

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 2013

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 2012, 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 Out 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 – this includes public, private, and Catholic school students.

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 2012 - March 2013² and consists of a series of Small Group Sessions (22), Large Group Sessions (2), 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 14, 2011 and will close when all small groups are filled to capacity OR on Monday, October 31, 2011 (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.** *Due to the capacity and design of the program, we cannot honor requests for multiple students to be placed into the same small group nor can a Confirmation catechist guarantee any student placement. The high school youth ministry office reserves the right to make all student placements.*

PROGRAM FEE: The parishioner student rate is \$160.00³, due at the time of registration (the non-parishioner student rate is \$200.00). This fee covers program costs from January 2012-March 2013. All registrations received after October 31st will be assessed an additional \$20.00 late fee.

RETREAT FEE: You will be assessed a \$100 retreat fee for your student's off-site, weekend retreat. A \$30 non-refundable deposit will be due with your retreat registration, and the \$70 balance will be due 30 days prior to the retreat. (See retreat page for more details.)

CATECHISTS: Parent volunteers serve as Confirmation catechists (Please, only 2 leaders per small group). The program fee will be reduced to \$50.00 for all Confirmation catechists. See the enclosed catechist registration form for more information; we must secure all leaders in this program no later than Sunday, September 11, 2011.

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 2013.

³ If you are enrolling two (2) students in the Confirmation Class of 2013, 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 2012, freshman students are welcome to attend a retreat beginning in the fall of 2011. In fact, most students prefer to attend their retreat during their freshman year to avoid scheduling conflicts that 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 2011-2012 school year are enclosed with this mailing and will be available online after September 1, 2011.

Fall Retreat (November 18-20, 2011 at Dickson Valley in Newark)

Winter Retreat (February 3-5, 2012 at Bishop Lane in Rockford)

Spring Retreat (April 20-22, 2012 at Bishop Lane in Rockford)

**Registration for any of these retreats opens to ALL students
on Monday, August 22, 2011.**

Please note that our retreats generally fill to capacity very quickly, so we encourage you to register your student ASAP beginning August 22 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 will be available in the Confirmation Class of 2013 Parent Handbook that you will receive in January.*

CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 2013 CATECHIST VOLUNTEER FORM

Students in the Confirmation Program actively participate in a small group. Each small group is facilitated by a team of two (2) trained adult leaders, typically parents. If you are interested in co-leading a small group, please read the overview below and complete the volunteer form. **WE MUST SECURE ALL OF OUR CATECHISTS NO LATER THAN SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2011.**

CATECHIST OVERVIEW

- o Each pair of catechists co-leads a series of 22 small group sessions from January 2012-March 2013. Of these sessions, twenty (20) use our program text *Send Out Your Spirit*, one (1) is a session with a priest, and one (1) is a post-Confirmation wrap up.
- o During the summer 2012, catechists will pair up and oversee a service project that teaches the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. All projects are short in nature (2 hours to 1 day).

ORIENTATION DAY & TRAINING SESSIONS

Monday, September 12 – Orientation Day from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM (This mandatory orientation includes an overview of program procedures and guidelines, distribution of materials, and a review of attendance/assignment policies as well as volunteer paperwork.)

Monday, October 17 – Training Day from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM (This training focuses on understanding the role of the catechist and on how to use program resources such as the text book, binder, supply box, Bible, and Catechism of the Catholic Church to run each session.)

Saturday, November 5 – Level One Catechist Certification from 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM (This workshop offers catechists the opportunity to achieve their level one certification *provided that they have also completed the necessary prerequisites which include Protecting God's Children and the materials covered on our first training day in October.*)

Monday, December 12 – Training Day from 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM (This final training highlights adolescent spirituality and working with students in a small group environment. Additionally, you will receive a draft copy of your small group roster for review.)

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 Confirmation Program fee is reduced to \$50.00 per 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 (only 2 per group please)? 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

*Due to the capacity and design of the program, we cannot make arrangements to place certain students into any particular small group, with the exception of a catechist and their own student. Nor should a catechist guarantee a student that if he/she requests a certain group it will be granted. The high school youth ministry program reserves the right to make all student placements.

**ALL catechists must have participated in the Protecting God's Children program prior to volunteering in 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 completed Protecting God's Children to date, please indicate above and we will contact you with directives on how to complete this free course