

**A GUIDEBOOK FOR CONFIRMATION
CANDIDATES, PARENTS AND SPONSORS**

**Church of St. Theresa
63 Winter Street
North Reading, MA 01864**



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome! We are looking forward to sharing with you this journey of faith as you prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. As you will see, Confirmation Preparation involves learning, sharing, serving, fellowship, spiritual growth and fun! You will be given the opportunity to learn more about your Catholic faith and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Confirmation is the Sacrament in which one is enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church. It strengthens us and obliges us to be witnesses to Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith. It is the Sacrament in which one enters into full membership in the Catholic Church.

Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which strengthens the work of the Holy Spirit to root us more deeply as children of God, incorporates us more firmly in Christ, reinforces our bond with the Church, associates us more closely with her mission, and helps us to bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a spiritual mark or indelible character on the Christian soul; for this reason one can receive this sacrament only once.

A Christian does not live as a child of God through his or her own efforts alone, but through the grace of God. We see this in a practical way when we look back on our own lives and the lives of others, even the lives of saints. Therefore, it is our duty to seek the grace that God offers us in order to live our lives as Christians in the way that God intends.

SECTION A: DEFINITION

The sacrament of Confirmation continues the life of grace begun in Baptism and strengthens us to be Christ's witnesses. In the sacrament of Confirmation we experience, affirm, and receive in a deeper way the life of the Holy Spirit that we first received in Baptism. We are sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth whom Jesus promised to send and who would guide us always.

When we are confirmed, the Holy Spirit strengthens us with seven special gifts: Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgment (Counsel), Courage (Fortitude), Knowledge, Reverence (Piety), and Wonder and Awe (Fear of the Lord). The gifts of the Holy Spirit help us to live as faithful followers and true witnesses of Jesus Christ, strengthening our minds and our wills to do what Christ asks of us.

Like Baptism, Confirmation marks us with an indelible character. And, like Baptism, Confirmation is a special moment in our Catholic faith that we only celebrate once. Confirmation cannot be repeated. One Faith, One Lord.

We look forward to working with you to prepare for the coming of the Holy Spirit into your life through the sacrament of Confirmation. We promise to pray with you for the gift of a deeper commitment to your faith and your active witness to your belief in Jesus. Our Church was established by Jesus Christ, and built by many people who were witnesses to their faith through knowledge and action. You are called to continue in their footsteps.

SECTION B: CANDIDATE ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

At St. Theresa Parish we have chosen the following means to assess a candidate's readiness to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation.

1. **Candidate:**

- Must freely choose to be confirmed and make their desire known.
- Must have a spirit of cooperation, a prayerful attitude, and a willingness to learn how they can live daily the Gospel Jesus preached.
- Must have adequate knowledge of the Catholic faith and have participated in required learning sessions. These are demonstrated through the following: active participation in class, attendance at weekly Sunday Mass, and successful completion of all assignments.

2. **Attendance is mandatory** at the following events:

- Learning Sessions
 - Irregular attendance and/or poor achievement and lack of cooperation may result in the delay of the sacrament.
- Sponsor/Candidate Commissioning
- Candidate Retreat
- An interview with a member of the pastoral staff or other designated parish leader, if applicable
 - Students will be contacted individually if an interview is deemed necessary.

3. **Acts of service** will help the candidate experience first-hand the vocation that is theirs as a follower of Jesus. The kinds of service activities they experience in preparing for Confirmation may set the direction for the particular gift of service they will make in the Church as a confirmed member. Confirmation-Be Sealed.

4. **Letter to Bishop Mark.**

In January of Grade 10, students will be asked to write a letter to Bishop Mark as a reflection of their experiences as Confirmation Candidates and their readiness for Confirmation. More direction on the letter will be given during lessons in January. The letters will be submitted on Google Classroom.

5. **Sacrament of Reconciliation**

During the month before Confirmation in Grade 10, students will be asked to sign up for a time to come to church and go to confession to prepare for their Confirmation.

APOSTOLIC SERVICE HOURS

Candidates are expected to complete 5 hours of service hours during each of their two years of confirmation classes. If a single service is not 5 hours per year, then similar experiences may be coupled to total 5 hours per year. A defined year will run from May to May. **Additionally and separately, every candidate will be ask to do at least one service activity within our parish over the course of the two year program.** These activities will be posted on the Confirmation website as they become available and sign up should be done through the indicated activity coordinator.

Written Reflections: After completing their hours of service, candidates are required to reflect on a take away from their service experience in a paragraph. How will their service experience impact their choices after they are confirmed and what types of service would they feel they would continue when there was not service requirement built into their education? Reflections should be a minimum of 200 words and submitted - name written on the top - to Ms. Bowers on Google Classroom using the GC codes below.

How do we find service opportunities:

Service opportunities will be updated on the Confirmation Website as they become available. Please respond to Ms. Bowers or otherwise indicated event coordinator in order to reserve your spot to volunteer.

IDEAS FOR SERVICE:

SERVICE TO THE PARISH: Examples of parish service include for example working with the summer SUMP program, working at the Parish Picnic or helping with the Appreciation Dinner, or helping with the May Procession, hospitality service.

SERVICE TO COMMUNITY: This will include all Public and government facilities such as parks, community recreation centers, animal shelters, libraries, etc. This is work that may or may not have direct contact with those that it benefits, and may include physical labor to build or repair facilities or land.

SERVICE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: In issues of Social Justice, our faith calls us to measure the world around us, not by what it produces, but by how it touches human life and whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person. This category involves direct contact with individuals that the service goes to. The service is intended to protect and improve that Human Dignity of those that are typically economically or physically challenged. For example, participation in Habitat for Humanity, working at Feed My People, helping with the clothing drives, having a mini-food drive in your neighborhood and delivering the donations to the North Reading food pantry, serving Thanksgiving dinner to people who are homeless, helping out at a soup kitchen, organizing a recycling effort or another means to express your commitment to cleaning up the environment, etc...

Google Classroom Codes

Grade 9: 650qov

Grade 10: o5yiw6

SECTION C: PARENT'S ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

As the primary religious educators of your children, you are a vital part of the preparation of Confirmation. Your faith and witness have laid the foundation for your child. While the candidate must want to receive the sacrament of Confirmation, your opinion of this sacrament will have a significant impact on your child.

As parents, you will want to keep in mind the responsibility placed on your child and sponsor for this sacrament. Your encouragement and enthusiasm are one of the greatest gifts you can give.

PARENTS:

1. **Assist your child in filling out the Confirmation Information Form - due on January 12th.** If your child's baptismal name is that of a recognized saint of the Church, there is no need to select a new name for Confirmation. Using the baptismal name for Confirmation is preferred because it highlights the relationship between the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.
2. **Sponsor selection:** Assist your child in the selection of a suitable sponsor. Ideally the sponsor should be the person who was the godparent at Baptism. This more clearly expresses the relationship of the two sacraments. **THE CANDIDATE'S PARENT MAY NOT BE THE SPONSOR.** You may want to read over the sponsor's responsibilities and help your child form a list of possible sponsors. Talk with potential sponsors about the meaning of their role and the needs of your child. Encourage and initiate meetings with your child and sponsor.
3. **Attend Masses on our schedule** with your child and sit with your child.
4. **Decision Point Textbook.** The entire book and videos that your child will be viewing during lesson meetings is available online. It would be helpful for you to look through the lesson and watch the videos so that you can support the program at home.
5. **Serve as models** for your child by being committed Catholics; worship with your family on a regular basis; nurture your child in the faith; pray for and with your child regularly.
6. **Service:** Become involved with your child's hours of service. Help him/her understand that Confirmation service is the beginning of a life committed to Christian service. Share with your child. Continually encourage your child to participate in the sacramental life of the Church before as well as after celebrating Confirmation: seasonal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Sunday celebration of the Mass and participation in the Eucharist.
7. **Decision:** Listen attentively to your child and encourage him/her to reflect on and thoughtfully consider the decision to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Keep in continual communication with your child and his/her sponsor. Challenge and respect their feelings and thinking.
8. **After Confirmation:** Support the continued religious education of your child after Confirmation by encouraging their participation in youth ministry groups and opportunities.

SECTION D: SPONSOR'S ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of the Confirmation sponsor is often an overlooked and under-used resource for a candidate's preparation and growth. As a sponsor, you are accepting more than a casual interest in one person's spiritual life. Your candidate is contemplating a life commitment, which will influence everything he/she does from now on. You can be a valuable instrument for that person by listening to his/her thoughts, sharing your own experiences and understanding, and by introducing him/her to whatever will enhance growth in the faith.

For many people, sponsorship is no more than a momentary "honor" a candidate bestows on someone he/she respects. Surely being a sponsor should be considered an honor, but its ministry and responsibility goes beyond the moment of Confirmation. Our hope is that our Confirmation candidates will be fortunate enough to find sponsors who care for them and are eager to participate in their preparation and continue to support them on their faith journey on a regular basis.

Listed below are the requirements for a Sponsor for Confirmation in the St. Theresa Parish Program. Before accepting this responsibility, we urge you to weigh each requirement and to be honest with your candidate if you can or cannot live up to these expectations.

The Sponsor:

1. Attend the grade level sponsor meeting with your candidate after mass. (Grade 10: Oct. 20, Grade 9 Dec. 9)
2. Must be sufficiently mature for the responsibility (emotionally and spiritually) and be at least 16 years of age.
3. Ideally should be someone other than immediate family members.
4. Must be an active member of the Catholic Church and has been initiated in the three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
5. Ideally should be the person who was the godparent at Baptism. This more clearly expresses the relationship of the two sacraments. However, the sponsor must have experiences in common with the candidate and be actively involved in the life of the parish. **THE PARENT MAY NOT BE THE SPONSOR.**
6. Needs to be a model of a Catholic-Christian who is confirmed in their commitment to a Christian life and is willing to serve as a strong and long lasting Christian influence on the candidate through service, faith, and prayer. As the candidate prepares for the reception of this Sacrament, the sponsor can also explore the depth of his/her commitment and understanding of Confirmation.
7. Needs to be willing to share themselves not only with their candidate but also with others in the community. This is demonstrated in numerous ways:
 - SERVICE - By assisting their candidate with at least one of their service opportunities. These projects can be done in any of the categories of service to parish, to the community or for social justice.
 - LETTER DESCRIBING YOUR CANDIDATE'S READINESS FOR THE SACRAMENT – In January of the candidates Grade 10 year, you will be sent a google form to fill out that will ask you to attest to the candidate's readiness for the sacrament and his/her potential commitment to the church in the future.
 - SUPPORT - As the candidate prepares in the knowledge of his/her basic beliefs, the sponsor can initiate get-togethers with the candidate. The sponsor needs to challenge and encourage her/his candidate through discussion, teaching and shared experiences and to meet the requirements asked of them. The sponsor is also invited to come to mass with their candidate.

SECTION E: PRACTICAL POINTS - DRESS CODE/ETIQUETTE

During weekly classes candidates are expected to keep themselves appropriately attired. Any form of dress which is distracting or disruptive in appearance is not allowed. Candidates are expected to be respectful of each other as well as teachers and assistants.

At the Rite of Confirmation, candidates and sponsors must wear proper modest attire similar to clothing for other important life events.

DRESS CODE: We use Confirmation robes - but below should be respected.

Males: It is preferred that suits, or blazer and slacks, with a dress shirt and tie are worn. Dress shirts must be tucked in. Ties, dress shirts, coats and slacks of any color are permitted. Pants must come to the waist and over the hips. No flip-flops, or tennis shoes are permitted. Polo shirts, tee-shirts, hoodies, and fleece tops should be avoided, and denim is not allowed.

Females: It is preferred that dresses be worn; however, skirts, tops, and slacks or suits of any color may also be worn. Tops must be modest and cover the midsection. No flip-flops, or tennis shoes are permitted. Tee-shirts, hoodies, fleece or tank tops, low-cut or midriff outfits, mini-skirts are not permitted. Low-rise slacks are not allowed, and denim must not be worn. Also, makeup should not be worn on the forehead since it forms a paste with the chrism oil which then smears on the next child to be confirmed.

ETIQUETTE:

- Cell phone use is inappropriate during any Church celebration (Cell phones should be left at home the day of Confirmation)
- Chewing gum at any Church celebration is inappropriate.
- Unnecessary talking or socializing is not proper behavior during any Church celebration.

PICTURES:

- The ceremonies of the Church should be celebrated with dignity and respect.
- Pictures may be taken during the processional and recessional processions only.
- Pictures may be taken with the Bishop after Confirmation Mass.

SECTION F: RESOURCES

1. Resources for Saint Research
2. Confirmation Sponsor Form
3. Confirmation Information Form

RESOURCES FOR SAINT RESEARCH

- americancatholic.org
- catholic.org/saints
- saints.sqpn.com
- <http://www.ewtn.com/saintsholy/>
- <http://www.loyolapress.com/saints-stories-for-kids.htm>
- <http://www.catholic.org/saints/>
- <http://www.catholic.org/saints/stindex.php>
- <http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/patron02.htm>
- <http://www.wjpbr.com/saintalp.html>
- http://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/saints/list_saints.htm
- <http://www.roman-catholic-catechism.com/roman-catholic-saints-2.html>
- <http://www.magnificat.ca/cal/engl/liste-sts.htm>
- <http://www.catholic-saints.info/>

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

CONFIRMATION SPONSOR FORM

To be completed by Sponsor at Sponsor Meeting

To the Sponsor: Congratulations on being asked to be a sponsor for the Sacrament of Confirmation. To be a sponsor there are several requirements the Church asks of you:

- 1) must be sixteen years of age or older;
- 2) have received all three sacraments of initiation, and lead a life in conformity with the faith
and the role assumed as a sponsor;
- 3) is not the parent of the candidate.

COMPLETE FORM BELOW(Please print clearly):

Name of Candidate: _____

Statement of Candidate:

I understand that a sponsor for the Sacrament of Confirmation is an important choice to make regarding my final step into full communion with the Church. In choosing this person, I understand he/she will be my guide during the coming year as I prepare to become a full initiated member of my Church and the Catholic faith. Therefore, I understand that I must choose a person who is practicing their Catholic faith, and who will be a good example and guide for me.

Candidate's initials: _____

Statement of faith commitment and practice by Sponsor:

(Sponsor's Name – please print clearly)

I recognize that as a sponsor for this sacrament: I am: 1) committed to keeping God's commandments as Jesus and the Church have taught me; 2) to worship God through prayer; and 3) faithfully attending Sunday Mass and to also strive to translate my faith into good examples and works. I hereby state I am: 1) a baptized, confirmed Catholic; 2) a registered member of

_____ Parish in _____;

and 3) if married, married according to the laws of the Roman Catholic Church. I also promise to assist this candidate both before and after the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation to live the Christian life. Finally, I attest that all the statements above are true.

Signature of Sponsor: _____

Address: _____

email address: _____

CONFIRMATION INFORMATION FORM
for GRADE 10 Candidates only

(Information needed for records of parish where baptism took place)

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

CONFIRMATION (SAINT) NAME ONLY _____

STUDENT'S NAME _____ AGE (in Oct. 2019) _____

Church of Baptism:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Date of Baptism: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

Mother's First Name and Maiden Name _____

Father's Full Name _____

SPONSOR'S NAME _____

PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME AS IT IS TO APPEAR ON THE CERTIFICATE:

First Name	Middle Name (if applicable)	Confirmation Name	Last Name
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