

The Sacrament of Confirmation

Fall 2023 – Spring 2024



Information Packet

St. Leo *the* Great Catholic Church

Winston – Salem | NC

Dear Parents and Sponsors,

Confirmation is one of the three essential *Sacraments of Initiation* in the Catholic Church. It builds upon the graces received in Baptism that redeemed us from Original Sin. Confirmation strengthens us in the life of the Holy Spirit through His particular gifts that enable us to live out the supernatural calling we were given in Baptism. It also intensifies our bond with God the Father, the Church, and Jesus Christ, especially in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

The Church in Her wisdom uses the Confirmation preparation to reach out to individual young people and to prepare them adequately for **active participation** in the liturgy, evangelistic mission of the Church, and a life of servant leadership to their wider community. *Thus, our diocese requires both a “remote” preparation of two years of formal religious education (through a Catholic school, homeschool program, or Religious Education class) and a “proximate” preparation held all together with the other Confirmation candidates.* Your teen is now entering that period of proximate preparation. This phase of preparation solidifies a young person in their understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation, deepens their prayer life, authenticates their view of other human beings as valuable through active service, and challenges them personally to prepare their heart and mind for the reception of the Holy Spirit’s gifts. The Confirmed are, like the Apostles after Pentecost, *charged with a mission to spread the Gospel through their words and actions.*

None of this makes very much sense if the *Confirmandi* are not regularly attending weekly Sunday Mass and going to Confession at least once a year. It is through these Sacraments that a young person especially prepares his soul as fertile ground to receive the Gifts of God.

I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with these young people. At this crucial time in their lives there are so many distractions and pressures that push them toward the world’s idols of success. Strengthened by the Holy Spirit and encouraged by the mentorship of their parents, sponsor, pastor, and religious education instructors, teens are equipped to find the path God has prepared for them that will lead them to ultimate fulfillment and peace. Thank you so much for the sacrifices you make to place this preparation for life as a priority for them this year. I promise you that you could not invest in anything that would bear more fruit.

In Christ,

Colton P. Brown

Director of Parish Life & Evangelization
Interim Youth Ministry & Confirmation Coordinator
Middle School Religion & Literature
St. Leo *the* Great Catholic Church

Getting Reoriented *on* Confirmation

Like most of you I received my First Holy Communion *before* I was Confirmed. That was the sequence, Communion then Confirmation. However, I learned something very important during my studies: Confirmation is the second sacrament of initiation, not the third. When we bring adults into the Church, they are baptized, then immediately confirmed, and then they make their First Holy Communion. This happens all in one Mass, the Easter Vigil.

The original order (Baptism-Confirmation-Eucharist) for these sacraments was normal for children born into the faith for most of our history. Catholics in the past were baptized as infants, confirmed between 10-12 years old, and only then made their First Holy Communion. It was not until 1910, when Pope Pius X moved the age for Communion down to 7 (without commenting on Confirmation) that the order became disrupted—and became the order we and our parents and grandparents grew up with for the past 100 years.

However, there has been a growing awareness of a problem with the change. And in fact the Second Vatican Council said that in the Latin Rite (the Roman Rite we are part of) the original order of the sacraments should be restored. Why?



The reason is this, as Emeritus Pope Benedict said in a major teaching document: “It must never be forgotten that our reception of Baptism and Confirmation is ordered to the Eucharist.” **In other words, Confirmation is part of our preparation to receive the Eucharist. It is the Eucharist that is the “source and summit” of Catholic initiation.** The Eucharist, prepared for by Confirmation, is received when we have all the tools (the Gifts of the Holy Spirit) to work effectively within us and to help make us fruitful disciples.

Our Catechism in paragraph 1275 explains how this original sequence of the sacraments of initiation mirrors and builds on our natural human life cycle:

Christian initiation is accomplished by three sacraments together: Baptism which is the beginning of new life; Confirmation which is its strengthening; and the Eucharist which nourishes the disciple with Christ’s Body and Blood for his transformation in Christ.

Baptism-Confirmation-Eucharist is the order in the other dozen or so Rites that make up the Catholic Church. It is the order used by all the Orthodox Churches and by the Oriental Orthodox. It is the order called for in the Church’s basic canon law. It is the order of 95% of our history and all the billions of Catholics that history encompasses, as well as with those entering the Church through RCIA today.

Now obviously, we can’t just change the order on our own as a parish--and it’s a bit late for your children to do it anyway! (Let me add that while some bishops in the United States are beginning to restore the original order in

various dioceses, I have not heard it discussed here. Yet.) But we *can* get our thinking straight and approach Confirmation in a different frame of mind.

Our GOAL is the Eucharist! Confirmation is not the source and summit—it is a necessary part of the way to the source and summit. The Eucharist is Christ Jesus Himself, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, and receiving Him and growing in relationship to Him is the goal.

Confirmation, by completing our Baptism, makes us more prepared to receive and more able to put the Eucharist into practice (since we will have strengthened gifts from the Holy Spirit, for example). Therefore, with Confirmation, we are really ready for the full power of the Eucharist to begin working in us and transforming us.

Confirmation, then, is spiritually the completion of Baptism. It is not “Christian maturity”—it sets things up so we can grow more and more mature throughout our lives with the weekly help from Jesus as Eucharist. It is, as Pope Benedict teaches, “Ordered to the Eucharist.”

Jesus talks about Christians being light—so people can see, and recognize the true, good, and beautiful. And Scripture talks about the work of the Holy Spirit as fire—which warms people up and enlivens them. So think of the Sacraments of Initiation this way: each of us is like a piece of wood, muddy or covered with dirt—wash it off (Baptism) with a little water, then splash it with a little oil (Confirmation) so you can light it up. Good start, but how do we keep the fire going? What can make it grow to provide a lot of light, a lot of warmth for a long time? To do that, we have to FEED THE FLAMES (with the Eucharist, week by week).

Your children will be Confirmed so that the Eucharist can help them grow and produce fruit. Confirmation is not a reward for being grown up. Eighth graders can’t drive, can’t vote, can’t marry, can’t join the military, etc.,—and they certainly have not reached full maturity as Catholic followers of Christ. ***Confirmation, for 8th graders, is only the end of initiation, not some kind of graduation—much less retirement from growing in Christ! To receive Confirmation and not to continue with weekly Communion and frequent formation in the Faith is to thwart the entire point of Confirmation itself.***

Your children need Confirmation so they can have that full power of the Eucharist as they begin moving toward young adulthood—where they will need a lot more maturity to handle the challenges they will face. ***You parents remain absolutely necessary during this process after Confirmation—to get the Confirmed ones to the Eucharist on Sundays, to see that the whole family prays and serves,*** to see that the teens keep learning from the Scriptures, the YouCat, and other good Catholic resources.



Proximate Preparation

Here are the steps for proximate preparation at St. Leo the Great. They align with the Diocese of Charlotte requirements, though the way each parish interprets those guidelines is a little different according to the needs of their parish.

- ❑ Register for religious preparation (year #2) with SLCS school, SLCC 's Religious Education program, or a home school program.
- ❑ Register for our Confirmation online
- ❑ Baptismal information will be handled by the parish office
- ❑ Attend weekly Faith Formation classes **AND** the Scheduled Collective Formation Meetings
- ❑ Sign up for & attend the Retreat [Date is Saturday December 9thnd]
- ❑ Complete your sponsor form (attached) [Due January 7th, 2024]
- ❑ Sign up for & attend your Confirmation interview with the youth minister. Appointments will be made with Mr. Brown throughout February & March 2024
- ❑ **If your sponsor is from another parish**, they must send in a letter from their parish stating that they are a practicing Catholic in good standing [Please request the letter when you decide on a sponsor]. If they are members at SLCC, they will need to fill out a form from our parish
- ❑ Complete approximately 25 hours (TOTAL) of Corporal and/or Spiritual Works of Mercy (see below) and turn in your hours and reflection [Due by your interview]
- ❑ Complete your saint form (attached) [Due by January 7th, 2024]
- ❑ Attend Confirmation Rehearsal (date TBD once Confirmation is set)

Retreat

Our annual retreat will take place Dec. 9th. It will MOST LIKELY not be an off campus event. It will be held at St. Leo Church. **There is a \$25 fee to help assist with the cost of food (due 2 weeks from Retreat Date).** Please know that we may have to move the Retreat to a date this Spring. Father Gober and I will discuss and select the best dates for hosting our Retreat.

This retreat is mandatory. If you have a serious reason you cannot make it (sports generally do not count as serious, though I know commitment to a team is a good thing), talk to Mr. Brown sooner rather than later about an approved alternative retreat. If parents would like to volunteer, that would be great! Contact Mr. Brown as soon as possible to find out the requirements for volunteering! **Students MUST attend a retreat. If you have plans to attend another Parish Retreat, please inform the coordinators.**

Your Confirmation Sponsor: facts and procedure

Because Confirmation is so closely related to Baptism, **the most appropriate Sponsor for Confirmation is one of your godparents.** You need **one**, and **only one**, Sponsor for Confirmation.

Anyone serving as a Confirmation Sponsor must meet the following criteria:

- Has received the Sacraments of Initiation in the Catholic Church (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist).
- If married, has a marriage that is recognized by the Catholic Church.
- They must attend Sunday Mass weekly and all Holy Days of Obligation.
- They must strive to live the teachings of the Church, *as certified by their home parish. (More information below).*
- Is 16 years of age or older.
- Is willing to support you by prayer, conversation, and example of a Christian life.
- Is not your parent. (Your parents are, as with Baptism, the Catholics primarily responsible to raise you in the faith. Godparents and Sponsors are supportive substitutes if your parents are unavailable).

It is possible for someone else to stand as proxy for a Sponsor unable to attend the Confirmation Mass. Just let us know who the proxy will be.

Sponsor certification:

If the Sponsor is a member of St. Leo's simply fill out the form and turn it in by January 22nd. Please have your sponsor (member of St. Leo) call the office and a sponsor form will be provided. A parent cannot be a proxy.

If the Sponsor is a member of any other Catholic parish in the world, the Sponsor must request a letter from their home parish certifying that he or she is a member of the Church in good standing. Many parishes in the US have

their own versions of such letters since they are used to receiving certification requests for Baptisms and Confirmations, etc.

Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

Service, or ministering to others, is an everyday part of the lives of all Christians. This should simply continue as Confirmation approaches.

In order to encourage teens who are not used to an active participation in the life of the Body of Christ, we have several minimal requirements that will help the teens to explore different ways of serving within their parish and community.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are expressed in love towards others and in reverence towards God. They enable us to live out the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy more authentically in our daily lives.

The 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

The 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

Some of the ways of serving are more obvious than others—one can feed the hungry by helping out at a soup kitchen. Some of the ways of serving are less obvious—one can visit the imprisoned by visiting people at a nursing home who often feel abandoned and purposeless. I don't recommend taking the Spiritual Works of Mercy in their most literal interpretation (Admonishing the Sinner for 1 hour by telling my sister all the things she should be doing to be nice to me) but rather in an active and concrete but more remote, spiritually-supportive role.

Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy log entries should be signed by an adult who is leading the event or supervising using your log sheet. If there is not someone available (for instance at a liturgical event), a parent may sign the sheet. **A total of 25 hours are asked of each student. Keep in mind that the students must complete both Spiritual AND Corporal Works of Mercy.** The point is not to add a burden to students who are already active in the community but to encourage variety and a consistent habit in active service. Paid service or jobs do not count.

Please note: only 5 hours per activity may be recorded on your sheet. A variety of service is required.

Here are some ideas that would qualify for the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Many opportunities present themselves on a regular basis through the SLCC bulletin. Most Youth Group service events are open to Middle School students as well as High School students; however, it is not our responsibility to provide all of the hours needed through our events alone.

Corporal Works of Mercy

- Feed the hungry—soup kitchens, food collections, parish events that need servers (every winter, the youth group serves a meal at Pathways-the date for this event will be sent out in an email); making (assisting with) dinner for your family, loading or unloading the dishwasher
- Give drink to the thirsty—volunteer at a race for a good cause, volunteer at a concession stand
- Clothe the naked—help with a clothing drive or getting gifts for poor children at Christmas-our Christmas giving tree at your parish is a great opportunity, folding laundry
- Shelter the homeless—same as above; buying blankets, coats, mittens, gloves, and donating them to a shelter in need
- Visit the sick—homebound ministry, visit nursing homes, volunteer your time to help a sick person or pregnant/new mom with meal prep, child care, yard work, or house cleaning
- Visit the imprisoned—same as above, write letters to a friend or relative or give them a call; ask a nursing home if they need any donation
- Bury the dead—maybe indirect by helping to clean the church before a funeral with Altar Committee (always takes place on a Saturday); have a Mass said for a deceased relative

Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Serve in liturgy through choir, lecturing, altar serving, ushering, etc
- To admonish sinners: spend time studying the Faith, reading about one's patron saint, etc.
- Pray for the living-Pro-life prayer, like participation in 40 Days for Life (spring & fall), the March for Life (Jan), or the Life Chain in October
- Pray for the dead-Going to a cemetery to pray for the Poor Souls in November, praying a family rosary together for the Poor Souls in Purgatory or for a deceased relative, having a Mass offered for a deceased relative and attending that Mass. Prayerfully attend a special service like a formal holy hour, funeral, or celebration of a feast day that does not fall on a Sunday or Holy Day; attend Latin Mass for the first time, offering up your Holy Communion for the souls in purgatory; attend the Triduum at Easter time
- Instruct the ignorant-Tutoring after school, coaching, any teaching role in which the confirmand is assisting another to learn a new skill, helping a younger sibling with their homework, reading them stories, etc.
- Comfort the sorrowful and counsel the doubtful: Sending Christmas, Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day cards to those who may not have family during the holidays (we will have a special service project of making cards for those who our deacon visits with Holy Communion)

If you have questions about type of activity qualifying, feel free to e-mail Colton Brown at cbrown@stleocatholic.com

Families and teens have come up with some great ideas of their own and this is the goal! We want our teens grow in true acts of charity rather than checking off a list of required service hours.

Quick Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy Summary:

- 25 Total hours of service, minimum
- Aim for variety: Both Corporal Works and Spiritual Works within the minimum 10 hrs
- Please record all charitable works on the “Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy Log” provided on the next page
- For the one activity that had the biggest impact on you, please write a reflection
- Staple all of it together and turn it in to Colton Brown by **the date of your interview**
- If your teen completed activities during the summer of 2023 (July 1st and on), they may use these towards their 25 hours. Hours previous to July 1st, 2023 may not be used

Please note: If your teen does not complete the 25 hours, they will not be penalized. We are flexible with hours, but have set the 25 hour max, with the five hour limit in order to encourage teens to learn about the various Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy we are ALL called to practice. Teens can and should work more than two hours on a project, but they are just recording two.



Pentecost by Duccio

“Remember, then, that you received a spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of holy fear. Keep safe what you received. God the Father sealed you, Christ the Lord strengthened you and sent the Spirit into your hearts as the pledge of what is to come.” — St. Ambrose

Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy Hour Log

Hand in by interview **Confirmand's Full Name:** _____ **Total Hours:** _____

Date	Time Start	Time Done	Total Time	Person or Organization Served	Type of Service (label Corporal or Spiritual)	Authorized Signature

*If you need extra space just make another copy of this page. For **one** of the above activities fill out a copy of the next page.*

Reflection Sheet

Please turn in your typed reflection by the date of your interview.

What type of service did you do?

What Spiritual or Corporal Work of Mercy did it reflect? (if any)

Answer most of the following questions in full sentences and detail within a paragraph reflection:

What were your responsibilities, or what did you accomplish?

How did your actions bring Christ to the person or organization you served?

Describe a special moment.

Was any part of the service difficult for you personally?

How will you make service a way of life?

Was any part particularly challenging or new for you personally? Why?

Why do you think this sort of event is important (to you individually or to those whom you served)?

Confirmation Saint Name:

Traditionally, those who are being confirmed in the Catholic faith choose a Confirmation name. They choose a saint to be their patron, or advocate, or life-guide from the many thousands who have gone before us. It could be a saint they particularly admire, perhaps one who faced particular kinds of challenges or represents people of a certain type—background, kind of work or interests, involvement in missions or particular kinds of service, etc. Rather than become a formal part of your legal name, your confirmation name is more private, more of a secret spiritual name, though one we can share with family and our friends.

The Scriptures are one rich source for such names, and **you may also “re-choose” your baptismal name [this is the option recommended by the diocese--look for various saints who shared your name if there are any, learn about them, and pick one as your patron]**, or the Christian name of a relative or your Sponsor. There are thousands of other possibilities among the many, many saints, martyrs, confessors, doctors of the Church, and other holy men and women in our Catholic history. Since the saint is an intercessor or spiritual resource for you, you may also choose either a male or female saint. (Note: You may also use a feminine form of a masculine name or vice versa, such as Henrietta if you are a girl for St. Henry, or Francis for Frances if you are a boy, though most people simply take the name of the saint they most admire without worrying about it.)

Your final choice is due by January 7th, 2024 via the form with your reasons for your choice. Please show in your “reasons” that you know something about the saint’s life, patronage, etc.

Here is a good online source for some 8,000+ saints' names and information about them and their patronage:

<http://saints.sqpn.com/>

Here's a great source that lists them alphabetically and considers name variations quite well:

<http://catholicsaints.info/baptismal-and-confirmation-names/>

Final Summary & Notes

- Make sure your teen is properly registered for Confirmation AND for Year #2 Religious Education with the parish or school.
- Review the dress code for Confirmation Mass. Please know the dress code is strictly enforced.
- Regular Sunday Mass attendance is necessary (it is one of the Commandments)! I encourage you to go to Confession as a family too.
- Attend weekly classes and Super Sundays (schedule is listed below).
- Attend the Retreat.
- **By January 7th, 2024:**
- Complete sponsor form (and request a letter from their parish if required)
- **By the beginning of February 2024:**
- Sign up for an interview in Feb or Mar with Mr. Brown (you can do this by contacting me via email or phone. We can set up a date and time that is best for you!) Interviews must be finished by March 31st, 2024.
- Complete Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy (due by the interview)
- **By January 7th, 2024**
- Fill out the online saint form
- **Also to be Completed:**
- Review guidelines for Confirmation dress (this will be provided via email)
- Attend the rehearsal (Date TBD before Confirmation)
- Attend Confirmation (date TBA by diocese)

The **date for Confirmation** is announced by the diocese at some point in January or February. I will email the date to all parents the moment I receive it so you may plan accordingly. I will also announce the rehearsal date and time as soon as we hear from the diocese!

Dates for SUPER SUNDAY Classes:

Below you will find a list of Super Sunday classes. For each class, video links, handouts and discussion questions will be provided so parents and families can study and learn together alongside their teen. I will also attach sections and reading assignments for the main text, *The Baltimore Catechism*, will be provided in advance.

Expectations: Students will be given resources and notes. Please have them complete all homework and be prepared to turn in when we have our classes. I strongly encourage EVERY STUDENT to have a pen and consistent notebook when they attend the SUPER SUNDAY classes. I will be checking NOTEBOOKS during INTERVIEWS.

October 15th, 2023: Who is the Holy Spirit?

November 12th, 2023: The Power of Prayer

December 10th, 2023: The Incarnation

January 14th, 2024: Stewardship over God's Gifts

February 11th, 2024: The Saints – Building a Relationship

March 10th, 2024: Apostolic Succession - Universal Call to Holiness

Things to know!

The following is a summary of what is required to know before the interview in February & March 2024. I have included the prayers and various lists of specific definitions. However, the confirmand should feel free to look these up as well and do further reading on the topics as found in the Catechism.

Fundamental Prayers	Confirmation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign of the Cross • Our Father • Hail Mary • Glory Be • Nicene Creed • Act of Contrition • Prayer to the Holy Spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened at Pentecost? • What are the effects of Confirmation? • What are the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit? • What happens in the Rite of Confirmation?
Our Call as Christians	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ten Commandments • Precepts of the Church • The Beatitudes • Spiritual Works of Mercy • Corporeal Works of Mercy • Theological and Moral Virtues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy Days of Obligation • Definition of a Sacrament • Seven Sacraments • Definition of Matter and Form and an example • Transubstantiation • Definition of grace

Act of Contrition:

- Oh My God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all of my sins because of thy just punishment, but most of all because they have offended Thee, My God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.

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.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Definition of a sacrament:

“The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us,” (CCC 1131).

Definition of matter and form:

Both are necessary to every sacrament. The form is “composed of the liturgical words used to give sanctifying grace” and matter “is the physical sign that gives sanctifying grace” (*Didache Series*, 100).

Transubstantiation

What is: Transubstantiation: according to the teaching of the Catholic Church, the change of substance by which the bread and the wine offered in the sacrifice of the sacrament of the Eucharist during the Mass, become, in reality, the body and blood of Jesus the Christ. The Catholic Church teaches that the substance, or reality, of the Eucharistic offering (either bread alone, or bread and wine) is changed into both the body and blood of Christ. **The Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity (the Eucharist) is not just a symbol, but the true presence of Jesus.**

The following are all topics we will discuss in class. It might be helpful for your teen to bring a notebook if they would like to take notes, etc.

List the Seven Sacraments

What are the effects of Confirmation?

What is grace?

What are the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit?

The Theological Virtues

The Moral Virtues

Holy Days of Obligation

What happens in the Rite of Confirmation?

A note from Mr. Brown:

Preparing for the interviews for the Confirmandi can often be very stressful. Please assure your teen that the interview with myself is nothing to worry about! While I definitely want to know that they have listened in their Religious Education classes and during monthly meetings at the parish, the purpose of the interview is to gauge their desire to be confirmed as well as their desire to grow in the Faith. The interview is a conversation about the amazing teachings Christ has entrusted to His Church in order to lead us closer to Him and also to discuss how we can further grow in our relationship with God.