

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

A GUIDEBOOK FOR CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES AND THEIR PARENTS



*“You too, dear young people, can be joyful witnesses of Christ’s love,
courageous witnesses of His Gospel, carrying to this world a ray of His light.”*

—Pope Francis, World Youth Day Rio 2013

SAINT GENEVIEVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
PANORAMA CITY, CALIFORNIA

COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH MINISTRY

The Comprehensive Youth Ministry at Saint Genevieve is modeled after the United States Bishops' document, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (1997: USCCB). More than providing programs of activities, we seek to provide Christian formation for youth integrating them in the faith life of our parish community.

Youth ministry is the response of the Christian community to the needs of young people and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community.

Goals

Our ministry to youth at Saint Genevieve is guided by three interdependent and equally important goals .

- ❑ **EMPOWERMENT:** To help young people live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.
- ❑ **PARTICIPATION:** To invite youth to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community.
- ❑ **GROWTH:** To encourage the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

How Do Our Parish Accomplish These Goals

- ❑ By accepting the call to see our youth as gifted and growing members of the community, and to actively respond to the needs of youth.
- ❑ By calling young people to grow as Catholic people of faith: to voice their needs, to share their gifts and talents as disciples in the world, to participate in the life of the parish and the mission of the church – to live with a purpose!
- ❑ By offering a variety of programs, opportunities and activities for youth such as community building, recreational and social, prayer and worship, faith formation, leadership development, service learning, outreach, and mentoring.
- ❑ By providing programs for families, and supporting parents, youth and families in their daily living.
- ❑ By creating ways for youth to become involved in the various ministries of the Church, and helping parish organizations to invite and involve youth in their programs.
- ❑ By encouraging and strengthening youth in living out their faith beyond the parish by supporting youth in the wider community, and by supporting youth-serving organiza-

tions in the community.

THE CONFIRMATION PROCESS

The Confirmation Process at Saint Genevieve is part of our Comprehensive Youth Ministry as outlined and accomplished through our threefold goals mentioned above.

Confirmation preparation is a process in Christian growth based on our belief that teens are at a significant point in their faith journey where they are beginning to establish a personal faith identity. Through sharing their own journey and interaction with others, the candidates are assisted in identifying and understanding how God is working in their lives, and come to a new realization of faith within the context of the parish community.

The goal of the Confirmation Preparation Process is to prepare the high school-aged youth to receive the sacrament and to deepen the faith of the parish community. A justice perspective and sensitivity to the multi-cultural diversity of the Archdiocese are integrated into this program. This process is grounded in a vision of youth ministry in which the parish community responds to the needs of the youth and encourages them to return to share their unique gifts with the parish community (*A Vision of Youth Ministry*, 1976: USCC).

Through a modular model, the Confirmation Process at Saint Genevieve provides foundation for catechesis, prayer and worship, service opportunities, retreat experiences and community building. This process encourages full and active participation of all involved, and calls on the community to celebrate significant moments in the candidates' faith journey.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN THE CONFIRMATION PROCESS

“As the primary educators of their children: parents are to be intimately involved in the catechesis for Confirmation. This will help them renew and strengthen their own faith, besides enabling them to set a better example for their children.”(NCD, no. 119)

Because parents:

- Are the primary educators of their children
- Are responsible for initiating their children into the sacramental life
- Serve as models for their child by being committed Christians

Parents should expect to:

- Worship with your families regularly
- Be actively involved in the Confirmation preparation of the candidate.
- Engage in discussions about the material being studied including sharing your understanding and perspective.
- Encourage your child to reflect and thoughtfully consider the decision to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.
- Pray for your child’s spiritual growth every day.
- Support and encourage completion of assignments, activities and expectations.
- Emphasize the importance of the sacrament of Confirmation by taking an active part in the celebration of Confirmation.
- Assist in retreats, service work, meetings, classes, spiritual events and social events.
- Faithfully bring your teen (and when necessary yourself) to meetings, programs, and prayer services that are planned to help your child prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation.

WHO MAY BE CONFIRMED?

Confirmation candidates:

- Are of high school age {fourteen years old and under tighen years old}
- Have received the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and Eucharist.
- Are practicing their Catholic faith
- Are in the state of grace
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities of a member of the Catholic Church
- Are aware of the initiation aspect of the Sacrament of Confirmation and be committed to continuing the faithful practice and study of their religion
- Have a sincere desire to receive the sacrament as well as an appreciation of sacramental life of the Church
- Register with the parish for the sacrament of Confirmation (Confirmation Registration Form)

What's Expected of the Candidate

- Participate in weekly Mass
- Participate in classes
- Choose a qualified sponsor and meet regularly with him/her.
- Write a letter of intent the Pastor
- Choose a saint's name as your Confirmation name and write a biography about that saint.
- Participate in Rite of Commitment Mass in May or June.
- Participate in the sponsor/candidate meeting
- Participate in Confirmation retreat
- Be involved in Service activities
- Perform or attend at least four Prayer & Worship Activities
- Write a letter to the Bishop.
- Participate in the Confirmation rehearsal.
- Participate in the Confirmation liturgy!

EXPECTATIONS IN DETAIL

The following explains each of the Confirmation expectations in detail and in some cases, the reasons the requirements are important to the formation of the candidate. Please remember that while in many cases we list a minimum requirement for Confirmation, the candidates should be encouraged to make many of these activities a regular part of their religious practices.

Participate at Sunday Mass

The Confirmation candidate and his or her parents (along with the rest of the family) must have a sincere intention of participating in Mass every week.

Participating in the Eucharistic life of the community is both a privilege and an obligation of Confirmed Catholics. This is also an important way that parents demonstrate to their children the importance they place on the faith they are handing on to their children. Worshipping as a community we build up the Body of Christ. If your family has not been attending Mass regularly in the past, we are confident that by doing so you will notice many spiritual benefits by the time Confirmation approaches.

Participate in Confirmation classes

Attendance at the Confirmation classes is extremely important in preparing the candidates for reception of the sacrament. When a class is missed, the candidate loses time for fellowship and prayer as well as the material covered that day.

We expect that you will make these gatherings a priority and therefore make a sincere effort to adjust your other obligations accordingly. Students are expected to be prepared for the classes, which includes completing any assigned readings or homework.

Contact your catechist immediately if critical circumstances will not allow you to attend a class. The catechist will determine an appropriate at-home assignment so that the candidate does not fall behind in the lessons. Excessive absenteeism can affect the candidate's ability to enter fully into this important period of preparation.

Choose a qualified sponsor and meet regularly with your sponsor

The confirmation sponsor should be a person who has been a strong role- model as a faith-filled Catholic. This person will be a companion in your faith journey and will vouch for your readiness to receive the sacrament.

The sponsor should therefore be able to meet regularly with the candidate, spend time building a bond with the teen, help him/her prepare for the sacrament through prayer, study, service and discussion and be in physical attendance at the rehearsal and the confirmation. Attendance by proxy is allowed in certain situations, such as the sponsor living out-of-town and being unable to travel to the celebration. Requests for proxy should be directed to the Director of Youth Ministry.

The Sponsor

- Must be a practicing Roman Catholic who attends Mass regularly (Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation) and is living according to the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Supports the person to be confirmed in their commitment to a Christian life
- Must know the candidate and be willing to serve as a strong and long- lasting Christian influence on the candidate
- Must be fully initiated themselves, having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist
- Must submit a verification of Confirmation (a copy of their Confirmation certificate or a letter from the parish where the sponsor was Confirmed.)
- Should be sufficiently mature in their own faith commitment
- May be either male or female for any candidate
- May assist the candidate in choosing and carrying out the candidate's service project commitment
- Must be reasonably informed on current church teachings
- May accompany the candidate to special liturgies and preparation programs
- May not be the parents of the candidate
- Assists in determining the candidate's readiness for the sacrament
- Presents the candidate to the minister of Confirming Bishop

Preference is given to the candidate's baptismal godparent, which most fully expresses the integral connection between Baptism and Confirmation.

Along with this guide you will find a Confirmation Sponsor Information Form. This form is due back at the time of the sponsor/candidate meeting in the Fall.

Write a Letter of Intent

Each candidate must write a letter of intent in the candidate's own handwriting and addressed to the Pastor, Father Alden J. Sison. The purpose of this letter is for the candidate to demonstrate in writing his/her desire to be Confirmed, and willingness to make this commitment. Please use the following as a guide for the letter:

- I. Begin with your greeting: Dear Father Alden:
- II. Introduce yourself and share some information about yourself, such as your family, your interests and hobbies, and a little about your background.
- III. State that you would like to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation and explain (in one or two paragraphs) why you want to be confirmed. It may help you to think about
 - the ways in which this sacrament will strengthen your relationship with Jesus,
 - the role of faith in your life
 - what it means to you to be a part of our parish community
 - how the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to be witnesses for Jesus (read and reflect on the Acts of the Apostles)
- IV. Conclude your letter with a quotation from Scripture which will serve as your inspiration during your preparation for Confirmation. This can be a sentence or a few sentences. Include an explanation as to why you chose this passage. Make sure you cite the scriptural passage.

This letter must be turned in by the sponsor/candidate meeting in the Fall Session.

Choose a Confirmation name and write a biography about that saint

In the scriptures when God had a mission for someone, He often gave them a new name. We know for example that Jesus gave Cephas his new name: Peter.

And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.
—Matthew 16:24

Even without a new name, your name has always told others who you are. God calls on each of us to fulfill a special mission. It may be converting non-believers, helping the poor, being a peace-maker or giving witness to the love of Christ in your life— one of many other callings. Confirmation may be the continuation of a mission you began at Baptism, or the beginning of a new mission.

Therefore there are two options when deciding on a Confirmation name:

- I. Because Confirmation is the strengthening of the work that God began in your life at your Baptism, it is recommended that you give first preference to using your Baptismal name for Confirmation. This shows the integral link between Baptism and Confirmation (Note: this applies only if your Baptismal name was a Saint's name).
- II. Perhaps you see Confirmation as the beginning of a new mission for you and a fresh beginning in your faith journey. Then you may choose a new name for Confirmation. Your Confirmation name should be that of a saint you admire or the saint name of someone you know and look up to as a Christian role model.

There are many helpful websites available to assist you in gathering information about the saints.

Here's just a few:

<http://www.catholic.org/saints/>

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/lots/>
<http://www.catholic-pages.com/dir/saints.asp>
<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saints/>
<http://catholicism.org/category/lives-of-the-saints>
<https://www.ewtn.com/saintsHoly/>

Once the candidate has chosen his/her Confirmation name, they must complete a biography of that saint using the form found with this guide.

The saint biography is due to the Religious Education Office by December 8th—the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and the one-third of your Year I of your Confirmation Preparation.

Participate in the Rite of Commitment Mass

All candidates, parents and if available, sponsors should plan to attend the Rite of Commitment, celebrated at the candidate's parish in the Fall Session. The exact date will be posted in the finalized schedule. During the Mass the candidates will declare their intent to seek the Sacrament of Confirmation with the parish community as witness. In return the community agrees to support and pray for all those involved in this faith journey.

This Rite is celebrated at the 5:30 pm Sunday Mass.

Participate in Sponsor/Candidate meeting

The candidate and his or her sponsor must attend a meeting together in the afternoon of the Rite of Commitment Mass. The purpose of the meeting is to bring the candidate and sponsor together to begin their mission and begin to build their bond as partners in faith. We will go over expectations and give suggestions for topics of conversation as well as ideas for service projects.

Participate in the Confirmation retreat

Retreats provide a unique opportunity for the candidates to spend an extended time in discernment and reflect on the gifts of the Spirit and reflect on their relationship with God and their faith life. It is therefore required that each candidate attend a weekend retreat in the Spring Session of Year II.

THE FOUR MODULES OF CYM

Catechesis: Faith Themes

The emphasis during this module e is on sharing the faith journey and growing as a faith community. This involves sharing in the following areas:

- Journey/Faith Story
- Personal Giftedness
- The Person of Jesus
- Service

Service Activities

An awareness of the importance of and vital need for performing service to others is critical in preparing the candidates for Confirmation. Throughout Scripture we are called to love our neighbor and stand up for justice and peace. Since service and justice are so important to who we are as Catholic Christians, we ask that the candidates make his/her service projects a priority.

Serving others is not something we do “to get it over with”. It is something we do because we recognize the presence of Jesus in all persons and in all of God’s creation. Therefore it is encouraged that the candidates get involved in a new service activity which is an ongoing and a regular commitment.

Some things to think about when considering your service are:

-What are people’s needs or problems and what can I do to help?

-Who needs time, effort, work or service from me?

-What unique gifts or talents has God given me that can be used to serve others?

Once you identify where service is needed, make specific plans and follow through with those commitments.

Each candidate is required to fulfill four Service Projects before they are confirmed. After each Service Project, the candidate submits a short reflection paper.

Participate in Prayer & Worship activities

Spending time in prayer and reflection does not end when we leave the church on Sunday. It is so important for the candidates to become aware of the many opportunities that are available for them to meditate, celebrate and further their relationship with God.

A list of Service Project is provided to the candidate at the beginning of each Quarterly Session.

Community Building Activities

Attend Confirmation Rehearsal

All candidates and their sponsors must attend the Confirmation rehearsal which is typically the Thursday before Confirmation. The sponsors will also give witness to the readiness of the candidates at this time.

Participate in the Liturgy and Rite of Confirmation

Confirmation is normally celebrated in the spring. The exact date will be announced.