

St. Paul the Apostle Confirmation Formation



Parent/Student Handbook 2025-2026

Just as Baptism **gives** new life, Eucharist **nourishes** life, and Reconciliation **restores** life when it is broken, Confirmation **strengthens** that life by the gifts of the Holy Spirit (cf. CCC 1285). It is about strengthening what God has given, and continues to give to us today. (cf. CCC 1302-1303).

About Confirmation Formation Program

Confirmation Formation for grades 7 thru High School is designed to encourage growth in faith, strengthen students' relationship with Christ and build a better understanding of our shared Catholic Faith.

Students will be presented with grade appropriate material under four main categories:

CREED / LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS / MORAL LIFE / CHRISTIAN PRAYER.

| CREED |

We believe that the doctrine of the Church is articulated in its creeds. These truths we profess as Catholic Christians flow from Scripture and embody a rich Tradition passed down from the first followers of Jesus Christ. This Tradition is God's revelation through time. An understanding of these beliefs provides the foundation of a faith development for children.

| LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS |

We believe as Catholic Christians that the Liturgical Year with its seasons and feasts celebrates God's presence in the cycle of human life. As a community of faith we are invited into the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church.

| MORAL LIFE |

We believe we are called to a moral life that embodies Jesus Christ's example of faithfulness, forgiveness, compassion, justice, and service.

| CHRISTIAN PRAYER |

We believe prayer is integral to the Christian life. It sustains and nurtures our relationship with God, enlightens our relationships with others, and provides a greater sense of well-being.

Our curriculum is designed to share the beauty of the Church and her teachings. Students will receive teachings on Salvation History, the Catholic Church, the Eucharist & the Mass, Mary, the Apostles and Saints, Faith in action, Vocations & callings, and so much more. Classes are intended not only to present information but to help students learn about and understand the roots of our faith, highlight the relevance of Jesus in our lives today, the power of the Holy Spirit, the significance of faith sharing, the power of prayer, and offer encounter with our loving God for whom we were created to know, love, and serve.

Material and lessons will be taken from a variety of sources:

Called to be Catholic (Loyola Press) / Confirmed in the Spirit (Loyola Press) / Teen Bible / YouCat
In addition, material and lessons will be taken from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Theology of the Body for Teens, Connected (Ascension Press) and other Catholic articles, Bible studies and videos from **FORMED.org**. Scripture teachings, reflections, discussions, prayer services and guest speakers, along with participation in weekly Liturgy will round out our Faith Formation Confirmation Preparation program.

Abbreviations used on Faith Formation Calendar

S/W = Faith Formation classes on Sunday or Wednesday

SCU 1 = Sacramental catch up classes for grades 3 thru 6

CF = Confirmation classes (7th, 8th, HS)

CCU = Catechism Catch-up for Confirmation Prep students needing the Sacrament of Baptism, Reconciliation and/or First Eucharist

Faith Formation Office: 847-816-8677

Faith Formation Staff:

Amy Russell - K thru 6 Coordinator

arussell@spa.church

Cassie Bertke - 7 thru HS Confirmation Coordinator

cbertke@spa.church

Mary Jo Urquhart - FF Admin (all clerical issues, absentees, service hours, records)

murquhart@spa.church

Tammy Oberstar - FF Admin (all financial issues, Virtus site admin, records, email issues)

toberstar@spa.church

Attendance: Regular weekly attendance is expected and should be the norm for all faith formation students. Regular attendance helps your child feel part of the group, fosters a sense of continuity, and emphasizes the importance YOU place on faith formation. Our attendance policy is designed to help you and your child build on this idea.

- Student absences should be reported in advance of class via **email to Mary Jo Urquhart: murquhart@spa.church**. Please include your child's first and last name and reason for absence. If your child is feeling ill, please keep them home. An email confirming a students absence will be sent following any missed class
- We do understand that illness & family emergencies may keep a student from class. With this in mind we allow 4 absences per Faith Formation year. There will be no formal make-up sessions. Please use your child's class syllabus, provided in their student folder, to review & cover the missed material.
- **After 4 absences**, a meeting with the grade coordinator and a member of the Pastoral Staff will be required. **Additional absences** after this initial meeting will be reviewed by our Pastor and staff to determine preparedness to continue to the next year. The final decision will rest with our Pastor.
- **7th, 8th, High School:** Mass is part of your class time. A student not in attendance for Mass will be considered absent from the class.

CONFIRMATION FORMATION: CLASS DAYS, ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Classes will meet **3x/month (exceptions: Dec/Jan/Feb), from 3:30-6:00pm (including Mass)**. Our class time is precious and our catechists spend many hours preparing lessons & materials. Just as schools have a specific start and end time, so do we. Please be respectful of our catechists and other students and ensure your student arrives on time and is present until the end of Mass. Students arriving late or leaving early are a distraction to others and quite often miss significant teachings.

CONFIRMATION FORMATION: MASS ATTENDANCE

Weekly Mass Attendance is a Chicago Archdiocese requirement for all Confirmation candidates. While we will not be taking attendance on the “off weeks”, we strongly encourage students and families to make weekly Mass a priority. St. Paul’s offers 5 Masses each weekend and there are multiple Catholic Churches in the area if the St. Paul’s Mass schedule doesn’t fit your family’s activity schedule.

Mass is part of our curriculum so if a student is absent for Mass on a class day, they will be marked absent for the entire class.

CONFIRMATION FORMATION: RETREAT

A Retreat is required for all Year 2 and HS students.

8th Grade & HS students will participate in a full day Retreat, Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026

Prince of Peace Catholic Church, Lake Villa

Parent drop off & pick up required

CONFIRMATION FORMATION: PARENTAL & SPONSOR INVOLVEMENT

There is no stronger testament to the value of this program than students & families praying together, worshipping together at Mass, and being fully engaged in the spiritual growth of each other. Sponsor & candidate conversations are extremely beneficial to candidate formation.

Prayer Service: Dec. 7, 2025. Parents and Sponsors are encouraged to attend, participate, and pray with the students. Your show of support is invaluable to your child’s faith journey.

(New) Faith Enrichment for Students/ParentsSponsors: We will again offer a book study and discussion. These sessions will be held in the LLGS on Monday evenings (4), 6:30-6pm. Two sessions will be offered: **Session 1-** 10/20, 10/27, 11/3, 11/10 **Session 2-** 1/26, 2/2, 2/9, 2/23
Registration Required. **Church Service Hours: 8 (with full participation only)**

Sponsor Class: Jan. 25, 3:30-6pm. Year 2 & HS students and their sponsors.

Additional information on the retreat, Faith Enrichment, and Sponsor Class will be provided later but please mark your calendars with these important dates.

CONFIRMATION FORMATION: *CONFIRMATION INTERVIEW*

In February, Year 2 & HS students will complete a 15-minute confirmation interview with a Priest, Deacon, Faith Formation catechist or staff member. Interview conversations will help guide Fr. Chris and our staff in assessing the readiness of a student for Confirmation. Students will have an opportunity to ask questions as well as answer those posed by their interviewer. Dates, times and sign-up information will be provided in January.

CONFIRMATION FORMATION: *SERVICE*

Service is a Chicago Archdiocese requirement and should be based on Catholic Social Teaching & Corporal Works of Mercy. With this in mind, our **Service requirement for 2025-26** is as follows:

Service to the Church - Minimum 10 hours (choose from approved list)

- **Classroom Assistant for a Faith Formation class:** Advance registration & regular attendance required. Contact the Faith Formation office. **Fulfills yearly requirement**
- **Faith Enrichment/Book Study & Discussion:** This is a student/parent or student/sponsor activity & will be offered twice. Registration & attendance for all 4 meetings is required.
Session 1: 10/20, 10/27, 11/3, 11/10 or **Session 2:** 1/26, 2/2, 2/9, 2/23. **6:30-8pm**
Service hours given for full participation only- **8 hrs**
- **Craft Fair (Nov):** Advance registration required (**Hrs TBD**)
- **Babysitting- Boy Scout Annual Meeting (Nov):** Advance registration required (**2 hrs**)
- **St. Vincent de Paul Soup Kitchen:** Various dates. Advance Registration required (**3 hrs**)
- **The CHOSEN:** Watch a full season at home and complete questions on each episode (question packets provided, please ask)- **8 hrs**
- **Christmas Card Delivery (Dec):** Advance registration required. Pick up cards in the LLGS & deliver to predetermined locations (Nursing Homes, Senior Centers, etc). (**2 hrs**)
- **Catholic Charities Gift Sunday:** Assist with organizing & packing trucks after the 11:30 Mass. Parents welcome! (**2-3 hrs**)
- **Set-up and tear down of Christmas decoration in church:** Advance registration required. This activity requires a student & parent team. 2 Saturdays in December and 1 Saturday in January (dates to be announced later), **9am-1pm**. To register, contact the Parish Office after dates are announced. 847-918-0600
- **First Communion Retreat:** Advance registration required. Assist as needed (**2 hrs**)

Students will keep a **written log for Service to Church hours only**. Hours & log must be completed and **turned in no later than March 1, 2026**.

Service to Community: Students will participate in group **Service Projects** designed to benefit PADS of Lake County and the homeless population relying on the Holy Family Food Pantry. A written summary of each project will be required to receive service project credit and fulfill the service to community component.

CONFIRMATION FORMATION: CHOOSING A SPONSOR

High School: Sponsor name due by November 2, 2025

Year 2 students: Reconfirm sponsor name no later than November 2, 2025

Year 1 students: Sponsor choice due by January 11, 2026

The word “sponsor” comes from Latin which means “to give assurance, promise solemnly.” Within the Catholic Church “sponsor” means one who presents a candidate for baptism or confirmation and undertakes the shared responsibility with parents for the person’s religious education and spiritual welfare.” Each Confirmation candidate must choose a sponsor during their first year of formation. Choosing a Confirmation Sponsor early allows the student and sponsor to engage and develop their faith relationship with one another and the Lord, growing spiritually together.

The role of a Confirmation Sponsor:

- Continues the work begun by the Godparent(s) of the Confirmation Candidate.
- Commits to being an example of a faithful follower of God throughout their life.

Canon Law states that in order to serve as a sponsor, a person:

- Must be a Confirmed Catholic
- Displays a visible commitment to living their Catholic faith
- Has the ability and intention to carry out the responsibility as the candidate’s spiritual guide, understanding it is a lifelong commitment
- Regularly attends Mass
- Takes regular advantage of the sacraments (Eucharist & Reconciliation)
- Is at least sixteen years of age

Other Considerations:

- **May not be a parent of the individual to be confirmed**
- Each candidate may choose only one sponsor
- Because the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are so closely connected, the Church suggests a Godparent as a preferred choice, but it is not required

Questions to help determine who would be a good sponsor choice:

- Who is someone who has nurtured my faith?
- Is there someone in my life who’s faith I admire?
- Who is or has been a guide, a confidant, a listener, in my life?
- Who will continue with me on my faith journey after Confirmation?

CONFIRMATION FORMATION: CHOOSING A SAINT NAME

Y2 & High School: Saint name due by November 2, 2025

God Himself said, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine" (Isaiah 43:1).

Choosing a Confirmation name is an opportunity to choose a name that has special meaning to you, a name that will help you in your journey of faith. This is both a privilege and a responsibility. **By choosing a saint's name, you're asking him or her to pray for you in a special way and you are telling that Saint that you admire what they stood for and will honor their name.** Also, having a special connection to someone in Heaven is a big deal!

Your Confirmation Saint Name:

- Is the name of a Catholic Saint
- Reflects your identity as a member of the Catholic Christian Community
- Is associated with someone whom you respect
- Is an example of love and holiness
- Can be your Baptismal name

Where to begin:

PRAY! Just as you should pray about any decision, ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Also, in this case, the internet can be your friend! Search "Patron Saint of ____." Read about some of the amazing men and women who lived ordinary and extraordinary lives. Discuss with your parents and your sponsor how and why they chose their saint.

The following website may be helpful:

<https://www.catholic.org/saints>

<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/saints>

<https://mycatholic.life/saints>

Many Saints have their own websites! Check for yours!

(NEW) Year 1 students will begin exploring saints for their Confirmation which will help them find that special connection to a saint who will be their heavenly guardian throughout their faith journey. **Three (3) short saint reports** will be required throughout the year.

Due dates: 10/26, 1/25, 4/12.

CONFIRMATION FORMATION: SAINT REPORT

Y2 & High School: **Saint Boards due by March 1, 2026** *(Board size 22x28 will be provided)*

The Saint Board serves as a way for each Candidate to “get to know” their chosen Patron Saint and to share that information with others.

MY CONFIRMATION SAINT

Content of Board: Pictures, articles, statements, prayers, etc.

- Date and place of birth & death. Some significant facts about the saint's life.
- What led you to choose this particular saint. What about their life inspires you?
- How is this saint impacting your faith journey?
- In what ways will you need your patron saint to help you after Confirmation?
- What have you learned about your patron saint that you personally desire to imitate?
- Are there any ways that you are already similar to him/her?

Possible Sources

Books:

- Lives of the Saints
- Butler’s Lives of the Saints
- Catholic Encyclopedia
- Saint of the Day (series)
- Saints for Young Readers (series)

Catholic websites:

- www.ewtn.com/saintsholy
- <http://www.catholic.org/saints/>
- <http://www.americancatholic.org/>

All Saint Boards will be displayed around the LL and/or in the upper Gathering Space, March 1-21, 2026.

CONFIRMATION FORMATION: BISHOP LETTER

Y2 & High School: Bishop letters due no later than March 8, 2026

All letters will be printed and signed in class on March 15, 2026

It is your choice to respond to God's call to live your faith more deeply – to worship, witness and serve as a confirmed Catholic Christian. **If you wish to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation**, write a formal letter of request to the Bishop, stating your desire to be confirmed.

Please check spelling and grammar! **The entire letter should not be more than 1 page.**

We will print each letter here and students will sign them during class on March 15th.

All letters are put in a binder and delivered to the Bishop's office the week of March 16th.

Please pray about this and give serious thought to what you want to convey to the Bishop before writing your letter.

Format as follows:

GREETING

Begin your letter with the greeting: Dear Bishop _____.



BODY OF LETTER

Paragraph 1: Introduce yourself. Briefly say something about your family or background. The Bishop does not need to know about how many pets you have but should know where you're from, how old you are, maybe something special or unique about your family, etc...

Paragraph 2: Request the Sacrament of Confirmation! Explain why you would like to be confirmed. **Be Honest!**

Paragraph 3: Explain how you have prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation- Classes attended, retreat, service, participation in other Sacraments, etc. If there was a specific class or topic that really spoke to you, now is the time to recall that experience. Tell the Bishop about your growth in the Faith and how it has impacted your life so far. You could also speak about service to others: in the community, in the parish etc...

Paragraph 4: Tell how you will carry out your Faith life after Confirmation. Maybe mention what you expect from the Holy Spirit (gifts).

CONCLUSION

Conclude the letter with **one of these**: Sincerely, Yours in Christ, Blessings.

Sign your name.