



St. John XXIII

Catholic Parish & School

CONFIRMATION HANDBOOK 2026-2027



Pastor:

Fr. Matthew Kirk

Director of Faith Formation:

Maureen Rotramel

Associate Director of Formation:

Lesa Staehler

Email: staehlerl@stjohn23rd.org

1800 N. Wisconsin St.

Port Washington, WI 53074

Phone: 262-284-2102

Web-site: www.stjohn23rd.org

Contents

Confirmation Elements	3
General Requirements for Candidates	3
Sponsor's Role	4
Parent's Role	5
Determining Readiness	5
Attendance	6
Parish Mission	6
Confirmation Retreat	6
Prayer Buddies	7
Questionnaire to the Bishop	7
Christian Service	7
Confirmation Interviews	7
Rehearsal	8
Confirmation Name	8
Baptismal Certificates	8

Welcome!

On behalf of the faith community of St. John XXIII, we are excited that you are here and ready to participate in this year's Confirmation Preparation Program. The purpose of the program is to assist you on your faith journey and to help prepare you for full membership in the Catholic Church. It is our hope that through this time of preparation you will freely desire the Sacrament of Confirmation and that you will commit yourself to follow the life of Christ serving the needs of others in our parish and community.

Therefore, we dedicate ourselves to helping young people be truly prepared, to go out and spread the Good News of Jesus Christ, to be able to practice our faith, beliefs, values and morals, to have an active, working knowledge of the many aspects of Catholicism, and to be responsible and responsive adult members of the Church of today and tomorrow. We are here to accompany you on this journey of discipleship not just during this time of preparation but for a lifetime of faith!

CONFIRMATION ELEMENTS

The key elements in preparation for the celebration of Confirmation are:

- **DISCERNMENT:** What does it mean to say, "I'm ready to accept and live a Christian Catholic lifestyle?"
- **COMMUNITY:** Am I an active part of my faith community?
- **CHRISTIAN MESSAGE:** Are scripture and reflection important parts of my everyday life?
- **WORSHIP:** Do I participate actively in liturgy and prayer?
- **SERVICE:** Am I using my gifts and talents for the benefit of others?

Our goal is to prepare candidates to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, which completes Christian initiation begun at Baptism. This preparation aims to deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith and strengthen their commitment to living as disciples of Christ. We aim for an environment in which they can experience the love of God, our Father, the humanness and care of Jesus, and to accept the creative challenge of growing in the Spirit of God.

This handbook was prepared to help you throughout the year. You will find guidelines to assist you in making the decisions you will be called upon to make. Please take a few minutes to read through it.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONFIRMATION CANDIDATE

The Confirmation Program is open to all who are at least juniors in high school and will be 16 years of age prior to the celebration of Confirmation.

- A Candidate must be a **baptized Catholic** or have been received into the Catholic Church.
- **A copy of the Candidate's Baptismal certificate must be on file.** If the Candidate was *not* baptized at Immaculate Conception, St. Peter of Alcantara or St. Mary's, please provide a copy of your Baptismal Certificate.
- **The family of the Candidate must be registered members of St. John XXIII Parish** or the Candidate must provide a letter of consent signed by the Pastor of the Candidate's home parish. A letter of consent gives permission for the Candidate to participate in Confirmation at St. John XXIII. A letter of consent should be addressed to Father Pat Wendt.
- Candidates **must have been enrolled** in either a Catholic parochial school or a parish Religious Education Program prior to entering immediate preparation for Confirmation.
- **Attendance at all Confirmation sessions is essential and required.** These dates are listed on the schedule. If a candidate misses a session, the make-up work will need to be completed. If more than two sessions are missed, a meeting with the candidate and parent/sponsor may be scheduled.
- Service is an integral part of being a Catholic Christian. It is the way we express our commitment to living life in the Spirit of God alive within us. We use our giftedness to benefit others. All Candidates are required to **participate in service ministry and reflect upon justice and service through the Matthew 25 Project.**
- A Candidate must attend a Confirmation Retreat. Retreats provide an opportunity for prayer, reflection, friendship, and relaxation. The St. John XXIII Confirmation Retreat is scheduled for **February 28 - March 1 at the Daniel Soref Retreat Center.**

THE SPONSOR'S ROLE

The support of the entire community is focused through the sponsor chosen by the Confirmation Candidate. The introduction to the Rite of Confirmation states: "Ordinarily, there should be a sponsor for each of those to be confirmed. The sponsor presents the Candidate to the minister for the anointing, and will later help the Candidate fulfill the baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit." Godparents at Baptism can be sponsors at Confirmation. In this way, the relationship between Baptism and Confirmation is retained.

- The sponsor does not need to be the same sex as the Confirmation Candidate and a Candidate may have more than one sponsor, although one should be designated as the liturgical sponsor who will present the Candidate for Confirmation.
- The sponsor must be sufficiently mature for the role, belong to the Catholic Church and have been initiated into the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, and must not be prohibited by law from exercising the role of sponsor. The sponsor must be at least 16 years of age.
- Parents may not act as sponsors (Canon Law #874) but they may present their son or daughter to the Bishop for Confirmation. This is for two reasons:
 - 1) *The sponsor is seen as someone who shares with the parents their obligation to bring up their child in the faith, especially in the event the parents are unable to perform this function.*
 - 2) *The sponsor represents the larger church - the entire community of believers.*

The sponsor should be someone who truly will support the Candidate in the desire to believe in Jesus Christ and to live out that belief in his or her daily life. The sponsor also must be willing to challenge the Candidate on un-Christian attitudes or actions when that is necessary, to pray with the Candidate, and to encourage the Candidate on his/her journey of faith. The sponsor witnesses, prays, and participates regularly in the celebration of the Mass and of the sacraments; is a real friend, someone who is "there" when needed; is a guide, a good listener who is ready to give advice when asked; one whose experience as a Catholic is an invaluable source for helping the Candidate to make decisions about his or her life as a Catholic. Practically speaking, this means that the sponsor must be someone with whom the Candidate can relate and also someone with whom the Candidate has regular contact during the preparation period.

Although a parent may not be a child's sponsor, it certainly seems reasonable to be a sponsor for your child's friend. We encourage you to look within the faith community for an appropriate sponsor.

We ask that each candidate choose his or her sponsor early. It is **expected** that the sponsor spends time with the candidate during the preparation period. Sponsors are invited to attend LIFT: Opening Windows: Good Pope John and the Saints Who Inspire Us on **October 18/19, 2026**. Sponsors are also asked to attend a **candidate-sponsor session** on **November 15, 2026** as well as the **rehearsal** on **April 30, 2027**. In the event that your sponsor cannot join you for these sessions, we ask that you complete an activity with them outside of class. A handout of suggested activities will be provided to you.

THE PARENT'S ROLE

"As the primary educators of their children, parents along with sponsors are to be intimately involved in catechesis for Confirmation. This will help them renew and strengthen their own faith, besides enabling them to set a better example for their children. " (*National Catechetical Directory*, no. 119)

Parents play a unique role in Confirmation preparation. For many years they have led their children through special moments of faith growth. While continuing to lead by the example of their own lives, parents now face the added challenge of granting their son or daughter a free choice in the decision to be confirmed.

We want parents to be very familiar with the components of the program, as well as the rationale. Some parents were confirmed under the "Old Rite", which differs significantly from the "New Rite". Age of the person, length of the preparation, involvement of Christian service, etc. are some areas of probable contrast. The responsibility here is different from earlier years, but in no way less important. Adult catechesis can be a powerful means to help the parent grow in faith and lay aside any doubts or fears about their children and Confirmation.

Parents can help their children in the following ways:

- Assisting their son or daughter in determining readiness. Parents should be informed of the criteria for readiness for reception of Confirmation, which includes involvement in all four elements of catechesis: community, worship, service, and message.
- Respecting the decision their son or daughter makes.

We also encourage parents to participate in the sessions and service projects. There is a specific **parent/child session scheduled for February 7, 2027.**

DETERMINING READINESS

Readiness for celebrating a sacrament cannot be determined simply by the calendar. The meaning of the Rite for those celebrating it and its total impact on their faith-lives will be strongly affected by many developmental factors besides age. These factors may include: the maturity of the candidates, the depth of their faith development, the degree of their commitment to Christ and to the faith-community, the level of their awareness of their religious realities, the extent of their involvement in community worship and service, and their knowledge and understanding of the basic teachings of the Church.

Because Confirmation celebrates the response of the individual to the gift of faith, the primary responsibility for determining when the candidate is ready for the sacrament lies within the individual candidates themselves. Because Confirmation is a sacrament of initiation, the decision is to be made in dialogue with the whole community, nevertheless, the community must show its support, welcome the initiates, and sustain them in their decision so that it will be truly free. The adult community can do this by its own example of a living faith, by helping the candidate to make a serious and properly motivated decision, by offering a well-planned Confirmation program, by encouraging the candidates to participate in the program, and by praying with and for the candidates for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

It may well happen that a candidate will not feel ready to be confirmed. It is important that the

candidate then does not feel somehow ostracized from the Catholic community or forgotten. That very important moment requires, on the part of the community and its representatives, understanding and support and continued contact with those making a decision to postpone Confirmation.

ATTENDANCE

Confirmation candidates are expected to attend **all** sessions. If a candidate cannot attend a session, please alert the Confirmation coordinator as soon as possible, but no later than one hour before the session is scheduled to begin. Candidates are also expected to be at the session on time; the same policy as above is to be followed.

Attendance and participation in the sessions is extremely important to the preparation of the candidates. If a candidate must miss a session, make-up work will be assigned to ensure the candidate understands the material covered. Excessive absenteeism will be addressed by the coordinator, the candidate and his/her parents if necessary.

LEARNING IN FAITH TOGETHER (LIFT) INTERGENERATIONAL/FAMILY FAITH SESSIONS

This year we are bringing back a special formation opportunity to all members of our parish, regardless of age or family status, through our Learning in Faith Together or LIFT Sessions. This will be an exciting opportunity to grow together as the Catholic faith community of the Port Washington and Saukville areas.

Join us for **Opening Windows: Good Pope John and the Saints Who Inspire Us**, an intergenerational faith formation event celebrating our parish patron, **Saint John XXIII**, the "Good Pope," and other saints who inspire us to live with faith and courage. Through prayer, stories, and engaging activities, people of all ages will discover how ordinary people became extraordinary saints—and how God calls each of us to holiness.

The same session will be offered twice to accommodate family schedules. All sessions begin in the St. Peter's cafeteria, and a light meal or snacks will be provided. All ages are welcome!

Please note that all sessions will be at St. Peter.

*CRE/Confirmation candidates and families are required to attend **ONE** of these sessions instead of CRE that week:*

- Sunday, October 18 at noon
- Monday, October 19 at 5:30pm



LIFT Oct 26

Please register on-line at www.stjohn23rd.org/CRE or by clicking here: [LIFT 26](#) or scanning the QR code above.

CONFIRMATION RETREAT

The Confirmation Retreat is a very important aspect of the Confirmation Program and a requirement of the Archdiocese. Perhaps one of the best ways to understand the importance of the retreat is to look at how it is modeled in the life of Jesus. In Scripture we see time and again that whenever Jesus had an important decision to make or challenge to face, he went away in

silence for a while to gather his courage, regain his perspective and to be strengthened by his unity with the Father. (MT 4, LK 5:16, MK 6).

While the modern day retreat experience may differ from Jesus' style, the purpose remains the same. Over an extended period of time, away from schedules, tensions and a fast-paced life of activity, young people can get in touch with the deeper questions of life and find nourishment for their spiritual journey.

In a retreat setting, young people have an opportunity to EXPERIENCE what it means to be a member of a community. They will also have the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The retreat center provides all the meals. Snacks may be brought in but only eaten in designated areas. Please refer to the handout and permission slip for more details.

If for some reason the candidate cannot join us on either retreat, arrangements must be made by the candidate to join a retreat from another parish. Please let us know, **no later than January 15th!**

CONFIRMATION/FIRST COMMUNION PRAYER BUDDIES

Each year we pair up our Confirmation candidates with a young person who is preparing for First Communion and we ask that they pray for one another as they journey towards their respective Sacrament of Initiation. We also make them a special gift and card during the retreat.

CONFIRMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

In preparation for the ceremony of Confirmation, each candidate is required to complete a questionnaire to the confirming Bishop. The purpose of this questionnaire is to give the Bishop an opportunity to find out a little about each candidate beforehand. It also allows the candidates the chance to communicate personally with the Bishop about his or her feelings, background and hopes about the church. From our experience, the Bishops really do read all the questionnaires received. This year Archbishop Grob will be presiding over the Sacrament of Confirmation.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

You will recall that whenever service has been discussed, a definite number of hours were not specified. Christian service means more than just spending time doing a task. It involves prayer and reflection. Thus, we are asking you to complete a brief reflection on the service you participate in as well as a reflection on social action. More information on the service component can be found in the Matthew 25 Project packet.

The experience of Christian community flows naturally to service. Christ gives his people different gifts not only for themselves but also for others. Each must serve the other for the good of all. It is important, also, that you as Confirmation candidates see that these service experiences are not simply requirements to be confirmed but are our response to Christ's action and initiative in our lives. As such, service should become a way of life.

CONFIRMATION INTERVIEWS

Interviews with the parent and candidate occur in the fall as part of the orientation to the program. As one of the final stages of the preparation process, candidates will be interviewed

by a member of the Confirmation team to ensure understanding of the Sacrament and readiness. Honesty and sincerity are essential in these interviews. The interviews will occur on April 11, 2027 in 30 minute intervals. Candidates will sign up for interviews closer to the date.

REHEARSAL AND CEREMONY INFORMATION

The ceremony of Confirmation requires a brief rehearsal to ensure that it will run smoothly and meaningfully. All candidates and their sponsors are required to attend. It should not take more than an hour. **Rehearsal is at 6:00 PM on April 30, 2027 and the Rite of Confirmation will be held, Saturday, May 1, 2027 at 10:00 AM**

CONFIRMATION NAME

Candidates may use their baptismal name or another Christian name when receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. A Christian name would be the name of a saint or blessed. Derivatives of names (Kelly for Catherine; Jenna for Genevieve) or Old Testament names are also appropriate. Candidates may use their first or second names if they are Christian names, or they may select a new Christian name. The candidate should know the relationship of the name to the religious Christian tradition. Exceptions can be made if a particular non-Christian or family name has significant meaning for a candidate that can be articulated to the Bishop. Most importantly, candidates should be encouraged to learn about their patron as part of their preparation for the sacrament and should particularly focus on the virtues of their patron they wish to emulate.

BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATES

Before you are confirmed, we must have your baptismal information. If you were baptized here at Immaculate Conception, St. Peter of Alcantara or St. Mary's Parish, your indication of such will suffice. If you were baptized at another parish, we need a **COPY** of your baptismal certificate. If you do not have your baptism certificate, call or write the church in which you were baptized and they will send you a copy. It is necessary for us to send notice of your Confirmation to the parish where you were baptized for their records and your certificate will have the address and date of your Baptism

Note: In case of inclement weather, please tune in to local TV and radio stations for class cancellations. Information on cancellations will also be available at www.stjohn23rd.org.

Candidates, if you are unable to attend a session, please contact us no later than one hour in advance at 284-2102 or email staehlerl@stjohn23rd.org.