

# WHAT'S INSIDE

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## IMPORTANT DATES

Below is a quick glance list of important dates for 8<sup>th</sup> grade Confirmation candidates. Please note these dates on your calendar. Your cooperation in meeting these due dates and attending events is needed and greatly appreciated.

Parent Formation/Meeting Night	Monday, September 26, 2011
Retreat 1 (10:00-2:00)	Saturday, October 22, 2011
Confirmation Info Sheet (CIS)	Monday, November 7, 2011
Sponsor Night	Monday, December 12, 2011
Final Corrections to CIS	Monday, January 9, 2012
Service Project Class Presentation	Monday, January 9, 2012
Retreat 2 (10:00-2:00)	Saturday, January 28, 2012
Bishop Letter Due	Monday, February 6, 2012
Parent Formation Night	Monday, March 5, 2012
Retreat 3 (9:00-2:00)	Saturday, March 10, 2012
Sponsor Faith Sharing Sheet Due	Monday, March 19, 2012
Confirmation Rehearsal	Thursday, April 12, 2012 (specific times on next page)
Confirmation	Saturday, April 14, 2012 Sunday, April 15, 2012
Last Class – Mystagogia	Monday, April 30, 2012

## ***Parent Formation***

To help parents fulfill their role as the primary faith educator of their children, we are offering two Parent Faith Formation Classes. We ask that you seriously consider attending both classes in order to enrich your own faith life, and model ongoing faith formation for your child.

*Confirmation as Sacrament*  
*Rite of Confirmation*

*September 26, 2011 during class time*  
*March 5, 2011 during class time*

## ***Confirmation Rehearsal***

All rehearsals will be the evening of **Thursday, April 12, 2012.**

1<sup>st</sup> hour will be for the 9:30am ceremony and as follows:

6:00 – 7:00 pm: 9:30 am Ceremony

7:00 – 8:00 pm: 1:00 pm Ceremony

8:00 – 9:00 pm: 3:00 pm Ceremony

## ***Confirmation***

Saturday, April 14th, 2012 @ 9:30 am

Saturday, April 14th, 2012 @ 1:00 pm

Sunday, April 15th, 2012 @ 3:00 pm

## What is Confirmation?

- **A Sacrament of Initiation that strengthens one's relationship with the Church and commitment to being an active member.**
- **Through this sacrament, the Holy Spirit and His gifts help us to live our baptismal promises, grow into the likeness of Christ, and share His mission.**
- **The preparation process for Confirmation offers an opportunity to deepen one's commitment to a specific way of life – as a follower of Jesus.**

Confirmation is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist). For those who were baptized as infants and received First Communion as little children, the celebration of Confirmation as a young adult presents a very special opportunity to affirm the decision made by their parents and godparents on their behalf.

Confirmation is not a graduation from religious studies. It is a "Rite of Passage" that invites you into full participation into our Church. As a fully initiated Catholic you can serve as liturgical minister, sponsor other's entry into the church, and are encouraged to attend all parish adult functions!

As our young people prepare for Confirmation, our entire community will support them in prayer and action as they deepen their understanding of the fundamental beliefs of our Faith and broaden their participation in the life of the community.

The Church's vision of Confirmation includes *Word, Worship, Community* and *Service*. The *Word* of God is the Scripture. It is the history of God's loving relationship with our ancestors in the faith. Our *Worship* includes all of our prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God our Father, through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The normative prayer experience for practicing Catholics is the Eucharistic liturgy. Participation in the *community's* Sunday celebration is a powerful act of belonging and nourishing oneself. And after we have celebrated as member of the Body of Christ, we go forth to love and *serve* one another, as well as those outside our own community. Loving God and our neighbor, just as Jesus commanded his first disciples.

With the gifts of the Holy Spirit, our Confirmation candidates will live a life dedicated to spreading God's love and helping to build God's Kingdom on earth.

## The Role of *Parents*

### *God's Gifts That Lead to Holiness*

Just as your child grows physically, intellectually and emotionally, so, too, he or she grows spiritually. As a parent responsible for the development of your child, you try to meet all of his or her changing needs. You foster and direct spiritual growth by the atmosphere in your home, the example of your life, and the celebration of the sacraments. You have seen that your child has been initiated into the faith through Baptism and the Eucharist. Now your young teenager is at the stage of **strengthening and reaffirming his or her commitment to the faith** through the Sacrament of Confirmation. The elements of our parish preparation program for the sacrament, including the textbook, *Catholic Connections Handbook*, will assist you in giving your teen a better understanding of Confirmation, and will help him or her **lead a more active, responsible Christian life**.

The goal of the sacramental preparation program is to help young people be receptive and responsive to the graces and challenges of the Sacrament of Confirmation. They **become more aware of the presence and action of the Spirit's gifts within them, which empower them to live more fully as Jesus did**. They will **discover ways to fulfill the specific responsibilities that are theirs as Christians**.

Throughout the preparation process, we also hope to give guidance to all those involved in the formation of the candidates and in the celebration of the sacrament so that Confirmation becomes a meaningful faith experience for the candidates, the family, and the parish community. In addition to our texts, we will offer opportunities for your child to share faith experiences, encountering Christ as they come together for retreats and service opportunities.

Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to be our advocate and helper. At Pentecost, this Spirit was poured out on the first believers, making them witnesses full of faith and courage. At Baptism the Holy Spirit comes upon us, and at Confirmation we are anointed in the strength of this Spirit and sent to carry on Christ's mission. Confirmation gives us the strength to become the man or woman God intended.

The Spirit in us is the same Spirit who anointed Jesus to redeem the world and bring about the kingdom of the Father through loving service. **The Holy Spirit and his gifts help us to live our baptismal promises, grow into the likeness of Christ, and share his mission**. We are united with other Spirit-filled people in the Church, the Body of Christ. Together we spread the message of the Good News, we worship at the Eucharist, we support one another in community, and we give service to those in need.

As young teens struggle to clarify their own convictions, attitudes, and values, parents are their chief models. Faith is caught more than taught. In undertaking more seriously your role of preparing your teenager for Confirmation, consider these questions:

- **Do I keep lines of communication open with my teenager?**
- **Do I make time for prayer, both private and communal?**
- **Do I actively participate in the sacramental life of the Church?**
- **Do I try to grow in knowledge of the faith and share it with my family?**
- **Do I give loving service to those inside and outside my family circle?**
- **Am I involved with parish activities as much as I could be?**

If we can assist you in your own spiritual journey during this time feel free to contact us.  
St. Paul the Apostle Parish Staff

## ***Sharing Your Giftedness***

*The Church teaches that parents are the first and foremost teachers of faith for their children. As your child journeys through the process of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, there are opportunities for you to guide, accompany, and learn from him or her.*

- Talk with your child about the faith content he or she is learning in religion class. Learn something new yourself!
- Encourage your child in their practice of personal daily prayer and the use of the Gospel Reflection.
- Witness to your own faith in your daily words and actions.
- Pray with your children. Include in your family prayers those who are in need around the world.
- Participate in the faith-sharing component of the preparation process, using the "Candidate/Sponsor Sheets" provided for sponsors. These faith-sharing conversations offer a wonderful opportunity for parents to lead their children to love and serve God in daily life.
- Guide your child's choice of a Confirmation name and a faith-filled sponsor.
- Support (and join) your son or daughter in planning and performing Christian service. For example, volunteer as a family to serve at a hot-meals center or to clean the home of an elderly person.
- Attend Sunday liturgy. Invite a friend or relative who does not participate in Mass to go to church and breakfast with you.
- Help out at a parish social function or participate in it.
- Support a parishioner, neighbor or friend who needs encouragement, sympathy, or material help.
- Decide how you can strengthen your bond with the parish community and commitment to the mission of the Church. Take action to do so.
- Consider how you can grow as a Christian: For what do you need to be forgiven? What virtue can you ask God to help you develop?

## The Role of the *Sponsor*

Choosing a Sponsor...

Each candidate, with the help of his or her parents, is responsible for choosing a sponsor. At Baptism, parents chose two sponsors (godparents) for their child – people who made a commitment to be an example of the faith and help raise them in the Catholic way of life. For Confirmation, the candidate again invites someone to serve as a sponsor to help him or her live out their Baptismal promises.

### ***The responsibilities of the sponsor include:***

- *Guiding* the candidate to understand and appreciate the Sacrament of Confirmation and have the right intentions for receiving it;
- *Mentoring* the candidate throughout the preparation process by encouraging him or her to pray and participate in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and to become actively involved in the life of their parish community;
- *Engaging* in the candidate's spiritual journey through periodic meetings for the purpose of faith-sharing;
- *Presenting* the candidate for Confirmation and continuing to assist the confirmed person in living a Christian life throughout their lives.

Sponsors are to be chosen because of their ability to “**apprentice**” others into the Catholic way of life. This involves prayer, celebration of the sacraments, living the Gospel, turning to other Catholics for support and guidance, and studying the faith. The role of the sponsor for Confirmation involves much more than simply standing behind a Confirmation candidate as the bishop confirms. It is to be the beginning, or the continuation, of a lasting relationship of faith mentoring and apprenticeship.

The Church suggests that, to express more clearly the relationship between Confirmation and Baptism, the baptismal sponsor (godparent) also be the Confirmation sponsor. (However, the candidate may choose an individual other than the baptismal sponsor.)

There is no regulation determining that men must be sponsors for boys and women must be sponsors for girls.

### **Canon Law states that a sponsor must:**

- Be at least sixteen years of age;
- Be a confirmed Catholic;
- Be living according to, and an active member of, the Catholic faith;
- Be an individual other than the candidate's parent.

## Sponsor Involvement in the Confirmation Preparation Process...

St. Paul the Apostle Parish is committed to involving the sponsor throughout the journey to Confirmation. During the time of preparation, they are expected to take an active role in the life of the candidate. This demands time, commitment and willingness to share their faith with the candidate, but also presents a unique and valuable opportunity to deepen both their relationship with a young person and their own faith life.

### The sponsor will:

- **Engage in faith-sharing conversation** with the candidate at least four times throughout the preparation process, using the "Candidate/Sponsor Sheets." The purpose of the faith-sharing component is to promote a dialogue between candidates and sponsors. Explanation and instructions for the faith-sharing component are contained in the forms packet.
- **Attend Mass with the candidate** whenever possible and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with them during the Lenten season prior to the celebration of Confirmation.
- **Attend Monday December 12, 2011** Sponsor Night (in the event that the Sponsor cannot attend, a parent must attend with their child)
- **Be present for the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation on April 14th or 15th, 2012**
- **Remain engaged in the faith life of the newly confirmed**, continuing to share prayer, insights, and support as the young person continues his or her journey of faith beyond Confirmation.

### ***Instructions for Faith-Sharing Component for Sponsors (or Parents) and Candidates***

- Candidates should arrange to meet with their sponsor for at least FOUR faith-sharing conversations.
- An hour of sharing is recommended. Choosing dates and times in advance may help ensure regular communication.
- These sheets are to be used as guides for the sharing sessions. The sheets are divided into three sections: Prayer, Knowing My Faith, and Christian Service. Candidates and sponsors should share the respective topics together, using as much of the sheet as time allows.
- SEVEN "Candidate/Sponsor Sheets" are available: numbers 1-5, and then Advent & Lent. We are asking candidates to discuss, and turn in reflections for at least FOUR of these sheets, but would encourage the use of all.
- Throughout this time of preparation, sponsors should seek to support candidates and their families. They should help the candidates become aware of their reasons for wanting to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation. Candidates will grow in their acceptance of the responsibility of being confirmed in the Catholic Church.
- *Parents* may also wish to use some or all of these sheets for their own conversations with their child.

## **CONFIRMATION PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

As you read through the packet, please be aware of the various due dates that have been listed. Your teen is encouraged to turn things in ahead of schedule. We have a rather large Confirmation class and so paperwork turned in early will help to create a wonderful, carefree day!

### ***Attendance***

Regular attendance and arriving on time to class is essential for the continuity and reinforcement of Catholic teaching and spiritual formation. Regular, consecutive attendance is expected of all teens. Due to the nature of the curriculum and the importance of each candidate being fully prepared for the sacrament, the following attendance rules apply:

1. In the event that your teen must miss a class, a phoned or emailed excuse is expected and parents should make arrangements with the Family Spiritual Formation Office to pick up any handouts, etc.
2. If three classes are missed without adequate reason, such as illness or a family emergency, the teaching staff, the Family Spiritual Formation staff, and the pastor will review your teen's progress. It will be determined at that time if your teen has the ability to successfully complete the program and be adequately prepared to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.
3. We recognize the fact that families can be faced with some unforeseen crisis. Please contact the office if such a situation occurs. We are willing to work with you.

## ***Baptismal Records***

**We must have a photocopy of your teen's baptismal record.** If you have not submitted one, our office will contact you. The parish that baptized your teen is responsible for maintaining all sacramental records for their entire lifetime. Once they have been confirmed, we forward the necessary documentation to the parish of baptism to be entered into the records, as well as recording it in our parish register.

If your teen was baptized in a Christian church other than the Roman Catholic Church, they may need to make a Profession of Faith, or need to be baptized. We must review their information and then determine what needs to take place. Please contact the Family Spiritual Formation Office if your son or daughter falls into this category.

## ***Eucharist and Reconciliation***

You are not required to submit documentation that these sacraments were received. However, if your teen has not received either of these sacraments, we will provide additional formation sessions. The 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Coordinator will contact you based on the information received on the registration form if your teen falls into this category.

## ***Textbooks***

Catholic Connections Handbook will help your candidate to grow in their understanding of our Church and how God speaks to His people through the Church. Also, they will discover what it means to be an active member of the Church now and as Confirmed Catholics.

## ***The Catholic Youth Bible***

We will also be using the Catholic Youth Bible that your teen received last year. If you were not in the program last year a Bible will be issued to your teen. If your child has lost their Bible a \$20 replacement fee will be charged. As well as containing God's Living Word, this Bible edition contains editorial notes written specifically for teens, so that they may enter more fully into the spirit of God's Word.

## Confirmation Information Sheet

**Due Date: Monday, November 7, 2011**

We have designed a comprehensive form in hopes of gathering all the information necessary to ensure that Confirmation day goes as smoothly as possible. Please know that we are asking for seating reservation information early. Give us your best guess and contact us with changes as it gets closer to the actual date. If you need any special seating, please let us know. Parents who are trained Eucharistic ministers at St. Paul's are encouraged to be Eucharistic ministers for their candidate's ceremony. Siblings who are trained as altar servers are likewise asked to consider acting as a server at this important time. Please indicate your interest on the back of the Confirmation Information Sheet.

**Please Note: We cannot process your teen's Confirmation paperwork, and assign your preferred Confirmation time, until we have a Baptismal Certificate and the Confirmation Information Sheet on file in the office.**

### *Saint Name Selection*

Taking a new name at Confirmation can be symbolic of a new or deeper stage in your faith life. There are several Scripture stories of people whose names changed after they experienced a conversion: Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter, and Saul to Paul. Celebrating the sacrament of Confirmation is an opportunity for you to reflect on what Baptism and union with Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation means in your life. It is also an occasion to reflect on how you want to witness to the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. If you choose a name other than your baptismal name, look to saints and holy people who are truly witnesses of faith for you. Choose the name of a saint you admire and whom you want to be your patron. The decision to choose a special patron (and name) at Confirmation or to honor the name received at Baptism is not really the most important part of the celebration. What is important is God and the Church's commitment to you through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Your form should indicate your final Confirmation name. This does not need to be the same name as in your saint report, if your growth in knowledge and understanding has led you to a different model for holiness.

## *Final Corrections*

### **Due Date: January 9, 2012**

In early January you will receive a copy of your teen's Confirmation Information Sheet to 'proof.' Please carefully look over your information make any and all changes and turn it in to the 6th – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Coordinator. You may also email corrections to [cpearson@stpaultheapostle.net](mailto:cpearson@stpaultheapostle.net) .

**ALL CORRECTIONS MUST BE MADE IN WRITING. If we do not receive any corrections by January 9, 2012, we will automatically assume the information is correct. We cannot make any changes after this date because the Confirmation Booklet will have gone to print.**

### *Certificate Corrections*

If there is a mistake on your certificate, we will re-print it for you after Confirmation day. Please indicate in pencil/pen on the certificate any changes that need to be made. Drop the certificate off at the Family Spiritual Formation office (under the door if we are not there) and we will be more than happy to produce a new certificate.

## Service Project

**Due Date: Monday January 9, 2012**

**The Family Spiritual Formation program is not responsible for scheduling or providing service hours.** We recognize the scheduling demands that many parents and teens face and we have tried to provide as many service opportunities as we can. We will also notify the candidates when service opportunities present themselves. Please check the Service Opportunities bulletin board located outside of the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Coordinator's Office (Room 6) and the Sunday bulletin for available service opportunities.

In 1 Corinthians 12:4 we learn that "there are different kinds of spiritual gifts". In the 7<sup>th</sup> grade year students experimented with a variety of service with the intention of identifying the type of service that best uses the gifts God has given them. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade year of service is designed to allow the students to focus on the type of service that most closely relates to their unique God-given gifts and talents as well as their own interest. This project can be attending an already existing service opportunity such as assisting with Holy Family Soup Kitchen or it can be a project that they create on their own.

After having completed the service project, the student is to complete a reflection sheet. Students will also need to present their service project to their class on January 9, 2012. Only after the presentation and the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Coordinator's office has received the service project reflection sheet is the project considered completed.

The Service Reflection sheet is in your student's form packet, as well as on the St. Paul the Apostle website.

## Bishop Letter

**Due Date: Monday, February 6, 2012**

Each candidate is required to write a formal letter to the confirming bishop of the diocese, prior to Confirmation. A sample is in this packet.

The contents of the letter should include the following information:

- Address the letter to Bishop Francis Kane
- Introduce yourself. Tell something about your family, your background.
- Request the sacrament. Give several reasons why you would like to be confirmed.
- Explain how you have prepared for the sacrament. It is important that you tell about specific parts of your preparation: your prayer life, your celebration of the other sacraments, your service for others exercised at home and within the parish, and so on.
- Tell how you will continue to carry out your life of service to God and others through the power of the Spirit. Tell how you plan to make your Confirmation in the faith real and alive in the future.

This is a formal and important letter. It serves as your teen's request for full initiation into our community. It should be written thoughtfully and be respectful in tone. This letter should be typed and checked for spelling and grammar. If your teen does not have access to a computer, please neatly write the letter by hand. Bishop Kane **does read each letter**. The bishop uses the letters as part of his homily. Please make sure the letters are appropriate in content and appearance and deliver them to the 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Coordinator's office by the above due date.

**Please do not be late.**

We want Bishop Kane to have a chance to read about and understand your child's faith experiences as they work to become practicing Catholics.

## Sample Bishop Letter

Susan Smith  
St. Paul the Apostle Parish  
8th Grade Confirmation Class 2008

Dear Bishop Kane,

My name is Susan Smith. I am formally requesting to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on Saturday, March 18, 2006 at St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Gurnee.

I am thirteen years old and I go to Woodland Middle School. I am the youngest of four children. My oldest sister Karen is in college and my two brothers go to Warren High School. My dad is in the Navy and my mom is a substitute teacher.

I asked my grandma to be my sponsor. She is always really nice to me and I love her very much. She calls me "her little cookie" because she says I can always look on the bright side of things. My grandma is a big Cubs fan and she watches them play on the television all the time. She goes to Mass everyday even though she doesn't have to. She told me that when she starts off each day with God it makes the rest of the day seem special. She is very holy and she talks about God all the time. She misses my grandpa who died last year but she told me that he is helping Jesus get things ready for her when she goes to heaven. She even prays at McDonalds when she eats there.

I chose Joan of Arc for my Confirmation name. My grandma's name is Joan and my dad is in the Navy. She is the patron saint of the members of the military. She was a really great soldier and God gave her many special gifts. I thought she is a good person for me to look up to as a role model. I am looking forward to my Confirmation day.

Yours Respectfully,

Susan Smith

## **Sacrament of Reconciliation**

It is important for the candidates to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation as part of their Confirmation preparation. Reconciliation is a Sacrament of Healing. It gives us the grace to repair our relationship with God and with others whom we have hurt. Receiving the sacrament will give our teens the opportunity to reflect on how they can live better lives, and realize that they are confirming their faith in an all forgiving God. We will forward opportunities for you to take your child to celebrate this Sacrament prior to their Confirmation.

# REHEARSAL & CONFIRMATION DATES

## *Confirmation Rehearsal*

Attendance is mandatory, as the students need to understand their part of the ceremony. All rehearsals will be held in the church proper on Thursday, April 12, 2012. The rehearsal schedule is as follows:

6:00 – 7:00 pm for those who will be confirmed at 9:30 am on April 14<sup>th</sup>

7:00 – 8:00 pm for those who will be confirmed at 1:00 pm on April 14<sup>th</sup>

8:00 – 9:00 pm for those who will be confirmed at 3:00 pm on April 15<sup>th</sup>

## *Confirmation*

April 14, 2012 @ 9:30 am Ceremony

April 14, 2012 @ 1:00 pm Ceremony

April 15, 2012 @ 3:00 pm Ceremony

## Confirmation Day Questions

### ***How will we find our seats?***

The seating chart will be available at both entrances and in the Gathering Space at the Confirmation rehearsal. On the day of Confirmation, your certificate and other personalized materials will mark your place. Seating is typically assigned based on the number of family members in a pew.

### ***Length of the ceremony?***

Anticipate the Mass/Rite lasting about 1-½ to 2 hours. We ask that once the Mass is over, families exit the church as soon as possible and leave their pew clean and organized because other Confirmation ceremonies follow shortly. This would include gathering any personal items, throwing out used tissues, etc. and placing the Gather Books neatly in the slot.

We ask that the assembly remain silent and prayerful during the conferring of the Rite. The bishop spends time with each Candidate during the anointing, and this is a sacred moment for them. Please remember to turn off all cell phones and beepers.

### ***How to address the Bishop?***

Most Reverend Francis Kane, Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago.

### ***Dress code?***

We ask that dress be appropriate and modest. Items such as t-shirts, jeans, or tennis shoes are not appropriate for Confirmation. We ask that young women wear something that covers their shoulders and skirts that are appropriate in length. The candidates wear nametags so that the Bishop can call them by their Confirmation name. These nametags glue on and will not be comfortable on bare skin. Young men should wear dress slacks and a long sleeve shirt and tie. Suits, sport coats and vests are optional.

### ***Use of cameras?***

A videotape of the event will be provided to every candidate. The dialogue between each candidate and the Bishop is also recorded. Your family's first priority the day of Confirmation is to be there for your teen. Photographers are 'observers' and not participants. We ask that if you feel you must take photos, you do it from where you are seated, and if at all possible, do not use a flash. The Bishop will be

confirming 200+ candidates that weekend. We ask that parents be respectful of the sacrament, the videographer and of the other candidates and their families when taking pictures. The Bishop will be available for pictures after each ceremony. He is very generous and will be available until the last photo is requested. Candidates and their families are invited to take photos in the church space at the times that will be provided.

***How do we get a videotape of the ceremony?***

Every teen will receive a videotape of the Confirmation Mass they attend. As always, we will have Welsh Video taping the event; they do a wonderful job.