

OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH

Confirmation

Handbook



Director of Faith Formation:

Confirmation Prep I & II

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Dear Parents:

Welcome to Our Lady of Grace! We are very excited to assist you as you prepare your child for Christian maturity in the Catholic faith. Our Confirmation program is a two year process culminating with the reception of the sacrament in 8th grade.

Each year you and your child will meet at the parish center once a month to be presented with the material needed to instruct and direct him/her in the ways of our faith. We know that as the primary teacher of your child your task is sometimes difficult and overwhelming. Please know that we are here to work with you and provide you with the tools needed for this part of your child's faith journey.

Your child will also be required to participate in Christian service activities throughout the 2 year process. (S)he will be responsible to complete, and return in a timely manner, independent study, reflections and homework assignments.

One of the precepts of the Catholic Church is weekly attendance at Sunday Mass and on Holy Days of Obligation. Our schedule of weekend Masses is: Saturday - 5:00pm, Sunday - 8:00am, 10:00am, (Family Liturgy) , 12:00 noon and 5:30pm, (Youth Mass.) Attendance is expected and will reinforce the learning taking place both here and in your home .Once a month your child will be asked to reflect on the readings and hand in their reflection.

If during the course of Confirmation preparation, you have any questions or concerns, know our door is always open for matters regarding the process or any other issues you may wish to discuss. Please do not allow any situation to take a turn for the worse before contacting us. We can only help *if* we are made aware of problems as they occur. Be aware that full compliance is required for advancement in each year of the process.

For those receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation this year, tuition must be paid in full prior to receiving the ceremonial tickets. In case of financial hardship however, there is a process of assessment and assistance in place. Please notify the Faith Formation Office.

Please read through this handbook with your child so you will both know what to expect as we work with you during these middle-school years.

Dear Students:

Welcome back! You are beginning your journey towards reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation and the beginning of your life as an adult Catholic. We extend our heartfelt greetings to all of you.



During this two year process we will work with you, your parents and sponsors to help you get ready to take on the responsibilities of mature Christians in the faith. Each month you and a parent, (&/or sponsor) will come to the parish to participate in interactive workshops and assemblies. You will also complete service projects each year and be required to hand in multiple homework assignments and reflections as required.

Each time you come you will be responsible to make sure you and the adult accompanying you **sign-in for workshops or fill out and drop off an attendance card at the assemblies** which will be held in the church or PES hall. When handing in *any* paperwork, especially the independent homework or other written assignments, **please make sure your name is clearly printed on it.** We are not able to give you credit for your work if your name is not on it or if your name is not legible.

The Bishop of our Diocese of Rockville Centre gives us clear guidelines and mandates regarding your preparation for Confirmation. Among them are classes, community service, attendance at Sunday Mass and a readiness assessment for Prep II students.

Although this may sound overwhelming, we're pretty sure that if you are open to learning about and working on your faith with us you will have experiences and knowledge that will stay with you for life. If at anytime you have questions, concerns or just want to talk please know that we are always here and want to hear from you.

The Basics

The following information pertains to ALL levels of Confirmation preparation:

- Workshops are scheduled 10 times per month. Assemblies twice per year. Additionally one make-up class is scheduled each month.
- Each student is scheduled to attend (8) one and a half hour workshops which will take place in the parish center and (2) of the workshops are one and a half hour assemblies which will take place in the church or PES hall.
- Attendance at all scheduled grade level workshops and assemblies **are mandatory**.
- Each student will receive a schedule of the workshops and assemblies they are assigned to. It is important that every effort be made to attend the assigned session.
- If there is a **periodic** scheduling conflict, students may attend any other session with a phone call to the Faith Formation office, or the make-up session that month.
- If there is a scheduling conflict for the entire year, parents may call the Faith Formation Office and request a different time-slot.
- The parent and/or sponsor must attend the workshops and assemblies with their child. However, in case of emergency a grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc. may attend with the student. A student will not be admitted into class without an accompanying adult. A child will not be admitted to class with an adult accompanying another student.
- Attendance sheets will be located in the hallway prior to each workshop. Both student and accompanying adult must sign in each month.
- Attendance cards will be distributed at the assemblies. Both student and accompanying adult must fill out the card and deposit it in baskets when leaving the church or PES hall.
- Students and/or adults arriving **later than 15 minutes after the start of workshops/assemblies will not be allowed entry**. Attendance at another scheduled session will be necessary.
- Students and/or adults leaving prior to the end of workshops/assemblies will not be credited for attending. Attendance at another scheduled session will be necessary.

- Students will be required to complete and hand in independent home work assignments in a timely manner. Failure to complete home work will result in delaying the student's progress in the program. Be sure to have your name clearly and legibly printed on all paperwork that is handed in. It is the student's responsibility to hand in their work at the workshop.
- All people attending workshops/assemblies are asked to turn off all cell phones, pagers, beepers and all other electronic devices.
- The program has been developed such that the progression of learning leans heavily on the prior material. Therefore, it is important that the independent work be done according to the scheduled assignments.
- The independent work and homework assignments will be found on the Independent Work Schedule which is affixed to the inside cover of the student's book.
- **ABSENCES:**Please note: Due to the importance of every class no more than one absence will be allowed per year without delaying progression through the program and/or receiving Confirmation. In case of an absence due to an emergency or illness that prevents a student and parent/sponsor from attending one of the 10 monthly classes an essay will be required so that the flow of the material for that workshop will not interrupt the learning. **In no way is this a punitive measure. It is for the benefit of the student and would allow some credit to be given.**

Confirmation Prep I

In Prep I, students will begin their FIA ministries to learn about the many works that take place at Our Lady of Grace. They will be assigned to work with 5 ministries throughout the year. Please see FIA handbook for complete description of ministries. The assignment schedule will list the names of the ministries, date or month task will take place, name and contact information of the ministry leader. It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to contact the ministry leader at least one month in advance to ascertain the particulars of the assignment. It is extremely important that students attend the Faith in Action tasks which they have been assigned. If there is a scheduling conflict the Faith Formation Office should be contacted as soon as possible so other arrangements can be made.

Please note that the purpose of the students being mentored in ministries is for them to understand the working of the parish. Hopefully this will expose them to service opportunities they may wish to pursue after Confirmation. Therefore, we will not accept service hours they may have completed for school, scouting, outside organizations, etc. unless prior approval has been obtained from the Faith Formation Office.

Confirmation Prep II

In the final year of preparation students are required to participate in working together on service projects that will benefit the larger community and world. Project date and time to be announced.

Mass attendance is a precept of the Catholic Church. It is presumed that families attend Mass weekly. Therefore, once a month the Confirmation students will be asked to reflect on what they heard in the scriptures and write about it on the forms handed out with this booklet. They will be required to have a priest sign their sheet and hand it in to the Faith Formation Office or at their monthly workshops.



Sponsors

The Confirmation students should begin to think about their sponsor in Confirmation Prep I. In Confirmation Prep II, students will decide who they will ask to be their sponsor. This decision should be made with a great deal of care. All sponsors must be over 16 years of age, confirmed and a practicing Catholic. Ideally the sponsor should be someone with whom the student has a close relationship and is present in their life. During preparation, sponsors are strongly encouraged to participate in workshops and assemblies. Parents are always urged to attend, however during the final year, the sponsor may take on the role of the child's participating adult.

Confirmation Name—The choosing of a Christian Name

Students will choose a saint's name for Confirmation. The new name should be the name of a *recognized saint* of the Catholic Church. Names of saints are chosen to serve as Christian role models for those being confirmed.

Confirmation Readiness Assessment

Each candidate for Confirmation will go through an assessment interview to determine how well they are prepared to receive the Sacrament. Questions in the interview cover three main areas: catechesis, formation in the life of the community, and discipleship and service. In the catechesis section topics include evangelization, faith and morals, the sacraments, Christian sexuality and lifelong learning. The formation in the life of the community section asks questions about Mass attendance, prayer and family life. The third section deals with the service that has been carried out by each student, as well as general questions on vocations, discipleship, social justice and respect for life.

Bishop Murphy commends parents for bringing their children to the faith and assures them that the main goal of the program is for the child to be ready to be confirmed. If a child is not ready the parish staff will work with the child until they are ready.¹

¹ Iapalucci, Mary. "Diocese offers tool to ensure confirmation readiness " The Long Island 09 July 2008: 3

Copy of Parent / Student Contract

STUDENT:

I _____ have read the Confirmation handbook and understand that I must fulfill the following:

- Attend the scheduled Confirmation Workshops and Assemblies.
- Do the Independent work prior to the workshop, complete and hand in all required homework assignments.
- Participate in the assigned Faith in Action or Service Projects for each year.
- Pray each day.
- Attend Mass and do the monthly Mass scripture reflection and hand it in.

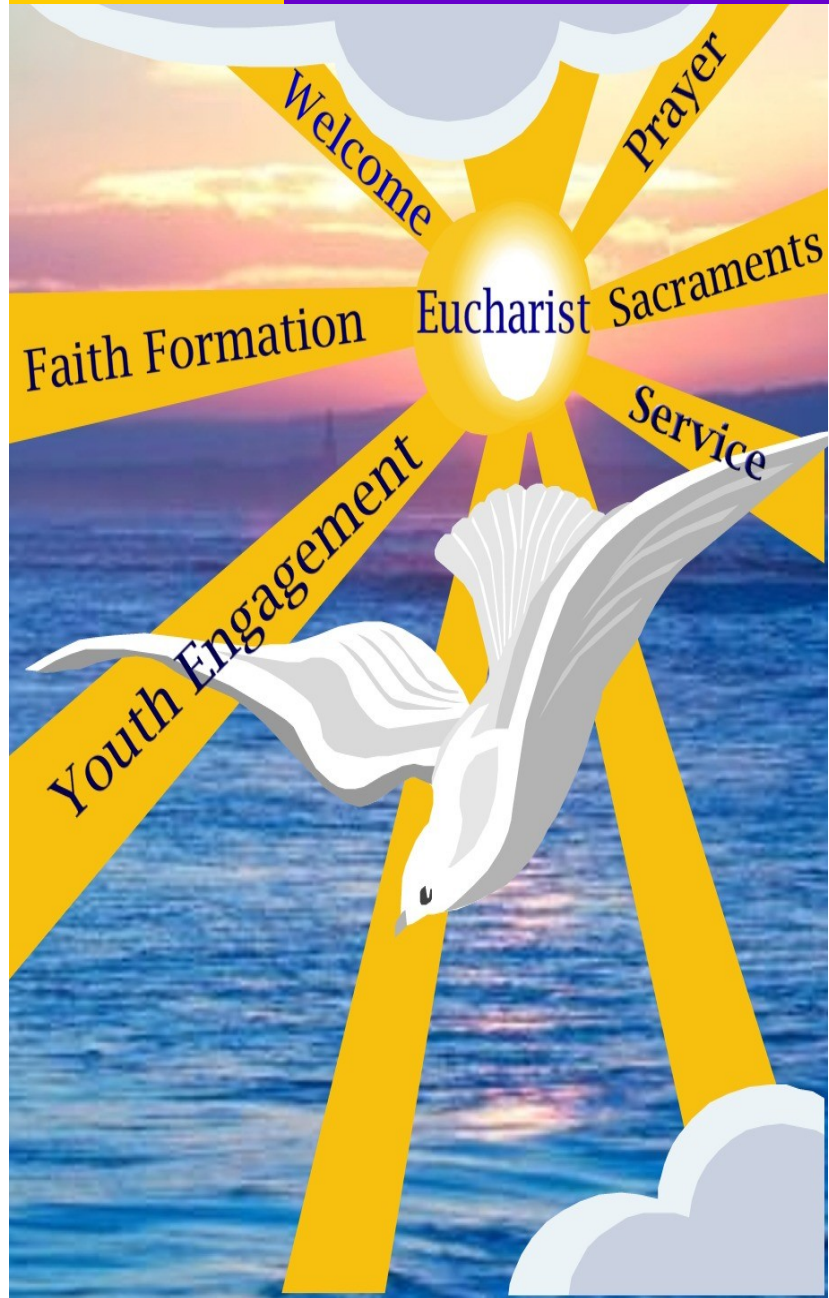
PARENT:

I _____ have read the Confirmation handbook and understand the expectations and commitment to the Confirmation Preparation process. I will help my child by attending the monthly workshops and assisting and encouraging him or her to complete the above work and tasks. I understand that if we are not in full compliance, advancement to the next step can be delayed.

Retain for your records

Notes from Meeting

Parish Priorities



Welcome

Prayer

Faith Formation

Eucharist Sacraments

Youth Engagement

Service