

**CONFIRMATION
PROGRAM
FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**



**Our Lady of the Pines
&
St. Theodore's Catholic Churches
Nevis / Laporte, MN**

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 an intensive preparation. During his 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

Our Confirmation preparation is a 3-year program, 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**. Our Lady of the Pines and St. Theodore's Catholic Community will gladly accompany the candidate with the help of Parents, Teachers and other Volunteers. We invite the parents to be involved in the faith formation of their children by being part of the weekly group discussions and other youth activities planned for their children. Confirmation preparation program is designed by using the method of: group teaching in the class room, group activities in Christian service projects and the Confirmation candidate's personal reflections and interactions at prayer sessions and retreat exercises.

Since the earliest days of the Church the metaphor of planting, nurturing and 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. Different parents will sign up to be present to animate the small group discussions on Wednesday evenings.

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 Catholic Faith Hand Book: **Christian Morality**. Besides the teachers, parents will be part of small group discussions and help their children to interact with other youth in our parishes or neighboring parishes.

Third-Year Preparation

In the final year, the candidates enter a "**Period of Reflection**." They reflect on the Sacraments of the Church, especially the Sacrament of Confirmation. It will be a rewarding time for them to be awoken to the gift of the Holy Spirit, His assistance in our lives 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 as you begin the Confirmation Program.
- If you were baptized in another parish than Our Lady of the Pines and St. Theodore's Catholic Churches, Nevis / Laporte, 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 Advent and Lenten season.
- Choose a sponsor using the Guidelines.
- Complete 100 Candidate/Sponsor Interactions Questions by March 31. (60 during the 2nd and 40 the 3rd year of Confirmation preparation.)
- Complete a minimum of 10 hours of Christian Service per year, with 5 hours within our Parish. A form needs to be filled out for the service completed.
- Participate in one Youth Rally and one Retreat and all youth programs organized in the parish.
- Pick a Confirmation patron/name saint your second year.
- Write a reflection paper about your confirmation patron/name saint by March 31 of your second year.
- Write a letter to the Bishop of Crookston requesting him to confirm you and present the letter to your teacher by March 15 of your third year.
- Have an interview with the Confirmation Team by September 30 of your third year preparation.

Confirmation Sponsor Guidelines

Your Sponsor should be:

- At least 16 years of age
- Fully initiated into the Church (celebrated Baptism, the Eucharist and Confirmation)
- Be a practicing member of a Catholic Parish community
- Could be one of your baptismal godparents
- Of either gender
- Neither parent may be a sponsor
- AND is 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 **10 hours of Christian service every year—to total 30 hours.**

Confirmation Patron/Name Saints

- Preferably one of your baptismal names, if they are saints
- A study on the life of your saint is needed
- Write a paper about how can you imitate the life of your patron saint.

Retreat Opportunities

- NET Retreat
- Diocesan Youth Rally
- TEC Retreat
- Parish Retreat Program

What is Expected of a 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 and meet at least 3 times a year.
- At your meetings with the candidate, discuss the topics on faith, clarify the 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 and encourage to use them for building up a bright future.** Send this letter to the Pastor by September 15 of the 3rd year of preparation. The candidates will receive this letter as a surprise.
- Attend the rehearsal session for the rite of Confirmation with your candidate normally scheduled the day before confirmation.
- Sponsors are welcome to attend the Confirmation sessions with the candidates on Wednesday evenings, whenever it is possible.

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.



Prayer for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

O, Lord our God,
Send your Holy Spirit upon us.
Give us the spirit of wisdom
and understanding,
the spirit of right judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.

Fill us with the spirit of wonder and awe
in your presence.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

