

Concerning Changes to Confirmation and Youth Programs

Parents & Youth,

Many of you may already know that the archdiocese is lowering the age of Confirmation to any youth in 7th grade or higher. In response to this change and the new challenges and opportunities it presents, we are making several changes to our youth and Confirmation programs. Please read the below information carefully.

First, our weekly youth program will now be comprised of all youth in 8th - 12th grade. Weekly meetings will be on Sunday afternoons, 3:30 - 5:30 P.M. There will no longer be a dedicated youth group for middle school youth. This is because our 6th and 7th graders will be focused on preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. In addition, newly confirmed 8th graders will benefit far more from being with the high school youth, especially given the fact that they are already facing many of the same challenges and difficulties their slightly older peers face in high school.

Now for our Confirmation program. The program will remain a 2 year program; however, it is going to become more robust to ensure the younger youth are properly prepared to receive this important sacrament. This means that several changes are going to occur:

- 6th grade youth will once again be part of the faith formation program on Sunday mornings. However, their 6th grade year will be spent building a good base of knowledge in our Catholic faith. This will hopefully prepare them for a more rigorous sacramental prep program in 7th grade. *This year is mandatory!*
- 7th grade youth will now be focused on preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. They will attend weekly classes on Thursday nights, 7:00 - 8:00 P.M. The requirements for this program are listed below. *Please review them carefully!*
- Next year will be a transition year. This means we will be running two separate Confirmation classes. One for the middle school youth in 7th and 8th grade; one for the high school youth in 9th - 12th grade
- High school youth will meet for their Confirmation classes on Tuesday nights, 7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

To summarize: Next year we will have two Confirmation classes here at St. Theresa. A high school class that will meet on Tuesday nights, and a middle school class that will meet on Thursday nights. All 6th grade youth will be placed in a Sunday faith formation class that is mandatory if they are going to be confirmed their 7th grade year.

I would like to encourage all of you to not delay this important sacrament. Youth in 7th grade are perfectly capable of receiving and understanding this sacrament. In centuries past this was the norm, and more and more dioceses across the country are going back to this historical norm. You do your child no favor by waiting for them to “*decide for themselves*” later. **This sacrament is NOT about “choosing” to be Catholic,** and as Catholic parents we have a responsibility to ensure our children receive the sacraments.

Finally, I'd like to stress that Confirmation is NOT Catholic graduation! Our goal is to create a 6th and 7th grade Confirmation program that gives our youth a solid foundation of knowledge in our faith. However, that does not mean our youth are done and ready to tackle the world after they are confirmed. The point of our 8th - 12th grade youth program will be to now support and help these newly confirmed youth with the difficulties and challenges they face. This means providing a space where Catholic youth can connect, learn, and grow in their faith. Parents, I encourage you to do all you can to keep our youth active and engaged in our youth program after they are confirmed.

St. Theresa Confirmation Program Requirements

Confirmation is an important sacrament that is, unfortunately, often overlooked and forgotten. At the reception of this sacrament you receive a special strengthening of the Holy Spirit, are bound more closely to Christ and His Church, and are made apostles and soldiers for Christ. It is unfortunate then that many treat this sacrament so lightly. With the reception of Confirmation we are obligated to live, defend, and proclaim the Gospel message of our Lord Jesus Christ. With this in mind, please carefully and prayerfully review these requirements:

- All youth wishing to be confirmed must have completed their 6th grade faith formation year with at least 80% attendance.
- All 7th - 12th grade youth must attend their respective Confirmation classes and have at least an 80% attendance record.
- All 9th - 12th grade youth must also attend the weekly youth group meetings on Sunday afternoons from 3:30 - 5:30 P.M. This will be optional for 8th graders this year, but mandatory in future years.
- All youth preparing for Confirmation MUST attend a weekly weekend Mass (Saturday vigil or Sunday). Youth must have an attendance rate of at least 80%.

These are the main requirements for the Confirmation program. Failure to meet them may result in your son or daughter being removed from the program. As always, if you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me at the email address below.

In Christ,

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