

*Church of the Incarnation*  
*Confirmation Expectations for Candidates*  
*for Sacrament of Confirmation*  
*March 18, 2023*

## Expectations for Confirmation Students

This year, we have four expectations for our students. Below are the details of the expectations:

1. 8<sup>th</sup> Graders are not REQUIRED to attend a retreat. However, students are required to attend some form of faith forming spiritual experience and complete a reflection on that experience. This faith forming spiritual experience must be held outside of the normal school and PREP hours. Here are some examples of opportunities coming up:
  - † XLT Tour: October 15 at St. Mary's in Springboro
  - † Dayton Area Junior High Retreat: November 4 and 5
  - † All EDGE events (look for information from Danny Dunn)
  - † Dayton area reconciliation service (Advent and Lent)
  
2. 3 Parent Sessions with reflections
  - † After each session, you will write a paragraph that summarizes your conversation with your parent. Please consider the following questions
    - i. How did this conversation go? Was it easy or difficult?
    - ii. What is something(s) you learned about your parent(s)?
    - iii. How does this conversation change your relationship with your parent(s)?
  
3. 3 Sponsor Sessions with reflections
  - † After each session, you will write a paragraph that summarizes your conversation with your sponsor. Please consider the following questions
    - i. How did this conversation go? Was it easy or difficult?
    - ii. What is something(s) you learned about your sponsor?
    - iii. How does this conversation change your relationship with your sponsor?
  
4. 3 Service Sessions with reflections

Jesus told us "As you did it to one of the least of my brothers, you did it to me". This is the same Jesus who tells us "This is my Body, this is my Blood" and commissions us through Eucharist to live and to share the good news—the gospel. As Catholics we are called to serve, not to do "projects" or to "count hours" but to truly change ourselves and the world. Pope Francis said, "Become active yourselves, also. When many do that together, then there will be improvements in this world and people will sense the Spirit of God is working through you. And maybe then you will be like torches that make the path brighter for these people." Go and Do!

For service related to your preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation we ask that you participate in at least three occasions of service that are not less than one hour each. For eighth graders one of these services should be done with your sponsor and/ or family member if your sponsor lives out of town. Seventh graders should serve with a parent and/or family for one service. And YES you may do more than three!

Once you complete your service we ask you to reflect and to answer several questions about your experience, which will be available on Google Forms, and submit it to your teacher by the due dates. If you are doing a long term service, such as serving as an aide in special needs or a member of the Food For All team, you can choose one of the due dates for your report. Reports are due:

Service #1: Not later than November 1—this can include service you performed over the summer like a mission trip or VBS

Service #2: Not later than January 9

Service #3: Not later than March 1

Reflection Questions for your reports:

1. Briefly describe your service, what you did, who you served, and who you served with?
2. What impact did your service have on the community? What community did you serve—parish, an individual, your neighborhood, or a wider community?
3. What did you learn about yourself through this experience? What God-given gifts and talents did you use in serving?
4. Relate your service to scripture. Be sure to include the citation from the Old or New Testament.
5. Which principle of Catholic Social Teaching best describes your service? Try to select a different principle to describe each of your occasions of service. Most of the time more than one will apply so selecting a different one should not be difficult.

We selected these principles of Catholic Social Teaching to help you connect your service to the teachings of the Church:

- Life and Dignity of the Human Person—each person is created in the image of God. Service related to love of neighbor—working with families, children, elderly
- Option for the Poor and Vulnerable—in the Gospel Jesus demonstrates respect, dignity, and assistance to the poor and vulnerable. Service related to helping with hunger, homelessness, sharing with our neighbors
- Care for God's Creation—we are called to be stewards of all God's creation, to protect it for future generations and to share it with those present today. Environmental and service relating to hunger and to animals is included here.
- Call to Family, Community, and Participation—God created us as social beings to be in communion with one another. Service that supports family and community is reflected here.

## **Parent Session 1**

Ask your parents to tell you the story of your baptism. Ask them to include the following:

- Why did you choose to have me baptized?
- What did you wear? Why?
- What did I wear? Why?
- Who did you choose to be my Godparents and why did you choose them?
- What Holiness did you see in them that made them a good choice?
- If you could choose Godparents for me today, who would you choose and why? Would it be the same people?

## **Parent Session 2**

For this session, both you and your parents should answer the following questions:

- What qualities do you have which people like in you?
- What do people thank you for?
- Even simple, everyday actions can make a huge difference in someone's day. What do you do, big or small, to make others feel good?
- What talents has God blessed you with that can help build up His Kingdom? What things can you do to make the world a better place?
- Think about a time when you felt that people were seeing Jesus through your actions. How did you feel? What did you enjoy? Was any part difficult?
- Talk about some of the people who have inspired you by the generous giving of their time and talents to the Church. What have you learned from them about who you would like to be? How are they great servants?

## **Parent Session 3**

For this session, both you and your parents should answer the following questions:

- Who is your best friend? Why?
- What do you look for in a friendship?
- How do you get to be good friends with someone?
- What makes someone a good friend and not just an acquaintance?
- Any relationship involves some form of communication, whether it is talking together, texting someone or writing a letter. The more time you spend on a relationship, the more the relationship grows. If you could text God, what would you text Him?
- We can't text God, but we can talk with Him! This is what prayer is: spending time with God in order to grow closer to Him. Jesus often prayed spontaneously and aloud. Would you be willing to try this now with each other? Here is a format to follow: Praise God, Ask God, Thank God (PAT). Start by quieting yourselves, maybe hold hands if you are comfortable doing that, and invite God to be part of your conversation. Following the PAT formula, your prayer may look something like this: "God, You and all good and all loving. Your love surrounds us and fills us with the courage to ask You to hear our prayer about what is on our hearts (then say what that is). We thank You for hearing our prayers and for all the gifts You have blessed us with. Amen." It doesn't have to be complicated or long! But praying together in this way can be a very powerful experience, especially if you pray together on a regular basis.

## **Sponsor Session 1: Getting Acquainted**

Getting to know one another involves sharing ideas, experiences, and feelings. This session is designed to help the sponsor and candidate become better acquainted with each other and the rest of the community preparing for Confirmation this year.

### **Step One: Listen to this song**

Build Your Kingdom Here

by Rend Collective

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbdJXKqVgtg>

### **Step Two: Choose a track and have a conversation**

**Getting Acquainted Track One:** *Use this track of questions if you and your sponsor/candidate need time to get better acquainted.*

Make sure you both answer the questions!

1. Tell me about your family (because I may not know much about them) ...how many members, who are they, where you fit into the lineup. What is your favorite thing to do with your family?
2. What is the way that you spend the bulk of your time on a daily basis? a. Do you enjoy spending time this way? Why or why not? b. What is your favorite way to spend your time?
3. What is one thing that you feel you do really, really well?
4. What is the kindest thing anyone has ever done for you?
5. As we spend this year together, what is one thing about me that you think would be good to know?
6. Tell me why you chose me as your sponsor/why you said yes to being my sponsor
7. What do you think you can learn from your sponsor/candidate this year?
8. Are you looking forward to being Confirmed? Why? (or Are you looking forward to me being Confirmed? Why?) Why is being Confirmed in your Catholic faith important to you?
9. How do you think being Confirmed might change you/me?
10. Tell me about your relationship with Jesus Christ. What difference does it make in your life?
11. Do you ever pray to the Holy Spirit? a. Have you had a prayer answered lately? What was it? b. What does it mean to you to have a relationship with the Holy Spirit?
12. What sort of life plan do you think God has in mind for you? a. How do you imagine yourself participating in the Church in 10 years? 20 years? b. What about you does God find great delight in?

13. Go back and look at the lyrics to “Build Your Kingdom Here”. The writers of this song are very passionate about their need for God in their lives. How does your relationship with God fit into the things you care about? How do you need God’s power in your life?

14. Look at the quote below. What do you think about it? How does it apply to your life?

**Getting Acquainted Track Two:** *Use this track of questions if you and your sponsor are already close and are ready to dive into a deeper relationship.*

Be sure that both of you answer these questions!

1. What are you looking forward to about this Confirmation preparation process?

2. Tell me about your own Confirmation experience/tell me about what you anticipate receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation will be like for you.

3. What sort of challenges do you think the year ahead will bring as we prepare together for Confirmation? What can we learn from each other?

4. What goals do you have for your life at this point?

5. What if your one big goal in life, the one thing God is calling you to do, is to be with God forever. How would this change your outlook on any other goals you have in life?

6. How would you describe your relationship with Jesus? Does knowing Jesus make a difference in your life? How does it make you sensitive to the needs of others?

7. In Acts 2: 1-3, we read “When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim”. What would it mean to you to have a tongue of fire descend upon you? Would it change you? In what way?

8. Do you ever pray to the Holy Spirit? a. Have you had a prayer answered lately? What was it? b. What does it mean to you to have a relationship with the Holy Spirit? c. If you don’t have a relationship with the Holy Spirit, how do you form one?

9. In Confirmation we receive the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us and helps us to be the best we can be. What inside you needs to be strengthened? What is the best in you that the Holy Spirit will help you share with the world?

10. Jesus tells us in Matthew 24:35 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” If the physical world will all pass away, what do you have left in your life that is important to you? How do you view your relationship with God in the middle of that?

11. What sort of plan do you think God has in mind for you? How best will you serve the Lord? What about you do you think God finds delight in?

12. Go back and look at the lyrics to “Build Your Kingdom Here”. The writers of this song are very passionate about their need for God in their lives. How does your relationship with God fit into the things you care about? How do you need God’s power in your life?

### **Step Three: Setting Up Your Next Meeting Together**

Think about what your goals for meeting together should be. Remember: “What you put in is what you get out” of this program, so think BIG! God is infinite love and your relationship with God has infinite room for growth. How can you make the best of this time with your sponsor/candidate? Make three goals for the Confirmation year. (These can include goals to be open, goals of when to meet, goals of service experiences, etc.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### **Step Four: Closing Prayer**

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy. Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit to defend all that is holy. Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I may always be holy. We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen

## **Sponsor Session 2: Catholic Identity**

In this session, your focus should be on what it means to be a Catholic Christian. As confirmed Catholics, we are challenged to be witnesses to our faith at home, at school, at work, and in the community where we live.

### **Step One: Opening Prayer**

Lord God, As we begin this new session, teach us to be Your hands and feet where we are As we spend time together, teach us to love as You love us As we journey toward the Sacrament of Confirmation, teach us to pray for those in need So that You are honored and glorified Amen

### **Step Two: Communities we belong to**

It is important to live the sort of life that brings Christ into the world, through both our words and our actions. But that can be hard to do alone. That is why it is so important to belong to the Church that Jesus established here on earth. Let’s explore this by answering these questions:

1. What sort of groups do you belong to?
2. Do they have special rules that you have to keep?
3. Do you have a uniform to wear? What does it look like? What does it symbolize? Can anyone wear it?
4. Why do you want to belong to your group? What sets the group apart and makes it special?
5. What would you think if someone joins your group/team, wears the uniform but never participates? What would you say to them?

### Step Three: Think about it/Talk about it

Now think about this: When you were baptized, you became part of the group known as the Catholic Church. The Church was instituted by Jesus when he sent his Holy Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost. It is the “keeper of the faith” and it shows us how to live the way Jesus wants us to live. The sacrament of Confirmation will complete your initiation into the Catholic Church.

Talk about this: How do I show others that Jesus is a part of my life? How do I show that I belong to the Catholic Church?

As a member of the Church, you are expected to keep certain rules and accept certain teachings. You are not supposed to pick and choose on your own what you want to hold true and what you want to avoid. This is so that, as members of the same Church, we are all united in our beliefs and actions. We know how to live because the Church shows us how. And if we are all living the way Jesus, through the Church calls us to live, then we can be His hands and feet in this world! Let’s look at the Precepts of the Church and think about why they are important in keeping us united as a Church.

The Precepts of the Catholic Church are a description of the absolute minimum we need to do in order to be considered members of the Church. We may see these precepts as being harsh, but in reality, any group we belong to will have rules for its members. Remember that the Church uses these precepts to remind us that Christian life requires a commitment to prayer and active participation in the liturgy and sacraments. If we fall below this bare-minimum level, we can't rightly consider ourselves to be in full communion with the Catholic Church.

- † You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor.
- † You shall confess your sins at least once a year.
- † You shall receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season.
- † You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.
- † You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church.

(These quotations are from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, in its section about the Precepts of the Catholic Church (#2041-3))

Always remember: The Precepts of the Catholic Church are minimum levels of participation in the life of the Church. Out of love for Christ and a desire to advance in the spiritual life, you will normally try to do far more than they require.

Talk About This...

- Do you find being Catholic difficult or easy? Why?
- What Church teachings do you find hard to follow? Why?
- Do you think having precepts to follow makes your life better? How?
- Discuss together how your relationship with Christ has grown from early childhood, through grade school, to the present. What image do you have of Christ? How has it changed over the years as you have grown?
- Sponsors: how has being Confirmed helped you grow?
- Share some experiences you have had when you struggled to live our Catholic Christian values in an environment that is often un-Christian, or even hostile to Christians. If you haven’t had any, based on what you know about the world, what can you expect to encounter as you grow up?

- In what ways does being a Catholic Christian make a difference in your life?
- What is your favorite thing about being a Catholic? Why is it your favorite? Being a Catholic Christian means you will accept the daily challenge and responsibility of choosing to follow God. This challenge is tough for everyone, at all ages. We all try – sometimes we succeed and sometimes we fail. The important thing is to keep trying – it is what Jesus asks us to do!

#### **Step Four: Closing Prayer:**

As you wrap up this session together, take some time to place yourselves in God's presence. Once you are quiet, think about what you have discussed and share with God what makes you happy about being a member of His Church. When you are ready, conclude by praying this prayer together:

Lord, teach me to be generous. Teach me to serve You as You deserve; to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, save that of knowing that I do Your will. -St. Ignatius of Loyola

### **Sponsor Session 3: Moral Growth**

The focus of this session is a challenging one. As Americans, we are proud of our freedoms, and it might sometimes appear that the Catholic Church is trying to take away our freedom by telling us what to do. It is important to remember, though, that doing what is morally right allows us a greater freedom – the freedom that comes from being a child of God. During this session, take time to consider situations you may encounter in your life and talk about what it means to act in a Christ-like way. For more info about the Catholic Church's view on freedom and morality see the Catechism of the Catholic Church. ([http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM))

#### **Step One: Opening Prayer**

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen

#### **Step Two: Listen and discuss**

Come As You Are  
By Crowder

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2zhf2mqEMI>

This song is written from the perspective of God singing to us. Talk with your sponsor about a line or two from the song and what it means for God to say these things to us.

#### **Step Three: Read and discuss**

*"I do not understand what I do; for I don't do what I would like to do, but instead do what I hate. I don't do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do. My inner being delights in the law of God. But I see a different law at work in my body – a law that fights against the law which my mind approves of. It makes me a prisoner to the law of sin, which is at work in my body." Romans 7:15*

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul talks about a very human struggle: to choose good over evil. Do you find yourself dealing with this struggle too? Maybe it doesn't seem that black and white to you on a regular basis- sometimes it is just a matter of following the easier path, even if it isn't a good choice.

Think of a time when you felt pulled in two different directions. Share what the situation was and how you decided to resolve it. Talk about what helped you decide what to do in that situation: did you ask anyone for advice? Did you spend time in prayer? Did you talk to your friends about it? Looking back at the situation now, do you feel like you made the best choice you could make? Would you do anything differently?

Now look at the lyrics from "Come As You Are". What do those words mean in light of the human struggle to choose good over evil? What is the good news to be found in your relationship with Jesus Christ? Remember, Jesus will always forgive us if we are truly sorry. But He is calling us to be the best version of ourselves. So even though we come as we are, we should go forth better than we were, growing ever closer to Christ.

#### **Step Four: Talk about how you talk**

One of the biggest struggles we face regularly is choosing the right words to say. Sometimes, it isn't so much our actions as it is our words that hurt others – either the words that we say or the words that we don't say.

Talk about the following questions:

- Are you proud of the way you talk?
- How can using "bad" words influence your relationship with God?
- Are your personal speech habits a good example for others? Give an example.
- Do the words that come out of your mouth tend to be words that build another person up, or tear the person down?
- Are the words that you say different if you are talking about a person who is not with you?
- Have you been hurt by words that others have used? In what way?
- What do you think about gossip? Is it an easy sin to commit? Why?
- Share with each other your reaction to the questions above and your feelings about being hurt.
- How might you use words in a way that helps build up the kingdom of God rather than tear it down?
- What words does Jesus say that give you hope or comfort? Note: Growing morally never ends; it is a lifetime struggle. We are all constantly growing and being challenged to lead good lives. Growing morally means we are striving to improve. In your life every day you choose between right and wrong. But here 's the good news: God has told us what is right and wrong; we don't have to figure it out by ourselves. If we strive for what is morally right, we will grow closer to God .

## Step Five: Talk About Making Choices

Answer the following questions with: What would you do? Why? Who could you hurt? How?

1. You knew there was going to be a major test today, but you just couldn't find the time to study last night. You're sitting now sweating over a test problem that you can't solve. You have the opportunity to cheat without any chance of getting caught. What happens next?

2. Your team has an away game on Sunday morning. You have things you want to do on Saturday, and you know you will have to be ready to leave for the game by 8:30 on Sunday. You will not get back until late that afternoon. What do you do about going to Mass?

3. You are sitting in the cafeteria in your usual spot with your friends. You notice an unpopular person walking around with a tray, looking for a place to sit. No one else appears to notice. There is an empty place at your table. What do you do?

4. You and a group of friends are at The Greene. Together, you decide to go see a movie there. You know that one of your friends can't afford the cost of a movie ticket and that this is going to be awkward for them. What would you do?

5. You receive a text from one of your friends. In the text are some cruel (but kind of funny) remarks about another classmate. What do you do about the text?

6. You have your friends over to your house. You are down in the basement, with the door shut, talking and having fun. One of your friends goes to the refrigerator in the basement for a can of pop and finds the beer that your dad keeps there. Your friend announces that there is beer available and everyone runs to the fridge. What do you do?

In any of these situations, you might have answered the way you thought you were supposed to answer, the answers that you have learned in Religion class. It is possible that, in real life, you may act in a very different way – and it is okay to acknowledge this (look back at what St. Paul says to the Romans - he struggled too!). Part of growing in your faith is learning that life is full of difficult choices, and that making the right choice can be difficult too. Discuss with your sponsor the following questions:

- Is there something you have done that wasn't right that you maybe now regret? What can you do about it now?
- We need to remember that every time we make a choice that is sinful, we are not only hurting our relationship with God, but we are also hurting our relationship with our family and our faith community. How can our own sins hurt our relationship with others?

God knows that it can be hard to make the right choice. That is why He has given us guidelines (like the teachings of Jesus and the 10 Commandments) to follow, as well as parents, teachers and Church leaders to show us how to make good choices. It is a skill that we all need to learn and to work on every day. It really is our job to ask questions and learn - we call this forming our conscience – so that we can become a morally responsible Catholic Christian. And here is the best part: even when we make the wrong choice – even when we choose to sin – God always offers us forgiveness.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is there for us to experience that forgiveness. True, we have to be sorry for our sins and we have to take responsibility for our actions. But this is part of growing up. Eventually, you may find that it is easier to do the right thing. This may be because it is less painful in the long run. But if you are growing in your relationship with God and spending time in prayer with Him, you will also find that it is easier to recognize and then choose the actions that are God-centered –even when it seems like you are the only one doing so.

Consider going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation with your sponsor or parents.