

*wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude,
knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord*

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

gifted

SJTW



CONFIRMATION



Saint Joseph the Worker
Catholic Church

"The Advocate, the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name, He will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you."
~ John 14:26



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Coordinator’s Note

“gifted” – Candidates, we would like to welcome you as you prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation with St. Joseph the Worker. Confirmation preparation at SJTW is a 2-year process of mission and reflection. All candidates will be asked to commit to prepare for this sacrament through service, prayer and participation in the life and mission of the Church.

The preparation experience, which we call *“gifted”*, challenges you to discover your own God-given gifts, talents, and interests – and to use them in your journey of discipleship.

The contents of the Confirmation Candidate Handbook are designed to help you, your parents and sponsors to understand and embrace the experiences that being *“gifted”* has to offer.

Hopes and Prayers – Confirmation is not a “graduation”! Quite the opposite... Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation – a beginning; a commitment and anointing into a life-long journey of discipleship.

It is the wish and hope of the community of St. Joseph the Worker that during this period of preparation each of you will experience the peace, love, mercy and vitality that can only be truly found in a life connected to God. We pray that you will find a home and purpose in the Church and look forward to the energy, ideas and perspective that you and your peers have to offer this community and the world!

Barry Shay

Barry Shay	Katie McCarty	Fr. Mike Sullivan
Confirmation Coordinator	Director of Faith Formation	Pastor

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Confirmation Prep Sessions

Purpose & Practice

Preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation is a process that invites young Catholics into a deeper relationship with God and into the life and mission of the Catholic community. Our "gifted" Confirmation Preparation focuses on discovering three aspects of the spiritual life:

- Discerning our personal gifts and call.
- Understanding and serving the needs of the community.
- Personal engagement in a life-long journey of faith with Christ and His Church.

We ask that everyone involved in this process (Candidates, Sponsors and parents) to view this period of preparation as an apprenticeship of faith *not a program or check list of things to do*. The commitments that we are asking from the candidates are precisely the same commitments that every Christian disciple is asked to make!

Purpose ~

Discovering your purpose in life is one of the most exciting adventures a person can have in your walk with God. Your gifts, talents and abilities are uniquely given to you for two reasons. First, these personal gifts reflect our unique and personal relationship with God and help us to grow closer to Him. But God does not stop there! The gifts that God bestows on every believer is also intended to be shared for the common good of the body of Christ. In this way, God uses us a multiplier for His love, mercy, healing, understanding, strength, wisdom, ad infinitum.

So many young people (and older) ask the question, "What is the meaning of life?" Understanding and sharing our gifts is a great place to start.

Practice ~

The Gospel values taught by Jesus (love, forgiveness, faithfulness, justice, etc.) were never intended to be abstract concepts to be studied or some general philosophy of niceness. These values given to us in the lessons of the Gospels were always intended to be actively practiced as part of our daily life. This is the mission of the Church! Young people seeking a deeper connection to the Catholic Community through the Sacrament of Confirmation should understand (and have a chance to practice) the responsibilities and goals of that community.

SJTW Confirmation Candidates are asked to make just that commitment.

- Practice worship by learning about and attending Mass regularly.
- Practice justice, mercy and love by serving the poor and marginalized in the community.
- Practice personal disciplines (prayer, generosity, etc.) to grow in holiness (closer to God).

In short, practice what it means to be a disciple of Christ.



The Required Stuff-

Each Candidate *must* have the following before they can be presented to the Archbishop to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation:

Baptismal Certificate – Any candidate who was not baptized at St. Joseph the Worker, will need to supply a copy of their Baptismal certificate. We collect this document with the Confirmation II Sacramental Preparation Form. After Confirmation, the parish where the candidate was baptized will be given written verification that the candidate completed the sacraments of initiation. This will become part of their permanent record in the Church as Confirmation enables you to sponsor someone else in the future and allows you to be a godparent.

Sponsor – Each candidate must choose a sponsor. Sponsors must be able meet all of the following criteria:

- An adult (16 or older), ***who is not the parent*** or legal guardian of the candidate.
- The Sponsor must be a *practicing Catholic* who has already received the Sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation.
- The Sponsor must be willing to act as a spiritual mentor to the Candidate.

Candidate Commitment – Each candidate seeking this sacrament must freely choose to be confirmed and be committed to continuing the faithful practice and study of our faith.

United States Council of Catholic Bishops – The USCCB asks each parish to prepare candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation (*and by extension, a lifetime of participation in life and mission of the Church*) by offering educational and worship experiences in the following areas:

- Mentorship (*see pg. 5-6 for details*)
- Ongoing Faith Formation (*see pg. 7 for details*)
- Immediate Sacramental Preparation (*see pg. 8 for details*)
- Discipleship (*see pg. 9-11 for details*)
- Spiritual Renewal (*see pg. 12 for details*)

Mentorship

Guides along the way

"Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us." 1 Thessalonians 2:8

Parents (life-long mentors)

Parents are the first and primary teachers of the faith and are vital role models of our faith. Parents are encouraged to be strong leaders by continuing to learn and be active in their own faith. Our Faith Formation Team stands ready to support parents with whatever material (or answers to those tough questions) that you may need.

During the preparation process we are asking your teen to enter into an apprenticeship of Christian discipleship. We want to partner with you to help the candidate discover the faith of our ancestors as well as the reality of our faith that is lived out daily. Parents can help candidates discover their giftedness and to response to God's generous outpouring of love.

- Model Christian discipleship and participate fully in liturgy each week.
- Model gospel values at home and in the community.
- Help Candidate Choose a Sponsor.
- Help Candidate Research a saint and choose a Confirmation Name.
- Help monitor Candidate's progress to complete Confirmation Prep commitments.
- Submit a Sacramental Registration form (both years).
- Provide a copy of the Candidate's Baptismal Cert. (if not baptized at SJTW).

Sponsors (spiritual mentor)

Candidates will select a Confirmation Sponsor in the spring of their first year of preparation. Sponsors play a crucial role by providing spiritual mentorship that will last for years to come. Candidates should take care in selecting their sponsor. The Church views the role of godparents and sponsors as being a life-long ministry, not simply an honor or title.

In addition to *the USCCB requirements listed on page 4*, Sponsors are asked to help guide their Candidate in the following ways:

- Attend the Candidate/Sponsor Confirmation Prep sessions.
- Meet individually with the Candidate at least 4 times before Confirmation.
- Monitor and help the Candidate keep their Confirmation Prep Commitments.
- Write a Sponsor Recommendation Letter (spring of Year II)
- Attend the Confirmation Celebration

*A detailed handbook and explanation of the Confirmation Sponsor program will be presented to Candidates and their Sponsors at the **Candidate/Sponsor Orientation Session**.*

Mentorship

Guides along the way

“They asked each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?’” Luke 24:32

Discipleship Group Leader (Community mentor)

Most candidates will participate in **OneWith** at St. Joseph the Worker for their ongoing faith formation. The Discipleship Groups formed in 9th grade will continue to meet together through 11th grade. The relationships built between the students and their Discipleship Group Leaders in these small faith-sharing communities often last well beyond Confirmation.

Saints (Unseen mentor)

Confirmation II Candidates will choose and research a Saint. The chosen saint may be adopted as the candidate's Confirmation name.

The significance of taking on the name of the Saint follows many examples in scripture. Throughout scripture, God changes the name of someone at a crucial time in their lives. He changed Abram's name to Abraham when He made Abraham the "father of many nations"; and He changed Saul's name to Paul after experiencing a conversion of heart.



Candidates seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation agree to commit to complete the following Mentorship Milestones:

- **Select a Sponsor.** Candidates will be given direction on methods to discern a sponsor that is right for them.
- **Submit a Confirmation Sponsor Form:** Candidates must submit a Confirmation Sponsor Form by the end of their first year of preparation.
- **Attend the Candidate/Sponsor Sessions.** Candidates must attend all of the “Gifted” Confirmation Prep sessions – some which also include sponsor. If your sponsor cannot attend, a parent may act as a proxy for these sessions.
- **Meet individually with the Sponsor.** Candidates must commit to meet with their Sponsor at least 4 times before Confirmation.
- **Select a Confirmation Name** (optional). Candidates will be given direction on methods to research saints and discern a Confirmation name that is right for them. Although selecting a Confirmation name is optional, everyone is encouraged to do so.

Ongoing Faith Formation

“God confirms us with you in Christ and has anointed us, putting a seal on us and giving us the Spirit.” ~ 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

Ongoing Faith Formation

As candidates prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation it is vitally important for them to continue to grow in knowledge and understanding of God’s word as well as the Traditions, teaching and practices of the Catholic Church. Our Catholic faith is vast in scope, rooted in centuries of philosophy and theology and rich in symbol, prayer and practice; but sometimes the true meaning of our worship or action can be lost in layers of ritual.

Obviously, one could study for a lifetime and still not fully know all that can be known about the Catholic Church, its teachings and its traditions. During this period of immediate preparation candidates will focus on what can be considered the most basic truths related to being a practicing Catholic.

Public/Home School Students – Most candidates will participate in the **OneWith** Sunday night formation here at St. Joseph the Worker for their ongoing faith formation. The Discipleship Groups formed in 9th grade will continue to meet together through 11th grade. Any candidate who misses a **OneWith** session may make up the session(s) by attending an approved “Catholic enrichment” program (an adult educational program, Catholic youth rally, etc) or submitting the “Mass Understanding” make-up assignment found on Faith Formation webpage (www.sjtw.net/grades-9-12-onewith).

Catholic High School Students – Candidates that attend a Catholic High School that is accredited by the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis receive ongoing faith formation as a part of their academic curriculum. Catholic High School students are welcome to attend our **OneWith** sessions as an optional activity.

Liturgy: “Source and Summit” – For all Candidates and every Catholic, the Eucharist is an inexhaustible mystery to be loved and to be lived. It is a sacrament; it is a sacrifice; it is a meal; it is a liturgical celebration, a public proclamation of our faith in sign and symbol; it is the “Source and Summit” of our Christian experience. *To truly understand who we are as Catholics; to fully participate in the life and mission of the Church; to become the person of faith that God has called us to be, we must seek God in the sacraments... we must seek Him in the Eucharist!*

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Confirmation Prep Sessions

Immediate Sacramental Preparation -

The goal of our catechesis for immediate Confirmation preparation is to help young people to understand the Sacrament of Confirmation and appreciate the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Our Confirmation Prep Sessions focus specifically on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, development of a "Catholic"/Discipleship identity, and commitment to the life and mission of the Church.

All Candidates seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation must attend all of the Confirmation Prep Sessions. If a candidate finds that it impossible to attend, they must contact the Confirmation Coordinator or Director of Faith Formation to set up an individual appointment for the Candidate and their Sponsor/Parent to make up that session.

Please check your Faith Formation Schedule or the Confirmation Schedules available in the Faith Formation Office or on our webpage (www.sjtw.net/grades-9-12-onewith).



Candidates seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation agree to commit to completing the following Faith Formation/Immediate Prep

- **Attend Mass weekly.** All candidates preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation are expected to commit to attend Mass every week.
- **Commit to ongoing faith formation.** All candidates preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation are expected to learn about the teaching and practices of the faith by participating in ongoing faith formation. Candidates may fulfill this commitment by participating in the **OneWith** program at SJTW or by attending Catholic School.
- **Attend ALL Confirmation Prep Sessions.** All Candidates must attend each of the mandatory Confirmation Prep Sessions.

Discipleship (Christian Service)

“... ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” Matthew 20:40

Serving others is not a requirement for Confirmation...

Service to others is a *requirement* for the Christian life (Mt. 25:40)! To share the gospel of Christ - to serve, heal and forgive others with great love and humility is ***the mission of the Church... and the responsibility of every Christian!*** As part of your preparation for Confirmation, you will explore how to use your *God-given* gifts and interests to become Christ for, and see Christ in, others.

To highlight the different ways the people of God are commanded to serve the needs of the world, we have divided the service commitment into two distinct areas that reflect our personal and communal responsibilities as disciples of Christ.

Acts of Comfort and Family & Community Service.

To help candidates become intentional about *how and why* they volunteer their time, we have provided clarifying questions for each ministry category. Before recording their hours, candidates should ask themselves these questions (and be able to defend their answer).

Acts of Comfort (20 Hours, Minimum):

The Acts of Comfort ministry allows candidates to share their time and gifts to heal the physical needs of the people. In the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 25:31-46), Jesus gives us practical (and specific) instruction on how we should serve the needs of others and God at the same time. We want candidates to understand that this is the mission of the Church and to give them a chance to experience it first-hand.

If you can answer yes to the following question, then your volunteer service can count as *Acts of Comfort*: ***“Does this volunteer experience help to ease the pain, suffering, despair or loneliness of those who are made in the image of God?”***

Just a few of the thousands of examples of Acts of Comfort:

- Visiting a Nursing Home
- Volunteering at a food shelf / homeless shelter
- Feed My Starving Children
- Loaves and Fishes
- Mary’s Place
- Home Free
- Hope Street
- Families Moving Forward
- Habitat for Humanity
- Summer Stretch Leader
- ChristPower Mission Trip

Discipleship (Christian Service)

Family/Community Service (10 Hours, Maximum):

The aim of Family and community service is to provide candidates with an opportunity to follow Jesus' teaching and put their faith into action in ways that help to build up families and the greater community. This ministry emphasizes recognizing our own unique gifts, talents and interests as gifts from God and using those gifts to make our world a better place.

If you can answer yes to the following question, then your volunteer service can count as Family/Community Service: *"Does this service demonstrate love and/or compassion for someone in my family or community and make my family or community a better place?"*

Just a few of the thousands of examples of Family/Community Service (Discipleship):

- Helping a neighbor in need (*Shoveling driveway, mowing lawn, baby sitting – for free of course!*)
- Peer to Peer tutoring
- Social Hour after Mass (*serving cookies and punch*)
- Volunteering for a community or sports organization
- Volunteering at school
- Benefit for cancer
- *Special Projects* around the house (*and done with LOVE – NOT chores*)

Other examples of *discipleship ministries*:

- Altar Server
- Art & Environment
- Lector
- Hospitality – aka: Usher
- Projectionist
- Choir/instrumentalist for Mass
- Children's Liturgy of the Word
- Sunday School (ages 3-5 see Monica Leibl)
- Faith Formation Aid - Grades 1-8 (Beth Heimer)
- Summer Stretch Leadership Team (Barry Shay)

Many of the ministries listed above require volunteers to sign up in advance here at our parish and some training may be required before you begin to volunteer. They may also require a period of commitment (6 mo. – 1 yr.). Please make sure that you can make a commitment to your chosen ministry before you sign up. For more information about these ministries, contact the person listed in (parentheses).

- Tarri Nelson: Office of Music & Liturgy 763-400-7205; tnelson@sjtw.net
- Monica Leibl: Faith Formation Office 763-400-7156; monical@sjtw.net
- Beth Heimer: Faith Formation Office 763-400-7211; bethh@sjtw.net
- Barry Shay: Faith Formation Office 763-400-7212; bshay@sjtw.net

Discipleship (Christian Service)

Christian Service – Young people have a tremendous capacity and energy to perform great works of charity (love). Most do this with vitality and joy. What a blessing!

Our youth are not the future of the Church they are a vital part of the Church TODAY. The Catholic Church needs the optimism, the perspective and the energy that our teens have in abundance. To this end, we invite all of our candidates to dig into their volunteer efforts with the same focus and enthusiasm as many of their other interests or hobbies. If not for your own sake (satisfaction of helping others, learning more about your faith/God, discovering an area of passion, etc), then for the sake of a Church and a planet that need your ideas, energy and example.

While the youth minister and small group leaders will undoubtedly be able to suggest or highlight opportunities for ministry *please remember that each candidate is responsible for finding their own volunteer opportunities, and tracking their own hours.* Periodically you will be asked to use a form like the Volunteer Commitment Card in your Confirmation Folder to submit updates for our records. ***Please keep a master copy of all your Confirmation commitments in your Confirmation Folder for your own records.*** We will review this record from time to time at **OneWith** sessions.



Candidates seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation agree to commit to complete the following Volunteer Ministry Milestones:

- **Acts of Comfort (20 Hours, Minimum):** Each Candidate commits to volunteer a minimum of 20 hours of ministry attending the physical needs of others (food, shelter, clothing, medical, etc).
- **Family/Community Service (10 Hours, Maximum)** Candidates may accumulate up to 10 of the 30 hours in volunteer activities that benefit the wider community.

Spiritual Renewal (Retreats)

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.” John 16:13

Taking Time for God– Few people take time to be still and enjoy God's presence. But consider the Lord's instruction, "Be still and know that I am God." That is why the US Bishops feel that it is imperative that all candidates preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation set aside a period of time so that they can more fully comprehend the presence of the Lord.

Retreat Experiences –The life of today's teen jam-packed with frenetic activity. Retreat experiences allow the candidate to set aside a time for prayer and reflection. This allows space for the candidates to focus on their interior spiritual life and their personal relationship with Jesus. Retreats also serve to help candidates discern their response to God's outpouring of love and how they will live the Sacraments as a regular part of the parish.

Flexibility– We also understand the busy lives and complicated schedules that accompany modern life (all the more reason to “recharge your spiritual battery”), so we have designed the “Gifted” experience to be flexible enough to meet the needs of each Candidate, by giving them a chance to build this valuable experience into their life in a way that works best for them.

Options – Candidates may choose from a dozen different retreat experiences offering **more than 50 date options** over the next two years. Each retreat option has been assigned a point value (1-6 points). Candidates preparing for Confirmation must accumulate at least 6 points from the following retreat experiences. Candidates may begin attending qualified retreats for Confirmation as soon as April of their 9th grade year and must have completed their retreat experiences (minimum of 6 points) at least one month prior to the Confirmation celebration.



Candidates seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation agree to commit to complete retreat experiences totaling at least 6 “Retreat Points”:

Sample of Retreat Options for 2019-2020

- “Logos” Retreat (for Discipleship Groups): 2 points
- Technology Retreat: 1 point
- SJTW Women’s Morning-Retreat: 1 point
- SJTW Courageous Christianity: 1-2 point(s)
- ChristPower Mission Trip: 3 points
- Summer Stretch Leadership Team: 1 point
- Dunrovin Sr. High Getaway: 3 points
- NET Ministries Confirmation Retreat: 3 points
- Central Minnesota TEC [Candidate w/sponsor or parent]: 3 points
- More....

Check the “Spiritual Renewal Handbook” for more retreat options/details.

In Conclusion...

"... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

Final Candidate Notes:

Confirmation is not about deciding to be Catholic. By virtue of your baptism, you are already Catholic. Confirmation, along with the Sacrament of the Eucharist, completes baptism.

Receiving the sacrament of Confirmation is NOT a "graduation" from religious education.

On the contrary, through the sacrament, we are commanded by Jesus to "go in peace, to love and serve the Lord".

As one of the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation, Confirmation celebrates the reality that the Holy Spirit is already alive in us and working through us. As with all sacraments, Confirmation should be entered into freely and with an open heart.

Candidates who wish to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation agree to commit to actively participate in the life and work of the Church and demonstrate the following:

- Make time to pray each day.
- Attend and participate fully in weekly Liturgy.
- Choose and meet with your Sponsor.
- Attend all "*gifted*" *Confirmation Prep* sessions.
- Fully participate in ongoing Faith Formation (**OneWith**/Catholic school)
- Volunteer for a minimum of 30 hours of Christian service.
- Participate in retreat experiences (Min. of 6 points).
- Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation shortly before Confirmation Mass.
- Seek the Sacrament of Confirmation freely and with an open heart.

The hope this parish is that this preparation will foster the understanding that our Catholic faith is a journey that **BEGINS with Confirmation** and lasts a lifetime! God is always calling us to more!

Notes...