

## **Confirmation Hand book**

Dear Parents and Candidates:

Welcome! We are looking forward to sharing this journey of faith with you and your family as you prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. As you will see, Confirmation preparation involves learning, sharing, serving, spiritual growth, and fellowship!

You will be given the opportunity to learn more about your Catholic faith and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Confirmation is the Sacrament in which one is enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church.

It strengthens us and obliges us to be witnesses to Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith. Confirmation is the Sacrament that perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives us a fuller participation in the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply as children of God, incorporates us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us to bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a spiritual mark or indelible character on the Christian soul; for this reason one can receive this sacrament only once. A Christian does not live as a child of God through his or her own efforts alone, but through the grace of God.

We see this in a practical way when we look back on our own lives and the lives of others, even the lives of saints. Therefore, it is our duty to seek the grace that God offers us in order to live our lives as Christians in the way that God intends. When we fully participate in His Church through the Sacraments and through our involvement in our community, we ARE the Body of Christ. Here at Saint Joseph's Church we unequivocally recognize the parents' role as primary educators of their children in the faith.

The Church has a responsibility to not only support parents in this role but to assist parents, as well. We have attempted to create a program designed to best support and assist our parents. We do not want the faith formation program at St Joseph's to be a replacement of the parents' role as primary educator. Instead, we hope to stand beside and partner with our parents in helping to lead your teen closer to Christ.

What follows in the next few pages is what we offer at St. Josephs to assist you in leading your teen in forming their faith, in sacramental formation, and in active parish life through Confirmation.

The program that our parish has developed, as listed below, is the norm or standard whereby we can see if our youth understand the necessary material, participation, and spiritual life beneficial to being confirmed.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Confirmation program you can contact me by email [p.donnelly@catholicwealdstone.org](mailto:p.donnelly@catholicwealdstone.org)

Thank you for allowing us to assist you in preparing for Confirmation.

***Sincerely in Christ***

***The Faith Formation Team.***

### **Weekly Mass Attendance at Mass**

At the centre of the Catholic Christian faith is the celebration of the Eucharist, the real presence of Christ in the bread, wine and the people who eat His body and blood. It is at Mass, at Liturgy, where we come together with all of our Catholic Christian friends to celebrate as one church. It is only fitting for the people of our parish community to celebrate and walk with you on your journey toward being a full member. Weekly attendance at Mass is therefore, expected of candidates and their families.

### **Service and Outreach: 'Faith in Action'**

We are called as Christians to the service of others. In years past, candidates have had to fulfil a certain number of service hours and have the person they volunteered to help sign a sheet showing their service. We do not ask our candidates for this. Instead, we ask that each candidate do some service each month, and at the end of each month write a paragraph on what they did for service and what they learned.

### **Group Sessions**

Beginning the year of Confirmation formation will take place remotely on the **MS TEAMS** learning platform. We will have weekly class gatherings for learning, sharing, serving, spiritual growth, and fellowship. During our groups sessions we will break open the teaching on a more intimate level. We will be using the online series **Decision Point** by Matthew Kelly for teaching and discussion each meeting. Each Thursday evening will begin at 6:00 pm and will end no later than 7:00 pm. We ask that every effort be made to attend each session there will be a register to track attendance.

### **Retreats**

Retreats are such an important part of the Confirmation process; they are even important in life. How many times do we look forward to a vacation from school or from our everyday lives? We go to the beach, or the mountains, Hawaii, Disney World, just about anywhere to "get away" and recharge our batteries. Retreats are intended to do the same. They give people the chance to "get away", to step back and reflect from things that prevent them from focusing on our Lord. Retreats allow candidates to go away to have fun, relax, but more importantly, to recharge the spiritual battery.

This year we are unable to offer a group gathering retreats but we will be offering an **'ONLINE RETREAT PROGRAMME'** during the Easter period. Candidates will be expected to complete this and upload all their work to MS TEAMS in order that the catechists can give them some support and offer guidance in their spiritual journey.

### **Youth Group**

The Youth group will be run by Father Mario and his team remotely online. Youth Groups are each Thursday 6.30pm-7.00pm. The primary objective is to encourage teens to realize a deeper relationship with Christ and to challenge them to live their faith as they carry out their daily lives. Teens experience this sharing in an atmosphere of love and acceptance from their peers and the adult leaders who are there to assist them in their journey. Candidates are recommended to attend Youth Group after they receive the sacrament of confirmation as this will support them in continuing their faith journey.

## **Sponsors**

Sponsors are people who you can rely on during your faith journey. They should be people with a deep commitment to the Catholic faith and who are active, confirmed members of their parish. They should be willing to listen to you, help you answer questions, and be willing to share their faith and example with you. Sponsors are expected to maintain REGULAR contact with their candidate to not only pray, but to socialize and develop a stronger relationship.

Please take time to discern your Sponsor and have them complete the Sponsor Information Form in this Registration Packet. All Sponsors must have their Sponsor Information Form signed and sealed by their parish priest. We ask that each candidate chose their Sponsor and have the form turned in no later than January 2021. Each Candidate will be asked to pick a Confirmation name which will be a Patron, Saint. Your Confirmation Saint will be a patron for you throughout your year of formation. You will pray alongside your Saint as you prepare for this beautiful sacrament, and your Saint should serve as a reminder of the faithful examples that go before us and an example of a life committed to love and sacrifice. The Saint can bear special relevance in your life and your gifts. For example, if music is very important to you, St. Cecilia, the Patron Saint of Music, might be a good choice. There are literally thousands of Saints who remind us of what an ordinary person can become. You will take the name of this Saint in the official record of the church, and this is what the Bishop will call you when he seals you with the gift of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation. Please take the time to thoughtfully choose a saint who will represent something important to you, and who you will look to for inspiration of faith.

## **What does the Church ask for you the Parent?**

### **1. Watch for signs of readiness:**

-  *A developing sense of personal responsibility for duties at home, school & church.*
-  *A willingness to help and serve others.*
-  *A personal interest in learning about and practicing the faith.*
-  *A desire to identify himself/herself with Christ in the Catholic Church through the Sacrament of Confirmation.*

2. Attend Candidate/Parent sessions with your child and ensure that your child actively takes part in the Zoom Youth meetings sessions weekly after Confirmation.

3. Provide the information needed such as Baptismal certificate, First Communion certificate, etc.

4. Provide the opportunity for the candidate to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. Also provide for their frequent reception of the Eucharist and Reconciliation.

5. Positively encourage your child to complete the Online Retreat Programme during the Easter break.

6. Monitor and track your child's progress by assisting them in uploading their 'Theory' homework from the 'Dynamic Catholic' booklet and evidence of their 'Practical' homework's to MS Teams.

7. Provide the opportunity for you all to complete the 'Fundraising' sponsored activity to raise funds to restore the church roof.

8. Pray for your child in a very special way during this time of preparation for Confirmation.

### **Checklist for Successful Parents:**

Below is a checklist of some ways you can be a successful Catholic parent. Check all those statements you already do. If some remain unchecked, you may want to consider making them part of your family routine in the future. God bless you in your sacred vocation of parenting!

- 1) Attend weekend Mass as a Family each Sunday.
- 2) Discuss the meaning of Scripture readings and/or the homily after Mass with your children.
- 3) Regularly go to Confession with your family.
- 4) Discuss the beauty and meaning of the Sacraments with your family
- 5) Say morning/evening prayers/ grace before and after meals and/or the Rosary as a family or individually.
- 6) Visit Church or participate in a weekday Mass with your children
- 7) Share what your Catholic faith means to you personally with your family.
- 8) Take an active part in your child's Sacramental preparation and faith formation programme.
- 9) Speak often and lovingly of your faith, especially when you feel particularly close to God.
- 10) Take an active part in parish life and encourage your children to do the same.
- 11) Openly share your values and discuss them with your children, listening carefully to their comments.
- 12) Help them develop moral decision making powers appropriate for their maturity by sharing your insights and guiding them without making all the decisions for them.
- 13) By word and example, teach your children how to love and value one another, and seek/offer forgiveness.
- 14) Pray for your family, and ask them to pray for you.