

Confirmation Preparation

A GUIDEBOOK FOR CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES AND PARENTS

NOTRE DAME DE LA MER PARISH WILDWOOD, NJ



*"...that their hearts may
be encouraged as they
are brought together in
love, to have all the
richness of fully assured
understanding, for the
knowledge of the
mystery of God, Christ,
in whom are hidden all
the treasures of wisdom
and knowledge."*

Col 2, 2

INTRODUCTION

Welcome! We look forward to share 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 in the world today.

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

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

A Catholic does not live as a child of God through his or her own efforts, but through the grace of God. You can see this in a practical way when you look back on your lives and the lives of others, even the lives of saints. Therefore, it is your duty to seek the grace that God offers you in order to live your lives as Catholics in the way that God intends.

WHO MAY BE CONFIRMED?

Confirmation candidates:

- are generally between the ages of thirteen and sixteen
- have received the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and Eucharist
- practice the Catholic faith
- are in the state of grace
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities of membership in the Catholic Church
- are aware of the initiation aspect of the Sacrament of Confirmation and **ARE** 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.
- Are **registered members of their parish and therefore registered with their parish for the sacrament of Confirmation (form A: Confirmation Registration Form – Religious Education)**

CONFIRMATION CANDIDATE ARE EXPECTED TO: (at a glance)

- ☐ participate in weekly Mass (as an altar server, or in the congregation)
- ☐ attend classes regularly and participate in classes when present
- ☐ choose a qualified sponsor for Confirmation
- ☐ write a letter of intent asking to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation
- ☐ choose a **Saint's name** as a Confirmation name
- ☐ write a biography about the saint they chose and why the saint was chosen
- ☐ participate in Rite of Commitment Mass apx. ONE month before the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- ☐ participate in the sponsor/candidate meeting
- ☐ participate in the Confirmation retreat
- ☐ attend the additional Confirmation classes set up for Saturday mornings the weekends just before the sacrament is conferred
- ☐ complete the regular covenant requirements
- ☐ complete 10 additional hours of service to local organizations (please see the regular covenant for places and ideas)
- ☐ be regularly involved in social justice activities (Such as the Giving Tree, Lazarus House, etc.)
- ☐ perform or attend at least one additional spiritual activity.
- ☐ write a letter to the Bishop using one of the templates that will be provided.
- ☐ 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 in Mass on Saturday evening or Sunday each week

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 passing on to their children. When we worship 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 and God I am sure will bless you and your families.

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. 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 the catechetical office immediately if critical circumstances will not allow you to attend a class. The Faith Formation Director in collaboration with the catechist will determine if an at-home assignment is needed so that your son or daughter do not fall behind in the lessons. Excessive absenteeism Summer Intensive (only one day may be missed over the two weeks of classes) Year round program (two days which is the same amount of hours as one day in the summer may be missed.) Absenteeism that is greater than this can affect the candidate's ability to enter fully into this important period of preparation **and even postpone for a year the reception of the sacrament.**

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 them, 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 not being unable to travel to the celebration at the time decided by the Diocese. **Requests for proxy should be directed to the Faith Formation Director.**

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 Catholic life
- ☐ must know the candidate and be willing to serve as a strong and long-lasting Catholic influence on the candidate
- ☐ must themselves be fully initiated into the Catholic Faith, having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist
- ☐ if not a member of Notre Dame de la Mer Parish the sponsor must submit a letter of eligibility from their parish to be a sponsor in good standing in the church.
- ☐ 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 (Mother or Father) of the candidate
- ☐ assists in determining the candidate's readiness for the sacrament
- ☐ present the candidate to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation

Preference is 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

Confirmation Sponsor Information**Form B Confirmation Sponsor Information.**

This form is due back at the time of the sponsor/candidate meeting in September.

Write a Letter of Intent

Each candidate must write a letter of intent, addressed to the **Pastor, Notre Dame de la Mer Parish, North Wildwood, NJ** 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:

1. **First-** begin with your greeting: Dear Father
2. **Second-** Introduce yourself and share some information about yourself, such as your family, your interests and hobbies, and a little about your background.
3. **Third-** 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, b) the role of faith in your life, c) what it means to you to be a part of our parish community and/or d) how the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles to be witnesses for Jesus (read and reflect on the *Acts of the Apostles*.)
4. **Fourth-** 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.

This letter must be turned in by the sponsor/candidate meeting date that will be presented each year.

Choose a Saint's name for Confirmation and write a biography about that saint

In both the Old and New Testament, when God had a new mission for someone, He often gave them a new name. 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 nonbelievers, helping the poor, being a peacemaker or 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:

First- (note: this applies only if your Baptismal name was a Saint's name.)

Because Confirmation is the strengthening of the work that God began in your life at your Baptism, it is recommended that you give preference to using your Baptismal name for Confirmation. This shows the integral link between Baptism and Confirmation.

Second- 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 Catholic role-model. The saint could also be someone that has been given the responsibility to care for a specific occupation or type of art in the world.**

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

A few are:

www.catholicforum.com/saints

www.catholic.org/saints

www.catholic-pages.com/dir/saints.asp

www.theworkofgod.org/saints

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 Faith Formation Director by December 8th the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and the halfway point in this Confirmation preparation year.

Participate in the Rite of Commitment Mass

All candidates, parents and if available, sponsors should plan to attend the Rite of Commitment, celebrated approximately one month before the date of Confirmation. The exact date will be listed when the Confirmation date is received from the Diocese each year. (This is not usually until sometime in December before the

Spring Confirmation.) 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 will agree to support and pray for all those involved in this faith journey.

Participate in Sponsor/Candidate meeting

The candidate and his or her sponsor must attend a meeting together. Again, this date and time will be set when the Confirmation date and time are set each year. 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 time apart from the daily routine and reflect on the gifts of the Spirit and on their relationship with God and their faith life. It is therefore required that each candidate attend the Confirmation retreat hosted by the parish in their Confirmation year. This retreat is usually at the Marianist Retreat Center in Cape May Point, NJ

Attend additional confirmation classes set up for Saturday mornings specifically for the Sacrament of Confirmation

In order to cover all the material specific to the Sacrament of Confirmation it is necessary to set up additional Confirmation classes on Saturday mornings in the year of receiving the Sacrament. All candidates are expected to be present for these classes. We ask that since Confirmation is received only once in a child's lifetime and in the lifetime of their faith that the Sacrament and preparation for the Sacrament take priority over other activities and events they may be involved in.

Complete the requirements on the regular yearly Covenant of all Religious Education students/families.

In addition to the requirements for Confirmation it is necessary for the candidates to also complete the religious and social justice activities outlined on the Family Covenant. Both are expected to be completed in a Sacramental year.

Complete ten additional service hours to increase their awareness of the need to do for others and to help those that are less fortunate than they are.

As the youth grow in the faith they need to develop their awareness of social justice issues. One of the most obvious ways to do this is in helping those that are less fortunate than they are. This might also include helping abused animals, homeless, natural wildlife clean-ups in the area etc. Please help your child to find a local organization that they will be able to offer 10 hours of assistance to.

The parish does have Lazarus House which is always in need of help. Catholic Charities in Rio Grande may also need help. The "This and That Shop" run for St. Mary's in Rio Grande often needs assistance as well. Nursing homes, wildlife societies, and other causes in the immediate area are all additional ideas. Please do not wait till the last minute to accomplish this task. **(Form C – Volunteer Hour Form- 10 hours)**

Be regularly involved in social justice 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 Catholics, we ask that the candidates make his/her service projects a priority. Serving others is not something we do “to get it over with”. Service is something that 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 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 would benefit from time, effort, work or service from me?
- What unique gifts or talents has God blessed me with that I can use to serve others?

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

“You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself. He replied to him, ‘You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.’” (Lk. 10: 27-28)

There are many, many opportunities to serve at the church and in the community.

A few examples are:

- Be an aide for Religious Education
- Join a choir
- Become an altar server
- Give service at Lazarus House on days off and weekends
- Help out at This and That in Rio Grande, NJ (not for profit thrift store)
- Student tutor to younger students
- Be an usher

As other opportunities arise during the year we will list them in the bulletin. (Please read the bulletin every week as it provides you important information about the parish and events that take place in the Diocese.)

Participate in at least one additional spiritual activity that is new to you

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 throughout the week and in all the places that they go.

The following is a partial list of spiritual activities:

Attend daily Mass

Participate in Advent and/or Lenten preparations

Participate in a Christmas pageant, Living Stations of the Cross,

Participate in the Triduum services- Holy Thursday, Good Friday, or Easter Vigil

Attend Eucharistic Adoration

Receive Reconciliation on a regular basis

Reflect on Scripture- in your journal for three minutes each Sunday

Pray the Rosary

Read the Bible

Participate in Bible study

Although the minimum requirement is to participate in one of these activities, we sincerely hope the candidate and his or her family will have an active spiritual life!

“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” -James, 4, 8

Write a letter to the Bishop

Each candidate is expected to write a letter to the Bishop.

The students will be given at least two templates to follow when completing this letter.

The letters will be sent to the Bishop about one month prior to the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. A due date for the letter will be given by e-mail and regular US mail. Please be aware of this and watch for the due date to assist your son/daughter in getting this letter completed in a timely manner. **(Form D – Templates for Bishop Letter.)**

Attend Confirmation Rehearsal

All candidates and their sponsors (or a parent) **must** attend the Confirmation rehearsal which is typically the day before Confirmation. The sponsors need to be present since they give witness to the candidate's readiness during the Confirmation ceremony and need to know when and what to say to the Bishop.

Participate in the Liturgy and Rite of Confirmation

Confirmation will be in the spring of 2009. 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 25

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

“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)

Parents are the primary educators of their children and are therefore responsible for initiating their children into the sacramental life of the Catholic Church. Parents must also serve as models for their children in the faith by being committed Catholics to the beliefs and practices of the faith.

Parents should show example by:

- Worshipping with their families regularly
- Be actively involved in the Confirmation preparation with their children.
- Engage in discussions about the material being studied for Confirmation and share their understanding and perspective on matters of the faith with their children.
- Encourage their children to reflect and thoughtfully consider the decision to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.
- Pray for the spiritual growth of their children each day.
- Support and encourage completion of assignments, activities and expectations for preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- 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 or whatever other means possible to emphasize the importance of the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation by the children.
- Faithfully bring their teen (and when necessary themselves) to meetings, programs, and prayer services that are planned to help their children prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation

Template A

Form must be filled out completely.

Confirmation Registration Sheet

Confirmation Recipients May 2014

Notre Dame de la Mer Parish

North Wildwood, NJ

Full Baptismal Name of Child _____

Date of Birth of Child _____ Age _____

City and State of Birth of Child _____

Father's Full Name _____

Mother's Full Name (Maiden) _____

Home Address (street, city, state) _____

Home phone number _____

Cell phone number _____

E-mail address _____

Sponsor's Name _____ (be sure spelling is correct)

Sponsor needs to obtain a certificate of eligibility from the parish where he/she attends church regularly and is a listed parishioner.

CONFIRMATION NAME _____

Church of Baptism _____ City of Church and State _____

Date of Baptism _____ (You must include

month, date and year even if baptized at St. Ann or Assumption) If baptized at **St. Ann or Assumption** and the month, date and year are listed as requested there is no need to attach a copy of your baptismal certificate. (If **baptized at a church other than St. Ann or Assumption please do not return this form without first attaching a copy of your child's baptism certificate. The certificate is needed to complete the files and the records after your child has received the Sacrament of Confirmation.**)

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Template B – Sponsor Information Form

Template C – Volunteer Hour Form

Template D – Format for Bishop’s Letter – Please type letter and use one of the two forms below. sample

Notre Dame de la Mer Parish Religious Education

1500 Central Avenue Suite #100

North Wildwood, NJ 08260

609-522-2709 X218

Dear Confirmation Candidate 2016

As you continue to prepare for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation there is one more task that you need to complete:

- Please write a letter to Bishop Dennis J. Sullivan asking for permission to be admitted as a candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation from Notre Dame de la Mer Parish. Please follow the directions below when writing the letter and include answers to all the questions provided that should be part of this letter.
- **Paragraph one**
 - A. start by stating your name
 - B. parish and city of parish that you are a member of
 - C. state that you are currently preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation
- **Paragraph two**
 - A. request the privilege of receiving the sacrament of Confirmation
 - B. give at least two reasons why you would like to receive the sacrament of Confirmation
- **Paragraph three**
 - A. tell about the service that you have completed in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation
 - B. Explain what you gained by completing this service
- **Paragraph four**
 - A. State the name that you have chosen for Confirmation
 - B. State the reason that you choose this name and saint as a model to follow
 - C. State a few facts about the saint that you would like to live in your own life.
- **Paragraph five**
 - A. Use the paragraph on the next page for this paragraph and complete it with your own ending.

Please type your letter and send a copy by US Mail to the office to my attention or e-mail me a copy with your name typed where the signature should be no later than January 10, 2013. The office address is listed above and my e-mail address is: amuryasz@notredamedelamer.org

Any questions please call the office at the number above. Thank you,

S A M P L E

Most Reverend Dennis J. Sullivan
Bishop of Camden
631 Market Street
Camden, NJ 08105

Date

Dear Bishop Sullivan,

I,state your name and follow directions on page one. **Paragraph 1**

I requestand follow the directions on page one. **Paragraph 2**

Part of my preparation..... Continue to follow directions on page one. **Paragraph 3**

I have chosen Saint Continue to follow directions on page one. **Paragraph 4**

As a full member of the Church, I will continue to daily live out my faith by..... (**Describe how you plan to continue participating in the Church after Confirmation. How do you plan to live the Catholic way of life?** **Paragraph 5**)

Respectfully yours,

Signature or type your name

(If you sign the letter type your name three lines below the signature)