



*Confirmation Handbook 2009-2010*

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## **Definition of Terms**

For ease of conversation, this document will refer to the Cathedral of St. Mary, Christ Church Newman Center and the Church of St. Augustine as the *River Cluster*.

## **Summary of Confirmation Preparation**

The Confirmation preparation program in the River Cluster is a formation process based on the principles concerning parish ministry to youth set forth in the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' 1997 document *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. *The candidate who willingly and actively participates in this process and is confirmed will have an understanding of themselves as an individual loved and called by God to discipleship as a valued member of both our parish community and the universal Church.*

***No candidate should be coerced into the formation process, as this not only defeats the purposes of the program but also creates an atmosphere that could negatively affect others.***

It is expected that the young person who wishes to receive the sacrament of Confirmation accepts the above-stated understanding of what it means to be confirmed and will participate fully in the process as well as take seriously what it means to be a member of the Church. Candidates, *together with their families*, are asked to read over and discuss the expectations and requirements of the River Cluster preparation program as stated in this handbook before signing and submitting to the program coordinator the participation agreement on the last page of this document. *Failure to meet any of the expectations and/or complete any of the requirements herein stated is equivalent to withdrawal from the program for the year (Candidates may re-enroll the following year).*

Candidates are expected to attend Mass every week. If they are away from the parish, it is expected that they will seek out another Catholic church in which to attend Mass. The Eucharist is central to the Catholic life. It is the central means by which we nourish our faith and worship God. Further, it is through hearing the Scriptures read and discussed that we learn more about our faith and about God. The Confirmation sessions are intended to complement the faith formation that takes place both within the candidates' families and at the Mass.

Confirmation sessions take place in the Mary Center twice a month, from October through May, for each grade level. Please refer to this year's schedules for more details.

## **Attendance and Participation**

Responsible participation in a faith community is central to the sacrament of Confirmation; therefore it is important that all candidates – and table leaders – make every effort to attend all sessions each year. If a candidate knows that they will miss a session, it is their responsibility to inform the program coordinator and to find out from their table leader what material they missed. *If a candidate misses three sessions over the course of the year, they will be considered withdrawn from the program for the year; the registration fee will not be*

*refunded.* The candidate is always welcome to re-enroll either the following year or at such a time when they are ready and able to participate fully in faith- and community-building. Again, due to the centrality of responsible participation in a faith community, “make-up work” done at home or “make-up attendance” at another program is generally not a sufficient substitute for attendance at a session. Candidates are advised to put the session dates on their family’s calendar as soon as possible and to try to eliminate any potential conflicts. Candidates and/or their families experiencing any anxiety or concern related to this expectation should contact the program coordinator.

Attendance, however, is just the beginning! Candidates and table leaders alike need to make the most of our time together by engaging and participating fully in the sessions. We are all unique individuals, and we each possess our own gifts and talents. We need to work together to establish a community in which everyone feels comfortable, encouraged, and supported enough to share his/her gifts, talents, and faith so that we all may learn from each other and grow together. To this end, in the unlikely event that a candidate’s behavior is purposefully disruptive, catechists are instructed to refer the candidate to the program coordinator immediately. The candidate will then be instructed to call home and arrange to be picked up immediately. The candidate and his/her parents will need to talk with the program coordinator prior to the candidate’s return to the program.

## **Prayer**

Prayer is a vital part of the Christian life – and therefore a vital part of preparation to receive the sacrament of Confirmation! Throughout the course of the formation process, Confirmation candidates will have numerous opportunities to discuss and explore prayer, with a particular emphasis on discussing and exploring the role prayer plays and can play in their daily lives. Candidates will also experience different forms of prayer, ranging from more traditional prayers to prayers borrowed from other cultures and religious traditions, from the use of modern music as prayer to peaceful and profound guided meditations. Each session begins and ends with a prayer experience.

## **Community Service**

The Church teaches us that it is the responsibility of the baptized to live the Gospel in the world. Christians actively preach and spread the Gospel when they participate in both civic and parish-based activities in a manner consistent with Jesus’ example and teachings. As we believe that the sacrament of Confirmation empowers a person to live the faith in a very public way, each candidate in Confirmation preparation is asked to complete ten hours of service within the parish and ten hours of service outside of the parish.

Some service opportunities will be presented to students during their class sessions to aid candidates in finding service sites. Often families of Confirmation students get involved in service together – something that grows the family as well as the student preparing for Confirmation! To get involved, or should any questions or concerns arise regarding this service component of the program, candidates and their parents are welcome to contact their team leaders and/or the program coordinator.

## **Retreats**

Candidates are asked to participate in two retreat experiences during the formation process. Due to the holistic nature of the retreats, candidates will not be allowed to arrive late and/or leave early from retreats. If a candidate cannot attend the scheduled retreats within the River Cluster program, then he/she is responsible for finding and attending a comparable retreat experience offered by a neighboring parish or Catholic youth group. While participation in retreat experiences offered by other parishes do fulfill this program requirement, candidates are urged to make every attempt to attend our River Cluster retreats; the Confirmation retreat is an integral part of our Confirmation preparation program and has traditionally been very moving and fondly-remembered faith experiences for candidates. *Any retreat experience outside of those offered by this program must be approved by the program coordinator prior to the candidate's participation in the experience.*

## **Confirmation Interview**

Candidates will complete an interview with a member of parish staff or a parishioner in April prior to Confirmation. The goal of Confirmation Interviews is twofold:

- 1) for the parish to show their support in you as a candidate; and
- 2) for you to demonstrate your readiness to be confirmed.

Students will sign up for an interview time at one of their spring Confirmation sessions.

## **Confirmation Projects**

### *Student Autobiography*

Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation. That means that in Confirmation you are welcomed into the Catholic Church, and more specifically, into your particular parish community. Sometime prior to your Confirmation Retreat, we'll ask you to fill out an autobiography sheet. Then, we'll post your autobiographies and pictures in church. At that time, we'll also ask parishioners to pray for you as you continue in Confirmation preparation.

### *Letter to the Pastor*

Confirmation candidates are asked to write a one to two page letter to our pastor, Fr. Tony Oelrich. Candidates are encouraged to answer the following questions in their letters: 1) Which gifts of the Spirit are most active in my life? 2) Which gifts of the Spirit do I hope to receive in the future? Why?

### *Choosing a Confirmation Name*

Confirmation Guidelines from the Diocese of St. Cloud encourage candidates to choose their baptismal name for their Confirmation name. The use of the candidate's baptismal name can serve to further emphasize the threefold process of Christian initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. However, if a new name is chosen, it should be that of a *biblical figure* or a *Christian Saint*.

## **Choosing a Confirmation Mentor**

A mentor is a confirmed, adult Catholic who is willing to work with a Confirmation candidate in his or her faith journey. This person should be at least 20 years of age, a non-parental adult and a person who is a good role model of faith for the Confirmation candidate. The mentor will be working closely with the candidate so he or she should be living close enough that the Confirmation candidate and mentor will be able to meet individually, at their own convenience, to complete monthly one-on-one sessions.

Ideally, your mentor will also be your sponsor; however you may choose to have two separate adults if your sponsor is unable to meet with you on a regular basis.

## **Choosing a Confirmation Sponsor**

Candidates are free to choose their own Confirmation sponsors. Sponsors should:

- *be a confirmed Catholic in good standing and at least 16 years of age.*
- know the candidate well and be willing to serve as a Christian guide and role model for the candidate.
- be willing to support the young person being confirmed in his/her commitment to living a Christian life.
- be confident enough in their own faith commitment to be able to support a young person in his/her faith commitment.
- Candidates may wish to choose one of their baptismal godparents to be their Confirmation sponsor, emphasizing the important relationship between the two sacraments. Because it is the sponsor's role to support both the candidate *and his/her parents*, the Church discourages candidates from choosing one of their parents to be their sponsor.
- *Candidates need to select a sponsor no later than the December sessions. Each candidate-sponsor pair will need to complete a sponsorship form (included in this packet).* Candidates or sponsors should then return the completed form to St. Mary's Cathedral Parish Office as soon as possible. Sponsors are invited and encouraged to join the candidates for the Confirmation rehearsal session. If a candidate's sponsor is unable to be present at the Confirmation Mass, a proxy may stand in for him/her. Again, please do not hesitate to contact the program coordinator with any questions or concerns about choosing a Confirmation sponsor.

## **Miscellaneous Information**

### ***Tuition & Fees***

**Cathedral of St. Mary and Church of St. Augustine** use a family fee for faith formation tuition. Families with one enrolled student pay \$40; families with more than one student pay \$75.

There is an additional \$25 Sacramental preparation fee for students in grade 10. This helps to cover additional costs during that year of preparation, including the Confirmation retreat.

The registration fee for a candidate is waived when an immediate family member volunteers his/her time and talents to serve as a catechist in the parish's faith formation programs. Please note that faith formation in general – and the sacraments in particular – will never be withheld in times of financial need. If there is a hardship in meeting any of these fees, please do not hesitate to contact the program coordinator.

**Christ Church Newman** charges \$65 per student for 2009-2010.

### **Program Coordinator Contact Information**

Program coordinators:

Lisa Neu, Director of Faith Formation  
Address: St. Mary's Cathedral  
25 8th Ave S  
Saint Cloud, MN 56301  
Phone: 320-251-1840 x100  
Fax: 320-529-3231  
Email: [lneu@staug.com](mailto:lneu@staug.com)

Amber Christie, Director of Faith Formation / Campus Minister  
Address: Christ Church Newman Center  
396 First Avenue South  
St. Cloud, MN 56301  
Phone: 320-251-3260  
Email: [newman\\_rep@charterinternet.com](mailto:newman_rep@charterinternet.com)

## **Confirmation Checklist**

Confirmation candidates should use this list to evaluate their progress toward the Sacrament of Confirmation.

- Confirmation Mentor chosen
- Photocopy of Baptismal Certificate turned into the parish office (If not baptized in one of our three parishes)
- Confirmation name chosen
- Confirmation Sponsor chosen and asked
- Autobiography sheet completed and turned in (due December 10, 2009)
- Participation in Confirmation Retreats
- Christian Service Completed  
20 hours, 10 in the parish and 10 outside the parish  
(due March 3, 2009)
- Satisfactory Attendance at Confirmation Preparation Classes
- Satisfactory Completion of Mentor Packet
- Information Sheet turned in
- Letter to Pastor completed (due February 10, 2010)
- Confirmation interview completed

# CONFIRMATION INFORMATION PAGE

Please turn this page in on March 24, 2010

## Candidate Information

Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate's Parish \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate's full name as it should be written on his/her certificate:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Date of baptism \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
month/ day / year month/ day / year

Current age \_\_\_\_\_

Circle Sacraments Received:

Baptism

Reconciliation

Eucharist

Place of baptism (Church) \_\_\_\_\_

City / State \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmation Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor's Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's First / Maiden Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's First / Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Everyone must fill out this form for the parish records. A baptism certificate must be submitted unless you were baptized or received First Communion at one of our three parishes. Thank you for your cooperation.