

MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH

Faith Formation Program for

Children and Youth

11 Grove Street
Wakefield MA 01880



Preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation

CANDIDATE AND FAMILY INFORMATION HANDBOOK

Kathy Keegan, Coordinator Grades 6-10

kathy.keegan@mbsparishwakefield.com

(781)-245-3414

Reverend William D. Coughlin, Pastor

Parish: mbsparishwakefield.com

Rectory: (781)-245-2080

I BELIEVE in the HOLY SPIRIT

What does it mean to say “I believe in the Holy Spirit?”

To believe in the Holy Spirit means to worship him as God just like the Father and the Son. It means to believe that the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts so that we as children of God might know our Father in heaven. Moved by God’s Spirit, we can change the face of the earth.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church 683-686/YouCat 113)

Before His death, Jesus promised his disciples that he would send another “Counselor” (Jn 14: 16) when he was no longer with them. Then when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples of the original Church, they learned what Jesus had meant. They experienced a deep assurance and joy in their faith and received particular **charisms**; in other words, they could prophesy, heal, and work miracles. To this day, there are people in the Church who possess such gifts and have these experiences.

Charisms: (from the Greek charis = gift, grace, favor, Charm): a name for the gratuitous gifts of the Holy Spirit as they are described, for example, in 1Corinthians 12:6: the gift of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, speaking in tongues, and the gift of interpreting them, wisdom, knowledge, firmness in faith, and so on. Also included are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.



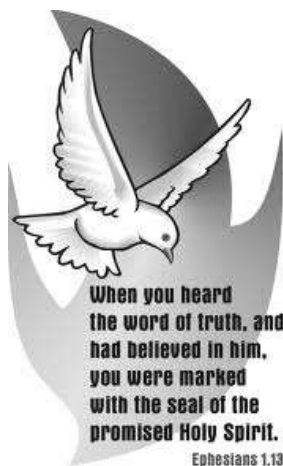
www.shutterstock.com · 71041960

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit,
and they shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.
AMEN.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMITMENT	page 4
HOLY MASS ATTENDANCE	page 4
REQUIREMENTS TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION	page 5
CHOOSING A SPONSOR	page 5
CHOOSING YOUR CONFIRMATION NAME	page 6
CONFIRMATION RETREAT	page 7
CONFIRMATION ESSAY ASSIGNMENT	page 8
STEWARDSHIP & CHRISTIAN WITNESS SERVICE WORK	page 9
WORKS OF MERCY SERVICE WORK OPPORTUNITIES	page 11



“For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Jeremiah 29:11

The Sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion and strengthening of baptismal grace. Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace, which has the following effects: *Grounds us more deeply in our divine adoption, unites us more firmly to Christ, strengthens the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to us at Baptism, perfects our relationship with the Church, grants the special strength of the Holy Spirit for spreading and defending the faith by word and action as true witness of Christ.*

COMMITMENT

We all answer to God for how committed we are in passing on the Faith to our children. The MBS faith formation team has to answer for how well we do *our part* in aiding families in preparing our youth for the reception of the sacraments. The requirements we have for our youth to receive the sacraments are to fulfill our *obligation* to all families to provide quality and faithful catechesis. Sacrament preparation requires certain sacrifices which remind us how important the sacraments are, and how building the Kingdom of God requires a mature, sacrificial commitment for the sake of the Gospel. The catechists who prepare our youth for the sacraments make sacrifices of time, activities, and energy; we too, as families have to make certain sacrifices and commitments to ensure that our children have a meaningful experience as they celebrate the sacraments.

HOLY MASS ATTENDANCE

Jesus says, “I am the bread of life.” John 6:48-66

As a family, the first thing you can do to help your daughter or son to prepare for Confirmation is to commit to “full, active and conscious participation” in Sunday Eucharist. Participating in the Sunday Eucharist is not an “option” in our Christian way of life. “Going to Mass” is not one of the rules for Catholics. Rather, it is **what defines us** as Catholic Christians. It is the celebration which identifies us as followers of Christ. We gain our very identity as Catholic Christians from the weekly Sunday celebration. Candidates for Confirmation are called to join with the fully-initiated members, their parents and families, and other parishioners – at the Sunday celebration. As well, the Sunday assembly needs to worship with the candidates for Confirmation.

The Church considers that a candidate for Confirmation both know and practice their faith. Therefore, preparing for Confirmation is not just “checking off the boxes of what is required”. All candidates for confirmation must fully participate in the Confirmation program. This means that all candidates are asked to attend the Holy Mass each Sunday. Confirmation preparation without regular Mass participation would be insincere. It’s like trying to play in the big game of the season or perform in the end-of-year concert without ever having come to practice.

REQUIREMENTS TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

- Parents and Candidates read and agree to the Confirmation Prep Handbook
- All youth entering the Confirmation Preparation Program are expected to attend the Holy Mass on Sundays, Holy Days of Obligation and all grade sponsored Masses and participate fully in all activities, events, requirements and the Confirmation retreat regardless of if you attend public or private school.
- Completed religious education classes through Grade 9 and properly registered with the Faith Formation Office which includes having a baptismal and 1st Eucharist certificate on file.
- Attend class with a respectful attitude, open mind, and willingness to participate in discussions.
- All forms completed and submitted to the Faith Formation office by their deadlines including permission to participate, waivers and health forms.
- Fully participate in the Confirmation Retreat
- Complete all required Confirmation Christian Service projects.
- As opportunities arise throughout the year, make your best effort to attend extra-curricular, special features, guest speakers, etc. to open your heart and mind to God in a variety of venues.
- An excess of 3 absences will require you to re-enroll in our program the following year.

CHOOSING A SPONSOR

**God, the ultimate Father,
wants to teach you everything you need to know to live a rich and full life.**

John 14:26

Confirmation can be a great experience, and hopefully you have thought a lot about what this sacrament means, and how the Holy Spirit will affect your life. You will be required to have a sponsor, someone who will guide you and share the story of faith with you. A good sponsor will make this process easier and even more fun.

If all has gone as planned, the best person will be one of your baptismal godparents. The ***Catechism*** (#131) and canon law (#892-893) both tell us that you need a sponsor. As with Baptism, your sponsor is someone other than your parents because he or she will assist you in your continued faith journey. Having one of your godparents helps us to see how Baptism and Confirmation are connected. Sometimes, though, things just don't work out that way and we can't have either of our godparents as a sponsor.

A sponsor is someone you trust, whose faith you admire, and who will be there for you. The **requirements for a sponsor are listed on your Confirmation Application** but we will review them in our initial Confirmation meeting. These requirements are set forth by the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (www.usccb.org) and are strictly adhered to.

Please consider the following when choosing your Sponsor

- You are calling this person into a lifelong journey of faith with you.
- This person should be present and available to you in your life, especially this sacramental year – they may not always be physically present but at least they are present through other media – however – they should make it a priority to be available for **Sponsor events, Confirmation Rehearsal, and the Sacrament of Confirmation.**
- Your sponsor is a companion on your faith journey, supporting you in prayer and in your search for the Holy Spirit. Your sponsor can best help you if he or she is someone whose Christian lifestyle you admire, someone with whom you feel comfortable, and someone who has the time and willingness to be involved with you in this process.
- Pray to the Holy Spirit to help guide you on who should be your best choice of a Confirmation Sponsor.
- Your sponsor witnesses for you before the entire Church. Standing by you as you are Confirmed, he or she proclaims by that gesture that you are ready and willing to accept the responsibilities and privileges of being a fully initiated member of the Catholic community.
- Make it special when you ask them to be your sponsor. Don't have your parents ask for you. Ask them to help you grow in faith by being your Confirmation sponsor!
- Most importantly, if you are struggling to find a sponsor, *please don't hesitate to ask us for help.*

CHOOSING YOUR CONFIRMATION NAME

"I have called you by name: you are mine." Isaiah 43:1

Your name was spoken aloud on the day of your Baptism and it became part of your identity as God's child and a member of the Catholic Church. A great deal of thought went into your parents' choice in naming you. You may be named after a relative, a special family friend, or a saint your parents greatly admire. Now that you have decided to become confirmed, you have the opportunity to think in a new way about your name and how it relates to your decision to be confirmed.

- **Reaffirming Your Baptismal Name**

Although it is traditional to take a new name at Confirmation, it is not required. Instead, you may want to reaffirm your baptismal name since the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are so closely related. Confirmation seals and strengthens the faith and grace you received at Baptism. It completes your Baptism. Reaffirming your baptismal name is a sign of your commitment to live out the promises your parents and godparents made for you at Baptism.

- **Adding a New Name**

You may also choose to add a new name at Confirmation. This decision indicates your new awareness of how Confirmation will help you live as a disciple of Christ. The name you choose must be a Christian name—the name of a saint or one of the great men or women from the Bible who have gone before us in faith. You may also choose the Christian name of your Confirmation sponsor because this individual is an example for you of how to live the Catholic life. Spend time prayerfully reflecting about your choice as this is an important decision. Remember, God calls each of us to be holy! Choose a name that reflects a special holiness that you can relate to and try to emulate in your life!

- **Research Your Name**

The first thing you should do is pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance in choosing a saint that will be best for you. The second thing you should do is some research. Whether you reaffirm your baptismal name or add a new name at Confirmation, research the life of your Christian namesake. Find out how they serve as an example for your faith journey. **You are required to report to you Confirmation Coordinator on your research in writing.** A FORM WILL BE PROVIDED.

WEBSITES TO USE FOR YOUR RESEARCH

Catholic Online-Saints	http://www.catholic.org/saints
Patron Saints Index	http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/indexsnt.htm
Catholic Information Network - Catholic Saint Links	http://www.cin.org/saintlink.html

CONFIRMATION RETREAT

"For God alone my soul waits in silence; from Him comes my salvation.

He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress." Psalm 62

Retreats are such an important part of the Confirmation process; they are even important in life. How many times do we look forward to a vacation from school or from our everyday lives? We go to the beach, or the mountains, the Cape, Disneyworld, just about anywhere to “get away” and recharge our batteries. Retreats are intended to do the same. They give people the chance to “get away” from things that prevent them from focusing on our Lord. Retreats allow candidates to “get away” to have fun, relax, but more importantly, to recharge the spiritual battery. After your retreat, you can be guaranteed that your life will be changed.

All Confirmation Candidates are required to attend our Confirmation retreat (including students that attend Catholic schools and students that have attended retreats in the past). This is a community based event and all are expected to attend.

- **DATE:** Monday, December 14, 2015
- **TIME:** 4:45 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. (Doors locked promptly at 5:00 p.m.)
- **Refreshments:** Served at 6:00 p.m.: Pizza/drinks (**please notify of food allergies**)
- **Facilitator:** New Spirit, Inc.

If you are unable to attend our retreat, you will be responsible for attending a Confirmation themed retreat at another parish, paying their fee and presenting a written verification of your attendance to the CRE prior to receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. Your portion of the confirmation fee (\$25.00) which is allocated towards the retreat is non-refundable.

Catholic High School Students: Most Blessed Sacrament requires you to attend our Confirmation Retreat as part of your Confirmation Preparation.

If you are curious, please visit the website of New Spirit, our Retreat facilitators at www.newspiritinc.org

CONFIRMATION ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

TOPIC: What does Confirmation mean to me and how do I plan to continue my faith journey once I have been confirmed?

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love."

St. Francis of Assisi

Each Confirmation Candidate is required to write an essay. The essay should be typed, double spaced, and at least one page, two at the most. It can be hand-written if preferred but it must be legible!

Remember: Confirmation is not graduation. It is the beginning of your adult life as a Catholic.

Please visit <http://bustedhalo.com/video/confirmation-why-were-confirmed> . This will help you understand what it means to be confirmed.

We want this essay in your own words, from your heart, guided by the Holy Spirit.

- **Who will be reading your essay?** Your catechists, all 10th Grade Confirmation Prep catechists, the Faith Formation Coordinators for Grades 1-5 and Grades 6-10, Father Coughlin, and the Bishop who will be confirming you may ask to read all of them or a select few!
- **Why do I have to write an essay?** Some parishes ask you to write a letter to the pastor or the bishop. We suggest that you approach your essay as if you were writing to them! It is important to all of us as ministry leaders and catechists to know that you understand what it means to be confirmed and that you are serious about your commitment to your faith.
- **DUE DATE: Essays are due the 1st of February!**

If you have any questions regarding this assignment, please feel free to speak with your catechist, Kathy Keegan, or Father Coughlin.



STEWARDSHIP & CHRISTIAN WITNESS SERVICE WORK

- **Corporal Works of Mercy**

Feed the Hungry, Give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, bury the dead.

- **Spiritual Works of Mercy**

Admonish the sinner, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, comfort the sorrowful, bear wrongs patiently, forgive all injuries, pray for the living and the dead.

- **Social Justice Principles**

Life and Dignity of the Human Person, Call to Family, Community and Participation, Solidarity, Option for the Poor and Vulnerable, Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers, Rights and Responsibilities, Care for Creation.

“Go lie down, and if he calls you again, say, “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.”

1 Samuel 3:1-21

Confirmation is the Sacrament of Initiation. It is a beginning, not an ending. It is the recognition that we are all members of One Church, and being a member takes faithful participation in prayer and community activities. *Stewardship*, using wisely and sharing freely the many gifts that God has given us, is the responsibility of every full member of the Church. Focusing on the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy, and Social Justice Principles, the Candidates for Confirmation are encouraged to explore their awareness and attitude toward this lifelong commitment of sharing their time, talents and treasure.

- **OBJECTIVE**

To prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation is to be formed as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, and an important component of this formative path is contained in the invitation to follow Jesus’ life of service: “*I have come to serve, not be served.*” A very important part of following Jesus Christ as Lord is the aspect of discipleship. For this reason, all candidates in preparation for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation are expected to experience moments of service. Your service is essential for your formation in discipleship. Both in his instruction to the new disciples and the final instruction before his Passion, Jesus made it clear that discipleship was to be measured by the way his followers tended the needs of the least of their brothers and sisters. Unless they fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, welcomed strangers, clothed the naked, visited the sick and the imprisoned, they could not be part of the Kingdom (Matt 25:34-36).

Service is based on the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and most of all, on the example of Christ who came to serve. When giving service, the following points should be considered:

- ❖ Your service is not just a job to be done. It is selflessly and lovingly helping those in need.
- ❖ You should reflect on how your service project is helping you take on the mind and heart of Christ, fulfill the needs of others and build up the Christian community.
- ❖ The giving of service should continue after your confirmation and all through your life.
- ❖ Service should be incorporated in your family, in the Church, in the community and for the poor, needy, and elderly.

Service should be given willingly and freely. A written reflection report on your service work will be required.

REQUIREMENTS FOR STEWARDSHIP AND CHRISTIAN WITNESS SERVICE WILL BE DISCUSSED IN DETAIL at the Introductory Parent(Guardian)/Candidate Meeting in the September:

- There will be opportunities within the parish for all of our students on a first come, first serve basis. All service work must meet the criteria as stated above.
- All Candidates for Confirmation must complete service based on the “works of mercy” devoted to Confirmation Christian community service AND not including service work performed through your High School, signed by an authorized person present during their actual service work. There are opportunities within the parish to get involved in service associated with the works of mercy listed on a separate form. Sign up early! First come, first served!
- Visit to My Brothers Table Soup Kitchen, Lynn MA or comparable “soup kitchen” experience to help prepare, serve, and clean up a lunch or dinner to serve to those who hungry.
- ALL Candidates for Confirmation are required to help out with the MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT HOLLY FESTIVAL. You can choose which day you will help out. Please mark your calendars!!
Dates we need your help are: December 3rd and December 5th.
- Witness to Faith Interviews – interviewing senior MBS parishioners about their life and faith, transcribing the interviewing to be compiled into a keepsake for the history of MBS.
- Monthly works of mercy within the Confirmation Faith Formation Program – more details to follow.
- All Candidates for Confirmation are asked to consider participating more fully in the life and mission of the parish community. All volunteer work at the parish level can be included as part of your Christian Witness Service hours for Confirmation and can be applied toward high school volunteer hours and resumes. Opportunities are listed on a separate form attached.

Service must be completed and submitted to the Faith Formation Coordinator by the end of March!



CANDIDATES FOR CONFIRMATION
WORKS OF MERCY
SERVICE WORK SUGGESTIONS

FEED THE HUNGRY

- Bread of Life, Malden
- St. Francis House, Boston
- St. Vincent de Paul, Lawrence
- My Brothers Table, Lynn
- Interfaith Food Pantry, Wakefield
- A Servants Heart Pantry, Melrose

GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY

- CRS Rice Bowl Lenten Program – an MBS based project

CLOTHE THE NAKED

- Donate gently used teenage size jeans and sweatshirts and winter coats to Project Care and Concern. Please wash and fold clothing, pack neatly and label packaging. Leave upstairs in the stairway of the Gathering Space – an MBS based project
- Donate old shoes, sporting equipment, bikes, toys to a shelter or hold a yard sale and donate the proceeds to St. Francis House or St. Vincent de Paul or a local family in need

SHELTER THE HOMELESS

- Visit the NationalHomeless.org website for ideas on how you can help the homeless
- Discuss in your class ways you can reach out as a class to help the homeless
- Pray for those who struggle to find shelter
- Mission of Deeds in Reading, MA is a local non-profit organization established to help those in need
- Hand Delivered Hope (on Facebook)

COMFORT THE SICK

- Project Linus – making blankets for youth who are in need – an MBS based project
- Volunteer at a Hospital
- Walk for Breast Cancer, the Jimmy Fund or another organized Walk to raise awareness

COMFORT THE IMPRISONED

- Donate Books to a Prison
- As a Class this year, each week, include those imprisoned in your prayer intentions
- Honor those who are/were prisoners of war

BURY THE DEAD

- Help beautify a local cemetery or memorial site by clean up/plantings/flags
- Visit the cemetery of a loved one and commit to praying for them on a regular basis
- Special Intention Masses can be arranged for those who have died by calling the rectory or lighting a candle

Yellow highlighted opportunities through MBS – more information to follow