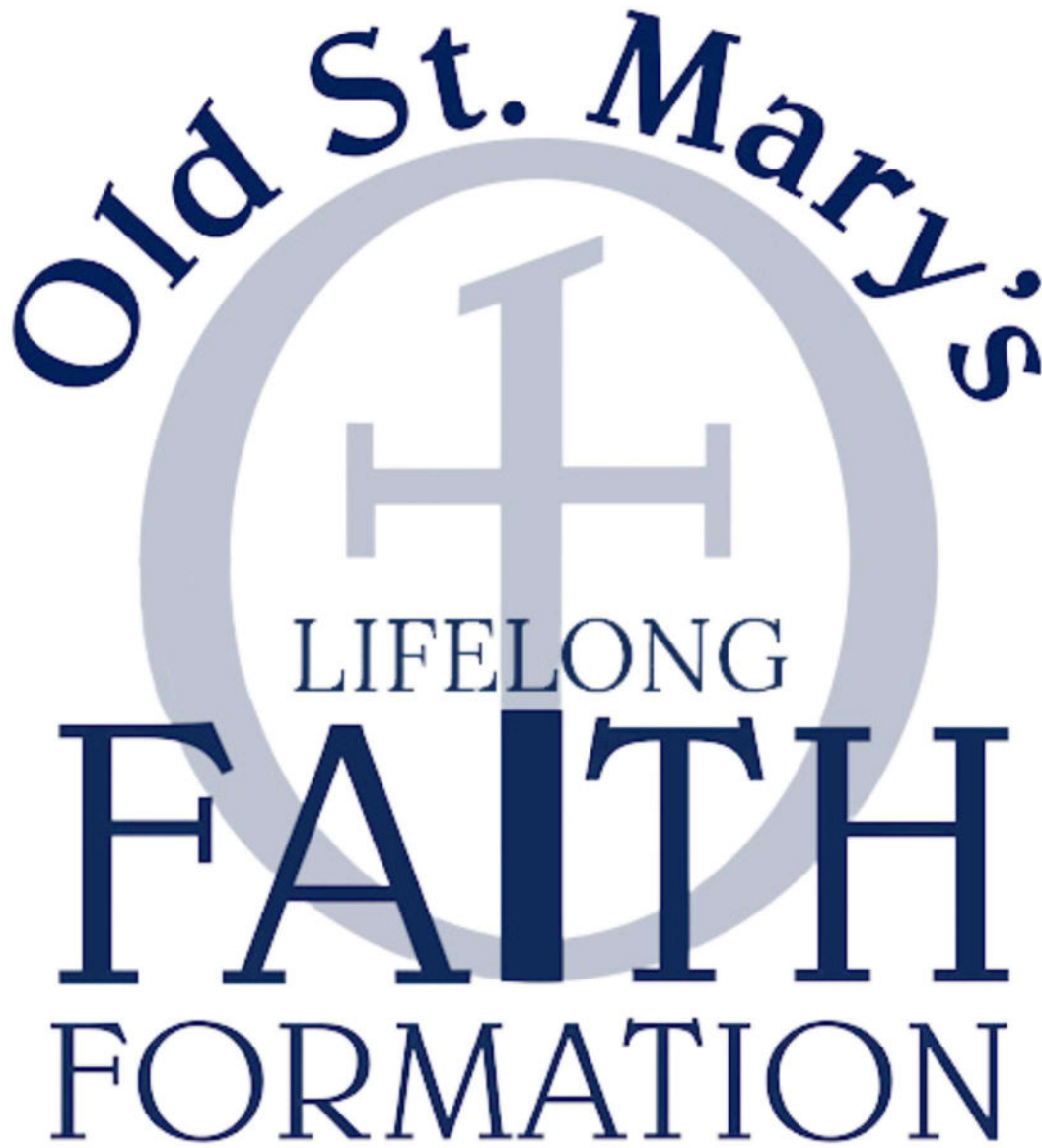


Old St. Mary's Catholic Church
Confirmation Handbook 2025-2026



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What is Confirmation?

Confirmation: A Sacrament

Confirmation is one of the seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church. The classic definition of a sacrament is “an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace.”¹ It is important to remember that sacraments are not rewards for a job well done, but graces for the journey ahead.

The Graces of Confirmation

“In the sacrament of Confirmation, a baptized person is sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and is strengthened for service to the Body of Christ.”²

“Confirmation deepens our baptismal life that calls us to be missionary witnesses of Jesus Christ in our families, neighborhoods, society, and the world. . . We receive the message of faith in a deeper and more intensive manner with great emphasis given to the person of Jesus Christ, who asked the Father to give the Holy Spirit to the Church for building up the community in loving service.”³

“But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse,

and from his roots a bud shall blossom.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him:

*a spirit of **wisdom** and of **understanding**,*

*A spirit of **counsel** and of **strength**,*

*a spirit of **knowledge** and of **fear of the Lord**,*

and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord.”

Isaiah 11: 1-3

This passage speaks of the Holy Spirit conferring the gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, courage (fortitude), knowledge, and fear of the Lord. We traditionally add one more gift to this list: piety. You receive these gifts in a special way in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

We at Old St. Mary’s Catholic Church look forward to making this journey with you and your family. Please read on for details about the Confirmation preparation process.

¹ Baltimore Catechism

² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website

³ United States Catholic Catechism for Adults

Preparing for Confirmation

We ask the following of our students in Grades 6 and 7 in order to help them prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation:

1. **Attend weekly Mass on Sundays** (or Saturday nights). Regular engagement in communal worship is the primary way in which young people are formed as Christians, and we will be bringing themes from Sunday Mass into the classroom regularly for discussion. You may attend Mass at any Catholic parish, especially when traveling. Students will be asked to complete short Mass Reflection assignments to aid in our class discussions.
2. **Attend Confirmation Preparation classes** as scheduled. For Sunday Faith Formation students, these are your weekly classes on Sunday mornings. For OSM School students, these are your regularly scheduled Religion classes in school. If a student is absent often, that student may not be properly prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at the normal time.
3. **Attend 2 Weekend Confirmation Retreats** as scheduled (in Spring of Grade 6 and Fall of Grade 7).
4. **Have conversations about faith with your parents and Confirmation sponsor** regularly. We will sometimes provide prompts for these conversations and ask that you write down important take-aways from them.
5. **Participate regularly in the life of the Church** by attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, receiving the Sacraments (including Reconciliation) regularly, and actively giving service to others.
6. **Complete and return all assignments / forms** by the date requested. These required items are:
 - a. A copy of student's baptism certificate
 - b. Saint Report
 - c. Letter Requesting Confirmation
 - d. Sponsor form
 - e. Service Hour Log
 - f. Other items as assigned by student's teacher

Information on Confirmation Sponsors

The Role of a Confirmation Sponsor

A sponsor must be a person who knows the candidate and offer support by prayer, discussion, and sharing about his/her faith. Ideally, it should be someone who has already been involved in the candidate's spiritual formation, such as a godparent, a family member, or a member of the parish. The sponsor must meet the requirements below and be able to obtain a letter of good standing from the parish at which the sponsor currently attends Mass (if not Old St. Mary's).

Eligibility of a Confirmation Sponsor

A sponsor must:

- Be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church. Good standing includes:
 - Regularly participating in Sunday Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation
 - Striving to follow the teaching of the Church in all things
 - Live chastely according to their state in life. In most cases, this means that you either had a Catholic wedding to your significant other (or con-validation of the marriage in the Catholic Church) or have never been legally married. These are general guidelines and may not apply to everyone. If you have questions about whether your relationship status receives the Church's blessing, please reach out to Elise Flick at elise@oldstmarys.com.
- Be at least 16 years old
- Be a fully-initiated member of the Catholic Church (having received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist)
- Not be the biological or legal parent of the candidate
- Not be under any canonical penalty (is in a state of grace and able to participate fully in the sacraments)

Each name submitted to be a sponsor must be verified in advance of the Confirmation Mass. To allow time for this, sponsor names and forms must be submitted on time.

Your Confirmation Saint

Each Confirmation candidate chooses a saint as a patron and is confirmed under that patron saint's name. The name is a symbol of your full initiation into the Church and her mission. When you are presented to the bishop at the Confirmation, he will call you by the name that you have chosen.

*A **patron saint** is someone already in heaven with whom we feel a connection, want to imitate, and from whom we request intercession throughout life.*

The tradition of taking on a new name reflects a new role in life. This is evident throughout the Scriptures, e.g. "Abram" was changed to "Abraham" which means "Father of Many Nations," and Simon was changed to "Peter" which means "Rock" because Jesus founded His Church upon him as the first pope.

When you choose a new name for your Confirmation, it should be the name of a saint you have read and learned about, admire, and want to imitate. In choosing a saint name, take some time to research a saint that you would like to model your own life after. In your Saint Report, you will tell us why you chose this saint.

Practical Guidelines in Selecting a Saint

- You should try to learn about a lot of saints. That way you will make a better decision about your patron saint, and you can learn about other saints to pray to as well; they are always eager and happy to help us.
- You should be familiar with this saint's life. You may see similarities between you and this saint, and/or want to be like this saint.
- The saint you select should be someone you look up to as a hero.
- Talk to your saint! Build a relationship with this person through regular prayer.
- Remember that your saint does not have to be the same gender as you.

Saint Report

The saint report should be a typed reflection with at least three paragraphs: (1) a brief biography of the saint written in your own words, (2) an explanation of the reasons why you have selected this saint, and (3) ideas of how you will develop your devotion and relationship with this saint. Try to include these things in your report: cool facts about the saint, what this saint is a patron of, when the saint lived, and when the saint was canonized. Your report will be read by your teachers and the Director of Lifelong Faith Formation.

Your Letter Requesting Confirmation

Each candidate for Confirmation will be asked to express their desire to be confirmed in a letter to the parish leadership. In this letter you introduce yourself and share a little about yourself, then tell us why you want to be confirmed, and how you will live as a Catholic after your Confirmation – it is an opportunity to reflect on the ways you have grown in relationship with God and the Church. Another reason this letter is important is that it is your chance to tell us that you understand what the Sacrament of Confirmation is and want to receive it. You can talk about your Confirmation class, your family, ways you have grown in your faith since your Baptism, and anything else you want to share.

The questions below may help you reflect on some of the things you may want to include in your letter. Answer the questions below, and then write a first draft of your letter requesting the Sacrament of Confirmation. Then, after leaving it sit and praying on it for some time, write your final draft.

- Formatting: your letter should be about one page in length, using 1-inch margins, a professional-looking 12-point font, and standard 1.15 spacing.
- Letters should start with, "Dear Parish Family" and be signed with your name (and signature).
- Your letter will be read by a member of the parish staff. If we share something from your letter with the community, it will be done without your name attached.

Questions to Help You Write Your Letter:

- In what ways has preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation helped you?
- How do you understand the Eucharist? What does the Eucharist mean to you personally?
- What will you do for the Church – and for society – as a confirmed Catholic?
- What kind of relationship do you have with God?
- How do you pray? Think about ways that you pray with others, and ways that you pray on your own.
- What might God be calling you to do in life? What skills/gifts has He given you so that you can do good things with them?
- Are there any particular saints you have come to admire? What qualities of those saints do you hope to imitate in your life after Confirmation?

Service Hours

Confirmation is about participating fully in the mission of the Church as an adult member. Over the course of the school year, candidates must complete at least 10 hours of service. We ask that at least half of your hours of service be performed at your parish. Students at OSM Catholic School may fulfil their Confirmation and school service hours requirement simultaneously.

The Parish and the School are not responsible for scheduling or providing service hours. We aim to provide as many service opportunities as possible, but the Confirmation student is responsible for ensuring that the service requirement is met on time. Please check the Sunday bulletin for service opportunities.

There is a service hours log contained in this packet, which students will need to submit before Confirmation. For more information or clarification, contact the Director of Lifelong Faith Formation.

Confirmation Liturgy Attire

****This dress code applies to candidates and sponsors. ****

Candidates for Confirmation must be dressed in “Sunday-best” attire. The following norms apply:

- Dress trousers (no jeans or shorts), with a shirt and tie. A coat is recommended. Dress shoes are required. Please avoid heavy color.
- A dress or skirt must reach the knees (remember that you will be bowing) and must cover the back. The church will be cold – spaghetti straps and low-cut dresses are not recommended. Dress shoes are required (no high heels, please).

Please ascertain prior to the ceremony that dress is appropriate.

Hair should be styled in such a way that the forehead is easily anointed.