

"I have called you by name; you are mine"

Isaiah 43:1



St. Madeleine Sophie Roman Catholic Church

High Springs, Florida 32643

CONFIRMATION PROGRAM AT ST. MADELEINE

.....In its truest sense, the Universal Church is locally evident and personally experienced in and through the Parish. For every Catholic, participation in Parish life is both a right and a duty. Almost by definition, the Church is spiritually strong and vibrant to the extent that the Baptized members of the Parish community live their faith and share it with others. In Confirmation, the candidate is agreeing to enter into that Parish community, so it is proper that he or she prepare for that serious obligation in the Parish setting. That is why the church normally requires that Baptism, Confirmation and the Easter Communion be received in one's proper Parish.

.....Ideally, participation in Parish life includes a variety of actions - registration as members; contribution of time, talent and money to Parish activities; apostolic service to the needy in the Parish and its larger communities; cooperation in the religious education of all family members; and regular sharing in the Sacramental life and worship of the Parish community.

.....Preparation to receive the Sacraments requires much more of the candidate than schooling in the basics of the faith. While that aspect is important and is certainly provided very well in our Catholic schools and CCD programs, much more is involved that is best provided in the Parish setting described above.

.....Confirmation, for example, brings to fullness that life in the Holy Spirit into which we were first initiated at Baptism. Therefore, a comprehensive preparation for Confirmation necessitates proper planning of curriculum, serious teacher-formation, Clergy participation, parental involvement and the prayerful support of the total Parish community. Program components include study, service, retreat and liturgy. Beyond just catechesis, Parish programs include a significant service project experience directed and evaluated by a Parish staff field person; a candidates' retreat for enhanced religious formation; education in liturgy fostering active participation on the part of the candidates in special liturgies and celebrations of the Eucharist; and interviews with Parish staff and/or clergy to develop mutual personal relationships and understanding of the candidates' readiness and willingness to be Confirmed. Parents should share in this preparation.

The four to six month period of proximate preparation for confirmation will include a number of sessions for parents and sponsors to aid them in their mentoring roles.

Confirmation preparation is one of many opportunities for ongoing faith formation in the life of young people. It is the obligation of parents to see that their children continue to participate in the catechesis and other faith formation offered by the parish throughout their high school years, even after the celebration of confirmation.



CATECHETICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE CONFIRMATION PREPARATION PROGRAM

St. Madeleine Sacramental & Catechetical guidelines require that:

- 1.) All families must be registered members of the parish.
- 2.) It is expected that confirmation candidate have attended at minimum the 7th grade catechetical preparation before entering the Confirmation program

A) For Children in a Religious Education program:

- Consistent attendance at Sunday morning RE classes from September to May
- Consistent attendance at Sunday mass
- Attendance at all classes throughout the 1st & 2nd years of the Confirmation program. (No more than two (2) absences will be allowed, and none during the sacramental preparation sessions)
- Submit reflections, reports or documents to the RE office as specified.
- If from another parish, provide documentation of 7th grade RE instruction.

B) Catholic school students

- Consistent attendance at Sunday mass
- Attendance at **ALL** Sacramental Preparation sessions as scheduled
- Submit reflections, reports or documents to the RE office as specified.

OTHER GUIDELINES

Each candidate is required to complete:

- Confirmation program registration – 1st year
- Candidate and Parish Covenant – 1st year
- Sponsor Choice form and Confirmation Name form – 1st year
- Saint reflection paper – 2nd year
- Sponsor/Candidate session forms – 2nd year
- Service Experience/Corporal Works of Mercy (2-short term) – 2nd year
- Parish service form (Long term ministry) – at the end of the 1st year

SPONSORS (2nd year Confirmation Program)

About your Sponsor:

You need the support and presence of your sponsor as you prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Keep in mind the sponsor must take an active part in your journey. Please carefully read the following descriptions of the requirements, role, and participation of the sponsor.

Requirements for your Sponsor:

- 1.) Sponsors must be confirmed members of the Catholic faith.
- 2.) Sponsors cannot be younger than 16 years of age.
- 3.) Sponsors must be "practicing Catholics" and active members of their parish (each sponsor is asked to get a letter of validation from their pastor or parish staff confirming that they are active members of their faith community.
- 4.) As per canon law requirements, a parent cannot be a sponsor for a candidate.
- 5.) Sponsor needs to pick up, fill out and return "Sponsor Information Packet" to the Church office.

Role of the Sponsor:

- 1.) To journey with the Confirmation candidate through the discernment and preparation process.
- 2.) To participate in the Confirmation enrollment ceremony at St. Madeleine church.
- 3.) To present the candidate to the Bishop (or his delegate) at the Confirmation liturgy in the spring of 2011 for anointing.
- 4.) To support the newly Confirmed young adult as she/he **continues** on their faith journey.

Participation with Your Sponsor:

- Meet with you twice on your own time.
- Assists with the Corporal Works of Mercy, if possible
- Participates in Confirmation rehearsal on
- Participates in the Confirmation celebration liturgy
- Attend parish mission with candidate

With the above in mind during the summer months prior to the 2nd year, the candidates are expected to be thinking about their choice of sponsor, and interviewing adults they are considering to be their sponsor. Their decision will have to be handed in by the date on the paper which will be mailed to you over the summer between the 1st & 2nd year of the program.

SERVICE HOURS (1st year Confirmation program)

Service hours are for 1st year Confirmation candidates. Each child is expected to complete 10 service hours. They will be given a form that needs to be completed and signed by the supervisor. They will also be expected to complete a reflection on the service hours they completed – also provided with the service hours form.

Parish Service/Corporal Works of Mercy(2nd year Confirmation program)

Being a Christian, a Catholic, and a disciple of Christ calls us to live our lives according to the example and instructions Jesus himself gave us. One of the most important lessons Jesus taught us was that we must be willing to be a servant to all people in His name. This means we must actually **DO** something to be a disciple of Christ! By doing parish and community service, we demonstrate a willingness to show Christian responsibility. It is expected of each candidate to choose one long term ministry (Parish Ministry) and two short term ministry experiences.

During the summer months prior to the 2nd year of the Confirmation program, the candidates are to explore the different ministries in the parish. During the summer prior to the 2nd year, each candidate will be given a list of long term ministries to choose from. The list will include the frequency and hours expected of the volunteers along with the name and contact information of the ministry leader and job description. The candidate is expected to discuss these options with his/her parents and decide on one long term ministry. The candidate is to return the forms the 1st week of class with his/her decision and begin on the next available scheduled service time. Two short term Corporal Works of Mercy are also required and a list of these will also be sent home. Please check the bulletin board in the 2nd year Confirmation room for any updates to the short term Corporal works of Mercy list, as from time to time, new opportunities may arise.

Each candidate is expected to hand in their forms in a timely manner. The start date of the long term ministry experience will be on or around September 15th. The ministry experience will continue until the end of CCD.

The short term Corporal works of Mercy will last for the duration of the event – usually a few hours but no more than 1 day.

Expectations of a Confirmation Candidate

- Attend all classes!
- Hand in papers, in a timely manner.
- Attend Parish mission and retreat in the 1st & 2nd years.
- Participate in the Stations of the Cross during Lent
- Attend all Holy Week services
- Attend Confirmation retreat (2nd year)
- Attend day of Reflection and Confirmation practice (2nd year – with sponsor)
- Attend Retreat properly attired
- Attend Confirmation ceremony properly attired.

Sporting events and games are not a valid excuse for missing class or any other Confirmation function! **If this is not acceptable – then maybe you are not ready to be confirmed!**

RETREATS FOR THE 1ST AND 2ND YEAR CONFIRMATION PROGRAM

All candidates are expected to attend two retreats.

- 1.)The parish mission (TBD)
- 2.)The 1st year, and/or Confirmation Retreat when scheduled

All candidates are expected to participate in the Holy Week Liturgy

- 1.)Holy Thursday Liturgy
- 2.)The Stations of the Cross on Good Friday
- 3.)Either the Liturgy on Holy Saturday or Easter Sunday.

Retreat Guidelines for Confirmation Retreat

- No outside food or beverages – this includes gum.
- No cell phones: If we see or hear it, we will take it away.
- No headphones, I-Pods or any similar device. If we see or hear it, we will take it away.
- No device that may be used as a weapon (lighters, matches, lasers, knives, etc.) The item will be taken and your parents will be called to pick you up.
- No running in the building
- No smoking; your parents will be called to pick you up.
- No wandering beyond the outside boundaries set forth by the team leaders.
- Respect all team members and facilities staff and one another.
- Keep noise to a minimum
- Maintain the facilities and rooms neatly. All furnishings must stay in the rooms in which they were found.
- Ask any team leader for help if you need anything - especially if you feel sick.
- Be open to having a good time - Be yourself and work as part of the team.

Confirmation Dress Code

The Candidates will be wearing robes. The dress code under their robes is as follows:

Boys

- Dress Slacks
- Dress Shirt/Tie
- Dress Shoes
- If they have a Sports/Suit Jacket, they should leave it with their parent as it would be too hot under the robe.

Girls

- Dress or skirt (any color) of an appropriate length for church – i.e. knee length
- No spaghetti straps, sleeveless or low cut dresses or tops.
- Dress Shoes
- If nail polish is worn, it should be a subdued or pastel color

NO SNEAKERS

The sponsors should also be appropriately dressed, since in their role they are an official representative of the Church. Please follow the same guidelines as the candidates.

CANDIDATE AND PARISH COVENANT

A covenant, in its most general sense, is a solemn contract or similar undertaking.

Participation in the preparation process will require commitment on the part of both candidates for Confirmation and their families. It is important that all aspects of this preparation are a priority and be recognized as essential to the formation of the candidate. An orientation session will help parents to view plans and expectations of the Confirmation process. Beyond the orientation session, parents are encouraged to join “Generations of Faith” and commit themselves to active participation in the liturgy on Sundays. They also make a commitment to guide their candidate to each session. To that end, please read the following points and indicate agreement by signing at the bottom.

THE CANDIDATE AND PARENTS

I understand that deciding to enter the Confirmation preparation program is an important decision requiring study, prayer and purposeful participation.

I will do my best to take this decision seriously and will participate and support my companions on this journey by asking questions and sharing my thoughts and opinions. I will strive to be engaged in my words and actions for my benefit and for the benefit of my peers.

I have been told about and understand that two retreats are required elements of the process. Should a serious situation arise regarding my attendance, I will contact the DRE with sufficient advance notice and we will come to a resolution together.

I understand that if I miss a session, I will need to contact the DRE. The DRE will send me the materials necessary to make up the session – this includes a written reflection due within 1 week of missing the session.

I understand and agree to the service ministry portion in the 2nd year of the program that includes 1 long term ministry and two short term “Corporal Works of Mercy” and the corresponding written reflections.

I will do my best to pray every day to encourage my growth in and understanding of the Holy Spirit.

I understand that the Eucharist is the “source and summit” of our lives as Roman Catholics. The Eucharist is both foundational to the Catholic faith and it is that unity with each other and with God for which we strive. Consistent participation in the Sunday Eucharistic liturgy is an essential component of Confirmation preparation. Therefore students and their families will make every effort to attend Mass. I understand that I will prayerfully choose a sponsor over the summer between the 1st and 2nd year, who will serve as a “mentor”. I understand I need to build a relationship of trust with my sponsor and

that trust takes time to build in a relationship. It is my goal that after a period of weeks, I will be able to discuss with my sponsor such personal topics as sharing faith, praying, and celebrating the Eucharist.

I understand there are other requirements that I must complete prior to Confirmation that are not outlined here.

I understand and agree that a sports activity, sports related activity, or recreational activity is not a valid excuse for missing class.

THE PARISH

The parish will support you with the materials and information necessary for the preparation program.

The DRE, catechists, program team, parish staff and the parish community will pray for you and your fellow companions so that you may continue to grow in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The DRE, catechists and program team are here to help you grow in your awareness of how the Holy Spirit is active in your life.

Confirmation Candidate

Parents

Class facilitator

DRE as representative of the parish community

Acknowledgement

This is to acknowledge that I, _____
Have received the confirmation information packet.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Pages 9-11 are to be signed and returned to the DRE no later than the first week of Religious education.

WHAT IS READINESS?

When speaking of the readiness of a child to celebrate a sacrament, there are three areas to address: the family, the individual, and the parish community.

Family: primary place of child's formation

- Does your family participate in the life of the community in the area of worship, formation (education), and service?
- Has your child received appropriate formation for his/her age?
- Does your family pray together at home?
- As parents, are you willing to commit to the continuing formation of your child in worship, formation, and service?

A candidate's readiness involves the following:

- A person must be baptized and have the use of reason (about the age of seven)
- Developmentally disabled persons should be confirmed after appropriate catechesis. If catechesis is not possible, he/she should be confirmed.
- Does the person express a desire to celebrate confirmation?
- Does the candidate participate in the worship life (Eucharist) of the community regularly?
- Has the person been formed in faith in an age-appropriate manner?
- Is there a commitment from this person to continue formation and participation in the worship life of the community?

*Because sacraments are community celebrations, the **parish** also has a responsibility in sacramental preparation.*

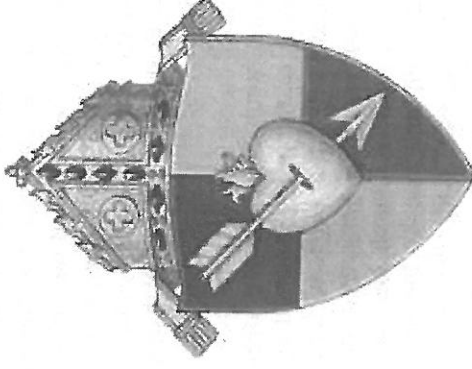
- Does your parish provide you (parents) with necessary support and information to enable you to fulfill your role as primary educator of your child?
- Does your parish provide opportunities for life-long faith formation?
- Does the community welcome children into its life?
- Retreats and service projects can help prepare children more fully for the sacrament of confirmation as well as for their future lives as fully initiated members of the Church.

The Role of the Sponsor

- Sponsors are to have an active role in the preparation of the candidate.
- Sponsors must be 16 years of age or older, Catholic, confirmed, leading a life in conformity with the faith, who has received Eucharist, and who is not bound by any **canonical penalty**.
- He/she must be willing and able to share faith and to make the necessary time commitment to fulfill his/her responsibility.
- It is preferable for the godparent to be the sponsor at confirmation. This manifests clearly the connection between baptism and confirmation. Others may, however, be asked to fulfill this role.
- Parents may not be godparents or sponsors for their children. They have a particular and very important role as primary catechists of their children.

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

In The
Diocese of St. Augustine



Office of
Christian Formation

Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation that is closely connected to the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist. It completes the sacrament of baptism, brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace and strengthens the gifts of the Spirit received at baptism. The sacrament of confirmation also leads us to the Eucharist as the way to live out our lives as fully initiated Catholics.

Confirmation Through History

In the first centuries of the Church, Confirmation was almost always celebrated at the time one was baptized. When people were baptized, they emerged from the water and the new life they received was sealed by an anointing with oil (chrismation) by the bishop. At the same celebration, they were welcomed to the table of the Eucharist for the first time.

Early in the Church, a custom developed for the anointing of the newly baptized by the priest immediately after baptism, followed by a second anointing performed by the bishop. The western Church has reserved these two anointings, one by the priest or deacon at baptism and the other at confirmation by the bishop. The Eastern Church combined the two and the anointings are done by either priest or bishop.

Throughout the centuries, the time lapse between baptism and confirmation grew until confirmation was celebrated around the age of 14. Eucharist was still celebrated after confirmation. Pope Pius X lowered the age of reception of Eucharist to the age of reason, but did not address the issue of the age for Confirmation.

The Second Vatican Council called for a revision of the Rite of Confirmation that reflected its close connection to baptism. In 1972, The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults was promulgated. In this Rite, un-baptized adults and children of catechetical age are to be fully initiated (receive baptism, confirmation and Eucharist) at the same ceremony.

The revised Rite of Confirmation permits the Conference of Bishops to designate the age when confirmation will be celebrated. The U.S. Bishops have stated that the sacrament may be conferred anytime between the ages of 7 and 19 with each bishop establishing the norm for his diocese. The Diocese of St. Augustine confirms youth who are in the eighth grade or higher.

The content of the preparation is to have at its core the format/structure of the Eucharistic celebration. Themes should include "sharing, listening, eating, conversing, giving, thanking and celebrating." (NCD, #133)

SACRAMENTAL POLICIES FOR THE DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

The Diocese of St. Augustine establishes the following requirements for the celebration of the Sacraments of confirmation, first penance, and first Eucharist for School Aged Children as follows:

1. Ongoing remote preparation is essential prior to sacramental catechesis.
2. Readiness of candidates is determined through consultation with parents, catechists, pastor and candidates.
3. Remote preparation is provided through the Religious Education Program, Catholic School program and home school programs during their regular classroom instruction. All programs mentioned will utilize the same text selected by

the D.R.E. and the school principal for consistency and continuity from the approved U.S.C.C.B. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) list. The choice of texts would then need to be approved by the Office of Christian Formation and the Diocesan Office of Education Services.

4. Immediate preparation for the sacraments involves religious education programs, Catholic school programs and those who home school joining together for a minimum of six (6) hours, and a maximum of twelve (12) hours for each sacrament. Sacramental catechesis takes place during parental meetings and/or parent/family rituals, workshops, and/or retreat time.

5. Since full initiation is the norm for all Catholics, persons with special needs (families with unique needs, including physical, emotional and mental disabilities but not limited to these circumstances) are to be included within all formation, training and participation of sacraments.

6. Parents and other role models are encouraged to act as witnesses by their regular participation in church life within the parish.

7. The proper context for the celebration of the sacraments is the parish community. A privileged time and place for the sacraments, namely confirmation and first Eucharist, is the Sunday assembly.

A complete copy of the
Sacramental Guidelines of the Diocese of St. Augustine is
on the diocesan Website www.dosall.com or
at your parish.