

YOUTH SAFETY

Youth safety remains the highest of priorities with *Connect Youth Ministries* and St. Isidore parish. We foster a safe environment by complying with the procedures of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.

Every adult employee and volunteer who has access to young people has been trained in safe environment policies and has undergone a background check. Parents and guardians are encouraged to drop into sessions and observe and monitor activities.

We also pay attention to those who come to any high school youth group, including youth groups that are part of the Confirmation Preparation program. While our youth groups are open to all youth, only youth with parental permission and a signed Code of Conduct are permitted to enter. Guests are allowed with a signed parental permission/code of conduct form.

Anyone who enters our youth ministry space should be aware that we have designed the space to maximize public space and allow for the monitoring of adult and youth interaction to ensure such interactions are appropriate.

We never gather with youth in a “one-on-one” environment. There is always a staff person who is familiar with emergency and safety protocols whenever youth gather and there is always at least one other trained adult volunteer.



Manual disponible en Español a petición solamente, en la oficina de Formación de Fe

CONFIRMATION HANDBOOK 2019-2020



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CONFIRMATION

Dear Parents/Guardians of potential Confirmation Candidates,

Thank you for your interest in preparing your child for the Sacrament of Confirmation through *Connect Youth Ministries* at St. Isidore Parish. *Connect Youth Ministries* is the comprehensive youth ministry program of St. Isidore Parish serving youth in their Junior High and Senior High years. *Connect Youth Ministries* hosts over 30 youth groups per week. Twenty of those youth groups are part of our Confirmation Preparation Program which assists young people in preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Sacraments are signs of God's love to God's people. We approach the Sacraments so that we might better know God's love, experience it, and share it with others. It is our hope that preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation will reveal God's love to your child and your family.

Before registering, it is important that you know the expectations of the Confirmation Preparation Program and the purpose behind these expectations. Please read this booklet thoroughly before registering.

It often goes unspoken, but it is important to ask, "Why should an individual seek the Sacrament of Confirmation?" The Church teaches that Confirmation "strengthens the graces received at Baptism." As such, Confirmation is not a requirement to be "Catholic." Your child has been Catholic from the moment of his/her Baptism. At Baptism, you made a commitment to raise your child Catholic. Receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation does not fulfill the obligation you made or release you from your obligation. You will still have that responsibility even if he/she is Confirmed.

Confirmation strengthens an individual's ability to live a Catholic life. Confirmation does not provide magical protections. Good things and bad things will still happen to your child if he/she is Confirmed or not Confirmed. Confirmation is not graduation from Catholicism. Religious growth is a life-long process, and Confirmation will not end the need for continued religious formation.

ATTENDANCE

Preparing for Confirmation is a commitment, but it should not be a commitment that frustrates or complicates the lives of its participants or their family. It is not unusual to have absences from time to time for school, family, or personal reasons. It is perfectly acceptable for a participant in the Confirmation Preparation Program to miss up to three sessions. Sessions include the weekly meetings, scheduled participation in TEEN MASS, their group service project, and the participant's sponsor formation session. If any session is missed, the participant is invited to make up the session immediately by attending a session on another night within the same week. A maximum of four make up sessions are allowed. Although tardiness happens, any tardiness over 15 minutes will be considered an absence. When making up a session, it is necessary to call the CYM/Faith Formation Office (513-620-4CYM) in advance to schedule a make up day and receive credit for the make up session.



TEEN MASS SESSIONS—FOR ALL

On the third Sunday of every month, Sunday, Monday and St. Isidore School 8th Grade Confirmation Preparation Candidates are required to attend monthly TEEN MASS.

All Sunday, Monday Confirmation Preparation sessions scheduled to start at either 4:00 PM, 5:15 PM, on Sunday or 5:45 PM, 7:00 PM on Monday nights, and St. Isidore School 8th Grade will meet and participate in TEEN MASS from 4:00 PM to 5:45 PM at St. Isidore main Church .

On these nights **ALL** Sunday and Monday Confirmation Sessions, and St. Isidore School 8th Grade , will be require to attend TEEN MASS and the activity following the Mass. Please be aware that these are schedule sessions and there are no make ups.

These replace their Sunday/Monday normal Session.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Catholics believe that a personal relationship with God is important. We have a co-equal emphasis on the relationship between God and the community. We believe that faith is not only an individual's pursuit but the pursuit of the whole community. God speaks to us as a community. God has made us his people.

For that reason, it is important that we spend time together as a community, that we get to know each other and that we have an identity of being a community. We do not always agree on everything. Even the Saints of the Church would often get into heated disagreements with each other! Still, we must know that God has not abandoned us to be alone, as individuals. We are a part of this thing called "Faith" together.

There are no requirements per se in the Confirmation Preparation Program to ensure that a youth has been properly brought into the Community Life of Catholics, but we do establish a goal that every family would know how to utilize the role of the Catholic community in their life and feel invited to participate.

The Catholic Community has numerous resources to support families with prayer, social activities, service opportunities, fellowship, support in crisis, companionship, and more!

One resource is *Connect Youth Ministries* itself. It is designed to be a comprehensive youth ministry program serving the needs of youth from 7th grade to 12th grade. CYM provides a place for teens to gather, recreate, pray, work on school projects, and just be teenagers! CYM provides healthy social alternatives for young people such as Lock-Ins, Ski Trips, Six Flags field trips, Mission Trips, Connection Groups, Fundraisers, and more!

There is always an invitation to be involved. We ask a simple but important question, why would you want to be Confirmed in a faith built on the premise of community if you did not want to be a part of that community? This is your parish, and it is large enough that there is something for everyone! Get to know your parish - your Catholic community - and get involved as best as you can.



As a parent, if you are going to require your child to do anything, please require them to participate in the preparation program, but do not force your child to be Confirmed. To enter the Sacrament under the impediment of force would be as tragic as forcing your child into a marriage without his/her complete consent. Sometimes, a young Catholic discovers in his/her heart that he/she does not want to receive Confirmation. We will support the youth in this decision, for it must be freely chosen.

Which brings us to the reason Confirmation preparation is done at an age in which the individual can make a mature choice about following Jesus Christ as a Confirmed Catholic. Some parishes across the country celebrate the Sacrament in eighth grade, while many parishes celebrate the Sacrament in eleventh or twelfth grade. The later ages are viewed as opportunities for individuals to make a freer, more responsible choice about Confirmation. The last few years we've incorporated the preparation for Confirmation during Eighth Grade or Freshmen year.

We recognize that high school years have many difficult demands on students and families. These demands continue throughout life, they are not limited to high school. We therefore believe, that there isn't a better time for an individual to choose to strengthen his/her faith than when life is full of options, some of which challenge the Catholic Faith. At the same time, twelfth grade might seem unnecessarily difficult for some youth and families. For that reason, we offer Confirmation preparation to any youth who is in eighth grade or older, who has completed the necessary prerequisites, or is willing to fulfill those prerequisites while preparing for Confirmation. The option is yours.

At St. Isidore Parish, this is done through our comprehensive youth ministry program. *Connect Youth Ministries* provides multiple opportunities for youth to grow in the Catholic Faith by exploring the Faith, questioning, growing in community, having fun, learning the Church's teachings, praying, serving others, attending retreats, and creating the space for every adolescent to "connect" with God, with the Church, and with his/her truest self. During preparation for Confirmation and beyond, it is appropriate as parents for you to expect your child to participate in the



INTELLECTUAL FORMATION

The recent *National Survey on Youth and Religion* reported that in a survey of 3,370 youth, 67% of youth indicated that they wanted to learn more about their own faith tradition. At St. Isidore Parish, we recognize that this problem is not unique to teenagers. There is an overall deficit of understanding about the Catholic Faith in the general population. What the Church's teachings are and what those teachings mean need to be taught. Learning the mysteries of the Catholic Faith is a life-long process, and we could never expect anyone to know all the doctrines of the Church, but it also stands to reason that if someone wants to accept from the Holy Spirit the gift of Catholic Faith, then he/she needs to know some of the basic beliefs.

We review many of those beliefs in the weekly sessions in the Confirmation Preparation program but simply reviewing the beliefs does not internalize the vocabulary of our faith community. Learning religious beliefs is much like learning a language. The best way to learn a language is to speak it, using its vocabulary in conversation.

We do use a 100 point Vocabulary Inventory to evaluate that a participant in our Confirmation Preparation Program has a basic understanding of the vocabulary of the Catholic Faith. It is our expectation that youth be able to pass this test to the level of their intellectual abilities.

REQUIREMENTS FOR INTELLECTUAL FORMATION

- **Increase his/her understanding of the basic beliefs of the Catholic Faith and take an evaluation which demonstrates an increase in his/her understanding.**
- **Attend weekly Youth Group and special parent/sponsor sessions aimed at preparing him/her for the Sacrament of Confirmation (see *Attendance Policy*).**



PREREQUISITES

The Confirmation Preparation Program with *Connect Youth Ministries* is a two year preparation program. The Diocese of Joliet requires Confirmation Preparation programs to have two years of preparation (20 hours each year) before an adolescent may receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Because of this requirement, prerequisites exist to enter the Confirmation Preparation Program with *Connect Youth Ministries*.

8TH GRADE—If your child attends Catholic School (such as St. Isidore) or has attended a year in 7th grade with Connect Youth Ministries, and will be entering 8th grade, he/she will have the opportunity to register to be Confirmed in the Spring of 2020.

HIGH SCHOOL – If your child has graduated from a Catholic School (such as St. Isidore School) or attends Catholic High School (such as St. Francis), your child has completed prerequisite requirements, for those entering High School.

If your child has completed one full year in Connection Group sessions in previous years of Junior High (7 & 8th grades) or High School, your child has completed prerequisite requirements, he/she will have the opportunity to register to be Confirmed in the Spring of 2020.

If your child has not completed any of the pre-requisites, you need to sign up your child in a pre-requisite program (CYM 101), before entering Confirmation Prep Program.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

To be Catholic necessarily requires participation in the Spiritual Life. The Spiritual Life is a mystery, which we as a Church are constantly striving to articulate accurately. As a community, we believe that there are unseen truths which guide and direct our lives. The Gospel according to John wrote Jesus' words this way, "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

Catholics are people of the Spirit. To be Confirmed as a Catholic means that a person accepts the mystery of the Spiritual Life and accesses it, or is willing to try to access it, to the best of his/her ability. The Confirmation Preparation Program with *Connect Youth Ministries* seeks to provide the space necessary for young people to explore the Spiritual Life and be equipped with personal resources to find and recognize the Spirit working in his/her life. No one can dictate how the Spirit will live and breathe in an individual, but we do make minimum expectations as follows.



REQUIREMENTS FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- **Attend a Confirmation Retreat. (Required by the Diocese of Joliet)**
(Retreat is provided by Connect Youth Ministries — DATE—TBD)
- **Participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during both Advent and Lent.**

Check bulletin for Parish Reconciliation dates.

- Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and write a reflection on his/her experience of Mass once a month.
- Attend the mid-year Spiritual Formation Session with the candidate and his/her sponsor **Sunday, January 26, 2020.**

PRAYER FORMATION

In the scriptures, St. Paul instructs the People of God to "pray without ceasing" (Thes 5:16-24). Prayer is the way in which we communicate with God, where we overcome the distance between the human and divine and are able to speak to and listen to God and God's will for us. Prayer is certainly an important part of being Catholic and therefore is an important part of Confirming one's self in the Catholic Faith. It follows that someone who wishes to be Confirmed should have an understanding of what prayer is, how to pray, and respect for prayer. The tradition of the Church is rich with numerous forms of prayer, and at St. Isidore Parish, we have many persons who thrive in many different prayer traditions.

During the Confirmation Preparation Program, participants will be exposed to many different forms of prayer, and they are asked to respectfully learn and participate in those different forms. We hope each participant will find the manner of praying that best suits their personality. We can teach about prayer in our sessions, but the best way to know about prayer is to participate. So that young people can participate in prayer, we hold evening prayer **please refer to your child's calendar for time*, every night in the chapel at St. Isidore parish.

The Mass is our community's primary communal prayer, and we seek to involve young people in knowing and coming to full, active, and conscious participation in the Mass. To assist in this process, we host a special Mass for teenagers on the Third Sunday of every Month. This Mass is commonly referred to as TEEN MASS.

Parents are always welcome to attend any of our sessions but are especially invited to join us for prayer in the Chapel every night of the week and also the monthly TEEN MASS.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PRAYER FORMATION

- Attend regularly scheduled Connection Group evening prayer at St Isidore Chapel (5:15-5:45 PM Sun, 7 - 7:30 PM Mon.).
- Participate as a liturgical leader in at least one TEEN MASS.

