

Confirmation Preparation

A GUIDEBOOK FOR CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES AND PARENTS

St. Michael the Archangel Parish



“Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example for the believers in your speech, your conduct, your love, faith, and purity.”

1 Timothy 4:12

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome! We are looking forward to sharing with you this journey of faith as you prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. As you will see, Confirmation preparation involves learning, sharing, serving, fellowship, spiritual growth and fun! You will be given the opportunity to learn more about your Catholic faith and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Confirmation is the Sacrament in which one is enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church. It strengthens us and obliges us to be witnesses to Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith. It is the Sacrament in which one enters into full membership in the Catholic Church. Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives us the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply as children of God, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us to bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a spiritual mark or indelible character on the Christian soul; for this reason one can receive this sacrament only once.

A Christian does not live as a child of God through his or her own efforts alone, but through the grace of God. We see this in a practical way when we look back on our own lives and the lives of others, even the lives of saints. Therefore, it is our duty to seek the grace that God offers us in order to live our lives as Christians in the way that God intends.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

General criteria:

1. Must be validly baptized in the Catholic Church.
2. Has received proper instructions or catechesis on the Sacrament of Confirmation.
3. Capable of renewing baptismal promises.
4. Must be in the state of grace on the day of the celebration.

For the Diocese of Honolulu:

5. Must be at least in the ninth or tenth grade to receive the sacrament.
6. Must have participated in a two-year parish Confirmation preparation process.
7. Expresses a stated personal desire to receive the Sacrament.
8. Demonstrates a willingness to witness more fully to Christ by word and action.
9. Shows interest in and willingness to participate in an on-going service ministry of the parish.
10. Has completed at least 25 hours of community service during the two-year process.

For St. Michael the Archangel Parish:

11. Must not miss more than 3 sessions per semester over the two years of Confirmation Preparation, and achieved 90% or better on all homework assignments

EXPECTATIONS OF CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES- at a glance

- 1) Participate in weekly Mass
- 2) Participate in Confirmation Preparation classes
- 3) Choose a qualified sponsor and meet regularly with him/her
- 4) Write an essay at the beginning of Year 1 and a second essay just prior to Confirmation at the end of Year 2
- 5) Choose a Confirmation name
- 6) Participate in the Rite of Enrollment liturgy in September or October of Year 1
- 7) Participate in the parent/sponsor/candidate meeting
- 8) Participate in a weekend Confirmation retreat
- 9) Participate in at least 25 hours of service ministry over the two-year process.
- 10) Participate in the Confirmation rehearsal
- 11) Participate in the Rite of 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.

1) Participate in Mass on Saturday evening or Sunday each week

The Confirmation candidate and his or her parents/guardians (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/guardians 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 benefits by the time Confirmation approaches.

2) Participate in Confirmation Preparation classes

Attendance at the two years of Confirmation preparation classes at St. Michael's is extremely important in preparing the candidates for reception of the sacrament. These classes are included in the Youth Ministry curriculum; therefore, regular attendance at the weekly Youth meetings is required. 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 include completing any assigned readings or homework. Contact your instructor immediately if critical circumstances will not allow you to attend a class. The instructor will determine an appropriate at-home assignment so that the candidate doesn't fall behind in the lessons. Excessive absenteeism can affect the candidate's ability to enter fully into this important period of preparation. Therefore, in order to receive the sacrament, no more than 3 sessions may be missed in any one semester over the two years of preparation, and achieve 90% or better on all homework assignments.

3) 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 Youth Ministers.

The sponsor:

- May not be the parents of the candidate
- Must be fully initiated themselves, having received Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation
- May be either male or female for any candidate
- 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 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 assist the candidate in choosing and carrying out the candidate's service commitment
- Must be reasonably informed on current church teachings
- May accompany the candidate to special liturgies and preparation programs
- Assists in determining the candidate's readiness for the sacrament
- Presents the candidate to the minister of Confirmation

Preference of sponsor should be given to the candidate's Godparents, which most fully expresses the integral connection between Baptism and Confirmation. If you are using a proxy sponsor, he/she must also meet the above criteria

4) Write an essay at the beginning of Year 1 and a second essay just prior to Confirmation at the end of Year 2

Each Year 1 Confirmation candidate must write a 500-word essay answering the question "What type of disciple do you want to be?" This first essay must be turned in by the parent/sponsor/candidate meeting in autumn (September or October) of Year 1.

Each Year 2 Confirmation candidate must write a 500-word essay answering the question "What has changed in your life during the two years of Confirmation preparation?" This essay must be turned in at least two weeks prior to the Rite of

Confirmation liturgy.

5) Choose a Confirmation name

The rite says nothing about taking a new name at Confirmation. Therefore, candidates are strongly encouraged to retain their baptismal name rather than take a new one. This is desirable because it manifests an understanding that Confirmation completes the grace of Baptism.

6) Participate in the Rite of Enrollment liturgy

All candidates, parents, and if available, sponsors should plan to attend the Rite of Enrollment, celebrated in the autumn, usually in September or October. 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.

7) Participate in Parent/Sponsor/Candidate meeting

The candidate, his or her parents/guardians, and sponsor must attend a meeting together the same day as the Rite of Enrollment Mass. The purpose of the meeting is to bring the candidate, parents/guardians and sponsor together to begin their mission and begin to build their bond as partners in faith. We will go over expectations and give ideas for service projects.

8) Participate in the weekend 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 the Confirmation retreat hosted by St. Michael the Archangel in their Confirmation year (Year 2). This retreat will be a day or evening of prayer on a weekend.

9) Participate in at least 25 hours in social justice (community 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 whom we are as Catholic Christians, we ask that the candidates make his/her service 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 service

activity which is an ongoing and a regular commitment. The focus of their service should be to the poor, shut-ins, persons with disabilities, and homeless. If in doubt as to whether your proposed service will count, ask the Youth Ministers. Hours in a liturgical ministry (choir member, lector, usher, greeter, etc,) do not count; these are considered a “responsibility” as members of the parish community.

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.

There are many, many opportunities to serve at the church and in the community. Just a few examples are:

- * Work in the garden at Immaculate Conception
- * Clean the church
- * Clean the grounds of the church cemetery
- * Gather food for the hungry at Thanksgiving
- * Sing Christmas carols to the elderly
- * Feed the hungry

Candidates are strongly encouraged to serve with their parents and other family members. Other opportunities will be listed in the monthly newsletter and the parish bulletin. (Please read the bulletin every week as it provides you important information.)

10) Participate in the Confirmation Rehearsal

All candidates and their sponsors (or a proxy) must attend the Confirmation rehearsal which is typically the Wednesday before Confirmation.

11) Participate in the Rite of Confirmation

Confirmation will be in the spring. The exact date will be announced.

“All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.” -Rite of Confirmation

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

“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/guardians:

- 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/guardians 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

NOTICE OF RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I _____, the parent/guardian of _____
have received, read and understand the St. Michael's "A Guidebook for
Confirmation Candidates and Parents".

- ❖ I understand that I am to fulfill the "Roles and Responsibilities of
Parents/Guardians"

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date