be the most important step that they will make in their lives of faith thus far. If they are to take this commitment seriously, we (you as parents and us as a Church community) need to work together to guide and support them in order to help them to make a true and lasting commitment to Christ, a relationship that will have lasting effects throughout their lives.

With this in mind, our focus for the year will be to develop and deepen their relationship with Christ and the Church through "Encountering Christ". As with last year, Confirmation sessions will be held twice a month on Sunday mornings beginning at 10:45am with check-in for Mass, 11am Parish Mass (with emphasis on reaching out to youth with contemporary music ministry and technology), followed by lunch (pizza) and a general or small group session in the church basement ending at 1:15pm. Rather than a classroom setting, adults serving as mentors will assist me in the general and small group sessions sharing not only their knowledge of the faith but, even more importantly, being an example of the faith which our youth so desperately need. Those who participate in the program will also be expected to attend Mass each week, as the Church prescribes. Throughout the course of the program, students will be encouraged to participate in one of the various ministries our parish has to offer in addition to living out the mission of the Church in their daily lives.

Enclosed with this letter, you will find the following: The schedule for the 2018-2019 Faith Formation year, as well as **2** applications which will need to be filled out: one for the student and one for the parents. These few questions will help me to get to know you and your son/daughter better and help to learn how we can better serve you. Once you have completed both applications (student and parent) I am asking that each student, along with their parents meet with me so that I may personally welcome all of you into the program, answer any questions you may have and give you further information about the year.

In order to set up a meeting with me, please contact Connie at the rectory (508-548-0108) who will have my schedule of available times. This meeting, which will take place in the rectory/parish office, will need to

take place between now and the end of August and will last no more than 20 minutes. It is important to note that *no student* will be admitted into the program without the completion of both applications and meeting with me. Please do not wait until the fall to set up this meeting!

During our first session of the year on Sunday, September 23, students and parents will attend the 11am Mass together, and then will have an opportunity to meet with the student's mentor and to listen to an overview of the Confirmation: Encountering Christ program.

As in previous years, there will be a program registration fee. The fee for this upcoming program year will be \$45 per student (which has changed since last year). This registration fee will go to covering the cost for Confirmation robe rentals, food (pizza) for each session, and our retreat. No one will be denied participating in our program due to financial hardship. If you have any questions, please be sure to get in touch with Jonathan Galo.

It is our goal, through the Confirmation program, to guide the youth to "encounter Christ" so that they will make a lifelong commitment to their faith. I hope it will engage the youth and be of support to you as their parents. I look forward to hearing from you and meeting with you and your son/daughter sometime over the summer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Msgr. Stephen J. Avila". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Msgr. Stephen J. Avila, V.F.
Pastor