

Saint Isaac Jogues Church

Confirmation Preparation Program Policies

General Information

1. Preparation for the reception of the sacrament includes regular attendance at Faith Formation (Religious Education) classes. Classes are scheduled so that Candidates are still able to meet their regular Sunday Mass obligation.
2. Candidates must be members of the Catholic Church and entering at least 10th grade in the fall of 2011. Candidates must have participated in Faith Formation (at St. Isaac Jogues or elsewhere) or attend a Catholic School for 2 years before receiving the sacrament. That is:
 - a. A year prior to the immediate preparation (8th grade)
 - b. The year of immediate preparation (9th grade)
3. Candidates must be registered parishioners of St. Isaac Jogues Parish one year prior (grade 9) to enrolling for the sacrament of Confirmation. If a young person has not been a registered parishioner for at least one year prior to enrollment they will need to complete a year of high school faith formation or Catholic high school prior to enrolling. Exceptions to this rule are only to be made at the pastor's discretion. *(If a family has moved residence into the parish short of one year prior to enrollment their enrollment will be considered pending the young person meets all other requirements to enroll for the sacrament.)*
4. Parents and Sponsors are expected to attend appropriate seminars and assist in the preparation of the Candidate for reception of the sacrament of Confirmation.
5. Candidates are expected to attend all of the Confirmation classes. If they are not able to attend a class it is important that a Candidate (parent if Candidate is unable to) call and let the office know the reason for the absence. It is also important so that the Catechist can prepare the make-up work for the Candidate to complete. *If a Candidate misses a class, it is essential that they complete the assigned make-up work to be sure that the Candidate remains eligible for the Sacrament.*
6. **CANDIDATES ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND MASS WEEKLY.**
7. Each Candidate will sign a covenant stating their willingness and intent to be an active participant in the St. Isaac Jogues Community through their attendance at Mass, their service commitments, their youth ministry involvement and their formal instruction that includes attending classes, retreat, and sponsor gatherings during the Confirmation process as well as the years following Confirmation.

Mass of Enrollment/Day of Awakening/Community Event

******Confirmation Covenant will be turned in at this time.***

The Mass of Enrollment, also called the Mass of Candidacy, will take place on Saturday, May 7, 2011 at the 4:30 p.m. Mass (at Immaculate Heart of Mary). Those enrolled in the preparation program declare their intention to be Candidates for Confirmation. They agree to take part in the catechetical sessions and other required activities that are a part of the program. During Mass the parents and Sponsor will be invited to stand with the Candidate as the community agrees to accept and pray for them. The Candidates will present their Confirmation Covenants to the celebrant expressing their commitment to participation in the preparation program.

During the Day prior to the Mass of Enrollment the candidates will take place in a **Day of Awakening.** This day will begin at 3:00 p.m. and end with the Mass of Enrollment at 4:30 p.m. The guest presenter this year for the Day of Awakening is National Catholic speaker, **Fr. Leo Patalinghug.** Fr. Leo has presented at churches throughout the United States as well as several Catholic Youth Conferences.

There will be a **Community Event** featuring Renee Fr. Leo called, *Grace Before Meals* from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the church. All Confirmation Candidates and their families are asked to attend this event.

Mass & Stewardship Participation Cards

During the preparation process, Candidates will be asked to attend mass weekly. It is important to participate in the liturgical life of the church, after all, that is what one confirms in the sacrament, to be fully active in the life, worship and mission of the catholic faith. The candidates will be given 5 Mass/Stewardship cards at the beginning of the preparation process that are to be filled out by the candidate and placed in the offertory collection at any mass throughout the preparation process. These cards will ask the Candidates to reflect on how they have given of their time, talent and treasure to God and the church that week. These cards are intended to help the Candidates understand the responsibilities they will have as a fully initiated member of the church.

Choosing a Sponsor and Sponsor Certification Form

******Sponsor Certification forms are due by: October 2, 2011***

Each Candidate must have an individual Sponsor. The Sponsor may be one of the Baptismal godparents, again, showing the unity between the two sacraments, or the Candidate may choose a new person to share this part of his/her faith journey with them. The Sponsor should be a person with whom the student can identify in terms of Christian living and who is actually able to support and encourage the young person in their faith life. A parent is not able to be the Sponsor for his/her own child. Additional qualifications for the Sponsor are:

1. They must be a practicing member of the Catholic Church who has received the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

2. They must be active in the Church and its mission.
3. They must be at least 16 years old. If a prospective Sponsor is under the age of 18 they must obtain special permission from the Pastor. Please contact the Youth Ministry Office if this is the case.
4. They are able to assist in the Candidate's preparation for the sacrament by talking to, praying for and with the candidate, and meeting with the candidate on a regular basis.
5. They are to assist the Candidate in fulfilling their Baptismal promises.
6. They need to be available to present the Candidate to the Bishop at the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
7. They need to be available to the candidate after receiving the Sacrament to continue to support them as they grow into adult faith.

The Sponsor Certification Form is for the Sponsor to fill out and return to the Youth Ministry Office.

Confirmation Outreach Projects and Youth Ministry Requirements

******Outreach Projects and Youth Ministry Involvement Log and Reflection Form are due October 9, 2011.***

St. Francis of Assisi tells us to, "Preach the Gospel at all times, if necessary, use words." As young people preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation, we need to embrace the Gospel message and try to imitate the life of Christ. To help prepare for the sacrament, the Candidates are required to complete three outreach projects of their choice. These projects will focus on three areas:

1. A Parish Outreach Project

This project should focus on being an active member of a parish community. Some examples of parish outreach projects are being a Catechist assistant for Faith Formation, being a Liturgical Minister during mass, (i.e. lector, usher/ greeter, music ministry) or other parish-sponsored outreach such as helping stock the food pantry or volunteering in the parish office.

2. A Community Outreach Project

This project should focus on helping the local community. Some examples of a community project are making casseroles for Beans and Bread or Our Daily Bread, serving food at a soup kitchen, volunteering at a nursing home, raking leaves for a community park or elderly neighbor, coaching for Parks and Rec, volunteering at the Humane Society, working with Literacy programs, roadside clean-ups, etc.

3. A Family outreach project

This project should focus on the family as a Christian unit. The purpose of this project is to have several family members working together to help build up the Body of Christ.

No project should be something that is expected of you as a family member. Cleaning your room, helping another family member with chores, or visiting a relative (unless it is under extraordinary circumstance) would not be appropriate for any project.

There are no “number of hours” required for any of these projects. Some may take only an hour to complete but WE ASK THAT ONE PROJECT BE A LONG-TERM PROCESS. Each Candidate should view Christian outreach as an important part of our Faith. All outreach projects must be approved by the Coordinator of Youth Ministry. Please use the Outreach Projects and Youth Ministry Involvement Log to document your projects.

Upon completion of all three projects Candidates are required to complete the Outreach Project Reflection Form. These projects allow the Candidates to experience hands on formation as they prepare for active roles of Christian Outreach in the Church and community. That is, the hours of service are not as important as the period of reflection that the Candidate makes to help live the Gospel message of Outreach.

Jesus loved helping others. So that you will enjoy yourself, also choose something that you enjoy doing. Outreach work is something you do not get paid money to do. Creativity is the key and, in helping God’s people, the sky is the limit! Some of the Outreach projects will be offered through the Youth Ministry or Parish Office. Please read the bulletin for upcoming opportunities and events.

Youth Ministry Requirement: Candidates are preparing to accept the responsibility of sharing their faith with their peers as confirmed members of our Catholic faith. During this time of preparation, they are required to experience spiritual growth with their peers through two youth ministry activities. Some examples of youth ministry activities are weekly Youth Drop-In Nights (Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. in the Cronin Center), Amusement Park trips, Coffee Houses, Lock-Ins, etc. Please refer to the parish bulletin for upcoming youth ministry activities. **Attending Mass and the Confirmation Retreat do not fulfill the youth ministry participation requirement.**

Choosing a Confirmation Name

******Confirmation Name Reports are due by: October 16, 2011***

Each Candidate is expected to select a Confirmation name. In order to manifest the close relationship of Confirmation to Baptism, the selection of the Baptismal name is encouraged. The other alternative is to select the name of a Saint who may have special significance in the Candidate’s life. Each Candidate is required to do a report on the name that they will be using for Confirmation. This report gives the Candidates an opportunity to reflect on why their Baptismal Name was chosen by their parents or, if choosing a different Confirmation name, they reflect on the Saint that they have chosen to honor by taking their name.

Confirmation Retreat

*****Retreat Permission slip due by: November 6, 2011.**

Candidates are required to attend a weekend retreat that is specifically formatted for the Sacrament of Confirmation. This retreat will be held at the Msgr. O'Dwyer Retreat House in Sparks, Maryland from **Friday, December 9 to Sunday, December 11, 2011, from 7:00 pm Friday to noon on Sunday**. Parents are responsible to bring their child to the retreat and are encouraged to join us for the closing Mass (which counts for the Sunday obligation.)

During the retreat the Candidates will write a letter to the Bishop administering the Sacrament of Confirmation. This letter may reflect their experience of the Confirmation program, relationship with his/her Sponsor, outreach projects and youth ministry activities, and answer specific questions the Bishop asks them to reflect on. They will also request the reception of the sacrament from the Bishop who will read the letters and may choose to read parts of them at the Confirmation Liturgy in January or, in some circumstances, contact the Candidate for further correspondence.

What to bring:

- * Sleeping bag or sheets and a single blanket for a single bed
- * Pillow
- * Comfortable cloths (no t-shirts with non-Christian values, tank top/spaghetti straps, bare mid-drifts please)
- * Toiletries – Toothbrush, paste, soap, shampoo, deodorant, etc.
- * Towel and wash cloth
- * Bible and Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth (if you have one)
- * Guitar, sports equipment, a good spirit!
- * You may want to bring some change for the soda and snack machines.

What NOT to bring:

- * Individual Snacks (Retreat House policy will not allow them in the dorms)
- * Drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, offensive materials, etc.
- * TVs, radios, pagers, i-pods, portable DVD players, video games, etc.
- * **CELL PHONES (this is a retreat and it is important not to bring items that will distract the sanctity and spirit of the retreat.)**

We are aware that other school and extra curricular activities may be scheduled for the same dates as the retreat. If there is a conflict or special needs that need to be taken into consideration, we ask that you contact the Youth Ministry Office, 410-668-3686, well in advance to try and make other arrangements. The retreat is a requirement for this program and you are asked to make it a priority.

Directions to Msgr. O'Dwyer Retreat House:

Take the beltway, 695 West to 83 North. 83 North to Belfast Rd/Sparks exit. Turn Right onto Belfast Road. At the Stop sign, make a left onto York Road. The Retreat House is at the top of the Hill on the right. Phone: 410-666-2400

Candidate Interviews

Each Candidate is required to be personally interviewed by a parish staff member or Catechist following the apprenticeship portion of the program. The interview is a formal process that will last about 15 minutes. The purpose of the interview is to ensure that the Candidates are well prepared for Confirmation and that they have a true desire to celebrate the sacrament. Each candidate will sign up for an interview time during the retreat. **The date for the interview will be determined by the candidate at the retreat!**

Confirmation

Rehearsal Date: Wednesday, January 4, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. All Candidates and Sponsors are required to attend. If a Sponsor is unable to attend, a parent may stand in for them at this time.

Confirmation Liturgy: Sunday, January 8, 2012, at 5:30 p.m.

The big day arrives! Candidates and their Sponsors are asked to meet in the Hall no later than 60 minutes prior to the start of Mass so that we can have everyone prepared for the processional. Each young person will be participating in a liturgical ministry, which they will choose during the retreat.

Suggested attire for Confirmation:

Gentlemen should wear dress slacks, a button down shirt and tie. Many gentlemen choose to wear a sports coat or suit, but they are not required.

Ladies are asked to wear a dress or skirt and blouse that is at least knee length or a pantsuit. (Strapless dresses are not appropriate for Confirmation.)

Post-Confirmation Faith Formation, G.I.F.T. (Growing In Faith Together)

Faith development takes place throughout life, especially in the searching years of adolescence. Formal Faith Formation (religious education) is not finalized with the reception of Confirmation. On the contrary, the confirmed adolescent is now recognized as a more responsible member of the Church and community. They are expected to continue with the formal Faith Formation (religious education) process offered by the parish through the 12th grade. Formal and informal Faith Formation (religious education) are both necessary throughout all of life and certainly through adolescence. **We, as members of our Catholic community, commit ourselves to growing in our faith together throughout all stages of Life!**