

A final note for parents: Confirmation is a wonderful opportunity to experience God's grace in our lives, and to take the next step in our faith journey! If you have questions or concerns, or if your son or daughter is unsure about whether they are ready for this, please speak with me, or have them speak with me. Some students might be much better prepared for this sacrament down the road than they are right now, and we don't want them to miss this gift by just going through the motions. We all have moments of doubt, or difficulties in our faith lives, but real resistance or serious anger or apathy about this shouldn't be treated lightly. Receiving this sacrament can be a real moment of grace for your whole family, rather than a time of tension or frustration.

Call us—we are here to help!

We are so excited for you and your family as we approach your child's Confirmation! Please keep all of the students, teachers, and the whole parish in your prayers as we head toward the fall.

Here's a final checklist of items we need for Confirmation:

Registration form and fee

Baptismal Information sheet (& certificate if baptized outside of Ipswich)

Sponsor Information Sheet

For the 1st class in the fall, students must bring:

Signed Sponsor Conversation Sheet

Any make-up work they have, or Service Project Reflections...

They should have their Confirmation name chosen!!

God bless you all, and have a wonderful summer!

Our Lady of Hope's Confirmation Prep. Handbook 2007



Office of Religious Education

1 Pineswamp Road

Ipswich, MA 01938

978-356-2522

elisa@ipswichcatholics.org

Please read this whole booklet— it's full of all the necessary information for Confirmation! Please keep it handy until Confirmation is over in October. It should answer most questions you might have—but if you have any more questions, please don't hesitate to contact me!

Program Requirements

If you are ready for Confirmation, here are the basics that you've accomplished:

- *Completion of 2 year Confirmation Program (including completion of make-up work, attendance at special events, and regular participation at Mass)*
- *Completion of Service Projects for each year*
- *Attendance at Confirmation Retreat*

So, what's next?

Here's how to get there from here:

- *Have a conversation at home about this booklet, and the Sacrament— pray & prepare as a family for this great grace!*
- *Choose your sponsor!*
- *Choose your Confirmation Name!*
- *Complete Sponsor Conversation Sheet over the summer*
- *Attend classes, and rehearsals for Confirmation in the fall.*
- *Receive the Sacrament of Confirmation!*

Odds & Ends

(frequently asked questions)

- **WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?** I go over this with the students in the fall, but just so parents are aware, here's the "dress code".
REMEMBER— you're dressing for church, not the beach.

This is a special and quite holy occasion!

God doesn't see you the way your friends and peers do, and you're dressing for Him today (and hopefully everyday):

For the gentlemen: Button down shirt & tie are required— a jacket is preferred, but we don't want anyone to have to go out and spend a lot of money on suit (that's just not what Confirmation is about), so it's not required; Dress pants— nice khakis are fine (no rips, no stains, no jeans); Dress shoes— NO sneakers, sandals of any kind; SHIRTS TUCKED IN, PANTS BELTED at the waist (not halfway down the rear-end).

For the ladies: Mid-calf or longer dresses or skirts are preferred— but everything must at least be below the knee (not "at" the knee, it's cold in late October anyway), dressy pants are fine, nothing sleeveless, strapless, or strappy— wear something over it for Mass... no plunging necklines or ANY midriff showing (I'm glad that fad appears to be over for the moment)— PLEASE nothing too tight or skimpy!! Dress shoes— NO sneakers, sandals of any kind.

- **WHO NEEDS TO BE AT THE CHURCH EARLY ON CONFIRMATION DAY?**

Definitely the student & sponsor need to be there at 9am— the bishop speaks with them and we take care of some important things.
Parents can leave & come back if necessary.

- **ARE THERE RESERVED SEATS?** Only for the students & sponsors. After the rows of students and sponsors, people may sit anywhere— so getting there early is a good idea.

- **WHAT ABOUT PICTURES?** No photography is allowed during the Mass, but the Bishop is always available afterward for pictures, and you can take as many as you'd like after Mass in the church.

Sponsor Conversation Sheet

This step is pretty straightforward— using the sheet included with this booklet as a guide, your son or daughter should initiate a conversation with their sponsor over the summer. Hopefully, they are close enough to their sponsor that they will be speaking with them anyway, but this is an opportunity to talk with their sponsor specifically about Confirmation, and to ask questions about their sponsor's experience of the sacrament. If they can meet in person with their sponsor, wonderful. If they can't, a phone conversation is fine. They do not need to take notes about the conversation, but they should have either their sponsor or a parent sign the sheet, to attest that the conversation happened. Then, bring it with them to the 1st class in the fall, where we'll talk about their experiences.

Fall Schedule

Students MUST attend these evenings— mark your calendars!

Monday Evenings from 7-8:30pm

September 24th

October 1st

*****SUNDAY, October 14th***

Reconciliation Service— Sponsors invited!!

October 22nd

CONFIRMATION REHEARSAL with Sponsors:

Friday, October 26th at 7pm

CONFIRMATION DATE:

Sunday October 28th, 10am Mass

Students MUST arrive by 9am and meet in the church

The Conversation

It's very important to recognize that although students are finishing their Religious Education program for youth, the actual development, growth, and education in their faith will last the rest of their lives! Think back to when you were 16 (the age many of our students are when they "finish" their religious education)— does the understanding of your faith that you had at age 16 still sustain you at age 40? Does a child's understanding help sustain an adult's faith, with all of the complex questions and situations that life brings? Talk with your son or daughter about what they plan to do to continue their faith life after Confirmation— beginning with regular participation at Mass. Help them to speak about their gifts, and think of ways they can use them to serve in their parish community. Are they singers? Teachers? Readers? Do they love to help others? As a parent, you are still their #1 role model (even if most days it doesn't seem like they are paying attention— or even like you very much), and their primary educator in the faith. Reinforce this conversation by paying attention to your own spiritual life. Help them to stay connected to their faith community by staying connected yourself. Give some thought to the next step in your own faith journey. If you really thought that the last 10 years of Religious Education were worthwhile— and you must have, if you continued to get them here each week!— then help them to see why it matters to you by your involvement and participation.

If you have questions about how to get more involved in parish life, please call Elisa or Nancy anytime at 356-2522..

Sponsors

Help your son or daughter to choose a sponsor for Confirmation— it's great if it can be a Baptismal Godparent, but not necessary. This person should be a role model of the faith to your son or daughter. Here are the guidelines for Confirmation sponsors:

- *A sponsor MUST be a Catholic who practices their faith!*
- *Must be at least 16 years old and already Confirmed;*
- *If married, the marriage must be according to Church law (if you have questions, please call the church for assistance);*
- *A sponsor does not need to be the same gender as the candidate;*
- *A sponsor may not be the parent of a candidate.*

We do need to have you fill out the Sponsor Information Sheet as soon as possible, as we invite all the sponsors to a Reconciliation Service before Confirmation, and need to send them the information. We hope that sponsors are close enough to Ipswich to be able to join us for the evening, and for the rehearsal before Confirmation (see the attached calendar for all these dates), but if sponsors are far away, parents can stand in for them on these evenings.

***If a sponsor becomes ill, or cannot make the Confirmation due to an emergency, a parent can fill in as a proxy for the sponsor at the Confirmation Mass.*

Choosing a Confirmation Name!

This is another opportunity to speak with your child about Confirmation. Help them to think through name possibilities. Ideally, the name has some meaning for them— perhaps it's a favorite saint, or the favorite saint of a parent or godparent. It could be the name of a loved one, which is also a saint's name. It could be the patron saint of something that they love— for example, "Thomas" after Thomas Aquinas, the patron of students. Here are some websites to check out to learn about saint names:

THE PATRON SAINT INDEX: lookup names by date, by name, or by topic (ie. what they are the patron of: for example, if you lookup "music" you'll find "Saint Cecilia," the patron of music):
<http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/indexsnt.htm>

CATHOLIC ONLINE: Another great way to browse for name possibilities, with lots of great facts and answers to faq's:
<http://www.catholic.org/saints/>

If you have questions or problems regarding sponsors or names, call Elisa at 356-2522.

Students need to have a name & sponsor chosen by the time we meet in the fall!

I can't stress enough how important it is to talk to your child about these things, and really have the conversation about Confirmation with them— use the Confirmation name & sponsor issues to broach the subject!