

Confirmation Preparation

To Know God

Attendance and Reconciliation

Look, we pray, upon the oblation of your Church and, recognizing the sacrificial Victim by whose death you willed to reconcile us to yourself, grant that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ. *Eucharistic Prayer III*

Besides being a weekly obligation for every Catholic, Mass is the preeminent means for learning about, loving, and serving God and each other. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Faith. This is our central act of worship which allows God's grace to be present and working in our lives. **Sunday Mass attendance is expected of all Confirmands.**

In addition, reconciliation throughout the year is encouraged. Regular opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered.

Confirmands are also required to attend all confirmation classes. Students may not miss more than three classes. If class is missed, the student will need to make arrangements with the teacher and all material will need to be made up the week after an absence and given to the Confirmation Prep Coordinator.

DVDs of the curriculum may be checked out in the parish office or by contacting Kimberly Souba, Confirmation Prep Coordinator, at kimberly.souba@gmail.com or by calling 309-944-5393 ext. 107.

Following two absences, the student and one of his/her parents will be required to meet with the Confirmation Prep Coordinator. After the third absence, they will be required to meet with the pastor.

Commitment and Registration

Those of you who seek to complete your Christian initiation, are you prepared to listen to the apostles' instruction, gather with us for prayer, and join us in the love and service of others? *Rite of Acceptance*

Commitment is an overwhelming theme throughout the Old and New Testament. At Baptism, we begin the journey of commitment. Parents and Godparents make the commitment for us at infant baptism. At Confirmation, we assume this commitment more fully, exercising our own wills, and determining that they will claim the Christian Identity.

The traditional definition of the term Sacrament is, "A visible sign, instituted by Christ, that gives grace."

What does this mean?

1. "A visible sign"

This is simply what you can see/feel. It is the sensorial (of the senses) aspect of our faith. An action is performed by a minister (usually a Priest). For example, when a baby is baptized in the church the Priest pours water over its head and at the same time says the words "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." That is a visible sign.

2. "Instituted by Christ"

Jesus Christ instructed His Church to offer the seven sacraments to His followers. For example, His directive to His disciples in Matthew's Gospel (28, 19) "Go then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples; baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you."

3. "To give grace"

The way we describe grace to small children is with the word "strength." Grace is God's free gift of Himself as the controlling influence in our life and the decisions we make once we have committed ourselves to Him in faith.

We celebrate the Sacraments to know God. We celebrate them as a community because together, we are the living, breathing, working body of Christ. Through prayer, service, communal life, and striving to be firm in our beliefs, we come to know God. Together, we do this as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

When we celebrate the Rite of Confirmation, we are bringing the Sacrament of Baptism to completion. We see in Acts of the Apostles that the Apostles laid hands on the baptized so that they would receive the Holy Spirit. Confirmation is considered as perfection of Baptism, because, as the introduction to the Rite of Confirmation states:

By the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence, they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.

Confirmation is the last of the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states "Lay the foundations of every Christian life." It further states, "By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity."

To Love God

“Pray and learn to pray! ... Deepen your knowledge of the Word of the Living God by reading and meditating on the Scriptures.” – Saint Pope John Paul II, Dilecti Amici

First and foremost, Mass (and the Liturgy of the Hours) is the public prayer of the Church. In addition to that, we are all called to develop a prayer life to deepen our relationship with God. We come to know God better and more perfectly through direct conversation, just as we do with our friends. Through prayer, we learn to not only talk but, also, to listen.

For many, formal prayer provides the starting point. Because of this, students in the Diocese of Peoria are required to memorize formal prayers. It is the responsibility of those forming the students in the faith to make sure they know these prayers before being confirmed.

Prayers to be memorized for Confirmation include: The Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be, the Fatima Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, Come Holy Spirit, St. Michael's Prayer, Guardian Angel Prayer, Act of Faith, Act of Hope, Act of Charity, Morning Offering, Angelus, Anima Christi, Regina Caeli, Prayer to St. Francis, and Memorare.

To Serve God

Remember: *“God doesn't require us to succeed, He only requires that you try.” – Saint Mother Teresa*

The real mark of a mature Christian is looking out for our brothers and sisters and serving their needs. The Church continually calls us to share our talents and our time with and in service to others. It is only in this way that the world will ever come to know Jesus: by seeing him at work in us.

To get used to the idea of SERVICE, the Diocese of Peoria has called on each Confirmation Candidate to perform 20 hours of donated service to others as a prerequisite for Confirmation. Students should perform at least 10 hours of service within the Church and 10 hours within the Community each year during Confirmation preparation. For St. Malachy's that would be a total of 40 hours between 8th and 9th grade.

Confirmands will need to fill out the Service Hour Reflections documents and return to the Confirmation Coordinator by a date to be determined.

The work you do does not need to be big, fancy, or showy. Jesus taught us that even giving someone water in His name is an act of love. Service hours should be those that we give of our time, without any compensation.

Suggestions for Service Hours

Here are some suggestions but there are many more that you could come up with. Whatever you do, do it out of love. Remember: To receive credit, compensation will not be accepted.

Altar server

Babysit

Cook a meal

Do the laundry

Greet at Mass

Help a teacher

Help clean the church

K of C Fish Frys

Parents' Club Lasagna

Supper

K of C Pancake

Breakfasts

Help decorate the
school/church

Help someone with
homework

Help with VBS

Mow grass

Pray a rosary

Rake leaves

Shop for a shut in

Shovel snow

Sing in the choir

Usher at Mass

Visit a sick person

Work at a food pantry

Write a letter to the
military or a veteran

Humane Society

See a need and start a
project