

Our Lady of the Pillar Catholic Church

401 S Lindbergh

St. Louis, Missouri 63131

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Candidate

Confirmation Handbook

Confirmation Date:

November 8, 2018

6:00 – 9:00 pm

Confirmation Candidate Handbook

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# WELCOME TO FORMATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

## What is Confirmation?

The Sacrament of Confirmation makes present the same grace that was showered upon the Apostles fifty days after the Resurrection of Christ.

Through the celebration of Confirmation, the Father and the Son pour out the Holy Spirit, who brings seven special gifts: wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and wonder & awe in the presence of the Lord. Each of these special gifts of the Spirit gives grace that helps us to face the challenges of living in full accord with the Gospel today.

The reception of this sacrament is an indispensable moment in the life of all Catholics, and its celebration is of importance for the Church. The sacrament is called Confirmation, because it confirms the grace of Baptism. Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Its effects are to:

* Root us more deeply in being children of God
* Unite us more firmly to Christ
* Increase the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
* Strengthen our bond with the Church
* Help us to spread the faith by word and deed. It used to be common to call confirmed Catholics "soldiers of Christ." This indicates Confirmation's effects: it readies us for a full and active mission of service in the name of Christ.

#

**THE CONFIRMATION CANDIDATE**

1. The Candidate must complete all registration requirements for Confirmation:
	1. Complete and return the Registration Form
	2. Complete and return the Confirmation Planning Form
	3. Provide a copy of his/her Baptismal Certificate
	4. Prepare a letter to the Presider asking for Confirmation
	5. Ask a qualified person to serve as his/her Sponsor
	6. Select a Confirmation name
2. Candidates must display an openness of heart through:
	1. Attending Mass regularly
	2. Attending all scheduled formation classes
	3. Completing all homework for formation classes
	4. Completing a Confirmation name essay
	5. Completing the confirmation service requirement
	6. Completing the Candidate/Sponsor faith-building requirement

# THE CANDIDATE’S FAMILY

1. Parents are the primary teachers of their children in faith. Parents assume the responsibility to model personal prayer, community worship and service.
2. It is the role of the parents to assist their child in meeting the Mass attendance requirement, and to assure that the Candidate is scheduled to attend all of the Confirmation formation classes, the retreat, and Confirmation.
3. Candidates may have homework for each class. Parents should be familiar with the homework and help the Candidate approach it prayerfully.
4. If the Sponsor is out of town or in case of emergency, a family member should stand in for the Sponsor at the Confirmation practice. Likewise, if the Sponsor cannot provide a letter to be read at the retreat, a family member should do so.
5. It is vital that the Candidate’s family pray for and with him/her and be willing to share their faith stories, as well as the importance of faith to their parents, grandparents, and others. Share the story of the Candidate’s baptism, where and when it took place, who was there, and who were chosen as godparents.

# THE SPONSOR

1. What is a Sponsor? The Confirmation Sponsor is the one who assumes responsibility for a person during a period of instruction and vouches for the suitability of the Candidate to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is the responsibility of the Sponsor to stand before the faith community of the church at Confirmation and testify to the Presider that the Candidate is ready to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. This witness is a specific prerequisite of the Candidate’s reception of the sacrament.

A sponsor must be at least 16 years of age and has received the Sacraments of Initiation.

1. The Sponsor needs to be able to fulfill several requirements:
	1. The Sponsor must be an active, practicing Catholic who has already received the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.
	2. It is recommended that the Sponsor be an older person (at least sixteen) who has some experience with his/her faith and, hence a clearer perspective from which to guide the Candidate.
	3. The Sponsor may not be a parent, but may be a godparent.
	4. The Sponsor needs to be willing to help the Candidate fulfill the requirements of meeting and faith-building activities.
	5. The Sponsor (or a family member) needs to be willing to write a letter to the Candidate about his/her faith.
	6. The Sponsor (or a family member) needs to be willing to come to the Confirmation practice (**Sunday November 4, 2018 at 3 pm)**
	7. The Sponsor needs to be open, honest, caring, committed, and encouraging, a person who will help the Candidate grow in his/her understanding of the faith as the young person comes to a deeper appreciation of God in his/her life.
2. The Canon law of the Church also asks Sponsors to be actively involved in the child’s life of faith after Confirmation, helping him or her to behave as a true witness of Christ and to fulfill the obligations inherent in the sacrament.
3. At Our Lady of the Pillar, we ask our Candidate’s Sponsors to write a letter to their Candidates. The purpose of the letter is to help the Candidates better understand the significance of this sacrament in their lives. The letter should be emailed to Deacon Fred at ftustanowsky@olpillar.com or mailed to:

Our Lady of the Pillar

Attn: Confirmation Formation

401 S. Lindbergh Blvd.

St. Louis, MO 63131

All letters **must be received by November 2, 2018** so that we can assure that each Candidate has a letter to read at the retreat. If the Sponsor cannot provide this letter for any reason, a family member, adult friend or teacher should do so. We hope that students will read these letters and spend time thinking about them during the retreat. When all Candidates receive a letter at the retreat, it is a wonderful experience. These letters mean a lot to them. Usually, a Sponsor’s letter will be 2-3 paragraphs long. Try to make the letter personal so it will touch the Candidate in a special way, but the following format guidelines may be helpful:

* 1. Open with brief words of encouragement: For example, “You have been very dedicated to the Confirmation formation program”, “you have worked hard to achieve…… in your personal life”, or “it is wonderful to see you overcoming obstacles and growing in your faith.”
	2. Focus on the Candidate: For example, “Something that I have enjoyed getting to know about you is <your unique talent for…...>, <your special way of…….>, or <your commitment to…….>.”
	3. Discuss the Candidate’s spiritual gift(s): For example, “I have noticed the spiritual gift of……… flowering in you, because of the way family and friends find……. special about you.”
	4. Close with a blessing, short prayer, something you hope for the Candidate, or a special insight that might influence the Candidate’s faith.
1. Message to the Confirmation Sponsor: *If you have been asked to be a Confirmation Sponsor, Congratulations! One of our Parish’s Confirmation Candidates values your faith, finds trust in you and knows that you are someone who will care about him/ her and his/her faith development. Being a Confirmation Sponsor is not all that complicated, but it does take time and a caring heart. Here are a few suggestions on how to be the best possible Sponsor for your Candidate:*
	1. *Be a living model of faith. The young person choosing you as a Sponsor sees in you a person of faith and that is what he/she needs most of all. This young person needs a living witness of a practicing Catholic who is active in his or her parish, who participates in Sunday Mass and lives a life that reflects Catholic faith. This commitment challenges you to get more involved in the life of your parish, to learn more about your faith and to strengthen your spiritual life. Being a Confirmation Sponsor does not mean that you have to become artificially saintly, but rather requires that your faith is authentic and sincere.*
	2. *Pray for your Candidate and for yourself. As the Candidate decides to be confirmed, he/she needs spiritual strength. Your prayers for your Candidate are important, but do not forget to pray for yourself also, that you can share why you value and practice your Catholic Faith.*
	3. *Give of your time and share your gifts. Whatever gifts and talents God has given you, use them to their best during this time.*
	4. *Offer the Candidate a small gift of spiritual significance: a Bible, rosary, book about our faith, or book about the Candidate’s name saint. Be creative and personal.*

***Confirmation Schedule:***

***ALL CLASSES, RETREAT AND DAY OF REFLECTION ARE MANDITORY!!!***

Saturday August 18, 2018 “Light the Fire” Retreat” 1:00-5:00pm PLC & Church

 “Life Is Choices”

***CLASS SCHEDULE: (Attendance Required at all classes)***

Tuesday August 21, 2018 #1 “Relationships” 6:30-8:00pm OLP School

Tuesday August 28, 2018 #2 “The Bible” 6:30-8:00pm OLP School

 & “The Church”

Tuesday September 4, 2018 #3 “The Jesus Question” 6:30-8:00pm OLP School

Tuesday September 18, 2018 #4 “The Prayer Process” 6:30-8:00pm OLP School

 & The Rosary

Tuesday October 2, 2018 #5 “The Eucharist” 6:30-8:00pm OLP School

Tuesday October 16, 2018 #6 “The Holy Spirit” 6:30-8:00pm OLP School

Tuesday October 30, 2018 #7 “Holiness is Possible” 6:30-8:00pm OLP School

 & “Made For Mission”

***DAY OF REFLECTION:***

SUNDAY November 4, 2018 Adoration, Benediction, 1:00-6:00pm Church

 Reconciliation, Session 10: “Confirmation”, Rehearsal & Mass

CONFIRMATION November: 8, 2018 Archbishop Carlson Church

# REQUIREMENTS DURING CONFIRMATION FORMATION

## Letter to the Confirmation Presider/Bishop

This year, **Archbishop Robert Carlson** will preside at our Rite of Confirmation. Each Candidate must formally request the privilege of Confirmation by writing a letter to him. The letter should be introductory (tell him who you are) and should express why you want to be confirmed.

These letters will be turned in at formation ***class #4 on Tuesday September 18***

## Formation Classes and Homework

Prior to each class, all Candidates are expected to complete assigned homework.

Bring to class: Paper, Pen / Pencil, your text book and **YOUR BIBLE!**

## Confirmation Saint Name Essay ***(Due date class #3, September 4)***

Selecting a Confirmation Name:

* 1. Candidates for the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation may select a saint’s name that would symbolize a new beginning in your faith life and a connection with that particular saint. The particular saint’s name chosen would represent a strength or attribute you feel you need.
	2. It is important and necessary to learn something about the saint you choose before you decide on that name.
	3. The Candidate should not select a name merely because you like the sound of the name, how it fits with your other names, or because it is a name of a friend or relative.
	4. If the Candidate’s baptismal name is the name of a Christian saint, and if he/she feels that the baptismal name provides the meaning described above, the Candidate is welcome to use the baptismal name instead of selecting a new name.

Essay Requirement:

* 1. The Candidate must write a two paragraph essay about his/her choice of a Confirmation name. (Please type)
	2. The first paragraph is to be about the life and legacy of the particular saint whose name you are choosing.
	3. The second paragraph is to be about why you are choosing this particular saint. What symbolism or meaning does this saint hold for you? What do you hope to gain by modeling yourself after this saint? If your confirmation name is your baptismal name, your second paragraph should also explain why that choice was meaningful for you.

## Sponsor/Candidate Meetings

The Sponsor and the Candidate should have regular one-on-one meetings together. Guidelines for these meetings are as follows:

* 1. The Sponsor and the Candidate should arrange for a time to meet at least once a month between now and Confirmation.
	2. This time and place should be one in which you both feel comfortable and relaxed and where you will not be distracted or disturbed. If necessary, the meetings can take place by Skype, phone, chat or email.
	3. It is important to establish the right mix of informality and seriousness for these meetings.
	4. Start with a brief prayer. This prayer can be spontaneous or you can use traditional prayers.
	5. These meetings are used to discuss faith issues being addressed in the Candidate’s formal formation classes. Some of these topics are:
		+ God
		+ Scripture
		+ The Church
		+ Morality
		+ Social justice
		+ Service to the Church and community
		+ Importance of the liturgy and sacraments, attending Mass
		+ Vocation
		+ Elements of the Rite of Confirmation
		+ How to live as a Catholic in daily life
		+ Challenges the Sponsor has faced and how faith has helped.

## Sponsor/Candidate Faith-Building Activities

Each Sponsor and Candidate are required to do **a minimum of two (2)** of the following grow in faith activities. If the Sponsor is out of town, you may need to be creative in selecting activities that can take place by Skype, face-time or phone. If it can be arranged, the activities should be from different categories. Ideally, try an activity from each category.

### ***Prayer and Devotional Activities***

The importance of prayer, devotion and reverence cannot be overestimated in the life of a Catholic. Here are some activities that the Sponsor and Candidate can do together to explore the importance of prayer, devotion and reverence:

* 1. The Candidate can be invited to attend and participate in the Sponsor’s regular devotion, prayer group, bible study, or choir practice.
	2. Participate in a Novena, or say three Rosaries, one meditating on the Joyful Mysteries, one on the Sorrowful Mysteries, and one on the Glorious Mysteries.
	3. Sign up for and attend one or two sessions of Eucharistic Adoration.
	4. The Sponsor and Candidate both participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and then attend Mass together—perhaps try attending Mass in Latin, Spanish, or another language that the Candidate is learning for a different experience in the universal Church.
	5. Select a religious-themed book or a complete book of the Bible. Read it separately, then come together to discuss its message and how it applies in your lives. (For book ideas, try <http://catholicteennovels.com>, [www.catholicmom.com/fiction.htm](http://www.catholicmom.com/fiction.htm), or [www.catholiccompany.com/teen-literature-c697](http://www.catholiccompany.com/teen-literature-c697)).
	6. Spend a few hours in prayerful study of the Catechism. For example, consider reading YOUCAT, short for “Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church”, and then come together to discuss how it compares to more traditional Catechism.

### ***Leadership Activities***

There are many ways to describe leadership. A leader will not hide behind the status quo simply because it is safe. We are called not to timidity and fear but to leadership, to live out our faith in the here and now. We are called to be a beacon of light, now and for the future of our children and their children and the children yet to come that will need the help of faithful hearts. Though the status quo is comfy, we are called to step out and build what we need as a Catholic community. Here are some activities that can build future Church leadership and light in our world:

* 1. If the Sponsor leads Children’s Liturgy or another formation program, the Candidate can participate in planning for and leading a session.
	2. If the Sponsor is a part of Parish Council, the Candidate can help prepare for and then attend a Parish Council meeting.
	3. Attend a Catholic Charities advocacy event (<http://ccstl.org/get-involved/advocacy>).
	4. Plan an outreach program supporting a mission that is important to the Catholic faith; design and implement the necessary steps to carry out your idea.
	5. Meet with a seminary, convent, or religious order to learn how vocations work.

### ***Service Activities***

As Catholic Christians, God’s call demands that we give ourselves wholly to God and to each other. God’s call of service demands that we love each other to the same degree that God loves us. Whether it be helping the infirm, feeding the poor, visiting the sick, or other outreach, we must freely love each other with faith and fidelity. This is God’s call to service, to serve God and each other with love. Here are some ideas to incorporate the Call to Service into your preparation for Confirmation:

* 1. The Sponsor can invite the Candidate to help with the Sponsor’s regular community service project.
	2. Volunteer at one of the eight Catholic Charities’ agencies (314-367-5500x1155).
	3. Volunteer at the administrative office of St. Louis Catholic Charities (314-367-5500x1123).
	4. Sort and box food products and household items for Operation Food Search (info@ofsearch.org), the JFCS Food Pantry ([www.jfcs-stl.org](http://www.jfcs-stl.org)), or St. Louis Food Bank ([www.stlfoodbank.org/HowToHelp/Volunteer.aspx](http://www.stlfoodbank.org/HowToHelp/Volunteer.aspx)).
	5. Sort and organize baby items for Nurses for Newborns (<http://www.nfnf.org>).
	6. Assemble bulk mailings for National MS Society -Gateway Area Chapter ([www.gatewaymssociety.org](http://www.gatewaymssociety.org) or 314-446-4164).
	7. Clean and organize at St. Vincent's thrift store ([svdpstl.org/volunteers.asp](http://svdpstl.org/volunteers.asp) or 314-881-6032) or the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition’s resale store (shelleythomasbenke@foster-adopt.org or 314-367-8373).
	8. Visit, provide entertainment or read to senior residents at Cardinal Ritter Senior Services ([www.cardinalritterseniorservices.org](http://www.cardinalritterseniorservices.org) or 314-961-8000), Bethesda-Dilworth ([www.bethesdahealth.com](http://www.bethesdahealth.com) or 314-266-1035) , Meramec Bluffs Care Center (<http://www.lssmo.org> or 314-968-5570) or Sunrise Living (OnClayton.AVC@sunriseseniorliving.com or 314-646-7600).
	9. Support OLP outreach. (For example, volunteer at a fish fry, make sandwiches for St. Patrick’s Center, or gather food for Warm Meals Monday)
	10. Pick up litter and do weeding at an area Church that is in need of some TLC.

### ***Pilgrimage Activities***

A pilgrimage is a journey or search of great moral or spiritual significance. Typically, it is a journey to a shrine or other location of importance to a person’s beliefs and faith. The desire to go on pilgrimage is rooted in human nature, and we see this kind of travel throughout the world and in all times in history. The value of a pilgrimage is limited only by the amount of love and charity found in the pilgrim. What kind of pilgrim can you be? Here are some ideas to start a faith-filled journey in our area:

* 1. Black Madonna Shrine ([www.franciscancaring.org/blackmadonnashri.html](http://www.franciscancaring.org/blackmadonnashri.html))
	2. Old St. Ferdinand Shrine Tour ([www.oldstferdinandshrine.com](http://www.oldstferdinandshrine.com))
	3. Shrine of St. Joseph (<http://www.shrineofstjoseph.org/>)
	4. Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Hope (<http://www.stalphonsusrock.org/site/>)
	5. National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows (<http://snows.org/>)
	6. Plan your own pilgrimage to a place you have never experienced from the point of view of a faith journey. ([www.romeofthewest.com/2010/05/pilgrimage-sites-in-saint-louis-region.html](http://www.romeofthewest.com/2010/05/pilgrimage-sites-in-saint-louis-region.html)).

Each sponsor/candidate activity requires a 1 page summary of the activity and its meaning. These papers are due and turned in: Class # 5 October 2 and Class #6 October 16

It would be really great if you and your sponsor collaborated on writing these papers.

# WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

The essential Rite of Confirmation is the anointing of the person with chrism. Chrism is one of the three kinds of holy oil which a Bishop blesses each year at Mass on Holy Thursday. (The others are the oil of catechumens used in Baptism, and the oil used in Anointing of the Sick.) Each of the holy oils is composed of pure olive oil. From ancient times, olive oil has been looked upon as a strengthening substance (so much so that athletes would bathe in olive oil before taking part in athletic contests). The significance of the holy oils used in the sacraments is then very evident: the oil represents the strengthening effect of God's grace.

Besides the distinct and special blessing which each holy oil receives, chrism has another difference: it is fragranced with balm, which is procured from the balsam tree. In the holy chrism, balm symbolizes the "sweet odor" of virtue. This spiritual fragrance characterizes the attractiveness of the person who puts to work the graces received in Confirmation.

Those who receive Confirmation must be in a state of grace, which means that they should first be cleansed spiritually by the sacrament of Reconciliation. They should be prepared to show in their lives that they are Christians.

The night of Confirmation is a holy evening and a cause for celebration. All Candidates should be dressed appropriately for church and follow these guidelines:

* Girls should wear dresses or skirts at or below the knee. If you wear a sleeveless, spaghetti strap or strapless dress, you must wear a cardigan or sleeved top over it during the Mass. Nice church shoes with tights or stockings please.
* Guys should wear a shirt and tie, dress pants, and nice shoes (no tennis shoes). Wear a sport coat if possible.

Often, the Presider will spend time talking with the Candidates before mass. To prepare for this discussion, Candidates should know the following well by the evening of Confirmation:

***The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit:***

* Wisdom
* Knowledge
* Understanding
* Courage (Fortitude)
* Reverence (Piety)
* Wonder & Awe (Fear of the Lord)
* Right Judgment (Counsel)

***The Four Evangelists:***

* Matthew
* Mark
* Luke
* John

***The Four Marks of the Church:***

* One
* Holy
* Catholic
* Apostolic

***The Nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit:***

* Love
* Joy
* Peace
* Patience
* Goodness
* Kindness
* Faithfulness
* Gentleness
* Self-control

# CONFIRMATION PLANNING FORM (Due Class #3 8/21/2018)

**CANDIDATE INFORMATION:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Last First

**FAMILY INFORMATION:**

Do you have a sibling who could serve the Confirmation Mass? € Yes € No

 (Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

How many people (including the Candidate and Sponsor/Family Members)

are planning to attend Confirmation?

How many people (including the Candidate and Sponsor/Family Members)

are planning to attend the Reception after Confirmation?

# CONFIRMATION SPONSOR FORM (Due Class #2 8/28/2018)

**CANDIDATE NAME:**

**SPONSOR INFORMATION:**

Name:

 First Middle Last

Nickname: Date of Birth:

Address:

 Street City, State, Zip

Phone: Email Address:

Name of Sponsor’s Parish:

City: State:

Relationship to the Candidate:

Please confirm that the Sponsor has received the following sacraments (Check that all apply):

* Baptism
* Reconciliation
* Communion
* Confirmation

Mass Attendance Checklist

For Confirmation, each student is required to attend mass regularly on the weekend. In the past we required the students to turn in a signed bulletin from the mass they attended. This became an administrative headache as well as congestion at the exit of church with the priest and deacon signing bulletins as members were attempting to leave church.

So this year we are putting the responsibility and the assignment on the shoulders of the parents. Below is a checklist of all the weekend masses prior to Confirmation (the requirement is Saturday mass or Sunday mass, not both days). Please put a check mark next to the dates your child attends mass. This form is to be turned in at the last scheduled class (October 24)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Weekend Dates Yes (My child attended Mass) No (My Child did not attend)

August 18/19 ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­

August 25 / 26

September 1 / 2

September 8 / 9

September 15 / 16

September 22 / 23

Sept 29 / Sep 30

October 6 / 7

October 13 / 14

October 20 / 21

October 27 / 28

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