

St. Thomas More Parish



Confirmation Preparation for Teens

9/16/2016

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.

There have been some changes to the Confirmation program in the interests of better meeting the needs of families and Candidates. These changes can be seen in the program description following this letter.

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

Program Description

Confirmation Preparation for Teens

St. Thomas More Parish

Please consult both the Confirmation checklist and the Confirmation schedule 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 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: St. Thomas More Parish teens seeking to be Confirmed this year, 2016-17, will register for the Confirmation group, which will give them one year of immediate sacramental preparation.

To register for the Confirmation group this year, youth must:

- Have regularly attended the Senior High Youth Group, **REMNANT** (no more than three absences), OR a Catholic High School in the previous year (2015-16).
- Be age 16 by February 1, 2017 (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, 2017-18, 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. 18, 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 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 during the month of October. Those who attended this interview last year are exempt.

4. Candidate Baptism & 1st Communion Certificates, due Oct. 30.

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. 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. Parish Service Hours, due Jan. 29th.

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. 29th. 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 (for a list, see: <http://www.stmp.org/parish-life/ministries>); answering special parish service requests, etc. Parish Service Hours cannot be fulfilled by service in non-St. Thomas More Parish related activities, or such things as helping 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 form, due Oct. 23.

Candidates must choose Sponsors and make sure they submit the Sponsor Registration form. Sponsors must be Catholics in good standing with the Church, have received the Sacraments of Baptism, 1st Communion, and Confirmation, and be at least 16 years of age. Parents cannot sponsor their own children.

Sponsors are required to attend two Confirmation sessions, Oct. 23rd and Dec. 4th, 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 substitute to attend the Sponsor Confirmation sessions (a parent is fine). A substitute must likewise be found to attend the Confirmation Mass rehearsal and Confirmation Mass in place of the Sponsor- this person must meet the same eligibility requirements as the Sponsor. For any substitutions, the Youth Minister must be notified ahead of time.

7. Catholic Youth Convention, Nov. 12-13. Registration due Oct. 16.

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 TBA.

8. Sponsor Baptismal certificate, due Dec. 4.

Sponsors are required to send in recently issued Baptismal certificates containing notations for 1st Communion and Confirmation. 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. If there are any questions regarding problems in obtaining these certificates, they should be addressed to the Youth Minister ASAP.

9. Confirmation Request Letter to the Pastor, due Dec. 11.

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. 11th.

10. Confirmation Retreat, January 13-15 (Friday evening to Sunday afternoon).
Registration due Nov. 6th.

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 \$120 fee, which includes transportation, meals, lodging, facilitation and supplies.

10. Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Several possible Confirmation Mass dates have been submitted to the Archdiocese for approval. We should be notified of the final Mass date around mid-October, and it will be announced to the Confirmation group. This date will also determine the Confirmation Rehearsal date, which will be the Thursday evening immediately prior to the Confirmation Mass. The Confirmation program will end with the Confirmation Mass, so all sessions on the schedule listed after the final Confirmation Mass date will be cancelled.

V. Cost

Other than the registration fee (see Registration Form for Junior & Senior High Programs), there will be a \$120 fee for the required Confirmation retreat (Jan. 13-15).

There will be fees for optional events as well, such as the Catholic Youth Convention (Nov. 12-13), and other events as announced.

If you are unable to pay the full amount for any event, please contact the Youth Minister. 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 session absences are allowed. Candidates are also 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 may cause you to be ineligible to receive Confirmation.

- Confirmation Sessions- did you attend the Confirmation sessions with **no more than 2 absences**? (see Confirmation schedule)
- Candidate Interview- did you sign-up for and attend an interview with the Youth Minister in **October**? You may also check this item off if you are exempt, due to attending this interview last year.
- Catholic Youth Convention- did you register for CYC by **Oct. 16th**? (CYC is optional, but strongly encouraged)
- Sponsor Registration- did you choose a Sponsor and make sure they turned in their Sponsor Registration form by **Oct. 23rd**?
- Sponsor Sessions- did your Sponsor attend the Sponsor sessions (**Oct. 23rd, Dec. 4th**)? If they couldn't, due to illness or living out-of-state, did you bring an appropriate sub?
- Candidate Baptism & 1st Communion Certificates- did you send copies of your Baptismal and 1st Communion certificates to the Youth Minister by **Oct. 30th**? If you received those Sacraments at St. Thomas More, did you simply notify the Youth Minister by e-mail?
- Confirmation Retreat- did you register for the Confirmation retreat by **Nov. 6th**?
- Sponsor Baptismal Certificate- did you make sure your Sponsor turned in their *recently issued* Baptismal certificate with 1st Communion & Confirmation notations, by **Dec. 4th**?
- Confirmation Request Letter- did you write and turn in your Confirmation Request Letter to the Pastor by **Dec. 11th**?
- Parish Service Hours- did you complete 12 parish service hours and turn in the form by **January 29th**?
- Confirmation Rehearsal- did you and your Sponsor attend the Confirmation rehearsal? (possible dates- **Feb. 23rd or Apr. 27th**. Final date TBA)
- 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. 25th, Feb. 26th, or April 29th**. Final date TBA.)