

St. Christopher's Church Confirmation Program

2011-2012

Spreading and Defending the Faith



1861 Harbor Drive
Chester, Maryland 21619

Fr. Paul Jennings
Deacon John Robinson
Deacon James Massacci

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IMPORTANT DATES: (mark your calendar)

	Deadlines/Date
Confirmation Candidate Information/Registration Form	Sunday, October 9, 2011
Baptismal Certificates	Sunday, December 18, 2011
Initiation Mass	Sunday, January 8, 2011, 5 PM Mass at St. Christopher's
Permission slip for retreat	Sunday, January 29, 2012
Retreat: Mandatory	Saturday, February 25, 2012, 9:00 AM- 3:45 PM in the Parish Hall
Letters to Father Jennings	Sunday, February 26, 2012
Community Service Completed (turn in tracking form)	Sunday, March 4, 2012
Sponsor Certificate Due	Sunday, March 11, 2012
Confirmation Rehearsal: Mandatory	Thursday, April 12, 2012 7 PM. (Please have sponsors attend also)
Confirmation: Mandatory	April 15, 2012 arrive no later than 4:15 PM (see dress code)

Mission

For every Catholic, Participation in Parish Life is both a right and a duty. The church is spiritually strong and vibrant to the extent that the Baptized members of the Parish community live their faith and share it with others. In confirmation, the candidate is agreeing to enter into that Parish community, so it is proper that he or she prepare for that serious obligation in the Parish setting.

Participation in Parish life includes a variety of actions – registrations as members; contributions of time, talent, and treasure to Parish activities; apostolic service to the needy in the parish and its larger communities; cooperation in the religious education of all family members; and regular sharing in the Sacramental life and worship of the Parish community.

Preparation to receive the sacraments requires much more of the candidate than schooling in the basics of faith. While that aspect is important and is certainly provided very well in our Catholic Schools and CCD programs, much more is involved that is best provided in a Parish Setting.

Confirmation brings to fullness that life in the Holy Spirit into which we were first initiated at Baptism. Therefore, a comprehensive preparation for Confirmation necessitates proper planning of curriculum, serious teach-formation, Clergy participation, parental involvement, and the prayerful support of the total Parish community. Program components include study, service, retreat, and liturgy. Beyond just catechesis, our Parish program includes significant service project experiences; a retreat for enhanced religious formation; education in liturgy fostering active participation on the part of the candidates in special liturgies and celebrations of the Eucharist; and interviews with Fr. Jennings to develop mutual relationships and understanding of the candidates' readiness and willingness to be confirmed.

Confirmation is not a Sacrament that is chosen for us as in Baptism. It is a serious choice we must make on our own. It is a commitment we make to live in the fullness of faith. Such a commitment requires careful preparation and the support of the family and Parish community.

Confirmation Requirements

- Attend Mass weekly - Faithful attendance at Mass weekly is a **MANDATORY** requirement. **Attending Mass at the completion of class (9:30 or 11:30 AM) does NOT satisfy this requirement. The first Sunday of every month the students will attend Mass (9:00 or 11:00 AM) as a class.**
- Each Candidate must clearly understand that the Sacrament of Confirmation is the completion of the Sacrament of Baptism; that they are confirming the vows taken by their parents and godparents at Baptism.
- Successfully complete class requirements which will be defined to the candidates in their classes by their teacher.
- Attendance at all classes - **THREE ABSENCES (January 8th- April 15th)** may result in repeating the class and the Candidate not being Confirmed, unless there is a serious medical or family reason.
- Come to class on time! Candidates coming in late are very disruptive to class and this will not be tolerated.
- Write a letter to Fr. Jennings requesting to be Confirmed - the letter should explain why the Candidate

wants to be confirmed, should demonstrate an understanding of the Sacrament and should include how Confirmation will effect their lives. (Check calendar for when this letter is due).

- Interview with Fr. Jennings - the Candidates will be asked questions that will demonstrate their readiness for Confirmation and their willingness and ability to spread and defend their faith as confirmed Catholics.
- Complete 3 Community Service Projects – **One** must be outside the Parish, examples: Helping at area Nursing Homes, Senior Homes, Participating in the March for Life, working at a food bank or food kitchen, assisting at a homeless shelter. You could even run your own coat drive or food drive for the homeless or needy. **One Project** must be for the Parish and the **Third** can be for either. All outside the Parish Service Projects must be approved ahead of time by your teacher. Your teacher will also be consulting with the coordinator of whatever Parish activity you choose, to be sure you were an active participant.
- Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation: All candidates must receive this sacrament within 1 month of their Confirmation. Consult the bulletin for times.
- Attend the Confirmation Retreat on Saturday, February 25, 2012 – **MANDATORY – If a Candidate fails to go on the retreat he/she may not be confirmed. You have advanced notice for the date of this retreat so please work all schedules around it. If, for serious reasons beyond your control, you miss the retreat, contact the RE Office as soon as possible.**
- Attend the Confirmation Rehearsal – **MANDATORY for Confirmandi** – We would like to have the Sponsor there if possible and at least one parent.
- Must turn in Sponsor Certificate on or before **March 11, 2012.**
- Must turn in Baptismal Certificate on or before **December 18, 2011**, if not baptized here at St. Christopher's.

Sponsor's Role

A Sponsor should play an important role in preparing the candidate for confirmation, is required to participate in the Confirmation ceremony, and should serve as a guide and roll model afterward in the life long journey toward Christ. Specifically, sponsors should:

- Commit the time to help prepare the confirmandi.
- Participate in 1 community service activity with the confirmandi.
- Attend 1 confirmation class with confirmandi.
- Write a letter to the confirmandi encouraging them in their faith. **(Requirement)**
- Attend Mass with confirmandi when possible.
- Attend Confirmation practice and the ceremony **(Requirement)**
- Make themselves available to guide the confirmed after Confirmation.
- Encourage the confirmed to practice their faith by frequenting the sacraments, serving as good examples to society, and living up to their commitment to spread and defend the faith.

Selecting a Sponsor

A Sponsor is required for the person being confirmed. Any Catholic 16 years of age or older who has received the sacrament of confirmation and the Eucharist and is practicing the faith is

eligible. The baptismal sponsor can also be the sponsor for confirmation. Parents cannot be sponsors of their children.

A Sponsor should be prepared to assist the person being confirmed in their preparation, during the ceremony, and afterward in the life long journey toward Christ.

Selecting a Confirmation Name

We are encouraging students to select a confirmation name. While confirmation names are not required, they are consistent with the Church's tradition of assigning new names to the faithful when they accept a new ministry (i.e. religious, St. Peter, St. Paul) and afford students the opportunity to reflect on the life of a saint they wish to emulate. There are many good books on the lives of the saints. For online information on saints, you can browse

<http://saints.catholic.org/index.shtml>.

Confirmation Letters To Father Jennings

Each candidate for confirmation is required to write a letter to Fr. Jennings explaining why he or she wishes to receive this sacrament. The letter should demonstrate that candidate's understanding of the sacrament, his/her desire to receive the sacrament, and how this will change his/her life.

Community Service

Community service is a natural outflow of Catholic living. "Faith without works is dead" James 2:14-26. The act of serving others changes our hearts, broadens our perspective, and draws us closer to God and each other. Both St. Christopher's Parish and our local community provide a wide variety of service opportunities.

Each Candidate must complete three mandatory community service project. One must be outside the Parish, examples: Helping at area Nursing Homes, Senior Homes, Participating in the March for Life, working at a food bank or food kitchen, assisting at a homeless shelter. You could even run your own coat drive or food drive for the homeless or needy. One Project must be for the Parish and the Third can be for either. All outside the Parish Service Projects must be approved ahead of time by your teacher. Your teacher will also be consulting with the coordinator of whatever Parish activity you choose, to be sure you were an active participant. Students are responsible for tracking their service projects, discussing scheduling with their parents, and turning in their tracking sheet.

Program Overview

The curriculum is centered around knowing God, believing in God, and acting for God:

- **Knowing God** will be accomplished each class through
 - o Written lesson plans following a pre-determined format
 - o Lectures, question and answer
 - o Text books "Spreading and Defending the Faith" &

- o Supplemental resources “Our Life in the Church”, (the Catechism, & the Bible)
 - o Weekly review of prior lessons
 - o Tests and quizzes
 - o An anonymous question box in each class
- **Believing In God** (trusting) activities seek to make God real to students and deepen their relationship with Him.
 - o Prayer at beginning and end of class, offering up intentions, students lead prayer
 - o Structured reflections and meditation using
 - Scripture reading
 - Catholic Reflection book i.e. “My Daily Bread”
 - Prayer Books and Devotions such as the Rosary
 - Inspirational Music
 - o Participation in the Sacraments at selected class sessions
 - Attend Mass
 - Go to Confession
 - Eucharistic Adoration
 - o Just Ask Father – Father will stop by classrooms periodically to answer student’s questions.
 - o Class Retreat - Students will attend a day of retreat to deepen their faith
- **Acting for God** activities seek to help Students practice their faith every day.
 - o Participation in the Sacraments
 - o Dedication of a class lesson to discuss life long, ongoing conversion and ways they can begin.
 - o Special Topic Talks by Fr. Jennings and/or a guest speakers.
 - o Performance of community service (outside class)
 - o Participate in group community service projects
 - Assist in Family Life committee
 - Assist with Mass (Lecture, Ushers, etc.)
 - Assist Lower Grade Teachers.
 - Assist the elderly
 - Assist the poor and needy, etc.

Are you ready?

Sometimes students feel that they are not ready to be confirmed. This is an important decision to be made by the student and the parent with input from the teacher/priest. The confirmation Program has been designed to help students “become ready” for confirmation. Confirmation is the beginning of a life long journey of spiritual growth, learning, and discovery.

Students will be tested on their knowledge of the faith but that test alone cannot determine readiness. If there are concerns about a child’s readiness, a meeting should occur between the parents, the teacher/priest before prayerfully making a decision.

Confirmation Day Attire Dress Code

For Confirmandi and Sponsors: Please choose Modesty in choosing your outfit.

Men –

- Suit
- Sport Jacket and Dress pants (NO Jeans)
- Dress shirt and tie
- Dress socks and dress shoes (NO sneakers)

Women –

- Modest dress
- Dress skirt and blouse
- Dress or shirt must be knee length or longer
- Chest, back and shoulders must be covered
- Dress shoes (NO flip-flops)

Keep in mind, your forehead must be uncovered for the anointing from the Bishop.

Did you know...*St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City maintains a strict dress code. Even in the summer, shoulders must be covered at all times, shorts, short dresses, tank tops, and any revealing clothing are not permitted inside...*

Home Schooling Policy

Parents who home school their children may be unsure how they wish to prepare their child for Confirmation. Pope Paul VI declared that through the Sacrament of Confirmation we are “bound more intimately to the Church” and “they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and deed as true witnesses of Christ”. Because of the communal nature of Confirmation, we strongly recommend that parents enroll their children the church’s Confirmation Program.

Class Time

Class will be held for 8:00 -9:30 AM and 9:30-11:00 AM on Sunday mornings in the religious education classrooms. Once a month class times will be extended so the class can attend Mass together, see schedule for these weeks. All other class times will overlap with the 9:00 AM Mass so please plan accordingly. If circumstances arise where the 9:00 AM Mass is then only Mass a student can attend that Sunday, please send a note to the teacher and the student will be dismissed in time/excused late so that they can celebrate Mass with his/her family.

Contact List

Contact	Title	Phone/E-mail
Fr. Paul Jennings	Pastor	410-643-6220
Ms. Katie Lewis	CRE/Confirmation Coordinator	410-643-8489
Mary Jourdak	8 am 8th Grade Girls Teacher	410-643-5766
Walter Gill	8 am 8th Grade Boys Teacher	
Alanna Giebler	9:30 am 8th Grade Girls Teacher	410-643-2774
Mark Todd	9:30 am 8th Grade Boys Teacher	410-924-2428/ markandlesley@verizon.net