

A GUIDEBOOK FOR CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES AND PARENTS

For

St. Michaels Catholic Community

Fort Gordon, GA

*“...that their hearts may
be encouraged as they
are brought together in
love, to have all the
richness of fully assured
understanding, for the
knowledge of the
mystery of God, Christ,
in whom are hidden all
the treasures of wisdom
and knowledge.”*

Col 2, 2-3



Index of Topics

Page 3: Introduction

Page 4: Who can get confirmed?

Page 5: Confirmation Candidate Expectations- At A Glance

Expectation Details:

Page 6: **Mandatory: Participate in Mass** on Saturday evening or Sunday each week.

Page 6: **Participate in Confirmation classes.**

Page 6: **Participate in the Confirmation retreat.**

Page 7: **Performing 25 hours of Service.**

Page 8: **Participate in at least one additional spiritual activity that is new to you.**

Page 8: **Write a letter to the Bishop.**

Page 8: **Attend Confirmation Rehearsal.**

Page 9: **Participate in the Liturgy and Rite of Confirmation**

Page 9: **Choose a Confirmation Saint's name and write a biography about that saint** (see attached forms).

Page 10: **Confirmation Saint's Name Form.**

Page 11-12: **Form: Saint's Biography and other related details.**

Page 13: **Choosing a qualified sponsor.**

Page 15: **Confirmation Sponsor Information Form.**

Page 16: **Qualifications for Confirmation Sponsors.**

Page 17: **Candidate and Parent Confirmation Commitment Form.**

Page 18: **What Will I Wear?**

INTRODUCTION

Welcome! We are looking forward to sharing with you this journey of faith as you prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. As you will see, Confirmation preparation involves learning, sharing, serving, fellowship, spiritual growth and fun! You will be given the opportunity to learn more about your Catholic faith and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Confirmation is the Sacrament in which one is enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church. It strengthens us and obliges us to be witnesses to Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith. It is the Sacrament in which one enters into full membership in the Catholic Church.

Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives us the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply as children of God, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us to bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a spiritual mark or indelible character on the Christian soul; for this reason, one can receive this sacrament only once.

A Christian does not live as a child of God through his or her own efforts alone, but through the grace of God. We see this in a practical way when we look back on our own lives and the lives of others, even the lives of saints. Therefore, it is our duty to seek the grace that God offers us in order to live our lives as Christians in the way that God intends.

This is a time when the candidate journeys, when possible, with a sponsor. This is the moment in one's Christian life when the candidate freely declares that they are now going to be responsible from now on with their faith formation.



WHO MAY BE CONFIRMED?

Confirmation candidates:

- Are between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. If older, this individual must be interviewed by the Senior Catholic Active Duty Priest and possibly receive some from of Catechesis.
- Have received the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and Eucharist (1st Holy Communion).
- Are practicing their faith
- Are in the state of grace
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities of a member of the Catholic Church
- Are aware of the initiation aspect of the Sacrament of Confirmation and be committed to continuing the faithful practice and study of their religion
- Have a sincere desire to receive the sacrament as well as an appreciation of sacramental life.
- Register with their parish for the sacrament of Confirmation (Religious Education registration form)



CONFIRMATION CANDIDATE EXPECTATIONS- at a glance

- The confirmand is educated in the middle school years.
- The confirmand will receive the sacrament in the eighth grade. There are exceptions an older child. In this case, the parent and child will need to be interviewed by the Senior Active Duty Priest.
- **MANDATORY: No child can receive the Sacrament of Confirmation unless they have an officially stamped Baptismal and First Holy Communion record.** These two sacraments are always listed on one single record. If your child was baptized on a Military installation, you must produce an Officially stamped AMS copy. If you have lost it, you must go the AMS website and request a formal copy. Go to: <http://www.milarch.org>. There click of the tab: “Sacramental Records.” Then, choose either the “Online Request From” or click the “Printable Request From” button.
PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE MILITARY POST FOR RECORDS. THEY DO NOT KEEP ANY SACRAMENTAL RECORDS.
 - For those who lost your civilian baptismal-1st Holy Communion record for your child, contact the civilian parish where the child was baptized.
 - Further Requirements for Confirmation will be explained to the students and parents upon entry into the Confirmation program. Day and time will be TBA-TBD.
 - All dates and times for rehearsals and ceremonies will be listed on the Religious Education Calendar. Parents and Students are responsible for reviewing the scheduled Sunday classes, and mandatory retreats and rehearsals. Please review the Religious Education Calendar given to you. We suggest you hang the schedule on your refrigerator door.
- **Mandatory:** Participate in and attend weekly Mass
- Participate in classes. If a candidate misses 3 classes, the parents and student must meet with the Senior Active Duty Catholic Priest to discuss future participation in the program.
- Choose a qualified sponsor and meet regularly with him/her.
- write a letter of intent.
- Choose a saint’s name as your Confirmation name and write a biography about that saint.
- Participate in the sponsor/candidate meeting
- Participate in Confirmation retreat
- Be regularly involved in social justice activities
 - perform or attend at least one additional spiritual activity.
- Write a letter to the Bishop.
- Participate in the Confirmation rehearsal.
- Participate in the Confirmation liturgy!

EXPECTATIONS IN DETAIL

The following explains each of the Confirmation expectations in detail and in some cases, the reasons the requirements are important to the formation of the candidate. Please remember that while in many cases we list a minimum requirement for Confirmation, the candidates should be encouraged to make many of these activities a regular part of their religious practices.

1. Mandatory: Participate in Mass on Saturday evening or Sunday each week.

The Confirmation candidate and his or her parents (along with the rest of the family) must have a sincere intention of participating in Mass every week.

Participating in the Eucharistic life of the community is both a privilege and an obligation of Confirmed Catholics. This is also an important way that parents demonstrate to their children the importance they place on the faith they are handing on to their children. Worshipping as a community we build up the Body of Christ. If your family has not been attending Mass regularly in the past, we are confident that by doing so you will notice many benefits by the time Confirmation approaches.

You must either attend mass at Good Shepherd Chapel or off post. You have to sign in for mass on post. **If you go off post, you must have a priest print his name and sign a bulletin and have his contact phone number listed on it.** Without this, we will consider it a missed mass.

2. Participate in Confirmation classes

Attendance at the Confirmation classes is extremely important in preparing the candidates for reception of the sacrament. When a class is missed, the candidate loses time for fellowship and prayer as well as the material covered that day. We expect that you will make these gatherings a priority and therefore make a sincere effort to adjust your other obligations accordingly. Students are expected to be prepared for the classes, which includes completing any assigned readings or homework. Contact your catechist immediately if critical circumstances will not allow you to attend a class. The catechist will determine an appropriate at-home assignment so that he/she doesn't fall behind in the lessons. Excessive absenteeism can affect the candidate's ability to enter fully into this important period of preparation.

3. Participate in the Confirmation retreat.

Retreats provide a unique opportunity for the candidates to spend an extended time in discernment and reflect on the gifts of the Spirit and reflect on their relationship with God and their faith life. It is therefore required that each candidate attend a least the Confirmation retreat hosted by the community in their Confirmation year. **Both Parents and Candidates need to review often the Religious Education Calendar.**

4. Performing 25 hours of Service. (Being regularly involved in social justice activities).

1. In order to fulfill the Church's requirement to receive Confirmation, Candidates are required to complete community service before celebrating the sacrament of confirmation. This can be accomplished in the following two ways:
 - a. **25 Hours of service** –These projects should reflect service to the church (15 Hours) and secular (10 Hours) communities. A list of possible service projects within the church community will be made available to the candidates---see your CCD teachers. Service Project Report Forms will be available through the faith formation office and will be posted throughout Good Shepherd Chapel near the bulletin boards. These forms must be clearly and fully filled out to be accepted.
 - b. Think about One Principal Project that you are Committed to one area of interest. Warning---Prior to the start of the Proposed Project, you must submit the Proposed Project Form to the Religious Education Coordinator for approval.

Something to think about:

An awareness of the importance of and vital need for performing service to others is critical in preparing the candidates for Confirmation. Throughout Scripture we are called to love our neighbor and stand up for justice and peace. Since service and justice are so important to who we are as Catholic Christians, we ask that the candidates make his/her service projects a priority.

Serving others is not something we do “to get it over with”. It is something we do because we recognize the presence of Jesus in all persons and in all of God's creation. Therefore, it is encouraged that the candidates get involved in a new service activity which is an ongoing and a regular commitment.

Some things to think about when considering your service are:

- What are people's needs or problems and what can I do to help?
- Who needs time, effort, work or service from me?
- What unique gifts or talents has God given me that can be used to serve others?

Once you identify where service is needed, make specific plans and follow through with those commitments. Here is a scripture passage about why we serve God and others:

“You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself. He replied to him, ‘You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.’” (Lk. 10: 27-28)

There are many, many opportunities to serve at the church and in the community. Just a few examples are:

*Be an aide for Religious Education

*Join the Choir

*Assist with Parish activities such as St. Michaels Day

*Join the parish Lector, Usher/Greeter, Altar Server ministries

Other opportunities will be listed in the parish bulletin or given to you by your CCD teacher.

(Please read the bulletin every week as it provides you important information.)

5. Participate in at least one additional spiritual activity that is new to you .

Spending time in prayer and reflection does not end when we leave the church on Sunday. It is so important for the candidates to become aware of the many opportunities that are available for them to meditate, celebrate and further their relationship with God.

The following is a partial list of spiritual activities:

Attend daily Mass

Participate in Advent and/or Lenten preparations

Participate in a Christmas pageant, Living Stations of the Cross,

Participate in the Triduum services- Holy Thursday, Good Friday, or Easter Vigil

Attend Adoration or Reconciliation on a regular basis

Reflect on Scripture- in your journal for three minutes each Sunday

Pray the Rosary

Participate in Bible study

Although the minimum requirement is to participate in one of these activities, we sincerely hope the candidate and his or her family will have an active and ongoing spiritual life!

“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” -James, 4, 8

6. Write a letter to the Bishop

It has been customary for the Bishop to request that each candidate write a personal letter to him requesting Confirmation. The students will be given more information about this letter as Confirmation approaches. This letter will be due by mid January.

7. Attend Confirmation Rehearsal

All candidates and their sponsors (or a proxy---i.e. stand in) must attend the Confirmation rehearsal which is typically Friday evening before Confirmation, which will start on a Saturday sometime between 1530 and 1700 hours. The sponsors will also give witness to the candidates at this time.

8. Participate in the Liturgy and Rite of Confirmation

Confirmation date is to be determined based on the Bishop's schedule. Typically, the mass is held in February. Pay attention to emails and to the CCD teachers for they will have the latest information on the day and time of the mass.

9. Choose a Confirmation Saint's name and write a biography about that saint.

This is to be handed in to your CCD teacher by 11th of December.

In both the Old and New Testament, when God had a new mission for someone, He often gave them a new name. Even without a new name, your name has always told others who you are.

God calls on each of us to fulfill a special mission. It may be converting nonbelievers, helping the poor, being a peacemaker or one of many other callings.

Confirmation may be the continuation of a mission you began at Baptism, or the beginning of a new mission.

Therefore, there are two options when deciding on a Confirmation name:

- a. Because Confirmation is the strengthening of the work that God began in your life at your Baptism, it is recommended that you give first preference to using your Baptismal name for Confirmation. This shows the integral link between Baptism and Confirmation (note: this applies only if your Baptismal name was a Saint's name.)
- b. Perhaps you see Confirmation as the beginning of a new mission for you and a fresh beginning in your faith journey. Then you may choose a new name for Confirmation. Your Confirmation name should be that of a saint you admire or the saint name of someone you know and look up to as a Christian role-model.

There are many helpful websites available to assist you in gathering information about the saints. Just a few are: www.catholicforum.com/saints. www.catholic.org/saints. www.catholic-pages.com/dir/saints.asp. www.theworkofgod.org/saints. Once the candidate has chosen his/her Confirmation name, they must complete a biography of that saint using the form found with this guide—see next page.

Confirmation Saint's Name Form

The preferred name for Confirmation is the baptismal name because it expresses the relationship that exists between Baptism and Confirmation.

If a new name is taken it should be the name of recognized saint of the Catholic Church. If the baptismal name is not that of a recognized saint, or a derivative, a new name should be chosen for Confirmation.

Names of saints are chosen to serve as patrons and models for those being confirmed. *Candidates should choose a patron's saint's name, not because of the attractiveness of the name, but because of the attractiveness of the Christian life that that person led.* Find out more about your patron saint's life. Choose either your baptismal name or a new Confirmation patron saint's name, this report needs to be a 5 paragraph, double spaced essay detailing biographical info on your saint, virtues you wish to emulate and why you choose the saint.

Below you will find an outline to help you write your essay.

Candidate's Full Baptismal Name: **PRINT CLEARLY**

(First)

(Middle)

(Last)

Saint's name or derivative you have selected to use: **PRINT CLEARLY**

[This is the name that will appear in the official Confirmation record; First Name, Confirmation Name, Last Name]

This form and the questions below are to be completed by each candidate and returned to the Confirmation Facilitator no later than December 13th.

Form: Saint's Biography and other related details

(It will be easier for you to use your computer to respond to these questions. **Due by 11 December**)

[Resources for research; websites: faithfirst.com, Catholic.org. Many websites of parishes have links to stories of saints' lives. Also, public libraries, and the RE Office in bldg. 9]

Saint's Name: _____

Feast Day: _____

Saint's place of birth: _____

Other information on your:

Family: _____

Occupation: _____

Event in the life of the Saint for which he/she is most famous:

What type of death was experienced by the saint you've chosen?

What virtues did this saint practice in his/her

life? _____

What aspect of this person's Christian life attracted

You? _____

How is this saint a model for Christians today and how can you imitate your saint's virtues?

Ask your parents how they chose your birth name? Briefly write about why you received the name you have.

10. Choosing a qualified sponsor

The confirmation sponsor should be a person who has been a strong role- model as a faith-filled practicing Catholic who has received all of hers or his sacraments. This person will be a companion in your faith journey and will vouch for your readiness to receive the sacrament.

The sponsor should therefore be able to meet regularly with the candidate, spend time building a bond with the teen, help him/her prepare for the sacrament through prayer, study, service and discussion and be in physical attendance at the rehearsal and the confirmation. We know that your sponsor may live out of state. In this case, phone calls and or video (e.g. Skype, Facetime) forms of expected. Attendance by proxy is allowed in certain situations, such as the sponsor living out-of-town and being unable to travel to the celebration. We must know who this person is in advance.

The sponsor qualifications: AMS Sponsors for Confirmation

4.2.12. The confirmation sponsor must be a practicing Catholic. The sponsor's duty is to see that the one confirmed acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the duties inherent in this sacrament. (c. 892)

4.2.12.1. The qualifications of the sponsor at confirmation are the same as for the godparent at baptism. A parent may not be a sponsor for his or her child at Confirmation. (See cc. 893, §1 and 874) (See also: *Qualification for godparents, page 10*)

The Code of Canon Law (874) and St. Michael's have this criterion for one to assume the role of sponsor for Confirmation:

- *Be designated by the candidate, parents or guardian and willing to accept the role of Confirmation Sponsor.*
- *Be at least 17 years old.*
- *Be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the Sacrament of the Eucharist*
- *Be a Catholic who participates in Sunday liturgy, lives a life in faith and harmony with the Catholic faith and the role to be undertaken, and is willing and able to participate in the Eucharist with his or her candidate*
- *Not be bound by any canonical penalty*
- *Cannot be the father or mother of the one to be Confirmed*

4.2.12.2. It is desirable that one's baptismal godparent also serves as one's sponsor for confirmation. (c. 893, §2) This expresses more clearly the relationship between Baptism and confirmation and also makes the function and responsibility of the sponsor more effective. Nonetheless, the choice of a special sponsor for confirmation is not excluded. (See: *Rite of Confirmation #5*)

St. Michael Sponsor requirements:

Our community requirements follow with what the Archdiocese and Canon Law require. In addition, we elaborate more on those AMC and Canonical sponsor requirements:

This individual:

- Must be a sufficiently mature and practicing Roman Catholic who attends Mass regularly (Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation) and is living according to the teachings of the Catholic Church
- Must support the person to be confirmed in their commitment to a Christian life and must know the candidate and be willing to serve as a strong and long lasting Christian influence on the candidate
- Must be fully initiated themselves, having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist and therefore must submit a Letter of Good Standing from their parish priest. **We can find a community member on post if you cannot find a sponsor**
- Can be either male or female.
- May assist the candidate in choosing and carrying out the candidate's service project commitment
- Must be reasonably informed on current church teachings
- May accompany the candidate to special liturgies and preparation program
- Can assist Confirmation team in determining the candidate's readiness for the sacrament
- Will present the candidate to the Bishop of Confirmation either in person or by **Proxy (i.e. a stand in)**

Preference is given to the candidate's baptismal Godparents, which most fully expresses the integral connection between Baptism and Confirmation. If you are using a proxy sponsor, he/she must also meet the AMS sponsor qualifications as well.

Qualifications for Confirmation Sponsors

The qualifications for a confirmation sponsor (4.1.11 AMS Regulation) are:

- It is desirable that the one who undertook the role of sponsor at baptism be the sponsor for confirmation.
- **A non-Catholic may NOT be a confirmation sponsor.**
- Parents, though they may NOT be the confirmation sponsor, may certainly present their children for confirmation as a proxy for the sponsor.

To be admitted to the role of sponsor, a person must:

- The candidate for Confirmation chooses the sponsor.
- have completed the sixteenth year, unless a different age has been established by the diocesan bishop or it seems to the pastor or minister that an exception is to be made for just cause:
- be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken:

The sponsor is actively participating and living the Catholic faith through attending Mass and trying to live a lifestyle that professes the Gospels.

- not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared:

The sponsor is in good standing with the Church. A Letter of Good Standing must be turned in to the Confirmation Facilitator NLT Mid December.





Candidate and Parent Confirmation Commitment Form

“A lasting promise between God and his people”

1. The family of the candidate are registered members of the parish of St. Michaels Catholic Community, Fort Gordon, GA, actively worshipping and participating in the life of the parish and currently enrolled in the religious education formation process at St. Michaels.
2. Regular attendance and participation at weekly liturgies and scheduled formation activities, i.e. classes, retreats, Sunday Mass. More than 3 absences from the Confirmation Preparation program will constitute a withdrawal from the program. Must be interviewed by the Senior Active Duty Priest.
3. Regular attendance and participation in weekly RE classes appropriate to the candidate’s grade. This ensures continuity and consistency in the faith formation of the candidate.
4. Candidates are encouraged to maintain a journal throughout the confirmation preparation process. This journal should contain their personal thoughts and reflections regarding their faith journey. The journal experience is to allow the candidate to reflect on their daily lives in light of the Gospel message to “love and serve God and one another.”
5. Candidates are required to complete community service before celebrating the sacrament of confirmation. This can be accomplished in the following two ways:
 - a. 25 Hours of service –These projects should reflect service to the church (15 Hours) and secular (10 Hours) communities. A list of possible service projects within the church community will be made available to the candidates. Service Project Report Forms will be available through the faith formation office.
 - b. One Principal Project. Committed to one area of interest – Prior to the start of the project, the Proposed Project Form must be submitted to the Religious Education Coordinator for approval.
6. The AMS Diocese requires a copy of the baptismal certificate and First Communion Certificate to be on file prior to the reception of all sacraments. If candidate was baptized/received First Communion at a military chapel, you may call the Archdiocese for the Military Services for a copy of the certificate. (202-719-3624) or online at www.milarch.org. If baptized at a civilian parish, contact them. Sacramental paperwork must be received NLT 11 December. Please allow 4-6 weeks for your request to process.
7. A completed Sponsor Form. Sponsor qualifications must be adhered to completely. **Parents cannot be sponsors.**
8. A completed Saint’s Information Sheet is required of all candidates. The choosing of a saint’s name or the use of the baptismal name is the choice of the candidate, but a Saint’s Name Information Sheet is required of every candidate.

We understand and agree to the requirements for the Confirmation process at St. Michaels Fort Gordon. Failure to meet or complete these requirements may result in a statement of non-readiness for year of preparation and/or the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation.

Signature of Confirmation Candidate

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian



What Will I Wear?

Attire for your child at Confirmation:

Young Men:

Black Dress pants/slacks (no baggy/sagging pants)

White Dress Shirt with solid Red Tie

Belt

Dress Shoes Black/Brown

Young Women:

White Dress/Skirt (length falls below knee)

White Blouse (no halter/spaghetti strap/bare shoulders/low cut front/back/bra should not be visible)

Dress shoes (no flip flops)