ST. MATTHEW CATHOLIC CHURCH SPOTSYLVANIA, VIRGINIA



CONFIRMATION FALL 2027

Welcome to the St. Matthew Sacramental Program for Confirmation! It is extremely important that the student (Confirmation candidate), parents, and the sponsors collectively participate in the Confirmation preparation process. By working together with the Religious Education Office and the catechists, the candidates will be well prepared to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

The sacrament of Confirmation strengthens us to be a witness to our faith. With that in mind, an emphasis will be placed on the candidate having a sound knowledge of the basic truths of our faith.

I am pleased to offer this handbook to assist you in preparing your child for this sacrament. It is designed to explain all the responsibilities and requirements of the parents, candidate, and sponsor.

Your cooperation in completing the forms and returning them to the Religious Education Office in a timely manner is greatly appreciated. You will find a listing of requirements and their due dates on the last page of this handbook. You may deliver the requirements in person, by email, or through mail.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason regarding Confirmation preparation. I am here to assist you and your child in whatever way possible to make the sacrament of Confirmation a spiritually rewarding and memorable event.

Many blessings,

Danielle Houck
Director, Religious Education

Purposes of Catechesis for the Sacrament of Confirmation

- Helps the candidate firmly believe in Christ as Lord and Savior and identify as a Christian and member of the Catholic Church.
- Teaches that the sacrament of Confirmation increases and deepens the grace of Baptism, imprinting an indelible character on the soul.
- Teaches that Confirmation strengthens the baptized with the fullness of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- Strengthens their bond with the Church, associates them more closely with the Church's mission, and helps them to bear witness to the Catholic faith in words and deeds.
- Includes instruction on the Rite of Confirmation and its Form and Matter.

Catholic Diocese of Arlington Faith Formation Policies and Guidelines



"Be who you were created to be, and you will set the world on fire."

St. Catherine of Siena

"Holiness consists simply in doing God's will and being just what God wants us to be."

St. Therese of Lisieux

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

"*Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.*
Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children.
Through the grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children.
Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God."
(Catechism of the Catholic Church #2223, #2225, and #2226, respectively).

As a parent, you have *the primary role* in the sacramental preparation process for your child. You will help your child grow in the faith as you prepare him/her for the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation. ***Your attendance at required events and Sunday Mass is essential.*** Your interest, example, witness, and prayers make a difference in your child's decision to receive the sacrament.

PARENTS PLEASE:

- ✞ prepare your child for the decision to be confirmed through instruction, example, and prayer.
- ✞ complete and return the Confirmation Record Form with a copy of your child's Birth Certificate and Baptismal Certificate *including those baptized at St. Matthew.*
  (Located on page 14 and due March 11th)
- ✞ complete and return the Confirmation Gown Order Form
  (Located on page 15 and due May 3rd)
- ✞ assist your child in ensuring all class assignments are completed (including all the material identified in this handbook).
- ✞ ensure your child attends classes and the Confirmation Retreat. If any student has a conflict with the Confirmation Retreat scheduled at St. Matthew's Parish, he/she MUST go to a retreat at another parish prior to our Confirmation date. Please contact the Religious Education Office for further assistance.

Our Confirmation date will be _____ at _____.

The retreat will be _____
from 10 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.

CONFIRMATION CANDIDATE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

"Baptism, the Eucharist, and the Sacrament of Confirmation constitute the sacraments of Christian initiation. The reception of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For by the sacrament of Confirmation, the [baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit."
(CCC #1285)

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Fulfill weekly Mass obligation and go to Confession on a regular basis.**
- **Attend and participate in weekly scheduled Religious Education classes.**
- **Demonstrate a sound knowledge of the Truths of our Faith.**
- **Commit to continuing your Religious Education after Confirmation.**
- **Prayerfully consider and select a sponsor.**
  See Sponsor requirements page 6
- **Select a patron saint's name as a Confirmation name. Write and submit a report on the chosen saint.**
  See Guidelines for Saint Report on page 8; due March 11th.
- **Prepare a letter to Father Eversole explaining why you would like to be confirmed.**
  See Guidelines for Letter to Father Eversole on page 9; due March 11th.
- **Perform a minimum of 10 hours of Corporal Works of Mercy and 5 hours of Spiritual Works of Mercy as outlined in this handbook.**
  See Guidelines for Works of Mercy on page 10; due May 3rd.
- **Attend an interview with one of the members of our clergy.**
  See page 13
- **Attend <u>all events</u> of the Confirmation Retreat.**

SPONSOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers this advice: "The Sponsor for Confirmation is one who, fittingly, is a spiritual help to the Candidate."
(CCC # 1311)

Sponsors take on a life-long commitment to help their candidates fulfill the obligation for this sacrament. The sponsor for a candidate wishing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation has important duties and responsibilities. Although his or her role is not the primary role (that is the duty of the parent), he or she is an important person in the preparation process and for the encouragement of the candidate to persevere in the faith throughout their life. There is only one sponsor per confirmand.

REQUIREMENTS:

† Live a sacramental life by attending weekly Mass, regular Confession, and a moral life consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

† Must have received all the Sacraments of Initiation; (Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation)

† If married, the marriage must be valid in the Catholic Church.

† Must be 16 years of age or older.

All sponsors must be properly disposed to receive Communion at the Solemn Confirmation Mass.

Sponsors who are from Saint Matthew's

must be a registered member of the parish and attend weekly Mass.

Call the Parish Office to request a Sponsor Letter. This letter should be requested by May 3, 2027.

Sponsors who are not from Saint Matthew's

must contact their parish and obtain a sponsor eligibility form from their pastor. This letter indicates that the sponsor is a registered, participating Catholic who is eligible to act as a sponsor.

This letter must be received by the Religious Education Office by May 3, 2027.

SPONSORS WHO CANNOT ATTEND THE CONFIRMATION MASS

If the sponsor cannot attend the Confirmation Mass, a proxy, explicitly designated by the candidate, can be selected. If the Confirmation candidate has a proxy, the Religious Education Office MUST be notified in advance. The proxy must meet the same requirements as a sponsor and provide an eligibility letter.

A PARENT MAY NOT BE A SPONSOR BUT MAY ACT AS A PROXY SHOULD THE SPONSOR BE UNABLE TO ATTEND.



GUIDELINES FOR SAINT REPORT
Report is Due March 11, 2027

Each Confirmation candidate is required to write a Saint Report featuring the saint whose name has been chosen as the Confirmation name. The purpose of this report is for the candidate to learn about the saint.

The following information should be included in the report:

† Personal influence of the saint on the candidate including
- Why did you choose this saint?
- What is it about the saint that you would hope to emulate?
- What was the most interesting thing you learned about the saint?

† Biographical information on the saint (if available)
- date and place of birth and death
- description of saint's service to God and others
- feast day of the saint
- symbol, if any, associated with the saint
- circumstances of death
- if the saint is a patron of any group, discuss the reason and significance
- discuss any specific devotion(s) that were attributed to this saint

† What about the person moved the Church to name him/her a saint?

† Bibliography

This report should be typed, double-spaced and at least one page. Any report submitted with inadequate content or format will be returned for a re-write. **MATERIAL GENERATED BY AI OR COPIED FROM THE INTERNET WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Saint reports may also be submitted in the form of a trifold poster or lapbook.



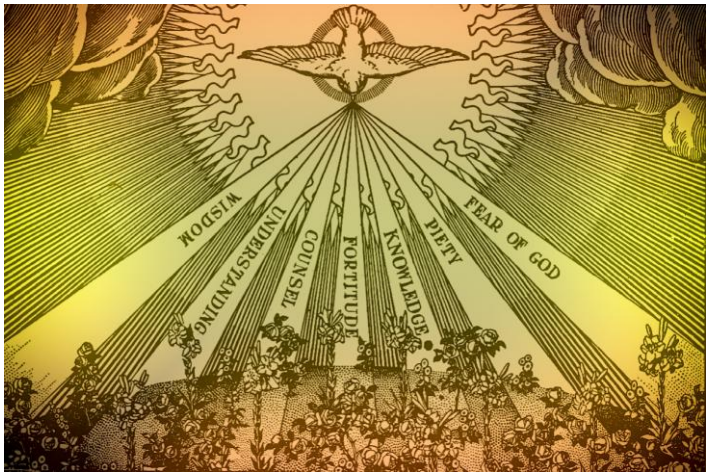
GUIDELINES FOR LETTER TO FATHER EVERSOLE
Letter is due March 11, 2027

After prayer and reflection, prepare a one-page, double-spaced letter to Father Eversole explaining why you would like to be confirmed.

If you need some help getting started, pray and reflect on the following questions:

- Why do I wish to be confirmed?
- How am I preparing for Confirmation?
- What will I do to continue to grow in my faith as a Catholic?
- What are my thoughts about Confirmation?
- Will I commit to weekly Mass attendance, regular Confession, and continuing my Catholic formation through the High School Ministry program?
- Who did I pick as my Confirmation saint? Why?

Please submit the letter to the Religious Education Office.



GUIDELINES FOR WORKS OF MERCY HOURS
DUE MAY 3, 2027

We can grow in virtue by practicing the Works of Mercy. In these acts, we show our love for Christ by helping our neighbor. Since we have both bodies and souls, the Works of Mercy are divided into two groups. The Spiritual Works of Mercy care for the soul, and the Corporal Works of Mercy for physical needs (Corporal comes from the Latin word c*orpus*, which means body).

The Spiritual Works of Mercy	The Corporal Works of Mercy
Admonish the sinner	Feed the hungry
Instruct the ignorant	Give drink to the thirsty
Counsel the doubtful	Clothe the naked
Comfort the sorrowful	Visit the imprisoned
Bear wrongs patiently	Shelter the homeless
Forgive all injuries	Visit the sick
Pray for the living and the dead	Bury the dead

A minimum of fifteen hours of Works of Mercy (five spiritual and ten corporal) is required. Service is based on the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy, and most of all, the example of Christ who came to serve. When providing service, the following points should be considered:

† Your work of mercy is not just a job to be done, but the beginning of a life-long commitment of witness by serving Christ in others.

† You should reflect on how your “work” helps you to take on the mind and heart of Christ, to fulfill the needs of others, and to build up the Christian community.

† Your work of mercy should be done with a spirit of giving greater glory to God and not for any thanks you may receive.

Below is a list of *suggested* works of mercy. You may wish to do some of these or perhaps you may find some other unique ways to serve. **Sports activities and secular school projects <u>do not fall</u> under the Corporal or Spiritual Works of Mercy.**

Spiritual Works of Mercy Suggestions (Five Hours)

- Spend an hour with Jesus during First Friday Adoration or anytime the church is open.
- Attend an additional Mass during the week.
- Pray the Rosary with other parishioners the last Saturday of every month at 4:30 or at 7:00 p.m. on Fridays.
- Read Sacred Scripture or biographies of the saints.
- With parental approval, listen to Lighthouse Catholic Media CDs or watch material on the FORMED website.

Corporal Works of Mercy Suggestions (Ten Hours)

- Many parish groups are in need of additional help during the year. Be sure to contact these groups when they advertise for help in the parish bulletin.
- Weeding of the parish grounds (please call the parish office)
- Help with Religious Education events
- Offer your service (without pay) to an elderly or disabled neighbor to do special projects such as mowing, raking leaves, shoveling snow, or weeding.
- Babysit (free of charge) for parents who are providing a service, i.e. scout leader or catechists. Babysitting for your own parents or for a neighbor who is not giving service to others does not count toward service hours.



Service hours must be listed on the Works of Mercy Summary Form found on page 12 of this packet.

Saint Vincent de Paul

WORKS OF MERCY SUMMARY FORM
Due May 3, 2027

Name of Candidate: _____

10 Hours Corporal

Date of Service	Nature of Service	Number of Hours	Signature of Parent

5 Hours Spiritual

Date	Type	Number of Hours	Signature of Parent

INTERVIEW WITH CLERGY
Spring 2027

The Religious Education Office will contact the parents of the Confirmation candidates to schedule an interview with Father Eversole or one of the deacons of our parish. **One parent must attend this interview.**

The purpose of the interview is not to make the candidate nervous but to foster a conversation about Confirmation between the candidate and the clergy. Candidates are encouraged to ask any questions they may have and be prepared to answer basic questions such as but not limited to

- What happened to me when I was baptized?
- What will happen to me when I am confirmed?
- What are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit?
- How does each gift help me?
- What will the bishop say when he confirms me?
- What is the name of the oil used in Confirmation?
- Why did I select a particular saint as my Confirmation name?



CONFIRMATION RECORD FORM
Due March 11, 2027

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION:

Confirmation (Saint) Name Chosen by Candidate: _____
THIS IS THE NAME THE BISHOP WILL BE GIVEN

Name:_____
Last First M.I.
Print Name as shown on the *Baptismal Certificate*

____/_____/_____ **_____**
Date of Birth **Place of Birth (City, State)**

Father's Name: _____
First Middle Last

Mother's Maiden Name: _____
First Middle Maiden Name

Church of Baptism:_____
or Profession of Faith(POF) **(Please print full name of Church)**

_____
Full Street Address of Church of Baptism or POF City State Zip Code

_____ **_____**
Date of Baptism* **Year and Church of First Holy Communion**

*** Please attach a copy of the candidate's Baptismal and Birth Certificates. This includes those candidates who were baptized or made a Profession of Faith at St. Matthew's.**

Name of Confirmation Sponsor: _____

Is the sponsor a member of Saint Matthew's Parish? _____

What is the sponsor's relationship to the person being confirmed? _____

GOWN ORDER FORM
Due May 3, 2027

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

Candidate's Name:_____

_____ **Height in inches**

_____ **Approximate Weight**

Please attach a $20 check payable to St. Matthew's to cover the gown fee.

Item	Due Date	Who is responsible	Page in handbook
Confirmation Record Form	3/11/27	Parent	Page 14
Copy of Baptismal Certificate	3/11/27	Parent	n/a
Saint Report	3/11/27	Confirmandi	Page 8
Letter to Father Eversole	3/11/27	Confirmandi	Page 9
Works of Mercy	5/3/27	Confirmandi	Pages 10-12
Sponsor Eligibility	5/3/27	Sponsor	Pages 6 & 7 Actual form is obtained from their parish
Gown Order Form & Check	5/3/27	Parent	Page 15