

St. Thomas More Parish



Confirmation Info Pack

9/8/2017

Dear Parents and Teens,

Welcome to the teen Confirmation program! It is wonderful to have you on board with us this year. Confirmation preparation is an exciting time of drawing nearer to God and strengthening our relationships with friends, family and our parish community.

Confirmation Candidates will engage in thorough catechesis, be mentored by their Sponsors, fulfill parish-specific service hours, and attend a Confirmation retreat. They are also encouraged to attend other optional Senior High Youth Ministry events, most especially the Catholic Youth Convention.

Pope St. John Paul II called the youth his hope. We here at St. Thomas More Parish are putting our hope in you. We are counting on you to participate fully in the program and to become strong Christian leaders in our community. Along with the entire Archdiocese, we invite you to learn about the power of the Holy Spirit and see what difference the Sacrament of Confirmation can make in your life!

God bless you on your journey,

Fr. Stephen Okumu

Pastor

Becky Harmon

PA for Youth Ministry

Confirmation Preparation for Teens

St. Thomas More Parish

Please consult both the separate Confirmation schedule and the Confirmation checklist at the end of this pack for the listing of program events. Please keep in mind that these may be subject to change. Schedule alterations will be announced at Confirmation sessions and updated on the parish website calendar: www.stmp.org

I. Program Goal: The goal of the St. Thomas More Parish Teen Confirmation program is to challenge each candidate to be a witness for Christ and His Church and to determine if they are ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

II. Components: This goal is achieved through catechesis (instruction in the Faith), liturgy (public prayer and Sacraments), service, and community-building activities.

III. Eligibility: Confirmation is a two-year process. For the first year, teens will attend either our Senior High Youth Group (**EMPOWER**) **OR** Catholic high school. For the second consecutive year, candidates will enroll in the Confirmation group.

To register for the Confirmation group this year (2017-18), youth must:

- Have regularly attended the Senior High Youth Group, **EMPOWER** (no more than three absences), **OR** a Catholic High School in the previous year (2016-17).
- Be age 16 by February 1, 2018 (exceptions are possible, but involve additional requirements).
- Have received the Sacraments of Baptism and First Communion.
- Have a desire to be Confirmed!

Teens seeking to be Confirmed next year (2018-19), will need to register for this year's Senior High Youth Group, **EMPOWER**, and regularly attend (no more than 3 absences), **OR** attend a Catholic High School.

IV. Preparation: Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation consists of the following stages:

1. Faith Formation Info Meeting, Sept. 17, 9:30-10:30 AM, Renggli Room.

Parents especially are encouraged to attend.

2. Confirmation sessions, Sundays, 3-4:30 PM.

No more than two excused absences allowed. See Confirmation schedule for complete session listing.

3. Candidate Interview, October.

Candidates must sign up for and attend an introductory interview with the Youth Minister in October. The sign-up link will be available on our webpage and will be sent out via email.

4. Candidate Baptism & 1st Communion Certificates, due Oct. 29.

Candidates must submit copies of their Baptismal and 1st Communion certificates. If requesting copies to be sent from another parish, please allow enough time for them to arrive by the deadline. Sometimes this process is slow, so candidates are advised to make the request ASAP. Candidates who received these Sacraments at St. Thomas More Parish may simply notify the Youth Minister by e-mail, and their records will be checked.

5. 8 Parish Service Hours, due Jan. 28.

Service is an important part of Confirmation preparation. Candidates will be responsible for seeking out service opportunities at St. Thomas More Parish, recording them on their Parish Service Hours form, and submitting the form by Jan. 28th. Parish service hours are specific to St. Thomas More Parish, and can be fulfilled by: participating in Youth Ministry service events such as the March for Life, or other activities as announced; serving in a Mass Ministry such as altar serving, lecturing, ushering, or music; participating in other parish ministries, including ministry meetings (for a list, see: <http://www.stmp.org/parish-life/ministries>); answering parish service requests as needed, etc. Off-campus service activities through a St. Thomas More Parish ministry are also eligible (such as going with the St. Thomas More Parish “Neighbors in Need” group to feed the homeless). Parish Service Hours cannot be fulfilled by service in non-St. Thomas More Parish related activities, or such things as helping to carry chairs at Youth Group. If you have a question about whether a specific service opportunity fulfills this requirement, please contact the Youth Minister.

6. Sponsor Registration, due Oct. 1. Sponsor sessions, Oct. 8 and Nov. 5.

Candidates must choose sponsors and make sure they register online (www.stmp.org/87). Sponsors must be Catholics in good standing with the Church, have received the Sacraments of Baptism, 1st Communion, and Confirmation, and be 16+ years of age. Parents cannot sponsor their own teens.

Sponsors are required to attend two Confirmation sessions with their candidates, Oct. 8th and Nov. 5th, as well as to have regular conversations with candidates outside of program events. Candidates are encouraged to choose local sponsors, but in the event that an out-of-town sponsor is chosen who cannot attend program events, candidates must choose a proxy to attend the sponsor Confirmation sessions. A proxy must likewise be found to attend the Confirmation Mass rehearsal and Confirmation Mass in place of the sponsor, if the sponsor cannot attend due to a serious reason, such as ill health or being unable to travel if they live out-of-state. Proxies must meet the same eligibility requirements as sponsors, except that parents may be proxies. For any substitutions, the Youth Minister must be notified by email ahead of time.

7. Sponsor Baptismal certificate, due Nov. 5.

Sponsors are required to send in recently issued Baptismal certificates containing notations for 1st Communion and Confirmation. Alternatively, copies of all three certificates can be handed in. In order for a candidate to be Confirmed, they must have a sponsor who has received Baptism, 1st Communion, and Confirmation. Therefore, making sure that sponsors send in their certificates by the deadline is essential. Requesting these certificates from other parishes takes time, especially if the parishes are located outside of the United States. This should be taken into account when selecting and informing sponsors of this requirement. In the event that there is no possible way to obtain the certificates, such as records having been destroyed in a fire, then sponsors may attempt to get their currently registered parish to complete the Sponsor Verification Form. If there are any questions regarding problems in fulfilling this requirement, they should be addressed to the Youth Minister ASAP.

8. Parent session, Oct. 22.

Parents are an important part of the Confirmation program. They are asked to walk with their children every step of the way, helping them to choose an appropriate sponsor and interact with them at least once a week, encouraging them to attend optional events like CYC, making sure they go to Mass and Confession regularly, meet their deadlines, and find service opportunities, as well as sharing their own faith with their children and leading by example. Studies show that the degree to which children see their parents practice the faith, and engage in conversations with them about it, is the *best* indicator of whether those children will keep their faith as adults. Parents receive Parent Guides and are required to attend a Confirmation session with their children on Oct. 22nd so that Youth Ministry can support this dialogue and engagement. Candidates will also be sent home with specific discussion questions to share with their parents.

9. Catholic Youth Convention, Nov. 11-12. Registration due Oct. 22.

CYC is **strongly** encouraged, though not required. It is a fantastic way for candidates to start off the program well, by allowing them to get to know each other, enjoy themselves with thousands of other Catholic youth, hear nationally recognized speakers, experience special prayer and worship opportunities, celebrate Mass with the Archbishop, learn about the faith from Youth Ministry professionals from all around the Archdiocese, and encounter Christ in a whole new way. The fee for CYC is \$95. This covers the registration fee, overnight accommodations, transportation and meals. Scholarships are available upon request. See our Youth Ministry page for registration details: www.stmp.org/87

10. Confirmation Request Letter to the Pastor, due Dec. 10.

Candidates must write a letter to Fr. Okumu explaining why they desire to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. They have the option of including their choice of Confirmation name at this time. These letters are due by Dec. 10th.

11. Confirmation Retreat, January 12-14 (Friday evening to Sunday afternoon). Registration due Oct. 15.

Candidates must attend the Confirmation Retreat as a required element of the program. This year we will be going to the multi-parish Archdiocesan retreat at Camp Don Bosco. There will be a \$110 non-refundable fee, which includes transportation, meals, lodging, facilitation and supplies. Parents may email the Youth Minister to request need-based scholarships.

12. Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Three possible dates have been submitted to the Archdiocese for our Confirmation Mass. Around mid-October, the Archdiocese will let us know what our final date will be and an announcement will be made. The Confirmation rehearsal will be the Thursday prior, from 7-8 PM. The possible Confirmation Mass dates are: Feb. 11 (Sunday 10:30 AM Mass), April 14 (Saturday 5 PM Mass), and April 15 (Sunday 10:30 AM Mass). The possible rehearsal dates are: Feb. 8 or April 12. Both candidates and sponsors will need to be sure to keep all these dates clear until the final announcement is made. The Confirmation program will end with the Confirmation Mass, so all scheduled sessions after the Confirmation Mass date will be cancelled. However, our newly confirmed are very much encouraged to go to our senior high youth group (**EMPOWER**) and enjoy other Youth Ministry events.

V. Cost

After August 1, 2017, the registration fee will be \$95 for one child, \$125 for two children, and \$155 for three children. The multi-child discount includes children enrolled in other Faith Formation programs.

Other than the registration fee, there will be a \$110 fee for the required Confirmation retreat (Jan. 12-14).

Optional events will have fees, as well, such as the Catholic Youth Convention (\$95, Nov. 11-12), Mission Trip (TBD, July), the Vacation Bible School Service Project (\$15, August), and other events as announced.

If you are unable to pay the full amount for any event, please email the Youth Minister to request a need-based scholarship. Donations for those who cannot cover their costs are always greatly appreciated.

VI. Attendance

Candidates are required to attend the Confirmation sessions and the Confirmation retreat. Two excused absences are allowed for sessions. Non-attendance at the Confirmation retreat will result in the candidate being unable to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Candidates are strongly encouraged to attend the Catholic Youth Convention, though not required. Any candidate dismissed during a session due to discipline issues will be marked absent for the entire day. If discipline problems occur while at an off-campus event, parents may be contacted to come retrieve the youth in question.

For questions, please contact:

Becky Harmon: (425) 743-2929 x.106, rebeccah@stmp.org

Confirmation Checklist

Please read this checklist completely. Put it in a safe, easy-to-remember place, like on your fridge, and mark off each item as you complete it. Consider setting reminders to avoid missing important deadlines. Contact the Youth Minister immediately with any questions. *Please be aware that failure to complete an item by the deadline may cause you to be ineligible to receive Confirmation.*

- Confirmation Sessions- did you attend the Confirmation sessions with **no more than 2 excused absences?** (see Confirmation schedule)
- Sponsor Registration- did you choose a sponsor and make sure they registered by **Oct. 1st**?
- Candidate Interview- did you sign up for and attend an interview with the Youth Minister in **October**?
- Sponsor Sessions- did your sponsor attend the Sponsor Sessions (**Oct. 8th, Nov. 5th**)? If they couldn't, due to illness or living out-of-state, did you bring an appropriate sub?
- Confirmation Retreat- did you register for the Confirmation retreat by **Oct. 15th**?
- Parent Session- did your parent/guardian attend the Parent Session on **Oct. 22nd**?
- Catholic Youth Convention- did you register for CYC by **Oct. 22nd**? (CYC is optional, but strongly encouraged)
- Candidate Certificates- did you send copies of your Baptism and 1st Communion certificates to the Youth Minister by **Oct. 29th**? If you received those Sacraments at St. Thomas More, did you notify the Youth Minister by e-mail?
- Sponsor Certificate- did you make sure your sponsor turned in their *recently issued* Baptismal certificate with 1st Communion & Confirmation notations, by **Nov. 5th**?
- Confirmation Request Letter- did you write and turn in your Confirmation Request Letter to the Pastor by **Dec. 10th**?
- Parish Service Hours- did you complete 8 parish service hours and turn in the form by **January 28th**?
- Confirmation Rehearsal- did you and your sponsor attend the Confirmation rehearsal? (**Possible dates:** Feb. 8, April 12)
- Confirmation Mass- did you make sure your sponsor was aware they needed to attend your Confirmation Mass? If they are unable to attend due to special circumstances, have you found a suitable proxy and contacted the Youth Minister? (see sponsor section) (**Possible dates:** Feb. 11, April 14, April 15)