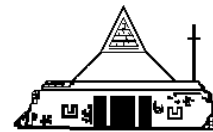




## CONFIRMATION PROGRAM FACT SHEET



Being involved in the preparation of young people for the Sacrament of Confirmation is extremely exciting and rewarding.

Programs of Confirmation preparation are filled with great moments of laughter, friendship, searching, honesty, and growth. It is indeed a privilege to walk alongside those who are preparing for this Sacrament of Christian Initiation.

The church views the role of parents in religious formation of children as both a privilege and an obligation. When you presented your child to the Church for Baptism, you were distinctly reminded that you have the responsibility to “bring [your child] up in the practice of the faith” (*Rite of Baptism* 56). **This privilege and obligation extends to all sacramental preparation.** Our program does not replace the role of the parents but assists them. We work in partnership with parents in the faith formation of their children.

### **How do I know if my child is ready for Confirmation?**

If a baptized child of catechetical age is growing up in a home where the faith of the parents is expressed in personal prayer, regular worship within a parish community, and in a life lived in accordance with Gospel values, then that child is ready. A child's readiness for a sacrament is not just a matter of age, school grade or religious instruction. When your child is confirmed, he/she will be celebrating another stage in their full initiation into the Church community. **It is a beginning.** With guidance, participation in age-appropriate programs, as well as celebrating the sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist, they will continue to grow in faith.

### **Is my child eligible for the Confirmation program?**

If your child has completed her/his level 5 program at St. Luke's then he/she is eligible to begin a catechism program which will prepare him/her for Confirmation. By coming together at the parish, the Level 5 students were able to review and discuss with their peers and catechist some important areas of their Catholic faith. Knowing about their faith is only one component of being a Catholic and experiencing it is another. The Confirmation program **will focus mainly on the Sacrament of Confirmation.**

Children entering the program from another parish will have to meet certain minimum requirements. Assessment will be on an individual basis.

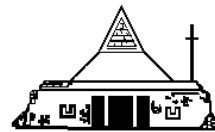
### **What are the demands of the Confirmation program?**

A firm commitment from your child and your family is expected when your family decides to make the request for the Confirmation program. This type of preparation might seem at first glance easier than weekly classes, however, it does require a greater commitment from the part of the family and the confirmands. Your child must be willing to miss the occasional activity (hockey/soccer game, practice, social event, etc.) in order to attend the scheduled Confirmation gatherings.

The only weekly gatherings are attending mass with their family and participating in the children's liturgy. The schedule contains 3 types of events:



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- **Type A:** These are events where the confirmands, accompanied by a significant adult (parent, sponsor, grand-parent, etc.), come together to celebrate and discover our various Catholic rituals – *why we do what we do*. These events are held once a month as per the schedule. Please take note that no make-up sessions will be offered for these events.

**NOTE: Parents are always welcome to support their child by becoming a catechist.**

- **Type B:** These are catechism classes for the child. They are held the week immediately following the Type A gathering. In these classes we hope to deepen your child's understanding of the experience shared the previous week. Classes are held on **Tuesday at 4:15 pm, Friday evening at 6:45 pm or Saturday at 3:15 pm** and last 90 minutes.
- **Type C:** These are opportunities (**4 Saturday evenings normally from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm and 1 Sunday afternoon from 1:30 pm**) to grow in faith with the larger faith community including youth involved in our youth ministry programs. Our faith is a personal thing but it isn't private. We are called to live as community and these events provide the opportunity for your child to meet and get to know the youth who have been confirmed and have felt called to continue their faith growth through participation in other experiences in the church.

**Attendance requirements?** Attendance **is** mandatory

We are asking you and your child to give these catechism activities **priority** over other activities. We understand that other activities (hockey, soccer, basketball, baseball, even family events, etc.) might come up during the year and will conflict with the catechism schedule. **We expect that your family will understand that the catechism class should take priority.** If you and your child cannot make such a commitment, we encourage you to postpone your confirmation preparation. You will always be welcome to begin your preparation the following year.

It is highly recommended that the parents of children registered in other activities also look closely at their schedule and availability before committing to this program. It is recommended that the parents advise coaches as soon as possible that their child has a previous commitment that might require that he/she miss certain practices or games occasionally due to this prior commitment. Unless your child is sick we do expect them to attend all the events. It is therefore important that your child has the full support of the family before registering. We ask that you take time to talk with your child about this commitment. **We are not asking children to eliminate other activities from their lives but rather to prioritize this program for one year.**

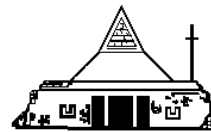
### **What is a Confirmation sponsor and what role do they have?**

A sponsor can make an enormous difference in the preparation of a candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is important, therefore, that the candidates be encouraged to choose sponsors who are well suited to the role and who will be integral to the preparation process.

The Church's tradition of involving a sponsor in the preparation of candidates for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation is one of our most ancient approaches to faith formation. The sponsor was a living witness and mentor who represented the Christian community (its values, beliefs, behaviours, and so on) to the catechumen. The sponsor will, in turn, witness to the community on the catechumen's readiness for the initiatory sacraments.



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The role of a sponsor does not end with the celebration of the sacraments. Rather, it is a lifetime commitment, a relationship that will last throughout the individual's journey of faith.

In the early Church the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation were always celebrated at one time; therefore, the same sponsor was involved in Baptism and Confirmation. In subsequent centuries, however, with the separation of Confirmation from Baptism, it became more common to have different persons act as sponsors for those two sacraments.

\* \* \* \* \*

### What does RCL – Faith First say about this program?

***RCL's Confirmation sacrament preparation program is an extensive and comprehensive program designed to help guide young people as they continue their journey of Christian initiation into the Church. This preparation is rooted in solid sacramental theology; includes the elements of ritual, prayer, Scripture, doctrine, and reflection; and is centered in "the community, which lives, celebrates and bears witness to the faith" (General Directory for Catechesis 68).***

Preparation for the sacraments is not only about cognitive learning (knowledge) it is also very significantly about a period of spiritual preparation. While young people may be somewhat limited in their theological understanding, they bring to their preparation for the sacraments an authentic spirituality. They bring a desire to know Jesus and to follow him. They bring an eagerness to share in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Here are two principles that guide catechists in preparation for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation - Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

- Sacraments are always a beginning. Young people will grow in their understanding and experience of the sacraments as their faith deepens.
- Sacraments of Christian Initiation **do not signal graduation or completion** in any way, but celebrate the **beginning** of a lifetime lived in the generosity of a gracious God.

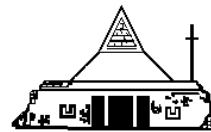
**This program offers a very different way of preparing candidates to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is built around the encouragement of the General Directory for Catechesis to *provide liturgical catechesis*, which it describes as an "eminent kind" (GDC 71) and a "privileged means" (GDC 207) of catechesis for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Every step of the way, the aim of this program will be to help candidates prepare for the actual liturgical celebration of Confirmation.**

Liturgical catechesis recognizes the teaching of the bishops more than forty years ago - at the Second Vatican Council - who explained that, in the renewal of our life of prayer and worship, the "aim to be considered before all else" is the "full, conscious and active participation" of all the people in our liturgical celebrations. (See Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 14.) This program is specifically designed to help young people celebrate their Confirmation liturgy more fully, consciously, and actively.

RCL's Confirmation Preparation program will teach the candidates truths and doctrines that are connected to their everyday Christian lives. It will lead them through a process of spiritual formation that will help them grow in readiness and desire for the gift of the Holy Spirit. This



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program will assist the candidates in being more open and ready for the ways that God wishes to transform their lives through the power of this wonderful Sacrament of Christian Initiation.

### How about engaging the Eucharistic ASSEMBLY

St. Luke's Parish will also encourage all parishioners to keep the candidates in their prayers.

*God our Father, complete the work you have begun  
and keep the gifts of your Holy Spirit active in the hearts of your people.  
Make them ready to live his Gospel and eager to do his will.  
May they never be ashamed to proclaim to the entire world Christ crucified  
living and reigning for ever and ever. AMEN. (Rite of Confirmation, "Prayer Over the People")*

### Confirmation to the Service and the Mission of the Church

The mission of the Church makes clear that service is integral to all Catholics. The Church's mission is threefold. It includes word, worship, and service. **We live out the mission** of word by reading Scripture and spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. **We carry out the mission** of worship as we participate in liturgies and communal prayer. **We live out the mission** of service as we serve one another and the Church.

We must therefore take the time to teach young people about the mission of the Church and our long history of Catholic social teaching. As you do this, you will help them understand that service is not an extracurricular activity, but a way of living our faith.

At Baptism, we are baptized into the common priesthood. And by virtue of our baptism, we are called to carry out the ministries of Jesus Christ in the world today. Service is essential to this call. Now as we come to Confirmation, we celebrate the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We also recognize that each of us is blessed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is a crucial time to help young people discern how they might put their gifts to use serving their parish, their community and the world.

Although service is integral to the mission of the Church, it is not required of candidates in order to receive the sacraments. Remember that **Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation**, a new beginning, celebrating our life-long call to live our faith. Rather than requiring service before confirmation, we will focus on fostering a life of service. We will encourage the young people to get involved; we will help them understand that each of us plays an essential role in our Church. We cannot stand around and point out to people what needs to be done. We - parents and parish - need to help young people understand that if we don't do it, it won't get done!

***“What I can do, you cannot.***

***What you can do, I cannot.***

***But together we can***

***do something beautiful for God.”***

*Saint Teresa of Calcutta*