

SAINT PHILIP CHURCH

Confirmation



2023 – 2024

Program of Preparation Handbook

For Incoming Grade 9 Students

INTRODUCTION

This is an exciting time for you, the candidate, and your family. As your first “church” – the domestic church, your parents at your Baptism vowed to raise you in the Roman Catholic Faith. The Catholic home is the first school of Christian life. Although Confirmation may mark the end of your formal religious education, it is the beginning for you to live your life as a disciple of Jesus Christ in the community of the Roman Catholic Church. Your education in that Faith is and will be a lifelong experience.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains the purpose of the Sacrament of Confirmation: “Baptism, the Eucharist, and the Sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the “sacraments of Christian initiation,” whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For by the sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence, they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed” (CCC. 1285).

The program outlined in this handbook is designed to give the candidate a historical and realistic approach to what it means to truly be a committed Roman Catholic in today’s world. For it is the same Holy Spirit who bestows the same gifts today as He did the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. The Roman Catholic Tradition calls us to serious prayer and study to prepare for this outpouring of the Holy Spirit by the hands of our bishop.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is never to be taken lightly, nor is it to be received without proper preparation and careful consideration on the part of both candidate and those who both prepare and support him/her. It is for this reason that we make every effort to ensure that each person Confirmed is properly formed in the Faith of Jesus Christ and has the knowledge and experience of Holy Mother Church, which is His body, living and present in our world.



CATECHETICAL COMPONENTS

“Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for it had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord, Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.” Acts 8: 14 – 17

IN BRIEF

Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which enhances the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a spiritual mark or indelible character on the Christian’s soul; for this reason, one can receive this sacrament only once in one’s life. The essential rite of Confirmation is anointing the forehead of the baptized with the sacred chrism together with the laying on of the minister’s hand and the words: “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”

PENTECOST AND THE *GIFTS* OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The seven sanctifying gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David, Son of God. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations.



REQUIREMENTS

Saint Philip's program of preparation requires the completion of several steps before a candidate is considered "ready" to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. All eligible students, including those currently enrolled in Catholic School, must participate in the complete program. If you are transferring from another parish, documentation is required from your previous faith formation office acknowledging your participation in their program. This is required prior to being admitted into the program here at Saint Philip's.

Confirmation Requirements At a Glance (*to be completed over a 2-year period*):

- Attend the Confirmation I and II classes.
- Attend Prayer Services – our first one will be on: **Sun. Jun. 4th @ 7:00pm.**
- Attend weekly Mass and all Holy Days of Obligation.
- Attend a Confirmation Retreat.
- Select a Confirmation Sponsor.
- Choose a Confirmation Name and write a brief reflection.
- Complete 2 service ministries and write a brief reflection.
- Attend a Candidate/Sponsor Retreat and Ceremony Rehearsal.

CONFIRMATION REQUIREMENTS EXPLAINED

CONFIRMATION CLASSES

Every candidate must complete two years of classes before receiving the sacrament of Confirmation (*Confirmation I and Confirmation II*).

It does not matter if you are in public, private, Catholic, or home school, as there is a specific Confirmation curriculum.

This year's Confirmation class has two options to choose from to complete the curriculum component:

- **Option 1**: Attend classes for one week each evening for 2-consecutive years. Classes each evening during the week are from 5:15 PM – 8:45 PM.
 - Confirmation I curriculum classes will be held on:
Monday, June 26 through Friday, June 30 – 2023.
 - Confirmation II curriculum classes will be held on:
Monday, June 24 through Friday, June 28 – 2024.

PLEASE NOTE

If you choose option 1, you must commit to the whole week, for the entirety of each evening. The only exception is an emergency – and that will be at the discretion of the pastor. If any evening is missed, the candidate will have to attend the full year's upcoming classes.

- **Option 2**: Attend classes over the course of the next two school years, twice-a-month on Monday evenings, from 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM, from October through May.
 - ★ If you choose Option 1 – the sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated in the Fall of 10th Grade (some time in Oct or Nov).
 - ★ If you choose Option 2 – the sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated in the Spring of 10th Grade (some time in Apr or May).

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION AND HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH MINISTRY

Teens enrolled in Confirmation preparation are strongly encouraged to actively participate in our High School Youth Ministry programming, which provides ongoing formation and fellowship through Catechesis, Service opportunities, and social events.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, and the Sacrament itself, is of vital importance. However, it is just the beginning – though now fully initiated into Holy Mother Church, discipleship is a lifelong endeavor, and one cannot travel this road alone – we need our brothers and sisters in Christ – we need a strong Catholic community to help continue to form us and for us to grow in.

High School Youth Ministry will plan fun events throughout the year and continue to form you as an intentional disciple of Jesus Christ. We will cover real issues that affect you – issues in your school, your sports teams, our culture, etc.

PRAYER SERVICES

There will be several Prayer Services throughout the Confirmation Program. These Prayer Services are specifically designed to provide a unique opportunity of “Encounter” between our Lord and all present who are seeking Him with a sincere heart. These services are one of the most important aspects of our Confirmation program of preparation, as we get to adore Our Lord face-to-face in the Blessed Sacrament. Pope Benedict XVI said, “The Eucharist is the great school in which we learn to see God’s face, we enter into a close relationship with him; and at the same time we learn to turn our gaze to the final moment of history when he will satisfy us with the light of his face. On earth when we are walking towards this fullness, in the joyful expectation that the Kingdom of God will really be brought about.” (General Audience; Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2013)

- Our first Prayer Service is on *Sunday, Sun. Jun. 4th @ 7:00pm* – it is called *Prayer Service in Celebration of Commitment* – *this is for both the candidates and parents – the whole family is invited.*

PARTICIPATION AT SUNDAY MASS

Participating at Sunday Mass (or Saturday evening Mass) each and every week throughout the year is an awesome privilege and a grave responsibility for every Catholic-Christian.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: *Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to His Church. The faithful give witness to God’s holiness and their hope of salvation. They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit* (#2182, Catechism of the Catholic Church).

To be in our program of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation means to commit to the weekly celebration of Holy Mass at Saint Philip’s.

Please read carefully and prayerfully the following protocol we will follow:

✝ **You attend Mass at Saint Philip's ...**

- ✝ THEN ... please drop into the collection basket your offering envelope:
 - ✝ with a money-offering enclosed for the support of our Parish
 - ✝ **OR** with a paper on which you write down a sacrifice you have made the past week
 - ✝ **OR** with a good deed you have done the past week
 - ✝ **OR** a prayer you are requesting from God
 - ✝ **OR** a note of thanksgiving to God for a gift or blessing you have received from God the past week

✝ **You attend Mass at Saint Philip's but do not have your offering envelope with you...**

- ✝ THEN ... place the bulletin (with your name on it) in the mailbox outside the front door of the McNamara building (on the side of the Church that faces the Parish Center)

✝ **You attend Mass at another Catholic Church ...**

- ✝ Take a parish bulletin from the Church you have attended and sign your name on it. Then please place the signed bulletin in the mailbox outside the front door of the McNamara building as soon as possible during the week ... before the following weekend – please remember to put your name on it.

SELECTING A CONFIRMATION SPONSOR

Each candidate at the completion of the Confirmation I summer program will choose a sponsor. The sponsor will be required to fill out a “Sponsor Form” and **have it signed by the Pastor of the Parish that they belong to** (this includes sponsors that attend Saint Philip as well).

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING A SPONSOR

First, sponsors should have already received the three sacraments of Christian initiation; namely, Baptism, First Eucharist, and Confirmation. If some persons have not yet received one of these sacraments, they should decline an invitation to be a sponsor until they do so.

Sponsors also should be practicing Catholics. They should participate at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and they should receive the sacraments of Holy Communion and Reconciliation regularly. The whole purpose of the sacramental life of the Church is to nourish us on our journey of faith. If those who lead the way are not nourished properly, they will falter and eventually be unable to keep up with the pace of Christian living. When that happens, how can they lead others?

We often talk about the Christian vocation. Sponsors should be living the Christian vocation faithfully and conscientiously either as single persons or as persons validly married in the church. Yes, religious and clergy can serve in these roles. But some married persons, unfortunately, may not be eligible. Those married by a justice of the peace, those living together without the benefit of marriage and those who have been divorced and remarried without a declaration of annulment from the diocesan tribunal concerning the previous marriage(s) are not eligible to fulfill the role of sponsor for Confirmation. It is possible to rectify that situation, but, unfortunately, one cannot do so hurriedly. This is why pastors always encourage folks not to procrastinate when they find themselves in such a painful dilemma. They are not excluded from the church community but they have incurred some impediments, which limit their participation in the full sacramental life of the church.

Sponsors also should be striving to live out in a very active way their own baptismal commitment to Christ and his Church by the way they treat others. Furthermore, they should believe all that the Roman Catholic Church teaches and believes and should be making a serious effort to lead a life of virtue, avoiding temptations that inevitably lead to sin.

Parents of those to be baptized or confirmed are not eligible to serve as sponsors, but grandparents and siblings are eligible. Parents have a more important role as first teachers of the faith.

Sponsors must be at least 16 years of age and thereby be able to assume the responsibility which God and the church place before them in serving as guides and companions for those being welcomed into the life and full share of the mission of the church.

Last but not least, sponsors should promise to give their support to these sacramental candidates by their prayers and the example of their Christian lives each and every day. The roles of sponsors are serious and effective evangelizing resources for our church's mission. In many ways, together with parents, godparents, and sponsors are

the principal formators in the way of Christian living for those whom they accompany to the saving waters of Baptism and the holy anointing of Confirmation.

RETREAT REQUIREMENT

The purpose of the Confirmation retreat is to be removed from everyday activities, to quiet the mind and the soul to be better disposed and more sensitive to the movement of the Holy Spirit. This retreat also allows the candidate to fully focus on the greatness of the Sacrament that he/she has been preparing to receive. Although the practice is older than Christianity, the example of Christ's forty days in the desert makes such retreats part of divine revelation, to be imitated, as far as possible, by his followers.

Diocesan requirements stipulate that Confirmation students must attend a retreat. Retreat dates will be clearly defined by the beginning of the Confirmation summer program so that you are able to reserve that date on your family calendar. Extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the candidate will be taken into consideration and a make-up retreat will be scheduled.

✦ RETREAT DATE TBA

- ❖ If you go to the Steubenville Summer Conference this summer, it will satisfy your Confirmation retreat requirement.

CONFIRMATION NAME & SAINT REFLECTION

As a candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation, you will take the name of a saint as your "Confirmation Name." This will be recorded in the Catholic Church's official records, and the saint you choose will take special interest in you – yes, YOU! You can ask in prayer for your saint's assistance and intercession, and trust that they will then pray for you to God.

In Christian theology, the Christian Church, or **Church Universal**, is traditionally divided into:

- the **Church Militant**: comprises Christians on earth who are living; who struggle against sin, the devil and "The rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).
- the **Church Triumphant**: comprises those who are in Heaven.

- the **Church Suffering** or *Church Penitent*: Christians presently in Purgatory.

These terms are often used in the context of the doctrine of the **Communion of Saints**; although the barrier of death may physically separate Christians from each other, they nonetheless remain united to each other in one Church, and support each other in prayer.

You have two options when choosing a Confirmation name:

1. You may choose your present baptismal name if it is a saint's name. This shows the sacramental connection between Baptism and Confirmation, which, along with the Eucharist, constitute the Sacraments of Initiation.
2. You may also choose the name of a saint who inspires you. Taking a new name at Confirmation is an expression of a desire to accept a new role in the Church. There are several Scripture stories of peoples whose names changed after they experienced a call from God. Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter, and Saul to Paul are a few examples.

It is important and necessary to know something about the saint before you decide on the name. Conduct research, and then write a one page minimum, double-spaced typed report on your saint.

The report should include the following:

1. Birth, death date of the saint.
2. Where they were born and lived.
3. A little bit about their early years.
4. What called them to a life of holiness?
5. What did the saint do during their lifetime or death that was Christ-like?
What are they known for?
6. What is their feast day?
7. Why did you select this name/saint?

CONFIRMATION SERVICE

Stewardship is the sharing of our time, talent, and treasure out of gratitude to Almighty God for all of the blessings that He has bestowed upon us. In preparation for Confirmation, it is important that we reflect on and identify those areas in our

lives where we excel and find a way to share them with others, especially the marginalized. Our gifts may be academic, athletic, musical, artistic, or a combination of many areas. Stewardship is always for **non-profit** and need not be measured by hours. As Confirmation candidates, think of ways that you can thank God for all that you have now and will have in the future.

With the help of your family, you are asked to:

- Serve in **Two** Parish Ministries:
Through Parish Ministry, you will have the opportunity to build up our parish community. Pray about which two ministries listed below that you would be able to serve with the gifts and talents God has given you.
- Write **one** “reflection” paper on all of your ministry experiences.
This reflection should be *at least* one page in length (typed, double spaced paper) and address:
 1. What the nature of your ministries were.
 2. How you encountered Christ through the people you served.
 3. How you modeled Christ to the people you served.
 4. Summarize your experience, your thoughts, and what you learned from your service.

Attach your 2 Ministry forms to your reflection paper – these can be printed off of our Faith Formation website (www.reledsaintphilip.com).

All paperwork will be submitted at the end of your Confirmation II year prior to your ceremony. A date will be given well in advance.

Ministries To Choose From:



JOYFUL NOISE MUSIC CHOIR

Have you been given the gift of music through voice or instrument? Join the youth music ministry. As part of this ministry, you will commit to attend one practice per month with the choir and sing at the 9:30 AM Sunday Mass once per month.

HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM



As a member of the High School Leadership Team, you are committing to attend one planning & development meeting per month, during which you will be an active member in planning and executing high school youth events for the youth of St. Philip Parish. To be a member of this team, you are expected to exemplify the life of Jesus through your actions and words. Members of the leadership team are active and committed to supporting youth ministry events. You will help to plan at least one major service or social event during the year.

VACATION BIBLE CAMP



Youth volunteers for Vacation Bible Camp will assist for set-up, implementation of, and clean-up of VBC. They will attend 1 info. meeting and be available to assist at 2 set-up days the week prior to camp. This year's camp is:

Monday, July 31 – Friday, August 4 from 8:30 AM – 12:15 PM

READERS AT MASS



Youth who volunteer to be readers at Holy Mass will lector twice a month at the weekly Youth Masses on Sunday evenings. Youth who sign up for this ministry will attend a training session with Fr. Phillip to prepare to serve in this ministry.

GOD'S LITTLE ACRE



Youth volunteers for God's Little Acre will offer two Saturdays per month (8:30 AM – 10:30 AM) during the summer and during the harvesting season in our garden on Church Property. Youth will report directly to Mr. Paul Santucci while serving in this ministry.



ALTAR SERVING

Youth who participate in the ministry of Serving at the Altar during Mass will serve at least two times per month. Servers will be under the direction of Fr. Phillip and will be expected to exhibit the upmost reverence during the Holy Mass.



KIDS CAMP

Youth volunteers for Kids' Camp will assist Family Ministry one Saturday morning per month from 8:45AM – 11:15AM, serving the elementary children of our Parish community as they grow in faith. This ministry runs Oct – May.



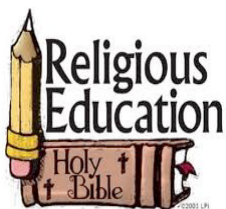
PRAYER MINISTRY

Youth volunteers will be prayer warriors for Christ. This group of volunteers will participate in one Holy Hour of Adoration in the Chapel each month. This will be organized by an adult who will lead them in prayers, and devotions. A parent should attend with their son/daughter.



CEMETERY WALK MINISTRY

Youth volunteers will participate as actors and guides in our annual Back from the Dead Cemetery Walk. This event will take place in late October after the Saturday evening Mass from 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM. Volunteers will also attend 4-practices for this event.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSROOM AIDE

Youth who volunteer to assist teachers for Faith Formation classes for children in grades 1-3 on Monday evenings from 5:30 PM – 6:45 PM, 2 times per month.

GENERAL CONDUCT

PRIOR CATECHESIS AND ASSESSMENT

Candidates for Confirmation must have attended three consecutive years of Faith Formation (grades 4, 5, & 6), or have been enrolled in a Catholic School prior to admission. Those who do not meet this requirement must demonstrate a basic knowledge of the dogmas and doctrines of our Roman Catholic Faith. This will determine if they will be allowed into the program **or** at what grade level they will be participating in our Faith Formation programming.

RESPECT AND COURTESY

All candidates are to be respectful toward the coordinator, their classmates, and especially their classroom catechists. Disrespect, discourtesy, and class disruption will not be tolerated. The program coordinator, the parish priests, or a catechist may issue two “warnings” to a student who exhibits discourtesy, disrespect, or is a disruption. On the third offense, the student will be removed for the remainder of the class and sent to the coordinator. The parents will be notified by phone and the student will be placed on probation. Disrespect and discourtesy are clear indications that a student is not ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

CELL PHONES, TEXTING, AND INTERNET

The use of cell phones for texting and web-browsing is strictly forbidden. Students may need cell phones to contact parents after class, but cell phones must be turned off and may never be used during class time. Emergencies should be reported to the coordinator of the program, who will contact parents if necessary. Catechists and the Saint Philip staff reserve the right to confiscate cell phones. Cell phones confiscated will be given to the program director until the conclusion of the class session or event.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all classes and events is mandatory. Diocesan requirements stipulate that at least thirty hours of catechesis be completed during the Confirmation program. Missing class may result in a delay of your Confirmation ceremony and require you to repeat that year.

CLASS TARDINESS

Unexcused tardiness will not be tolerated. Students are required to arrive a minimum of 5 minutes before the scheduled class time or meeting/s. Classes will promptly begin at the specified time given.

ENROLLMENT

Each candidate with their family, must be properly registered and be an active budget contributing member in the Parish of Saint Philip's, as well as, registered in the Religious Education Program from the onset. All other children in the family should also be registered in the Religious Education Program, not just Sacramental students.

PROBATIONARY CONDITIONS

Candidates will be placed on probationary status for the following:

- Missing Mass
- An unexcused class absence
- Consistent tardiness
- More than two warnings for cell phone use during class
- More than two warnings to a candidate who exhibits discourtesy, disrespect, and/or class disruption

If placed on a probationary status, the candidate and his/her parents must meet with the pastor and/or coordinator to seek readmission to the program. It will be the candidate's responsibility to call or see the pastor or his delegate to schedule a meeting prior to his/her next class.

DRESS CODE

Students are expected to dress appropriately so as not to distract those around them. Hats are not to be worn inside the parish buildings. No tank tops for boys or girls. Skirts and shorts should be appropriate length.

BAPTISMAL RECORDS

A copy of the candidate's baptismal record is needed for all candidates (even if baptized at Saint Philip Parish). If we do not have your baptismal certificate on file, and you do not have a copy, please obtain one from the parish of baptism.

Confirmation Covenant Agreement

“Called by Christ as Disciples; Sent to Serve in His Name”

“Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit – His actions, His gifts, and His biddings – in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community...”
(CCC 1309)

Candidate Pledge:

- I have read the program handbook and I understand all that is expected of me.
- I will complete the requirements of the program with the help of my parents and sponsor.
- I will participate actively in the sacramental life of the Church by attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- I will make a sincere effort to develop a consistent prayer life.
- I will attend all required classes and events, and will notify the coordinator in the case of sickness or emergency. I will also complete all required assignments, forms, and activities.
- I will seek to be actively engaged in the life of my parish community by committing to 2 parish ministries.
- I will be respectful of my classmates, my catechists, the program coordinator, and my parish priests.
- I will remain open to growth in understanding, explaining, and defending my Catholic faith.
- I will attend all mandatory retreats.
- It is **MY** choice to enter the Confirmation Program in order to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Candidate's Signature _____

Date _____

Parent Pledge:

- I have read the program handbook and understand what is expected of my child.
- I will do my best to ensure that my child meets the requirements of the program while allowing him/her to take responsibility.
- I will aid and support my child in participating more actively in the sacramental life of the Church (Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, attending Reconciliation/Penance, Eucharistic Adoration).
- I will remain actively engaged in my child's progress as he/she advances toward reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- I will do my best to demonstrate by example all tenants of the Catholic faith.

Parent's Signature _____

Date _____