

November 10, 2021

Dear Sponsor,

Congratulations! You have been chosen by a confirmation candidate for a special role. A wonderful adventure in the spiritual life awaits the two of you. As a Confirmation sponsor, you have accepted a responsibility that is an honor in our Church.

Your role is to spiritually walk with the candidate during the preparation for the sacrament. You will be assisting the candidate in being a true witness and disciple of Jesus, and representing the community when you present your candidate to the bishop. Your special role does not end at the Confirmation liturgy; you will help the candidate fulfill his or her baptismal promises after Confirmation with the help of the Holy Spirit. I ask for your assistance with the following items.

### **SPONSOR AFFILIATION FORM**

If you are not a member of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, or your candidate has not done so already, please bring the Sponsor Affiliation form to the Pastor of your parish to sign and return to us by December 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **SPONSOR & CANDIDATE ACTIVITIES/CONVERSATIONS**

To assist you in guiding the candidate, I ask that you meet individually **at least** two times during the preparation process. Enclosed is an activity sheet for your first meeting, **which should take place before January 23, 2022**. A second activity sheet will be mailed later.

### **CONFIRMATION RETREAT LETTER**

Prior to your candidate attending their retreat in January/February, we will send you another letter with a special request. At the Retreat the candidates receive letters from parents and sponsors. The letter should be about their faith, how you have seen them grow in faith, about their gifts and talents and how they can better use them to serve God. It is a positive and powerful experience for the candidates. It is also a surprise and we ask that you help us maintain this surprise. Your candidate will be participating in one of two Confirmation Retreats. Several weeks before they attend you will receive more detailed directions from us about the letter and how to get them to us so that it will remain a surprise for the candidate.

### **REHEARSAL AND THE RITE**

**Confirmation is scheduled for Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm!** We ask that you and your candidate arrive by 6:30 in order to be prepared. **We will have a rehearsal on Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm for you and your candidates.** The celebrant for Confirmation will be Bishop Conlon!

Being a mentor and a guide for a candidate should not be taken lightly. This highlights the need for you to ask the Holy Spirit to help you in your role as sponsor. Your role is not that of a teacher but rather that of a mentor, a companion on the journey. It is your experiences as a person living the Catholic faith that will enrich the candidate. As a person bearing witness to Jesus in your own life, you are providing a young Christian with something that cannot be learned from a textbook.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the sacramental preparation for Confirmation, please feel free to contact me at 630-852-3303 ext. 6 or [stephanie.snyder@ourladyofmtcarmel.org](mailto:stephanie.snyder@ourladyofmtcarmel.org).

In Christ,

**Stephanie Snyder**  
Director of Youth Ministry

# WHAT IS CONFIRMATION?



## THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION...

- welcomes us and deepens our belonging to the faith community
  - deepens our relationship to God, as Creator, Redeemer and Spirit
  - strengthens us as disciples
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- ***A Sacrament is part of the way that God loves us and calls us.*** A Sacrament is God's love expressed as free, undeserved gift (God's grace!).
    - The Gift within Confirmation is that of strengthening us for discipleship and deepening our belonging to the faith community through the Trinity.
  - ***God uses visible signs to communicate invisible love.*** To communicate God's love, God uses our senses: eyes, ears, touch, smell, and taste, and elements of our world.
    - In Confirmation, the signs we will celebrate include being anointed with oil and the laying on of hands as we remember the water of Baptism and the nourishment of Eucharist.
  - ***God calls and invites; we respond.*** An attitude of openness communicates a "yes" to God's invitation to a deeper relationship. This "yes" does not mean we know that we will always be faithful or that we are worthy of the gift. "Yes" means we are open to be strengthened by God who calls and loves us.
    - In Confirmation, we have the opportunity to say "yes" through the various responses in the prayer.
  - ***The community witnesses to and celebrates the sacraments.*** A sacrament is a powerful sign that God is alive and present in the world. It is a tangible way we can encounter God on earth – a little taste of heaven on earth! As Church, we are called to be sacrament, which is to be God's hand and healing touch in the world. At the same time, we celebrate the sacraments as our most important prayer. This community that celebrates sacraments is global, reaching to other faith communities throughout the world and joined in a common bond. The community is also local as a diocese or archdiocese, as a parish and as a community of faith in families.
    - In Confirmation, the community witnesses our celebration and provides a sponsor who represents the love of the community for us.

## TIPS AND IDEAS FOR SPONSORS

1. Participate in activities with the candidate, i.e., take him or her to a movie and talk about it over a snack afterwards, or invite him or her on an outing such as biking, roller blading, ice skating or hiking. Try activities that involve the candidate in creative expression.
2. Establish a regular time to be with the candidate as a listener, sharer and co-traveler on the faith journey. Communicate that the friendship between the two of you makes a difference in your life.
3. Talk about current events and trends and how faith is or isn't a part of them.
4. Be willing to enter into discussion with the candidate about the differing values around us and affirm the healthy, life-giving choices of the candidate. Model healthy, life-giving choices and relationships in your own life. Share stories of others, both current and of history, who have struggled with issues of personal integrity.
5. Recommend or buy spiritual readings for the candidate that link faith to daily life.
6. Share with the candidate the significant moments in your faith life. Ask open-ended questions (why, how, where, when) that encourage the candidate to explore how his or her faith is experienced in life.
7. Participate with the candidate in community service activities.
8. Explore different ways to pray with the candidate. If you need any recommendations, feel free to reach out to me. Send the candidate scripture notes every week. Meet with the candidate and talk about what kind of homily the young person would write for the upcoming Sunday.
9. Find five other adults who are going to pray for the candidate.
10. Create a prayer board for the candidate's bedroom where he or she can put up the names of people who are in need of prayer.
11. Send a card to the candidate on the anniversary of his or her baptism.
12. Reach out to the candidate with a "good luck on the exam" telephone call or a congratulatory note about a job well done. Try doing "random acts of kindness" for your candidate.
13. Learn friends' names and inquire about them regularly. Talk with him or her about the value of friends, and the struggles of relationships.
14. Take the candidate to the ritual experiences at Church or in the community, e.g. Mass, Stations of the Cross, etc.
15. Share how your faith and experiences of Church have made a difference in your life — including the doubts and struggles you may experience.
16. Pray for the candidate, and let him or her know it.
17. Ask the candidate to pray for you.

## Sponsor/Candidate Questions

- List 3 adjectives that describe who you are. What nickname best describes you?
- Candidate: What are your reasons for wanting to prepare for Confirmation at this time?
- What do you think Confirmation means? Discuss with your Parent or Sponsor about their Confirmation: What did being confirmed mean to you? Where was it? Who was there? Was there anything significant that happened that day? What were feelings you may have had during the ceremony? How were you prepared for the sacrament? Was there anything that stood out for you as memorable about your preparation or celebration? Looking back, what does it mean for you now?
- How will preparing for Confirmation deepen your relationship with God?
- Candidates and Sponsors: How does prayer fit into your life? How do you pray? When? Have you been praying more since you started this preparation time? How can you fit prayer into your life?
- Do you attend Mass regularly? Why? Why not? How can going to Mass help strengthen your faith and benefit you? How can attending Mass benefit the rest of the community?
- What has been a “God Moment” you have had in your life? What is one that has happened recently? (Times when you sense God’s presence in your life through other people, circumstances in your life, music you hear, words you read, etc...).
- Look back to the prayer we started out with. Are you truly being who you are meant to be? What area in the prayer would you like to work on more in the coming weeks? Pick one and share.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

## **SPONSOR & CANDIDATE ACTIVITY #1**

Please complete this Sponsor & Candidate Activity by January 23, 2022.

Plan to spend 90 minutes with the candidate for this activity. Try to pick a site where the two of you will be free from continuous distractions and the business of everyday life. Local restaurants and parks tend to be good settings for one-on-one discussions. Sharing a meal together is a good way to begin or conclude.

### **HERE ARE SOME TOPICS TO DISCUSS DURING YOUR SESSION:**

- \_ Read, "John Baptizes Jesus", from the Gospel of Matthew 3:13-17. Talk with your candidate about how God has been a part of your life, about the actions and values of Jesus which draw you to him. Talk also about whom the Spirit is to you and how you feel the Spirit is working in your life right now.
- \_ If you were at the candidate's baptism, share some memories of that experience. Also share memories of your own Confirmation.
- \_ Read "The Walk to Emmaus" from the Gospel of Luke 24:13-32. Discuss how Jesus is present in our daily lives, and how when we encounter Jesus we are changed. Talk about ways to encounter Jesus today.
- \_ Discuss why the candidate chose you to walk along side of him or her for this journey of Confirmation preparation.
- \_ Ask the candidate how the preparation is going. Ask him or her about the topics being discussed in the classes.
- \_ End the activity with a short prayer.

Feel free to add to this list of suggestions. Try to make the activity more of a casual discussion than a formal question and answer session.

If any issues come up that you think the parish staff should know about or you want ideas for resources you can use, feel free to call Stephanie Snyder, Director of Youth Ministry, at 630-852-3303 ext. 6 or [stephanie.snyder@ourladyofmtcarmel.org](mailto:stephanie.snyder@ourladyofmtcarmel.org). We are ready and willing to guide the candidates, sponsors, and families through this preparation process.

## **JOHN BAPTIZES JESUS**

(Matthew 3:13-17)

Jesus left Galilee and went to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John kept objecting and said, "I ought to be baptized by you. Why have you come to me?"

Jesus answered, "For now this is how it should be, because we must do all that God wants us to do." Then John agreed.

So Jesus was baptized. And as soon as he came out of the water, the sky opened, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down on him like a dove. Then a voice from heaven said, "This is my own dear Son, and I am pleased with him."

## **THE WALK TO EMMAUS**

(Luke 24:13-32)

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him. Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"