

High-School Confirmation

General Information & Policies

“Be pleased, [O Lord,] to *confirm* in faith and charity your pilgrim Church on earth.” (Eucharistic Prayer III, Roman Missal)

The community of the People of God here at St. Joseph is delighted that you are inquiring into the Sacrament of Confirmation as a high-school student. Below, you will find some general information on how it is that we prepare high-school students for this important sacrament of initiation.

The Sacrament of Confirmation strengthens the baptized and obliges them more firmly to be witnesses of Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith. It imprints a permanent character or divine seal on the soul; it enriches by the gift of the Holy Spirit the baptized who are continuing on the path of Christian initiation; and it binds them more perfectly to the Church. (Adapted from the Code of Canon Law #879)

Our goal, then, here at St. Joseph is that candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation adequately understand the nature and purpose of it as described above. We seek to “lead the candidate toward a more intimate union with Jesus 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.” (Catechism #1309) By preparing the candidates in this way, the Sacrament may be for them a powerful proof of Jesus’s presence and strength. Indeed, through it, Jesus will confirm all the goodness that he has created in them and send them into the world fully equipped for battle.

What are the basics of the preparation program at St. Joseph?

- In our parish, candidates are broken up into gender specific small groups that meet in the homes of adult volunteers. These volunteers, in addition to being screened and trained in Safe Environment practices, are trained to facilitate one’s formation in the Faith using the aid from Ascension Press, “Chosen: Your Journey Toward Confirmation.” This small-group, home-based, facilitator model is the traditional way that confirmation has been taught in our parish for many years and has proven to be a very successful program and a rewarding journey.
- Registration occurs online.
 - As you register, you will be given the date of a mandatory orientation meeting. At least one parent must accompany the candidate to this meeting. At this meeting, many details will be given, and you will have the opportunity to ask questions.
- The home-based sessions occur on a weekly basis over the course of about six months. However, meetings are not scheduled over major holidays and breaks. The exact schedule will be provided at the orientation meeting.
- In addition to the home-based sessions, candidates are required to participate in a singular confirmation retreat. It is a weekend retreat where the candidates leave St. Joseph on Friday and return around midday on Sunday.

- Though our adult facilitators are volunteers, other costs are incurred in order to administer our program, such as materials and the retreat. We collect these costs from each candidate, and the exact amount can be seen on the online registration page. Thank you for your cooperation!

Who may receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at St. Joseph?

- Any baptized 11th grade high-school student.
- If you are not in the 11th grade but are at least 16 years old, please contact the Pastor through the parish office so that the best decision can be made regarding your particular situation.

What if I am not a parishioner at St. Joseph?

- You are most welcome to prepare for the Sacrament and receive it here—the two go together—at St. Joseph parish!
 - However, if you are a parishioner at another parish, it is necessary that your home pastor grant you permission to both prepare for and receive the Sacrament here at St. Joseph.
 - In addition to registering online at St. Joseph, please bring to our parish office written permission from your pastor. You would need to call your home parish office to request that permission.
 - If you are not a parishioner at any parish, we would love for you to be a part of our family here at St. Joseph parish if it is the right fit for you!
 - However, we do need your sacramental records from your baptismal parish.
 - In addition to registering online at St. Joseph, please call your baptismal parish office and request that an original copy of your sacramental records be sent here to our parish.

What if I am a parishioner at St. Joseph, but I was not baptized at St. Joseph?

- No problem. In addition to registering online at St. Joseph, please call your baptismal parish office and request that an original copy of your sacramental records be sent here to our parish.

Does St. Joseph also need a record of my having received the Sacrament of the most holy Eucharist for the first time?

- Yes. If this did not happen at St. Joseph parish, then please call the parish at which it occurred and request that an original copy of your sacramental records be sent here to our parish.
 - It would also be a good idea to have them send those same records to your baptismal parish, which is the primary location for all our Catholic records.
- If you have not yet received your First Communion, please inform our Director of High-School Faith Formation that such is the case.

What if I have received the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist here at St. Joseph?

- Then don't worry, we have all of your records! Please register online, and you'll be all set.

Just as in the Sacrament of Baptism, the candidate seeks the spiritual help of a sponsor. The role of the sponsor “is to take care that the confirmed person behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations inherent in the sacrament.” (CCL #892)

Who may be a sponsor (CCL #893 and #874)?

- A fully initiated Catholic, i.e., a member of the Catholic Church who has him/herself received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Most Holy Eucharist.
- Someone 16 years old or older.
- Someone who leads a life of faith in harmony with the duty being undertaken as described above. This moral quality of the sponsor implies that as a minimum he/she:
 - is capable of participating fully in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, i.e., that they are capable of receiving Holy Communion.
 - faithfully participates in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Most Holy Eucharist at those times prescribed by God through the Church.
- Cannot be the father or mother of the candidate.
- The Church encourages that, in keeping with the unity of baptism and confirmation, a sponsor be chosen from the candidate’s godparents if possible.

May I have two confirmation sponsors?

- Yes, but the norm is one.
 - If the candidate chooses to have two sponsors, both sponsors need to meet the requirements listed above.

Must I participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass while preparing for confirmation?

- All Catholics are enjoined by divine law (which is a precept directly from God and communicated through the Catholic Church) to participate in Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation unless there is a grave, i.e., very serious, obstacle preventing them from doing so or unless they are dispensed by the bishop for a grave reason. When one chooses to act otherwise, he/she is saying “No” to God’s salvific and loving presence in their soul; thereby gravely wounding their relationship with Jesus and cutting themselves off from all sanctifying grace. In other words, not attending Sunday Mass or Mass on Holy Days of Obligation is a mortal sin.
- While Mass attendance is not formally tracked as part of our formation program, it is extremely encouraged for very obvious reasons. In fact, small group participants are expected to hold each other accountable in order to help build each other up in the Faith. The truth is that we at St. Joseph don’t see this as a mere check-in-the-box kind of thing. We lovingly desire the true good of all our candidates for their sake. We want our young people to be filled with joy, peace, and happiness at every moment of their lives; we want this happiness to be of a heavenly kind from God himself.

I have other questions.

- Don’t panic! The Director of High-School Faith Formation will walk you through everything. Remember, there will be an orientation meeting to kick things off, and you will have the opportunity to ask questions then.

How do I get started?

- Please visit the online registration link.
 - The link is closed outside of registration periods, so if it is not working, you may be just a bit too early.
- There is also a link for sponsors. Don't worry about that one for now. More will be explained at the orientation meeting.

May God our Father bless you and your family abundantly!