

Confirmation Booklet - St. Benedict Church

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Confirmation Pastoral Team Members



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Pastor's Message to Parents

Preparing a Child for Confirmation



At this time, your child is eligible to enter a process of preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. This will be a special event for your family as well as for our parish family.

Thank God, the sacrament of Confirmation is not the end of the road. It marks, rather, your child's decision to live a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. This is a radical life-style option which must be nourished continuously throughout life. Confirmation only makes sense if we let it do what the name suggests: confirm our option for Jesus as central to our lives, so that God's grace will help us to live our faith.

For all their noble intentions, children are children. To become Christian in fact and not just in name, they need the example of adults - especially their father and mother - who live their faith. Without such examples, the flame of faith which burns so enthusiastically in the tender heart of a child will quickly grow cold.

I am concerned that too many of the children in Catholic schools and in Catholic families are regularly not attending mass. If a child does not grow up practicing their faith, the sacrament of Confirmation will remain just another 'social occasion', without much ongoing meaning in their life.

I encourage you, as always, to attend Mass with your child every Sunday or Saturday. This is your privilege. This is your responsibility. This is your choice.

If you choose not to attend Mass, I invite you to consider postponing your child's confirmation until Sunday mass becomes a priority. One's grade in school or one's age when the sacrament is received really doesn't matter. What is important is that those who are confirmed live the Christian lifestyle.

Should you wish to discuss this with me, I would be delighted to hear from you.

May these months of preparation leading to your child's Confirmation be for you a grace-filled time—a time of renewal, refreshment and new life in the Spirit.

Considering Confirmation: A Message for Candidates

Your initiation into the Christian community began when your parents presented you for Baptism. It is now time to complete this initiation process in the sacrament of Confirmation. We welcome you and celebrate your decision.

As we begin the process of preparing you for this sacrament, here are a few things for you to think about:

Confirmation is about Initiation not Graduation

At the end of Grade 8 you will (or did) graduate. Think for a moment about what this means. You have spent many years attaining enough knowledge to merit a certificate that says you have earned/learned an elementary education. You have completed something. You will never go back to being an elementary school student again. Graduation signals the end of something. It is the last step of a process.

Initiation, on the other hand, is something quite different. Initiation signals the beginning of something. It is a first step, not the last. As a sacrament of initiation, Confirmation is about the beginnings of a new and deeper kind of Christian commitment. It is the beginning of your life as an adult member of the Church. Do you have to know everything about being Catholic to be confirmed? Not necessarily! Learning about one's faith is a lifetime process. You need only know enough to understand what kind of commitment you are making.

Confirmation is about Commitment

When you were baptised, your parents made a decision to raise you as a Catholic Christian person. At Confirmation, both you and the Catholic community confirm this decision. This is your chance to decide to renew and recommit yourself to the promises that were made on your behalf at your baptism.

So what are you committing yourself to in the sacrament of Confirmation? Well, first of all to living a Christian way of life. This means trying to be loving and kind in all that you do. It means caring about justice and truthfulness. And most of all it means having a relationship with Jesus. Central to this relationship is living a life of prayerfulness - both personal (private prayer) and communal (Sunday Mass). For Christians this is how we come to know

and express our faith in God. It is also how we find the strength to sustain our commitment to live just and loving lives.

If you do not feel this commitment, we encourage you not to be confirmed. This is not because we want to be judgmental or "exclusive". Rather, Confirmation is about celebrating one's full, conscious and active participation in the Christian community.

It doesn't make sense to celebrate the ritual if we do not intend to live out the commitment. We would certainly never dream of signing up for a sports team and buying all the equipment just so that we would have the experience of signing up with no intention of participating in the games. Nor should we celebrate a ritual of Christian commitment if we don't intend to participate fully. Whenever in our lives we feel the call to full inclusion in the Church, whether we are thirteen or ninety, this is when we should be confirmed.

How Do You Know You Are Ready?

The following questions will help you to discern if you are ready to celebrate Confirmation.

1. Why do you want to be confirmed?
2. If everyone else in your peer group/class/friends, etc. was choosing not to be confirmed, would you still choose to be confirmed yourself?
3. Are you willing to be a person of love and compassion, serving others in the way that Jesus does?
4. Are you willing to make an effort to deepen your spiritual life through private prayer and public worship, especially Sunday Mass?
5. Is participation in the Christian community, particularly through your parish important to you?

Preparing To Celebrate Confirmation

A Resource for Families

The celebration of the sacraments is of utmost importance in the life of the Church and each of its members. We know that Confirmation is a sacrament of initiation. The original and normative order for celebrating the sacraments of initiation is Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Baptism and Confirmation prepare the way for our full sharing in the Eucharist. Our full sharing in the Eucharist is the event that draws us into communion of life in God.

Originally and for many centuries the sacraments of initiation were celebrated in that order: Baptism followed immediately by Confirmation, followed by sharing in Holy Communion within the celebration of Eucharist. Adults, infants, and children were initiated into the Church in this manner. The usual minister to preside during the celebration was the bishop.

We need to see Confirmation as a sacrament which empowers us to celebrate the Eucharist in a new and more dynamic way through the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are sent out from the Sunday Eucharist as people whose mission it is to witness to Christ in the world. The Spirit given us in Confirmation enables us to give a powerful and effective witness to Christ's presence.

Commit to Sunday Eucharist

As a family, the first thing you can do is to recommit to full, active and conscious participation in Sunday Eucharist - Sunday Mass. Participating in the Sunday Eucharist is not an option in our Christian way of life. "Going to Mass" is not one of the rules for Catholics. Participating in the Sunday Eucharist each week is what we do as Catholic Christians. It is the celebration which identifies us as followers of Christ. We gain our identity as Catholic Christians from the weekly Sunday celebration.

The candidates for Confirmation need to join with the fully- initiated members, their parents at the Sunday celebration. Remember, sacraments are of the utmost importance in the life of the Church and each of its members. The Sunday assembly needs to worship with the candidates for Confirmation.

Family Meal

This family meal will be free from cell phones, mobile devices, and television. The meal will

be a time for sharing your daily experiences and good food.

If our families can celebrate at least one family meal each week, then our children will begin to understand at the deepest level the place that Sunday Eucharist holds in our lives as Catholic Christians.

Family Rituals

In the midst of busy and demanding family and professional lives, it is important to remember the place of family rituals. The presence of simple and profound rituals have an impact which goes far beyond the present moment. The simple rituals which shape family meals convey deep meaning to our children. For example: light a candle for each evening meal, have the table blessing (grace) lead by a different family member and hold hands to pray. Holding hands is a sign of reconciliation; eating together is a sign that we at least want to get along. Avoid the temptation of using meal time as the chance to deal with family problems or discipline issues. Music also adds a festive touch to family meals.

Link to Baptism

We may gain a greater sense of the importance and place of Confirmation when we take time to recall the Baptism of our children. Use this time as an opportunity to find your daughter's or son's baptismal candle (if it is lost, purchase a nice large white candle), locate the pictures taken that day and spend some time explaining to your child the joy you felt at the time of their birth and Baptism. Share with your child your emotions surrounding that time in their life.

It is wonderful to light the baptismal candle during the family meal.

Choosing a Sponsors

Each candidate for Confirmation is to be presented by a sponsor. The selection of this sponsor is guided by specific criteria or qualities.

The sponsor is to be:

- a Roman Catholic,
- at least 16 years of age,
- a fully initiated member of the Church: ie. Confirmed and has already received the sacrament of Holy Eucharist.
- a faithful active participant at weekly Sunday Eucharist.

A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic church community (ie. Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, United) may not be a sponsor.

A person who is a member of one of the separated Eastern Churches may serve as a sponsor.

If it's appropriate and possible, the sponsor for confirmation can be one of the sponsors that were present at the child's baptism.

The sponsor must not be the father or the mother of the one to be confirmed.

Being a sponsor is not an honorary role. It is not necessary and often not advisable to ask a relative to be a sponsor. The sponsor is a guide, witness, companion for the candidate. The sponsor does not need to be the same gender as the candidate.

Registration Information: Confirmation

Every year in September, St. Benedict parish offers a process of preparation for Confirmation for youth who are in Grade 7 and older. This is a parish-based process for the immediate preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation.

The stage of immediate preparation for Confirmation assumes that your child:

- is baptized in the Catholic Church or other Christian Church
- participates, in-person, at Mass weekly on Saturday evenings or Sundays,
- has an active experience of prayer in the family,
- receives religious education at school or through the parish, and

Register for Confirmation at the Church You Go To

Children receive immediate preparation for Confirmation in the parish where they worship weekly on Saturday evenings or Sundays. This means that the church at which your child registers for and celebrates Confirmation is determined not by the school your child attends but rather by the Catholic Church your family belongs to.

Where do I Register my Child if we go to a Catholic Church different than St. Benedict Church?

If you go to Catholic parish such as ST. JUDE, ST. PHILIP NERI, ST. ANDREW etc., contact that parish to enquire on how to register your child for Confirmation.

What if we go to St. Benedict Church?

For a child whose family participates in Sunday Mass at St. Benedict Church, registration for Confirmation opens in September of each year. In early September a meeting for parents is scheduled in the parish hall at which the registration and preparation process is explained.

Notice regarding this parent meeting appears each year in the online parish bulletin in late August. Do not rely on the school to inform you of the registration process for Confirmation: since the sacraments belong to the church, information related to the sacraments is provided by the church.

How do I know my child is ready to prepare for Confirmation?

Parents are encouraged to reflect on and discuss as a family your child's formation in the faith and readiness for preparation for this sacrament. A genuine sign that a young person is ready to journey in a process of spiritual formation leading to Confirmation, is weekly and active participation in the Sunday Mass and daily prayer.

If family prayer and weekly participation at Mass on Saturday evenings or Sundays is not part of your family experience, you may choose to defer registering your child to a later time since the invitation to prepare for and celebrate Confirmation is extended by the church each year.

What is the next step if I wish to register my child for Confirmation at St. Benedict Church this year?

- 1. Plan to attend the PARENT MEETING in early September to receive your registration form and full details on the preparation process. The Confirmation Parent Meeting date is published in late August in the WEEKLY BULLETIN section of our parish website: **visit www.stbenedicts.ca then, click on the Weekly Bulletin button to locate the appropriate bulletin for that meeting date.****
2. Locate your child's BAPTISM CERTIFICATE since a photocopy of it is required as part of the registration process. Even if your child was baptized at St. Benedict church, a copy of the baptism certificate is required. If you cannot locate your child's baptism certificate, contact the church where your child was baptized to request a baptism certificate. If your child's Baptism certificate is not in English, kindly have the information translated.

**Blessings as you consider and prepare for this important step
in your child's faith journey.**