

2016/2017 St. Joseph & Nativity Parishes Confirmation Guidelines

Confirmation of teens is offered for those young adults, grades 8 and up, wishing to complete their Initiation into the Catholic Church. Traditionally, Confirmation is celebrated during their Eighth Grade Year. These parishioners (both from St. Joseph Parish School, and St. Joseph & Nativity PSR) take part in a parish-based preparation process for the reception of this sacrament. Contact the Religious Education Office for more information.

Confirmation Service Component:

Service to God and one another are essential to being Catholic Christians. Information on Catholic Social Teachings are available at any time. Please ask, as there are a variety of resources on these teachings.

Service Opportunities – see the Youth Volunteer Service Application for details and options

Confirmation Service Experiences: Students preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation at St. Joseph & Nativity Parishes are asked to become more involved in service both at the parish and community levels. As part of your sacramental preparation, please take time to experience service at St. Joseph & Nativity Parishes and other community events **beginning June 2016**. We ask that all Confirmandi have at least five (5) service experiences before Confirmation:

- At the parish level, which means both St. Joseph & Nativity Parishes
- At their school
- Within the larger Amherst & South Amherst community

In addition, we ask that the Confirmation Sponsor (or parent, if the sponsor is unavailable) participate in one of the above mentioned service opportunities with the Confirmandi. The experience with the sponsor or parent may occur at the parish, school, community or greater Cleveland area. This is a great time for parents and students to explore service opportunities in places outside the home. Service at home or for family members is encouraged daily, but is really part of being a family member. Please use Confirmation service as an opportunity to open new doors for service! The ability to serve others should be ongoing and your experiences should never end. As a result, we do not ask for a specific number of hours. Our goal is for you to understand the need to help others in all areas – always. Once you complete a service experience, please complete the Service Reflection and turn it in no later than 5 days after completing the service. You may drop it off at the St. Joseph Parish office or mail it to the Director of Religious Education at St. Joseph Church. Our DRE, Fr. Tim and others will read your reflection papers, so do your best work! Students will be expected to share details within a small group regarding service experiences. Sharing usually results in sparking an interest in other to try or continue service to a particular group. In order to assist you with service experiences at our parishes, please read the St. Joseph & Nativity bulletin, or visit the St. Joseph website to see what opportunities might be available at our parish, or check out the Youth Service Application. The categories selected on this application will then be forwarded to the contact person for those specific areas. They will get in touch with you for help with their event. Please call the Religious Education Office at 440-988-2848 ext. 242 if you have an event where you need volunteer help or if you are looking for additional service opportunities.

For those in Grade 7:

This is when your journey to Confirmation begins. As you start preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation in the eighth grade we strongly recommend getting started on your service experiences right away. **Please DO NOT wait until the last minute. We recommend having at least three (3) completed by the end of your seventh grade year.** This is also a good time to start gathering the required paperwork and information that we will need for you to receive the sacrament of Confirmation in your eighth grade year. Please remember that the **Service Experience Reflection sheets are due within 5 days of completing your experience. NO EXCEPTIONS!** This will become a part of your sacramental file here at St. Joseph & Nativity.

Also it's not too early to start thinking and praying about who you would like to be your sponsor. This person will stand up with you on your Confirmation Day. We hope this process will be a fun and enjoyable time for you as you begin to explore your Catholic faith in a deeper way.

For those in Grade 8:

Congratulations! You've made it this far and are getting ready to end your preparation time, but still continue on your journey of faith that was started by you for your parents and godparents on your Baptism Day and First Communion Day. This journey is far from over Confirmation is not the end. It is a continuation of what we hope will be a life long journey for you.

As Confirmation Day draws near you are expected to have the following components completed at least 2 weeks before your Confirmation Day on February 19, 2017:

THIS APPLIES TO THE 2016/2017 Confirmation Candidates ONLY!

1. All necessary paperwork which includes: sacrament registration form, sponsor certificate if your sponsor is not from St. Joseph or Nativity parishes (see Sponsor responsibilities below for more information), your (2) service experience reflections, and your three paragraph essay on why you chose your Confirmation name (more information on this found in number 3 below)
2. Attendance and participation at the Confirmation Retreat
3. A three-paragraph essay on your Confirmation saint. This is a saint that inspires you, motivates you or simply a saint you can relate to. The essay should not be something you copy and paste from the internet. You are encouraged to put some thought and effort into this essay.
4. A signed copy of the *Candidate Commitment* handout from the *Chosen* program materials
5. A one on one meeting with Fr. Tim or the DRE to reflect on your experience thus far
6. Participation in the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to receiving the sacrament of Confirmation.

Your service experience reflections and saint essays will be read by the Confirmation Leadership Team prior to your one on one meeting, so it is strongly recommended that you complete those as soon as possible. The Confirmation Leadership Team consists of: Carol Wallington, DRE; Fr. Timothy O'Connor, Pastor/Administrator; Karen Casper-Linn, Principal of SJS School as well as the 7th and 8th grade parish school teachers and the 7th and 8th grade PSR catechists.

Parent Responsibilities:

We ask all of our parents to walk this journey with each of your Confirmandi. You are their first teachers and your examples are the best way for them to continue on in their faith. There is a parent component to our Confirmation program. In the seventh (7th) grade year parents will receive a parent book that goes along with each session in the student books, so they know and understand what their child is experiencing in this program. There are many helpful tips and resources in this book for parents. This book will be with you through to your Confirmandi's Confirmation Day so keep it in a safe place.

In addition there will be a parent information session held in the beginning of the preparation program and process. This session will be held at St. Joseph Parish on **Sunday, September 25, 2016 at 9:45 AM in the MPR room at the school.** We strongly encourage you to attend so that you can get the most out of our program and understand what is expected of your candidate.

Sponsor Responsibilities:

You as the sponsor are a critical piece in the journey for our candidates. You have the honor of standing up with your candidate on their Confirmation day, the day they say "yes" to walking a lifelong relationship with God. Sponsor expectations are as follows:

1. Sponsors must be at least 16 years of age, have received all the Sacraments of Initiation themselves (Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation), be actively practicing the Catholic faith, and be in a valid Catholic marriage if they are married. A valid Catholic marriage is one that has been blessed and approved by the Catholic church. If your sponsor has been divorced and remarried an annulment must have been procured and the new marriage blessed (convalidated) in the Catholic Church. If you need assistance in procuring an annulment or a convalidation to serve as a sponsor for someone please call the St. Joseph or Nativity Parish offices at (440) 988-2848 and we will be happy to assist you!
2. If you are not a parishioner at St. Joseph or Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary you will need to request a sponsor certificate or letter from the parish where you are actively practicing your faith. **(We do not need YOUR Baptismal Certificate).**

We want to encourage you to stay in contact with your candidate. We are providing a sponsor book for you so you can see what your candidate is learning and help engage them in conversation and activities together. We also want to encourage you if you are able to participate in a service experience with your candidate. This is a great way to spend some time together and help them understand that as Catholic Christians service is part of their life long faith journey.

Any and all questions about these guidelines should be directed to our Director of Religious Education.