

Confirmation Preparation Process



Handbook for Sophomores

**St. Mary & Holy Family Parishes
2016**

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Sometimes a Candidate has a Sponsor who is close to them and who can fulfill their role of mentor and witness but for some reason cannot be present at the actual celebration of Confirmation. It is possible to have someone stand in their place as a “proxy” for the Confirmation liturgy.

Do I Need to Choose a Confirmation Name?

A new name signifies that the identity of a person has changed. When a person changes from being a non-Christian to a Christian they are given a new name to communicate the profound change that has taken place in their hearts.

Because you received your Christian name at baptism we encourage you to keep the name you were given at Baptism. Keeping the same name reinforces the fact that Confirmation is the completion of what was begun at Baptism.

However, because of the long-standing tradition of those being Confirmed as youth picking a new name, you may still do so. That name will be recorded as part of your full Christian name in the permanent Sacramental Records of the Church.

The Confirmation Sponsor

On the day of Confirmation the Sponsor stands with his or her hand upon your shoulder as you are anointed. By their standing with you at this time they are testifying with their own lives that you are ready, you have truly become a disciple of Christ.

This testimony is important to the Bishop and community who rely on the Sponsor as one who knows you intimately and therefore knows of your faith with certainty.

Your Sponsor's strong supporting hand on your shoulder will also be a great support to you as make this important step in life.

The ideal person to be your Confirmation Sponsor is your Baptism Sponsor who has walked with you throughout your faith life. If they are not available then another Confirmed and active Catholic person who knows you and who is a support to you in your faith life would be appropriate. **A parent may not be the Sponsor.**

To fulfill their role the Sponsor needs to spend time with you sharing their faith. We ask that one way they do this is by your sharing your Confirmation Journal with your Sponsor as explained above.

(12)

Tentative Calendar

Enrollment Ceremony (during Sat & Sun Mass)	Sept. 10/11, 2016
Introduction to the Vital Signs	Sept. 14, 2016
Journal Sharing on Vital Sign 1: Service	Sept. 21, 2016
Journal Sharing on Vital Sign 3: Prayer	Sept. 28, 2016
Journal Sharing on Vital Sign 4: Church	Oct. 12, 2016
Journal Sharing on Vital Sign 2: Knowledge	Oct. 19, 2016
Confirmation Retreat	Nov. 5-6, 2016
Confirmation Interviews	Nov 14-27, 2016
Practice for Confirmation	Nov. 30, 2016
The Celebration of Confirmation 1:00pm St. Mary's Greenwood	Dec. 4, 2016

*Note: regular meetings are from 7:30pm to 8:30pm.

(1)

What Does Confirmation Celebrate?

The Sacrament of Confirmation is the third and final Sacrament of Initiation. To be “initiated” into the community of those who believe in Jesus means that you have become like Jesus, you practice his way of life. The special graces of this sacrament come to a person who has committed them self to Christ and to Christ’s way of life.

It is during these adolescent years when you begin to exercise your independence that you must decide whether you will be a follower of Christ or not. Your parents can no longer make this decision for you.

If you choose to make your own the Catholic faith we have been sharing with you, we celebrate this great step in the Sacrament of Confirmation. We gather to affirm and *Confirm* the faith that has taken root in you.

This affirming and Confirming strengthens you and gives you the courage to express your faith more freely and experience the Gifts of the Holy Spirit more fully.

Sample Journal Entry

Date of Experience ____/____/____

Vital Sign It Demonstrates:

____ Service ____ Knowledge ____ Prayer ____ Community

What happened? _____

What effect did this have on others? _____

What effect did this have on you? _____

Please add any pictures, writings, or other material that describes this experience.

Vital Sign #4: Community

If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. You are the Body of Christ, each one of you is a member of it. (I Corinthians 26:27)

The Candidate needs to demonstrate that they have strong friendships with other believers and are an active part of the Christian community.

Where as Service experiences were defined as experiences of helping those *outside* the parish community, experiences of involvement *within* the community beyond Sunday Eucharist would be appropriate for this part of the Journal.

The Candidate will have in their Journal at least two experiences of participating in events organized by the parish. Participating in a parish Festival or working at a dinner are examples.

Secondly they will have an experience of sharing their journal with their Sponsor. We ask that the Sponsor add their reflections on the experience in the Journal entry.

Thirdly they will have an experience of Christian community not organized by the parish. Examples include consoling a friend in distress, helping a friend make a difficult decision or a late night heartfelt conversation with an older relative.

How Do We Get Ready For the Sacrament of Confirmation?

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation began at your Baptism and has continued throughout your life. The most important part of your formation has come from the way of life practiced by your family at home.

The Process of Faith Formation provided by a parish is an important aid to families in forming their children in the Catholic faith. The title of this book—Confirmation Preparation Process—refers to the first semester of your junior year.

We enter into a time of discernment with you, reflecting on experiences that have shaped your life. During this time of reflection we are looking for four “vital signs” that indicate your life has taken on a Catholic Christian character and you are ready to affirm your faith at the Confirmation celebration.

Those “vital signs” are: 1) You seek to serve. 2) You understand the faith enough to share it. 3) You pray regularly. And 4) you are an active part of a Catholic Christian community, the Church.

What Is The Vital Sign Journal?

The Journal is a place for you to collect experiences you have had that express the presence of the Vital Signs in your life.

For most people, who have been living their faith, they need only collect for their journal examples of the things they have been doing over the years. We are asking people as they enter Middle School to start keeping a Journal/Scrapbook of their spiritual activities so that when they become juniors their work will already be done.

If you have not been spiritually active over the years it is not too late to become so in this junior year. We would be happy to assist you in getting involved in the kind of experiences that would help solidify your faith.

In the following pages we explain our expectations for the journal in more detail. We are asking you to have a series of journal entries for each of the vital signs. The “entries” can be of any nature, a written reflection, photographs, a letter of testimony from a supervisor, or a work of art. The Spirit manifests itself in many ways and we encourage the Candidate to be creative and free in expressing their faith.

When the Candidates for Confirmation gather for the “Journal Sharing Sessions” each Candidate will have the opportunity to

Vital Sign #3: Prayer

Rising very early before dawn, Jesus left and went off to a deserted place, where he was absorbed in prayer. (Mark 1:35)

The Candidate needs to demonstrate that prayer has become a regular part of their life, both private prayer and prayer with the community.

The Candidate will need in their journal at least:

Three experiences of celebrating Sunday Eucharist.

One experience of celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation within the last year.

One retreat experience within the last year.

Three experiences of personal prayer.

Other experiences that may be added would be weddings, baptisms, funerals the Candidate or other religious services the Candidate may have attended.

Vital Sign #2: Knowledge

The first thing Andrew did was go and tell his brother Simon: We have found the Messiah. (John 1:41)

One characteristic of a Christian is that they desire to share their faith with others and understand their faith sufficiently well to do so.

Minimally they will know by heart the Sign of the Cross, the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Ten Commandments, the Apostle's Creed and the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. They will know how to find any verse in the bible if given the name of the book, chapter and verse. They will know how to find the accounts of Christ's birth, death, resurrection and outpouring of his Spirit at the first Pentecost in the bible.

To demonstrate their faith has matured along with their other abilities, each candidate will write a one page or more single spaced reflection on a book, movie, or event exploring how it expresses or conflicts with our Catholic faith. The essay should identify specific teachings of the Church and how the book relates positively or negatively to them.

At the sharing session each Candidate will be asked to share their journal entry, to share a few of the items to be known by heart, and to demonstrate their ability to use the bible.

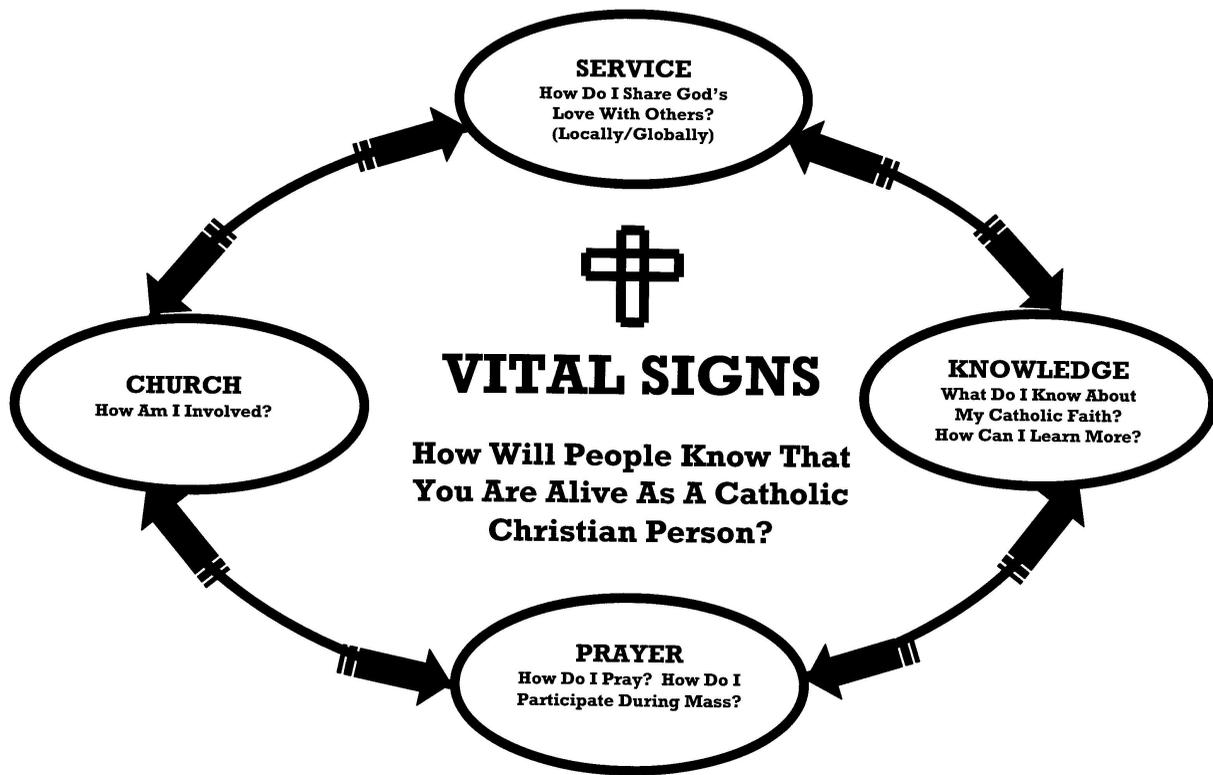
share their journal entries for one of the vital signs with the other members of his or her small group.

This sharing of your faith life with your peers will have many positive effects. It will be a tremendous encouragement to your peers to live out their faith. It will affirm in your own mind and heart that you are living the faith. It will prepare you for professing your faith on Confirmation day. And it will strengthen you for sharing your faith after Confirmation day.

We provide a simple "Journal Entry Form" to help you organize your Journal. But please do not let this form limit your creativity. You can convey the same information in many other ways. Your "entry" doesn't have to fit into a three ring binder.

See the sample "Journal Entry Form" on page 11 in this book.. In addition to the ones you received at the first meeting, these forms will always be available in the pamphlet rack on the wall in the West Gathering Room. Or please feel free to make copies for yourself.

If you have any questions about what is appropriate for your Confirmation Journal please contact Fr. Steve at 715-255-8017 or frstevesaplw@gmail.com.



FAITH JOURNAL AND SCRAP BOOK

Vital Sign #1: Service

Jesus said I come not to be served but to serve. (Mark 10:45)

The Candidate for Confirmation is expected to have at least three journal entries for this Vital Sign.

Service means giving of one's time and talents to assist someone in need outside the parish community without receiving payment in return. The Candidate may already be doing service projects for school or an organization they belong to. These may also be used for their Confirmation Journal. We are not asking you to do extra service for Confirmation, simply give us evidence that service has become a part of your life.

Examples include: helping coach a grade school sport, serving meals at the Salvation Army, mowing a neighbor's lawn (for free), participating in a walk to end cancer, or be in a committee working to end world hunger.

Responsibilities that are part of being a family do not qualify, like babysitting for a younger brother or sister, or raking your own lawn.