

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 2011

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The St. Peter High School Confirmation Program is a 13-month program that consists of four different and separate components: Large Group Sessions, Small Group Sessions, a Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy Project, and a Retreat.

LARGE GROUP SESSIONS

Large Group Sessions convene the entire Confirmation Class and address a variety of questions that students have about the Sacrament. These questions range from what is Confirmation and how did it get started, to what are the requirements of the program and how is this relevant to our lives. Meeting formats will vary, but include prayer, ice breakers, guest speakers, and large-group activities.

SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

In order to better understand their Catholic faith and learn more about the Sacrament of Confirmation, students participate in a *Confirmation Small Group* throughout their involvement with the Program. Beginning in January 2010, these small groups meet on a regular basis for a series of 20 sessions prior to Confirmation. These small groups serve as the foundation to the Confirmation Program and utilize the "Send Our Your Spirit" textbook by Ave Maria Press. In addition to these small group sessions, there will also be one (1) small group session during the year in which a priest will host an informal Q&A time with the students. Also, there will be one (1) follow-up session after Confirmation for students to process their experience of the Sacrament and embrace active involvement in parish life as a full member of our Catholic parish community.

CORPORAL AND SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY PROJECT

Service is an important part of our Catholic tradition, providing each of us with the chance to live out our faith by serving others. Therefore, we have incorporated a *Works of Mercy Summer Project* into the program to provide students with an opportunity to participate in a service project as part of the Confirmation preparation process. The High School Youth Ministry Office compiles a list of projects that function as a hands-on small group session in which the catechists instruct the students in the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Students then select a project of their choice to complete over the summer months.

RETREATS

Known as one of the most popular parts of the Confirmation preparation process, our *retreats* give students the opportunity to get away from the craziness of life for a while to think, pray, talk, and make new friends while developing their relationship with God. During their Confirmation preparation, students take part in one (1) retreat. This component may be met through one's participation in our high school youth ministry retreats. If you attend a Catholic School and your school offers a retreat, we can count your participation as your requirement provided that we receive a letter from the director of the retreat documenting your participation.

The Value of Confirmation Preparation¹ for All Students

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Sacrament of Confirmation celebrates the completion of one's initiation into the Catholic Church. This initiation began with Baptism and is constantly being renewed and nourished through participation in the Eucharist. The Confirmation Program at St. Peter is designed to foster growth in all aspects of faith, including a student's relationship with God, their understanding of the Catholic Church, and their unique and integral role as a member of our faith community. Each experience in the program builds upon what came before it in an effort to help students better understand what being Confirmed truly means. Hopefully, participation in the program will help students build a solid Catholic faith that will last a lifetime.

Relationship With God

God calls us to be in relationship with Him as his *children*, and while a program begins and ends, it is a relationship with God that endures over time. The Confirmation Program provides students with various opportunities to develop and grow in their relationship with God that include, but are not limited to:

- Prayer Experiences in large and small group settings
- Scripture Reflection in large and small group settings
- Study of God (Send Out Your Spirit, Chapter 2)
- Retreats

Understanding of the Catholic Church

At Confirmation, one completes his/her initiation into the Catholic Church. Therefore, it is important he/she understands the Church and its teachings. While understanding of Church and its teachings develops over time, the Confirmation Program aims to provide students with a basic understanding of the tenets of our Catholic faith. This is accomplished through approximately eleven months of catechesis in a small group of 8-12 students using the *Send Out Your Spirit* high school Confirmation textbook published by Ave Maria Press.

Role as a Member of our Faith Community

While Confirmation is a personal experience, it is not a private one. The Sacrament of Confirmation celebrates the completion of one's initiation into the Catholic Church. In order to be a part of a faith community, one must be both present and active. The Confirmation Program communicates the importance of the student's role in our faith community through:

- Program Structure (participation in both large and small group activities)
- The study of Belonging, Church, Social Justice, and Christian Vocation (Send Out Your Spirit, Chapters 1, 5, 7, 10)
- Participation in a Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy Project

STUDENTS ATTENDING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

CONCERN: Many parents question the value of and/or the need for their student's participation in the Confirmation Program because the topical information covered in the program is duplicative to the education received in the Catholic school.

RESPONSE: While education at a Catholic School will explore the teachings of the Church in more depth than the Confirmation Program, there is more to the preparation process than just "understanding of the Catholic Church." There are two other vital components to our program, as illustrated above: Developing one's relationship with God and Understanding one's role as a member of our faith community. Since one's relationship with God can and will grow/change over time, one cannot consider him/herself being 'done' or 'finished' with this aspect of their faith development. Therefore both Catholic and public school students benefit from the opportunities to develop their relationship with God offered in the program. Additionally, in appreciation of one's role in the faith community, he/she must be present to and participate in that community. While attending a Catholic school is being a part of a faith community, it cannot and does not substitute for the parish community. This includes, but is not limited to participation in Sunday liturgy and both the large and small group sessions of the Confirmation Program.

On a related note, we welcome the participation of the Catholic school students and the knowledge they bring to the Confirmation program. Often times their academic knowledge, coupled with being able to share things as a teen in the small group, lends to their peers' understanding of a given topic. The diversity of participation in the program helps everyone grow in faith!

¹ As opposed to calling it a 'program,' we may be better off referring to it as a formation or preparation process. Such language lends itself to the ongoing nature of the Sacrament and may dispel the myth that Confirmation marks a 'graduation' or completion of Religious Education.

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REGISTRATION PROCESS

- WHO:** All High School Youth yet to be Confirmed are welcome to register for Confirmation - Public, Private, and Catholic School students included
- PREREQUISITE:** As of September 1998, students enrolling in the Confirmation Program must have a background in Religious Education (RE). Students meet this prerequisite if they 1) participated in St. Peter's Junior High RE Program, 2) participated in the Junior High RE Program of another Catholic parish, OR 3) attended a Catholic School for 6th, 7th, AND 8th Grade.
- SCHEDULE:** The program takes place January 2010 - March 2011² and consists of a series of Small Group Sessions (22), Large Group Sessions (3), a summer Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy Project (1), and a Retreat (1)
- LOCATION:** Students will meet at St. Peter Church, Adult Leader Homes, and off-site locations (Mercy Projects and Retreats)
- REGISTRATION:** Registration opens on August 3, 2009 and will close when all small groups are filled to capacity OR on October 30, 2009 (whichever comes first). We will not process your student's registration until we have received your registration form AND program fee. *Students will be assigned to a small group on a first come, first served basis.*
- PROGRAM FEE:** \$160.00³ due with registration form on or before Friday, October 30, 2009. (This fee covers program costs from January 2010-March 2011.) All registrations received after October 30th will be assessed a \$20.00 late fee.
- RETREAT FEE:** You will be assessed a \$95 retreat fee for your student's off-site, weekend retreat. A \$30 non-refundable deposit will be due with your retreat registration, and the \$65 balance will be due 30 days prior to the retreat. (See reverse side of page for more details.)
- CATECHISTS:** Parent volunteers serve as Confirmation catechists (2 leaders per small group). The \$160 program fee will be waived for all Confirmation catechists. The catechist registration form is located on the back of the student registration form. Catechist positions will be filled on a first come first served basis.

² Dates are subject to change if the Rockford Diocese alters the date they schedule our Confirmation Liturgy. Currently, our Confirmation is NOT scheduled for 2010.

³ If you are enrolling two (2) students in the Confirmation Class of 2011, a discounted fee of \$210.00 for both students applies. If you have three (3) or more students enrolling, the discounted fee is \$260.00.

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RETREAT COMPONENT

All Confirmation students attend a single retreat to enhance their spiritual formation during their sacramental preparation program.* This means that students are expected to attend a retreat BEFORE they receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

While small group sessions for the Confirmation program will not begin until January 2010, freshman students are welcome to attend a retreat beginning in the fall of 2009. In fact, most students prefer to attend their retreat during their freshman year to avoid scheduling conflicts that may arise during their sophomore year.

For your convenience, the registration forms for all three high school retreats that will be hosted by the St. Peter Peer Ministry Retreat Team during the 2009-2010 school year are available ONLINE at <http://www.stpeterchurch.com/site/sr5.htm>. All of our high school retreats are held at Bishop Lane Retreat Center in Rockford.

December Retreat (December 11-13, 2009)

February Retreat (February 5-7, 2010)

April Retreat (April 23-25, 2010)

Registration for any of these retreats opens to freshman students on Monday, August 3, 2009.

Please note that our retreats generally fill to capacity very quickly, so we encourage you to register your student ASAP to reserve a spot on the retreat of your choice. A \$30 non-refundable deposit is required when registering for a retreat.

* Catholic school students may fulfill their Confirmation retreat requirement by attending a retreat that is offered through their school. Additional information is will be available in the Confirmation Class of 2011 Parent Handbook that you will receive in January.

CONFIRMATION CATECHIST REGISTRATION FORM

If you are interested in being a Confirmation Co-Catechist, please respond to the questions below.

In appreciation of your service as a Confirmation Co-Catechist, the \$160 Confirmation Program fee is waived for your student.

Your name(s) name: _____

Your student's name: _____

Your e-mail address: _____

Are you a Confirmed, practicing Catholic: Yes No

Do you have a co-catechist in mind? Yes No

If so, who? _____

What evening would you like your small group to meet? Sunday Tuesday Wednesday

Can/will your small group meet in your home? Yes No

Do you have any pets? Yes No

If so, please list: _____

Do you wish to have your student in your group? Yes No

Have you participated in the Protecting God's Children program? Yes No

If so, please indicate when and where: _____
date parish diocese

ALL catechists must have participated in the Protecting God's Children program prior to volunteering within our program. At this time, this is a one-time requirement, so you will not need to attend again if you have already participated in the past. If you have NOT already completed Protecting God's Children, please plan to attend on one of the dates shown below.

You must pre-register for Protecting God's Children by calling the Aurora Deanery Center at 859-3922

Upcoming Protecting God's Children Dates

Saturday, August 29, 2009 from 9:00 AM – Noon at St. Peter Church, Geneva, Seton Hall (lower level)

Monday, August 31, 2009 from 6:30 PM – 9:30 PM at St. Peter Church, Geneva, Muldoon Room (lower level)

Wednesday, September 2, 2009 from 6:30-9:30 PM at St. Peter Church, Geneva, Muldoon Room (lower level)

Tuesday, September 8, 2009 from 9:00 AM – Noon at St. Peter Church, Geneva, Seton Hall (lower level)

Thursday, September 10, 2009 from 6:30-9:30 PM at St. Peter Church, Geneva, Muldoon Room (lower level)

Thursday, September 24, 2009 from 6:30-9:30 PM at St. Peter Church, Geneva, Muldoon Room (lower level)

Wednesday, September 30, 2009 from 6:30-9:30 PM at St. Peter Church, Geneva, Muldoon Room (lower level)

Saturday, October 3, 2009 from 9:00 AM – Noon at St. Peter Church, Geneva, Seton Hall (lower level)

Thursday, October 8, 2009 from 9:00 AM – Noon at St. Peter Church, Geneva, Seton Hall (lower level)

Additional dates (if they become necessary) will be announced in the Sunday bulletin.

**You must pre-register for Protecting God's Children by contacting
the Aurora Deanery Center**

PHONE: 630-859-3922

FAX: 630-859-9637

EMAIL: auroraareacenter@sbcglobal.net