

# Middle School Ministry & Confirmation Preparation Information & Registration Packet



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Dear Parish Families,

Welcome to the St. Mark Middle School Ministry! We are excited to journey with your family and teen toward a deeper relationship with Jesus. In this registration packet you will find all the information you need about the Youth Ministry Program at St. Mark and Confirmation Requirements. This is truly a special time of spiritual formation for your teen; one that we hope will strengthen your entire family.

In the Diocese of Colorado Springs, the Bishop asks that all candidates for Confirmation be involved in Faith Formation one year prior to entering into Immediate Preparation for Confirmation. This necessitates a two year Confirmation Preparation. Our program has not always reflected this dynamic. Instead, preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation has been separated out of the general faith formation program into a classroom setting focused on intellectual knowledge. At St. Mark, we have united the preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation to a comprehensive youth ministry program reflective of an organic maturation of faith and deepening of one's relationship with God through a systematic catechesis curriculum.

In the Catholic Church, the Sacrament of Confirmation is given to the baptized in order to more perfectly bind the Candidates to God through His Church. Through this Sacrament, your child will be enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit to be a true witness of Christ. Confirmation is not a graduation from Religious Education or the faith. Therefore, the preparation for receiving this Sacrament cannot be simply a class your child must attend to receive head knowledge. Instead, this is a period of time for them to deepen their faith and ask God for the grace to live it out in a more real way. The youth who fully enter into this process of ongoing conversion have the opportunity to encounter Christ and become his disciples. Because of this, our entire Confirmation Preparation Program is re-structured in a way to encourage the candidates to not just go through the motions but to be open to the life changing power of the Holy Spirit as we see in the apostles at Pentecost. "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4)

Confirmation Preparation at St. Mark takes place within the Middle School Ministry youth group. This group starts in the 7th grade and continues through 8th grade. At the end of their 8th grade year, the youth involved in Middle School Ministry will be prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

To learn more about the program and your role as the primary educators of your children, we ask each of you to attend a Parent Information Session on Wednesday, September 12<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30pm in the Parish Hall. The meeting will not only inform you about the program, but will also offer ideas and tools to confidently engage and encourage your child in their faith formation. We will also review all components of our program, and the Youth Director will be available to answer any questions that you may have! Please know that we are praying for you and your child as they enter into this journey of preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In Christ,

Fr. Gregory Bierbaum  
Pastor, St. Mark

Joe Heasley  
Director of Youth Catechesis—Ministry

# **2018-2019 Middle School Ministry Session & Event Schedule**

Youth meet Wednesdays from 6:30 - 8:30pm in the Hall.

## **September**

12<sup>th</sup> Parent Meeting  
19<sup>th</sup> Session 1: Why am I Here?  
26<sup>th</sup> Session 2: What Makes Me Happy?

## **October**

3<sup>rd</sup> Session 3: What's your story God?  
10<sup>th</sup> NO SESSION: FALL BREAK  
17<sup>th</sup> Session 4: How do I know God is real?  
24<sup>th</sup> Session 5: Who is Jesus?  
31<sup>st</sup> Session 6: Why be Catholic?

## **November**

7<sup>th</sup> Session 6: Why be Catholic?  
14<sup>th</sup> Session 7: Where am I Going?  
21<sup>st</sup> NO SESSION: THANKSGIVING  
28<sup>th</sup> 8: How do I get there?  
30<sup>th</sup>-Dec 1<sup>st</sup> Confirmation Retreat

## **December**

5<sup>th</sup> Session 9: When did my journey begin?  
12<sup>th</sup> Session 10: Why tell my sins to a priest?  
19<sup>th</sup> NO SESSION - CHRISTMAS BREAK  
26<sup>th</sup> NO SESSION - CHRISTMAS BREAK

## **January**

2<sup>nd</sup> NO SESSION - CHRISTMAS BREAK  
9<sup>th</sup> Session 11: How does God help when it hurts?  
16<sup>th</sup> Session 12: Who is the Holy Spirit?  
23<sup>rd</sup> Session 13: What does the Holy Spirit do for me?  
30<sup>th</sup> Dry (Teaching) Mass

## **February**

6<sup>th</sup> Session 14: Why have I been Chosen?  
13<sup>th</sup> MS Rally Info Meeting  
15-17<sup>th</sup> Mountain Madness  
20<sup>th</sup> Session 15: Why do I have to go to Mass?  
27<sup>th</sup> Session 16: What does it mean to say, I do?

## **March**

6<sup>th</sup> NO SESSION: ASH WEDNESDAY  
13<sup>th</sup> Session 17: Who's Calling?  
20<sup>th</sup> NO SESSION - SPRING BREAK  
27<sup>th</sup> Session 18: Are you talking to me?

## **April**

3<sup>rd</sup> Session 19: Who is Mary?  
10<sup>th</sup> Session 20: What would Jesus do?  
17<sup>th</sup> Session 21: Do I have what it takes?  
24<sup>th</sup> Session 22: Why wait?

## **May**

1<sup>st</sup> Session 23: How do I build the kingdom?  
8<sup>th</sup> Session 24: Where do I go from here?

## **Date TBD**

Confirmation Ceremony

## 2018-2019 Confirmation Requirements

### Candidate Requirements

#### 1. Catechesis

- Candidates for Confirmation are required to complete two years of catechesis prior to the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Therefore in order to receive Confirmation in the Spring of 2019 candidates should have participated in Youth Ministry in the 2017-2018 school year.
- If a candidate does not meet this requirement they will need to register for Middle School Ministry or QAHAL and participate for two years before being confirmed in the Spring of 2020.

Fall of 2018 - 7th Grade Youth: - Active in Youth Ministry for two years; Confirmation Spring 2020

8th Grade Youth: - If active in Youth Ministry in 2017-2018 year, continue in Middle School Ministry 2018-2019; Confirmation Spring 2019

- If not active in Youth Ministry in 2017-2018 year, participate in Youth Ministry for the next two years; Confirmation Spring 2020

#### 2. Sessions- *“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to breaking of bread and the prayers.” - Acts 2:42*

- **Schedule:** Meet Wednesday 6:30- 8:30 pm in the Hall. Snacks will be provided.
- **Attendance:** Those preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation are required to attend Middle School Ministry. If a candidate for Confirmation misses too many sessions they will need to speak with the Director of Youth Catechesis and the pastor to discuss readiness for Confirmation.

#### 3. Faith in Action/Service - *“So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.” - James 2:17*

We will take part in one service project together as a group rather than requiring individual service hours. All candidates are required to attend this service project.

- **Christ in the City:** Second Saturday Lunch in the Park  
We will join the missionaries from Christ in the City along with 75 volunteers to serve a warm meal to almost 300 homeless in downtown Denver. Our time will include a training prior to service. Volunteers are encouraged to not only serve food but to sit down with those being served to talk and pray. This service is offered once per month and candidates for Confirmation must attend once per semester.

#### 4. Retreat - *“And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he (Jesus) prayed.” - Mark 1:35*

- Why Retreat? Jesus would often go off by himself to pray and be with God. Many people throughout Scripture would encounter God out in the wilderness. He uses times when we take a break from our everyday lives and distractions to communicate with us and reveal himself. Candidates are asked to disconnect from their regular lives in order to commune with God. These retreats will help the candidates to enter into their preparation more deeply, encounter Christ in a new way and bond with each other through activities, prayer, small groups and talks.
- Dates:

Mountain Madness (7th Grade) - February 15th-17th	Confirmation Retreat (8th Grade) - November 30th-December 1st
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Registration & Information Packets will be handed out in class as the dates get near.
- Attendance: Attendance at each retreat is MANDATORY for the youth of the respective grade.

#### 5. Patron Saints - *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.” - Hebrews 12:1*

- **Choosing a Saint:** All candidates will be asked to spend some time thinking and praying about a saint to choose as their patron for their life. Confirmation saints should be a person they want to be like that teaches them something about how to live as a Christian. These saints then become someone that prays for them from heaven for the rest of their lives. When someone is canonized, declared by the Church to be a saint, the Church is proclaiming that this member of the faithful practiced heroic virtue during their life on earth, 'the Church recognizes the power of the Spirit of holiness within her and sustains the hope of believers by proposing the saints to them as models and intercessors' (CCC 828). Youth should desire to be like their saint!
  - **Information Paper:** All candidates will be asked to submit a one page typed and double spaced paper to give a brief biography of the saint, how did that person strive for holiness, and how does the youth want to follow their example. More details will be given during class sessions.
6. **Mass Attendance** - *“Beginning with the Easter Triduum as its source of light, the new age of the Resurrection fills the whole liturgical year with its brilliance. Gradually, on either side of this source, the year is transfigured by the liturgy” (Catechism of the Catholic Church)*
- The Church requires that all practicing Catholics attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. Therefore, attendance at weekly Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation is expected and required by all candidates for Confirmation and their families. “The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor. **Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin...**Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to his Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity. Together they testify to God's holiness and their hope of salvation. They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” (CCC 2180-2182)

## Parent Requirements

1. **Why Parents?** Candidates for Confirmation do not prepare for this Sacrament alone. Parents are the primary teachers of the faith for their children and we want to help you in this role. During this special season of life we ask all parents to recommit to the basics of their faith: personal prayer, weekly Mass attendance, regular Confession, etc. and show their teens the joy of the faith. We ask all parent's to be actively engaged in what your child is learning through following along with your Parent Guide and using the material to facilitate discussions at home with your teen.

## Sponsor Information

1. **What is a Sponsor?** *“Iron sharpens Iron, and one man sharpens another.” - Proverbs 27:17*
  - **Role:** A sponsor is not just an honorary title; it is a calling. Each candidate should identify someone they consider a living witness of faith in Jesus Christ and his Church. A sponsor has three primary roles: (1) to assist the candidate in preparing for Confirmation, (2) to present the candidate for Confirmation, and (3) to help the confirmed person to live out his or her Christian faith fully.
  - **Qualifications:**
    - 1) Be an active and practicing Catholic who is at least sixteen years old.
    - 2) Have received the Sacrament of Confirmation.
    - 3) Be a person who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on.
    - 4) Not be a parent of the candidate (siblings are discouraged from being sponsors).

- **Requirements:** Sponsors should take seriously their role in assisting with the preparation of each candidate. We recommend making every effort to attend the Confirmation ceremony held in the Spring of 2019.